

ALLEGRA FULLER SNYDER: AN ORAL HISTORY

Interviewed by Richard Candida Smith

Completed under the auspices  
of the  
Center for Oral History Research  
University of California  
Los Angeles

Copyright ©2017  
The Regents of the University of California

## CONTENTS

### TAPE NUMBER: I, Side One (February 19, 1993).....1

Birth and early years in Chicago – Family genealogy – Mother's family background – Family's participation in New York cultural life – Family and religion – Early exposure to diversity –Margaret Fuller – Early experience of (father) Buckminster Fuller's work – Buckminster Fuller's role in Snyder's intellectual development – Family's financial situation – Perspective on feminism.

### TAPE NUMBER: I, Side Two (February 16, 1993).....15

Interest and ability in math, successful application to MIT – Education at Dalton School – Significant teachers at Dalton – Importance of movement/dance in Dalton education – Buckminster Fuller's influence on thinking about movement and bodily experience – Relationship to Helen Parkhurst, founder of Dalton School – Connections to John Dewey – Figure skating – Studying at the School of American Ballet – Education at the Madeira School – Learning Labanotation at Madeira – Dyslexia – Awareness of national and international issues, including World War II.

### TAPE NUMBER: II, Side One (February 22, 1993).....30

Father's relationship to Christopher Morley and the literary/academic world– Snyder's own relationship to academia – Full-time study at the School of American Ballet – Influence of Lincoln Kirstein – Work at the Dance and Theater Archives of the Museum of Modern Art – Lack of exposure to modern dance – Classical Ballet technique and training at SAB – Close friends at SAB –Lack of intellectual stimulation in conservatory training – Kirstein's New York Ballet Society – Decision to leave ballet and go to Bennington College– Relationship to George Balanchine – Choreography for the Joffrey Ballet – Thoughts about ballet.

### TAPE NUMBER: II, Side Two (February 22, 1993).....45

Admiration of Jerome Robbins – Studying with Hanya Holm and Alwin Nikolais in the late 1940s – Interest in Broadway dance – Working with George Amberg at the International Film Foundation – Interest in Maya Deren's films – Other examples of early dance film – Early films of Martha

Graham's work – Decision to study at Bennington – Martha Hill, Bennington College dance department chair and former dancer with Graham company – Training influenced by Graham and Humphrey-Weidman techniques – Early training in choreography at Bennington – Study in other fields enriching her choreographic explorations – Studying anthropology and its effects on Snyder's early choreography – Other influential professors at Bennington.

TAPE NUMBER: III, Side One (February 22, 1993).....59

Foundations for choreographic research at Dalton School – Difficulty in developing choreographic perspective in context of technical training at SAB– Discussion of one of Snyder's early works at Bennington – Choosing not to pursue choreography professionally – Exploration of ritual and symbol in choreography – More discussion of dance pieces created at Bennington.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side One (March 12, 1993).....68

More discussion of Bennington professors outside the dance department – Discussion of James Joyce and *Ulysses*, the connections between mythology and formalism – More discussion on study of anthropology and its effects on Snyder's choreography – Discussion of psychoanalysis (Freud and Jung), and Joseph Campbell's work – Snyder's relationship with father (B. Fuller) during Bennington years – More discussion of Snyder's interest in "the mythic."

TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side Two (March 12, 1993).....78

Discussion of various intellectuals' influence on Snyder – Cultural climate in 1950, McCarthy hearings, Snyder's lack of awareness around issues of socialism and communism – Snyder's lukewarm response to abstract expressionist painting, visual arts in general – Snyder's lack of interest in literature and fiction – Snyder's interest in documentary filmmaking – Working on *Gods of Bali* with Robert Snyder – Snyder's growing interest to and commitment to film through the International Film Foundation.

TAPE NUMBER: V, Side One (March 12, 1993).....90

Snyder's interest in lending dance more recognition as an art form – Development of television in the early 50s – Moving with Robert Snyder to Los Angeles in 1956 to start a family – Working with the Tewa Pueblos in New Mexico with a friend from Bennington.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side One (March 15, 1993).....94

Focusing on motherhood at the expense of professional life – Life in a diverse Silver Lake – Moving to the Pacific Palisades in the early 60s – Decision to pursue graduate work at UCLA – Growing interest in the area of dance therapy – Communication with Alma Hawkins at UCLA – Screening dance films in Los Angeles for a Bennington alumni group – Comparing cultural life in Los Angeles to cultural life in New York – Involvement with Kate Hughes and the Lester Horton New Dance Theatre (and school), meeting Bella Lewitzky – Organizing dance film showings at New Dance Theatre – Awareness of and interest in Lester Horton – Relationship between Horton and Lewitzky, Lewitzky's separation from the company and development as a choreographer – The founding of Cal Arts – More on relationship between Snyder and Lewitzky, teaching together at Idyllwild – Snyder's feelings on dance reconstruction in general – Back to Snyder and Lewitzky teaching at Idyllwild – Snyder being invited to Cal Arts.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side Two (March 15, 1993).....107

Filming the *Bayanihan* (Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company) – Technical information about filming the *Bayanihan* dances – Discussing the difference between proscenium performances of non-Western dances and performances in their own cultural context – Challenging the perception of dance as mere entertainment – Bella Lewitzky as a teacher and choreographer – Early years of the Joffrey Ballet, especially focusing on patronage – Snyder's choreography for the Joffrey Ballet, *The Venetian Glass Nephew*.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side One (March 15, 1993).....120

Continuing to discuss *The Venetian Glass Nephew* – The work's lack of written documentation (dance notation).

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (April 19, 1993).....122

Snyder's interest and work in dance therapy – Working with Mary Whitehouse – Approaching Alma Hawkins about the dance therapy component of the UCLA dance program – Decision to pursue a master's degree at UCLA – Disappointed that theory and practice were separate at that time, Snyder stopped dancing in graduate school – Returning to Mary Whitehouse and her

teaching – Using the experience of the body as a starting point for exploration  
 – Practicing dance with an inward attention – The emergence of form in spontaneous movement explorations – Making connections to the work of Isadora Duncan – Returning to the work in a dance therapy context – Comparing dance therapy work to contact improvisation – Discussing the importance of the Pilobolus Dance Company – Snyder's decision not to further pursue choreography – Returning to early interest in choreography as an interest in the emergence of a personal way of moving – Snyder discussing the integration of filmic visuals into other choreographic work, identifying that as an area she would have explored – Returning to Mary Whitehouse and her encouragement to verbalize movement experience.

Tape Number: VIII, Side Two (April 19, 1993).....136

Continuing to address the importance of verbalization and articulation in the therapeutic process of Mary Whitehouse – Discussing the theoretical influences on Whitehouse and Snyder in the late 1960s – Various encounters with Mary Wigman's work – Questioning the relevance of Jung and archetypal forms – teaching Native American circle dances – Further discussion of movement and ritual - Studying ballet with Carmelita Maracci in Los Angeles, separating from Maracci at the time Snyder entered UCLA – Integrating body and intellect through dance practice – Comparing UCLA's program to USC's – Returning to Maracci's influence on the LA dance community of the period – Discussing divisions within the UCLA department when Snyder entered.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side One (April 19, 1993).....150

Snyder's conviction that her major contribution to the field would concern “world dance” or dance ethnology – Discussing the UCLA ethnomusicology department at the time of Snyder's graduate work – Elsie Dunin’s folk dance classes at UCLA – teaching Dance Cultures of the World mainly to students with no background in dance – Teaching non-Western studio dance classes – Departmental hierarchy – Snyder’s identity within the department and the dance field as a whole.

TAPE NUMBER: X, Side One (April 30, 1993).....157

Review of Snyder’s program as a student, working with faculty, thesis project - Writing articles for Impulse and Dance Perspectives—Thesis Panel—Research into Dance Film and screenings—Becoming part of the faculty at UCLA and Cal Arts.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: X, Side Two (April 30, 1993)</u> .....	171
--	-----

Teaching at UCLA and affecting broader attitudes towards dance - Struggles developing the ethnodance program – Teaching four theory courses in addition to chairing the department – Nature of consensus within the department.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side One (April 30, 1993)</u> .....	186
---	-----

Margalit Oved Marshall – Divisions between, and fusion of, theory and performance – Programmatic inflexibility in the dance department – Snyder’s role as chair in shaping departmental policy – Encouraging service on UCLA faculty committees.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side One (May 4, 1993)</u> .....	198
---	-----

Snyder’s strong belief in the UCLA Dance Department, and her commitment to its breadth – Returning to the integration of practice and theory – Meeting university course requirements – Faculty recruitment – The abundance of lecturers over tenure-track faculty – Student recruitment – Beginning a discussion of the Graduate Dance Center.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side Two (May 4, 1993)</u> .....	211
---	-----

Continuing a discussion of the Graduate Dance Center – Student demonstrations and cultural developments of the 60s and 70s – Interplay between ethnic studies, activism, and Snyder’s teaching in the department – Carlos Castaneda and Snyder’s work with the Yaqui – Teaching American Indian material.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: XIII, Side One (May 4, 1993)</u> .....	224
--	-----

Working with African Studies academics – Discussion of Asian and Chicano Studies in the department.

<u>TAPE NUMBER: XIV, Side One (May 7, 1993)</u> .....	226
---	-----

Minimal effects of 60s counterculture on the life of the department – Monitoring explicit content in student performances – Snyder’s ambivalent feelings about feminism and the women’s movement of the 70s – Incorporating

widespread changes in the arts, teaching a class on “philosophical bases and trends.”

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, Side Two (May 7, 1993).....239

Encouraging dance ethnology students to question academic conventions – Preparing students for careers – Divisions between ethnology, therapy, and performance students in the department – Returning to a discussion of the philosophical bases classes – Impact of gay and lesbian civil rights movement on the department – Dealing with the AIDS crisis – The interplay between gender studies and dance ethnology – Discussing some difficulty being female, and engaged in the dance field, in the academic community.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, Side One (May 11, 1993).....252

Snyder’s filmmaking – The inherent difficulties in bringing dance and film together – Classic Hollywood dance films, Fred Astaire versus Gene Kelly – Returning to her creative decision on the *Bayanihan* film – Snyder’s engagement with film theory – Returning to *Gestures of Sand* and Snyder’s ethnographic research in preparation for that film – Discussing another of Snyder’s films, *Reflections on Choreography*.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, Side Two (May 11, 1993).....265

Continuing a discussion about *Reflections on Choreography* – Moving on to Snyder’s next film, *Baroque Dance* – Storyboarding the films – Use of Feuillet notation in *Baroque Dance* – Working on the Mary Wigman film – Interest in working with Isadora Duncan material – Beginning a discussion on *Celebrations: A World of Art and Ritual*.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, Side One (May 11, 1993).....279

More discussion of *Celebrations* – The spectator’s kinesthetic involvement in dance films – Working as the dance film editor for *Film News* magazine.

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, Side One (May 12, 1993).....284

Developing the Ethnic Arts program, which became the UCLA department of World Arts and Cultures – Reaching out to an interdisciplinary range of faculty members across the UCLA campus – Evaluating interdisciplinary programs in the university context – Developing the program’s curriculum – Working to tie

multiple disciplinary positions together and iron out the logistics of the program – Dance Department taking on the bulk of the administrative responsibility for the program – Mobilizing performance as a theoretical concept – Drawing a diverse student population, the effects of the program on the students.

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, Side Two (May 12, 1993).....298

Further discussion of the program’s development – Working with the art history and ethnomusicology departments – Facing challenges from program reviews, working to credit faculty for their teaching in the program – Moving from an interdepartmental program to an independent department, Snyder expressing concern about that development – Changing the name from Ethnic Arts to World Arts.

TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, Side One (May 12, 1993).....311

Discussing the merger of the Dance and World Arts and Cultures Departments – Discussing Snyder’s concerns about the changes to the dance department that such a merger would bring.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, Side One (May 19, 1993).....315

Discussing the role and position of the arts in the university more broadly— Transitioning from UCLA’s College of Fine Arts to the School of the Arts – Discussing internal administrative politics and the acceptance of “world arts” in academic departments across campus – Evaluating the creative work of faculty using standards developed for academic publishing – Discussing Snyder’s own academic advancement – Snyder’s participation in the department of art review (including Richard Diebenkorn’s removal from the faculty) early on in her academic career.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, Side Two (May 19, 1993).....327

Arguing for the support of the arts in the university, particularly in the development of “laboratory” space – How to encourage arts faculty to remain invested in artistic careers– Comparing the situation at UCLA to Bennington – Comparing UCLA to other large universities with investments in dance – Discussing the dance department at UC Riverside – Developing the MA program in the UCLA dance department, advocating for a PhD – Discussing



the state of dance studies in academia at large – Snyder’s involvement in the Arts Management program – Snyder’s involvement with the Institute of Ethnomusicology – Mantle Hood and the relationship between dance ethnology and ethnomusicology.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, Side One (May 19, 1993).....341

Discussing the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, possible retrenchment – Lack of university support for World Arts and Cultures model, and related models such as folklore – Serving on the Special Committee on Cultural Diversity – Discussing various other UCLA initiatives in the arts – Involvement in the UC Experiential Learning Project – Working on the Chancellor’s Committee in Instructional Development.

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, Side One (May 20, 1993).....350

Discussing arts education in the university context – Snyder expresses her belief in looking at the arts in the midst of a larger cultural context – Returning to UCLA (and World Arts and Cultures) as a venue for the exchange of ideas – Possibilities for nurturing the arts outside the university context – Buckminster Fuller’s work in educational contexts – Continuing to explore alternative educational structures in the arts – Bringing notable artists to UCLA for intensives – Discussing “The House” and the challenges to creating space for experimental dance in Los Angeles – Returning to arts in the university context – Buckminster Fuller’s teaching and the effect of his growing status on a young (post-college) Snyder.

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, Side Two (May 20, 1993).....364

Discussing the Buckminster Fuller Institute, and the ongoing development of his ideas in late 20<sup>th</sup> century – Snyder’s role as a mother, and her prioritization of family life – Discussing the careers of Snyder’s daughter and son – Addressing the broad theme of individual versus collective development – Snyder’s field research, preferring to focus on the larger picture of arts in society rather any particular cultural context – Snyder’s interest in serving as a facilitator to those working in their own cultural contexts.

TAPE NUMBER: XXII, Side One (May 20, 1993).....377

Discussing major thinkers in the field of anthropology, from 1970 onward (Turner, Lévi-Strauss, Ortiz, Geertz, Griaule, Douglas) – Discussing post-

modernism, post-structuralism, discourse analysis, and deconstruction; the influence of these intellectual developments on Snyder’s work in dance at UCLA – Snyder’s feelings about dance studies scholars and dance ethnologists Adrienne Kaeppler and Joann Kealiinohomoku – Looking at gender difference in the context of dance ethnology – Snyder’s thinking on the concept of transformation.

TAPE NUMBER: XXII, Side Two (May 20, 1993).....390

Continuing to discuss the concept of transformation with respect to world dance practices – Snyder’s work with the Teyyam of Kerala – Returning to Snyder’s work on transformation and shamanism – Snyder’s work on European festivals, and the connection to her research on the Yaqui – Looking forward to connecting with a network of scholars on ethnochoreology.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 16, 1993

SMITH: The first question in this process is always a straightforward, simple one, which is when and where were you born?

SNYDER: I was born August 28, 1927, in Chicago. We moved from Chicago before I have any actual, tangible remembrances. My father [R. Buckminster Fuller] said that we lived in an apartment that was not far away from where the [Saint] Valentine's Day Massacre occurred and it was-- I was born in the lying-in Hospital in Chicago.

SMITH: Did you have other brothers and sisters?

SNYDER: No. Well, no that's-- I had a sister. My mother [Anne Hewlett Fuller] and father had another daughter [Alexandra Willet Fuller], who was born before I was, who lived for four years, had spinal meningitis and infantile paralysis and so forth, and died a little after her fourth birthday. And that was a very devastating experience, as you might guess, for my parents. So I often say I was more than an only child because I was sort of an only child that came on top of an experience of a loss of a child. So there was, particularly on my mother's part, a great focus on me. [Laughter]

SMITH: Normally, I ask people about their parents. But you're one of the few people whose parents are very well known, so it's a question of how to approach this. But if you could just say a little bit initially about your father and your mother.

SNYDER: Well, I feel very strongly about my heritage, in a sense. My father was very much of a New England family. My father, when I was thirteen or fourteen, did a genealogy on both my mother's and father's side, my ancestors had arrived in the

United States from about 1620 through 1640. They were very much on the first wave of migrations from England, almost entirely, although some had been French Huguenots. A couple had come via Holland, but I think had basically been very much Anglo-Saxon in their origins. My father's family had been largely Unitarian ministers, teachers. My great-great-aunt--my great-great-great-aunt, I guess--was Margaret Fuller. And despite what others would think about my father, that sense of his New England heritage was very important to him. My mother's family settled in Long Island and mostly went down into the New York, Long Island area, again very early on.

SMITH: Puritan settlers.

SNYDER: Well, yeah. Or they were settlers from England. I'm qualifying this, Richard, only because they became Tories during the war. And this was interesting because my mother--even with the two hundred or more years between the English experience and her own--always remained quite an Anglophile. While my father was a Unitarian, my mother's family was High Church of England as far as sort of articulated religion, neither my mother or my father would, I think, have very formal religious concerns, although my mother certainly liked to go to church on Christmas and Easter and those kinds of days and some Sundays in between.

My mother was the oldest of a family of ten and her mother had died when her youngest brother was almost just born. So my mother sort of became the mother for the younger children in that family. We were of that group that was never wealthy, but sort of comfortably off, and there were always servants in the family. So it wasn't my mother was struggling with washing and ironing of the clothes kind of thing. But she was always deeply involved and devoted to her family and probably wasn't really

interested in social life. Her ten brothers and sisters kept her busy enough, even while I was growing up, so that there weren't a lot of people coming in and out of the house. As far as-- my father's work brought very interesting people into our house. My mother, I guess because she had been raised with servants and so forth--and we never did have any money for our own servants--was very uncomfortable in the role of hostess, particularly of cook. She was an atrocious cook and she knew it. So they didn't do much entertaining.

SMITH: Was she college educated?

SNYDER: No. I think she had a degree-- My grandfather, who I unfortunately only knew--I think he died probably when I was about twelve years old-- He was an architect stage designer.

SMITH: This is your maternal--?

SNYDER: Yes. He was a director of the American Academy in Rome. James Monroe Hewlett. A very respected person in the New York arts and architecture field, and I say this because my mother then became quite interested in costume design and graduated from Pratt Institute in her-- Well, she must have gone. It wasn't even a formal degree at all, but she went through Pratt and had some thoughts of doing some design at one point in time or another. But they were married when they were both really quite young. Let's see, they both must have been about twenty, twenty-one at the time they were married. And my mother, from then on, really never had any aspirations to do much of her own. She loved to read. She was a very self-contained person, and had a very great dignity and sense of self. But she was very quiet and could entertain herself very well without a professional career at all.

SMITH: I had wanted to ask you about the role of culture in your household.

Would you say there was avant-garde or a sort of middlebrow, middle of the road or--?

I assume that, I mean, given what you've said about your mother—

SNYDER: It's all kinds of mixtures of things. That which came from my grandfather was very respected but I guess you'd say traditional nevertheless. He did costume designs for one of the major actresses [Maude Adams], people on Broadway, in theater, in music a bit. One of his sister's husbands was very interested in music. So they're sort of respected, but more classical, artists. On the other hand, my father-- almost immediately, we were in New York--was pretty much involved with the cutting edge of the Greenwich Village art world. Isamu Noguchi was probably, at one point, my father's closest friend, but there was a whole group that was associated with a woman named Romney Marie. It was just beginning now, this sort of her influence. Her restaurant was a kind of a salon for [Arshile] Gorky-- Well, later [Willem] de Kooning-- I mean, you know, that--

SMITH: Did you grow up in the Greenwich Village area?

SNYDER: No. We lived on Eighty-seventh and Eighty-eighth Street. The first apartment was between Madison [Avenue] and Park [Avenue] and the next was between Park and Lexington Ave. And that was primarily because the later apartment backed on Dalton School, where I went to, and I could walk to school without crossing the street. Even though we stayed there until I was probably fourteen or so, that still was the reason why we were there, even though I got to crossing the street by myself. But that was the sole reason for being up in that--

SMITH: The Upper East Side.

SNYDER: The Upper East Side, yeah. And of course, for me--I think this is something we'll probably talk about--the fact that my father had sought out and was

able to put me in Dalton School was very important. I mean, not only the quality of education and the philosophy of the education, but also I was at Dalton then for-- I came in the early part of the third grade. I didn't graduate because we moved down to Washington for the very end of World War II so I was there for about ten years. The other people who were my friends and their families all tended to be very interesting and cutting edge people in New York. I felt as though I had a sense of really what was going on in the arts.

SMITH: As a teenager, did you go to concerts a lot?

SNYDER: No, as a teenager, I was already very much focused on dance and since money was always a struggle for us, I saved mine. I was sort of given the option of what were the few tickets that we would buy and they were almost always dance concert tickets. At that time, since ballet was more available, they were more largely ballet at that point. And I was actually sort of evolving more in the ballet field, initially.

SMITH: What about-- What kind of religious training did you have?

SNYDER: Nothing at all from my father, even though he felt the presence of some bigger power very strongly and that very much affected him and his life. But he was very much anti any formal religion. My mother was very much of a sort of-- It was a nice thing to do. But we didn't really go regularly to church and she didn't-- Or even perhaps she respected daddy's feelings. I mean, I can remember times when she would go off to Sunday morning at church and I didn't. So she certainly wasn't forcing that. I wasn't officially christened until two of my cousins, my mother's two nieces who were five and seven years younger than I-- And the family suddenly decided we sort of would have a joint christening. So I was--what--probably nine or ten at that point in

time, which wasn't exactly the time when one would traditionally be christened, if we were going to be christened. So it was sort of-- I think mother was more anxious to do it because she could then name her dearest sister and brother as my godmother and godfather and my aunt as-- So it was sort of building that structure rather than the religious concerns and trainings.

Now it was interesting, on her mother's side, her grandfather was Quaker and I think a very strong Quaker. In fact the whole history of the Quakers in the United States were very much a part of our family history. The Bourne House, which is still I think, called the shrine of religious freedom or something or other on Long Island, was actually one of my great-great-great grandparents. There may have been a conflict within the family which she never talked about, by her father's-- Her grandfather, who she adored and who actually raised her a good deal. Conflict between the Episcopalianism and the Quakerism then sort of neutralized or modified her religious interests, but nevertheless, they were there.

SMITH: Did you view yourself as a "free thinker"?

SNYDER: Yeah, I suppose so. And again, you know, from my sort of time of awareness, I was in school. Dalton. Again, the population was wonderfully mixed and there were certainly Asians and all kinds of spectrums of Jewish and Protestant and Catholic. Fairly early on, I remember a dear classmate was black. That was pretty early on in the system to have that kind-- I think another level of response to that question, though, Richard, would be that again, on both sides of the family, there was-- My families were merchants. On my mother's side, they were tea and coffee merchants. On my father's side, well, also that to a certain extent. And so there was a lot of traveling and we had, and I think you perhaps noticed even in the house when



you were there and when we come back again to have some more time at the house, why a number of the things I have there were things that my great-grandfather collected and so forth, having travelled actually to India and to China as a part of the tea and coffee trade, very early on. My mother had a particular appetite for Asian things. So we had a lot of Asian things around the house, very early on. So there was a sense of reaching out, I think, to other worlds, that was very much a part of my early experience. SMITH: You've mentioned the genealogy that you did with your father. Were, say, the family legends part of your growing up and discussion of family history on both sides? And the Puritan settlements and the Revolution and the Transcendentalists?

Was Margaret Fuller someone who was talked about as you were growing up?

SNYDER: A little bit. It was much more sort of active and on-going. I mean, I think I started out with that comment because I did have a sense of, you know, my roots. I mean it was still very active on both sides, they would talk about the family and the family meant seven or eight generations. And they were sort of-- But on the other hand, it was a reference to aunt Kate and great-aunt somebody and so and so and so and so in a way that was still very much very personal. Not so much as a distant historical figure, but as sort of a part of the continuity and very much still sort of influencing the present.

SMITH: Yeah. Was there a sense of carrying on or living on that you had been handed a responsibility that you had to live up to in these family traditions? SNYDER: Not really. I think I want to say both yes and no at the same time. My mother, as a presence, was somebody that I admired. She was very much of a lady. She had a great kind of a presence and containment. I very much felt that came from her upbringing.

And she wanted me to be a lady, whatever that meant. I remember wearing white gloves for most times when I would go out-- Not going to school obviously, but for anything that was more social and formal, I remember. Our great-aunt Kate, who was very much one of the matriarchs of the family, lived on Fifth Avenue. The pilgrimage to great-aunt Kate was very formal and I was to be very careful to sit properly and not to talk out of turn and so forth. It didn't feel uncomfortable to have those things. I thought if that was what I was expected to be, I was delighted to do that. So that's an interesting-- If you begin to think about that, that that was the beginning of my own sense of self in the context of Dalton, where a lot of people were a lot of different kinds of things and a lot of them were much more, well, their backgrounds were-- Although all of them probably came from--I don't know--some sense of morals and ethics and ethical upbringing, within that were very different ways of understanding and interpreting and most of the rest of them did not wear white gloves to most occasions. And I mean, I enjoyed the fact that they didn't and I did or whatever. And that became, whatever I was I felt fairly comfortable with fairly early on, which again, I'll talk about more later because I felt that was-- The educational process at Dalton was one that really encouraged a great deal of sense in self-knowledge and self-empowerment and in a very most positive kind of a way. SMITH: I had two questions before you get into Dalton, that still sort of focus on sort of general family things. One is what did you understand about your father's work, as you were a child? I mean, at that time, what did you understand that your father was doing and what his place in the world was?

SNYDER: Well, I certainly, pretty early on, I understood it to be something different from what most daddies did--I did call him Daddy and will still probably refer to him

as Daddy on the tape. I remember, for instance, that--just a quick little thing--we moved from Chicago to Long Island for a bit of time, sort of had a house near the rest of their brothers and sisters--my mother's brothers and sisters--and then went to Connecticut, which was where my father started to particularly work on the Dymaxion car. So we were in Long Island, when I was from two to about four, I guess, and then moved to Connecticut. In 1932, '33--I was just four or five at that point--my mother and father went together to take the first prototype of the Dymaxion car to the Chicago World's Fair. Actually it was the first time my mother had left me and I was left in a very nice sort of a summer camp situation, which was much more intimate than that. So my parents had gone off to do something unusual, I didn't know what it was exactly, but-- And then-- Well, actually, it was just around that time, so this is not actually chronologically accurate because I remember going over to his plant for the development of-- The car was in Bridgeport and we were living in New Noroton, Connecticut. So I remember him taking me over to see the car in its various stages. And he took me out to ride even in just the chassis of the car, which of course, immediately even when that was out on the road, people would just come, "What on earth is--?" because a three-wheeled, dew drop shaped car in 1932 was really so twenty-first century, people had no notion of how to deal with it at all. People would-- "What on earth is that?" and so forth. And he would talk to them about it. And so I was in when he took out the various cars and we would drive around and again, the reaction from people. So that was certainly one of my first senses that he was doing something that was quite exceptional and different and it seemed to be fun and fascinating and other people were intrigued about it too. His philosophy about children, which he's articulated in quite a few of his writings and talks and so forth,

was that a child is totally capable of understanding things. It's only their experience that is where there's a difference between an adult and a child in their communication about something. So, this is now actually jumping back, Richard, but during the time we

were living in Long Island, Daddy could draw free-hand very well. So he would tell me stories, which he came to call the Goldilocks stories and in fact, very much later the Tetrascroll manuscripts book [Tetrascroll: Goldilocks and the Three Bears, a Cosmic Fairy Tale] is sort of supposedly based on the Goldilocks stories he told me. It isn't, really. It was a much later rethinking of them. But the principle was correct, he really tried to-- A discipline of his, which seems strange because of his writing, was he felt that if he could really communicate to me the ideas that he was struggling with in his own thinking that he would then be at the point of having them where he could talk with others. So I do really actually remember him telling me about Goldilocks that had to do with trying to communicate to me the theory of relativity and I won't attempt to go more into that, but I do really know that he tried to do that and I remember and he drew-- He used to love-- You remember the stiff shirt boards that used to come with your starched shirts? Well, he used to draw on those for me, these stories about Goldilocks--and Goldilocks, of course, was myself--and her adventures with these various things which were really his theories. So he really very intentionally involved me in his thinking. I guess, really from my first, certainly my first remembrances and before I am conscious of these remembrances.

SMITH: So you were engaged in a dialogue with him throughout?

SNYDER: Yeah, right, right.

SMITH: Where did your mother fit into that dialogue?

SNYDER: I would call her a sort of quiet bystander, yet that is not really quite correct. I don't think she was--a big word for where I was at that point--as intellectually engaged as I was--now that's ridiculous to say for a three or four year old, but whatever--in this sort of the imagination about--

SMITH: But eventually, you were twelve or thirteen.

SNYDER: --that's right--about what he was doing. I really fired-- It did excite me. She was fascinated and she was very supportive of Daddy and she did-- And I think it is really important, even though this again is sort of jumping around, but you'll have to deal with this a lot with me. My father really credited her father, my grandfather on my mother's side, with really bringing him out. The Unitarian minister Bostonian intellectual was, yeah, intellectually sort of daring, but in many ways, pretty straitlaced and certainly in a creative [way] or in anything else but the verbal. And Daddy wasn't-- Well, he was verbal but it was his own kind of verbalness. He was much more, as he would later say, comprehensive. My grandfather really was the one who said, you know, "Trust your own thinking, be daring, be courageous," you know. "Risk." So my mother always had that. That was her experience of her own father. And she, in turn, gave that kind of support to my father. So even though she might not be as intellectually engaged, she was, on the other hand, saying, "Yeah, you should be doing what you want to do and I am willing to go along with this risk." And it was clearly risky much of the time. The way they were going to pay the rent and so forth was very questionable much of the time along the way. And then my mother had just a little bit of inheritance and she used that from time to time, well they never-- My father would be the first to be very angry if they suggested living off my-- So she was totally supportive of him.

SMITH: Was a financial cloud sort of a persistent part of your childhood? SNYDER: Well, they were nervous. I mean, yeah. I can on many instances remember my mother really sitting there with the checkbook and really, you know, trying to figure out just how they would get through the next month. While at the same time, and here again is sort of the dynamic, I mean, coming from this family where there's, you know, you lived at a certain level-- It was never an ostentatious and outward thing, but things were right. But that was just the way it was, so that's in a sense what she wanted to be. So yeah, there were a lot of interesting challenges and again, they both shared those with me. I mean, I was aware of my mother worrying I think to the extent that she didn't want me to worry but she wanted me to understand where she was coming from, as we would say today.

SMITH: Well, part of what I'm probing around is to the degree to which you, as an only child being raised in the family where your father was developing theories about education-- They would later become very pronounced and very well-known. To what degree were you being developed as an independent thinker and also the degree to which there's a sense of feminist perspective being fed into you that you, as a woman, did not need to feel limitations even though you were raised in a society which limited women?

SNYDER: Well, when you first said feminist, I was going to right away say, that really wasn't the issue at all. But it was interesting because it wasn't. Whatever the way that my schooling, my experience within the family, my experience of the family, the larger family circle and so forth-- I didn't really realize there was a feminine issue until years later. I mean I felt totally empowered as a woman.

SMITH: Years later, when you were in college or even later?

SNYDER: Even later. I think it really became fully apparent when I came to UCLA and when I was already in my mid-thirties and so forth because even though--and now we're jumping ahead to Bennington [College]--Bennington was, at the time that I was there, a girl's college, but it was a girl's college because-- I mean, what we felt was "Wow," you know. "It's a girl's college because, you know, we're so powerful."

[Laughter] It wasn't that we had to be segregated or protected from that male world out there at all. It was because we had more feminine energy than many of those masculine boys out there. Of course then this was only further reinforced to a large extent by the fact that I was in the world of dance and fairly early on, came to know that Martha Graham was a-- I mean, Martha, though I never did study directly with her, there were many, many cross-overs and including the fact that Martha and my father, largely through Noguchi, admired each other very much. So Martha was certainly one of the people that I idolized and of course, she was a woman. So as I say, it's interesting. It was so there that it didn't cross my mind until much later that it was an issue that was really out there. And I will say that because of that I was rather shocked and even hostile to the feminist movement as it became articulated in the seventies because I kind of felt that women were making a lot about something that I thought was there. I came to realize that it was, you know-- I mean, I now understand what this is all about, but it--

SMITH: Well, that raises the question: "What you grew up with." Is that what we might call, in sort of modern trendy terms, false consciousness about women's place in society or were you in a relatively narrow environment so that you could evade those kinds of restrictions that typically were put on women?

SNYDER: I think the second is more true. Now maybe it transformed itself in later life more into this kind of a naiveté. But at first, as I say, there wasn't any experience that I had, interestingly enough, including--and this again is a little jump chronologically, but it kind of fits in here--one of the few times when this sort of the question which preceded this discussion about: "Was I allowed to develop?" Given the empowerment to develop myself as I wanted to--the answer is largely yes--was when as I was graduating from Madeira School, which I went to last two years of my life. It just happened that I happened to be just naturally very good in mathematics and--



TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 16, 1993

SMITH: Chronology, it wouldn't work.

SNYDER: Definitely wouldn't work with me.

SMITH: So you were talking about mathematics at Madeira?

SNYDER: So anyway, I was at Madeira and I've come up to study at the School of American Ballet during the summer but I was also taking advanced trigonometry and so forth in the New York school systems and passing their regents exams with A pluses and so forth. So my father said to me, as I graduated from Madeira, "I would like you at least to apply to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]." So even though I don't think I ever really thought that that would be a way that I'd go, even though I was kind of fascinated by-- I said, "Okay, I'll do that." And I got accepted, now, again, I didn't even really think about that at that point in time. But we're now talking about 1945, my guess is that not a lot of women were accepted to MIT at that point in time. Now, exactly what level, I mean, maybe they just say that your oral exam-- It was really so far from my real thinking that I didn't do anything more about it. So I don't know whether almost immediately I would have been challenged. Maybe they even thought Allegra was a boy's name. I mean, who knows? But my experience then was you know, if you're good enough and you want to do it, can't you do it? I just didn't think of it in terms of-- And everything that I was interested in, the issue of my being a young girl or a woman was never a problem.

Arts, of course, are much more-- I would say my world was largely the world of the arts and I think now, and probably rightly so, the issue of the female voice as a

separate voice is there in the arts world. But at that point in time, it wasn't and I don't think it wasn't because that voice wasn't there. It was in the world of the arts and see, I had nothing to do with business. I had nothing to do with any of those worlds which were male-oriented worlds.

SMITH: I mean, obviously, a key theme that we're going to be coming back to again and again, is the relationship of experience and ideas. Part of what you've been telling me is that your experience led to ideas which may not have been realistic in terms of the way the total world was structured. So that points to a contradiction in that thesis. I'm wondering, you know, as you developed--we'll be coming back to this--how you yourself adapted and developed your ideas about the relationship of how people convert experiences into, you know, idea structures?

SNYDER: Well, I think-- I would love you to force me to come back to this on various occasions. I think it's a very fascinating subject which I probably haven't articulated that well even for myself. But I would say this, that the experience of empowerment for myself and what I saw around me was so strong and is still so strong with me, that I don't feel, even though and I certainly-- I mean, as I was more and more involved with UCLA and realized that my own experiences on so many levels were so different from the students, I still didn't feel that I was leading them along a primrose path by telling them to believe in themselves and that really if they had the courage that they could construct their own reality even if it-- I was always very frank to say it's very tough. Certainly seeing my father's and my own experience-- I mean the field of dance has been a tough field. All of these. So this wasn't too naively saying, oh, "Wishing will make it so," at all. But to this day, I feel that if you really

believe in something and you're really willing to tackle it, you can succeed and I don't care what gender or whatever. It's really is a possibility.

SMITH: We're going to be returning to this because it's clearly one of the main themes of your work. Okay, so when you were in the third grade approximately, your parents enrolled you at Dalton School.

SNYDER: Well, they moved to New York. My father had sort of completed his work on the Dymaxion car and I don't-- I'm not quite sure that I could actually say what brought him back to New York. From my mother's point of view getting closer to the family was certainly a part of what she wanted. So even Connecticut was a little bit too far away from the family for her taste, but--

SMITH: Was this a girls' school or a co-educational school?

SNYDER: From the first through the sixth grade, it was co-educational, and then, the boys left after the sixth grade. So my experience would be it being a co-educational school, really.

SMITH: Could you tell me about how the classes were structured and the types of teachers you had and the types of educational experiences you--?

SNYDER: Well, first of all, and I won't be able to really be too articulate about this. Dalton School was an educational concept which I think was probably very [John] Dewey influenced, but particularly articulated by a woman named Helen Parkhurst who founded the school. It was my experience of the curriculum certainly in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth grades that there was a great integration of subject matter and that one of the principals was that doing and performance was one of the key tools in the educational process. So each year sort of had a historical focus. Third grade, when I came in, was sort of the evolution of the world. I remember doing a dance; two pieces

of choreography. I wouldn't have known to call them choreography. But one was to the experience of the dinosaurs as they got caught in the tar-- the La Brea tar pits--and the whole end of the dinosaur period. Another one was the solar system and the relationships of the planets to one another, which I did also through a dance, and my people moving in various rates and with various qualities and so forth and so on. Then fourth grade was Egypt, fifth grade was Greece, then sixth grade--which was very exciting--was the medieval period, but in medieval Europe and medieval Asia because we did have wonderful teachers, one of whom was Elizabeth Seeger, who actually happens to be Charles Seeger's sister, who was a specialist in Chinese history. Another was Mrs. Ram Gopal MacGurgy, who was, in fact-- Yeah, yeah, I'm trying to think. We did a performance of the Ramayana, which for me, in later years, was very critical that that had been a part of my early life experience. I think we even did that in the fifth grade. I'm trying to think-- Also, I remember, having a very marvelous Greek festival, where we performed a little Euripides and Sophocles and such. [Laughter] And at the same time had Greek games and this and that and the other thing. Maybe it was China and India together with the medieval history in the sixth grade. But anyway, the performing, the doing, the preparing. In the preparing of the costumes, I remember talking about how the papyrus was beaten to make the paper. I suppose we had a piece of papyrus and the-- But it was all very experiential learning, and it was marvelous. It was very vitalizing and certainly my interests, again in dance and movement, was absolutely a part of that learning process.

SMITH: Now, how does the movement become a way of internalizing the knowledge that you're gaining from studies that you're doing? How does that process work?

SNYDER: Well, we did a performance in the fourth grade called "The Princess Runs Away." It was a little story about one of the princesses of the court of the pharaoh-- I can't tell you now which pharaoh it was, though. I didn't learn my lesson that well--who ran away because of something. And we looked to so many of the drawings from the tombs and so forth and I was one of the key people in that performance. We were trying to model our movement on what was going on and the parts of the things that we did in our body were replications of the information we were getting about that society from these graphic depictions that we were looking at on the tomb drawings. We happened to have the Metropolitan Museum [of Art] with all those wonderful tombs practically next door, so it wasn't, you know, it wasn't a fantasy. An experience was not too far. I mean, we would certainly go over to the Met quite regularly and walk through the tombs and look at the sarcophagi and look at Nefertiti and how beautiful she was. So I don't know if that answers the question, but it was literally experience-- It was put into your body and this didn't mean dancing, yet. And I think this is important, Richard, in terms of my later thing, because my concern about dance is not about dancing in sort of a very highly codified thing. It's something that goes beyond that to this. I'm sure you've looked at some of this stuff; the integration of the mind and the body. And if you can really have the feel of something in your body, it's just that much more powerful as a concept as a whole. And this again, I mean, very much was a part of what my father was teaching me, probably not verbally, but he was absolutely clear in his own process that an idea, no matter how large and how comprehensive-- Until he could give himself, what he called, "a special case experience of the principles of that idea," which he could literally feel and go through, and pull out and push out and activate in his body, he wasn't going to get the larger idea really clear. And that, once he was in the process of examining it from his experience and he was in the world of that experience, then he would indeed

have insights into the processes that were, what one might call, original because he was there. He was there with the direct experience itself and taking himself through that again and when he'd hit a point when he'd said that, "This thing just can't go through that because there's no way it can experientially." Then he'd say, theoretically, "That's not right," which led him, as you know, from his throwing out of all of the two-dimensional ideas of geometry to say, "Until you really understand from a three-dimensional point of view"--and everything that is talked about from a two-dimensional point of view is ridiculous when you get to the three-dimensional--"There isn't a reality to it."

SMITH: You mentioned that you were very good at math and of course, at least on a certain level, much of his work involves the manipulation of cubic geometry. Is this something that--?

SNYDER: Not cubes, triangles. [Laughter]

SMITH: [laughter] Three-dimensional geometry. Was this something that you were doing at home that had a sort of working with models and space and conceptualizing space?

SNYDER: Well, he was doing it a lot. And again, I did at one point, actually, work with him on some early sort of mathematic things, which, you know, were really very simple, but that was the only time I really directly assisted him on something. I think, I'm not sure I can even-- My experience, which is a general experience, is again, that he was doing it this way for his purposes and I would venture to say that, Richard, I saw--even though I couldn't have possibly been able to say it--that something about my interest in bodies moving through space had some kind of relationship to that. In other words, I did have the freedom to say, "Uh-huh (affirmative), so you're doing this,

Daddy. And I'm doing that and there is a relationship." And this again was where he was very wonderful as a father. And here equally, my mother, in another way, with my grandfather being an artist. Yeah, of course, of course, there's a connection. Yeah, that's the way you do it and that's the way I do it and we're both doing it together, kind of. You know, we're coming from the same place somewhere along the way. Now, none of this would have been verbalized in quite that way, but that was the way it felt.

SMITH: I mean, there's always the danger of someone coming in and looking at your education as being sort of a test tube kind of process, where ideas had been tested out on you.

SNYDER: If Dalton hadn't been there and Dalton hadn't been in and of itself, I mean-- I felt when I was in school that that was my environment. I was myself in another way than my mother's and father's daughter when I was at school and that the school supported it and me very, very powerfully that way. It was very good. I think I would have been a, say-- Another silly non sequitur thing, but, you know, a lot of people say, "How did you ever grow up at all when you're a daughter of somebody like Bucky Fuller?" And it is a good question. If I had been exposed to him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, I would have, despite all the positiveness, I would have shriveled. So I feel very much the dynamic between what I was feeling, learning of myself and my own way of doing things in Dalton and my home experience.

SMITH: Did you get to know Helen Parkhurst at all or--?

SNYDER: Oh, yeah. She was a great-- Let me see, she, unfortunately, was forced out of the school. I mean it was one of those points of tension. Probably when I was about in the sixth grade, the school merged with Todhunter School and she was not around anymore. And she was very much, earlier on, was very much idolized and so on.

[whispers] When you went to Ms. Parkhurst's office, you know, you were going to see the god or something like that. You didn't sit down, or I didn't sit down and have a--

Coming back to my mother's influence on me; I always did have a respect for adults. The adult-child relationship was one I felt pretty comfortable with. In the presence of an adult, you know, I was to listen and learn, not to speak out and be aggressive and so forth, which was quite different from a number of my other classmates, who came from a much more an aggressive kind of background. So they wouldn't be afraid to argue with one of their teachers. That wasn't my way of doing things.

SMITH: You've mentioned the name John Dewey in relationship to the school. To what degree in your childhood was John Dewey a name that you knew?

SNYDER: I don't think I was really aware of Dewey as Dewey until I got to Bennington. And actually, there's one of the houses at Bennington called Dewey. And then of course I came to realize how much of-- If you'd asked me as I was leaving Dalton anything about John Dewey, I wouldn't have known nor would that have been voiced there really.

SMITH: Did he and your father have any connection?

SNYDER: I don't think so. I don't think so. A friend of my father's who I had the pleasure of meeting, only on one occasion, but was a name that you may know through Alma [Hawkins] as well, was Harold Rugg. And Rugg was one of Dewey's, I guess, most significant students. But it would be interesting-- Certainly, Daddy was aware of

Dewey, but I don't believe there was any personal contact.

SMITH: Well, you said moving through space. And of course, at the age of twelve, you started studying ballet and figure skating. This was your idea, your choice?



SNYDER: Right. Well, figure skating wasn't entirely. Daddy had a friend named Irving Brokaw and Irving Brokaw was actually really one of the pioneers of bringing figure skating to the United States. I guess, as the story goes, [laughter] Daddy was talking to Irving Brokaw at, actually, one of the New York clubs that Daddy belonged to. This was one of those New England kind of traits. He liked the clubs of New York. He told him that I was interested in dance and studying ballet and so forth. And Brokaw said, "Why don't you have her study figure skating?" with a very interesting stipulation. He said, "But you have to, even before she's ever stepped on the ice, go out and have hand-made boots made for her so there's never any question of her feeling as though she's rolling over in the ankles and doesn't have her foot firmly under her." And having hand-made boots, Stanzione boots, which were the great boots for years and years, was quite an expensive risk. And Daddy decided to do that. And it was true, the first time I stepped on the ice, there wasn't any question of-- [tape recorder off]

SMITH: Were you a competitive figure skater?

SNYDER: No, not really. I loved ice dancing later on. But I never really-- I wasn't a competitor because--and this is interesting--I really didn't have any patience with those darn figures, which were the larger part of competitive ice skating at that point. You know, whatever it was, two-thirds of your points were doing those exact little figures and then you can do your free skating. Now, everything is totally turned around. And I don't think-- This was where Mummy's and Daddy's attitude about what I was doing was very interesting. They were very supportive, but I think they never wanted it to be more than I wanted it to be, in a sense. Well, I don't know. I was going to say maybe competition would not have been philosophically supported by Daddy, but that's not

quite true. He played football and so forth and loved it, so he really enjoyed the notion of competitive sports, so I don't think that would have-- So we would go every Saturday morning to the New York Figure Skating Club--the Junior Figure Skating Club--and I would take lessons and I loved the feeling of moving on ice. The sense of moving through space is magnificent still. So, and then later, I mean I would go a couple of other--

Now a little clause about this-- This comes back to my mother and who she was and would be different from a lot of my schoolmates. She wasn't about to let me get on the bus by myself on Saturday morning. So, you know, there was a little bit of limitation for me to go to ballet classes five times a week, which would have meant her going to ballet classes with me five times a week. That was a little more than, I guess, she was interested in doing and so forth. But it just seemed too much. So, there were some of those dynamics of limitations. Anyway-- And school--as rich and as varied as school was--always remained the central thing, there was never any question of my beginning a professional life or whatever.

SMITH: Even in your own mind, you were--

SNYDER: Even in my own mind, I was quite satisfied. Certainly when I got to be twelve or thirteen I was going down to the School of American Ballet to do classes by myself. But I wouldn't have-- You know, it wasn't a notion of giving up school in order to be there.

SMITH: So you studied ballet at--?

SNYDER: Largely at the School of American Ballet and again, I think probably luck had it that this occurred because Lincoln Kirstein had been one of my father's early sponsors when he was editor or leader of the Society of Contemporary Art at Harvard

[University]--when he was just getting out of Harvard himself--and asked Daddy to speak just after he'd done his first Dymaxion house, probably in 1930 or something or other. And Eddy Warburg, who was very much involved with the founding of that school as well-- As was very much sort of in later years, I perhaps cringed a little bit about this, but when Daddy saw that I had an interest, you know, he would sort of go, "Well, my daughter's going to be the greatest ballet dancer in the world. Where should she go to get the best training in the world?" And people would sometimes give him an answer. Anyway, I mean so, you know, if I wanted to do something, he wanted me to do it in the best way possible. No compromises there.

SMITH: Before we go on to the ballet and dance training, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about Madeira School. How was that different from Dalton or was it or was it an important ingredient in your life?

SNYDER: It was in, a sense, in a very different way. I mean, Dalton, was very much in the forefront of educational philosophy. Madeira was very much in the forefront with a very classical educational model. I mean, there was-- No, it wasn't. I was going to say it was one that would have fallen under the typical finishing school and it didn't. Ms. Lucy Madeira, who was still alive and still actively lending leadership to the school when I was there, was a true educator. She was an early woman who had really taken leadership in education. And there was a lot then that was sort of in the much more rote and classical thing. I mean we had not done much memorization of poetry where we were already thinking that we were reading [T. S.] Eliot at Dalton. And I'd get to Madeira and no, you know, we're going to sit and memorize the sonnets of Shakespeare. That's the way we're going to learn--approach--this. And there wasn't any attempt at sort of the integration. There was English, and there was math, and there was

physics, and they did have some dance. They actually had a very enlightened program in dance, but it was the gym class in the late afternoon. They happened to have a woman who had studied with [Rudolf von] Laban and taught us some Labanotation at that point in time, which was probably twenty years ahead of anything else. So, again, one of those curious coincidences which my father would say were totally not coincidences at all. But anyway, and I enjoyed Madeira too.

There was another kind of a challenge to it, now a very interesting thing and this is something that doesn't really appear, even in what you've read, but is probably important for the record. It was at Madeira that I discovered that I'm quite dyslexic. I had been able-- Because there were so many other avenues for me to deal with the acquisition and with the presentation of knowledge in the Dalton structure, just sitting down and reading and particularly writing and spelling-- I mean, yeah, they were problems, but nobody ever said they were real problems. I also didn't get-- Dalton was, at that point, a place where you didn't get any grades at all, so, you know, you'd have a conference with a-- I was such a sweet girl, so nice in every way that they forgot to sort of say that her spelling is absolutely atrocious and this and that and the other thing. So again, I didn't really-- I knew that I didn't love to sit down and read and certainly didn't write with as much fluency as some of my friends. But again, the Dalton thing had sort of-- My best friend, who was Gilbert Seldes' daughter, now a fairly a well-known actress herself, Marian Seldes-- Marian was terribly skilled in writing.

But she was horrible in mathematics. So I would tutor Marian in mathematics because I could just do that and, you know, I don't know that she really tutored me in writing because maybe I wasn't even-- But anyway, I felt, you know, she's very good in that

and I'm good at this, so that's the way it works. I don't have to be-- We'll both survive somehow. Anyway, I mean, with it being much more traditional oriented program at Madeira, they began to say, "Look, Allegra has some problems in areas." Again it was off-set by the fact that, you know, I was doing well in physics and da-ba-da-da-ba-da-ba. And they could see, you know, that I was-- So they actually did tests on me--and dyslexia, at that point, was called left-eyedness--and discovered that I was very left-eyedness and did reassure me that my intellectual abilities were fairly significant actually. And so it was an interesting thing to come at that point because it did-- Since then, I've been very aware that I have found areas where the problem of writing on a day to day-- Found ways-- That's why the computer for me, is a-- I mean, getting things down on paper I really enjoy and particularly the more I have the freedom to do it. And when I do my little spell-check and it says did you realize you know-- Mostly it was actually these inversion things which, more than anything else--

But that can get very messy. And there is a very, you know-- Some day maybe, after I'm through with some of-- I would actually like to subject myself to some study because the gap between the visual and, I'm not sure whether it's the auditory or, I mean-- My dyslexia actually comes out worst of all if you give me a telephone number or something like that. So it's not to do with the words themselves or something or other, but I have to-- Until I can actually see for myself--and this is interesting because it's about experience--transform that sound into something that's visual, I can't get any hold on it at all. So until I can actually, when you say to me, "Your number is 651-3992," I have to really see 651-3992 before I can-- Otherwise it's just sort a blah. So anyway, Madeira came at the right time for me. I think I would have been thrown off or frightened before, but I came to realize that there was a real problem and that I

would have to recognize it, one; work on it two; maybe even-- I don't know. But--

SMITH: Did you have a conflict about whether you should go to college or not? I ask that probably because you didn't go to Bennington until '47.

SNYDER: No, because you see, again, there were these two-- My own interest is saying, "Okay, now, this is a time, I've been sort of half doing dance. And you can't do half dance for a very much longer in your adult life. So am I going to really give myself a hundred percent now that I'm through with school to dance, or the MIT thing?" And again the MIT thing was successful. I imagine that you didn't even have to do any written essay, if you had a hundred and fifty percent on trigonometry and spherical geometry, they didn't care whether you could write or not probably. Again, I have no notion of that at all, Richard, really. Except for my father asking me to do that, it wasn't really in my thinking at all, I was really just breathlessly waiting to really feel that the time for me to commit myself a hundred percent to dance was there.

SMITH: The next thing, this is again a non-dance thing, but the degree to which you were aware of national and international issues as you were growing up. The degree to which they were important to you, they were discussed in the family or in the school. The question of the depression, of course, and the rise of fascism and the threat of war and, of course, the war. You went to high school throughout the war.

SNYDER: Yeah. Well, those were all very-- I mean, I remember at Dalton, it must have in sixth grade, we were all Willkieites. One world, [Wendell] Willkie. So we were all sort of-- We'd have town meetings on this, on that. On the other hand, really, throughout most of--into adult life, it was [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt there. I remember very clearly the day that he died at Madeira. And we were all-- It did sort of seem as though, perhaps the United States and even the world was going to come to an

end with his death. Yeah, I remember very-- I do actually remember, Richard, before we were in the war ourselves, in sort of the early days of-- We'd have air raid rehearsals at Dalton and we were, of course, into all of the rationing things and saving string and aluminum and this and that and the other thing. And this sort of first impression was, oh, gee this is kind of fun and interesting. This wouldn't be-- You know, eight or nine years old and then, of course, growing up through then really my whole teen-age years were with the war.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 22, 1993

SNYDER: Taking up the one thought, the actress that my grandfather had done a number of sets for was Maude Adams.

SMITH: Oh, okay. Very big name indeed.

SNYDER: Yeah. It gives you a sense of his--

SMITH: You had also mentioned that Christopher Morley had been an important influence that you thought you should have mentioned on the tape.

SNYDER: Well, I mean, that's a whole thing, in and of itself. What I would like to give you, I have an unpublished manuscript by Louise Morley Cochrane "A Sense of Significant" on them, I don't know if you'd like it, but it's-- I don't know when Chris first met my father [R. Buckminster Fuller], but it must have been just after we had moved back and were living in New York. They just became very deep friends and Chris really encouraged my father to think of himself as having the ability to write. He was just in the beginning of his working on his first book which was Nine Chains to the Moon. And in fact, when it got finished, Chris was able to find him a publisher, which was [J.B.] Lippincott [Company], I think.

We were talking about this in terms of my father's relationship to the academic community, where I was saying that he didn't really feel himself comfortably a part of that. Now, Chris was involved with that, not really himself, but his father and his brother were both presidents of Haverford College, I guess, for years and years and years and it was bringing Daddy into the writing community of New York. One of the things they used to meet for was what was called the Three Hours for Lunch Club, at



Prusella's Restaurant in New York. And this included both William [Rose] Benét and Stephen [Vincent] Benét and their wives, who were both writers--Elinor Wylie--and a number of others who were there because Chris was, well, among many things, had a column in the Saturday Review of Literature, but he was very active in the field and a very popular writer at that point in time. So it was just a real transformation in my father's thinking about his abilities in that area.

SMITH: Did you share any of that ambivalence towards academia in terms of your own development?

SNYDER: Not really because I think that, again, even as we've discussed and we'll talk more, I felt that my two major--well, I'd even say--my three major educational experiences: certainly Dalton [School], certainly Bennington [College], and really Madeira School as well because, even though that was a very traditional school, Ms. Lucy Madeira was a very inspired leader and perhaps there's one little story that--  
[tape recorder off]

There was a wonderful story for me about Ms. Madeira. There was sort of a traditional last breakfast, I guess, at her house for the graduating seniors. First of all I'd only been associated with this school for two years and the recognition that I was having trouble with writing and people who went to that school-- Most of them were of diplomatic families and so forth, so even though I enjoyed some of them enormously, I didn't feel quite a part of that world and didn't feel quite the confidence I had felt at Dalton. This last breakfast, Ms. Madeira was officiating. She was probably in her late seventies at that point, just a wonderfully vibrant woman. Without looking at me at all, she sort of looked around and she said, "You know, if I had another life to live, I would be a dancer." And I knew that she was speaking to me and giving me

encouragement to do something, which again, for the rest of those girls, who were destined to go on to particularly Smith [College] and Radcliffe [College] and then to their own lives-- But it showed the kind of sensitive human being she was. I think she wanted to give me a message and probably even knew that if she just called me into her office and said, "You know, I think your interest is wonderful and I want you encourage you," that that would probably have been-- I wouldn't have been as comfortable about it as I was with this particular-- Anyway, to come back to your earlier question, now, I didn't make a distinction between the experience of school and the academic world. I mean in particular and we'll talk a lot more about Bennington as we go along. No, I didn't have a fear of it because I didn't-- Again, in some ways, it was naive. When I arrived at UCLA, almost ten years, maybe even fifteen years after having graduated from Bennington, I thought probably one could set up a kind of a network at UCLA, which was just going to be a larger Bennington, but that the freedom to move from areas of thought and discipline, which was so prevalent at Bennington would be there. Particularly as I've ventured into doing some studies in anthropology, I discovered that that meant that I was able to do some classes, but it wasn't with really a welcoming hand in saying, "Oh, yes of course, there's some kind of connection between dance and anthropology," at all." It was quite the opposite. I began to learn about some of the limitations of the academic world.

SMITH: Well, in '43, you began studying at the School of American Ballet.

Actually, it must have been before '43.

SNYDER: I wrote down '43 in that little introductory chapter but I was checking back and I think it was at least '41 and it may have even been '39.

SMITH: But in '45, after you graduate from high school, you go there basically full-time.

SNYDER: Right. And I had come two summers before, which we talked about, to work intensively all summer long. So that would have been-- Well, I guess it actually was the summer of '45, after I had finished, graduated in '44. But I had been going there, at least, four and probably five years.

SMITH: As I understand it, at that time, in New York there was a sharp cleavage between ballet and modern. The dancers hardly even spoke to each other. So you had chosen which side of that cleavage?

SNYDER: Well, I didn't think of it as actually-- I loved ballet and there were wonderful teachers at the School of American Ballet. One, particularly, was Muriel Stuart, who actually was a Pavlova dancer, but whose approach was very much-- Well, she had a freedom about her movement, which--there was quite a lot written about Muriel Stuart--was a very wonderful bridge really between ballet and modern.

Certainly, I believe that [Martha] Graham, early on, had some encounters with Muriel Stuart and was very much inspired and taken with her. But a very interesting thing happened and I'm anxious to double check the dates on this, I would have to think that it was probably '45, maybe the fall of '45. Lincoln Kirstein had just come back from the war at that point and become very much involved again in the philosophy and the management of the school because while the school was inspired and certainly the core of its energy came from [George] Balanchine, Kirstein was really the person who was putting it all together. And Kirstein was wonderfully interested-- I mean, he had a lot of questions about the field of modern dance, but he certainly, very much included it in what was dance. In fact, one of the things which had been very inspiring for me, since almost at the time that I entered the school, was a publication that he initiated called Dance Index. And Dance Index was a monthly monograph but it's concern was

everything from early romantic ballet to Graham to dance in film to-- And some very good ethnographic graphic studies along the way. And since, again, Kirstein was very much involved with that, in a sense, while Kirstein was not a man you knew easily--it would be inappropriate really even to call him a mentor--there was something about his concerns and interests and particularly because it was my father's connection to Lincoln, that had really brought me to the School of American Ballet. You know, I was very much influenced by his way of looking at dance.

In '45, he decided to do an experiment at the school. A small group of us, including Tanaquil le Clercq, a wonderful black dancer whose name is Betty Nichols, a woman who later married Ricky Somos. Anyway, a very small group of us, I guess because only a very small group of us were interested or willing to put ourselves through this, I mean I didn't think of it-- Anyway, we had special classes, I guess, in the afternoon, after our basic morning technique class, and one of them was with Dorothy Bird, who was also with the Graham company. So his attempt at that point was to introduce-- Well one of the things he was introducing; we also had a very exciting class in Dalcroze [Eurhythmics] from John Colman who was very much a part of the key to the musical group that was connected to the school. A make-up class with a man, who I think I identify in the paper--

SMITH: Michael Arshansky.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. And Balanchine himself was doing a character class with us. It was wonderful. And so again, it didn't seem to me that I was being told--those that I really care about were saying there was any real cleavage between ballet and modern, even though it was absolutely true that none of the students would move back and forth between classes in ballet and modern, as they, of course, do very much today.

SMITH: But you were then or you--

SNYDER: No, I actually wasn't taking modern classes at that point.

SMITH: Oh, okay. Just the Dorothy Bird class.

SNYDER: That's right. Just the Dorothy Bird class. But also--I think it probably was in '45--there was another level of appetite that I had about dance, which I wasn't feeling was being very satisfied at this school. And I went over initially and volunteered myself to work at what was then, the Dance and Theater Archives at the Museum of Modern Art, which-- And the dance material was largely Lincoln's own collection, which he had just sort of really almost dumped on them. It was not a cataloged collection, really, at all. And the man who was heading up that collection was a man named George Amberg and he was very, very supportive of me. And I loved working there and I eventually sort of worked into a partially paying job. You know, it was still an afterhours kind of-- I mean, after I'd finished my technique classes at the School of American Ballet. But George was also very interested and open-minded about things. He was particularly interested in the relationship of dance and film and in fact, I think it was in '45 that he'd written a monograph for Dance Index on the early filming of dance. And one of the great pioneers in film all together in independent creative filmmaking was Maya Deren and Deren was just beginning to work at that point and Amberg was very excited about her work. So I went to quite a few lectures that he was doing, where he was talking about Deren and showing her films and he would send me off to things that he thought would be interesting for me and so forth. So, as I say, nothing in really my, in that whole thing was really limiting me.

There wasn't as much going on in modern dance right at that moment. Again, it would be interesting to actually check the chronology on Martha, but after the sort of early or late twenties into early thirties, there was a period when it was very hard for her to get a performance in New York. And yet she really-- I didn't get involved with the New Dance Group and the wonderful dance and theater works projects [Work Projects Administration]. Perhaps I was just a fraction too young to really-- Because that was really the late thirties that they were blossoming in New York. But then that, of course, was one of the holding and nurturing points for modern dance.

SMITH: Right, because then it was dissolved as of '41 basically.

SNYDER: Probably. Sounds like you know better than I do. Anyway, so there wasn't a lot for me to go to in the way of modern dance. I do think that--

SMITH: Was [Doris] Humphrey--[Charles] Weidman performing at that time? Were you aware of their work?

SNYDER: I was aware of their work. I think performances were largely located at the Ninety-second Street YMHA at that point. Of course Doris was very, very influential in developing that program and those performances. But until I actually got to Bennington, I don't really remember going to a performance at the Y.

SMITH: I wanted to get into Amberg and some of those questions. But first I'd like to ask you about the kind of movement language you were learning at the School of American Ballet. How you would characterize it?

SNYDER: Well, it was certainly-- Its base was strict Russian ballet, which is more rigid and formal than even the Cecchetti school, which was certainly around and available at that point. I mean, speaking of sort of dynamic-- I mean, there was even a rather strong dichotomy between Russian and Cecchetti. Actually, I think that

probably exists more than the dichotomy between ballet and modern to this day. The teachers that I had most, who I guess were the major teachers at the school, were Anatol Oboukhoff and Pierre Vladimirov and Muriel Stuart. And Oboukhoff was a very strict disciplinarian, very much of the Imperial Russian Ballet training. And I enjoyed the strictness of the class. I mean, one of the things I think that is exciting about ballet is that it's very clear and codified, in a sense, and I haven't really ever said this before, but it's interesting because it's sort of almost mathematically precise and like the mathematics--

I was just beginning to understand and I'd gotten a little bit excited about--I realized that even mathematics you could go above and beyond. You never forsook the roots, but you could elaborate or you could be creative with them. And certainly, all of those teachers were looking for something more in their students than just following the-- Doing their plies well and their extensions well. They were looking for a quality and encouraged it in various kinds of ways. I was particularly good at air--at jumps--and I loved that. I loved the end of the class, when we began to go across the floor, in turns and jumps. Interestingly enough, I was quite left-legged, as well as my left-eyedness. So I could turn to the left, which was almost impossible for everybody else to do and made me particularly stand-out in class for doing that silly thing. But nevertheless, it was fun. My own body structure was really not the Balanchine body. This part of my leg is too short.

SMITH: Your lower part?

SNYDER: Yeah. And I'm really too full here and that was true--

SMITH: In your thighs.

SNYDER: They're jumping thighs. I'm built much more like an oriental dancer, as oriental dancers tend to be very strong jumpers. Anyway, so you know, I-- My guess was that I didn't quite fit the picture that was out there. But I was never really told that at all. I was very much encouraged.

SMITH: This is an obvious question, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Was there a sort of external absolute that you were supposed to adapt yourself to to get as close towards?

Or could you work from the interior?

SNYDER: Well, that's what I'm saying, there was something more. Yeah, obviously, the more high extension you had or the, you know, the pointe, the strength when you're en pointe. Those were all things that everybody was striving for, the number of turns, confidence in turning. Everybody was striving for those things in a sense, but there was something more. And that's, I think, why all of those teachers were regarded as important to great teachers in the field of ballet. Many, many of the major dancers, certainly with the New York City Ballet, were trained under them. They were pushing for something which was, which they sort of communicated by "Yah! You're coming close to it." You know, "Come on," not being able to really articulate it, but to encourage one when you're-- And you knew. I always felt, when I'd hit that moment that I was striving for--

SMITH: You knew internally.

SNYDER: Yeah, I knew internally.

SMITH: Was that internal feeling sort of a collision of form and emotion? Or was it more intellectual in its apprehension of "Yes, I did this set of maneuvers properly"?

SNYDER: It was really form and form. That is, it was the external form with the



internalized form. Certainly with Muriel Stuart--and I think this was true with all of them, but I can't really quite hear what she was saying, but I can feel her saying it--it was about getting a flow that everything had a center to it and all of your-- You moved from an inner source and an inner place and your feet weren't doing something separate from your hands. There was a real relationship between. And yeah, you know, there was a level of emotion that came into that. If there was a kind of a sadness in the music that might affect your flow and the liquidity of your movement in one way or another. But that wasn't really in anyway either talked about or stressed. And that was, I think, for each dancer they found what it was that did inspire them. And music did inspire me very much and one of the things--which I'm sure Pia [Gilbert] talked a lot about in her own tape--but they were absolutely adamant about having live music in the studio. And there were some of the accompanists like John Colman, you know. You absolutely did soar with what they were doing and there were others who were much more-- Played their Chopin, played it very well, but it didn't excite you and that could affect me a great deal in a class. And I think it actually affected the teachers quite a lot too, but-- And none of the accompanists were in any way bad musicians, I mean, that would be absolutely beyond the realm at the School of American Ballet, but--

SMITH: To what degree was artistic interpretation stressed in the school? SNYDER: Well, I think this is what I'm talking about, this other whatever it is, which again, they wouldn't say artistic interpretation but it was something more, which you as a developing artist were yourself responsible for. At a point, they couldn't give that to you, you'd have to find it for yourself.

SMITH: Because there's the question, what's the difference between the well-trained dancer and the Olympian athlete? At what point do you go from purely technique to having something to say?

SNYDER: Right. Right. And that's very subtle because I think some of the great athletes, they do so much more even with maintaining or having to adhere to the skill. There's an overtone in that, so--

SMITH: I mean, you were raised in what we can say, for want of a better term, a sort of, say, the American [John] Dewey method, and of openness and working from the inside out. And here you're in a school with a larger influence and sort of a European system with mentor and pupil. How do those two things work for you emotionally and intellectually?

SNYDER: It felt all right. I think, again--I was saying the other day--perhaps because of my own personal upbringing and my mother and her influence on me. I think what I was trying to say to you about me at Dalton, I wasn't inhibited in many ways, but I was very fairly formal in my presence there when it served me. I had no trouble with this at all, particularly because I didn't feel that any of these people were just as-- They were strict because they had ideals and they felt that by adhering to what they were really understanding, what they were after, you would move towards achieving what they had hoped. So they were very giving as teachers really, even though they were very formal.

SMITH: What about mental training? And the intellectual training? How much of that was there?

SNYDER: Well, that was what frustrated me so about the school because-- Well, again, if you put Lincoln and the Dance Index and sort of the surrounding things. I felt

very strongly there was an intellectual frame or substance to dance, but talking with the other people, most of the other pupils-- Now, this little inner circle--and we really were an inner circle of Tanny [Tanaquil Le Clercq] and Pat [Patricia] McBride, the first Pat McBride. There's still a Pat McBride with the company now, but she's the second one. Pat McBride is now married to Lord somebody in England and is very much involved with the arts there. Well anyway, the girl who then became John Huston's wife. They were all very bright. Tanny's father had been a French literature person I think at Columbia [University]. And so that group, we sort of had, I don't know that I would say we actually engaged in intellectual conversations, but there was another level of interest about discussion. But the average student just-- I mean, there wasn't anything that they were interested in except whether this toe shoe was worked enough or this and that. I just came, very early on, to realize that I really didn't think that I could sustain myself in the field, as I think I wrote then in 1947. Early '47--it may have been '46, '47--the [New York] Ballet Society was developed and that was Lincoln's first step towards what was then to become the New York City Ballet but again, it was interesting because it started out by him sponsoring some very fascinating performances of, again, a very eclectic point of view. One of the first Gagaku performances in New York was sponsored by Ballet Society. Iris Mabrey, who was a fascinating modern dancer out of Chicago, Lincoln sponsored under the Ballet Society. Then the next year, he moved it into, about four or five performances during the year of ballet, and Balanchine began to do new ballets. Four Temperaments was one that he did at that point. While at the same time, trying to encourage some of the people who had come started with them in Ballet Caravan like Lew Christensen and Bill Christensen and Eugene Loring. And a little bit later on, Todd Bolender, who

was not really, sort of emerging-- Well, Todd was actually with Ballet Caravan. But anyway, he was a young choreographer working around with Balanchine. So the first year of

Ballet Society was really--I think they did two or maybe there was a Balanchine piece on each one of the performances and then the other two pieces were by these other choreographers who they were attempting to encourage.

I was one of the, I have to say, one of the more lesser members of the company, but nevertheless, I was considered a member of the company. All of those who chose to stay, did stay and go on to New York City Ballet, so I don't think I'm deluding myself to say that if I had so chosen I would have gone on with the company. How long and how successful I would have been is another question all together. But I was at the level which was appropriate-- SMITH: You were in the choir, as it were? SNYDER: Yeah, the chorus, the corps de ballet. And actually, I worked with Todd Bolender in one of his pieces, worked with Balanchine on *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, which he did. I think there was a third piece. And even those performances didn't really-- They were wonderful and they were exciting for sort of major professional performances, but they didn't change my thinking about really moving on. So I think it was the end of that year that I decided to go to Bennington. You said you wanted to talk more about Balanchine, I mean, Amberg. It was really Amberg who I think stimulated my interest in Bennington.

SMITH: Before that, is there anything you'd like to say about Balanchine? Working with him in the Ballet Society, did you develop a relationship with him?

SNYDER: It was fun when he did the character class. He often chose me as his partner for the character class. And he was an extraordinary man. You caught his

inspiration and energy almost anytime you were around him. He was a very, well-- He was both clear, but also very exploratory. It was exciting to watch him work choreographically, not so much with us, who were really still very much evolving students, but for instance, Tanny: the dynamic between him giving her an idea and her sort of exploring it in her own movement vocabulary and then him coming back to mold and form that. He did very much work on the bodies of the dancers, whom he very much selected because of the bodies they had. I mean, he had a body that he was very much seeking to work with. He, every once in a while, would come and do a formal ballet class, which was very exciting for all of us, but it was not a regular enough event to really comment on. I have a feeling we were all so nervous and excited about him doing it that probably we didn't do as well as we might have under the best of circumstances.

SMITH: But ballet continues to be something that you return to, in a sense as you're developing. In '62, you choreograph for the Joffrey [Ballet] and when you leave for Bennington, you're not saying good-bye to ballet.

SNYDER: Absolutely not, no. It's interesting, I mean, for whatever reason--maybe just because it was the vocabulary I really came to know--it's the most natural way for me to move. I came however to also feel that there were tremendous limitations in its stylization as far as what one could really address choreographically, that you had to acknowledge that it was a court form really or a very unrealistic--

The piece I did for Joffrey was very much of a fairy tale kind of a piece. I thought that was appropriate, I think. All of the great [Michel] Fokine ballets: Sleeping Beauty and so forth, are-- Probably the most comfortable dynamic between well, the choreographic dynamic in ballet-- I continue to love good

Balanchine ballets. Usually when I go to New York, if I can possibly can get to a performance of the New York City Ballet, I do. Much there, of course, becomes pure movement at a point where—

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 22, 1993

SNYDER: I was also fascinated by [Jerome] Robbins-- I'd like to say some more about Robbins--for many reasons. But his work was just really coming into-- I think, Balanchine must have brought him into the New York City Ballet just after I went to Bennington. Robbins was definitely struggling with trying to find a form that really did honor and-- You might say there was a fusion of what was going on in ballet and in modern, although I don't know that Robbins would talk about it in quite that way. I first came to be an admirer of Robbins, however, when he came to do research at the Museum of Modern Art, he was just about to-- Billion Dollar Baby was about to appear on Broadway. I guess I was probably at one of the first performances of Fancy Free and so forth. I mean his whole emergence through [American] Ballet Theatre, I was very well aware. But I was so impressed by somebody I'd already come to consider an important choreographer really researching his work in order to produce it. Again, it was a kind of a reinforcement of the sense of the need for fusing the thought and the actual experiential in dance. And I feel very-- Balanchine was a brilliant man. Kirstein wouldn't have supported him if he hadn't been intellectually a very brilliant man. Kirstein has an extraordinarily exciting mind. Graham, as I came to understand her better later and had more opportunities to be sort of be around or near what was a, you know, intellectually very acute human being-- I felt that was a very important part really of developing into a great artist, choreographer.

SMITH: In '48, you studied with Hanya Holm. What led you to that? Did it give you some kind of balance with the ballet training?

SNYDER: That was already at Bennington. And this was one of those happenstances.

Martha Hill, who directed the program at Bennington at that point, suggested-- She thought that I would enjoy Hanya's work, and I did. Interestingly enough, it was more-- I had a few classes from Hanya. More from [Alwin] Nikolais, who was at that point teaching for her, and another young man, whose name I will think of, but I can't think of right at that moment who didn't maintain his major position in dance. But I think why Martha suggested I go to Hanya was that I think she saw that I was--and this seems paradoxical to what my answer about ballet-- But that the strict vocabulary, Graham's vocabulary and method of teaching and moving, was somewhat inhibiting me choreographically. Hanya's approach was much more that you prepared the body and there was a level of then playing with those elements, there was a lot of improvisatory work in any Hanya class. And I think Martha felt that that would be stimulating for me. And it was. I came to realize that the German approach was one that I felt much more comfortable with, although I didn't have the opportunity of pursuing it really a lot more. I didn't study with Hanya other than that one time, but it opened a real door.

SMITH: Did they talk about Mary Wigman at all at that time?

SNYDER: I don't think so. No.

SMITH: Both Holm and Robbins raised the question of show dance because both of them were involved in that to a certain degree, and I was wondering what you felt about show dance at that time?

SNYDER: Well, this was the great era of the beginning of important show dance. In fact, I was almost going to put this in that little introductory chapter, but I decided not to. One of the most frustrating little episodes for me was that a friend of my mother's [Anne Hewlett Fuller] had actually gotten tickets for the opening night of Oklahoma!



and my mother decided to create a little party that I was going to take. I think it was just four tickets, myself and a young man-- I would have been, about sixteen I guess at that point? Maybe fifteen. Anyway, it was really one of the first sets of theater party things, although that was something one did in New York when you were a teenager. And then my mother read that it was based on Eugene O'Neill's--what--something under the lilacs [Desire Under the Elms]. Anyway, she thought that that sounded a little off-color and instead we did go out for the evening and went to something that was the usual variety show, in which there was a lot of slightly off-color-- I mean, that didn't bother me. But the thought that I didn't get to Oklahoma! And I was very much aware of Oklahoma!

Then Robbins did, I guess it was actually before Billion Dollar Baby, he did the thing that came out of Fancy Free: On the Town. And Balanchine had actually done some choreography for Broadway. I Married an Angel I think was his choreography. But Oklahoma!, I mean, I didn't see Oklahoma! It was marvelous because it seemed to me it was a real extension of-- I think I kept feeling and this goes back to-- I mean, I did have the privilege of seeing the first performance of [Anthony] Tudor's great one--gee, I'm getting old and my cold is affecting me--Pillar of Fire. When I saw that I was very excited. That again seemed to be a real attempt to bring ballet into the real world. Now, again, I realize I'm sort of contradicting what I've just been saying a little while ago. I guess deep down I wanted this form of dance that I was so involved with and in love with, to have real significance and meaning and I kept sort of being puzzled about that. I actually felt that when a good show like Oklahoma! came along that it was doing that. It was reaching out into really a broad public. People were loving it, yet it was good dance, it was soundly-- The

excellence of the choreography was there. So that was just another dimension I reached out to and was intrigued by. I don't think I ever thought that I would be directly involved with that, but it was certainly, it didn't in anyway contradict my feeling about what dance was and should be.

SMITH: During this whole thing, you're also working with George Amberg on a part-time basis and discussing these kinds of issues--

SNYDER: Right, right, yeah. And Amberg was one of the first people that I could-- I worked hard and I loved sorting through things and getting the files in order and so forth and so on. But you know, I'd wander over to his desk sometimes with something I thought he'd be interested in looking at or something like that and we'd get into a discussion about things and it was very stimulating, very fruitful. He then asked me actually to do--I guess that sort of wandering over-- He decided to do a ballet in America book [Ballet in America: The Emergence of an American Art]. And I did-- I think he gave me credit for major research on it. It came in part just from trying to get those files in order and discovering all of the other interesting little ballet companies, Catherine Littlefield, and the development of the San Francisco Ballet. Kirstein, obviously, had a great deal about that because [Lew] Christensen had come out of the early years of the Ballet Caravan. Lincoln Kirstein really sponsored them. So these were all sort of things that had been inspired by his quest to see an American ballet develop.

SMITH: You had mentioned Maya Deren. How did you respond to the Deren's films?

SNYDER: I was fascinated by them. And I guess, again, I felt that she was getting into a concept of choreography that also made more sense to me, that it was-- Ritual in Transfigured Time I think has probably always been my favorite of all of her work.

And I don't know if you've looked at that recently, but it evolves from a sort of--it seems like a cocktail party. For instance, one of things she does is to repeat the theme of people coming and saying hello and going out. And I mean it kind of becomes fugal kind of a theme in there. This was by recopying sections of the film and repeating them again and I could see that through film, one could really manipulate, choreographically, real movement, which was a very interesting dimension of thinking about choreography.

SMITH: By real movement you mean like pedestrian movement?

SNYDER: Yeah. And it could be that by the filmic repetition, you would begin to establish the rhythm which, of course, would have to be there, as far as I was concerned to begin to move it from pedestrian movement into dance. And she used all of the techniques of film, but very subtly, not as-- Slow-motion, beautifully incorporated at points for a purpose for-- She really understood film and I still feel that when I now teach classes about film and dance, I still usually use articles she has written. I think some of the most exciting--

SMITH: Who else was doing good dance films at that time?

SNYDER: There was a man named Michael Straight, who was just beginning to do some work at that point, who did three pieces: A Moor's Pavane with José [Limón], another piece with José, and a Valerie Bettis piece, I think. I wasn't very happy with his work. His work certainly demonstrated the problems to me because he was really working with an existing piece of choreography yet had to manipulate it enormously. I mean, he had extreme limitations. He was working in a studio that was about half the size of this studio, to begin with. So everything had to be sort of reoriented and

particularly with A Moor's Pavane, which-- That would have been slightly later time wise, but not very much.

A Moor's Pavane, I think, is one of the greatest pieces of choreography and I still do think that. It is because of José's fantastic understanding of the use of space and how then to make it dramatic, how to use the tensions of space to create the tensions of character. And this was all totally destroyed in Straight's work. I mean, I think I understood why it had to happen even at that point. But nevertheless, it certainly did support the concern that was often addressed which was that film really manipulated and took the life out of dance.

A couple of other people went on, yet later, to do a film of [Jean-Léon] Destiné. Two brothers--I can't think of their names right at the moment--went on to do other documentaries and became very well-known. They did this film on Jean-Léon Destiné, and Vanvaloo. There were not more--I mean, a dozen would probably be too much--films that were dance films at that point in time. It was really a very, very new field.

SMITH: You had mentioned in your, I guess, the autobiographical statement, that while you were working with Amberg, you saw, it sounds like raw footage from the Martha Graham troupe?

SNYDER: That was fractionally later. At the end of officially my junior year at Bennington, I had a little bit of trouble with my knee. And again, Martha Hill, who was a very insightful woman said, "You know, I think it would be possible for me to get you into a kind of an apprenticeship with Julien Bryan and the International Film Foundation." And Julien was, at that point, really one of the leading educational documentary filmmakers/ producers, with a very interesting-- I mean, he'd started out

with doing educational films which were largely ethnographic films. But he had a concern, in a sense, about the emerging film artists. So as soon as he began to get money, he began to engage people to work with him who were emerging film artists. His wife [Marion Bryan] had been a member of the very earliest of the Graham companies, that Martha Hill herself had been a part of. And so probably in the early thirties, Julien had asked Martha if he could get a man named Jules M. Bucher to shoot some film. So I guess it was thirty-five millimeter film. Yeah, because the shift from thirty-five to sixteen, which really Deren pioneered, was the thing that sort of made experimentation in film possible. You had to have a company to be doing work with film and you had to be using thirty-five millimeter-- Anyway, Jules, again, I forget his background, but he was a very good cameraman, very sensitive and they shot Martha doing Frontier, Steps in the Street, and one other. But there wasn't really a way of really doing simultaneous sound at that point in time. There was, but, I mean, it wouldn't have worked with Graham. So they'd shot this silently. And Louis Horst was the composer of all of the pieces. And these sat in the vault and they were, I mean, they'd get-- Even when I then looked at them in 1950, I guess that would have been, the latter part of '50 was when I went to work for Julien, they were already priceless documents, in a sense. And Julien brought them out. So I became apprentice and was doing everything. But, since Martha Hill had introduced us it was my understanding that I was there to try to prepare myself to do something about dance films. So somewhere along the way, Julien asked, he said would I like to look at this stuff; bring it out of the vault for me to look at in a big screening room at 1600 Broadway, which was where his office was. It was wonderful. I had no real inspirational notion about what could be done. So it went back in the vault again. Towards the end of the time

Julien tried to see if-- He talked with me about this, but I think I'd already left him and gone back to Bennington, graduated and so forth, because there was a definite time period that I was to be working with him. It turned out to be about a year. He talked to me about getting Louis [Horst] in to do a synch sound at that point in time. And then shortly after that, Louis died. That never got-- Then finally much later, Martha allowed them to be pulled out and she did the reconstruction for Frontier based on that film. And much, much, much later, they used that same source to do the reconstruction of Steps in the Street, which was the great success at the performances in France of the Graham company, the year before she died, I guess. But I don't actually know really what's even at this point, happened to that film.

SMITH: Okay. Let's go on to Bennington and your decision to go there. You decided to go study in the dance program at Bennington.

SNYDER: Oh, yeah. It was very much because Bennington was, at that point, along with-- Well, Sarah Lawrence [College] and Mills [College] were the only three colleges in the United States that granted degrees in dance.

SMITH: [University of] Wisconsin[-Madison] didn't?

SNYDER: Wisconsin's was a degree in physical education with a special emphasis in dance. It was very special and Margaret H. Doubler was there, but from my point of view, it was a very different-- SMITH: We'll get into that, I'm sure.

SNYDER: I certainly know why I didn't choose Mills, I'm not quite so sure, why I didn't even think of Sarah Lawrence, but I didn't. Even though Sarah Lawrence was offering a degree, Bennington, with its Bennington Summer Festival, Bennington was really kind of looked upon as the mecca of modern dance in the United States. And as it had happened, Daddy had also been associated with sort of the early-- I think he'd

come up and lectured at Bennington the first year it was opened. He had some very, very good friends on the faculty there, which I guess then-- Once I began to think about it, he was enthusiastic and enabled me to go there for a good scholarship, I guess. I mean, again, we had no money to pay for real tuition at Bennington at all. But as Bennington has always done, they had a number of people on scholarship there. I was very excited once I got there.

SMITH: I'd like to know if you could describe what the training basis was--both intellectual and physical--of the program structure itself.

SNYDER: Well, it was really a very, very, very small program. Bennington was a very, very small college at that point. I think the total student body was three hundred. But the dance program had, at the time that I came, and since it started up in 1932--I think was the first year--had had no more than one or two graduating seniors each year, which meant there were probably no more than eight to ten official dance majors, at any one time. The faculty, at the point that I was there, was really almost centrally Martha Hill, who had been a member of Graham's early, first company, and was very much a pioneer in the whole dance in education. She had to be--and I have to be frank to say I've never quite known-- I think she also, even while she was really founding the whole Bennington program, was also working at NYU [New York University], founding a lot of their work in dance there. And Bill Bales, who was New Dance Company in New York, Sophie Maslow-- Bales's trio [(Jane) Dudley-Maslow-Bales Trio] was a very active company in, I guess, the late thirties, early forties. But the New Dance School was one of the most eclectic and most, sort of active schools in New York. Ethel Winters from the Graham Company of '47 was up there. I guess she actually-- Ethel was starting her master's degree. I think she was the first student to get

a master's degree in dance at Bennington. But she also then was officially a teaching assistant. She was another Graham person. Bill was really Humphrey-Weidman. So we had Graham and Humphrey-Weidman. I mean those two-- And we had a lot of visiting teachers, although I can't really tell you exactly who, so they weren't that-- I mean, Bill and Martha were really the key people for me. We'd have a technique class every day, but there was a great deal of emphasis on choreography. And we, one of the early classes I remember taking with Martha Hill was called Style and Structure, which was sort of elements of choreography. And we were encouraged right from the first day to start working on choreography, which we'd do. There were a number of students at Bennington who were interested in dance. They weren't dance majors, but interested in dance. So we were able to find people who were in the technique classes who were eager and willing to be in a piece of student choreography. So and we had a little theater, which we could rehearse in very readily. So we each sort of plunged into our choreography. Friday afternoons we would have what was called a workshop all afternoon. And each one of us, who was working on any piece of choreography, no matter what stage, whether it was a fragmentary phrase or a full ten minutes of choreography, would take the opportunity of showing. I think you could probably say, we were expected, but I don't know that it was an absolute requirement you showed every time. This was wonderful because Bill and Martha would then make comments, critique, and everybody else would, all of the students would-- We had some very good musical faculty who also served as our accompanists, who would be involved. It was a wonderful learning experience. You learned what was working and what wasn't. But you also got very quickly a sense of the spectrum of opinion about things; that there wasn't a clear right and a wrong about a choreographic statement. So you learn to



become, you know-- You learn that probably, ultimately, the choreographer was the final decision maker on everything.

What was so rich and wonderful was that in dance as a recognized part of a very small college and an even obviously smaller faculty-- The other classes that we took-- And this is what I felt was so wonderfully stimulating, I mean, having classes with Howard Nemerov and Wallace Fowle and Erich Fromm and major minds in the field. You weren't one of a hundred in a class. You were one of probably ten or fifteen in a class. And discussion about the construction of Shakespeare's sonnets or whatever, again, somehow, I mean, you could easily bring it around to it having a relevance to the choreographer and the choreographic mind and that wasn't an absurd direction for it to take. Or on the other hand, exploring poetic forms in Ben Belitt's class and Gerard Manley Hopkins and so forth. I mean, I could see what I was trying to do in that class had something to say to me, as I went to work on my choreographic problems. So there was just a wonderful kind of dynamic, where none of these ideas really separated themselves, one from the other and all. I could take ideas from any of these classes and try them out in various ways with what I was trying to do.

SMITH: It also sounds like then when your dances are performed; they're not just discussed in terms of technique and what you're trying to say.

SNYDER: Very much so. Absolutely.

SMITH: What kind of anthro classes did you have?

SNYDER: Well, that was very exciting. I had a young anthropology teacher, whose name was Edward T. Hall, who was just, at that point, really formulating his own thinking in the anthropological field. But he went on really to deal with non-verbal communication with proxemics and the [The] Hidden Dimension and the silent world,

[The] Silent Language and so forth are all Ed Hall's work. He hadn't quite arrived at that stage yet, but again, he was very interested and supportive of any thoughts I might have about the relationship between anthropology and dance.

One of my very first pieces of choreography, I guess I did it at the end of my freshman year there, was a piece based on Georgia Sea Island children's songs and games [Li'l Girl, Li'l girl]. As I was attempting to research that, a number of sort of issues and ideas came to the fore which were influential in the directions of my life. One was that I realized that I couldn't really just use these wonderful sounds and rhythms which were indeed that, without a real attention to the context from which they had evolved. So I began to do an ethnographic research to the extent that I could. I also realized how frustrated I was not to be able to see, I mean, what this dance looked like. There were a couple of interesting books on the Georgia Sea Islands. A woman named [Lydia] Parrish had written quite a lot [Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands] and some of the major folklorist, [Alan] Lomax and so forth had gotten into the Georgia Sea Islands. So I could find some material that supported some understanding of that material, but I couldn't see it. So this was when the question of, or new dimension of, the importance of film came into my thinking. I thought, if there was even a little bit of a film record of the Georgia Sea Islanders, wouldn't that have helped in my work. So that gave me an added kind of interest in the what and the why of the relationship of dance to film. But it also really stimulated my sense of really wanting to do a lot more focus on the anthropological research into and study of dance.

And then I began to-- SMITH:

In general terms.

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. And then I began to work with Hall, and as I say, he was supportive of that. So I could see that was a way that I might proceed at a point.

SMITH: What classes did you take from Erich Fromm?

SNYDER: I don't remember now exactly. I have a feeling it was something called Personality and Culture, but I'm not really sure. It was very much from his point of view. And another important one that I felt privileged was--

SMITH: Stanley Kunitz?

SNYDER: Kunitz was there. Yeah, Kunitz was one of my early-- Kunitz left early but, no--

SMITH: Kenneth Burke?

SNYDER: Burke, Burke, yeah.

SMITH: Did you have any contact with Williams [College] at that time? Did you go over there to look at the art collections?

SNYDER: Contact was largely that the Williams boys came up and sought out Bennington girls for dates. And yes, so I was too busy doing my own choreography to do a lot of that, but I did do some socializing and there were some Williams boys and went down-- But no, I didn't really know the richness of the Williams campus. Nor Dartmouth [College]. You know, Dartmouth wasn't that far away either. Also a pretty rich resource but I didn't really get up there.

SMITH: So did you go there with the idea that choreography was what you wanted to do?

SNYDER: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

SMITH: So you'd made, in a sense, a decision to switch from performance to choreography to creation.

SNYDER: Yeah. I think that's what I-- I mean, you know, that was a risk because I didn't really have any real background in choreography in any kind of formal sense, although I had these experiences all along from making up my piece of something on the dinosaurs and the tar pits to the solar systems to-- I mean, something I actually didn't mention, I think, we did have a very nice woman--

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 22, 1993

SNYDER: Okay, we had an interesting [woman]--and this must have been sixth grade, I guess, sixth, seventh, eighth grade at Dalton [School]--who was a Doris Humphrey trained person. And in fact, I discovered later on--I didn't know this when I was at Dalton--but we had some very interesting pieces of--that we used to dance on and it turned out they were Arch Lauterer's. Some of his early constructions that then both Doris and Hanya [Holm] used at-- Another set that they used at Bennington [College]. Unfortunately, the teacher's name, it comes and goes and I keep thinking about it for various reasons then I can't think again. Can't think of it now. But she did a piece of modern choreography and I think we all contributed to it about the color spectrum, which I think Doris may have even done a piece on earlier. I didn't realize the ties at that point. So I've had just a little taste of choreography. Although I'd also at Dalton, one of the things, the sort of the bridges that I made between my ice skating and Dalton: we had what we called the skating club at Dalton, which had nothing to do with ice skating. It really was doing little sort of choreographic routines which we pretended we were doing as ice skating-- I mean it was one of those, you know, the early teen, girl teen kind of activities. But it wasn't, again, in fact, choreography. I would not have thought about it-- I mean, I wouldn't have given that label to it at that point in time. But that again was sort of my playing around with those kinds of things. But at that School of the American Ballet, there was no opportunity for--

SMITH: None whatsoever?

SNYDER: None whatsoever, no.

SMITH: Bella [Lewitzky], in her interview, described that in her-- You know, of course she studied with Lester Horton, who also discouraged people from developing their choreographic talents and her feeling was that the schools or just a person's private studio around their companies, that there really was not much opportunity to develop your ideas at that time--

SNYDER: I think that was probably true because certainly even though I didn't have direct contact, I knew enough people involved with [Martha] Graham to know that that was so with her. That was again really comes back to what I was saying about Hanya and why I think Martha Hill sent me to work with Hanya because she felt that there was a free-- There were the seeds of choreographic exploration in Holm's technique, which wasn't in any of the other techniques.

SMITH: Now in Li'l Girl, Li'l Girl, you've described some of the intellectual underpinnings of this, but I'd like for you to also describe the formal aspects of it. What did it look like? What were the major movement ideas in it?

SNYDER: Well, I tried to be-- I tried really to let movements come out of my response to the sound. It was conceived-- There were ritual themes involved in it. It drew on what I, you know, probably still very naively thought were some issues of slavery. The Li'l Girl, Li'l Girl, that particular song, actually, is about-- Let's see if I can do it now, "Went downtown to see my brown--" Well, anyway, it had suggested something about the mother being sold into slavery for prostitution. There were about six songs and each of them were fairly important kinds of issues, which I felt could be kind of transformed into a rather ritualistic group articulation.

SMITH: How did you go about creating the sensation of ritual or the feeling of ritual? How do you take movements and make it ritual, not simply dance but the kind of--?

SNYDER: Well, I think that I was understanding ritual-- more than I perhaps would think of it now, Richard--as in terms of ritualistic themes of birth and death. And I think I mentioned in that opening autobiographical piece that I was introduced to Sir James Frazer by Stanley Kunitz. He got me to read an abbreviated version of The Golden Bough. But that was a very important bit of-- Very eye-opening for me. And of course then, Frazer talks about a lot of sort of redundant patterns or themes that keep coming up ritualistically, that have symbolic power, undertones and also overtones. So that in a sense, if one did certain movements that the themes of-- And this was one that almost became a cliché in the modern dance world for a period of time, but I didn't realize it was a cliché at that point, and I did do it: you had somebody pass through your legs, it was symbolic of birth. [Helen] Tamiris did that a lot. Anyway, and so, there was a point-- One of the songs was about a birth and emergence and one of the movements then was the passing through the legs, which I thought was a ritualistic-- It was a ritualistic abstraction, I suppose, would be what I would say it was at this point in time. Frazer talks about how imitation of plants and animals were suggested, about growing bigger and taller by people jumping, which again--George Amberg's gift to me as I left him and went up to Bennington was Curt Sachs' World History of Dance, which in later years, you know, I have lots of very negative feelings about. But again, it was the first book on dance coming out of what's now called the sort of Cambridge school of Cambridge School of anthropology books. Some of the German thinking, but it linked a lot with what Frazer was talking about, about redundant themes that symbolized this in what Sachs would call primitive ritual. So I was sort of drawing on those kinds of things. I was looking for what I felt were some of the basic issues and themes that were imbedded in these wonderful songs and how

would I sort of see them presented in these ritual abstractions. At the same time, there was a great deal of responding to the rhythms and the movement.

SMITH: Now, the music you were using, [John A.] Lomax's recordings?

SNYDER: Well, they were Library of Congress recordings, really. Field recordings.

SMITH: I want to get the kind of dynamics of the program straight. Was everyone choreographing and everyone performing in each other's pieces?

SNYDER: Pretty much so. Well, those of us who were dance majors, I'd say, were mostly were expected to do both. And then there was this sort of larger group of students who were not dance majors, but who loved to dance and who would be delighted to be in a piece of choreography, so that you could do a piece of choreography-- I mean I think I had maybe even eight people in that piece of choreography and not all of them were dance majors by a long shot.

SMITH: To the degree that you were dealing with people who might have been physical but perhaps not trained, how did that affect your dance ideas?

SNYDER: Well, these people were all taking technique classes. They had dance background and experience, they weren't totally untrained people. But since I was really using a vocabulary which was pretty much my own, that they weren't a very strong-- Graham dancer was probably an advantage to me rather and a disadvantage.

SMITH: Okay. What were your other students doing their dances about? What kind-- ? Just sort of in general.

SNYDER: Well, I think I mentioned in that biographical thing, one of my first and very exciting experiences was being in what was actually a senior graduation piece, which was a piece that--

SMITH: Where Two Came to Their Father?



SNYDER: Yeah. The Navajo myth. And again, Tish Evans, who was Mabel Dodge Luhan's granddaughter, actually, had--She allowed her movement to be very much influenced by growing up, really, having a great deal of contact with Pueblo ritual.

SMITH: So there was sort of a general interest in ritual and--

SNYDER: Well, I remember, on the other hand, a Bach piece. I remember one that-- I think she graduated the same time that I did; Patrice Birch. She was going on to be a member of the Graham company and recently doing-- She did a couple of big Broadway shows. But Pat did something that was to do with an American theme of miner's wives waiting, and of a mine disaster. Quite a lot of American folk themes because folk music-- Well, Pete Seeger and--what's the group? [The Weavers]--were very popular at that point in time. And so American folk music-- Burl Ives-- So quite a few students would-- And on the other hand, we had a wonderful music faculty with wonderful musicians, so I can't specifically think but I believe there was a piece to Schoenberg and a piece to Hindemith and so forth. So that, you know, it was very varied. And Martha Hill and Bill Bales put no limitations on us. They encouraged us to tackle things that we could really tackle, that we could be responsible for and not get into such depth that we were getting ourselves into trouble.

SMITH: Now, at this time, did you have ambitions as to where you wanted to go?

SNYDER: Well, I hoped to be able to keep on doing the things that I was doing really. I supposed there was a part of me that said I would be professionally involved. But things were very thin and you know, it didn't take me too long to realize that if I wanted to do my own choreography, for instance-- Now this is more probably towards the end of my time at Bennington. In the interim for a couple of years, we had a touring company that, during the winter, non-resident term, went out and performed at

various of the Eastern colleges. That felt very good and if there had been a way to keep on doing that, I certainly would have enjoyed the possibility of that. But I could see that if I really wanted to do my own choreography, I'd have to have my own company and I'd have to take on all of the management responsibilities. For the most part, I saw that others who had come out of the program, who had started to do that, had gotten pretty well snowed under by the managing part and not much opportunity. Most of the students went then to New York, hoping to get into the Graham company or into working with various choreographers. I mean, I did, somewhere along the way, worked with Eleanor King in some performances at the Ninety-second Street YMHA. But I think I felt that the potential-- So really, the last two years at Bennington were, much influenced by the fact that I'd had this opportunity of going and working with Julien Bryan and the sense of the connection with film and dance became more and more important, and in a sense, more possible. One could do a dance film like a [Maya] Deren. I didn't necessarily think that I would do a Deren film, but I could see that she could have the ambition of doing a film and bring it to full fruition in a way that was much more realistic than thinking you'd have a company performing your choreography over a long period of time. So I think my professional commitment was much more directed really to film. But I also then got sort of engaged in all of the various possibilities of film as well. It was very interesting and the possibility of rooting out existing anthropological films and this kind of thing-- And I did particularly become excited about editing film.

SMITH: I think we'll get into that probably the next time. You choreographed three more dances--

SNYDER: Three more sort of major ones, yeah.

SMITH: And each of them seems to be an exploration of ritual and myth as-- Well, ritual and myth. One's in modern dress [The Four-Quartered Heart] and another's in Greek [A Strange Song for Ilium's Sake] but various forms of how we express emotion ritually.

SNYDER: Well, the connection and you know, this-- Although my understanding of ritual has become I think more enriched and refined over the years, what ritual was about seemed to be the appropriate context for dance really. It was dealing with universal themes. Now later on, I would throw away universal themes really, but there was something about it as confronting very broad and important issues in a way that had a meaning to a large number of people. So that interesting, that even Deren doing a very experimental piece herself-- Still her piece is also called Ritual in Transfigured Time. I think ritual--from Jung, from Freud--was something that artists found themselves--myth and rituals--very much concerned about.

SMITH: And symbol? Were you concerned with?

SNYDER: Symbol. Yes, absolutely, symbol. Perhaps symbol being the kind of tangible manifestation in mediation because it was really the symbolic then-- If anything, I found myself looking at the symbol a great deal in what I formulated choreographically.

SMITH: So that movements, images, you tried to make your dances as a series of symbols that had--

SNYDER: Yeah. I hoped they weren't static but they were that. And I would have to say, Richard, and I probably didn't say it very interesting-- I mean, Graham became very influential really, in her work which at that point in time was also really ritual and

symbol and marvelous in the way that was there. Some people perhaps would say that you were hit over the head from time to time with it. But it was marvelous. And I supposed I would have loved to have been a Martha Graham but myself at the same time.

SMITH: Of the dances you did at Bennington, what was your favorite and why?

What made it most successful for you as a statement?

SNYDER: I don't know that I can say-- I was pleased because each one seemed to be sort of a movement forward. And yet, I've felt quite satisfied. Perhaps the one that was based on The Trojan Women was the least successful, from an outsider's point of view. It was most challenging to me and I don't think that I solved all of the problems as well.

SMITH: Now, the way you described that, I got the impression that you actually had voices off-stage reading from the play.

SNYDER: That's right, yeah.

SMITH: It's a very tricky thing to pull off. Were they reading coherent sections from the play?

SNYDER: Yeah.

SMITH: So scenes.

SNYDER: I had them read in a way that I thought I understood that a chorus might read Greek tragedy. So that it wasn't-- I mean, there was a lot of, again, of rhythmic kind of a presentation to it.

SMITH: So you had group reading contrasted perhaps with solo reading then or--?

SNYDER: I remember I struggled a lot with that but it was very exciting. But with Li'l Girl, Li'l Girl I did feel as though I had really found that I could do something

in a way that was effective and exciting and at the same time, which had integrity for me.

I felt that I was really in it and really using the form.

SMITH: With And Christ Receive My Soul, did you study Gaelic dancing? Did you look at that?

SNYDER: No. That was more symbol and theme. I did a lot of research on what that particular Gaelic dirge was. But again, there wasn't really a lot of-- You could say that some of the movements had a kind of a medieval restriction to them, but I don't know exactly.

SMITH: At this time you were not familiar with ceilidh dancing, right?

SNYDER: No. No.

SMITH: Okay, of course, I'm curious with The Four-Quartered Heart, here you used Cole Porter for your soundtrack. Were you reaching out into a show dance vocabulary and to a kind of extroverted vocabulary with that dance?

SNYDER: No, but what I was trying to say there was that if you're trying to find something-- That had very much sounds and music and ideas that had very much influenced a lot of us in the way that, for a smaller indigenous group, another kind of a sound in-- That Cole Porter was it, in a way. Cole Porter was a sound, an idea that permeated my whole youth. And so, as you'd asked earlier about the bridge to-- When I responded that I thought it was wonderful that an Oklahoma! really was able to fuse a very popular form with an art form of great integrity-- No, no, I didn't have any ambitions about bringing this to Broadway or anything like that. It just felt like it was the right thing to do.

SMITH: Okay. Well, I don't have any more questions on the student dances.

Should we stop here? Or is there anything you--?

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. Probably we should.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

MARCH 12, 1993

SMITH: Well, today, continuing with your education, we left off last time with your basically graduating and getting married. I want to continue your involvement with films, but some of the elements of the building blocks of your intellectual formation; some of that included some of the teachers you had taken who were not dance teachers. I wanted to ask you a little more about the nature of those kinds of relationships, such as with Howard Nemerov or Ben Belitt. Erich Fromm, of course, became a nationally famous person.

SNYDER: Well, he was already well recognized, even at that period at Bennington [College]. I had mentioned at one point in talking, I always liked to maintain a rather formal teacher-student relationship. Certainly at Bennington, many students sort of, you know, had a social life with their faculty as well. But I, you know, admired them within the context of the classroom really. Ben Belitt was quite involved with the dance program, he was practically-- He and Martha Hill had a particular friendship. Ben would tend to sit in on more of this sort of, for instance, the very exciting Friday afternoon workshops that we had and I think I mentioned those to you.

SMITH: Yes, you did.

SNYDER: So he might come in and offer his criticisms in that context. But the others, Nemerov, [Wallace] Fowlie never really did that. But they certainly all came to our concerts when we had them.

SMITH: In class, could you--? In your office hours, in the teacher's office hours, could you bring up dance problems and discuss them with them?

SNYDER: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. This was to me what was so supportive really about the learning, teaching environment at Bennington, particularly for the arts and for those that were hoping that they were evolving into artists. There was a tremendous respect for all of the arts and the writers considered dance and music to be of really equal importance and yes, so many instances it was perhaps the root of the discussion. For instance, form. We would move from form as it was demonstrated in a piece of writing or even form as inherent in some of the analytical discussions that [Kenneth] Burke would, for instance, engage in. That would be very easy then to flow into a discussion about the form that one of the dances in the concert had taken, you know, the night before. Any of those kinds of interfaces were really not only possible but encouraged and very probable, very exciting.

SMITH: Did you view form as a manifestation of some kind of inner law or some kind of universal moving through people and their work?

SNYDER: I guess at that point, and this might be true today, it was a search for really what generated form. I certainly didn't think of-- When something seemed to be very formalistic, that fascinated me. I mean, the whole question of myth and ritual really entered into that in a sense where-- And the artist's translation of myth and ritual, then again, was a very much more dominant theme, I think. Whether you were looking at James Joyce or Martha Graham, they were both-- That had been the constant, both stimulation and reexamination of sort of the nature of myth and ritual.

SMITH: Of course, you mentioned in your writings that James Joyce was a factor in your development at that time. Did you read Ulysses in your college classes?

SNYDER: We got into Ulysses a little bit, but that-- It was really the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man that I think of particularly as my first major encounter with Joyce. And in and out a little bit of Finnegan's Wake. Now, and I really mean that in that way. And a lot of discussions about Joyce in various classes.

I think this is relevant to say, Richard; it was interesting because one of my dearest friends from my early time at Dalton [School]-- I think I even mentioned her name before, it's Marian Seldes. Marian Seldes was the daughter of Gilbert Seldes. And Gilbert particularly was very much a part of sort of Paris, New York art world of the twenties, thirties, forties. And they would have in their-- I mean, when I would visit them and Muriel Draper or Carl Van Vechten or these kinds of people were around a great deal. And there was a lot of literary talk there. And I remember actually Marian and her brother [Timothy Seldes] who is about a year and a half older, at one point, professing to get into the reading of Ulysses. And they talked about it quite a lot. And somehow or other I felt as though they were getting into a depth that they really didn't quite have the ability to master at this-- We're talking about teenagers. And it sort of turned me off of Ulysses. I mean, the discussion of Ulysses became a kind of symbol for pretending to be erudite about thinking in the arts and so forth. And so I guess I was sort of turned away from Ulysses as, but not turned away from Joyce, per se.

SMITH: There are some interpretations of Joyce as anti-mythological. SNYDER: Well, yeah. Whatever my thinking about myth at that point was it certainly was very, very tentative and very much in the process. But I have certainly come to very strongly feel that myth is very much a very active processing of the mind and that that



processing can take from all elements and utilize them. So this sort of a sense of the myth, mythic as having formal, almost classical roots; I think that wasn't a part of my thinking even at that point in time. So Joyce, myth or anti-myth, for me would be under the larger heading still of mythic. And I think the anti-myth would be anti-the existing, accepted myths in a sense, rather than the process itself.

SMITH: Another important influence you'd noted was [James] Frazer's The Golden Bough. Was that read in college class?

SNYDER: No, I think I mentioned-- We each of us had sort of individual mentors really. My first year, Stanley Kunitz was my counselor, I think, actually. I think, to be quite honest, he wasn't really very into sort of counseling in the way that some of the other teachers were expected, which was much more personal day-to-day guidance of the student. He liked to give rather formal assignments and so he felt that it would be useful for me to get into The Golden Bough, which indeed it was. It was simply the abridged one volume edition of it that I read. I would read that in preparation for these counseling sessions with him.

SMITH: Did you read [Franz] Boas or [Alfred] Kroeber or [Bronislaw] Malinowski or other anthropological writings?

SNYDER: I think I really was more formally introduced to them a year or so later with my classes with Edward T. Hall, which was, you know, my--formally--first introduction to anthropology. But as I would get into research-- Well, let's go to the first piece of choreography, which very much began to stimulate a lot of various directions which was that Li'l Girl, Li'l Girl, the one that was based on the Georgia Sea Island myths and games-- In doing research on the Georgia Sea Islanders or on attempting to understand what was the dynamic or the form or the overall structure of

what they were dealing with, in particular, in the songs and the games, I would hit, you know, anthropological references, obviously, which then would take me into that material. I don't particularly think of reading Kroeber or Malinowski in that regard, but it certainly did drive me into the reading of the anthropological literature that had relevance to at least this at that point in time. So I was beginning to get into all of that, not with any sophistication at all but--

SMITH: The move into Joseph Campbell; what was the avenue for that? SNYDER: Well, that actually, I guess, most clearly occurred because the materials for this choreography that Tish Evans was doing, When Two Came to Their Father, this Navaho myth-- Joe Campbell and Maude Oakes had done a beautiful portfolio for Bollingen on that myth with sand paintings. It would be interesting to check. I think this was one of the first, sort of-- He did a kind of an overview. Maude Oakes gathered these sand paintings. And so we all had the opportunity of getting into that as we were participating in the choreography and then because of-- I'm sure because of many things, but because of Jean Erdman, Joe's wife who was very much of the dance world at--that time still a major dancer in the Graham company-- Martha Hill knew Campbell well. So he was invited up to Bennington on several occasions to do lectures and so forth. And I think he came up for one of the times when we did this piece that Tish had done. Well, anyway, I know there was a lot of discussion about having him come up at that point.

SMITH: And, of course, Campbell leads onto Carl Jung, and psychoanalysis in general, was perhaps at its crest at that point. Were you studying psychoanalytic theory?

How did you sort of position yourself between the various schools; you know, the Freudian and the Jungian and--?

SNYDER: I think that I was-- Again, a formal sort of source, there were several classes in this area at Bennington. And I can't remember at this point, the name of the teacher of those classes. Interesting. Freud--Freudian theory seemed to be much more dominantly positioned at that point in time. And it was so out there that whether we all understood it that well, it certainly was almost a topic of everyday conversation, and very much wove in and out of probably almost any of the class discussions that we might have too. Now, it's interesting, I really wasn't as clear about Jungian theory or Jungian thinking until later, even though I would certainly say that at this point in time, I might find myself much, much more interested in Jung's thinking. There's something about his archetypal notions and there's a level of the universality of his work with myth that I am very hesitant about.

Coming back to Campbell, I think I checked this out when I was writing that little introduction. I think that The Hero with a Thousand Faces was published during the period of time that I was at Bennington. I certainly began to look at that quite intensely.

SMITH: There's a question of the conflict between a search for universals and the need to respect particulars that exists in anthropology and, I'm not sure if Jung-- Of course, he's not anthropology. And then there's the relationship of that sort of continuum to evolutionary thought. And, of course, you have one of your essays, "Movement and Communication," that you wrote while at Bennington that's self-avowedly evolutionist.

SNYDER: Right. It was. I remember even at the time, however, getting a rather queer, forceful note from my anthropology teacher. I started it out for class with Hall, but finished it up with another-- He was already very much slapping my hand about the evolutionary content of that paper. But there, I was also I think very much affected by some of my father [R. Buckminster Fuller]'s thinking and he is, I wouldn't use the term, evolutionist, but nevertheless, there is very much of a developmental approach that he has taken historically.

SMITH: History is a sequence of problem solving.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. And anyway, I would say this though, and I think I should mention this, that patterns and the patternings have been-- There's a connection between form and patterns and, whether you take an evolutionary approach or not, there are certain patterns that I have seen in sort of an overview of dance that I also attempted to try to get some handle on. I mean, the distinction--which I can't avoid even at this point in time--of areas where you get a much more of a rooted movement form, and those which are much more of an emphasis on the upper part of the body and the movement of the hands and the head and so forth, and those which have to do with movement of the legs and the feet. I still have a confidence that this has something to do with the difference between hunting and agricultural areas. But I think what is really, really out with the evolutionary theory, though actually I'm fascinated because recent reading seems to say it's very much in again as a topic of discussion right now-- I've seen quite a few books and articles about reexamining it, yet again. But it's certainly, not a growth in intelligence and mind, but an expansion of experience which really contributes to change. And it's not worse or better or better or worse but change.

SMITH: You mentioned patterns and that caused me think that-- To what degree were you aware of or when did you become aware of the work of [Vladimir] Propp and [Roman] Jakobson and the linguistic school of folkloristics?

SNYDER: Not until very much later, very much later--I mean, really, UCLA and my involvement, formally, with the folklore program there--that I really got into reading in some depth in that field.

SMITH: The other thing that I wanted to go back to is the tenor of your discussions and your relationship to your father during this period. Were you continuing to have that same kind of close, intellectual and sort of intellectual/emotional contact that you had had as you were growing up?

SNYDER: Yeah, I think so. I mean, obviously, I didn't see him that much. Here I was away at Bennington and then really onto my own life to large extent. And he was beginning to do traveling. He was teaching at Chicago [Institute of Design]. But I did begin to really-- I mean in one sense, I guess as I became more confident of my own thinking and my own ideas through all of that that I was experiencing at Bennington, I came to respect more and become more excited about my father's work. And I felt, you know, a real connection with a lot of it, in a way that wasn't child to parent, but was a respect for another person and their thoughts and directions. So that, you know-- I mean, he'd come and visit at Bennington and I was always very delighted with his willingness which he certainly felt to have not only engaging discussions with me but with my various good friends at Bennington. We had a lot of really-- I would say, that really was the period of most intense sharing of thoughts and ideas, during that period.

SMITH: One of the things-- There's a puzzle for me which is the apparent contradiction and the strong appeal that myth and ritual has to you and yet you're

coming out of an intellectual milieu or situation where there's, at the very least, a suspension of tradition in the sense of learning from experience of not letting any kind of past ideas prevent you from analyzing the givenness of an experience and how you balance those kinds of tensions. And I'm not saying you necessarily experienced as a tension, but--

SNYDER: No, and I don't experience them as a tension at all, again, because of what I was trying to say before, which is that my feeling about the dynamic of the mythic, which is a term I tend to use more than myth and ritual, is a very active, current, present processing of ideas. It's as present as it is past. And the past is all resources, all influences, all experiences. My feeling about the mythic is that it's very experiential. And even though I certainly wouldn't have been able to say that and in that way in the Bennington period, that was nevertheless the way that I felt involved. And again, to really emphasize the fact then that, for instance, the most important model for me as a creative person was Martha Graham. And, you know, I saw her constant, current engagement, where-- This is where it would now sort of jive with Jungian thinking-- though, again, I wouldn't have said it at that point in time--which was the themes raised, the issues confronted in the mythic experience are very essential human concerns. So it's very now. It's very current.

SMITH: I'm beginning to get a better sense of this. Obviously myth and ritual was a very big--I hate to use that phrase--but a very big thing in the late forties and the first two-thirds of the fifties. And I'm trying to get a sense of why a young woman, and you in particular, would find it appealing given your own cluster of interests and it doesn't seem like it was the aesthetic aspect of myth and ritual that was necessarily the most important element. It was not simply an emotional response to the forms. SNYDER:

No, I think in many ways, it had something to do with form and the attempt to understand the process of formation. I think that one of the things that I have tried to do, both as a filmmaker later on and as a choreographer, was to put myself inside the process. But feeling what one would put yourself inside of was not just a random personal-- Again, I wouldn't have been able to say this that clearly at that point, but the sense of sort of the dynamic between a point of view that an artist like Graham took and some of the other choreographers working, where there was the great intensity of, you know, contemplating one's navel kind of thing. Totally personal outpourings. And it's interesting. See, with Joyce for instance--to come back to the excitement of reading his early Portrait of the Young Artist--here is a young man who's on a very personal journey, yet what he's sensing is the larger, formal forms and structures, myths and rituals, that are actually affecting and nurturing and exposing him as an individual. And it's that dynamic, I think. It's the sense of what I mean by myth and ritual. It's the larger structuring, but it is a structure. So this again would lead me, much more, later on, to reject the Freudian, which seemed to be just the personal outpourings and be much more excited about the Jungian, which again, is the individual in relationship to those larger dynamics that are out there and are affecting us all the time.

SMITH: Did you use the mythic as complimentary or contradictory to the scientific mode of thinking?

SNYDER: I would say it was complimentary. It really complimented it. That kind of response comes, again, very much through my experience with my father open to me. And he was neither one or the other or both or whatever, I mean—

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE TWO

MARCH 12, 1993

SMITH: Okay. He was always trying--

SNYDER: He was trying to approach things from a scientific, or a pseudo-scientific--

On the other hand, he was an extraordinarily intuitive person. I felt as though these two things really, fundamentally merged rather than set a dichotomy.

And one sort of a theme or a quest really, over the years, was to understand that better.

A book that I think you probably see me referring to from time to time was that book, Imagination by [Harold] Rugg, which I'm sure you saw coming up in Pia [Gilbert]'s and Alma [Hawkins]'s-- Rugg's real sense that even the greatest of what we would call scientific and scientific minds like Einstein, it was really a fusion of tremendous attention to detail with a marvelous sense of allowing oneself to, at a moment really, risk everything for that intuitive knowing. None of the Bennington people were dealing with truly hard-core science. On the other hand, certainly, Kenneth Burke and Fromm were dealing with very challenging theory and yet, they also were very intuitive people. What I'm, in a very long-winded way, Richard, saying is there wasn't, again, the people that I-- My experience never really made me feel as though there was any cleavage between those two points of view.

SMITH: Okay. I want to just to shift a little bit and look at just sort of where you fit in to some broader, general, cultural, intellectual things and this is just really the sense



what your likes and dislikes were. And of course, you had Fromm as a teacher. Did you like him? Did you like his point of view?

SNYDER: Well, I was very stimulated by it. Again, I think one of the things that was very exciting about Bennington--probably this doesn't have to be restricted to Bennington at all--but certainly my experience of the teachers there was that they weren't out to sell you their ideas at all. They were excited about their own ideas and that and what one would share with them was sort of their excitement. And, as I've tried to stress before, what I got out of some of the discussions and from class, might find itself really most manifested in something I was working through choreographically. And it would be hard even for me to say exactly how those things were connecting. But nevertheless, it was what had occurred in class that had, you know, engendered this next thing. So that it wasn't a matter of buying his theory really. You know, if you ask me point-blank, I was less comfortable with his theory than I was, for instance, some of Kenneth Burke's work, really. There was more attunement with larger things that I was struggling with, that were really helped by my understanding of some of the things that Burke was after.

SMITH: Were you familiar, were you following the work of Eric Erickson and Melanie Klein or Karen Horney?

SNYDER: A little. It's certainly Erickson-- I can't tell you quite when I would have first-- Horney, I think, was probably more evidenced during my Bennington period and I think Erickson I encountered a little bit later. And again, of certain writings of Erickson that I was interested in, I wouldn't say that all or any of those would I've gone into great depth.

SMITH: Did you find the ideas-- Did you find Gestalt to be interesting?

SNYDER: Yeah, I did.

SMITH: Fritz Perls, or--?

SNYDER: Gestalt was also so much out there at that point that it didn't, you know-- That in fact was interesting because when I was doing that fairly recent presentation ["Past, Present and Future"] for the [UCLA Graduate Dance Ethnology Association, Thirteenth Annual] Dance Ethnology Forum and did mention Gestalt, I realized that I was having a great deal of difficulty in actually sort of locating the origin of the concept and the thinking. And again, the dynamic between my father's discussions on entropy and synergy and so forth. And synergy and aspects of Gestalt are very similar. Probably I felt they were similar enough to be fuzzy intellectually about the real differences.

SMITH: That's interesting. I hadn't thought about that before.

SNYDER: And Daddy was very much beginning the notion of synergy, which--very much of an aside--but that particularly fascinated me because I really saw how his concern with that word really almost made it pop into being. I mean, obviously it's a word that's been out there but when he would first use the word, absolutely nobody knew it or knew, you know, what it meant or anything else. It's so out there now as a word, with many very popular uses to it. And he really gave that word and concept a new life. It's very fascinating. Anyway, it was during the Bennington period that he was really beginning to articulate his thoughts on synergy.

SMITH: What about [Abraham] Maslow and the others associated with the concept of self-actualization? Of course, I think Fromm was one of those people as well.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. Out there, but not really, not really that influential.

SMITH: Switching a little bit and still on the same art topic but--

SNYDER: Just to say.

SMITH: Sure.

SNYDER: Because I think--thinking of Maslow and thinking of Alma--being in the world of very creative people, one didn't tend to dissect the process that much. I mean, I was certainly surrounded by very self-actualized human beings. But you didn't talk about it. That's the way you were. And the world of people dissecting--self-actualizers--was another world which I wasn't that interested in. SMITH: In 1950, David Riesman and others published The Lonely Crowd and that's sort of a landmark in the sense of this interest--sort of paranoid interest of, I'd almost say--about conformity. And did that book have a big influence at Bennington when it came out? Did people suddenly seem to be concerned about issues of conformity and bureaucratic rationalities sort of over-dominating American society?

SNYDER: Well, I certainly remember it as a topic of conversation. But no, not because it seemed to be something that had any relevance to the local experience at all.

SMITH: This is a very subjective question. I mean, the answer can only be subjective. But did you feel in 1950 that America was a society that was in the process of closing down the hatches or a society where things were opening up in a process of the barriers were coming down and possibilities were increasing?

SNYDER: I think that I felt they were opening up. But that is a very subjective-- I mean, life was definitely opening up for me. And you know, we've already talked about this really in even earlier experiences. Because the environments that I had been a part of from my very earliest times, were all environments that encouraged the sense of possibility. And you know, I just was very naive and not-- As I said to you before, it really wasn't until, I think, really my involvement with UCLA that some of this much more restrictive sense of what one couldn't do and limitations, that I was even confronted with them.

SMITH: What was your sort of feeling about the McCarthyism and the Cold War and the--? You know, what sort of directions did you think American society was going in in terms of its place in the world?

SNYDER: Well, I certainly, like everybody else in the United States, sat glued to much of the [Joseph R.] McCarthy hearings.

SMITH: Did you view McCarthy as an aberration or as something very typical or perhaps you had a mythic interpretation of--? [Laughter]

SNYDER: I guess that I'd hoped that he was an aberration. Again, it was interesting because the world that I myself was involved in was not a political world. My father, again, was very apolitical and it was certainly very shocking to see such distortions, and that people could be subjected to what they were subjected to because of their own personal way of thinking about things. But I personally didn't know anybody who was directly affected by McCarthyism.

SMITH: Did you know communists as a child growing up or in high school or at Bennington?

SNYDER: Well, very interesting. Actually, one of my dearest friends at Bennington was the granddaughter of Mother Bloor. And Chickie [Helen Chappell] actually was interrogated because of--to do with the [Alger] Hiss inquiry. And the Weavers and Pete Seeger and-- They were out and around. But again, we didn't really-- At Bennington, my sort of first sorting out of any of this, I got quite excited about socialism and Norman Thomas, but you know, in a very naive and schoolgirl-like way. I think in this area, I just have to say I was very naive about all of this. And I'm sure there are a lot of my friends and friends' families who were communists or socialists or this or that or the other. I don't know. I don't know how much older I am than you are, Richard, but the sense that for so long, [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt had been

president-- I mean, this is really my emerging into the political awareness world. There was that what we had was a president named Roosevelt and he seemed to be a fantastic human being and doing a lot that was constructive or addressing a lot of problems and trying to do something about it. And that was the way it was. I didn't really see-- I remember when Roosevelt died and [Harry S] Truman came in, a friend of my father's was absolutely, hysterically upset about Truman. He said, "There were going to be dire consequences". And quite the opposite, of course, occurred. So, you know, you don't really get a major-- Yeah, you have this McCarthyism but as a sort of day-to-day experience politically, I found it very comfortable.

SMITH: Did you worry about nuclear war or the possibility of nuclear war?

SNYDER: Well, again, the first A-bomb-- How old am I already?

SMITH: Eighteen, I think.

SNYDER: Well, that certainly-- Particularly the finish, I think, of World War II, brought into my awareness a number of things that were very different and very shocking. The atomic-bomb was very shocking. Whether I fully understood the consequences of that fact of moment in history at that point-- I mean, so many people could have been killed all with a dropping of one bomb. It was overwhelming. And the pictures. But I don't think I sensed at that point, as certainly came to understand later on, that our world had been turned totally around by that historical event. SMITH: Sounds like in any event your basic impulse has been, and is, to be optimistic, to assume that problems will be solved.

SNYDER: Yeah. It's difficult for the past few years, but--

SMITH: How did you feel about abstract expressionist paintings? Did that appeal to you? Did that excite you? Did it bore you?

SNYDER: Again, it was the process of it. I was much more-- I think [Jackson] Pollock, of all of them, was the most interesting to me because I really could see the process there. I admired very much the sense of process that was very fundamental to all of that. The actual result was not always that satisfying to me. Again, I guess because I did want more form.

SMITH: What about [Mark] Rothko then? Did you like him? Were you familiar his work, or [Robert] Motherwell? Motherwell certainly has a little bit more form and--

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. I wasn't really excited about any of them.

SMITH: Another big cultural wave--

SNYDER: [Franz] Klein. Klein, again, the power of the strength of his images was very exciting to me.

SMITH: Now some choreographers talk about painting, not necessarily contemporary painting, but talk about the graphic arts as being a very important influence upon their thinking. Do the visual arts have that kind of role in your choreographic thought?

SNYDER: No. No. I think filmic arts much more than graphic arts.

SMITH: Another cultural trend of the post-war period was the vogue of the literature of the absurd. Did that appeal to you?

SNYDER: No.

SMITH: What about existentialism and its, you know, various manifestations?

And [Jean-Paul] Sartre-- Everyone was reading Sartre and [Albert] Camus.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. No.

SMITH: Who were your favorite writers?

SNYDER: I tended very early on really, Richard, to do more conceptual reading. I didn't really-- And I'm sorry to say it really, because in this area I feel a great lack. To just sit down and read a writer for his writerly quality is not something that I tend to

do. And I'm not quite sure why really, because some of the-- I sort of got stuck in some of the-- I would prefer to turn to a poet, [T.S.] Eliot was obviously another one, somebody that I came to know very much at Bennington. I would tend to read Eliot, I think, rather than a novelist.

SMITH: But you mentioned filmic. Of course, you were moving into documentary film very early. I had intended to ask you about how, particularly after seeing the Bali film, Gods of Bali, what you knew about the work of John Grierson and the British documentary tradition and what you felt about [Robert] Flaherty and his maybe anthropological films. And then, you know, what somebody like Maya Deren with a more or less more surrealistic approach did to you--

SNYDER: Well, I'd had a lot of exposure to all-- I mean, Grierson and Flaherty-- Bob [my husband- Robert Snyder] actually worked with Flaherty and this came through-- Well, I didn't know the whole process but I looked at almost all of the major British schools and Grierson, Canadian Film Board and Flaherty. And they all excited me. Again, see, I think it's the dynamic there. The form and the content and their interrelationship, I think, is so exciting in film. So, you know, that was all right. And I was fascinated with [Maya] Deren. We've already talked a little bit about Deren.

SMITH: I wonder how you would evaluated-- I mean, of course, she was doing a very different type of film, but--

SNYDER: I admired or I loved the crispness of the mastery of the media, particularly the British documentarians had. And you know, the home movie quality of Deren which was so important to her in a sense, that was a part of her aesthetic that less excited me. But her organization of her films, the editing and the images were fascinating, I thought.

SMITH: I'd like to talk to you a little bit about Gods of Bali and first, I guess, linking it to the British tradition is what you felt about The Song of Ceylon.

SNYDER: Oh, I love Song of Ceylon. Fantastic. You do much too much honor to Gods of Bali really. That was a very interesting story, and the footage, I think is fascinating. Bob had done this wonderful film on Michelangelo, The Titan, which largely, actually was a reediting of already found footage at that point. So he gained a little reputation in the field of being somebody who could put new life and vigor into existing footage that was in and of itself interesting content-wise, but not really well organized or very-- So a fairly commercial distributor got a hold of the footage which was the source of Gods of Bali and it was material shot probably ten years earlier than that largely.

At this point, I didn't really recognize the name, Jaap Kunst. I've since come to know that he was really a major figure in the field of ethnomusicology. And Kunst had evidently worked with a Dutch film team and they'd shot this footage. The distributor came to Bob and said, can you recut this and jazz it up and make it more appealing to an art house audience. But the art house at that point was-- The Laemmes now are practically the only sort of art house. But, you know, it was for popular consumption. But it was a special audience. So that's in fact what we-- And Bob asked me, obviously because of the large amount of dance in it, if I would assist him on it. The narration-- The script is largely from [Miguel] Covarrubias's material that a good friend of ours,

Sid [Sidney] Carroll, got.

Anyway, we sort of, restructured it with particularly that sort of storytelling figure. I now personally regret because this is the-- I mean, what we have now--the original negative and so forth is totally gone--I have a sixteen-millimeter print that is



in fairly bad shape, from which we made that copy, fairly recently actually largely because I wanted to give a copy to some of our students that we'd had from Bali, for them to be able to take it back and to sort of, well, to look at it, to share yet again. Probably even though the Kunst material was not very exciting, I mean, it was not a particularly well done documentary, ethnographic film, I have a feeling that I would have been happier to have seen it stay as it was than our manipulation of the material. Some of the sound, for instance, is actually incorrect.

SMITH: Was that because you didn't know what you were doing?

SNYDER: That's right. Yeah. Largely we didn't know what we were doing.

SMITH: Had you been to Bali at that time?

SNYDER: No, I had not been to Bali at that time. But it was interesting. I mean, it got out for a little bit of time and--

SMITH: You rewrote the script?

SNYDER: Yeah. I had not too much-- The writer was Sidney Carroll and I think actually Bob and I did almost all of the editing ourselves. Anyway, we were a very small team working on it, so--

SMITH: Where were you living at the time?

SNYDER: New York.

SMITH: And did you plunge into studies of Balinese culture? You know, library work and that sort of thing?

SNYDER: Not really. Sid really went to the Covarrubias book and just more or less used that as the base. No, I think I was mostly involved with trying to see whether certain concepts--sounds very heavy--could be more persuasively put forth. I think the storyteller tool was sort of an interesting one, probably. So what we did was

restructured the film and I think made it filmically a good deal better. But we're not, ironically, given the fact that-- This already, clearly, was a direction that I was excited about but at that point in time, on that particular film, it wasn't really the ethnographic content that we were as concerned with. We felt in Covarrubias that we had a source that was, an acceptable source. And we sort of filmically made it work from that point of view.

SMITH: I guess I should ask you when as you completed your college education at Bennington, what were your ambitions? What were your goals? What did you--? What direction did you plan on pursuing?

SNYDER: Well, as I think I already said to you, what I was able to do under the Bennington structure and particularly because I-- Well, I think, they felt that my own dance experience was fairly strong as I came there at least, so I had a whole year really: the spring of my junior year and the fall of my senior year, plus the whole summer in between, working with the International Film Foundation in New York. And my experience there was across the board. It started out a lot with sort of working in the office and one of the privileges was to be able to screen whatever they had of the films that were sitting around there and a lot of times sitting with them as they screened things for clients. And there were a lot of very talented--not a lot--but there were a group of very talented people: I think I mentioned Francis Thompson; Philip Stapp, who is an animator, a very excellent animator; Peter Glushanok went on to do A Dancer's World. They were in that. So I just sort of became totally saturated with film. After they sort of moved me along so that towards the end of the period I was serving as script girl or even got to be assistant director or something or other on one or a couple of their films. And so, I really felt deeply committed to film as one of my areas of interest and concern. I also felt, even though I was very excited about

choreography, that--and I think I am repeating myself again, Richard--but at that point in time, in order to be a young, emerging choreographer in New York, which was really the only major place, you had to have your own company and it felt like the tail would be wagging the dog. I had really already begun to experience an equal, creative excitement particularly with editing film that I found very analogous to the choreographic process. So that I think again, it sort of thrust me towards being interested in working more with film than anything else. But always with dance as my central focus.

I spent a lot of time at that point, probably--well, somewhat because of the experience with Gods of Bali--of thinking what other materials were already out there in existence, hidden. At that point in time, for instance, the travel log was still a fairly regular element in going to the movies. And almost every travel log had a bit of dance in it--might be tossed off, but nevertheless it was there. And I had put in several proposals to various people and even as audaciously as the Ford Foundation saying that I thought that if we really could have a project where there was an effort to ferret out that film and to reorganize it again that it would begin to build an important foundation for the understanding and the study of dance. So that was a theme that-- An interest.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

MARCH 12, 1993

SMITH: Interview with Allegra Snyder, tape five, March 12, 1993.

SNYDER: You know, the field of dance was just, was quite a lot going on in New York. But outside of that, I think that it was true that if you went to the encyclopedia and looked up the arts at that point in time, dance would not have been included. It was so-- I had a clear commitment to doing things that would make, would make dance come more into a more central focus, I think, but not in a producing way, in an understanding way.

SMITH: Were you interested in television?

SNYDER: To the extent that one could be at that point in time. Television was really just beginning, but I wasn't pleased, for instance, because that was-- The 1950s was the

"Omnibus" era and that they were dealing serious--

SMITH: In terms of your doing your productions for television as a primary market--

SNYDER: No. I didn't really think of it as that-- Television seemed to, what, static.

As I say, my greatest creative excitement about film was the editing. And at that point, there wasn't very anything very subtle about the way television was put together, you had to, if you were lucky you had three cameras and the close-up, medium and the long-shot, you know, and that was it.

SMITH: When did you move to Los Angeles? And why did you and your husband [Robert Snyder] come out here?

SNYDER: We moved here in 1956, I think. Well, we had just after we were married, we took a trip around the country. I think sort of obviously because Bob's interest was film, although it was very much in the documentary area and had very little to do with Hollywood, nevertheless, this was an area that was congenial to film makers. And we just-- Something suggested-- Because I guess it seemed so interesting that-- Since I'd gone to Bennington [College] a little bit later, after a period of dancing in New York, so I left Bennington already feeling that I was quite an old, young lady, even though I was only twenty-two or twenty-three. And so we got married and we really intended to have a family almost immediately, you know, at that point in time, if you had a child after you were twenty-four, you probably couldn't even do it, you know. It was a very different attitude about women and having children and at that point. So, and I think we did feel that New York as congenial as it had been for us was not the place to raise children. So we came out and visited here and this felt quite comfortable about it. Bob originally thought we might go to San Francisco rather here. But we landed here, got in a house in Silver Lake area, which we enjoyed very much for, till the children were sort of at school age, then I discovered that I had to do nothing but driving them everywhere. We lived up quite high on one of the hills in Silver Lake. So, but I also I liked-- As soon as I got here, I sort of sought out what was going on in dance and--

SMITH: Maybe we could move that to next time because--

SNYDER: Right, right. Anyway, it felt like a congenial, pioneering, I like the pioneering feeling of Los Angeles.

SMITH: Okay. Well, as I said, next time, we'll get into L.A. and the late fifties, etc.

But the other thing I wanted to ask you about today was your experiences in the Española Valley [New Mexico] and studying, is that, Tewa.

SNYDER: "Tewa." Another of my very dear friends at Bennington. Very romantic story, which I won't go into much detail. One of her non-resident terms, she came out to work on a Navaho school in one of the Navaho reservations. It was the year of terrible, terrible snows and a lot of the schools were isolated and actually she was working in a school for tubercular children. And they got isolated and snow-bound and had to write help on this hay from the barn for somebody to come in and rescue them. The person who came and rescued them was a doctor who had worked in and around all of the Indian reservations and they fell in love as he drove her back to, out of the-- She had to go back to Bennington-- Anyway, he later resigned his headship of the Navaho reservation and moved to the Española Valley area. And then I went to-- And they actually, they had homes in San Juan [New Mexico] and then in Nambe [New Mexico]. He was very much involved with the Tewa Pueblos. And I came out to visit them quite a few times and began to be-- Well, just since it was sort of the first opportunity I really have to exposing myself to directly to Indian culture, I sort of focused in onto the Tewa. Then as it happened, curiously enough, the woman, who I still would call sort of the dean of dance ethnology in the United States, Gertrude Kurath had also done quite a lot of work with the Tewa. And there was quite a lot of material really. Elsie Clews Parsons had done quite a lot of work with all of the Pueblos. So when I sort of wanted to begin to do some serious, transform my sort of general interest into something that was more aligned with really serious study, the Tewa seemed to be a beginning place.

SMITH: That occurred later than, or did you begin the serious study--?

SNYDER: Well, the first encounter, visits with Michael and Barbara in the Española Valley were, I think, actually in our original trip sort of exploratory trip, in the, right after I had gotten out of Bennington and going back there on several occasions after we'd already moved here. But this was in, you know, early and then in mid-fifties.

SMITH: In terms of serious study, were you thinking in terms of making a film on Tewa dance?

SNYDER: Yeah. I really did want to do that. And then I came to realize that there was such strong feeling against doing something like that in general because at that point, the Pueblos had gotten very camera shied or camera angry. Too many people had been in and ripped them off with, you know, with everything, but certainly with film and still. And it just-- And I also-- It was very clear to me that if I really wanted to do something like that then I would have myself to give a considerable number of years of life to rather intensive, being in and around the Pueblos and that didn't really feel as though that was the way I, what I wanted to do. So I gave up on that. But I was excited. In the area dance ethnology, there's still not any films that I think are really, really fully-- I mean, it's interesting that you ask about-- Love to see some ethnographic film still really with the kind of dignity that I consider the British documentarians to have had with their great skills with film making as well. So many of those films are superb films in every sense, in the content and in their real understanding of the media.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE ONE

MARCH 15, 1993

SMITH: Interview with Allegra Fuller Snyder at her office at UCLA, March 15, 1993, tape six. When we left off last time, you and your husband [Robert Snyder] and, I guess, your two children [Alexandra Snyder May and Jaime Snyder] had moved to Los Angeles, and I think a fair question is, as a young mother, how much time did you have for developing your professional interest and how difficult or easy was it for you to make space for yourself to continue what you had already started?

SNYDER: Right. Well, I actually very much chose to put motherhood first for a period of time. I didn't really, I guess we're really just stopping with that. I tried to maintain a kind of alertness really to what was going on in the field of dance. Since I did have the-- My husband is usually worked at home so there was really quite a lot going on in the way of film making in the house, while I wasn't directly involved, there was nevertheless an intellectual engagement with that that was, I think, sufficiently nourishing. But I really, for the, you know-- I sort of decided to put my primary concerns on those things that related to being a mother. Soon after we moved out here, we joined a cooperative nursery school and fairly shortly after that I became, whatever it was, the president of the group for a period of time. So that meant that there was quite a lot of activity but very specific to the nursery school and to the children being in it. It was a-- This was in the Silver Lake area. The parents in the school and the children were always interesting people, so on a day-to-day basis



working with them was also a very satisfying experience. I was very pleased to discover how rich culturally the Silver Lake neighborhood was. I guess, perhaps, I have to say that it, you know, might not feel like an asset now, but at that point, it was a very interesting mixture and as the two children then-- They went to Micheltorena [Elementary]

School initially. And it was very exciting for me to see a class with many Asians, Chicano, Latino, not as many blacks as I perhaps would have-- But definitely, that really a part of it. A couple of American Indian children and it was very-- And there was, I mean, a lot of time then was spent in, as I say-- Proved, identified itself as a potential negative as things went on. There was-- I was taking them, you know, in the car to visit with this friend or that friend and I felt that they were being exposed to a very satisfying and important early experience with a multi-cultural society, at that point in time. And I think they did both become very comfortable with that kind of environment. As I say, as we-- As they really became more and more involved, more and more little people that had a lot of interests and needs, the Silver Lake, the advantage of living on a hill and looking out over the city became so what of a disadvantage. And it was at that point in time that we decided to look elsewhere. We had friends living in Pacific Palisades, who felt it was a very congenial neighborhood and one which was quite different in terms of the ability of the, of a child, of a young person to move around, you know, particularly in the area that we lived. It's very much like a little village in and of itself. And as soon as the children really understand it stood about-- Walking across the street, they could really walk themselves to the library and to the school, to doing things with their friends in the center, good playground and so for. So we did move there in about '60, '61. And it was at that point,

when the children were being on their own more, that I then decided that I could give myself the permission to get back to my own life and it was at that point I decided to come and do graduate work at UCLA.

SMITH: So that was '65, did you say?

SNYDER: Yes, '65 actually that I came here. But I-- It was about a year when I was talking with Alma [Hawkins]. Hey, I guess I initially met Alma because I had been interested in dance therapy as one of-- Perhaps to come back again to your question of last week about what I saw my future being, I think one of the things I really felt was that I'd like to find for myself first and then for others a clearer, obviously not a full answer, but a clearer answer about what really the function of dance was in human society, both in its initially processing and its current position. Also with the question of why dance had been so critical in pre-industrial society, where it was such a change in its placement in particularly in European society. Anyway, so it very-- I think actually, it's interesting, I remember that even with George Amberg we talked a little about Jacob L. Moreno, who used to do psycho-drama and then the issue of the non-verbal and its place in the, in what we call, therapy in our society. So there-- While I didn't ever think I was going to really get involved as a practicing dance therapist, it was an area that I was, I found myself very curious about and drawn to. And-- Well, anyway, it did bring me to initially to UCLA to talk with Alma, because I thought maybe I would do an article for Dance Magazine on dance therapy. And then I got really quite persuaded that UCLA was doing a number of interesting thing in dance and that possibility of sort of really continuing with an education that would allow me to do what I wanted to do in pursuing questions, a number of questions about dance,

dance from a cultural perspective, dance from the therapeutic perspective, dance in relationship to the life process really.

Alma was very much involved with the creative process. I say I had the pleasure of meeting [Harold] Rugg through my father. And Rugg's book on Imagination had come out in '61, '62, '63. Curiously, we also, my husband and I had gotten quite involved with some of the people in extension, particularly Bob [Robert B.] Haas and Rosalind [K.] Loring. And I remember Ross asking me to do something on a panel about Rugg's imagination, no, about the creative artist, I guess, and contemporary society. And I was-- I brought to that discussion, my very recent reading about Rugg and his whole thinking about the "felt-thought" as a very key element in actually in satisfactory working of the mind. So when I met Alma, we had a number of things that were connected and I got more and more intrigued in the notion of coming back here. I had also, through Bennington [College], another of the sort of early activities that I began to engage in when I got out here was seeking out other Bennington alumni with the notion which I then went on to do with a stimulating a alumni organization out here. And that also engage me quite a little bit. And somewhere along the way, I can't quite-- One of the early activities I did for the Bennington alumni was a couple of evenings, talking about dance and showing recent dance films because I had obviously kept on particularly paying attention to whatever was going on with media and dance, you know. I also-- SMITH: By that you mean modern dance or all dance?

SNYDER: All dance.

SMITH: So you were following jazz films and show dance and--?

SNYDER: Whatever I-- Yeah, really, at that point in time a private or individual interest with or access into an interest in, say, Hollywood film was a very frustrating one. I mean, you couldn't-- I couldn't, for the life of me, chose to shell a Fred Astaire in a living room as one can as these days. And it's interesting just as a remark that we can follow through later on. I mean, as Hollywood materials have become available to bring into the home and the classroom through video, I've become, I've done more and more with that as a source for a number of things. So it wasn't that I wasn't interested but the-- I suppose my feeling of contribution, however, was that on the other side, the access to modern dance, particularly, if you weren't in fact in a place where a concert was going on was very, very limited and the whole interchange then of what was going on in the East Coast and the West Coast particularly, was something that I found fascinating and challenging and I felt particularly with the first of the [Martha] Graham films, which were some of the first-- A Dancer's World, which I thought was and I still feel is, an extraordinarily good film, had been done in the early fifties. Say in a minute-- But the first sort of showing on the West Coast of Night Journey, I did in the context of a program. Appalachian Spring, I think, came in the interim. Anyway, so these kinds of things became available and believe it or not at that time, there were many, many people out here who had really no access to Graham. She wasn't touring at all at that point in time, even though her home was Santa Barbara and her roots were here. She had become very much of a New York-- Her sphere of influence was mostly the New York dance field, at that point. So this was, I felt a very exciting tool for beginning to create something of that awareness and interchange.

SMITH: For someone who's used to the intense intellectual and cultural life of New York, how did L.A. strike you when you came here?

SNYDER: Well, I started to say and this might have been off the tape, but I found Los Angeles to be very refreshing because I felt it was very pioneering in its attitude. If you had the energy and excitement about doing something, you could, in fact, do it much more easily than, even though I was really engaged in a part of the New York scene, I also realized that there was a very clear hierarchy of entrance into that world. And I had the privilege of already entering it, so it wasn't really a frustration but on the other hand, I could see, particularly with the interest in film. Film not being something that a lot of people in New York were at that point engaged in them, you know, having certainly a number of Amberg presentations where I was probably one of four people sitting in the audience, so-- And I felt that if I got excited about dance film out here, wanted to do something about it, that I could do something. And in fact, that was my experience to the extent, you know, and this is now a woman, young woman, but largely committed to her engagement with her young children, who are-- And involved with my husband and his work. You know, the opportunity for my own and of the time for my own individual doing thing was limited but when I had that time and that commitment, I felt I could do things quite rapidly. I'm trying to think-- Sort of number of-- I would-- Also because of my concern, let's see, let me get the chronology in here a little bit better. My engagement with the dance world included encounters with again,

I think I mentioned her the other day, Kate, and I'm blanking on her name, Kate Hughes, who I had mentioned was the Boston Forbes family-- But Kate was an interesting, quiet but very creative person who was also sought to be an activist in the field of dance. So one of my sort of first professional commitments was to her resurrection of Lester Horton's New Dance Theatre [and School]. Kate had the

opportunity to buy, I think, that property-- SMITH: The studio on Melrose [Avenue]?

SNYDER: Yeah. And did with the intention of starting up a new school. And I worked with her, as really sort of her executive assistant in a sense, more at the administrative level. For probably about a year and a half--

SMITH: That was '61, '62.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. And I think it was through that, I'm not quite sure of the sequencing, that I met Bella [Lewitzky]. Kate was studying with Bella. Kate asked Bella to do some classes, particularly in choreography. Kate was particularly interested in choreographer herself. She was a very talented choreographer. But she was interested in her school doing something about teaching choreography, which was again, very different from whatever else would be going on in studios around Los Angeles, which were much more than teaching ballet or even teaching modern dance, but technique, not choreography. So Bella came into classes and we got to know each other and I became very impressed by her, the quality of her as a person and her teaching. I found her to be one of the most articulate teachers of dance that I had really encountered. I mean articulate. And so we then had a sort of an on-going association.

Somewhere in there and you probably, you have it on your big print-out, Kate then also asked me to do this series at that New Dance called "A Look at Dance and Its History," which was to be and was an eight evening series, lecture but really primarily showing of films, what I would do with, I had a fairly clear concept of what I was going to try and do, so I would do sort of a bridge, I mean it wasn't, I wasn't just showing films at all. And I tried then to really focus on what I thought were many of the areas of dance that we should be aware of. Obviously, modern dance. I have to say

that it gave me the opportunity of showing the Graham or particularly the first showing of Night Journey. Also, I think we got on tape for the story of the [Mary] Wigman film [When the Fire Dances Between Two Poles] there, I didn't actually show that at that point in time. But Kate had said, I, you know, don't really worry about money on this now, I mean, there were limits, but since she was-- So I approached this series from a point of view of really what I thought was the, an ideal at that point in time, what, who were the key people that if you were looking at dance and its history, one should know and understand and itself, were there films that would enable me to bring me to bring them into this framework? And Wigman was one and I wrote to her and had the response that she didn't, that all of her films had been lost, but she identified this film that had been recently shot by, of her in Germany, which, as I think we got on tape before we-- At that point, we weren't able to bring the film over, but I had gotten engaged in this whole thing and later, Bob Haas provided the avenue for bringing it over. Anyway, that received-- Also we had already completed the Bayanihan film by them. So that was another activity that I engaged in. And so I think we showed the Bayanihan of that series. That's one of the first showings of that. You want to talk about that in-- Anyway, it was-- I felt-- Got some [George] Balanchine material by hook and by crook and it was both by hook and by crook, with, I got permission to show some USIA [United States Information Agency] films, which strictly speaking one was not allowed to show in the United States at that point in time. Also, Jerry [Jerome] Robbins film [NY Export: Opus Jazz]. So I was-- It was a fairly rich showing and I was very pleased with its result and that was a good introduction to sort of a major introduction of me to the world of dance and the dance world to me, in a sense and that whole sense of my identity with my interest in dealing

with dance comprehensively and through the tool of film was sort of my first, I think, first, identifying labels out there. And I was really-- That was all right, that was satisfactory. So as we review it now, I mean, there were quite a lot of things that I was engaged in, even with my sort of, not emphasizing my professional self.

SMITH: Were you aware of Lester Horton when you were back East?

SNYDER: Oh, yeah. Again, I mean the reverse was true that while I was very aware of the, as much existing photographers as there were, and there were quite a few good photographs of Lester. There wasn't anything else really. And again, he had worked a lot in Hollywood. Recent years, we've been able to dig up a lot of his Hollywood choreography, which unfortunately, I don't really think speaks, you know, very eloquently of his talents. But it was out there-- But other than that, it wasn't very much film. It wasn't really a way to know his work. I have actually been doing some consulting with a woman [Lelia Goldoni] who now is doing a film on Lester and I think it's going to be a very good one. And it will be very important to fill out that part of our history because I certainly did feel that he was a major figure in the field of dance and one that, who should be recognized on an understood and incorporated into our sense of our history.

SMITH: When you arrived in L.A. during this period that we're talking about, was there a sense of a Horton legacy in the dance community? Was it still continuing?

SNYDER: I'm not as much, actually as there is now. I think-- Again, when I was trying to think about-- I don't know whether Bella mentioned this. But when I then was asked, this is now five years later in 1967, first to do a report on dance and film for the National Endowment [for the Arts], newly formed dance programs. And then I was asked to come on to the "Dance Panel" for the NEA and Bella was just starting up her own company at that point. And I very much urged them to recognize her as a



major figure and to include her in the early artist that NEA was supporting, which they did. And I say that because there was this interim then, after Lester's death and then the closing down of the studio and before Bella's own emergence, when she had a lot of ambiguity about her feelings about Lester, I think. Or she was-- It was very important for her to establish herself as Bella Lewitzky with her own talents and abilities, rather than as she had been identified for so many years as Lester's great leading dancer. So in Bella's emergence, it wasn't-- She wasn't anxious-- It wasn't that she wouldn't talk about Lester, but in sort of the general conversation parlance with her and about her, Horton wasn't a major thread of conversation. Yet, Bella was one of the most active people here. Bella, now somewhere in this chronology, I think in perhaps in '62 or '63, Bella was already doing the Idyllwild [School of Music and the Arts (ISOMATA)] summer workshops, which again were very important, sort of coming together. She was very insightful in identifying interesting people and their work and sought wherever possible to bring them to Idyllwild for, either to teach or to do lectures or to perform or whatever. And also [laughter] Cal Arts [California Institute of the Arts] was in the process of being created at that point. I was fascinated about Cal Arts when I first read about it. And in fact, did write to Disney, very first announcement that I saw about Cal Arts, saying that I would be interested in being involved in it in some way if there was ever any-- That I saw and this probably wasn't necessarily the best thing to say in retrospect, that much of what I had felt about the vitality of Bennington, in terms of the arts, I felt probably-- I felt was possible in the vision of Cal Arts. I bring all of this up in relationship to Bella because then I did have conversations with the several with who then became the director, Robert--

SMITH: Herb [Herbert] Blau?

SNYDER: Herb Blau, right. Excuse me. I had conversations with him about Cal Arts. But it was also quite clear and I was very pleased really that Herb felt that Bella was the one to initiate that program. So then we got quite, Bella and I got quite involved with discussions. She asked me to come up to Idyllwild one summer, again to do an interesting project on dance, its history in an experiential way. But also, we had-- We took three figures, [Isadora] Duncan, Wigman and Graham and focused three days on each of them, I think. And what we wanted to do was the first day, to engage them in the environment of their artistic life and as much of their, encounter with them as was possible. And again, I did a lot of research to make this possible in Duncan's-- With Duncan, I began to do a, what became sort of a slide presentation, but working with the wonderful-- I always loved the José Clara drawings which I think were perhaps the most vitally and experientially honest with representation of Isadora. And again, and Isadora like Wigman, not so true of Graham was very articulate about what she was doing, so I worked very, in a very concentrated way with The Art of the Dance and selected her statements about certain things. So we spent probably with Duncan about two hours looking at these slides of her, my doing sort of a narration of her statement about certain things, about certain kinds of influences. And again, this was-- I mean, I did some of my own historical interpretations in a sense, which I still think is valid, though, for instance, I was very interested in what Weston was doing, Edward Weston was doing, felt that there was an interesting connection between Duncan and Weston, in their early West Coast experience. And that what Duncan articulated about her sense of nature with its wave phenomena being very much the kind of fundamental of her understanding of movement, I thought Weston was very much doing with his photographs. And so we looked at quite a lot of Weston photographs in those content.

We also then listened to a lot of the music that she used. And I felt this was a kind of a way of contextualizing. And incidentally, I mean that-- I remained excited about that material. I proposed once, I think to actually, to the Guggenheim [Foundation], get a Guggenheim to do something more about that as a film or as a slide print. And I still would like to do something about it. I've had recent fantasies, not so recent, but as the whole graphic, computer graphics field began to-- It really is possible now, one could make an analysis of a sequence of those José Clara drawings and interpretations really of where the body was going in-between the two moments on the Clara film in a way that I felt might communicate something more about Duncan.

Just as a parenthesis here, I've always felt very strongly opposed to people doing reconstruction of works of Duncan and of other powerful performers like Wigman. I don't really-- It's the whole artist that I think comes through and it demeans them when somebody else does their steps and their movements, it has nothing to do with them and their art.

Anyway, so I did this program with Bella at that point in time. It comes back-- I was able, not-- I was able-- We actually brought out to Idyllwild a two system projector, so I was able to show the Wigman field, though I had not yet completed a first cut of that film, I was able to do that. And we did quite a lot with the Graham things including getting somebody to play some of the Louis Horst material on the set. Then we had a, maybe it was two days on each of them, we actually got people to move to the music that had, were so fundamental to each of these people. And they were very different with Wagner, sort of with Duncan. Louis Horst and [Aaron] Copland and so forth with Graham. And producing your own sound, which was really what Wigman was about. And it was a very exciting experiment, really. We got

produced by the students, even though, I would say perhaps none of them or certainly a very small perhaps were not even aware of these people as major figures before they began to attempt this. They certainly hadn't any real feeling about them, but with this intensity of sort of focus, I would say that there was a real of a beginning of an understanding of the movement experience, through an improvisatory exploration towards the end. So anyway, so Bella and I found that a very satisfying working experience. And Bella then did, sought to bring me into Cal Arts in her early, couple of early years. And I did, in fact, although this is now jumping again a few years later, '66, I guess, I did teach there a series of classes, now going in mostly to the world cultures area and which-- So these were some-- I think I should talk a little about the Bayanihan at this point because this was another element. What we're roving in this discussion today, Richard, is really the period of about '57. See we got here, what did I say, '56. It wasn't really, obviously until--

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE TWO

MARCH 15, 1993

SNYDER: So '57, '58 to well, you could say to till '68 in a sense, although what we've been talking about sort of the first five years from that period. And the Bayanihan comes in at that point. And the Bayanihan is interesting to me in retrospect, as well, as what, what I really was, this for me was, had less to do with the ethnographic issues, than it was an opportunity to work with a performance group and try and see whether one could begin to break down that concept of one, that if you film dance, you had to distort the performance so that the integrity of the live performance was totally lost or on the other hand, that if you maintain the integrity of the performance that it had to be as dull as dishwater filmic representation of it. And so, that was really my objective in working on that. And again, working with a moderately small budget, so we had two cameras, two days to work, nevertheless, I felt that I was able to, to a larger degree, achieve what I wanted to do with that. And it has been pleasing to me that over the years as we've showed in that film, people have been excited about the performance, excited about the feeling of those people. That not saying, "Oh, god, that I remember when I saw them on stage and it was--" Yeah, you know. It gives me the fact and the information but the vitality of that performance was not there. I think, I mean, that has not been the reaction. It was, at that same time, fun because-- Yeah, I'll use the word fun, now, to also introduce into that film a little bit of an ethnographic contextualization or maybe ethnographic is a little bit of a contextualization of that material. And their idea is as distinct from your earlier question about Gods of Bali. I did a lot of research into that material as much as possible and was able to spread in, I

mean just for the records, I was-- The narration as it exists on the film was not what I wanted to be the final rewrite of the narration. We got caught in a sort of a time bind.

I forgotten that that was also the period I went to New York to do the work with the Joffrey [Ballet], so anyway, my husband decided to go and do the recording of the narration when I was away in New York. And there are about three or four moments in that narration that I really cringed about, that I feel are, you know, are just, not the way I would want to have said it, but so forth. So that's the way it is. But it was also the first opportunity to introduce some of my, let's call it, a very big word for a, again, modest endeavor, theorizing about myth and ritual, about the mystic. The section on the northern hill materials, there are some things in there that I still find quite exciting, in terms of talking about the, that myth is not as static and something of the past, it's the now doingness of, I think it says, but it is done again and again, but not again, it's always the active present. That's an idea that was very important to me, that I was able to sort of put that into the narration, was satisfying to me.

SMITH: You had to select from their repertory--

SNYDER: What we did, my husband and I, saw about four different performances as they were traveling around the country, San Francisco, I think we went to, Texas or someplace, New York. And we did a static from the balcony record of the whole performance. And then I worked a great deal with that and mapped out very-- First of all, then selected because each one of those suites, they did exist as suites in the performance, but they had-- There was other material that they did. Usually, there perhaps one or maybe two other dances that they did in a suite. And I-- Well, we used one suite or one sort of introduction as our title assembly. And then I would take that sort of, to create that frame, you go into each of the suites with a kind of a frame,

which was a way of kind of moving of transforming into visual terms. The entrance into another reality, which the curtain does. It was then also the opportunity to do sort of the general introduction to that particular area. And we usually took one portion of one suite as a kind of a background to that frame, so it wasn't treated in-- There the intention was not to see the choreography unfold, but it was much more for a visual experience. So then I did select what I thought were, let's say, out of five options, let's say we took three to concentrate on each of the suites, give or take, I mean, I don't remember them exactly. And then I did a very careful scripting of camera movement--

SMITH: So you storyboarded?

SNYDER: Yeah. And-- But the storyboard that was a very much of a movement-oriented storyboard, trying to anticipate what the editing would look like, trying to anticipate the problems of space, not-- And focusing on the problems of space, again, I did not want to move the camera in a way that would have been absolutely impossible visually from the theater. In other words, that choreography and it was choreography, although I think an interesting fusion of choreography. Interesting use of choreographic perspective on indigenous, traditional materials. But it was, it was choreography. There was-- Mrs. [Helena] Z. Benitez was their choreographer. And I wanted to respect the choreography, so we never, for instance, moved the camera any further than you could visually see from either side of the theater. I respected the spatial limitations that a proscenium creates. We went only so high. We didn't do a lot of really high overhead shots, but again, from where you could see in a balcony position, never a further distortions of those. I say these things because it is interesting now to look at some of the problems and solutions that some

of the better of the "Dance in America" film makers have done. And some of them have gone quite beyond those limitations. Although most I think -- Well, anyway, those were some of the parameters that I set for myself.

SMITH: And your selection of lens?

SNYDER: Well, I'm behind the camera and my position is director, had very good New York commercial camera person, who was not familiar with dance, but who on the other hand, was very, very receptive to my guidance. So yeah, there were certain moments when we went into close-ups, usually again in the establishing sections to give something of the sort of the qualitative ambience. But when we were working with the choreographer, I attempted to maintain the kind of guidance that I felt I had learned very much from the Astaire films, which were never to come closer than the full body. Now, on the other hand, you could become quite intimate because you could have one full body or a couple, those were the least problematic in terms of filming. The challenge was how to give a rather large group its validity, and at that same time, its liveliness, not getting too far away, so that you maintain the full spatial integrity of the choreography. But too distant in terms of the film of your shooting range. Many instances there, then I'd try to angle it from a point of view which was, had the most content in it. In other words, if I could figure if there was a group of, a line of dancers moving actually on, from presidium across the stage, almost the full dimension of the stage, I would move way to the left of the proscenium and see it more as a line that extended back from the, in the lens. So and that in the fore figure could be quite close than and have the vitality that one experiences from being quite close to a dancing figure. And at that same time, the sense of the full, not cutting off anything, but getting the rest of it so that your further dancers were quite far away from the camera but you



had the notion, you had the experience of both the close and the further in one shot.

SMITH: Your editing seems quite seamless and that was a striking feature in that film.

SNYDER: Well, we worked very hard at that. We came to recognize how to cut motion in a way, where-- Because I think one of the jagged things is not really to have a kinesthetic sense about the movement and the fact that it really does flow in the cut. So that we did a lot which was, at that point, not as-- All of these things that I'm talking about now, when-- I mean, what I really am talking about now is a-- You asked the other day about video, this is a perspective that filming on video now can do so easily. But we were really before video, we were doing, trying to maintain the kind of, what, to establish the kind of liveliness, you can now get with video, from a film. And filming on film is a much more static problem. So--

SMITH: Did you shoot on sixteen or thirty-five?

SNYDER: Sixteen, yeah. In the editing then, we did a lot of having creating two monitors for ourselves, which again now, would absolutely nothing. I mean, so what, you have twenty-five monitors. But at that point in time, one still edited on good old fashion, one, looking at one piece of film going through your movie only. So the challenge was to really do that, that kind of seamless editing with the equipment as it then existed. I feel reasonably satisfied with the results. I think I achieved what I wanted to achieve at that moment in time. I don't tend to show that film very much anymore because the twenty-five years since it was done, all of these things which were challenges at that point in time, as I say, are no longer challenges. They're no longer, even interesting. Because I have come more and more from my dance ethnology perspective to have a great deal of concern and even resistance to the kind

of stage performance that the Bayanihan represented, the preference would be now to get out in the field and to do that same thing, but with the material as it existed in its actual reality, rather than--

SMITH: But that's a different kind of dance.

SNYDER: Well, it is, it is, Richard. But the difference is still not well understood. I don't think really. Well, just to-- Yeah. It's interesting to me, for instance, because Judy Mitoma does have a much more of an interest in that fusion of performance and traditional ethnographic material. When I started out teaching the dance in Asia class, initiated it here, I would be very hesitant to use the Bayanihan. Or I would use the Bayanihan film in conjunction with some films that the University of Washington had, which were some of the same dancers that were shot in the field. So I would very much make a point of what had, what it transpired and that there was, there was a, in many ways, I guess a Western interjection. I mean the concept of performing on a proscenium, transforming these things to proscenium acceptable material comes from a Western perspective on dance. So I would make that distinction very clear, if I used it at all. Judy later on went to just show it. Now, here's a representation of Philippine material. I'm sure she said something about the company and the contextualization, but-- And I would still very much venture to guess that I could go into a number of audience and say to them, "Now, I'm delighted to show you an example of Philippine traditional dance" and show that and not one person would raise any question about what I would say. This has been one of these challenges, I think, in the field of ethnology. Those companies, Moiseyev being the leaders in the field of this fusion Bayanihan, some of the African groups, were important ambassadors of traditional materials. They brought an awareness of those materials to European and American

audiences. But in many instances then, the audience understanding got stop there. And when you, for instance, then showed an African mask dance in, again, a film, a valid ethnographic film, and a good one, I'm not talking now about one that—You know, the comment, "Much too long. Why does this go on for four hours? It doesn't excite me." You know, "Where's the hoopla? Where's the staged timing of things?"

SMITH: Is there a difference between entertainment and ritual?

SNYDER: Obviously, yeah.

SMITH: Has to do with what expectations you have.

SNYDER: Right, right. But why does, you know, you've thrown in the right word? Why then does it have to become our expectation that dance is nothing more than entertainment? And that is the expectation, largely. And it's only when dance conforms to that expectation that it has a validity for a number of people. And that's exactly one of the things that over the years I worked very hard to address and hopefully to break down.

SMITH: I had some additional questions about this period. For example, were you involved with the folk dance movement in L.A.? Did you go folk dancing? SNYDER: No, I was never involved with the folk dance movement. Later on, obviously, as I became more involved here at UCLA, that was another story, not that I ever myself personally engaged in the folk dance movement, but a number of my students were vitally engaged in the folk dance movement and I came to know it, what was going on and having an interest, again an appreciation. But from my point of view a question and resistance.

SMITH: And also if you could go back to Bella [Lewitzky] a little bit, I'm curious to know what her work looked like, herself like before she became Bella, before '66 when she started her first real company, what--

SNYDER: Well, I mean, that's--

SMITH: What did the early Bella look like?

SNYDER: I can't give you that answer, because she really wasn't out there to see except in the teaching context. As I say, that was my first introduction to Bella, in the teaching context, as a mover herself and her eye in both critiquing and reacting to a student moving technically and also choreographically. One of the things that Kate [Hughes] had particularly asked her to do was some choreographic classes. And as I recalled, I mean, she did introduce some choreographic principles. But then students would show materials to her and it was very interesting, her perception, her ability to, I thought, hit the nail on the head a great deal of time about where they were missing the boat on what they were doing. I'll actually say this, for the records: it was interesting to me, I stuck my neck out in really persuading the NEA to support Bella because I had already seen her company and its choreography and the truth of the matter was that I felt, while she was an extraordinary teacher, she was not as successful a choreographer. But I felt her overall integrity as an artist was so important that it was, it was important for her to become nationally known. Obviously, her choreography was at a standard that it, you know, one wouldn't be embarrassed by it, but it wasn't exciting. And in fact,

I've never found it truly exciting. That's all I'm going to say at this point.

SMITH: We may come back to that at some point.

SNYDER: No, no, it's fine. Not to interrupt you but to interrupt you, Richard. One other piece that I recognized because I realized when we were talking about the Bayanihan was my opportunity to go to New York to work with the Joffrey [Ballet]. That fell in that period. That was very exciting to me. It was quite a challenge. I still really was at that point-- I had a hunger. I'm not so sure that I don't still have a hunger on occasion to do something choreographically. I think I was a very good choreographer. A Dalton [School] friend of mine, Nancy Norman Lasalle, who was very wealthy, daughter of Dorothy Norman, who's a name in New York literary circle, "Twice a Year Press", a deep personal friend of [Alfred] Stieglitz's, a collector of Stieglitz's work. We were Dalton friends, but we'd gone on to study together at the School of American Ballet. Nancy was really not a good dancer, but she did also love ballet. She began to become a patroness of the New York City Ballet, which is a position she still very much holds. And but at that time, she was also interested in the first emergence of the Joffrey company. Bob [Robert] Joffrey had been, actually, sat at the feet of Balanchine. I first remember seeing Joffrey, when rehearsals of [New York] Ballet Society were going on. And Joffrey was around a great deal. He just sat and he observed Balanchine. I think he observed all the other choreographers, but I know that he was very excited to really understand something about Balanchine's choreographic process.

So the first couple of years of the Joffrey had started and then it came into a little bit of a faltering position. Oh, yes. One of his early patronesses was Rebekah Harkness, who then decided to go off her own and to establish the Harkness Ballet. And Joffrey lost her patronage. So Nancy decided to sort of move in a bit into this, but very, very much behind the scenes because she didn't want to jeopardize her own

support of the New York State Ballet. So Joffrey decided to continue something he had done with the Harkness for a couple of years, which was to have, bring in young choreographers to work with the company in a kind of a workshop situation. This was a way that allowed him to explore new talents to see what potential they might have for contributing to the company. Even though the company, the repertoire of the company, at that point in time, was very much, almost entirely his work. So Nancy was curious. I think, she knew of how much choreography I'd done at Bennington. I don't think that she had ever seen any of my work at Bennington, but she proposed to Joffrey that she'd fund my participation in one of these workshop experiments. And I was very challenged by working with a ballet company, having sort of philosophically come to the conclusion that as much as I loved ballet as a form that I felt that it also had a responsibility to a certain kind of domain of a work appropriate to it, that it was caught and it was fantasy and that choreographically, one shouldn't get, even though I had as I spoke to you before, I was particularly moved and excited by [Anthony] Tudor's work, by Robbins' work, by some of, by [Agnes] de Mille. I couldn't myself feel comfortable with moving into a contemporary theme. So I decided to do a piece that was a real fantasy piece. I had read and you asked me about reading before, I had read and fallen very much in love with a book by Elinor Wylie called The Venetian Glass Nephew, a charming, charming, wonderful piece of fantasy, laid in Venice in the height of the commedia dell'arte period. And so I decided that that would be the theme that I would chose. I tried again to find a music that I felt-- This is interesting in terms of the process there because, again, I felt that I needed to context them. If this was going to be Venice, fifteen blah-blah-blah, and that the music that I should find would be appropriate to that period. I finally chose some of Vivaldi's very dramatic

works, which again was interesting because at that period of time, my husband often makes this point not about me, but the fact that Vivaldi was not a recognized composer until, the sixties and so forth. You look up the great Levinson Encyclopedia [Encyclopedia of World Cultures, David Levinson, ed.] and there's no listing for Vivaldi. Vivaldi's work was not really a recognized, honored-- I Solisti di Venezia were one of the few groups that were really playing Vivaldi. But I found his work to be very, dramatically very exciting. So I came to New York, did this piece, which I realized probably wouldn't get produced because setting that-- It would had to have been a highly expensive production. Again, I wanted the costumes to be appropriately consistent and the Venetian costumes of that period of time were extraordinarily elaborate. Even the set would have to be elaborate. It would have been a production that Balanchine would have gotten away with [Lincoln] Kirstein or you know a very expensive production. But a young, emerging choreographer, a totally unknown in terms of ballet choreographer could not really have demanded that. But I decided it was more important for me to see if I could really make this work then have it go further. And again, I was fairly pleased, just historically, for the records, I was able to take anybody from the Joffrey company that was interested in working with to work with me. And I chose Lawrence Rhodes, who then went on much-- First of all, let's see, Larry went on to be, at that point, he was not a leading dancer with the Joffrey. He went on head of the Joffrey. Then he went on later to direct the NYU [New York University Tisch School] performing arts, undergraduate program. In other words, he became a very recognized dancer, usually of very dramatic pieces. Now, this is important, who was the dance, Ballet Quartet? I can't remember. Anyway, she went on to have gain a lot of recognition. Helgi Tomlinson, who heads up the San

Francisco Ballet at this point. Helgi was a wonderful, I guess, Icelandic dancer, at that point, totally unknown. And Gerry [Gerald] Arpino, himself, who at that point was, I mean he was working very, was a right hand to Joffrey. Again, not really recognized. The story is of-- maybe I shouldn't take the time to do this, but I have to a little bit. It's of a high ranking cardinal in the court of the pope [laughter] if you dare to say that. Who's a Venetian cardinal, who returns to Venice? He has one great wish in his life, which obviously hasn't been fulfilled because of the fact that he's a cardinal, which is to have a nephew. And he meets a sort of a Cagliostro, Nostradamus kind of a figure in Venice and he says, "I can fulfill that dream for you. I can take you to the Venetian glassblower and he will blow you a Venetian glass nephew." And so the cardinal allows himself to do, to get-- And of course, it introduces then the whole issue of black magic into all of these-- It's a beautifully written book. I'd even urge you to read it at a point. And so he is, this Venetian glass nephew is actually recreated, but it's so brilliant the work that nobody, except the Cardinal, knows that he's blown out of Venetian glass. So then, there's anyway-- And so that emergence out of-- That was one of the moments in the ballet was his emergence. And it was a very, very dramatic moment and it demanded a very dramatic portrayal. And Larry was wonderful. He was a wonderful, but-- I say this because he hadn't been a dramatic dancer before that, it was really, I think, his experience in working with me in this role that pushed him into that. He then, then the other dramatic moment is that he then falls in love with this beautiful young woman, again, wonderfully described by Wylie and they fall in love and then the problem of the fact that he is in fact, Venetian glass. And they seek yet again another black magician and she is changed into a porcelain figure to match-- Actually, the absolutely beautiful thing about the whole tingling and shattering of the



glasses as they first sort of confront one another, the brittleness of this--But a lot of wonderful visual--

TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE ONE

MARCH 15, 1993

SMITH: Interview with Allegra Snyder, March 15, 1993, tape seven. Okay.

SNYDER: I was, again, quite satisfied with the outcome. We had a couple of performances in a workshop context. And I think everybody was satisfied with what had happened. It didn't and I don't know whether-- I mean, I just say, I sort of-- The opportunity was for me, more or less, in and of itself. I suppose there was maybe a dream that [Robert] Joffrey would say, "Well, we can't do this piece [The Venetian Glass Nephew], but come back and do something else." On the other hand, I don't know how I would have responded if that had happened. Another curious, though interesting, piece of history was about two years later, one of Gerry [Gerald] Arpino's first major pieces was called Viva Vivaldi! and Gerry, I don't think would perhaps admit this, but I dare say that it was his becoming a part of that experience that made the piece totally different. But the experience with dealing with Vivaldi as a score was of interested-- So, what more to say about that? My husband [Robert Snyder] has always wished that I do a film of this, to do it filmically. And a couple of years ago, we went to Venice and there was quite a lot of talk about a series of Venice festivals, where they were doing interesting, sort of new materials in the performing arts, I rather thought it would be interesting to do an environmental version of it moving in and around, moving your audience by gondola from one dramatic portion of Venice to another and do it that way. But still, I may yet-- Fortunately, we did film the whole. I mean absolutely straight, totally, I mean, workshop situation, but at least I have a record of it that I could maybe do something with that.

SMITH: I was going to ask you how it was documented it, if you had labanotated it or--?

SNYDER: No, actually I was so pressured really on that, it was the first time I'd taken along-- I think I was in New York for three weeks, being away from the children, so it was-- I have a sort of a choreographic short-hand notation that I do, a kind of a stick figure, much more to do with spatial notations than anything else. I'm not sure that I even did any-- I have some notes about that, but not a lot. I also worked very carefully with the score on that. I think I have notations on score a little bit about things, but not enough so I could ever do a reconstruction from my notes. I don't even know if I can do a reconstruction from my notes. Probably I wouldn't do the same, but anyway, you know, the sort of the overall mixture of things was one that was exciting to me.

SMITH: Okay.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE ONE

APRIL 19, 1993

SMITH: Interview with Allegra Fuller Snyder at her home in Pacific Palisades, April 19, 1993, tape eight. Could you say a few words?

SNYDER: Yeah. Here we are, looking forward again to another session.

SMITH: Say a few more words.

SNYDER: Gee, let me see, I can hardly think when 1964 was, right now, today, so this is going to be an interesting--

SMITH: Okay. Where we left off last time, I wanted to talk to you about your work in dance therapy with Mary Whitehouse. We had discussed your work with Trudi Schoop and Jeri Salkin to some degree. It seemed that Mary Whitehouse is much more to the point in terms of your development.

SNYDER: Well, I think it's an-- There's sort of two things to be said here. One was that there was something about, again, the questions that I felt were being asked about the potential function and contribution of dance to larger patterns of society, which the emergence of dance therapy seemed important in assisting, really, in addressing this. I never felt that I would become a dance therapist myself, but I was very interesting in understanding it better.

SMITH: In terms of the training, did you work with people who needed therapy?

SNYDER: No. I mean this is an important distinction. In both Trudi Schoop's and Jeri Salkin's case, even though they were much more clinically oriented, and in fact, they had quite a lot of patients at Camarillo and we did go up to Camarillo State

Mental Hospital on a couple of occasions to observe their work, not to get directly involve with it. But even there, what I wanted to see was what they were doing in a group of people, most of whom were training themselves as dance therapists. But the groups themselves were people who had for the most part a considerable background in dance and performance dance. So a number of them were old gods modern dancers and feeling that they wanted to take a different direction. So I took work with Trudi and Jeri as I would perhaps take another kind of a dance class, except for the tasks or the techniques that were much more inner-inspired vocabulary of movement.

SMITH: So was your goal to broaden your movement vocabulary?

SNYDER: No, Particularly with them, it was to understand better the overall point of view of why they felt that movement could be an effective opener for human expression. And this didn't have to be clinically sick, it just had to be anybody in expression. I think, just to drop in another sort of element in this, it was interesting, we talked way back about my feelings that Hanya Holm's approach to dance was probably more kindred to my own personal interest than the American generated modern dance. Now, Trudi also, not Jeri so much, Jeri was actually came out of the Lester Horton School, but Trudi was German expressionist dance. She was a great artist of mime for years and years. I mean, I knew about Trudi as a major dance artist and maybe that was even why I was drawn to her a bit.

SMITH: Was she from Germany?

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. She may be Austrian, I think.

SMITH: But she was an émigré. Was her training in Germany? Or Austria?

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. She must have come over here just before World War II and sort of started up this new venture in dance therapy at that point in time. So there was

something about the approach that they were taking to dance that I get resonated with my early experiences of Hanya, even though it was much less technically based. And even then, moving to Mary Whitehouse, Mary also, her background is with Mary Wigman. And so this, you know, you could cluster them all together as all addressing the issue of how one got to sort of the center of the dance experience and let that emerge and not get trap in vocabularies that really weren't one's own. And well, the experience with all of them excited me because of that. Mary's was the most depthful. I have found a great rapport with Mary. And I probably would have continued on very intensely working with her. Again, not as a dance therapist but because what I felt I was really discovering about dance, dance from the broadest perspective. Then she developed multiple sclerosis about two years-- Or discovered that she had multiple sclerosis about two or maybe three years after I really started working with her and she had to give up her work. I felt that was a tremendous lost. I felt that I was just sort of on the brink of some discoveries with her that-- I think I went on, but I would have, now this is coming to this, we're talking about this period-- Well, I'll finish this sentence this way and then we can come back to-- I would have kept on moving much more intensely myself had Mary remained a functioning teacher. It was about the same time and I actually don't at the-- This time sequencing is a little unclear to me, but it was in this same period that I already mentioned that I sought out Alma [Hawkins] really, initially, because of what she was doing in dance therapy and I knew that she was starting to generate at the department and I went in thinking that I might do an article for Dance Magazine as something or other on dance therapy in Los Angeles because of already, you know, Trudi and Jeri and Mary were too, not the only ones who were involved, but certainly major figures. And I felt that theirs would be an

interesting account to bring to the more public awareness. And I thought that a third component would be the fact that a major, new emerging dancer program was including something of this point of view in its curriculum. And so, I got to know Alma and got to know what was going on at UCLA a little bit better and I also was in a period of personal transition, where my children were now just ending up elementary school, going into junior high and I felt that they were well capable of, you know, taking care of themselves on a day-to-day basis much more. So that I felt that I could begin to explore a new kind of use of my time and freedom in my own life again.

And so after talking with Alma, I decided I actually would go back to do the Master's at UCLA because I felt that I could have eclectic access to a number of different directions, including the anthropology as well as-- But the-- And well, I then did that. But what was interesting was that the graduate programs, the distinction between theory and practice was even more distinct in this period, what we're talking about, '65, now. And when I started to do the various theory classes in the department and in the anthrop department and so forth, there wasn't any technique classes that I could take. If I were an undergraduate, I could take core classes, but any moving classes were integrated into the concept of the core at the undergraduate level. There were no separate technique classes. And I mean, we could turn to Alma's thinking and there was a reason why. I mean, she felt that it was a fundamental integration. But it didn't really quite jive with what was going on. So I actually, more or less, stopped dancing when I came into the dance program. That's been a sense of frustration and even at points, I feel a bit of anger about it.

As I say, if Mary had stayed alive, I would have found-- I mean, she did die at about six years later. But active and practicing, I would have kept that part of my life going much more substantially.

SMITH: Before we get into the UCLA, your studies there, I wanted to ask you a few more questions about Mary Whitehouse--

SNYDER: I also, I don't think-- We said we were going to talk about Carmelita [Maracci], too.

SMITH: Oh, that's right. Yes.

SNYDER: And I'd like to do that. But fire away with Mary.

SMITH: The first one is if you describe some of the kinds of movements, exercises that she would give you and her other students and what their purpose was.

SNYDER: Right. The most strikingly different, you know, element was that the very first task we experienced, I think consistently was that we were all lie on the floor with our eyes closed and slowly, really tried to be sensitized ourselves, our bodies, minds to where the feeling of movement was in the body and begin to explore that in improvisational terms or just in-- That was the task that we were set to do.

SMITH: Sort of spontaneous or automatic movement?

SNYDER: Well, anything. It seems-- Well, it's certainly-- If I'd lie down and the first whatever, and it could be a tension, it could be an actual sensitivity of some kind, but if something said that I'm becoming aware of my shoulder, that the first thing I would do then would be to start and explore that. And I'll explore that in any way that I could or I wanted to. Almost always this exploration was done in silence. There wasn't really any kind of time parameters to it, now in the long run that wasn't quite true because we



all find ourselves sort of up and moving, maybe ten, fifteen, twenty minutes after starting this.

But now, certainly Mary was one of the first people, whether I would actually credit her with the first use of the term authentic movement, but that's what we were seeking there, movement that had its own source, wasn't any other reason for its being except that there was something in the body that said that we needed to start, I needed to start exploring this particular sensorial experience.

SMITH: I'm trying-- If you can give me a sense to the degree to which it was like or unlike surrealist exercises of automatic writings or automatic drawing. Were you trying to tap into the subconscious or the unconscious?

SNYDER: Well, yeah. Again, a need to come back to some of the things that I do think are important and now I'll refer back to [Harold] Rugg and-- The point of felt thought, a very powerful point, and it's neither unconscious or subconscious or highly or generated just by a mind attitude. It's a real fusion of those experiences. I think that my understanding of automatic writing is that it is really pretty unconscious that there's something that totally drives you. And that you really, you're just a kind of a tool and not really in charge of this. Now, I, as a person processing all of this, am very much in-- I mean, I am the center of that process and I do when I begin to want to explore this part of the body that seems to be seeking exploration. I am as a whole. You just can't say I'm either consciously thinking of it or unconsciously-- You can't. It is that real-- It is very much closer, I think, to the Zen experience, where, you know, the great-- I found myself, for instance, reading a lot of Zen at that point. Not a lot, but-- Zen and the Art of Archery, for instance, where you are, you know, at the pinnacle of really your control. You're-- You have so opened yourself up that the mind

is no longer the dominant, it is the totality. Yet, again, to stress that it is definitely not unconsciousness. You're more highly tuned, I think, throughout your body to all of this than you are with other kinds of movement. I mean, it was very interesting to be aware, because there were a number of other people working with Mary at this point, some of whom were right at that moment very deeply engaged in studying [Martha] Graham's technique and so forth. It was very hard for them to recognize and then to actually work in this kind of an experience of movement. They had been outwardly directed in what they-- Even though in any mastery of any movement technique, there's a level of sort of going into the movement and pushing yourself one. My leg is at this level of height, what is it that I have to do with my muscles and so forth to take it up to the next level. But that's a different kind of exploration, really. We would then-- It would usually happen that through this kind of exploration, in not too long a period of time, we would discover ourselves standing on our feet and beginning to move about in space. Sometimes then, that sort of first exercise would come to a halt, as we reached that point.

SMITH: I may be asking you to be making distinctions that are not entirely appropriate. But to what degree were these explorations aesthetic-driven in the sense of trying to find, explore forms or what were they, say, kinesiological or cognitive to see what the potentialities were or was it something else even?

SNYDER: Well-- In one sense it was not to-- I mean, it was to take yourself into a place where words really weren't appropriate, that the meaning of the experience as the whole was the essence of it. And it-- Say again what you said because I had-- SMITH: Well, the degree to which it was, the exploration was aesthetic-driven, looking for

forms, or more scientific, in the sense of discovering the potentialities of that part of the body.

SNYDER: It certainly wasn't scientific. And it wasn't aesthetic. What was a very interesting discovery, which I was one of the things that I found a very important in all of this, was that form emerged, that it was very often a part of the sort of the sequencing of the discovery was a beginning of a forming of it. That is what you wanted to do with it. You wanted to explore this particular movement by repeating it again, by extending it, by A's and B's and C's of variations and so forth, so that that I came to feel how intrinsic the process of forming was to all of this.

Now, I'm going to jump ahead in order to answer your question a little bit more. While it was never aesthetically propelled, I, many times later on, in the session, why for various reasons, one or several of us would sit on the side for a few minutes to observe what was going on with the others. And I would say that the aesthetic satisfaction of some of the movement that one saw in being articulated through this process was a great deal more important to me than much that I saw that had a conscious aesthetic to it. I also was doing a lot more rereading, at the time, of Isadora Duncan's work and came to feel that, first of all, again, to feel the importance of her work. And I tried, I think I already mentioned this that I actually wanted at that point to do and still have on my agenda a film about Isadora from this point of view. But that what she talked about, about breaking so of the shells-- She's a beautiful-- "Listen to your soul and from that a movement will emerge." I didn't say it right, but anyway, this is-- So I came to have a lot of feelings about a relationship to an aesthetic through this process of investigation.

No, if you set out to do something that was beautiful or this or that or the other, that was when it usually detached itself from you and usually in the long run was less both satisfying and successful. The next sort of series of things that we investigated were encounters with others. And again, they were very interesting because we could, we would dance with, in pairs, in groups of three or four, toward the end of the session, we might be dancing with everybody in the group, which might be as many as twelve people. And the sense of the kind of communication, articulation, group integrity--again, I don't know if that has a meaning to you but I need to say it that way--occurred because of that, because we were all in this process with a very centered one. I mean, a sense of centering when I was a part of all of this. And so that we could and again, we would explore movement experiences and sequences which were much more daring and exploratory than what was then being explored choreographically. Now, it is interesting that the field of contact improvisation, which I have not really, personally, investigated seriously. But I know enough about it and have had enough students who've been quite-- This was emerging about the same time and there's a lot of similarities certainly with the second phase of this movement investigation that's very similar to contact improv, which again is the real dialogue between two or three human beings, which, because a sense of really understanding/experiencing the movement, and I'm trying to-- I have a slash in between those as I'm saying and a sense of trust in the movement experience led to things which now also interesting to say that wasn't, was about this same time that a very aesthetically driven process of discovery movement developed with the Pilobolus company. But there's a similarity between all of those investigations. Pilobolus investigated because they were the core of-- The dancers in that company were the Dartmouth [College] champion gymnast

team and they knew their... the kind of dynamics and tensions that you could do with your body, which was-- And they began to then, under Alison Becker Chase, who-- Alison actually came out of UCLA program-- We're now talking about three years later. I'm bringing all of these together because I'm very much, over the years, have come to feel that things get in the wind of experience. And whatever, whoever that is that has theorized it, sort of simultaneous fires of new inquiry happened around the world and really, what, seemingly unconnected them, articulations, and yet there's something that really connects them, whether it's sort of a void that's been created by what has preceded it or whatever. But nevertheless, they begin to emerge and interrelate in a way.

SMITH: Now, if I read your CV correctly and I may not be, it seems that at this point, you're moving away from choreography. So were others, such as the people in Pilobolus, who are taking these kinds of explorations and using them as the basis to develop movements which can then be formalized and put into an aesthetic statement, you're moving in the opposite direction.

SNYDER: I wouldn't have necessarily done that, Richard, or I-- If I had kept on moving as I suggested. If I've had a little bit more time with Mary, I might have chosen in part to try some further choreographic explorations that were influenced by all of this. Certainly, my feelings of where my choreographic appetite. Those people, whom I sought out and found most interesting, and I did actually, it was really because of my seeing Pilobolus at Connecticut College the year that I was doing the dance television workshop in '68, I guess. We brought them out here for one of their first sort of international concerts because, you know, I felt there was something in what they were doing that I felt was very important and I thought others should be aware of it.

So I was excited, very much excited by any artists who I felt were reflecting this point of view. I think and this is a problem each of us faces in our life and you simply cannot do everything. And choreographically, well, there has been a number of choreographers, who no longer were actively dancing, among them Jerome Robbins and George Balanchine to name a few, nevertheless, you have to be working with movement in order, I think, to really engage in choreography. And so I didn't have the opportunity and it finally also became the time, really, to do that.

Also, there was a third element there which comes back to my early decision really not to put my priority on choreography which was that to a large extent, choreography demanded accompany and accompany then, you know, became the dominant element really. If I had, at that point in time, as Nancy Norman Lassalle had allowed me, not so much really, provided the opportunity to work with the Joffrey [Ballet], if at that point, somebody'd come along with that opportunity, I think I still would have taken it. Five years later, I probably would have been apprehensive. In fact, not too much longer after that, a composer, Leonard Rosenman? You seem to know a lot about music-- Anyway, Lenny was a very talented composer, mostly for Hollywood films. He was asked to do a Monday evening concert and asked if I would be interested in doing, he was also a conductor. He was going to conduct [Darius] Milhaud's The Creation of the World and asked if I'd like to do the choreography for it. And I was quite excited about that. However, it was interesting that what I came up with pretty much as I thought through was a kind of a choreography multi-media presentation. And it got to the point where it was the production was bigger than the finances could handle and also, I think it was about the time my schedule at UCLA was getting heavier and heavier and there were some delays and by the time Lenny

said, "Let's do it," I already had to say, "No, I can't do it anymore." But I put a lot of time into thinking about that. And I really was excited about it. And so it wasn't a matter of closing that door. It sort of the door closed really, in a way.

I think it is important to say here, just reflecting on all of this, that I would say that even my earliest choreographic experiences, why I think I was beginning to emerge as a choreographer who appeared to be interesting and exciting and had something to say, was that my approach, even though I wouldn't have labeled this at this point in time, was very much from this sort of discovery of my own movement. I would spend a long time in the studio with the music that I felt that I was right for the piece, even though sometimes the music can change later. But working with it in, what we now call improvising, but at that point, the notion of improvisation was--now, we've jumped back again to 1947, 48, '49--not really an approach that was being taken, discussed about being taken choreographically, although I would dare say that it is a tool that almost every choreographer uses in one way or the other. But, so, I found-- So this was almost a reinforcement of what I had discovered earlier on in the choreographic process and again, one of the things that had very much excited me and nurtured me in the choreographic process and there were many moments that were terribly exciting for me in the discoveries that I was making, or whatever you want to call them, artistically, aesthetically, or personally. So these were all really stepping stones or new dimensions of again, a recurring search and theme, I think, that it's still there really. I would also-- I mean-- The fact that when I started to think about the Lenny Rosenman task, that it went to more than just humans, moved me. It's also sort of another theme, I mean, which comes back to my interest in film.

There is often the sense that, particularly, in the context of the proscenium performance, that while the moving figure is an extremely powerful, there are other dimensions that one wants to explore. And the intrusion of or the inclusion of visual-- While I-- I have been very fascinated by [Alwin] Nikolais' work. I-- My own choreography would have never, never quite gone in that direction, but I certainly felt there were many moments when he enriched or enlarged his choreographic essence by his extraordinary theater craft, stage craft, the use of slides, the use of even film later on. This also was the very beginning of the period of the exploration of intruding a filmic image into a choreographic piece. I am jumping around a little bit. But, for instance, the production of Astarte that the Joffrey Company did a little bit later on, 1967 where they threw a film image on a billowing sails on the back of the theater was very, was not just a gimmick, it was a very exciting or some-- Don Redlich did some early pieces where he as the sole dancer on the stage, sort of related and danced with his filmic image projected on the scene in the back of the theater. So I felt there was a certain limitation in just the human dancing. And if I had gone on choreographically, I would have gone on to really bring in these other dimensions. And again, most of the time, it wasn't the opportunity and the expense of it, both were limitations that didn't allow me to-- I didn't move-- On the positive side and maybe-- So, let's just close that. And we'll lead into the next thing about UCLA with an upbeat note. I would like to go back to Carmelita, though, because she was another--

SMITH: I had some more questions. You've described two of the exercises-- I also liked it if you could talk about the kinds of readings, the kinds of intellectual discussions that she engaged her class with.



SNYDER: Well, what Mary would do in class which perhaps was different from what, you know, individual conversations with Mary would be, was more than try actually to get us to explore was a verbal articulation of some of the, what initially seemed to be very non-verbal experiences. I don't know that I really could go further in that because then it became a very, what happened in that process was-- Each time was very unique. But the fact that she was pushing toward an articulation, a verbalization in areas which had heretofore most dancers were at the point, "I can't talk about it, I'm just dancing. I'm not interesting in trying to verbalize about it." I found that very important that Mary felt that we could verbalize about it, pushed us into verbalizing--

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE TWO

APRIL 19, 1993

SMITH: You were saying an important bridge--

SNYDER: To what I then began to do or what I felt my ultimate mission at UCLA was, that I felt that to a large extent it was trying to really encourage the verbalization of territories that we in the field of dance had avoided or said we couldn't, we just couldn't articulate because I didn't believe that to be our truly ourselves. And it was a good escape. It was a good way of getting out of things to a large extent. So that exercise had a lot of influence on--

SMITH: What her point in doing that, at making you verbalize--

SNYDER: Well, this is where then-- This was to make more conscious, largely for the doers themselves, what was a part of, what one could claim to be an unconscious process. And this is where it links up with the potential of its use in dance therapy.

SMITH: That she, presumably, not particularly concern with repeating forms or anything. She was concern with the process being understood.

SNYDER: Absolutely. That's right. It's entirely process based. And we could-- She felt at many times, people would hit onto blockages or things that they were having difficulty with at the unconscious, subconscious level in their movement explorations, which if they began to verbalize them were opening of a door and led into, if it had to be, into a, if it was actually a malfunctioning area, that it could lead into a therapeutic process. Mary, in the groups that I was working with, she called us normal neurotics [laughter]. In other words, it wasn't-- At this level, a number of people did go on into applying it to dance therapy, but Mary wasn't-- That wasn't Mary's objective feeling,

and I don't think-- You asked about more private conversations. Mary was very much influenced by [Carl] Jung. She had also studied with Jung in Germany or--

SMITH: Switzerland.

SNYDER: --one of Jung's students, let me see, and was very much involved with a number of the leading Jungian analysts out here. A woman named Edith Sullwold, who in turn was very, was using Jungian analysis more to understand the creative process and more than to affect both acknowledgement and change in the teaching, learning of the arts as a fundamental development in education. So a lot of our, if we talked about sort of reading, I mean, we could hit on anything and I suppose that I would say that my own explorations at that point in time were very much the kind of saying, in the same area as Mary's was. So, you know, it might be that I would mention a book that I thought she was interested in—

I think it's also important, Richard, to say now we're talking about early, mid, late sixties into early seventies. And in the best sense of the new age thinking investigations, I mean a lot of that was about some of these same kinds of things. I was very fond of George Leonard's work in writing at that point in time. And he did do a book called Transformations about transformations as a central element in education or it is-- At the moment I run into my bookshelf and get it, I can't think what was his major breakthrough book in education was, but it was to opening the door to allowing this-- Well, I mean, we get these what had been dichotomies and which were, hoped to be fusion of linear and non-linear, verbal, non-verbal, holistic versus fragmented. And this is also at the same time that the new right brain work is beginning to-- [Robert E.] Ornstein and [Roger Walcott] Sperry and so forth are beginning the first major publications of that right brain, left brain works which also then seemed to not only

articulate some of this, but to validate the fact that there was a portion of, and in many instances, sort of lighten portions of ourselves, which had really had a place of function in the brain that wasn't being recognized by education and by society as a whole. So these were all sort of-- And the reason I said it at that very moment was so, you know, it was much more likely to pick up Los Angeles Times and to find, maybe not a front page article, but an Arts and Leisure article that had some immediate reference to some of this kind of body of concerns, quite different from what one would even have found in the mid-seventies. The nature of a dialogue with Mary would have seemed to have been much more topical. Current topical.

SMITH: How much was there available to read by or about Mary Wigman at that point?

SNYDER: Very little.

SMITH: So it was Mary Whitehouse talking about Wigman and her experiences then that were opening things, that perspective.

SNYDER: Well, I mean, I realized-- It was made it clearer to me some of the things I had already heard Hanya [Holm] and Nik [Alwin Nikolais] say in classes, which had their base in Wigman. I was already beginning to do my own studying about Wigman. All of the spider web of interrelationship. I mean, I think I had already done or was just about to do that experiment with Bella up at Idyllwild, where we worked with Wigman material and I think my encounter with Mary was actually post dated my efforts at getting the initial Wigman film for the New Dance Theater Film, Dance and Human History; Looking at dance and its History series. So I-- Wigman was already a concern for me. But it was important then to understand when I had such a positive response to what Mary was doing that she herself felt that it was in turn reflected her

study with Wigman, although she never-- She didn't pretend that it was an exact duplication of anything, but it certainly, it was very much influenced by the process of working with Wigman.

SMITH: Given the sort of Jungian framework within which a lot of this was taking place, to what degree did you approach these exercises? And I don't mean just you personally, that's sort of the collective. I mean when you form a circle, to what degree is the fact that a circle has a certain specific parameters of meaning and that particular kind of psychoanalytic framework affect the kinds of encounters that took place? In terms of the content experimentation, to what degree do, you know, things like animus/anima kinds of things begin to, you know, take charge of the kind of movements that emerge?

SNYDER: Well, you will find later in my own writings that I talk about this in the sense that whether you have any knowledge of Jung or even of ritual or anything else, when you are in a circle, there is an experience that occurs and I am in as interested in it, in fact, I am much more interested in it because of the sense that, coming back to the sense of the authentic that it is an experiential understanding. And so that I found the experience itself was the much more, the important foundation from which to explore all of this.

SMITH: But can you separate--

SNYDER: And this was the way it was approached in this-- I mean, I don't remember but that doesn't mean that it didn't occur, actually talking about the circle, for instance, from this kind of point of view at all, what would certainly come out was in, let say, if we were then reporting each of us individually about what had been a powerful moment or moments in the studio process in the last hour or something or other, there

would be sort of a consistent resonance of, a word which, again, was very popular at that point, a "peak-experience" occurring when we all came together, bonded in some way, in a circle or a circle like formation. That was and does remain to me to be-- And then-- So this was what Jung was also aware of and talking about, but to me which comes first, the chicken or the egg, it's very clear in this case that that comes first. That is the experience itself that comes first and then it's ours way of trying to talk about, analyze that experience that we come into some theory. Many of which very much like Jung.

SMITH: Because-- As you know, I'm dutifully applying the poststructuralist paradigm and asking you whether it is possible to separate the experience from the theoretical construct one brings beforehand and to the experience?

SNYDER: Well, again, I would answer this but I-- First of all, I would guess that even in the Mary Whitehouse's classes that there probably would have been at least fifty percent of those participants who were not versed at all in Jungian thinking. I would even perhaps dare to say that some would not have really known of Jung's work at all, that maybe a little bit stretching it.

On the other hand, I would also say that for many, many years, I, as a part of my American Indian class, this is a lecture with film classes that I did. General college class and when most of the students came in that class, made very sure that we weren't going to do any moving in that class because they were all very threaten by it.

Somewhere in the middle, after having shown them examples of circle dances, in fact, I usually sort of led right into it by quite a wonderful film on the Washoe Indian which at this point in time, they're, unfortunately I have to say, their rituals have deteriorated to such an extent that the only thing that really remains is a circle dance that they use,

really on all occasions, but this particular film shows the circle dance as a part of a puberty rite and a circle dance as a part of a harvesting dance which is very fundamental, too. So I would then take them out. One day, I say, "Now, we're going to go on a field trip." This is a class and we usually were lecturing in Haines Hall. But I'd go down in the enclosed back patio of the Dance Building and we would form a very, very large-- We'd just get out and form ourselves in what would then become a very large circle but I just-- No touching, no this or that and-- Everybody was so apprehensive about these things. And slowly bring them closer and closer together and finally, we did form ourselves into a fairly close-knit circle. And we would move around in the circle, sometimes-- I don't think that I-- I mean, obviously, afterwards, they were amazed about what they had experienced in that, in that exercise. I mean, I, again, perhaps, as any good teacher really, I tried to draw them out of what they had gotten in their experience. And some said very interesting things about it. While some have been wishing to please me as a teacher, I saw even later in papers, they would refer back to that as a kind of a link that led them to understand some of the other theoretical things that we had been discussing in class. Now, I would-- I think I could say of that class that probably ninety-nine percent of them were not very much into Jungian thinking. So it did really bear out the fact that for me, there was enough power in that. That it did bring this to the floor and you didn't have to think-- Have already been influenced theoretically about the possible outcomes of the experiments.

SMITH: Okay. Let's go-- I'm not trying to trick you. The next question, I was thinking about your Bali film [Gods of Bali] and then about the Mary Wigman film [When the Fire Dances Between the Two Poles] and in both film, there's sort of the importance of the four elements and their relationship to movement. And then sort of bridging,

leaping back to the middle, to this period with Mary Whitehouse. Did these movements to you, that you were feeling and exploring, did they express themselves to you as, in terms of representation or expressions of the four elements?

SNYDER: I'm very interested in your asking this question this way. I would not say that there were four elements [laughter] in any of those films. It-- Obviously, concerns with how to sort of articulate the cosmic in ritual forms, often, most persuasively in Pueblo thinking. I mean, it gets articulated as the four directions in the up and the down. And if air, fire and water, I think, are themes in the Bali, now, but you must remember, I want to under stress and underline that I didn't have much to do with that narration. In fact, you know, if anything it's really, pretty much a reworking of a lot of Miguel Covarrubias's Island of Bali text. I would certainly, if I was redoing that film now or ten or twelve years ago, those would probably have come up as, say, themes only because they are very clearly articulated in the myth and ritual of the Balinese. I'm trying to think where it actually it comes up in the Wigman film. But I guess what I'm trying to say, again, and it's not too different from my earlier answer, is that the understanding of really why ritual occurs is a very important to me. And I do feel different from Jung because I don't really necessarily always see them as archetypal, but more-- I mean, I'm much more experientially, environmentally based. Maybe, even though I don't know that I'd use this word about myself, "pragmatic". I feel that ritual comes about from really trying to articulate the fundamental experience of life. And so, yes, how to place oneself. How to orientate oneself, we understand is a fundamental part of understand the I. You have to know who you are in the context of the rest of everything in order to have a sense of self.



So that these were themes that kept finding themselves, although they would often said in different ways, and that's why, I think the four directions or even the four elements-- And you'd find a lot of-- I think Jung is already passed that. But even earlier, much more Frazerian based language. This sort of "oh, yes, there's always the four directions and the four elements." I wouldn't say there's always the four directions, the four elements. But that need to understand and place oneself in a larger hole has many ways of doing it. And certainly the directional is one that is there a great deal of the time. And less clearly stated and I think this is something probably in my manuscript, try and enrich on more, is that what I do feel also is that the true artist and I, not very articulate here-- But a human being who really operates from this creative center is in themselves sort of go through that is a, I think I do say this somewhere, is the microcosm of the macrocosm. In other words, each great artist be it Wigman, be it Graham, be it Isadora [Duncan], be it whoever, is sort of restating these things in their own work and their own because it's their quest as well. And because they are in our society, the artists of our society and given permission, which again, is not really the right way to say it. But their role in society is to, is to find for themselves this way of stating it in through their own meanings and their own terms. But so, it doesn't-- I mean I'll have to rush back and look at the Wigman film to find out-- But it doesn't surprise me if you found that to be a theme, even though I can't think right at the moment because Mary was, I think, one of those very essential artists and spokespeople for our society today. So, okay?

SMITH: Okay. Well, let's shift to Carmelita Maracci, at last. Back to simple facts.

SNYDER: The fact of Carmelita is very much related to all this. She was a great artist. She was also, unfortunately, extraordinarily paranoid and in, as she grew older and older, she got more and more, separated herself out from everybody and kept-- I guess, she probably was schizophrenic that she kept thinking that she had enemies all

over the place. And so it became impossible even to a student, let alone for her to become a, to remain in the visible to the public. But she was a great teacher and one of the reasons she was a great teacher was that she was totally aware of all of these things that we've been talking about and in a class that was basically a fairly traditional Cecchetti ballet class, she would make totally relevance, I mean, the discussion about [André] Gide or Jung or whatever and make it central to our understanding or tendues or our extensions or rond-de-jambes or whatever. Well and she was inspiring. She was very tough as a teacher. Her standards were extraordinarily high, almost nobody met them, almost none of the time.

I started studying with her fairly soon after we moved out to Los Angeles. Unfortunately, when I aligned myself with UCLA, now UCLA among everything else in Los Angeles was one of these boogie men for Carmelita. So as soon as I had shifted my attention slightly, she wasn't willing to have me in class anymore. So I stopped going, but-- This is a little off the track but I-- Because it is so important to me and it is very important to why I was at UCLA. Like Mary, like Graham, who as I told you I never really worked directly with, but I have the pleasure of sitting down with her on quite a few occasions. Like Carmelita, these are all truly important human beings. Their minds were as acute as their bodies, I mean, and that they were great, from my point of view, because these two things came together. That the importance of reaching out intellectually, as well as, in the case of dance, experientially seemed to me fundamental.

And if I was to be a teacher, my aim for my students was for them to first of all understand and appreciate that and hopefully, become, hopefully be encouraged to see their life endeavors reflecting that. And so then I entered a field which is largely only

one dimensional, of the bodily orientation. I really felt that the academic or the presence in an intellectual environment had the potential of encouraging this fusion. I hope that it wouldn't discourage the essential experiential dimension of it. And that again has been a part of this other, on-going confusion and dialog that has continued in the university. But was that these two came together-- And I mean, it's certainly, when I'm trying to say to you even if I'm not saying it very well reflects my feeling about why Bennington [College] was so important to me.

SMITH: This is also tangential but I had wanted to ask you, this seems as good a point as any, you chose UCLA, but were you familiar-- Did you know Aileen Lockhart and the program at USC [University of Southern California]. Was there a reason why you went to UCLA instead of towards USC?

SNYDER: Yeah. I'll start out by saying that perhaps I was-- I mean, I had no idea really about what a big, sometimes, great university, that in a sense-- I had envisioned UCLA as being sort of a very large Bennington. And why I say that as introduction to my response to you, was that I was attracted to UCLA because of the ethnomusicology program, because of the folklore and mythology program, because of Alma's acknowledgement of the potential of the ethnology in relationship to dance and of the dance therapy. My interest in doing some classes in anthropology. I felt that what I was reading in the catalog, at least, at UCLA, suggested that I could go in all of these directions and that that would be the way I would structure and formulate what I was going to do. To a certain extent, I was able to do that, I did take classes in all of those areas, but not as much and this sort of the sense of dialogue and access. I mean, when I was in, even ethnomusicology, I knew that I was another student from another department coming in. Who I was or what-- Really a notion of dialogue didn't occur

very much. Whereas, the USC program at that point was very clearly. First of all, it was a physical education program. And I didn't even understand really-- I mean, we talked about this a little bit already. My own roots were very much from the art of dance and I had no interest in having to do anything to do with basketball and so-- I also felt and I think this was true-- It was-- I mean, they produced some very good graduates, some interesting doctoral dissertations out of that program. But the program itself was very, very narrow. It didn't, to be just quite honest, it never even crossed my mind to think about it.

SMITH: About Carmelita Maracci, how would you assess the influence that she had on the L.A. dancing?

SNYDER: Well, you could speak to a small pocket of people and they would say, she was it, or there wasn't any question or she was very central. And this group would be a very interesting group because it would go from Hollywood people like Juliette Prouse and so forth to people in modern and ballet. She-- People would seek her out and there wouldn't be any real rationale for them seeking her out. And for those, she was amazingly important. For the larger majority of even the people engaged in dance, the in-- Well, you probably already know the answer to this question. I'm trying to think-- As I recall, Bella [Lewitzky] had some kind of an encounter, but I can't remember what the story was.

SMITH: Well, I thought-- I mean, what Bella said was she did take classes and seemed to have been important to her, but no, tried as I might, there was no way I could get her to explain in any kind of detail what the influence was to other than sort of, you know, a strange and marvelous person.

SNYDER: Well, that may come closer to the answer. I mean, for all of these, you know, sort of personal confusion, what one sense first and foremost is the power of the person with total conviction about what she was doing, total commitment to it. Deep passion, I mean, it's not very often that one comes and-- It's just a great human being and a great teacher. A great teacher, I think, doesn't, maybe doesn't, isn't do something specific, they just sort of change your life. And if you say, "Why?" Can't tell because they really affected everything a little bit or everything a lot. She, I mean-- Agnes de Mille, I think, Carmelita was one of the most important artists in the American dance field. John [Joseph] Martin certainly felt that way. And when he came out to be with us during the time that he was here. And I guess you got notes about John's thoughts on his oral history. But he, you know, I mean, Carmelita really was the person he wanted to see a long time before he was able to set up that meeting because again, these barriers of "John hates me" or "is spying on me." I mean, such a tragedy about that aspect of her life. But so she was nationally and internationally recognized and anybody who has seen her in performance and again, was affected forever.

SMITH: Had you seen her perform?

SNYDER: No, I never did. Well, I have no doubt that's so.

SMITH: Right. I think perhaps we should get into the substance of UCLA next time, but I have one question that sort of flows out of, I think, the subtext of what we've been talking about today or a subtext, which is, in my interview with Pia [Gilbert], she talks about a tremendous debate within the dance department between the group process people, in which Alma [Hawkins] was the leading figure and the art people, which Pia, of course, is herself involved and also Carol Scothorn. And I wonder how, as you're coming into the program, how, did you see that kind of debate or did you

know about it and was it something--? I mean it seems to me you're one of those people who want to knock heads together and force a synthesis.

SNYDER: Right. Well, now you've answered my question. I mean, I didn't think it should be a debate. I thought it was, these were all essential components of understanding, dealing with being a part of being a master of the field, that-- As I was saying earlier on, for instance, I found what one would call the process or the process approach was a very, very essential to the choreographic process to the-- Then he'll turn it off again. It sounded like a fire, smoke--

SMITH: Smoke alarm, well, that would have been contained.

SNYDER: I hope it wasn't a computer burning or-- [laughter]

SMITH: I mean, was that tension, was the fact that tension existed another factor that drew you to UCLA in the sense that you could satisfy both elements? I mean, Alma's background is not the arts so much as the pedagogical and almost the physical, I guess, it's the physical education at Teacher's College [Columbia University]. SNYDER: I think she'd say education rather than physical, I mean she would make that distinction a bit.

SMITH: But more, I would say the Margaret H'Doubler tradition then certainly the modern dance tradition.

SNYDER: I think I will be very honest in my answer to this question. I didn't realize. I had some rose-colored glasses when I came in. I was already-- While I am coming back to further education I'm already moderately mature woman, been out there involved with the dance for-- I already have a lot of convictions about this myself and my own convictions are more of the fusion of all of these things. So I didn't realize how separate they could be. To be-- I respected or I had an interest in Alma's work

because of her interest in therapy really, which, yes, translated was that the interest in the process. I really had never known a person who was, who had such a love for dance as Alma did, whose background was solely in education and physical education. I didn't really-- While I had, my response to you earlier about USC-- I mean I had enough of a feeling about not interested in physical education to not even thought about it, but--

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE ONE

APRIL 19, 1993

SMITH: It's just that I don't want to get heavy into these-- Continuing with Allegra Fuller Snyder, April 19, 1993 at her home in Pacific Palisades.

SNYDER: I-- Once I began to examine UCLA, what really did excite me about it was not necessarily the dance program except that I felt that it was, had a potentially richer vision of dance than I had seen in any other curriculum but that it was, in turn, in this environment of a number of other programs which I thought were really essentially important to what was, certainly, my conviction that, at that point in time, my next sort of commitment and hopefully contribution was to bring the world dance perspective into the field of dance.

SMITH: So what could be called dance-- What came dance ethnology-- SNYDER: And where I saw, say, the most-- And at that point in time, remember even ethnomusicology was not all over the place. And the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA was itself a fairly pioneering element of the university and that they had that point of view about music said to me, "Well, we certainly can--" That can only help to make possible that point of view about dance. And the [Center for the Study of Comparative] Folklore and Mythology program was a very, I felt, the potential of it and the fact of it-- But I mean, there was that element because you look in most curricula and you wouldn't see that division of intellectual inquiry really separated out.

SMITH: Now, to what degree were there already elements of world dance in place? And was it in the dance department or in ethnomusicology?



SNYDER: Well, there were two different things. There was some, an African studio class. Mantel Hood had very much-- First of all, he believed very essentially in performance as the tool to accessing the ethnomusicological body of knowledge. So he had studio classes or performance groups. Particularly at that point in time, he's just been to Africa and [J. H. Kwabe] Nketia had come back. And so, music and dance of Africa or maybe gone at that point was there in ethnomusicology. He was just in the process of marrying Hazel Chung at that point, who had some background in Indonesian. So I think they were doing-- No, no. Mantle was also a very savvy in his wit-- So when he didn't have enough FTEs in ethnomusicology, he would often come over to Alma [Hawkins] and say, "Look. Wouldn't it be nice for you to have a dance of Indonesia class?" And Alma had an interest in that area, so she'd say, yes and we can give you, you know, this portion. So Hazel, I think, was actually doing the Indonesian dance classes, maybe, slash dance of Bali in the dance department. But they were sort of-- They had been created because of Mantle's program in ethnomusicology. On the other hand, Alma herself had done some international folk dance. And simultaneously with myself, Elsie [Ivancich] Dunin was coming back to do graduate work. And Elsie was already quite well established in international folk dancing. Her specialization was either Slavian material, but she was highly respected in that. So and one of the core classes for the undergraduate major was an introduction to ethnic dance, I think it was called at that point in time.

SMITH: Ethnic dance meaning folk dance or the whole schmear?

SNYDER: Yes, meaning international folk dance at that point, although hopefully to be taught in a slightly different way, but-- So that had been on the books from the very beginning. When Elsie came to do her graduate work at that same time as I was

coming to do graduate work, Alma asked her almost immediately to, through her T.A. ship to, do that class.

Shortly after I got to UCLA, Shirley Wimmer came into the program. She had been at Ohio State [University]. Shirley's husband, at that point, unfortunately ex-husband, had been very well-known Kaplan, art historian of Chinese and Indian art. And so, Shirley had traveled to a great deal with him. And she was very interested and committed to bringing some of this material. And so Shirley started and then almost immediately I followed through with the starting of the first of the dance culture of the world classes, which were almost a parallel to the ethnomusicology curriculum. They had dance culture of-- I mean, music culture of--

SMITH: This was a series of cultures of a survey class?

SNYDER: We started out immediately with a series of classes. But fairly large groups and this remained for quite a long time. Dance culture of Asia, I think, was at that point time. Dance culture of Africa, sub-Saharan Africa-- And I guess-- Anyway, the American Indian class came in fairly soon into that, maybe because of my own enthusiasm for that material. And those classes were-- Now, see then-- They almost immediately fell in in a way that they remained for a number of years. They, because they were lecture classes, they became the-- They were acceptable as humanities units from College of Letters and Science and a lot of the modest students from College of Letters and Science took those for their humanities general education requirements, which I think very much influenced really the way evolved in a sense, because we then were addressing students who had no background in dance at all for a large extent. Also, a part of the problem which remained very fundamental to the evolution of the

program was that they were not required classes for our dance students. The introduction to the ethnic dance studio class was, but these weren't.

SMITH: Now, that's a performance class?

SNYDER: Yeah. It's a studio class. In other words, one learns by doing, but--

SMITH: What would be the rudiments of African dancer or Indonesian or--

SNYDER: Right. And it was-- Elsie almost immediately took it to another level, she felt that introductions to various movements, vocabularies would be very useful to the dance student. It was true that the dance students as a whole protested that class for years and years and thought it was a total distraction from what they were, thought they were doing at UCLA. So we had a few studio classes. Pretty early on, the African studio class moved over and we had various visiting guest artist who would do various special vocabularies from time to time. We had the introduction to ethnic dance and then we began to have these area classes, which started with a sort of large, all encompassing, and then would begin to break off into a particular area, although one of the problems of the program which never was resolved was that there wasn't a clear sort of-- Things were uneven.

And Elsie very soon started a dance of Yugoslavia class because that was her great area of interest but we never offered a dance of European culture or whatever. In other words, there wasn't a more fundamental class that would lead into the Yugoslavian class, you jumped right into that now. Elsie happened to teach it in a way that that wasn't really a problem. But it wasn't-- What I would have liked would be to sort of a fundamental introductory class that would then lead into perhaps, four or five offerings that would take you in depth in a number of different cultural areas, particularly when, I mean, for instance, I taught the African class somewhat influenced

by the model that Alan [P.] Merriam had developed in ethnomusicology, speaking about four sort of major sub-Saharan areas: the east Africa, West African, the Sudan, also then the South African music and dance. My ideal would have been then to have four different in-depth classes that perhaps were both movement and even more penetrating analysis of that particular area, but we were never, I mean, we had nowhere near the faculty to do all of this.

SMITH: Actually, this is something that's interesting because I started out, the question was trying to get your perspective as an entering grad student and we sort of very quickly slid into your perspective as a faculty person.

SNYDER: Well, somewhere along the way, you asked how early on was the concept of-- Oh, I responded to you, just for us both to get a little grounded again, you said, why did I come to UCLA. I said, for this broader perspective and particularly, most particularly because the ethnomusicology program existed there and I think that I did see myself returning to the university with this interest in world dance as being my sort of guiding principle.

SMITH: I'm wondering how quickly did that for you did the transition take place, where you move from thinking as a graduate student to thinking as a faculty person, I mean, were you involved in the curriculum like Elsie was, right off the bat, almost?

SNYDER: Yeah. It was sort of strange and as I look back on my positioning from an administrative point of view, even though I was a T.A. or a part-time faculty for a period of time, almost from the very beginning, Alma asked me to sit in on faculty meetings and I sensed my voice within the faculty meetings was almost equal to almost any other person sitting in that room. Now, with the clear exception of Alma, who was, you know, the very, very strong voice at that point in time. I mean, there was

a very clear hierarchy-- Alma, Pia [Gilbert] and Carol [Scothorn], who had been there from-- And then all the rest of us, in a sense. And it didn't really matter whether it was Juan de Laban or Shirley Wimmer or Elsie and myself for one having a, already holding a professorial position, I think, Shirley was also probably assistant professor-- Maybe she was full professor. Anyway, I mean, totally uneven. But within the private domain of our meetings, that's the way it was. And therefore in one sense, since I-- Elsie is a lot quieter than I, so probably within the context of the meetings, I was really sort of became the voice in talking about the ethnology, the mention of the program. But I became-- I mean, it wasn't too long-- I felt that I was in the position of speaking pretty, with some authority, I don't really like that word, but with some authority on almost any aspect of the program. And one of my frustrations with Alma was that despite the fact that she spoke a lot about sort of integration, she compartmentalized us very rapidly and at one point, we were lacking somebody in teaching choreography for one quarter-- You know, I said, "Alma, I think I can do that." I mean, no, I was dealing with this, I mean, what background did I have at all in choreography was kind of her attitude. And so, I-- There were plenty of battles that I was fighting for. I just sort of gave up on that. But I do, as we were talking earlier about this sort positioning into a place where I was not acknowledged as a practicing dancer, artist so forth was annoying to me. And well, I don't--

SMITH: Next time, perhaps, or the time after it will be an issue.

SNYDER: This seems like a total non sequitur, but I think it makes a point: We had a family friend for many years, who was called the non-playing captain of the Davis Cup team. He had been in tennis for years and years, but after a while, he didn't play tennis anymore but he was very active as a-- Anyway, I came to think of myself as the

non-dancing dancer of the, you know, UCLA dance department. And I think that was the way I was regarded and I wasn't happy. But just to put another seed out there for us to talk further about. The irony was that outside of the department of dance, because I was becoming quite active in, for instance, the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] and asked early on in to be a part of the dance panel at the NEA. There, I was brought in because I was considered as somebody who really understood the field very well and had a good deal of experience in a number of areas, even though they saw my expertise at media, which was, you know, and that was a fairly unique body of material that I-- So, it was a rather sort of-- I didn't get schizophrenic about it, but I was sort of a schizophrenic position-- The reality of UCLA and the reality of myself in the dance field as a whole.

SMITH: Okay.

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE ONE

APRIL 30, 1993

SNYDER: Tape ten, I don't believe it. [Laughter]

SMITH: That's nothing. Last time, we ended with your sort of sliding into both student status and faculty status at UCLA and I wanted to start off today, briefly by sort of reviewing your program as a student, the faculty you worked with, if there were classes that you took that were important to you and your thesis project.

SNYDER: Okay. I really tried to put together my own program quite a bit. As I say, sort of ironically because in one sense, Alma felt I had passed through what there was in the [Department of] Dance program in a way already. And as I said, very strangely, I wasn't able to take any technique classes. So I really tried to make a combination of classes in the departments that I thought would be relevant and influential to me, ethnomusicology, folklore and mythology, and anthropology. As it turned out, for the usual reasons, scheduling classes in ethnomusicology was harder than I had anticipated. So I finally didn't really do many classes with them although I got to know Mantle [Hood] and Hazel [Chung Hood], his wife, I think, and [J. H. Kwabe] Nketia. I wasn't really taking classes there. I took several classes in folklore. Worked with— SMITH: Wayland Hand?

SNYDER: Wayland, yeah. Wayland was wonderful and charming. And that was useful to me. It was very much of an introductory— But this sort of the approach to the evolution of thinking in the discipline was a very useful series of thoughts and ideas for me. And we did get into some of the collecting skills as well, which I found quite interesting and exciting.

SMITH: How did they balance the kind of humanistic, maybe like the Mircea Eliade approach, with the more semiotic and scientific approach, of say, the Proppian analysis of folktales and—?

SNYDER: It tended to be more a semiotic approach, Stith Thompson as one of the major people that we worked with and another man [Richard Dorson] from Indiana—Terrible. I haven't thought about this for a while. Well, it will come back to me, some of the other names. Also at that point—it was just a little bit later—that I came to know Bob [Robert A.] Georges in folklore and became very interested in his work on sort of process-oriented thinking. Bob, particularly through a student who began to take whatever classes I was involved in early on—Alice Singer—and who actually, I think Bob credits as being one of his assistants on his first book, which was really a series of essays—I forget what it was called at this point, Introduction to Folklore or something like that. Studies in folklore, I think. Anyway, whatever that slice of that slice of folklore—which was, at that point, fairly cutting edge folklore—that Bob was investigating, was particularly of interest to me.

I worked quite a lot with [William A.] Lessa in anthro—he's been retired for a number of years now—on classes on myth and ritual. Again, I mean, I remember one time trying to, or I did bring into class a report on [Joseph] Campbell. But that wasn't the approach to myth and ritual that was being taken in the class, although he was a very open and thoughtful man. He didn't shut me up and say, "No, you can't talk about this." But it was clearly another kind of direction and concern. Again, I liked a lot, as I said, even with Wayland, the skills of analysis of finding the kind of themes, motifs. I got quite interested in that. With Lessa, while it wasn't specific to myth and



ritual, we got into a lot of the sort of, again, tools of analyzing symbols and themes in myth in his class. And that too, I found very stimulating and challenging.

Then as I mentioned in our last talk, Shirley Wimmer was teaching in the department at that point and Shirley was sort of trying out the notion of doing some classes on— Well, we chose, and I was sort of in on the choosing, but the model of the dance cultures of, as the music cultures of that were being offered in the ethnomusicology.

SMITH: So this is Dance 140 [Dance Cultures of the World] A, B, and C. SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. That became the sequence when I started to teach them. I think actually Shirley's class may have been a graduate level class.

SMITH: The 266 [Dance Expressions in Selected Cultures]?

SNYDER: The 266, I think, yeah. But anyway, Shirley and I really sort of experienced ourselves as friends and colleagues. But in class it was interesting to really have the opportunity to get into particularly the Asian materials with her. As I mentioned, she has a strong background in that through her own experience, through her husband [Julius D. Kaplan]'s work in art history in that area. His name is Kaplan. Pretty strong—

SMITH: We talked about this somewhat last time.

SNYDER: So I was doing that class with Shirley. We sort of— Well, there were several culture-based classes and then I did several of Alma [Hawkins]'s dance therapy classes.

SMITH: Did you take the Philosophical Bases and Trends in Dance?

SNYDER: Right. And Alma was teaching that at that point.

SMITH: That was her class.

SNYDER: That was her class, really, yeah, initially. Then I taught it, then Pia

[Gilbert] taught it.

SMITH: I do want to get into how you taught it because Pia and I talked about it at great length and I think it may be interesting to have your version of the class.

SNYDER: Yeah. Well, I'd like to talk about it.

SMITH: Did you take Pia's music for dance classes?

SNYDER: No. Those were all undergraduate classes and Alma agreed that I didn't really have to do any undergraduate classes, except the kinesiology, which I finally didn't do. [Laughter] That was very, just really for the record, because I think it's interesting to note if we're dealing with intellectual growth. As I think I've mentioned my earliest bent really in school was toward the scientific. But I realized how much my own mindset had changed by the time here—what—fifteen years later in the graduate work. And I just had no interest or appetite in memorizing things. Valerie [V.] Hunt was an extraordinarily skilled teacher and very interesting. But all of the things that years before would have been like sliding off a piece of ice or whatever, I mean, they were just not—I was fascinated in the approach of really understanding the body well, and I thought that was a very important dimension for a program in dance. But I just couldn't take it myself and I think it is interesting to recognize how much your mental appetite changes over the years and what you really want to absorb and how you want to absorb it. I think that's an important lesson for educational modeling, really. First of all, I'm a mother with two children at that point— My children would, at that point, have been just going into secondary school, I think, or the last years of elementary school—

SMITH: Junior high school.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. So, I mean, there were just quite a lot of things that I had to— Anyway, I was fairly strict in monitoring myself as to how many units I was going to

take and I usually, you know, I took really the— I think I took really two classes each quarter, which did earn me the needed number of classes and really put a lot of time— I did fairly extensive bits of research in almost, in each of the classes. And some of that actually was even included in the manuscript stuff. The Tewa material was, in part, work I'd started in the myth and ritual class. I think maybe some of it then was also generated by one of the classes I did with Shirley. But anyway, I sort of built on it and I could really feel another kind of creative dimension in research emerging from all of that experience. I came to realize that there was a process that, for me, was very analogous to the creative process of choreography. And a lot of it was as intuitive as a piece of choreography that—You had a notion about something. You began to jump into it. In many instances, you found that you weren't totally off base in what you had initially just sort of had a feel about. So, that certainly fortified and inspired me further in the notion of my commitment to teaching and to the research and—if you want to call it—academic approach to dance.

You asked about the thesis. That was fun, because in fact, I had three projects. One, I did actually want to do the Tewa. The Tewa as a documentary film. I realized, first of all, it would have taken me a hundred years to raise the funds for it. And that I would have had to go into the field for another— Anyway, the parameters were impossible. So then that, I had also thought the material on Isadora [Duncan] was another project that I engaged in. I guess maybe that was a project— I think I must have taken it— I did take a class with Juana de Laban, I can't remember. It must have been history, graduate history of some sort. Anyway, that was a project that was— I allowed myself to put a lot of time into in that context. And I was also excited about the notion of doing that as a film. That would have been a little bit easier, but still the

component of money was just something that I couldn't quite figure out how I would resolve. And so then, sort of looking at really what was at root of both of those things, which was really the theory of film as it relates to dance in a sense, was what I finally decided to focus on. I was very glad that I had done that because it did allow me really to break through into another level of understanding about film and dance, which became, I mean, almost immediately when I finished my thesis, several different articles I was asked to do. Let me see, one for Impulse, one for the Dance Perspectives, which at that point was really the most important journal in the field. It wasn't really a journal, it was a series of monographs on themes, but it was a very important one. I worked with Selma Jeanne Cohen on whole issue of cinedance and one of my pieces is in there. The piece itself is too truncated really. It doesn't really work, I'm afraid. Maybe in the context of that whole issue, it did because, a number of the themes that I sort of summarize were embedded in the rest of the material and I helped in recommending and selecting some of the other contributors to that issue. And then the Dance Magazine article on the three kinds of dance film, which even though Dance Magazine was, as it continues to be, a very pop magazine in the field of dance, nevertheless, also had a very wide readership and had a, you know, very broad effect on the dance community. And that article—I still actually share that with others. I think it's a very useful article. And it was from all of that then that June [Batten] Arey, who was the first director of the dance program for the National Endowment for the Arts, asked me to do this major report on the relationship of dance to media. So the process of working on the thesis was a very productive one for me.

SMITH: Who were your advisors on the thesis?

SNYDER: I think Alma was my official chair.

SMITH: Could she handle the cinematic theory?

SNYDER: No. I mean, really, again, it's interesting. To a large extent for me, it was what I wanted anyway. But my positioning in the department was such a peculiar one really that people didn't really want to argue with me about things or they didn't—I mean, they really considered me the authority on what I was writing about, so there wasn't much challenge to it. Alma was very helpful and—

SMITH: So she was presumably learning from your—?

SNYDER: Yeah. I think she really— She was pleased, I mean, she had as a part of her large vision, certainly film was in that thinking. In fact, I think during that period, maybe even before I finished my thesis, we wrote a proposal for a major dance film archive, which was part of a even larger funding proposal that Mantle Hood sent in on behalf of both dance and music for archival funding and support in the media. What we got was some beautiful cameras which mostly were lodged in ethnomusicology. And we didn't really get a lot out of it. But it certainly suggested how supportive Alma and interested Alma was in that dimension, extension of the department. Shirley Wimmer was on my committee. Juana was on, and then Richard [C.] Hawkins in film.

SMITH: That was my next question, if you had taken any classes in theater arts or—

SNYDER: No. And I didn't really have—I don't think they had started the ethnographic film classes at that point. I certainly would have taken them, but I think, Richard, and— [John C.] Boehm and Mike [Michael] Moerman from the anthro created those classes about, three or four years later. No, I think Alma simply said, “Here's somebody in film that probably will be supportive of what you're doing.” And we didn't really have much dialogue on it or all that point in time.

SMITH: I want to get into the film, the question of film theory and dance theory, but I'd like to do that as sort of a unit with the three films from '68 to '77. Before that, I'd like to discuss one of the classes you started to teach. From '65 to '67, you were "film advisor," now what did that mean?

SNYDER: Well, I think, this proposal, which we worked quite considerably on, was one of my tasks. We were trying to build up some kind of a library in film in the department, so I spent quite a lot of time on researching what was available. Again, we didn't make as many acquisitions as any of us hoped because we didn't have the funds and also at that time, it was still— The field of dance film was really, almost not there. I think I've already mentioned in relationship to the New Dance [Theatre and] School's series on Looking at Dance and its History but when I had first screened— The Night Journey. The Dancer's World, Appalachian Spring were available, now, very poor quality, but then quite interesting. Kinescopes out of WGBH in Boston, which were interviews with court dancers, choreographers, some film clips— The people who were documented on those were important, I mean, from [Anthony] Tudor to, I don't think [Jerome] Robbins was interviewed, but Nora Kaye's classical ballet— [Alwin] Nikolais. So they were important enough for us to acquire some of those. Even ferreting out some of the early ones at that point in time; Doris Humphrey's Air for a G String, which I still think is really a beautiful film, very simple, was there and available. Also, during that time, I don't know whether it would have been exactly because of my position in the department, but Frances [L.] Inglis asked me to do this series on dance through film, which was a Royce Hall series. And Frances was very warm in her support and really to the extent that, I mean, there wasn't anything that

was outlandishly absurd, in terms of course, but we were able to project in both thirty-five as well as sixteen, so we had one of the first screenings of the [Margot] Fonteyn-[Rudolph] Nureyev, it wasn't Gisele— I'd have to look at that [Les Sylphides An Evening with the Royal Ballet]. Sorry, you should warn me sometime and I'll do a little homework. Anyway, that was an interesting and I thought a pretty exciting series. And I spent quite a lot of time on the preparation of that. We had an evening of [Fred] Astaire, which was one of the first and only—And we more or less edited and that was a really challenging thing. We did selections and the projectionist and I— I mean, he was running upstairs, and we had this cued this up and he'd put that reel of sixteen on and then we'd run over and put another one on. But we built a very nice program of his and [Ginger] Roger's dance sequences only from Swing Time, Top Hat and I think The Story of Irene and Vernon Castle. And that was one of the first times that Astaire or the Hollywood approach to dance had been really shown in the context of a series that included then classical ballet. We had an evening of pioneers of modern dance, which got some very interesting early Ruth St. Denis material. Frances did give me \$500 to sort of do the next level of polishing of the Wigman film [When the Fire Dances Between the Two Poles]. It wasn't the finished thing, but that was sort of the first public screening of the Wigman film. Got some early experiments with Doris Humphrey. Went into the [Martha] Graham. So we had an evening of modern, an evening of classical ballet, an evening of Asian dance— Bavanihan was shown as part of that—and an evening of European folk, flamenco, and an evening of experimental, pure cinedance films. So it was a good panorama of dance.

SMITH: What kind of attendance did you have? Do you recall?

SNYDER: It was very uneven really. Very uneven. You know, at times— You know, Royce is a bewildering auditorium to do anything in, really. So really even with maybe two hundred people, it looks like nobody's in there. I imagine we had, we didn't go much below two hundred. I would be surprised— I had no idea. I don't think Frances even gave me the figures. I would be surprised if we had more than five hundred or six hundred at any one thing. But I might be wrong about that. But it was interesting. Again, it sort of brought this screening—I wish I could think of which of the Nureyev-Fonteyn film it was—

SMITH: Well, we can get that later.

SNYDER: But anyway, that was the first showing of that. In fact, it was one of the only ones that had been shown. And that was a beautiful thirty-five print that we were able to get. And quite a lot of the ballet community came out for that. It was interesting. Again, people came out for what they wanted to see, really. It was hard to encourage them to cross boundaries, even though that was my real dream and intention in doing it. So that was another of the tasks that I guess I engaged in in that period from '65 to '67.

SMITH: In '67, you become a lecturer. Was it your understanding that you would eventually get a tenure track position in the dance department?

SNYDER: No. I've also sort of alluded to this before. Alma had a very interesting perspective on the faculty really. Pia and Carol [Scothorn] were initially the only tenure track, and then, of course, tenured, I think. But I think Pia was— Well, you'd know better than I. My sense is that Pia didn't actually get fully tenured even until within that period or even slightly a bit later. But Alma liked to have a faculty that was largely lecturers that she didn't have to fight for promotions. Alma probably more



clearly and maybe even realistically continued to recognize the resistance of the academic community to the dance and the dancers and whatever these people were that were teaching in the dance department. And I think she didn't want to press the issue too much. And on the other hand, we— I mean, even Shirley Wimmer, I don't think— She must have been assistant professor. Shirley was too smart to let herself get— But there was a lot of sort of discussion about all of that and Alma's resistance towards really officially having us acknowledged—

SMITH: So there was this large group of lecturers of which you were one?

SNYDER: Yeah, well, it wasn't so large, but this sort of the hard-working core of the department.

SMITH: Was it your intention to stay at UCLA if you could or did you—? Were you considering going elsewhere? Not that there was that much else for you to go to.

SNYDER: Yeah, well, it was interesting that at that point, Richard. Cal Arts [California Institute of the Arts] was emerging. And I think I have already said, but it's worth repeating at this point, I was very interested in Cal Arts from the very first announcement I read in the paper. In fact, I sent a letter off to [Roy O.] Disney saying that I really was excited about what he was saying—And whether I said it exactly in it, but I said, you know, I think there's a possibility of this being in some way analogous to the Bennington [College] model, which I just felt was the most exciting model for the development and nurturement of the arts in an academic setting. I didn't get a letter back from him, but I did get a letter back from one of his staff and that did lead, later on, to talks with— And you mentioned that he was the first director and whose name—

SMITH: Herbert Blau.

SNYDER: So I talked with Blau a bit, and then, of course, when Bella [Lewitzky] came on, I'd already had my working time with Bella at Idyllwild [School of Music and the Arts (ISOMATA)], so Bella was very interested for me to do something at Cal Arts. I'm just pausing to think whether— I must have done one of the dance cultures classes even in this period between '65 and '67.

SMITH: At UCLA or at Cal Arts?

SNYDER: At UCLA. Anyway, so when they moved out to Valencia— I think that I'm right that it was almost in that first year of Bella's heading up the new dance program when they were there. She asked me to come over and do the dance cultures classes for them over there. I had also known through the Society for Ethnomusicology, Nick England, who headed up their world music program. As it turned out, it didn't really matter that much because what I did discover—which I was sad—was that each of the arts was quite isolated from one another and rather than that sense of the integration, which is what I had thought might be the model that they were going to work with. This wasn't really so.

SMITH: Now, you had mentioned last time that your students at UCLA, which were just as likely to be physics majors—

SNYDER: Well, in those undergraduate classes, yeah.

SMITH: But in Cal Arts, were you dealing entirely with the dance students, or did you bring in other—?

SNYDER: Mostly dance. And I think there it may have been a requirement for them, so there was a lot more sort of initial dragging of feet in coming into that program. I think I did get a few world music students. But on the whole, those classes also proved— I think, they were exciting for me and I think the students were stimulated

by them. I approached them in a different manner. I mean, I tried to make much more of a connection to their, professional dance activities, the fact that most of them were there with the intention of becoming professional choreographers and dancers. At UCLA, it was much more of a cultural study than trying to include Western dance and it was Western dance aesthetics.

Anyway, so I was doing those classes at Cal Arts. I think I did that for two years or almost two years. So this must have been '67 and those classes at UCLA— They were just about to start their critical studies program at Cal Arts and they asked me if I would be interested in joining that as a full-time faculty. I think that I mentioned that to Alma. It wasn't really to push her in one direction or another, but I was really considering that as a possibility and it was at that point that she gave me a full-time— I think probably the first step was a full-time lecturer.

SMITH: So you became assistant professor in 1973.

SNYDER: Well, that all occurred because I'd already been asked to be chair of the department. So everybody said, well, looks as though we can't really have Allegra as chair of the department without her even having a tenure track position. They pushed me in and that went through almost immediately. Somebody once said to me that I had the fastest sequence of promotions of almost anybody at UCLA. I think the next year, they proposed that I be jumped up to associate professor three or something or other. And I think that went too. So I leapt from assistant professor to associate professor. But that was all to do with the fact that I had come in as chair of the department.

SMITH: So when you were offered the position at Cal Arts, then Alma countered with the full-time lecture position.

SNYDER: I think so. I really have to be honest in saying I can't— There was sort of this dialogue—

SMITH: Maybe another more important question is what were the factors that led you to choose UCLA over Cal Arts?

SNYDER: Well, I thought that the possibility of the visions and dreams that I had about what I was doing and why I was doing it appeared at that point to be more a possibility at UCLA. As I say, if I had found a slightly different orientation at Cal Arts, I would have been very taken with it. But it was really very much of a scene of specialization and I'm just not a specialist, you know. I really fight that.

Meanwhile, even though I had this sort of strange and ambiguous position at UCLA, I already really had begun to have some excellent working dialogue with a much more comprehensive kind of a situation. And I really did also enjoy doing these large undergraduate classes and really working with students who had no previous contact with dance at all. And I seemed to be able— I mean, it was an ideal time to be doing some of these classes because it was the late sixties, and the whole issue of educational relevancy was very much out there. And I think a number of students felt that what I was saying was very relevant in the—

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE TWO

APRIL 30, 1993

SMITH: Before we get into your classes, which is what the next big point—

SNYDER: Let me just say. Thinking about it, again, the sense that at Cal Arts I would have largely been working with dance students, who were going into the field professionally—and maybe I brought with me my bias of my own impression about the world of dance as a whole—I felt while some might emerge to be very gifted—Susan Rose who's now at [University of California] Riverside and I think really one of very talented artists, was one of my students. Actually, she came from UCLA and went over to Cal Arts. But, you know, every once in a while, you would stimulate somebody who really would emerge as a major artist. But on the whole, one's effect was much less significant than I thought really affecting the thinking of a student, who might go into any number of other areas. In other words, I was much more excited and I think remained much more excited about not affecting just those in dance but really affecting the attitude about dance by a very much larger community. So that opportunity seemed to be much more present and available at UCLA.

Now, in later years, as I've said, I came to resent the fact that I got very few students from the dance program in those very classes. I felt a little cheated by that as well. But, hoping that I'd have a broader effect through my teaching, I didn't mean to

exclude those in the field of dance, I just wanted to go beyond that. So really, I think, all of those things very much persuaded me that UCLA was the place I wanted to be if there was an opportunity.

SMITH: Of course, later you were in the position to make your classes mandatory if you wanted to, not all of them of course, but—

SNYDER: Well, with my leadership, we really did arrive at things at consensus. And for years and years, that wasn't the consensus of the department. I mean, this is a criticism that we'll probably talk about. I mean, the department, despite the changes of personnel and so forth, basically kept on holding to the program that Alma had created and it was very, very difficult, particularly because Pia and Carol remained absolutely committed to that same program and they really remained— Even though I was chair of the department, in a sense they were the seniors in the department. And they were really were—I tried to mediate what I felt was a real—at some points along the way—tension between the young faculty, who had another vision, and the old guard. But I never could really empower the young— Because I didn't want a real revolution on my hands, that wasn't the way I worked with things. So I couldn't ever quite get them to the point where their actions would create real change.

So whatever it was that was there in 1962 was, I mean, basically is still what it is, almost until today. I think we did— There was a minor revision, I think, three or four years ago. But I think that is—to be quite honest—one of the reasons that the program at this point is suffering. The administration feels that we got stuck and really couldn't get out of that mud that we had gotten ourselves into.

SMITH: Yeah, we'll have to explore that further.

SNYDER: One last thing on Cal Arts and this could be very, very brief, even to the point of a one word answer, but Bella had a very rocky experience there, maybe in some ways, an unhappy experience, and she's talked about it. But I wonder if you have any perceptions about that or the nature of her direction of the dance program at Cal

Arts and the problems that developed between her and the administration. SNYDER: I'm not sure that I really can, Richard. But I think that her having included me in in this sort of her early vision of the program suggested that she also had a larger hope and dream about things. And I think she also found this kind of compartmentalization to be a frustrating one. I mean, Bella in her own work has always— It's been very much nurtured and influenced again, by the larger artistic community. Her relationship with Rudi Gernreich was a very fruitful one for her. And with composers. I think she felt that she couldn't change— While she was very good at doing some of the things they expected her to, she was extremely gifted in technique and extremely gifted in her work with choreography. I think she is really probably the most important choreographic teacher around. There was a lot that I just felt that she hoped that she could do, and it didn't happen. But more than that, I don't really know. It was interesting then. Again, I think if Bella had had her way, she would have liked to have had me as a part of the dance program. It was sort of a compromise which I think she supported and even suggested that I be considered for the critical studies program.

SMITH: I could see that actually as more in line with the kind of program that you might want to develop—

SNYDER: Well, it might have been. It might have been. I mean, yeah, it could have been. Except again, it was sort of— It was and I think, in fact, came to be again, okay.

Here's the critical studies class that we have to take because they say we've got to take it. There wasn't the sense of the excitement about that dimension of the learning process, which was exactly the excitement that I had experienced at Bennington. I think at Bennington you really were hungry to extend yourself into the humanities. I will add—this would have been after I had been chairing the department—that they did come back to me and asked me to consider taking on the provost position at Cal Arts. I thought they were really ridiculous to even have asked me to do that. But anyway, so I did go through—I really did go through an interview process. I mean, it seemed to be up there enough that they brought me out and wined and dined me for a couple of times, on all of it. But I did it because they asked me. If they'd actually then come back and said, do it, I don't know that I would have even accepted it at that point. But it was kind of an interesting challenge to go through.

SMITH: What were your perceptions of Bella's management style? Was she the sort of person who would talk things over with people?

SNYDER: That I don't really know. In that respect, Richard, I just did come in and do my classes and went. I don't think I ever sat in on a faculty meeting at Cal Arts.

SMITH: Okay. Well, let's get into some of your classes at UCLA, I thought we'd start with the Introduction to Dance class, Dance 50.

SNYDER: Oh, okay. That came about a little bit later on. That was probably, in a sense, in relationship to the department, my most innovative contribution. But that didn't get introduced into the curriculum, I think, until perhaps '76 or something like that. Then I went away on one of my first sabbaticals and when I came back, we had expanded the classes in the graduate sequence in the ethnology program. And I decided I couldn't really keep on doing that any longer. But that really was a fun,



exciting model that if I had any—If I had been able to be three people in one, why, I really would have kept—We started it because of the premise that—and this did come from the sort of the rumblings that I felt were being articulated by the younger and I thought more innovative faculty as saying—Okay, the very first quarter of the first year of the freshmen, we'll put them into a class where they will get a brief one week taste of everything that we're doing in the program, including the ethnology, including the therapy. Also a very much of a sort of a “you as a dancer,” even though these were all very young beings at that point.

SMITH: So these were all dance majors.

SNYDER: Yeah. Well, Wendy—then Urfrig, now Temple—who was the undergraduate counselor, was able to sort of sneak everybody in, even though we never did put this in as a requirement. But because the poor first quarter freshman was so innocent, they couldn't really resist and say, “No, I don't want to do that class.” I also then really tried to have them feel themselves as entering into a field, a world. I had created some assignments, so if, let's say, the Nikolais company was there, they would actually do some research, maybe talk to somebody in the company. In other words, it was a— The intention was really to access and make real and make exciting, all of which lay ahead for them in the program. And what I hoped would happen would be that their appetites would be whet enough that even if the dance cultures classes and so forth continued just to be electives, they would have already been excited enough about that as an alternative possibility that they would indeed have gone and sampled it for themselves. And I, you know, obviously, see things through my own rose-colored glasses, but I really did think that it had a positive effect in that

way. And I really wished that we could have kept on with it because I think it could have changed.

SMITH: So was there opposition to the course?

SNYDER: No, there wasn't really. As I say, when I came back after this sabbatical in '78 and, actually at that point, gave up the chairing of the department, I decided that my priority was really on the graduate program and I couldn't do everything.

SMITH: And no one else was ready to step forward to—?

SNYDER: Well, yeah, somebody stepped forward for a bit. But because it wasn't a requirement, you know, and it was— So it wasn't necessarily a big plus on anybody else's thing and it really had to be something you loved and believed in. We developed a second class which Doris Siegel—Dance 50b I guess it probably was called, which was much more sort of an introduction to the craft of production or something like that. And Doris kept on doing that for, I guess perhaps even till she retired. And that also was useful but— Now, I'm trying to think— Somebody taught it one more year and then nobody else volunteered to do it and it just died. But it was fun and I did— I mean I can demonstrate, I lit some fires because some of our most interesting graduating seniors who—some of them—went on to do an M.A. with us were fired by that class. I mean I can say that just because they remained friends and I observed their progress through the program. So, I guess that's all I'll say about that. SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about the development of the focuses within the department. When you came in, how well developed and articulated were the, I guess, it's three focuses, isn't it—?

SNYDER: Well, at the graduate level, they really weren't. The development of the ethnology focus really came to rest on myself and Elsie [Dunin]'s shoulders.

SMITH: And you started that in '67? More or less.

SNYDER: Yeah, more or less. As I say, there had been— I mean, it was on Alma's master plan, all right. And early on, Shirley Wimmer was sort of starting to do some of those classes, but— And then Shirley left pretty shortly thereafter. But it really, even— I think I'm not incorrect in saying that Shirley was kind of looking forward to my being able to really take over and really work with that. And in the discussions about all of these, early on, I mean, I could pull out papers of this sort of the early seeds of the ideas, I mean, it was myself and Elsie talking with Mantle and Alma really about— And Mantle was involved with this, in the sense that Alma felt, very smartly at that point, that we could probably make it happen much more easily if Mantle was supportive and involved.

SMITH: I guess if we look at the ethnodance or the dance ethnology program, what kinds of choices were you facing as you developed the program?

SNYDER: Well, I think, unfortunately, the tension of theory and practice arose very early on. I didn't really want it to be there, but— I did feel very strongly that there was really a body of theory to be developed and I personally was putting my focus and my energy on that. I didn't want this to mean, however, that the experiential wasn't very important. Now, Elsie was doing—

SMITH: You mean performance of—?

SNYDER: Well, I prefer really to call it the experiential; the doing of it, not necessarily in the notion of performance. I mean, performance with the small "p," meaning just to perform oneself. That's no problem. But unfortunately, performance had the property of becoming a big "p" very fast. And one of the things that Elsie began to fight in the department was that she felt very strongly about the Yugoslav material as— I mean, she really went into great depth in the learning and the doing of

that material. She resented and resisted the notion then that the outcome of that was performances. A lot of the issue about— We were hoping that we were dealing with bodies of materials which were integral to a culture. They weren't about performance, they were a part of the ritual cycle or something or other and that, when transformed— And there were some good examples of these transformations. I mean, the Moiseyev company, at that point, was very popular and that had done a tremendous transformation— The Bayanihan itself is a good example. And there were a couple of others. In fact, there were actually some of the African companies that came out at that point. We don't see them much now, but the dance of Guinea, even the dance of Ghana group that Mantle particularly brought over— And what was happening at the University of Ghana in the Institute of African Studies was a kind of a transformation from its indigenous function and meaning to something else. One of our concerns was trying to make a point about that, not make an assumption that all dance then transformed itself in its ideal situation into a performance on a metropolitan stage. That it didn't have to have that quality or objective at all.

SMITH: But I understand there were people on the faculty or involved with the department who were very much interested in this kind of capital "p" performance, or kind of folklorico—

SNYDER: Right, right, so as I say—

SMITH: So was there—?

SNYDER: So that began to be a real tension. Now, in one sense, I suppose I exacerbated it in a way, because of the fact that I was saying, "Okay, my particular concern is with the theory of" and a lot of people then, since that was interesting and it was seemingly of interest to a certain group of students, they'd say, "Okay, so the

ethnology program is a theory program and it hasn't anything to do with performance." And that wasn't the meaning. As I say, my concern— What I would have liked— and we've talked about this— The ideal model that I would have liked to have seen was that you had some kind of an experiential dimension for every cultural area that was addressed from the theoretical, anthropological, whatever point of view. So that then they were taking— And that the student was actually putting those two things together into one and understanding the meaning, the meaning of the experience of their movement, by the meaning of the culture which it had generated it. But we didn't really—There wasn't really, in any area, I would say, that that fully occurred. Perhaps the Asian area eventually emerged a little bit more that way, because, again, the fusion of performance in the classical arts, so to say—India and really, certainly Japan and maybe to a lesser extent, Korea—is that they both are embodiments of the religion and the cultural ethics themes. But they are performed many times in a context that looks pretty similar to performance on a stage—on a proscenium stage in the Western sense now—in a performance in a temple setting. Anyway—

SMITH: It's their classical tradition, certainly.

SNYDER: Yeah. So this, and sort of in all of this was Elsie who was an excellent mover and teacher of European movement, particularly Yugoslavian—but really across the board—who had a very strong feeling about not taking this into a performance mode then. So, okay, somebody comes into the ethnology program, they can't do any performance—

SMITH: Somebody said they can't do any—

SNYDER: Yeah, well, no. Because we had many, many students who were deeply committed to the notion of theory and practice as we—this little miniature faculty of

Elsie and myself—were deeply committed to. And so we'd get a student who was doing the study of Bharata Natyam and she would say, "Well, I'd like my thesis to be a performance based on my theoretical study." And the rest of the faculty would say, "No, you're an ethnology student, you can't— That, no. Our performances are only allowed. We'll only support a graduate student who is doing choreography and or modern Western performance." Now, this became such a tension that the— Again, off the record but I suppose on record, I mean, Carol Scothorn, most persuasively articulated this opinion. She refused over and over again to allow any of our ethnology students the opportunity to do any kind of performance, even though, in fact, if we had, as a part of the dance ethnology forum— And after a while, the students in the program got so angry and fed up with all of this, that they said, as a part of the forum—which is one time when we've sort of got things a little bit to ourselves—"We were getting our own money from the Graduate Students Association and so forth and we're going to have a performance." And many times, those performances were jam-packed, sold out and some of the best performances that I thought had come through the department in a while. But they were not officially supported by the program itself.

SMITH: Now, is Carol— I know you can't really speak for her, but your understanding—and you must have debated these things for years— To what degree do you feel her position was theoretically based and to what degree was it a turf question?

SNYDER: I think probably it was a more of a turf question, but maybe because it was that and she didn't really want to admit that that was so. You know, she sort of would justify it programmatically now. The term "programmatic" would be used, or it

wouldn't be, "No, we don't permit it," but, "There isn't any space in the program," "There wasn't any class in the program," "What are these students studying in the program." I mean, "The choreographic students, they're taking classes and classes and classes in choreography, so this is a part of their work that perform on the stage. This is an evolution of their academic program. We have to have these performances because it's an academic requirement, we have these performances. But that student who studies ethnology; she is sitting in the classroom with Allegra and they're talking theory. There isn't anything in that program that says it's an academic requirement or a necessity for that student to perform." So that's a—

SMITH: So if a student had wanted to do South Asian dance, as a performance and theory, she would have had to go into the choreography and performance program and then integrate the South Asian dance culture into, basically, the Western or the North Atlantic terms.

SNYDER: That's right. And some of them did that, and some had some moderately successful experiences. A lot of them were frustrated because they were forced into doing what really felt, for them, was compromise and they didn't really want it, but they— A performing artist is a very passionate person about performance. And they may easily be more willing to compromise something if they're still getting the opportunity of doing something.

SMITH: Where did Pia and Alma fit in on these debates since they're the other two of the triumvirate—?

SNYDER: Right, right. Alma was largely out of this by the time, both the ethnology program and, obviously, my chairing the department and so forth— Alma was largely

not around at that point. There were a couple of years when there was sort— I was chairing and she was still around, but that was difficult for everybody, mostly Alma. So, I was trying to think if Alma had— It's hard to actually predict what Alma could have been, if she'd been in the center of the debate later on. She might have been swayed and swayed things in another direction. I know that at a point, she felt there should be some new energy and insight coming even into the choreography program. She wasn't very happy with the product, what she saw in the way of the students' work for a period of time. She felt there was something lacking. Whether she would have said that a dialogue or infusion of the ethnology perspective would have enriched that, I don't know. Certainly, on the other hand, as you know, her own work, when she left UCLA, was really taking the principles that she had evolved over the years in the context of dance therapy back into working with students in their creative work. So she certainly felt that there were insights from the therapy program that she would have liked to have seen more centrally affecting the whole of the program. That I know to be so.

Pia was always much more open about all of these things. I think perhaps the only sort of really clearly articulated resistance that Pia might have offered was her criteria about live music in a performance. So, are you going to be able to get a group of Indian musicians. We can't have it on tape. That wasn't really a particularly overwhelming problem because in many instances, these very students would be working, at least at points, with live musicians. In fact, that's what they longed for and craved. And in many instances, not many, but in some instances there would be counterparts in ethnomusicology who could have, you know, rendered that service. So I don't know that she— Then again, I guess the only other thing would have been, this



sort of programmatic theme, “Where is it? Where is it in the program that this is going to happen?” And Pia always worried and I certainly— Our solutions to these problems was not a good solution, “Okay, that’s fine. Now, we’ll add another class.” And blah, blah, blah and blah, blah, blah, “We’ll do it in addition to the five other classes that they shouldn’t be teaching on their regular load now, anyway, I mean, in other words, we just kept building and building a structure that was really untenable for the faculty to work with and live with. Where, as chair of the department, I could show you a quarter when I was teaching four theory classes in addition to chairing the department.

SMITH: In one quarter?

SNYDER: In one quarter,

SMITH: Why did you agree to do that? If you don’t mind my asking.

SNYDER: Because they were there and they had to be done. And I loved them all.

And programmatically, we had to have them in. I mean, all stupid answers. Stupid answers but at the point in time when they felt like that was the solution, now—

Anyway, I think we’re in very dangerous territory right at the moment, Richard, but I’ll say it anyway, I think this kind of solution to the problem probably comes about more from a faculty that is largely women, that is, largely there not because they’re academics, being academic, but because they are in love with their subject. So one just takes on more and more in order to make it happen. And anyway, so, but— SMITH:

It also sounds somewhat like the downside of consensus. Instead of resolving conflict, you defer it.

SNYDER: That’s right. Yeah, as I say, I found throughout the time that I was in the department and certainly as I was chair, even though we would say constantly and constantly and constantly, we have to arrive at this through consensus—and that we

had actual recorded notes on faculty meetings—you'd hear that over and over again— But the consensus was arrived at in a very, from my point of view—it's a word that's coming up—a very wishy-washy way, really. We were very, very afraid of really getting into arguments and really getting into debate and really being willing to challenge and question one another. There's a certain kind of reluctance to do that and, I mean, I think in some ways, ironically, this sort of— I rose to a leadership position in the department because I was not as afraid of that as the rest, but I couldn't ever really get others to engage in that, in a way that we really then worked through, fought through, and arrived at a consensus because we had really examined all sides of the question and really, again, came back to believing and this is the— It was because we were afraid to confront things, many, many times. And I just— I never could get us out of that pattern. And again, I, you know, I hope this is a useful document. I do think, again, this was initiated by the kind of leadership that Alma gave. Alma was a very gentle person and she didn't want to engage— She either would come in and say, “This is the way we're going to do it” or she would already sort of know how it was going to go and— She was very much afraid of confrontation. And Carol was too, I think for different reasons really. And so, so—

SMITH: As I recall, Pia's assessment of Alma was yes, the group process but Alma already had worked out in detail what she wanted to accomplish, so there was this combination of very authoritative command style and a democratic approach. If I'm summarizing her—

SNYDER: I don't really like to say these things, but I think they are real. I think the fact that Alma's whole life was involved with this, that there wasn't— That she hadn't been married, that she hadn't had children— If you have children, you know how to

get into debates [laughter] and you're not afraid if your child comes in one day, "I hate you because you didn't let me take the car." I mean, it's not the most fun thing to have said to you, but you work through it. And I think that she lived in a very insulated life, where people haven't challenged her, where— And she didn't really want to— I am going to get on the records one of my most favorite stories about Alma which isn't really—

TAPE NUMBER: XI, SIDE ONE

APRIL 30, 1993

SMITH: Interview with Allegra Snyder, tape eleven, April 30, 1993. SNYDER: She [Alma Hawkins] had great admiration for a number of the major artists in the field of dance. She loved Merce Cunningham, John Cage, José [Limón] and so forth. But there's sort of-- What it meant to be an artist of that stature was puzzling and bothersome, too. And I remember one day in faculty meeting, we were considering bringing Merce for a quarter and she said, "I love Merce, but I just would love him not to do those funny little dances he does." I mean, she just didn't want to deal with that reality of somebody doing something that was, again, I mean, this was at that point when Merce was right in the center of putting performances of on stage that three quarters of the audience would, you know, walk out screaming. And she hoped he wouldn't do anything like that. [Laughter] It's very unreal. She lived-- There's a lot of her life that was, from my point of view, was a very unreal life, even though she was a very, very lovely woman and absolutely committed to what she was doing and her-- I loved her because of her commitment to dance.

SMITH: On this question of the theory and experience, where did somebody like Margalit [Oved Marshall] come down? I know I'm raising a big thing there. SNYDER: No, it's very interesting one. You see, because, yeah-- I mean, Margalit, in the end, perhaps even sort of blew this issue into-- Shirley Wimmer and I met

Margalit, she was her with the Inbal when they were doing The Greatest Story Ever Told and she sort of wandered into the department and it was immediately apparent that she was just a magnificent presence. And so she came in and did something-- I remember it quite distinctly, our room 122, I think it is, no, 105. It's a lecture room on the west side of the building and it's a pretty small room, it's our largest lecture room. Shirley asked her to come in one day and she sat in the middle of the room and her drums and [clap hands] blew us out of the building really. She wasn't afraid to sit in the middle of that room and just do it. And so, Shirley and I persuaded Alma that she should start teaching. And then shortly after that I think this again was in the period from '65 to '67, under Alma-- Alma actually signing off the research grant paper, I got the money to do this little film of Margalit.

SMITH: Gestures of Sand.

SNYDER: Yeah. Yeah. And I did it because I was so excited by Margalit, but it was a very-- The film itself was a very important sort of process of discovery for me. What I had felt was this, you know, while you can't-- There isn't-- Margalit is incapable of dividing herself or articulating about herself or dissecting herself or talking about her culture, she isn't-- She is the living principle of the fusion of performance and culture. And I-- We recorded the dance in, again, a teeny little studio that we had somewhere at UCLA, it wasn't in the dance department. And I then did record a tape of her, oh, about two months later. But I-- The rhythm of the way she thought and spoke was so identical with her movement rhythm that I could actually-- Yeah, there was cutting out a few things, but I could put it-- It was as though she had narrated it to that, I mean, it was exactly a demonstration to me of what I felt Margalit was all about. Margalit then stayed on the department. Margalit began to sort of have-- She began to develop her

own company. She began to have choreographic aspirations, which were somewhat different from her indigenous roots. And yet, I mean, she's an artist too. Artist with a great deal of chutzpah. I think more than anybody else, I really understand the word chutzpah through Margalit. I mean, she was great, she wanted to do something. She'd come to Carol [Scothorn] and say, "I want to do a Bach suite" or something or other and sit on my door or Carol's door until somebody said, "Okay, Margalit, I guess we have space on the UCLA concert theater, do that." And then again, because she's a totally intuitive artist, I mean she'd say, "I think I'll have eight dancers," but then she'd wander around the halls and gather another twenty-four and then another thirty-six and by the time they got to the dress rehearsal, she'd have 96 dancers on the stage. And now they would all meet. I mean, it was very hard to work with her.

There wasn't any question about that. And Carol, more and more, came to resent that. And since Carol was responsible for the UCLA concert and it really-- This conflict began to arise particularly in context with that. And I think-- I mean, while Pia was fascinated and loved her, she also would run into this thing of Margalit saying, "Well, no I'm not going to sing myself, I just would like the whole of the L.A. Philharmonic over next week" or something or other, "could you--" You know, it was wonderful, while bizarre and most of the time, totally unrealistic kinds of things. And unfortunately, going along with that was that as she got sort of more and more distant from her own seed of inspiration, the work became less and less successful. So, I mean, unfortunately, it wasn't that she could argue, "Well, she was impossible to work with," and this and that and the other thing. "But isn't the result just magnificent. It wasn't. A lot of times, it wasn't. So, and because of this sort of going like Topsy into the program, she didn't have a really, a clearly defined position. She wasn't-- So Carol

would say, "Well, so she's ethnology." And we'd say, "She isn't really." Then-- So came a time when--

SMITH: Now, you would say that because her dance had moved away from--

SNYDER: No, it was-- Well, this, again, was to do with-- Well, one recognition, I mean, I thought it was incorrect to-- She had to be understood in another way, which the program just didn't allow for, because it didn't have this sort of somebody who fuses things, or somebody who isn't any of them, who isn't a specialist, who can't be categorized, which is what she was really. And I guess, some of this discussion came later on in terms of FTEs [Full-time employment]. Let's say needed somebody to lecture in the African area and Carol said, "But you got Margalit." Well, you couldn't get her into a lecture class. I mean, she wouldn't do that. Again, but she had a lot of chutzpah about that. One of my little side things with Margalit was that-- You remember the international college that was for a while brewing in Westwood? Maybe you wouldn't--

SMITH: No, I don't remember that.

SNYDER: It was a-- One of the non-sanctioned, what is the word I want, degree granting program that didn't really have, wasn't authorized, wasn't approved, wasn't-- None of those words are correct, but anyway-- And so for some reason or other, and they were actually, supposedly offering M.A.s and Ph.D.s in dance as one of the things they were doing, which if you can imagine my concern. And the chief faculty was Margalit. So people would sign up to do these classes-- They'd wander over to UCLA. She still really, literally couldn't write a clean sentence in English, which is not a problem except if you tried to teach it. [Laughter] Anyway-- I mean, so Margalit

always felt that she was totally capable of doing that and yet she wasn't at all. So it came to this darn push, shove kind of thing.

And for the record-- Doris and I were actually asked to write the official review of Margalit and what we said was this, that is a great artist and she should be honored in that way and she should not be-- But she is not a serious member of the ethnology faculty, teaching theory in the program. She isn't and she can't be. And if you're going to say that we can't make any other appointments because our FTE is located in Margalit, then we'd have to say, from our point of view, in the ethnology program, that we don't want Margalit. Now, we weren't saying we don't want Margalit in the department, we were saying that it was, that there was a need for a realignment of FTEs or a reconceptualization, an acknowledgement of somebody who could, who was in this. I mean, she could go into almost any class and, in some way or other, inspire it. You didn't know how. I mean, she was just that kind of charismatic and in the most-- You know, so she shouldn't been used in that way. And Carol absolutely, she wouldn't listen to that argument. She wouldn't go out and it was ironic to me because it was at that point in time that the--at this point, it would have still been a-- college was saying, "Yeah, I think there may be other kinds of appointments, somebody who is an adjunct faculty, who is a notable professional, who doesn't really have to contribute to--" I mean, who doesn't have to have a programmatic position, that their presence in a department is enough inspiration that one works it out that way. I think that that was an opportunity and Carol refused to-- She didn't believe in that. She refused to take that argument. So what got read from this really very positive review about Margalit, except that she shouldn't eat up the ethnology theory FTE got



translated into the department rejects Margalit. And that was the way it was taken up to the administration. And she was dismissed.

SMITH: Yeah. So she couldn't fit in to the performance, theory paradigm that had been imposed upon the department or the department had imposed upon itself.

SNYDER: That's right. That's right. Where she could have been the ideal model for it, in a sense, or almost the ideal model. I mean, the students-- What-- A modification for a student would be that they would be the kind of performer that Margalit was but they would be able to be intellectually articulate as well, that would-- If you'd say, what is your ideal model of an ethnology student that would be what I would say.

SMITH: But didn't you have people of that nature?

SNYDER: We had some. We had some wonderful people like that. Now, I mean, this is where and this would be interesting for you to look at even in six month's time, because this is the one-- Judy feels very strongly about his, Judy Mitoma, I mean, in the way of the fusion of the artist and the theoretician, although she comes from the point, Mantle [Hood]'s point of view which is much more that you just arrive at theory through practice. So in one sense, Judy urges on the side of emphasis on performance. Judy was able to contribute considerably to the program by all of her interrelationship with the Indonesian government and the Asia Society and Rockefeller [Foundation] by bringing into the ethnology program already outstanding performing artists from Indonesia, who were, had a great need because of the way their things were going for, to get advance degrees. So Ben [Benedictus] Suharto, one of the great Japanese court performers, [I Wayan] Dibia, Dibia before that, [I Made] Bandem, all came through our program. And they were willing-- They already had enough of a precision and access, I mean, if we didn't give them a performance opportunity in the department,

the Indonesian consulate was already anxious for them to do twenty-five performances. I mean, we always had the problem of them being asked to do so many guest performances all over the United States that maybe they weren't able to do, get into all of the classes, but-- So that-- If there was a frustration in the program itself, they weren't particularly cut off by-- Actually, Dibia was very interested in the fusion between his traditional Indonesian background and contemporary performance, so-- I mean, he was-- And he did a lot of the choreography classes, although his thesis and finally dissertation are solely written ones. But the student who isn't quite up to that stature. And Silvia Morales, a couple of years ago, really a fine and gifted flamenco dancer who finally did go through the MFA program, but who-- In that case, she sort of decided to go that direction, but always sort of wanted to be in, on both sides. And it took tremendous amount of arguing on the part of, particularly Judy, in this case to allow her into the MFA program. And Carol was just adamant initially that she wouldn't--

SMITH: Why not?

SNYDER: Because her performance was flamenco and that's not contemporary choreography.

SMITH: So it wasn't simply performance, it then had to be-- It was even more restricted-- I mean, it's modern--

SNYDER: As I say, again, once she-- SMITH:

It's become the modern dance focus?

SNYDER: The restriction there. It comes back still to the programmatic issue.

Carol was very reluctant to have her be accepted as an MFA student because her--

Because Carol's understanding of the MFA student was that their performance

proficiency would be contemporary modern choreography. We argued against this and she-- Once she was in the MFA program, then Carol would have to say, oh, programmatically, we, as an MFA student, we have guaranteed her performance opportunity. It did continue to be sticky because we didn't allow heels on the stage in 108, so blah-ba-ba-ba-ba-bab-ba-ba. I mean, I won't even --

SMITH: That's a big question. I mean the question of heels.

SNYDER: Well, then you'd-- We build all other things, finally she did perform there. And Sam [Jones] built her a platform. It was resolved. In the interim there was the possibility, which also I thought was very interesting of her performing in a more typical flamenco club, which would have been more congenial context, I thought, actually for her performance. But it-- I mean, there were obviously a hundred solutions.

SMITH: Well, she's in the MFA program. She is doing in, we can say, an ethno-dance, if you want to use that term.

SNYDER: Let's not use that, whatever, any, go ahead.

SMITH: So therefore she has-- And she has some theoretical interest, how well-- If someone's in the MFA program, how readily, how easy was it for them to then to integrate the theoretical kinds of questions that the ethno-dance, dance ethnology program was focused around into their MFA work?

SNYDER: Hard.

SMITH: Hard.

SNYDER: Hard.

SMITH: So presumably-- The MFA-- And Carol did not want to her that kind of talk. It wasn't that she was against it, it was just that it was not relevant to the evaluation of the student's work.

SNYDER: Well, I'm not going to answer you directly because-- SMITH: Okay, why was it hard? What were the factors that made it hard? SNYDER: Well, largely the way the program was set up. I mean, all the advance choreography classes were scheduled at exactly the same time as the advanced ethnology classes.

SMITH: Exactly.

SNYDER: Exactly. And so--

SMITH: And is this-- Are you talking about the 226 series.

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. Now, the 280 series. I think it was already 280 by the time Silvia was in.

SMITH: Dance Expression in Selected Cultures, the class that you had taught.

SNYDER: No, this would be [Advanced Studies in] Dance Ethnology, whatever, I can't--[Surveyal Dancing] in Selected Cultures is the undergraduate--

SMITH: No, this was a graduate course--

SNYDER: The 280 is a graduate class, but it's not-- The selected culture doesn't come into that logo. Yeah, so there's an absolutely-- And we would sit in the faculty meeting and say, "That people want to be able to--" "No, but you can't do this, it's impossible to move this class here to there." I mean, it got to that-- I mean, it often hit just that, "Can't be done. You can't move this class here." And there'd be all kinds of rationale about why it couldn't be-- It was, I mean, it was, I mean to do the scheduling for the department was a bewildering one.

SMITH: What about moving your dance ethnology class?

SNYDER: Yeah. I mean I could have moved it, but then they'd say, "Okay, you see, move that there because this is all," you know, I mean, it's really locked in to cement.

And when you move one, system's theory, if you set one then everything else is absolutely and nobody was willing to do that.

SMITH: But it's not in a big department like history, say, or--

SNYDER: Well, the fact of the matter was, Richard, and I did an analysis of this on a couple of occasions to point it out, we offer more classes in our department than almost any other department on the campus, twice as much as any of the other art programs. Again, because of this--

SMITH: You're not talking per capita, you're talking absolute terms? SNYDER: I'm talking classes, classes that are scheduled and supposedly, somebody's going to be teaching and somebody's going to be in there. It is true that, you know, on occasion we drop classes, but again, the-- So much of the undergraduate program which had such an effect in it, was that there was a very clear sequencing and core classes and sort forth. So you couldn't say, "Oh, well, that quarter, there just isn't enough freshmen to take that class." No, they had to take that class so they couldn't get from here to there without doing it, so you had to have that class. Was no flexibility at all in the program. And therefore, no flexibility at all in the scheduling. And then, so when these new situations problems, or when I finally say, "Look, we're in an age of media." This is me who for all of my adult life has been committed to that, finally trying to shake somebody loose to say, "The students in this department, if they're educated in the field of dance, must know something about media." Twenty years later, okay, finally-- There's nothing taken out, no, that's added on. So that's the twenty-ninth class that's offered for the choreography ethnology students so forth, on top of everything else. Yeah, it can be put in Friday morning at nine o'clock because that's the only time there isn't anything scheduled, we'll put it in-- Not a rethinking, not a-- And as a

consequence, even though there were a lot of people who were-- Most of them couldn't take it. Over the years, I got so sick and tired of students, who I really think were excited about the work of the ethnology program. And I had a good reputation as being an exciting teacher and they'd come up, "I can't wait until I graduate or leave or come back or something or other so I can take some of your classes, I can't take them with the schedule." Anyway--

SMITH: How did this affect the department sabbatical policy. I asked this partly because Pia [Gilbert] talked about never taking a sabbatical and she said something to the effect that Alma didn't really believe in sabbaticals.

SNYDER: That's right. Well, it's true. What I-- Come back-- What I tried to do as I came in as chair, which was-- Let's treat this program, this department was a program in the university that, and the criteria that we have that our teaching loads, what we do and how, has some relationship to the rest of the university, the positions we hold-- It was I that then put most of the rest of faculty at least on tenured track position, so we weren't ninety percent lecturers and two professorial appointments. I mean I remember nights and days sitting there analyzing what everybody's teaching load and coming back to them and saying, "Look, do you see, this person is teaching four classes in a quarter, the university says not more than two to do a good job." Oh, well, they say, "Well, you know that's a studio class." So I say, "All right, so we can have three classes if it's two studios and one theory class. But not more, not twenty-five more." "Oh, well, but it's just the evening of--" I mean they would argue themselves out of-- Somewhere along the way, I said, you know, people earn sabbaticals. And I think that I was one of the first to take a sabbatical. I said, that is a part-- Everybody has got to struggle through to think how to redo things or to get new faculty or

whatever because I'm going to take a sabbatical, I've earned it and I'm going to take it. And after that, that started to be-- I think Pia had taken one before then, but I think I was the second-- And I did it to really, I mean, to also say, everybody else, I mean this is a part of-- We are meant to be intellectually enriching ourselves or whatever-- This is one of our responsibilities as faculty is to be out there in the real world and really gaining new thoughts and ideas, get out for a sabbatical. But so, yeah-- It-- But now, people-- All but again-- Just talking to two of the faculty who, one was scheduled to have a sabbatical last year, one is-- And they're both saying, "Oh, but we're in such difficulty now, I don't think we'll-- I think I can't do that." Well, fortunately, I'm no longer there to really worry about it. But they just refuse to really to see how locked in they had gotten themselves. Also one of the things that I did early on and I started to get-- Which only added to my weight, but when I-- When the call for being on academic senate committees came along, I would say yes, I was very interested. Very early on I got to be committees of committees, teaching committees. I found these all incredibly important to get out there into the other world of the university. Again, we had been very insulated and again, this was-- Alma never encouraged it. I also said to the faculty and tried whenever I could, "Did you think you're interested in it. Volunteer yourself for the teaching committee. Get out there. Undergraduate honors and--" I mean, get out there, get to know the rest of the university and what it is they do and how they do it. It was very, very important to see us in relationship to the rest of the university.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE ONE

MAY 4, 1993

SMITH: I wanted to ask you and you wanted to state your objective for the Department of Dance and your belief about what the dance department at UCLA could have been.

SNYDER: Yeah. I felt in our, the previous tape, that I was being honest and quite critical about a lot that had gone on in the department, but I really was sharing all of that because of the more fundamental feeling and belief that the potential of the program at UCLA was extraordinary because it had from the very beginning--from Alma [Hawkins]'s vision--a breadth to it that no other program ever to emerge had. Even the current day, the big programs at Ohio State [University], at the University of Illinois, New York University-- None of them ever chose the breadth and I thought that-- And I believe that we had a very important contribution to make because we had chosen that route.

SMITH: Now, by breadth, do you mean specifically the dance therapy and the ethno-dance?

SNYDER: Well, yes. That the whole-- What I really do consider to be the full spectrum of ways to study and understand dance were potentially inherent in our program. I've often spoken about the dance therapy program. While it was specifically about an actual professional field called "dance therapy," it was also very much about



asking questions about the how, the self, how the inner experience was reflected in and effected movement. So that posed a number of questions that were very inner-directed.

On the other hand, the dance ethnology program was particularly concerned with contextualization, with the real relationship of forms to the larger cultural environment in which they were located. So you go from the very inner to sort of the broadest outer perimeters. You go from historical to contemporary in any number of different ways. It brought in both the social sciences and the humanities into the disciplinary tools that were used in these bodies of knowledge and learning. Of course, it really sought, in principle, to bring two modes of learning together: the experiential (the bodily) and the conceptual (the mind). So it was just full of richness and along the way, the tools like the kinesiological approach, which we early on were very committed to-- Now that is something that most dance programs have. But to study the body as an instrument, as a tool--well, the tool in the mechanical sense of the, "How does it really work?" Many dancers through the early eighties really didn't know their bodies at all. And a consequence [was] much misuse of the body in the practice of dance. Our commitment to both Labanotation and eventually to Labananalysis as ways of documenting, recording, to analyzing material-- All of these things make-- Some of them would be now a part of other programs, and some were very unique. Certainly the ethnology program and the commitment that we had to the therapy program were very unique.

SMITH: I think it's a pervasive, an underlining theme of this entire interview, this need to integrate the theoretical and experiential components of the human being. Dance becomes, for you, the way to achieve that. But it does seem from the discussion last week that there was, even within the department, a split; maybe not conscious

necessarily, but a splitting apart of that with the dance therapy and ethno-dance taking on the theoretical and theorizing aspects and performance and choreography taking on the more direct non-theoretical experiential elements. Were there efforts that you made as a faculty member and as chair to try to integrate those aspects, to balance both theory and experience and the humanistic training that's involved in, say, ethno-dance, in particular, with the more conservatory approach that might tend to predominate in the performance/choreography programs?

SNYDER: Yeah, there was a lot of discussion about this at points along the way. I think that that integration was seen much more real and important to some of the younger members of the faculty, who weren't given as much empowerment in their effectiveness within the department and in the curriculum. I initiated somewhere, I would say probably midway, in my long tenure as chair--the six years that I was chair--to really reexamine the curriculum and to really make subtle changes, make sometimes broad changes and sometimes rather subtle changes. What kept emerging in the discussion was that in discussion there seemed to be almost a consensus of commitment to this sense of integration and the principles of theory and practice as needing to move side-by-side or hand-in-hand or be all in the same. But somehow or other, and many times, it seemed as though the pressures that the individual faculty found in sort of meeting their day-to-day tasks didn't allow them to really make that happen. I felt it was, more than anything, it was a kind of encouragement of a change of point of view. And as I say, talking to almost all of the individual faculty that wasn't difficult. But then we kept coming back to the rigidity of what was down on paper as our program and therefore, what we saw as the mandate of our program. And so, and

we just couldn't seem to break through that. I'm back again, unfortunately, to the same theme as last week.

SMITH: Well, and we have discussed that so--

SNYDER: I mean, yeah, I could pull out from my files some-- I mean, we went through two years. I thought it was a very-- We used to have, in the fall before classes started, almost a week-- For a while, it actually was a retreat, and then we didn't quite do that. But we went, met all day, every day, later, in the Faculty Center. We had an agenda, but the agenda was not business as usual. The agenda was really trying to courageously question and rethink things. And I had a wonderful working committee that worked most of one summer. I did a lot of questionnaires and summaries of questionnaires to the faculty and came up with this document that was just very persuasive in terms of what new things we should do. And then we'd sit down and say, "Okay, does that mean we have one less section of Dance 25?" I'm not even going to label it, I mean, it was as anonymous as that. And-- "Oh, but we can't. If we do that, it would--" And we'd just fall back into this strange trap. It was as though we were caught in a fishnet of our own making or something or other, we just couldn't get ourselves out of it.

SMITH: Well, to what degree was this the contradictions of the dance department-- internal contradictions of the dance department--conflicting goals that everyone had, versus a sense of trying to interpret what the university requirements were--?

SNYDER: Well, there certainly was-- That was one of the, I would say now, probably I'd use the word excuses, but it felt like quite a real-- I mean, we'd talk about, for instance, requirements and the number of units for a requirement and I have to even confess that I sort of blank out on this. Eighty-eight units of requirement within the program and you couldn't go--and you have to have the other--you couldn't go over

one hundred and forty-- You know, there were a lot of number things so that-- A number's an example, but I think it demonstrates the paradox and really the absurdity of some things. We had students in the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior-- We had this concept of a core class, which initially met for the whole three hours, nine to twelve, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And in the original concept, it was there that sort of the theory and practice might fuse. But what happened was that then this-- But there wasn't any other opportunity for "the technique" or the actual dancing to occur. So students pushed and pushed to say, you know, "Some of these teachers are misinterpreting and you don't get enough dance, we don't get enough of the study of, and the discipline of dance." So more and more, those got to be an hour and a half of technique and an hour and a half of choreography in a very much more specific sense. Now, the absurdity of the numbers crunch was that we were never allowed, our students-- We were told that we could never make those classes worth any more than two units. So, for years and years-- I think this is still true--the students worked half of the academic day for-- Really, a third of their academic time at UCLA, they were getting two units of credit for. And I mean it's-- So then, of course, so they were getting this very small unit, then they had to have the addition of the four units of history, the four units of kinesiology, the four units, blah-blah-blah, even to make up a program within a quarter. So they weren't getting the proper credit for what they were doing. We were asking them to conform with the university requirements of their taking the twelve units of credit a quarter, by then asking them to do a lot more than anybody else. And then we were saying, "But why aren't you interested in reaching out and doing things that are not a part of your regular required courses? Why don't you

take another four units of dance cultures?" I mean, when a student-- When you confronted a student from that position, the answer was obvious. They just couldn't. They just couldn't. They were already-- And it was absolutely true that the dance students worked as hard, if not a good deal harder, than almost any other student in the university. We're typically there from eight o'clock in the morning to-- If we were having any kind of production and some kind of something would be going on, they were probably there to nine or ten o'clock every night. So where was, you know, where was their opportunity to reach out and be creative in their own--? So again, this came back to a part of what the dream program was or not even-- The revision was not to have so many fixed and required classes and to give them, those that we did, the appropriate number of units. So that, in fact, they would have time to reach out and have other experiences. But--

SMITH: I wanted to move on to the question of recruitment. First of all, faculty recruitment, because that's, in some ways, the nitty-gritty of where the direction of the department gets made. And your reflections on the effort to shape the future of the department by the faculty that it brought in. And I guess, as chair, you had to be worried about this, sort of on a front line basis.

SNYDER: Yeah. Just to review, the first sort of efforts I made was really to make more, to give more credence really to the faculty we already had. Now, in some ways, that then created less opportunity for further recruitment because Marion Scott, Doris Siegel, Elsie [Dunin] all moved into tenure track and I think all of them, almost immediately and under my chairmanship, became tenured faculty. And the number of FTE [Full-time employment] we had given to the department remained very small, so in a sense, we weren't doing as much recruiting as we should have. We also tended,

and we were very much criticized for this, and I think there was legitimate reasons for criticizing and on the other hand, there was some logic in why we did what we did. That is, we often times saw somebody emerging from within the program. Judy Gantz, for instance, who has remained on our faculty, and is really one of the best, now, both Laban teachers and kinesiology teachers. She was a grad from our program. And we could see that she was a, really was excellent and had excellent potential and interestingly enough, in light of what I've been saying to you, I felt that because she had come through our particular program, she did have the sense of the larger vision about dance, which made her potentially a stronger contributing faculty member. So she was hired on, actually in a lecturer's position, so it wasn't fully as--

SMITH: Is that by choice or was that an FTE question?

SNYDER: I think that was an FTE question. Yeah, we pretty much ate up--when we moved the people that I initially moved into the tenured positions--our hard FTE and what we were left with was the soft FTE. And that is the way it remained for really, I think, almost all of the time that I was chair. But Linda Goodman who became the second faculty in the therapy program was a graduate from our-- Martha Kalman, who came in as, again, lecturer, but full-time lecturer, had graduated from our program. So we didn't reach out very much. We didn't do really recruiting in the way that we should have. We didn't take the opportunity of really bringing in much in the way of new ideas and visions. That wasn't entirely true. Angelia Leung joined our faculty about half way through the time that I was there. She did come in in a tenure track position. And she came from the University of Illinois. So I don't think we were-- And once we got somebody on, we also had a great deal of difficulty, even within ourselves, of letting them go. The option was there with a lecturer of at a point, four years or two

years or whatever. Even some of the lecturers, you know, had to be reviewed on a yearly basis, although all of those sort of more rigid stepping stones with lecturers' positions were instigated during this-- I mean, I think in the seventies, that sort of process of how to deal with lecturers became more formalized within the university. For a while, a lecturer was a kind of an interesting position because you could sort of handle it the way you wanted to. If you wanted to review somebody, you could. If you wanted to sort of say, "Oh, they're doing fine," you could kind of let things slip and slide, which again was one of the reasons that discussions about Margalit [Oved Marshall] had not perhaps come to the fore earlier on.

SMITH: Were you exempt from the "seven and out" rule for your lecturers?

SNYDER: Yes. If they were less than fifty percent.

SMITH: Oh, okay. So not only were they lecturers but many of them were lecturers part-time.

SNYDER: Yeah.

SMITH: Was that satisfactory to them?

SNYDER: I think the answer was probably yes. I mean, unfortunately, again, if I was really honest, I'd have to say that they probably didn't know better, in a way. I mean, you have to always look at all of this from the point of view that dance in an academic community, all together, was a new situation for the world of dance. And we were the pioneers, really, in this. Therefore, when we asked somebody to join our faculty, you know, for them, their other option would be having their own classes in their own studio and that was an even more iffy proposition. So even if you said it's going to be a third of an appointment each quarter, a couple of thousand dollars, absolutely guaranteed felt like a great bonanza and blessing. You can justify doing it that way,

too. For instance, bringing in the expert in an African form, where they probably weren't doing more than that, met our needs and it did satisfy their needs. But it made then again, for a different kind of a cohesion or non-cohesion really. A lot of these issues that I'm talking about, if we'd had all full-time faculty, all faculty who felt an equal responsibility to the department, which-- I think if you get into an English department faculty and so forth, you'd find a lot of politicking and so forth. But you'd find as though there was a certain level of everybody feeling that they were tied to the fate of the department as a whole, so that a young faculty-- I mean, again, what we didn't have, in a way that I think we should have encouraged, was to have some of the younger faculty come in and they themselves say, "Oh, I'm excited this quarter about-- I'd like to try for one quarter, doing the history class." No, they were hired to do this specific thing and they weren't encouraged to do anything else. Now, then again, so there wasn't anything that said to them, you've really got to know what this faculty is doing over here and this faculty is doing over here, because you may have to do that introductory class next year, which is a way, the typical academic program works. The junior faculty gets clued in to what the department is doing as a whole and its sort of point of entry philosophy is because they're doing the "introductory to" classes. And that's just kind of a given. That's the way they start on their climb up the ladder. Well, we didn't have any of that kind of structuring. So our problems were generated by the way we were organized.

SMITH: They don't sound untypical of arts departments in general.

SNYDER: No. And again, that was in the years when I was chair and when I was feeling like I wanted to make change happen and even sometimes when I felt that I had the encouragement of the faculty. And then I would go to Dean [Charles] Speroni and



so forth and say-- And he was really eager that we stay and do exactly what we had done all along. [Laughter] So he wouldn't really encourage change. And then we got Dean [Robert H.] Gray in, there was sort of-- There again, there was a very confusing sort of yes, we want to see a lot of change, but we don't know exactly how it should go, so we're encouraging you and yet, we're not encouraging you to make change. And so-- When we'd get a review, an academic review, they'd say, "Why do you have so many lecturers? Can you build a program with so many part-time positions?" And the deans would come back and really say, "But this is the way we do it in music. This is the way we do it in the studio arts to a large extent. So this isn't a problem of dance, this is the problem of the arts in general. We don't have to really worry about this or we'll help you argue yourself out of that." You know, argue that problem so that it's resolved. SMITH: I do want to spend a session on sort of the role, the successes and the difficulties of integrating the arts into a university. But what about recruitment of students? Did you do any of that? Did you begin to see a change in the nature of your students coming in? Were you able to offer fellowships and that sort of thing that would allow you to be somewhat more selective about--?

SNYDER: We began to see a little bit more fellowship money for graduate students, I would say, beginning in the mid-seventies. Our philosophy of approach was very much the same kind of approach as we made with our faculty. With minimal funds, how to spread them out. So we used to split our graduate fellowships in halves or even in quarters, which again, initially did help with recruitment. We were able to offer some fellowships and FTE to probably, I would say, it might have even been as much as the top half, certainly the top third of the graduate applicants that we had received applications from. But as we roll into the eighties, and the pressures on the students, in

terms of the increase in fees and increases in their outside living, increase in just the cost of being here in Los Angeles and so forth, two things happened: if we really wanted to get somebody, we had to offer them a good deal more, which then made the numbers of positions and opportunities decrease. And even with that, what we found was that the students-- Even the best of what we could offer in most instances, still made it mandatory for the students to go out and find additional jobs. And while this is probably true for all graduate students in the university in a way, again, if you're trying in some way to integrate theory and practice, there isn't any question that this is more time-consuming. So very hard. I mean, the students, if they were in the studio and they were dancing in a performance context of some sort, this meant that they were rehearsing till ten or eleven o'clock and it meant they were waitressing in some awful place from, you know, twelve until four in the morning or something or other. You can imagine. And then you said, why didn't they get into the library? Why were they coming into the academic classes in the morning, ill-prepared and falling asleep? Well, they couldn't be miracle people. And yet, again, we couldn't really find a way of both raising some additional fellowships for ourselves. We didn't do a good job in fund-raising. And we should have gotten some of these fellowship monies. And we began, less and less, to be able to do a good job of recruiting.

The undergraduate level, the recruitment was very difficult because we really didn't have any kind of fellowship money to offer. I think that's fairly typical at the undergraduate level. And at the same time, however, most of these students, because their interests were not that, they weren't-- You have the top one percent who's coming in with a 3.9 or 4.0 or 4.2 GPA and so forth, who get the presidential fellowships, and we tended not to have students who qualified for that. So, we felt that the best

recruitment was touring, getting into the schools or doing sort of performances out there to interest students in the program. But we're putting this against the context of a diminishing dance component in high school programs to almost to totally non-existence by the middle of the eighties. Although a few pockets of hope with the emerging of the performing arts schools and the magnet schools, which have an interest in the arts. So, special programs, word of mouth was the best recruitment. Again, the therapy program and I think the ethnology program maintained themselves largely through that, through the networking of students, former students, alumni, and a sort of a growing alumni organization in both of those areas. The dance ethnology students began, pretty early on, to generate the annual dance ethnology forum, which brought not only our own students back but other students who were interested in the potential of the program for their own graduate work. So, in a sense, I think it wasn't an aggressive recruitment, but it brought to us a good number of really top-notch students.

SMITH: Okay. I wanted to ask you about your understanding and participation in the Graduate Dance Center. Your version of that story. [Laughter] We have Alma's, thanks to you, and Pia [Gilbert]'s, too.

SNYDER: Yeah. Well, I have two rather conflicting feelings about it within myself. Because it was a special program, because we did, in fact, get Rockefeller [Foundation] funds to support those students who were selected and brought into that program-- And the attention of all the faculty was on how to make that program a very rich and a special experience for the students. We did a very good job, I think, with the education of those particular--what?--I guess, at most, two dozen students who did go through that

program. It was very successful. And with the Rockefeller funds, there was enough, again, to have some special faculty: Jack Cole coming in one year; John [J.] Martin, I think, joined our faculty for two to three years, largely through the fact that there was some funds through the Rockefeller. I think his appointment actually utilized some of our own departmental funds. But certainly, it couldn't have happened without the Graduate Dance Center's presence. Jean Erdman. I mean, good, top, important professionals being there, but largely for those advanced students. And we did find ways to sort of integrate bodies of--

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE TWO

MAY 4, 1993

SMITH: Could you go back to the beginning of that sentence?

SNYDER: Oh, we did a better job of, I think, really looking at how to integrate bodies of ideas. The history, the philosophical bases and trends, the aesthetics class were all sort of pulled into one, quite stimulating lecture seminar, so that they would do all of that. They got official credit for all of those classes in this one seminar, which gave them more time to be in the studio. And yet, I think, they actually were exposed to a body of material that was very useful and inspiring to them. In other words, we did our homework on the creation of that curriculum in the way that we didn't on the rest of the students.

What bothered me, as I came in as chair with the last year or two of the Dance Center still in place-- The question was, was I, as the new chair, going to go after further funding to keep on having that continue or to readdress the question of what it had done? The problem with the program was that it made a very, very elite subculture and all of the rest of the graduate students, at that point in time, felt like they were treated as second-rate citizens. They weren't getting the faculty's attention. They weren't getting the use of the studio space attention. I mean, the graduate students all would have, really, fall productions of their choreography. The time to light and costume those productions took away from the graduate student who was doing choreography under the regular graduate program. I was concerned about that. I felt that that wasn't the way that we should handle it really, that either there was a way for us to be empowered, to make all of the graduate students have that same kind of

quality experience, which, again, now we're back to the other-- I mean, we began to hit and bump against monies, time, faculty, commitment, willingness to change and so forth. All of that, got into that. And so, I took the position that we shouldn't continue with it. I didn't get an overwhelming mandate otherwise from the rest of the faculty, even those who were involved with the program. I suppose if it was clear, but Rockefeller's whole leadership had changed. Their whole arts program had changed. If I had been able to walk into them-- And I did actually go to New York and talk with them and it was clear that they weren't going to come forth with further funding. If it had been a really an easy, you know, "Oh, yeah, here's another \$40,000 for you, or \$80,000 or a \$100,000," whatever it was--I can't remember what monies we initially got from them--maybe I would have been of a different opinion. But it then became even more clear that we'd be really in the position of robbing Peter to pay Paul. If anything, if we maintained that program, the rest of the graduate students would have continued to suffer even further.

SMITH: Or drop out.

SNYDER: Or drop out. Now, with the instigation of the MFA in what, in '83 or '84, in a sense, it's interesting because there's sort of a portion of that new program that looked, has a little bit of, or was-- We learned a little bit from the Dance Center program that inspired the MFA program. So, it has benefited. I guess, I think the potential of the MFA is maybe useful for the program.

SMITH: Do you feel there was-- Did anybody have deep regrets that the Graduate Dance Center was not continued in its original form?

SNYDER: I don't think that anybody had really deep regrets. I know that Pia and

[Emma] Lew [Lewis] Thomas and Doris-- I don't actually know what Carol felt, but I know that Pia was really deeply committed to it, yet I think she saw the problems as well as the possibilities. And she seemed to go along pretty comfortably with the decision as we made it.

SMITH: Okay. I wanted to shift gears just a little bit. You had mentioned, actually in our very first session, that the 1960s was a time of hope for you. And it was a period of, in particular, well, during the whole decade and into the seventies, it's a period of social turmoil. You had felt this as a period of rebirth of community for you. To what degree was this sort of the national tensions and what was being discussed and to what degree was it your finding a place for yourself in UCLA in the dance department?

SNYDER: Oh, I think I felt the student rebellions, as a whole across the country, were predicated on questions that needed to be asked of education. That there was, through their concern for much more sort of direct involvement of education with life and society, and the physical involvement as well as just the-- The activist quality of that suggested to me, in particular, that if the kinds of changes that they were seeking collectively across the country were, in fact, implemented in the universities, that the positioning of dance within the university structure as a whole might be very much bettered because what we could-- Again, we're back to experiential learning and so forth, if that was one of the things that they were seeking. I mean, whenever I say mind/body, I mean, I think back to that period and when that leaves as a theme song almost of a great deal of what was-- [tape recorder off]

SMITH: You were talking about the mind/body unity with--

SNYDER: And you know, this is the time of right and left brain. I mean, all kinds of things that were not necessarily, totally bound up with the student revolution, but on

the other hand, they quickly included them in their stew of concerns. And I just felt that if we really did listen seriously-- I think I mentioned to you at one point, I was very interested in George Leonard's writings on changes and education which were, almost at the advance of all of the student movement, but nevertheless, also both incorporated it and reflect, inspired things, too. So I did feel that it brought an important kind of attention into the university and I found then the students during that period of time very interesting, very open, very stimulating to work with. Sometimes more challenging. I mean, you know, it was inevitable, even in the dance cultures classes that, you know-- They were very anti-writing. I'm not so sure that I agree a hundred percent with that. So, you know, they'd come and say, "Oh, couldn't we possibly have, an end of the quarter project as a hands-on something or other?" If I felt there was enough substance to it I was willing to do that. Also, I did experiment. I know for one year, at least, or at least one quarter, in one of the dance cultures classes with some journal keeping, which again a very popular technique at that point, and which they were very enthusiastic about. But, you know, I felt I was also given the permission to experiment a little bit more within the class--didn't necessarily talk about it outside of the class--but within the class. And I saw those things that I really did feel worked and which I wanted to keep on sort of incorporating, even when the student mood had changed and those which, I really recognized pretty rapidly, were not serious concerns for a change but tools for goofing-off or avoiding the educational process as a whole. But I don't think that I could have really done some of the things that I found to be absolutely essential, for instance, in the teaching of the dance cultures classes, where right from the beginning I say I have to use a tremendous amount of film. Well, the academic attitude towards films, at that time, was that



obviously the teacher doesn't know what they're talking about themselves and they don't have enough to say in class and so it's a goof-off tool on the faculty member's part. And early departmental reviews would make very negative comments about the fact that I was using films in classes. Didn't that clearly indicate that I wasn't qualified to teach the class myself? With the cry for more relevance or more bringing the material, giving another kind of dynamic and life to the materials in the class, Office of Instructional Development actually emerges in the early seventies. And they're saying to the faculty, "We'll actually fund you to bring films into your classroom." So we understand from the point of view of innovative education that this is not a negative, but a very positive thing to be doing. So I gained acceptability and support and even a little bit for a while, the very fact that I was then doing it was noted by people in the university. I did become a member of the chancellor's committee on instructional development, I think, very early on and was with it for the whole rest of the time that I was on the faculty at UCLA. So those were some of the things that I felt effected very positively, the positioning. And I think the dance department did ride for a while on that wave of change.

SMITH: Well, I wanted to look at some aspects of the, turmoil of the sixties and seventies and ask you about its effects, both on the department and on you personally. The first, of course, is the war and the protest against the war, that sort of dominated campus life for a good five, six years.

SNYDER: Well, I mean, it's all too obvious to say that I was anti-war, in general. It had less sort of really deep affects within the department, than probably most departments, simply because particularly at that point in time, I don't know the percentage of men to women, but you know, I would guess we were ninety percent

women to ten percent men in the department. So the actual students being confronted with, were they going to be drafted, were they going to actually have to serve, were they going to offer resistance, were they going to be--? We weren't confronted with that question really at all in the department. So the war itself, as a central reality, I think, affected the department less. And it just happened that my son [Jaime Snyder] had already sort of passed the drafting period then. So it didn't quite affect us.

SMITH: He wasn't quite old enough for the draft?

SNYDER: Or maybe he wasn't quite old enough.

SMITH: Wasn't he born in '55?

SNYDER: Yeah.

SMITH: So had the war continued--

SNYDER: Right. That's right. So I guess the-- Yeah, the period of the draft, I guess, was just over-- Whatever, anyway, it didn't at any rate directly nor did it-- None of his friends, nor even Alexandra [Snyder May]'s friends were quite confronted with that issue personally.

SMITH: What about the rise of a third world perspective: black power, the American Indian movement, Chicanismo, particularly in relationship to your dance ethnology program?

SNYDER: That was exciting and very challenging to me because here I was doing, actually, with the dance cultures focus on American Indian materials, which I think that I was doing before the American Indian Studies Center started. So I was one of the few classes on campus that any of the American Indian students might seek out. And they did. And I was scared and gratefully challenged at the same time. I mean, I really wanted the class to be comfortable for them, to work for them, to be that I was, in fact,

addressing in that class things that were important and consistent with their own traditional experience. And I think it worked out that way. I had a few students, I think of one, Nellie Parrish was a Navaho who became-- I was excited because she became so excited about the American Indian class that she went on and did the Asian and the African class with me and brought her husband Eddie who was doing a sociology major or something or other into those classes. It was both very meaningful to her and I think she found me a teacher who really supported her and her concerns. I remember another Navaho who was a very activist Navaho. And it was a time when there was something coming up down in the city council--Russell Begay-- And I talked with Russ, I really-- We talked a lot. We talked a lot within the class, these issues were discussed a lot in class and Russell went down and talked about cultural ecology to the city council. I can't remember exactly what the issue was, but he said that I had largely inspired him to really take that issue and to argue it. It was for some of the early strip-mining things that were going on--

SMITH: Oh, perhaps the four corners.

SNYDER: Maybe the four corners. Something that involved L.A. in some way.

SMITH: Yeah, the city of L.A. was going to be part of the consortium to build a giant electrical power plant.

SNYDER: That's right. That's exactly what it was. And Russell went down and he was very effective and began to take a leadership role there. So that I was doing that class, that I was the-- The dynamic between what was occurring and what I really wanted to be a part of the effectiveness of this class were very dramatically interwoven and interlinked.

SMITH: Did you find yourself changing your courses during this period at all and--

SNYDER: Oh, yeah. I mean, I always tried to be-- A lot of changes occurred, not necessarily exactly because of this, but because it was a period-- There was also a kind of an academic awakening, or a scholarly awakening, for instance, to American Indian material. I was able to-- Some of the first of the use of--very excellent--the American Indian series that [Alfred] Kroeber and [Samuel Alfred] Barrett initiated, film series that they initiated up at Berkeley-- I think they came on the market for rental and then for acquisition, early in the seventies and I immediately began using some of those in my class. One of them, Pomo Shaman, I continually used in classes right up until this current time.

So things slowly, but surely became available which I immediately incorporated if I could. And written material, too. I mean, when you first start, there really wasn't anything, except very old and extremely biased and outdated early anthropological stuff. And then as the black, I mean, as the red power movement and [N.] Scott Momaday and, you know, whatever, the whole beginning of new materials which could be incorporated into class. So I tried to be very much on my toes and listened very much to suggestions from the students. And interestingly enough, you have also at that period--and this relates to all of this--the emergence of the [Carlos] Castañeda material.

SMITH: Right. You knew Carlos Castañeda?

SNYDER: Well, I knew him-- Johannes Wilbert, who actually lives right across the street, was one of Carlos's doctoral committee and he alerted me to his work very early on and discussed with me what he was going through. I mean, he did come back from his first field trip, I mean, completely overcome by his drug experience. So the question of whether Castañeda was real and Don Juan was real, wasn't an issue for me.

SMITH: Had you already begun your Yaqui work?

SNYDER: The Yaqui thing? No, we started-- I guess, I'd have to go back and actually check but my guess is that the first of the-- The Teachings of Don Juan[: a Yaqui Way of Knowledge] came out in '68 or '69. We didn't do our first Yaqui trip until '72. It was already very much the topic of discussion because the Yaquis themselves, suffered a great deal from the Castañeda material. Their positioning in society was totally marginal to begin with because they were not accepted initially as American Indians because they were Mexican Indians. So if there were any benefits from the support of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or anything, that was not available to them. On the other hand, they were avidly themselves not Mexican, not Chicano, because they had left Northern Mexico because they were fighting with the Mexican government and had-- Their own exodus was prompted by the fact that they were totally non grata there. So they were neither American Indian or Mexican. On the other hand, this being just the period that we're talking about and the whole issue of drugs and the drug culture-- another dimension to all of this--a lot of people came to Tucson thinking that they'd find Don Juan and easy access to all kinds of hand outs of hallucinogenic materials there. And so the villages were just filled with both hippies and with drug agents there, both of which were, you know, exactly what the villagers didn't need at all.

SMITH: Yeah.

SNYDER: And they were not practicing that at all, within that particular thing.

[Edward H.] Spicer, who was the great anthropologist, studied the Yaqui. We had quite a few discussions about it and he said, he didn't know who Don Juan was but he was clearly a marginal Yaqui, if Yaqui at all and not connected with any of the Yaqui communities. What he had presented to Castañeda was quite different from what Spicer saw going on. Even though, I think there was-- They all got, for a long period if

you mentioned anything about hallucinogenics or anything with the Yaqui, why it was-- We just couldn't really-- There's now-- I mean, on the other hand, I felt there was a very interesting mythic as well as linguistic tie with the Huichol who still were a very active peyote cult. And so, I felt since I was interested in transformation as the very key part of understanding the ritual process was well as the dance process that maybe there was something under-- There was some of the shamanistic practices, similar to the Huichols' that had particularly been a part of the Deer Dancer, Pascola component of the Yaqui. And now that seems to be-- There are a couple of recent books that are out where the Yaquis, the Yaquis of the Tucson area are more willing to talk about some of these things yet again. But however, we got quite diverted there. So I did for instance, use some discussion of the first couple of the Castañeda books quite a lot, with the American Indian class. And you know, I think we got into a lot of discussions which were interesting and challenging for me again, of people very willing to discuss their own experiences getting stoned and whatever else, and to share them in class. So I'd have to learn how to manage that and to appreciate it. But on the other hand, not to say, "Okay, we're all now going to come in and, you know, smoke grass here in this class." I mean, that wasn't what I was encouraging. But people sought and were seeking currently, at that point in time-- Transformational tools was a very good point of discussion that would lead into my own way of addressing something of the function of dance.

SMITH: Well, the next big topic is the women's consciousness raising movement.

SNYDER: Well, I think I should say before this, Richard, that I found the Black

Power movement somewhat different to deal with. And the way I really used to sort of almost get around that was to be very clear that what I was presenting in those classes was sub-Saharan African material. That it wasn't--

SMITH: African Americans were reclaiming that heritage once again.

SNYDER: Well, they were beginning to reclaim that, some of them. Although early seventies, it was still-- There was an interest. But the issue of the social, the power of, the acknowledgement of the Black in the community and their relationship to the whole structure of American society, I think, was more there than they're claiming-- I mean, now, the African American thing is very much more really interested-- This was really pre-Roots. When you get Roots--the articulation of the seeking of roots by Alex Haley--then that issue became-- And the relationship when Blacks did come into that class, they came in later on more with an interest of understanding Roots, in a way.

SMITH: Was there, for many of the ethnic studies programs, an effort to move these classes into their bailiwick and to insist that a person from that--a Native American teach Native American dance or an African American or an African teach African dance, etc? The question of propriety--?

SNYDER: Not really. First of all, the American Indian Studies Center and their program was under the leadership of Charlotte [A.] Heth, who was an ethnomusicologist and we were, you know, personal, professional colleagues.

Charlotte had a good deal of confidence and respect for me and my work and I think Charlotte was a very enlightened leader and felt very strongly, from the beginning, that what she wanted to have happen was two things: one, that issues concerning American Indians and American Indian concerns were much more widely addressed on campus, that she was interested in encouraging non-Indians as well as Indians to be involved

with them and include them and take on that responsibility. And the other mission of the center was to provide a home that would draw in American Indian students and that they would feel comfortable and integrated into the whole of the university. So I found her, in leadership, very enlightened. There were some problems with her leadership, but on the whole there wasn't any of that, really, initially, within that program. I was very included right from the beginning as one of the advisory faculty for that program and my classes were always sort of in part of the mainstream offerings that the American Indian students, who then came into the program, were encouraged to take. I saw their American Indian Studies major come into being. So there wasn't any of that tension at that point in time. In later years--And I would have willingly given over that class to anybody--I've always felt that any of those classes should, in fact, really be taught by a traditional member of the cultures or one of the cultures that's being dealt with in the class. But I also knew that there, from the dance point of view, was a body of material that had never been addressed before and I felt that that was equally important and that until I found somebody who was equally knowledgeable on both sides, I wasn't willing to easily relinquish my own teaching responsibilities. But I always kept looking at the American Indian students as they came through saying, "Uh-huh [affirmative], is this somebody that might be a potential for later on?" There's actually one woman who's at the University of Colorado now that's getting her Ph.D. in ethnomusicology, but who worked a lot with me, who I would enthusiastically recommend to do such a class at this point in time, because I think she's prepared. I had a comfortable working relationship with Claudia Mitchell-Kiernan. There wasn't any pressure. I don't know--They were less concerned with the arts in general. Their own program--if you look at their program--it didn't really



include the arts. I don't think my classes were ever listed under their class offerings.

On the other hand and this is, again, was a very different group of, the--

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE ONE

MAY 4, 1993

SMITH: You were saying about the African Studies?

SNYDER: So, the African Studies at that point in time was headed up by John [F.] Povey. Well, no. I had had-- Was [J. H. Kwabeno] Nketia actually--? I think Povey was always the titular head and Nketia was very much involved. Povey was responsible for the publication of African Arts under the aegis of UCLA, so he was very concerned with the arts, from a traditional, African point of view. So we actually organized a couple of seminars together and John--this is chronologically a little bit later on--got a grant one summer from NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] to do something for one of the NEA teacher programs--

SMITH: Oh, summer institute?

SNYDER: Summer institute for teachers, yeah. And I taught some sessions in that. And so all of those faculty, who were really African faculty involved with the African studies program, I had a good working relationship with and I think I wasn't able to bring Nketia-- Yes, he did a couple of lectures every once in a while. He was much too busy really with his own work to come and guest lecture. And we, early on, got one of the [Kobla and Alfred] Ladzekpos to teach in our class and I knew Kobla Ladzekpo very well, who was teaching the studio class in ethnomusicology in African material. So the Africaness, we had a good integration with. But the African-Americans: just sort of a comfortable but, I suppose, sort of hands-off policy on both sides. And I was doing the Asian class. At that point, interestingly enough, neither Asian students nor Asian faculty were very well organized. The issue of working with traditional

materials wasn't really a concern. I think to a much larger extent, it isn't. The Asians on campus are there to study everything but their own culture which oftentimes they feel they get plenty enough of at home and they don't have to be told about it within the context of a university class. So that just didn't even come up, really.

SMITH: Did you attempt to integrate Chicano or Latino, mestizo material into the Native American class?

SNYDER: No, I didn't. And because all during this period, Emilio Pulido [-Huizar] was on our faculty and he was doing a lecture class as well as studio classes for most of that time. So I felt as though-- Well, I wasn't either comfortable with that material, in terms of my own knowledge and background, and here was an example of somebody who was already working with their own tradition and teaching it, which I thought was the more appropriate way to go.

SMITH: Okay.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE ONE

MAY 7, 1993

SMITH: Okay. I wanted to pick up where we left last time, which was sort of the effects of these various strands of the 1960s on the [Department of Dance] and on you. I hadn't actually, originally intended to talk about drugs and hippies and that sort of thing, partly because you had sort of mentioned that in passing before. But maybe we should talk about the counter-cultural aspects of the sixties as they related to the dance department.

SNYDER: Well, again, the world of dance is a strange and-- In some ways, creates its own insulation, I guess would be the way I'd like to say it. There certainly were some drug problems within the department but nothing really terribly serious, simply because one can't really dance and be on drugs at the same time.

SMITH: So even smoking marijuana or taking LSD--?

SNYDER: I suppose there was smoking marijuana, to be just quite honest. I really didn't probe into that. There wasn't any real-- I mean, I didn't walk down the halls and discover people sitting in the corner, smoking. I mean, if I'd done that I probably would have asked them to go outside or something. First of all, there wasn't, even at that time, that much smoking going on in the department, in general. These are sort of the physical requirements of maintaining your instrument that sort of preclude-- And again, I've always played around, theoretically, with the notion that the transformative process in dance is so strong that it's very much equivalent to a high that's brought on by chemical means. One often sees that in other cultures, that sort of two parallel running things. But the use of a hallucinogenic is not usually associated with a

ceremony that has a rich component of dance as a part of that. So there wasn't that much in the way of drugs. Of all the rest of the lifestyle associated with hippies, I would have to say that was very hard to distinguish that of the sixties with that of the forties, in a sense. I mean, dance students tend to be-- They tend to seek their own kinds of clothing. It often is that which is a little bit more personal in its articulation anyway, or more comfortable. So a lot of these things were very similar to the kinds of visual symbols of the hippies in clothes. Feelings of being together and, you know, physically closer; again, not too different from pre-that period in the dance world. I think, probably, it's hard, even to say which comes first here. But the interest in the dance therapy program certainly brought to it people who felt it wasn't just the dance therapy they were interested in but that it was a statement about a lifestyle and a personal search which was related to some of these quests that were going on under the guise of hippiedom. So I certainly didn't see the kind of major changes or I wasn't as aware of really radical major changes because of these outside changes. But certainly-- I'll now repeat from the other day--if anything, there was more interest and support because some of this was related to what one could call philosophy or aesthetic or ethic of dance.

SMITH: Okay. Did it affect the kind, the subject matter, or the form of dances that the students were developing? Did the psychedelic experience become a-- SNYDER:

That did come in, more I think. I think there was more, yes. And we certainly had students who were interested in exploring nudity as a part of a statement of freedom.

SMITH: Yeah. Actually I was going to get into that. Pia [Gilbert], in her interview, recounts how, I think it's the late fifties, early sixties that the department actually had to police dances to make sure that they weren't too sexually explicit. And I gather then

that sort of broke down that need which may or may not be self-imposed to put restrictions on the student work sort of--

SNYDER: I wouldn't have said it that strongly for two reasons, probably: one, that I was not as directly involved on a day-to-day basis with working with the choreographic students, although I was on some of their thesis committees. I was not involved in the way that Pia was. She was really central to many of those choreographic committees. I also, probably would say, that I was more liberal about that too. I felt that-- I didn't encounter a situation which was so uncomfortable that I felt that it was totally inappropriate. There certainly had to be times when things had to be toned down and, I think, the question of really why somebody chose to do something. If there really was what I felt was a genuine statement, cause, reason, as difficult as it might be for some of us oldsters, nevertheless we should allow it to happen. If it was simply there as anger and titillation and very superficial reasons then I think that one would monitor it and--

SMITH: But how do you draw the line between titillation and dada provocation?

SNYDER: Hard. I think discussions with the student, viewing them, and the way that they handle themselves and their lives on a more holistic way. If this seemed to sort of be an aberration of what they did, perhaps one would question if it really was consistent. I can think of a couple of students who were great risk takers but there was great integrity in their risk taking and yeah, they got pretty close to being on the edge as far as what we really felt was appropriate or comfortable within the department. Yet, I felt they were important people with important statements and interesting to have followed through with some of them as they kept on-- They kept on being there in that place and yet, really contributing through that positioning.

SMITH: Did any of them develop careers afterwards?

SNYDER: Well, I'm thinking of one who is still very actively involved but went into the teaching area and still is doing interesting choreography. Interesting comment-- probably irrelevant--but she chose to be an unmarried mother which is not so strange these days. A mixed marriage-- I mean, all of those and that became a part of her later decision making. She couldn't just be on the cutting end as a risk taking artist because she had the responsibility for this child which she was very thrilled about, so--

SMITH: That sort of slides into the next big topic which is the effect of the women's movement and women's consciousness raising, which, I think, really sort of began in '69 and became very prevalent in the universities in the early seventies. And I would suspect that that had a profound impact on the dance department, given the sort of proto-feminist aspects of dance as an art form in the United States.

SNYDER: I'm trying to think, who was the man, he was at Cal Arts [Dean, School of Design], Richard Farson. I remember going to a presentation of his and it probably was '69 or something or other. He was talking about the feminist movement or the [Look Magazine article "The Rage of Women" 1969]. And I was quite surprised by what he was saying. I think we talked about this once a long time ago. On the one hand, from early on, I had sort of assumed that there was much more empowerment to the woman than seemed to be prevalent on a day-to-day basis. So in a sense, I was a built-in feminist. And yet, when it actually became a movement I was probably more--I'm not even sure that I can say why--resistant to that than most. I almost felt it was a statement that was unnecessary to make and therefore objectionable to make it, to make such an emphasis on it.

SMITH: Did you attend any women's consciousness-raising groups?

SNYDER: No, I didn't. Nope. No, I truly wasn't interested and I was a little put off by it.

SMITH: In '72, I think it was, Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro and several other women organized the Women and the Arts Conference at Cal Arts. So, did you attend that?

SNYDER: No, I didn't, although I-- There were some spill-off activities that I did go to. I remember an interesting Judy Chicago session at somebody's home. In fact, I think it was something that where my father [R. Buckminster Fuller] and Judy Chicago and somebody else were in debate--

SMITH: I mean it's-- This is something that I've encountered actually quite often, that there's a generation--I don't want to say gap, but a generation's demarcation--where women who mature, I'd say after '55, the women's movement was very central to their coming to some sense of maturation. Women who matured, whatever-- And I'm using that word, knowing that it's not a specific chronological term, but-- So it's not entirely age, birth date related, but women who matured prior to '55 seemed to respond uncomfortably to the rise of the women's movement. And I'm still wondering why that is, why that kind of split, what that split in experience must mean.

Why--?

SNYDER: I'm not going to quite answer that yet. It would be interesting for me to try and do so. Common talk, specifically, then about the dance department, where there were two sort of dynamics going-- It's certainly true that a number of the students became more and more vocal about this as an interest and concern and it did affect much that they did. On the other hand, we did really have what continues to be a central problem which was that the world of dance was so female biased and was such



an unacceptable world, almost, for men to enter into. We were constantly struggling to make dance more interesting to men to bring them into-- So it didn't really serve--and this would be true for all of the students in the department because of even the limitations choreographically. If you're without men dancers, what you do choreographically can be very limited, because certainly, the pairing of the dynamics of male and female movement is something that's an interesting component of choreographic pieces. So, there continued to be this kind of concern and tension and I think we'd say even the students didn't really want to come out sort of voicing too strong a female or a women's movement thrust if it would yet further put barriers to men being interested in entering into the field of dance. We're talking about a number of different things or concerns that are all being voiced in that period of time. I'm trying to think whether I felt that there was-- Some areas were really of deeper concern to the students and the department. And I do really think rather than any of these areas that the opening up or the exploring of a different relationship of--again, I'm getting very tired of this word--the experiential, of the feeling and the mind, which-- I mean, there they really felt as though as these issues got voiced, that their permission or their excitement or justification for their interest in dance got more and more supported. We haven't talked about Philosophical Bases and Trends [in Dance, Dance 158A-B], yet and I think I might just slip into that because when I took over that class from Alma [Hawkins], I guess there I did feel that some of the shifts that were going on should be particularly pertinent to the structuring of the classes would teach. I think I had a sort of a triangle of self, culture, and art as three dynamics that were very much about-- Again, I turned it around much more to, if you're talking about philosophical bases and trends, you, you the person, you the dancer, you the student is at the center

of all of this. Why are we discussing this in class but for you to become more confident and clear about your philosophical bases and trends or your philosophic bases based on the trends that are occurring. So I encouraged, we created-- I think this was, if I recall, I did this at least two years in a row, we built a quite an extensive bibliography for that class based on the recommendations of the individuals in the class about readings that they felt really were key to their own understanding of their self in the society of that day. It was a very interesting and a very-- Perhaps I can even dig it up for you, Richard, because you might be interested in seeing the kinds of things that they-- From George Leonard to [Carlos] Castañeda to [D. T.] Suzuki to, I mean, all of those kinds of-- But, as I say again, as I'm sort of, which I can't quite do, but sort of reviewing the lists of those books, the gender issues were not-- I don't remember that many of them brought in books that were concerned with feminism or with gender. I suppose maybe this was more appropriate to a dance student, well, maybe, I think it's more-- Sort of the goddess theme, which was one way of talking about the whole women's thrust, was something that I think-- The image was very empowering to the woman and it was much about physicality, sexuality, power. But it was in a sort of a more mythic term, and that's maybe why I was more aware of it or responded to it.

SMITH: Was Marija Gimbutas on campus at that time?

SNYDER: She was. I think her major work came out considerably later, but I did actually, I was very interested in her work. And interestingly enough, her daughter took quite a few of my Dance Cultures [of the World, Dance 140A-B-C] classes and I felt that there was a sort of a linkage somewhere between Gimbutas's work and some of the things that we were discussing, more in the dance cultures classes than in the philosophical bases and trends. But they were all mixed-up. I mean, what I found also

to be important was that issues that got raised even in the dance cultures class were not so dissimilar from those that got raised in Philosophical Bases and Trends, even though the ultimate objective of those classes was quite different. One was more understanding about culture and one was more understanding about self in relationship to culture. The history of that particular class, however, was fun and I don't know whether-- I know Alma didn't discuss this because-- Maybe she did. But Pia might have. Because there was one point-- I'm trying to think whether it was pre '72 when I took over the-- I think it was-- I think it was before I became chair. Anyway, this class, because of the way I was conducting it, became really--The difference between what was being supported in the rest of the curriculum and their concerns for dance as we were sort of defining them and articulating them in this class and what they found to be happening in the department as a whole. There seemed to be quite a gap and a gulf between those two things. And it actually led to a sort of a mini revolution which I attempted to make quite constructive but I don't know whether that was actually so. But they all got pretty excited about what was going on in class and again, we tried to sort of compile our thoughts into a statement, maybe it would be called a manifesto. [Laughter] It certainly was a statement. And I invited all the rest of the faculty in one day to sort of hear them out about all of this. And I don't know that it really had that much effect but it certainly was-- Nevertheless, I think it was important that it had occurred and it was interesting that despite that or maybe because of that--I have no really idea about this--that I was asked to consider taking on the chair. Now, I'm pretty sure--

SMITH: So, that's '73, '74?

SNYDER: No. Well, I actually-- Didn't I take over the chair in '72? Or was it '74?

SMITH: I think my notes indicate '74, which I think I got off of your vita.

SNYDER: Well, okay. All right. Well, then this would have been '74? Yeah. Okay.

And I enjoyed doing that class very much because I did think that it really allowed me to tune into where the students were and at the same time to really encourage them, again, in some of their original thinking, creative thinking, and sometimes boundary-breaking thinking. I do remember, I guess it was the second year I taught that class, when Alma was still chair and it had-- That was also really her pet class in a sense, because we had all of the seniors in that class and it also was a requirement of all entering graduates, I mean, because of the fact that it was required of our seniors and what we had said for allowing a student to enter the graduate program, that their undergraduate had to be equivalent to our own undergraduate. So anything that they hadn't had in their program somewhere else, they would have to do within our program which comes back to the complications and paperwork of-- We discussed later on. But the fact of the matter is then that, and since it was a class that was also not offered in any other dance curriculum throughout the United States, every graduate student really also took that class. So it was the real sort of a central focus for what was going on in the department. And remember Alma was somewhat disturbed by the way that I was handling the class. She felt that I was being too open-ended about it. SMITH: Were you consciously making a break from the way she had taught the class?

SNYDER: No, not really. I read very carefully her syllabus and talked with her a lot and felt that this would be the way that I would approach what I thought she was doing in the class and what I thought the class, the class content suggested. And I would still defend myself about that.

SMITH: Well, the overriding goal was to develop a sense of one's self definition and--

SNYDER: Yeah, but in relationship to the arts. So we did a lot of trying to look at major changes that were taking place in the arts.

SMITH: Contemporaneously and through time?

SNYDER: Mostly contemporary issues. I mean, you-- Again, there was a tremendous amount that was shifting at just that time, from [Andy] Warhol and [Anna] Halprin's work, Merce Cunningham's work. What were some of the, you know-- Or were there themes there, or was there a philosophy behind the shifts in their--? SMITH: Were you aware of Anna Halprin's work process, dance is digging a hole or--?

SNYDER: Yeah, I quite aware of all of that.

SMITH: Or group processes.

SNYDER: Yeah, I mean the whole process was very much of a theme and since now read-- Certainly that was a-- I was very persuaded by that. We could do a very complicated analysis yet again of how that all weaves in but I didn't consider it to be a-- I thought it was a very important reawakening, obviously it wasn't really something new, but the attention to it was, again, very new.

SMITH: But there were others, I'm sure others-- Well, I know there were other people in the department who were, again, shall we say made uncomfortable by that kind of reformulation of what dance could be.

SNYDER: Yeah, I think probably so or yes. But here, this I felt this was a forum really for looking very much at what was going on around the whole kind of breaking down of distinctions between the arts. We had performance arts beginning to hold their own. I very much urged students to get out and to talk with other students in other departments and form liaisons of other kinds of performance experiences of-- I felt that the trends suggested the questioning of the proscenium concept and the investigation

of environmental forms or exploring of other areas. That's what I felt was there, it wasn't me-- I mean, I suppose it was to a certain-- I was excited about these things. But what I found to be supportive and interesting was the consistency really between what the student seemed to be saying from their own questioning, from their own attentions, from their own appetites, and what was happening and what I felt we should recognize as possibilities and changes. Yeah, I was very sad to give up that class. But that was, I think, one of the first classes I actually did give up when I took on the chair because I just couldn't continue to do it.

SMITH: But from your vita, it looks like you continued to teach it through most of the seventies.

SNYDER: Well--

SMITH: I may be misinterpreting.

SNYDER: --somewhere along the way-- Maybe. I mean, I certainly hung onto to it for as long as I possibly could. It's possible that I turned it over to Pia when I went on sabbatical in '78 and then never attempted to take it back again.

SMITH: You've talked about studying contemporary changes in the arts. Were there other units to this class, conceptual units that you had structured in?

SNYDER: Well, it varied in form considerably from year to year. But, as I say, sort of the three elements that were constantly coming up and which I handled-- What were the changes that were going on in the broadest strokes in culture? And these would be larger-- This, you know, we got [Thomas S.] Kuhn's paradigm shifts at that point. That was a topic that was way beyond the arts, that was an awareness of different kinds of thoughts about reality. So I would try to bring that kind of discussion into

class. The arts, very specifically and the artist. One year I remember which I liked very much, although it turned out to be too time-consuming. But my husband [Robert Snyder] has done a whole wonderful series of films on the various artists, from Henry Miller to Anaïs Nin to my father to Stravinsky and so forth. I tried to bring those into the class, feeling that the students should get the feel of an encounter with the great artists. I also love the Gertrude Stein film. I used that quite a lot. Also the Sister Corita [Kent] film that one of Bob's assistant [Baylis Glascock] had done. Even the early [Carl] Jung film; I remember using that one year. I was trying to get at-- Those were all exciting encounters, sitting with this person and really experiencing them as a total human being and what kind of process did they go through, what kind of decision making did they do in breaking into their own ways of articulating their art. I wanted the students to be more aware of that. This self thing wasn't-- Obviously, that was a theme-- As a student talked about these things from their point of view, the issue of why they were saying it in that way was sort of the support of the self. I felt there was too much going on in the department, as I felt there was too much going on in the field in general, of just sort of saying, let your guts all hang out, that's all you need to do-- the contemplation of one's own navel theme. I felt, as a responsible artist-communicator, that one very much did need to know who one was in a place and time and the whys for what you were doing and really taking on a responsibility for something and not just feeling as though the arts gave you a permission to sort of free-associate and self-analyze, lie down on the couch of humanity, and let it all hang out. [Laughter] I mean I was very anti all of this. But--and I find I'm using this word more and more, maybe it's because it's a very clique word right now--I really did want to empower the student at the same time.

SMITH: Now, you had some students who were scholars in training and other students who were not, who were really there to be choreographers and performers. How did you mesh the kind of directions--?

SNYDER: This didn't become a problem for me. That's why I was absolutely convinced it wasn't a problem for the department. Those students who were there, largely the graduate students-- Now we're talking about the graduate class mostly, but those students who were there largely to study ethnology and therapy and choreography, we constantly discovered that the questions that we were asking and the reason why they were there as students were very, very—



TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE TWO

MAY 7, 1993

SMITH: I was saying, doesn't the form of the discourse and the level at which the discourse, the rules of the discourse vary in a scholar--? A dance ethnologist publishing in a scholarly journal has to abide by all sorts of rules and regulations that academics have imposed upon themselves and a dancer, a choreographer has another set of rules and regulations about how to communicate. And they're different. So you might expect a dance ethnographer to have a different level of writing skill perhaps, a different relationship to source material, more attention to accuracy of citation--well, not necessarily accuracy--but more attention to citation and knowledge of the written literature.

SNYDER: Yes. Those things that you've just said are true. I mean I would expect some differences there. I mean I did respect the fact that one communicated through movement and choreography and one possibly through research and words. But as a major faculty in the ethnology program, a theme that I talked about a great deal, even with the students in the graduate classes in dance ethnology, was that I didn't really want them to get trapped in accepting academic traditions if they didn't really work for them in the particular body of material that they sought to confront. And we're jumping probably ten years, but I certainly, in some of the last years of discussing in the graduate ethnology class [Dance 280A-B-C-D, Advanced Studies in Dance Ethnology], I said, "Maybe your means of publication is a poem." In other words, if-- What is it you are after? And this whole problem of communicating the inner experience, which even a dance ethnologist has to confront considerably from my

point of view since it's the essence of what dance really is about-- Maybe the written word, the scholarly article in a journal is never really going to work. Maybe, as risky as it is--and this certainly was and I think is to this day, a very great tension in an area which is concerned more with the academic and is a field that's very new and is a field that is questioned by the scholars for its scholarship--do you gain respect by absolutely conforming to what is out there and by doing the best scholarly articles you can do, even though while what you're writing about is saying that words are a very limited part of culture and communication and as a whole, you're doing it in words? Or do you risk saying even this is a new field and we don't have much respect from others, we're not really going to gain respect until we do it our own way in a form or forms that are really appropriate to our needs and what we really think? So coming back to the philosophical bases and trends class, I really wanted the ethnology students to be finding new forms for themselves as much as I wanted the choreographic students to be finding that. And again, it was, you know, those distinctions-- Susan [Leigh] Foster, who's now chair of the department at [University of California] Riverside was a student in those classes. Susan, at that point in time, while her interest was choreographic, she was brilliant in her thinking and interestingly enough, the topic of her thesis in the dance department was kinesiology based with an influence by what she'd learned in the ethnology program, even though she went on to do choreography and her field really is aesthetics now. But she didn't want to tangle with the more limited perspective on choreography and aesthetics, she felt she was encountering in the department. She felt the freedom to work at the ideas that were important to her could be done through another avenue, but-- And I think that was quite true. But it shows how, you know, sort of-- Well, just to reemphasize what I was

saying before, these distinctions and barriers fell away and the students in those classes were excited because they really were sharing and that distinction that existed outside of that class in the department of "Oh, yes, you're a therapy student. Oh, yes, you're an ethnology student. Oh, yes, you're a choreographic student," were not there in that class and they felt that they were a part of a larger whole. And I think very much appreciated that. And I tried. That was-- I mean, that again, was the frustration of knowing this was possible, knowing that it was, I felt, inherent in what we were doing, when I would bring it to the faculty not for them to be resistant to this very thing and not to make the changes in the curriculum as a whole that would have nurtured and encouraged that direction, which again I felt was the uniqueness inherent in the department and in the students who chose to come to that department.

SMITH: I have two questions that have arisen. One is you've described the sort of broad, philosophical kind of advice you were giving students, but then how does that relate to that more pragmatic advice that has to do with getting an academic job and promotions and the realities of promotions and tenure?

SNYDER: Well, at one level, it didn't at all. And on the other hand, it was very reality based. I was very concerned with the students; I mean a part of the sort of culture was there was level of it as, "What is that real world out there?" You know, what is the attitude about dance held by society today? Is it even real to think that most of you are going to go out there and go into university situations and find yourself in tenure-track or tenured positions? The reality then, and unfortunately the reality even today is that the very larger majority will not-- That is not an option for them. So again, I wanted to get them to-- I mean, on the other hand, I have felt that there are many other things that an exciting and vital love of the art, mastery of the art, and education

in the art lead to. The larger field of communications, I think is a field still waiting for the impact of the field of dance. I'm talking about across the board. Why aren't there twenty other series like "Dancing" [PBS television series] that's just going on. Why aren't our students, who I am convinced could be some of the most aggressively articulate formulators of such experiences out there actually doing them in that marketplace? Why isn't that as satisfying a way of utilizing what they gained as students in the department? Or, and this leads in with--The whole concept of how to bring the arts which made me be very interested in the Arts Management Program even though again, maybe the definition of management didn't necessarily mean managing a company to go into the Lincoln Center or Royce Hall. That management also needed a new kind of a vision, which talked about issues of bringing the arts into the community or this kind of thing. So there were all kinds of things that I was very concerned about the students really addressing. The premise being that the arts, and dance, in particular, are, from my point of view, a crucial element in society and we have to work in as many different ways as possible to bring that to the public. So, I suppose my long-range objective always has been much more the public than tenured-positions and ivory towers and going into your own little hole and so forth. It's been fun to think about some of them doing that. But in the long run unless, again, the university's attitude--and this comes to another theme that we turn to--is towards taking the responsibility for these larger issues-- The university can have fantastic and important effects on contributing to society as a whole and being relevant. I mean, I was just thinking about all the relevancy. The argument about relevancy was one that I was very taken with and found myself being very concerned about and underlining when I said, "Yes, let's be relevant, let's be meaningful." So--

SMITH: So you were thinking in terms of a success is when a student goes out and becomes a dance critic for a newspaper?

SNYDER: Could be. I wasn't really-- That they were successful both in fulfilling their own interest in dance and successful in bringing that very interest to some, to a next level and a next level--

SMITH: Whatever that might be.

SNYDER: Whatever that might be.

SMITH: Yeah. And it wasn't necessarily a point of the class to discuss what that level, in fact, would be.

SNYDER: Only to a certain-- I mean, when I saw a student-- So let's say Susan Foster is a good example. I mean, she was clearly interested in criticism. She could be a very good critic. So seeing that appetite in a student, I would then sort of say, you know, "Recognize who you are and what your areas of competence and success may be and maximize them. And again, don't get yourself trapped in saying, okay, well somebody else is telling me to be a this and a that and therefore that's what I'll be." Discover your successes in yourself. I suppose that was the self focus as much as really being critically examining of where you are really, what are you really good at, what are you really excited by and can really do maybe better than somebody else. And take that further.

SMITH: Okay. Well, the other thing I wanted to come back to: it's my perception of the dance department, based on talking to a number of different people, particularly students, that there is a strong division between the ethnology, the performance, and the therapy students that exist at this moment and it's connected with both snobbery and resentment. And if that's the case, if my perceptions are correct--and maybe you

don't agree with them--how did that develop out of the situation that you're talking about in the mid-seventies?

SNYDER: Well, we're back to where we were the other day. The curriculum is structured in a way that does very much compartmentalize those students and really sets them very discreet tracks in moving through the overall program.

SMITH: Now is that something that was already in place when Alma was chair?

SNYDER: Yeah, to a large extent. As I said the other day, the curriculum that we have today has probably quite a few more branches than existed at that time of its original articulation under Alma, but the roots are precisely the same.

SMITH: Okay, I don't want to rehash, to go more into the sort of bureaucratic things than we did last week which, none the less, I think was quite important, so-- SNYDER: Now, I'll give you another example later on. First of all, later on we even abandoned that the philosophic-- I think that we finally did throw that out as a requirement.

SMITH: As a requirement? Because Pia taught it up until she left.

SNYDER: Yeah. And then after that, Judy [Judith] Alter did for a little bit and then, it's probably still-- But it doesn't serve the same function at all. I don't think it's required for the graduates anymore.

SMITH: I mean her and Pia-- The way Pia taught it sounds very different from the way you taught it.

SNYDER: Right. Right.

SMITH: With very different goals.

SNYDER: But nevertheless, it did still do-- I mean, something of the dialogue between the various areas very much occurred in Pia's class. When Pia was teaching it, it still was one of the places where-- The sense that there was a whole and there was a

larger concern or even shared body of directions I think was in what Pia was doing.

SMITH: Did you have a set of core readings that continued with you throughout the class? I'm talking about something a little different than the bibliography that you talked about earlier, but--

SNYDER: Right. That varied. We did consistently--and this was a holdover from the original readings of Alma-- do creativity reading and I think Pia continued on with this.

Although again, I think each of us--

SMITH: Like Susanne Langer?

SNYDER: Well, Susanne Langer was certainly there for a while. And I'm very enthusiastic about Susanne Langer still. I'm going to be much too superficial, even for my own liking, in saying this, but I couldn't get the students-- Originally I read Feeling and Form from beginning to end and the students really, at that point in time, absolutely resisted that.

SMITH: Too philosophical? Too abstract?

SNYDER: Too philosophical. Too abstract. Too irrelevant. So I finally boiled down to having them read "The Magic Circle," which is one of my-- I particularly like that chapter, it's a very short one, it doesn't-- And again, that was interesting because it sort of brought in everything. I mean, it was as, I felt, as relevant to the ethnology student as it was relevant to the choreographic student really trying to understand their process and new forms. So, Langer got watered down under my system to just reading that chapter. Maybe-- I think I could show you a progression of perhaps the four chapters and down to two and then down-- I'm not really quite sure, Richard, I'd have to look back to double-check. But anyway, Alma had to have them read all of Harold

Rugg's Imagination. I required some of that. I still find that an incredibly important book myself. Some of that they found very eye opening. Emerging at that time and I don't know-- There were some books that were quite parallel to that that were very pop at that time, like The Crack in the Cosmic Egg [; Challenging Constructs of Mind and Reality], Joseph Chilton Pearce's book on creativity. Very interesting book. And actually, in fact, I find it curious because it so parallels Rugg and yet, Rugg doesn't get acknowledged in it. And then let me see, who else was some of--? Terrible. I haven't thought about this for awhile. There were a couple of books that even Pia continued on with. Who am I thinking of? Creative process by somebody. I'll come back to that later.

SMITH: We can fill that in.

SNYDER: But I wavered back and forth, one year I would actually say that largely what I asked them to do then, after having built this student-generated reading list, I told one of the assignments was to take five or six, any of the other of the titles that you see on this list that look provocative to you and to read them and to come up with your own something, I can't remember. But anyway, so that, at least one year, I did really abandon all "required readings." I think probably, that was a little bit too loose and I went back to something that was in-between but which even drew in later years-- When I abandoned that assignment all together, of identifying the readings, I nevertheless sort of was aware of this list that had been generated and used some of that from that list in a more required or shared reading assignment.

SMITH: Okay. This is sort of getting back to the question where we started at the very beginning of this session, but I wanted to ask you when gay and lesbian liberation became an important theme, a phenomenon movement within the department.



SNYDER: I would say late seventies, early eighties. And again, it's interesting, the balancing act between reality and the sort of the verbalized changes that are going on which begins to really talk about these things because homosexuality obviously had been something that was very deep as a fact within the field of dance. Yet, before it was a movement it wasn't really talked about. It wasn't talked about sort of in the general discussion. I can remember in one of-- Actually, in one of those Introduction to Dance [Dance 50] classes, a very interesting and very talented young man coming in, my guess is around '75, who is one of the first young men who is quite willing to talk about his homosexuality, who's quite, he was one of the first in the department to be very-- I mean, all different kinds of time of the hair painting and very extreme things, he was-- So he started bringing these themes into that introductory class. I remember him then bringing them into the philosophy class later on in a way that was very-- It was very useful really. It was useful-- I mean his courage to do that, probably went along with the fact that he was very talented. Sad to say that he died of AIDS not too much later after his graduation. So, you know, it's interesting as we talk about all of these things, my own experience of all of them, and I don't know whether this is, I mean it is definitely-- So much of this was not unfamiliar to me for, I mean, almost all of my life, and it was kind of interesting to see waves of things that were understood begun to be articulated and more out there for general discussion. But there was nothing that was really a complete surprise and there was nothing that really didn't feel as though it was almost a healthy, natural evolution of--and again, interesting if you want to say this--bringing a lot of sort of feeling states into, cognitive articulation, which after all then was the kind of a general theme that we were after in our program.

SMITH: In the forties and fifties and I guess through the sixties, in the milieu that you lived in, were same sex couples part of those groups? Were they accepted socially?

SNYDER: No, I don't think so.

SMITH: So that would be a new development in terms of what happened in the seventies and beyond?

SNYDER: Yeah, right. Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. Of course, the dance community or the dance profession has been hit very hard by AIDS. Did the department do anything in particular or more specialized than what the university in general was doing to discuss the AIDS issue and have AIDS education for its students and faculty people?

SNYDER: Well, my guess is and I don't have actual facts to back this up. But I would guess that we were more, we did something about that earlier than most departments. We had a very wonderful graduate student, who had a leadership role actually in the university student organization--and I'm again going to forget his name right now-- highly respected and highly recognized, who developed, who was in the final stages and then died of AIDS while he was still graduate-- That was a tremendous shock not only to our own students who looked at him as a leader but also the student body as a whole. We had a lovely memorial-- But I think that probably was one of the things that tripped us into doing as much as we could about educating the students to what they could and should be doing in order to assist themselves in that situation. It's interesting, I would say that the first years that we began to hear about AIDS, I was surprised that we didn't have more direct situations within the department. But that began to change. I mean, students that I knew very well and, sadly, respected enormously. I thought it was-- Six or seven of them I know died of AIDS. That's just

my own very, you know, most sort of focused awareness of students. I don't know how many have over the last few years.

SMITH: How did gender and gender consciousness and awareness and questions of sexual preference become issues or help focus work within the dance ethnology field? I've talked with Pia probably at length about some of the ways it worked with choreography and performance but I think there's probably other-- You know, in terms of dance ethnology, that's a whole other field where the kind of gender-related issues may have had an opening up effect.

SNYDER: Well, certainly gender related issues are very fundamental to the study of dance. But I would say that that was in place if we've been influenced by the anthropological model, which we certainly have. Gender studies come pretty early in the whole sort of questions that are attended to in the anthropological model. So I'm not sure that I would say that-- There was probably a heightening of interest in that area, but not a complete change of attention.

SMITH: Well, I mean there's the question of the degree to which shamanism and homosexuality intersect, which has been a big issue I guess in anthropology maybe really in the last ten years. Not that it was untalked about before but--

SNYDER: No, I wouldn't say. Well, you have-- Actually, some of the literature from, I could guess from, the fifties. I mean one of the first sort of tacks that anthropology took was that the shaman was a deviant and a schizophrenic. Deviant didn't necessarily--whether that deviancy was sexual, wasn't so much a part of it, but-- Could have been in there, was the larger label of deviant in all ways. On the other hand is, I mean, there is the recognition that many societies structure themselves to comfortably allow the deviant to function, I would say probably the issue-- Well, I'll say it anyway.

Implicit in the study of the ritual clown--which is another theme that I've been very interested in and which is out there-- is the fact that many times the clown is also a transvestite. Now, whether in fact, they are actually homosexual or whether the very fact that they play the role of transvestite as a very central figure within the ritual complex is a way of already allowing that sense of really bisexuality-- I mean, we could get into a Jungian theme at this point that we all really have those two parts in ourselves anyway and in that-- And the ritual attention seems to be much more to allowing that to be. So maybe the issue of homosexuality doesn't have to be as it may be out there and it may be the sharp difference between the homosexual and the heterosexual doesn't necessarily have to be drawn.

I feel so much of what gets addressed when you do come to the study of dance, particularly through the larger sort of frame of ritual-- As, you know, I have actually written about this--that so many of the themes which become, which are for, in our society, initially dysfunctional are addressed in another way which doesn't make them so in traditional society. It looks as though there are less tensions in certain ways. Now, you know, I would say I probably overemphasize that. Probably it's not quite as much to the point of generalization as I may state it to be, but it does seem to me that that really is a very interesting part of understanding these things from a larger cultural perspective.

SMITH: Okay. In an earlier session, you had stated that it was not until you came to UCLA that you became aware of the problem of women's status in society, and you alluded to that earlier today. What I wanted to ask was, were you referring to sort of the intellectual movement that was revealing that or did you at UCLA begin to

encounter the kind of overt behavior towards women that the feminists were talking about?

SNYDER: I didn't really encounter that maybe-- Well, anyway, I didn't really encounter that. But what I did certainly begin to encounter was going into university committees where the bottom line was, some of the other members of that committee who were male, just as I walked in the door, you could see them sort of-- Well, we'll discount her and her opinion. It's, you know, it's of lesser significance.

SMITH: Because you were a woman or because you were a dancer?

SNYDER: Well, I mean, this was magnified and multiplied and whatever. I mean, that I was woman first, then when they discovered that I was woman in a field called dance, that was-- And then in many instances that I didn't have a doctoral degree was, you know, the third level of negative response factor. [Laughter] But it was--just to defend some of my colleagues out there--equally interesting and really rather startling to me on many occasions to discover that none of those things were a problem because, as I began to sort of move out there in the larger environment of the university and put myself out-- As I said to you, at one point, I really made the effort to try and learn something about the university as a whole by serving on committees and being much more mainstream university. I was delighted to discover that, in many instances, one could earn respect by being who you were and by contributing what you could contribute. So it wasn't all negative by a long shot.

SMITH: Okay.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, SIDE ONE

MAY 11, 1993

SMITH: Today, we were going back to the question of film theory and dance theory and the films that you made since 1968. We talked a little bit about Gestures of Sand, but I thought perhaps before we get into the films themselves, I should ask you a little bit about how the process of thinking about film and dance worked for you. You had mentioned in previous sessions you had been involved by the sort of British documentary tradition, and I guess, to some degree the New York documentary tradition.

SNYDER: Well, I was certainly around the New York documentary tradition if there really was one. I don't know that that really is an identifiable something. But I certainly was around people who were concerned with documentaries and who were living in New York and working in New York.

SMITH: But I suppose with Gestures of Sand, Reflections on Choreography, and Baroque Dance [1675-1725] you were dealing with studio films rather than documentary films.

SNYDER: Right. First of all, one gets what one takes. You know, the opportunities were limited and there were, sort of two-- The documentary area of film, I think as a whole and this includes British, Canadian, all of those that were working in it in the United States, probably they were an important model because they were-- There was more of the individual artist or the individual filmmaker involved with all of that work. And the mark of the individual filmmaker was very present in all of those. Yet, they were not simply experimental explorations in film itself, as Maya Deren was doing,

even though, as I have mentioned before, I was a great admirer of Maya Deren's understanding of the filmmaking process and her--at one point--husband, [Alexander] Sasha Hammid was certainly a part of the larger documentary film group, which later on-- This is later on so it's not really chronologically appropriate, but Sasha Hammid and Francis Thompson, who I did come to know very well and worked with in the context of the International Film Foundation were-- So there was a lot of interweaving and overlapping. But the importance of the documentary was that it really was the most insightful use of film, yet, it was attempting to say something or to deal with a subject matter in some way. What I found with the documentary was that-- The respect I held for it was because it honored the content, yet it didn't get stuck in being afraid to use the potentials of film to really enrich and heighten the understanding. I mean, you got-- I think back now to some of the early-- Night Train, for instance, early British documentary. The editing on that is exquisite and it's very, it's probably some of the most daring sort of flashback, flash-forward, a loss of a sense of reality, time reality in one way and yet it's there for a very clear reason and it doesn't distort the content of the film, what the film is addressing, it rather heightens it and makes it more so. And I think this has always been my excitement about film and it comes back to, you know, I mean, my interest in reality and the transformation of reality or the heightening of reality. I think that film has the potential of doing that exquisitely. So then there's the question--in a much more challenging, I was going to say, basic way, and I'm not sure why I was going to use the word basic--but of confronting the reality of dance in an existence.

Now, much of the existence was in a performance, let's call it even a proscenium existence. But what is the reality of that experience? Why is it you're there

in the theater? Is it there because you want to constantly be reminded of the proscenium frame or is it that you really want to enter the stage and to experience the dance? And my sense was that one wanted to enter the stage. Okay. So, then there's this problem of trying to get into that reality but again, holding the integrity of the subject matter, the content, which in certain instances, then, is the already existing choreography or form. What I tried to begin to address was how-- First of all, one needed to really ask some basic questions about the differences between dance and film. I think there is an acutely different sense of both time and space in these two arts. In film, I feel the very ability to manipulate totally both time and space is very much an essence of its aesthetic. On the other hand, I think the great power of dance comes from a sense of flow and continuity in a way that you see a movement, a form evolve and you have to see really the relationship in time of one to the other. And you really have to know where you are in space because the dialogue of the individual dancer or dancers in relation to space is a very important, again, essential part of the aesthetic of dance. So I felt the challenging problem in bringing together those two forms was that one really dared to recognize that the aesthetics were almost in diametric opposition to one another. So then I felt that to begin to attempt satisfactory fusion of the two, one had to make very conscious choices of where and when one would lean towards one or the other, where the actual fractionation of time and space could enter into, say, the dance, even though that was a violation really of the integrity of the continuity of time and the positioning of space. I guess I haven't thought about it that much. I didn't say it really in the same way today, but anyway--

SMITH: Do you view film as a spatial art form? Art form that manipulates space?



SNYDER: Yes, very much manipulates space. But its space of a much larger, I mean, you-- A space in film can take you from the minutest focus on an object on a table, across the continent of the United States, to a sense of the whole Himalayas under you. I mean you can go from an extraordinary microcosm to an extraordinary macrocosm and that's very exciting. So how do you play with these two things? Well, I guess to, again, throw in a couple of very immediate examples of things-- I think one of the reasons that [Fred] Astaire, who I always respected as somebody who really had very clear notions and I think very much understood these problems in a way, or knew that his central concern was to honor the dance-- For instance, he said that he wouldn't let the camera go closer than the full body, in movement. Now, I think this relates to the understanding, then, that it is the full body in the continuity of its own time and space that really makes the powerful statement. And when then, the problem and this is always one that's discussed when you get into any of this kind of discussion-- So

Astaire is saying, "No close-ups."

SMITH: But then you have [Gene] Kelly, who's much more manipulative of cinematic illusion.

SNYDER: Right. And well, you look at Kelly really in terms of-- I mean, this particular issue, you'll see even Kelly doesn't go much for close-ups, or he goes for a close-up and--we're jumping a little bit but--so he goes for a close-up and this was really true of Astaire, too, although Kelly did a little bit more-- He was willing to break what was really the pure continuity of the dance-- Kelly was more of a dance, drama person. There's a lot more about Kelly as actor, so you could-- I'm sort of running some of An American in Paris as I'm talking about this right at the moment. So you have a beautiful duet, pas de deux, there and then it's sort of he goes into himself and

as he goes into himself, he picks up a flower or a bunch of flowers and the camera goes into the flowers at that point. But what's happened is that you stopped the dance itself and you've gone into this dramatic moment. And there, that use of the flowers and coming into the flowers, which then explodes out again into a very-- The flowers themselves become the colors which become the dancers which-- And you, again, sort of focus on the larger dance, the choreography as a whole. But-- SMITH: That gets back at the difference between, in a sense, the distinction you make between dance documentary--which even Astaire could be classified under--and then this sort of, what you call, choreocinema.

SNYDER: Yeah. I think as with all good art, these distinctions were blurred at a point.  
[tape recorder off]

SMITH: When we left off, we were talking about-- I'd raised the question of the three types of cinema--the article ["Three Kinds of Dance Film," Dance Magazine, Vol. 39, no. 9, September 1965] that you wrote--and how this relates to the classic Hollywood dance films that we were talking about.

SNYDER: Right, right. Well, you were suggesting that would I classify Kelly's work more in a choreocinema area and yes, I think we probably got this on tape, but I'll repeat. These distinctions blur at points along the way but Kelly was interested in going beyond the actual documentation of dance and I use that in a very-- I mean, if I've just said what I've said about documentary, then when I say documentation of dance, that's a very rich experience in and of itself. But he does choose to go beyond that and to experiment and-- But when it's right in the heart of the dance experience itself, I think he still honors the sort of the same kinds of concerns and has the same kind of integrity as Astaire does really in the midst of a dance section-- You will see

more cutting, there's no question about that with a Kelly. But coming back to my problems as of 1950 on, was that one does always have to remember in citing Astaire and Kelly that behind whatever they chose to do at that point in time, they had every option and every camera and every great cameraman and director that they wanted to have in assisting them, really. The spectrum of-- No, the richness of support or the ability to experiment was then much less available to anybody interested in working in dance film in the more everyday context without all of that money behind it. So the problem, then, of sort of reaching out to enrich the possibilities was harder. I mean, there certainly would have been, even in the Bayanihan film, I think probably some moments when I would have been interested in having the camera positioned in a slightly more experimental range. Not really a lot because, again, the dynamic of honoring the content of that material, an exciting, Busby Berkeley overhead shot--

SMITH: I think you had said that, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I recall you saying that you had shot that with the idea that every angle would be something that somebody could theoretically have seen somewhere in the theater.

SNYDER: In the theater, that's correct. That is correct.

SMITH: That raises the question-- Because most people do not zip around like atoms, from one part of the theater to another.

SNYDER: No, that's another-- It's a way of making some definitions but it again, it's already into its own reality. One of the ways of working with space for an already existing piece of choreography, when and with the problem of encompassing a number of elements or a number of people-- For instance, you have a group of dancers spread across the stage from the point of view of most of the audience. One way of tackling that is to go as much to the left or the right so that that is spread across the stage in a

very large-- And using up a lot of space becomes, instead, a focus on a line going out and extending in front of you. I do that on a number of occasions with the Bayanihan, where the width becomes a length which extends from front to back instead. Again, I didn't go so far that it would be absolutely impossible for somebody who was sitting way over, in what would probably be a fairly undesirable theater seat, to see.

Nevertheless it was about as clear to a sort of, taking a particular opportunity for its own sake--

SMITH: Were you reading film theory at this time? Were you reading [André] Bazin or--? I know you were reading [Béla] Balázs because you cite him.

SNYDER: Yeah, Balázs -- I was trying to read everybody. There were some that were a lot more interesting to me for various reasons.

SMITH: I mean, with Bazin you have the distinction he makes between the filmmakers of the long take and the filmmakers of montage. Was that a meaningful distinction to you, in terms of bringing it into the dance?

SNYDER: Yeah. I mean, I think again, I would quickly and probably, inappropriately, superficially sort of say, "Oh, yes, what he's talking about, again, is the question of the different kinds of time and space that you can have." The long shot or the long take is one kind of a sense of time. The breaking up is the other sense. I mean, you're constantly-- The most ideal decision-making process that you would be doing with the dance film is the constant back and forth between, am I going to err a little bit more on this side, on the filmic side, or on the dansic side? [Laughter]

SMITH: I think Bazin actually takes it further with the long take as the moral side because it's the presentation of an experience reality, where as montage is a breaking up of reality.

SNYDER: Right. You see and I mean, probably--and I have to say that I can't really recall what I read of him at this point in time, but I think I would have--I'd already then come to this other level of reality. We were just about--or a little later on came cinema vérité or Andy Warhol, where, you were literally setting up a camera for hours and hours and hours and hours or somebody-- And I would say the reality of that experience was really not the reality of the experience, that what the filmmaker potentially can do, and if they're very good, should do, is that they're always very much in this process. What is it that I, as one human being confronted with this situation, really want? What's the essence of what I want to get out of it? And as you sit with a person talking for-- I mean, what is it you're experiencing of them if you just sit--? I mean, it isn't-- If I just confront you here, I'm doing a lot of different kinds of adjusting, you know. Sometimes looking into your eyes is very important and that's really a focus. And as a filmmaker, I perhaps would come into focus it on your eyes at that point because there's a point of contact that we're experiencing at a new level by doing that. And just the frame and just you, you know, full shot, shaking your head and so forth is not getting at what's really happening between us. So that's the question I think that the filmmaker keeps wanting to-- They have to acknowledge themselves as the processor of reality.

SMITH: As opposed to the creator of reality?

SNYDER: I think initially as the processor and then going on into the creator. Now, again, if you're sort of in this mid-range of the documentary filmmaker then even the creation has to do with feeling that what it is is a heightened reality, it's not a new reality. A [Luis] Buñuel or a Deren really, at a point, creates a new reality, although I think Deren would, for instance, in Ritual in Transfigured Time, she would say that

she was still within-- This was not really a created reality, this was the reality of the inner depth of her mind, which again, I would say, this is where-- Transformation, the sense of, even the integrity of, the dream experience--and this is getting into all of the surreal and real is-- You consider dreaming to be totally away from your experience or is it really the essential, quintessential fusion of your experience? And even though it takes you into new dimensions of space and time, is that not real? Or is it heightened reality? Is it the essence of reality? And I would err on, again, that sort of, it's the essence of reality. And this relates to the whole sense that I have of what I call the mythic. I mean, that's what I feel culturally the mythic is. It's the quintessential reality, which doesn't exist in any one moment, but it's the fusing of moments of time and understanding.

SMITH: In Gestures of Sand, what was the reality that you had to process there and then represent?

SNYDER: Well, I shouldn't preface it in this way, but I mean, this was an extraordinarily low-budget film, so-- But what I really wanted-- The reality was Margalit [Oved Marshall] in her totality as artist, human being, which we've already talked about before, which I felt was so incredibly one and the same. So I wanted to get the life and vitality that she brought to even the simplest things. In one sense, one of the reasons that I was excited to even try and do that film was my sense that she could sit in an absolutely uninteresting, neutral, ill-defined environment and just her sitting there with her drum and with herself with her amazing voice as another instrument, she could evoke almost anything. And what I just wanted to do was to get at the power of that, but you know, there were points. I mean, I focused a lot on her eyes, so I did even with-- You'll see, I sort of move back and forth between the

honoring of the total, her total body--which I think is totally communicative--to actually making, having parts where I felt that it was her eyes or it was her hands or it even was a fairly close-up of her mouth where you see her tongue going in the ululation. So the interest-- That was where the sort of the center of her power was at that given moment. So I felt it was-- I gave myself permission, or it was legitimate, then, to go into this intensity of really coming into a very close focus and encounter with her.

SMITH: Yeah, there's a feeling in the film, well, at least to me, of movement without movement.

SNYDER: Yeah. There's actually a very small segment of what one would expect to call dance, which was, I mean, that's the way it was. First of all, again, I, in order to sort of prepare for this, just was with Margalit for a period of time and I really wanted her to tell me what she really wanted to do, to put on film.

SMITH: How well-versed were you at that point with the history and theory and, I guess, the ethnology of--for want of a better term--Middle Eastern dance? I mean, could you place her pretty comfortably in a larger continuum at that time?

SNYDER: I did a great deal of research at that point in time. And I think that I did it as I prepared to do the film. Yeah, I mean, for a few moments, I really felt quite expert in that area. I spent hours and hours in the library in ferreting out things and was very excited, because it was not-- I already had been teaching for quite a while, the sub-Saharan African dance cultures and I was-- So I was struck by some-- I mean, I was already then into the distinction of East African patterns from West African patterns. I'm very much short handing all of this. And there were some things that I'd already sort of become. I'd become very interested in preparing for the African set with this

extraordinary trade route. I think it's said in two and a half seconds in the introductory narration on the film. But the fact of the matter is that you could get on a piece of log in Mombassa--and I'm not sure that I'm going to remember this correctly now, but for odd conversation--in June, and just the current would wash you to India by fall or by winter and then you could sit in that same log and be washed back from Kerala and so forth back to Mombassa by the next-- And this was one of the most ancient trading routes, and right along in the middle there, then, was Aden and the Red Sea and what is now the [Suez] Canal, but it was-- So it was an area that I already had become aware of as one that deserved a lot of study because it really was a point where a great deal of fusion of some very interesting major cultures had occurred. So that was sort of-- It may have, it may have even prompted me, along with my own fascination with Margalit as an artist, to get more involved in the filming. I can't really quite tell you, but as poorly handled--and this was because of the low budget of the things--but that introductory portion about the drums and the gesture language of the-- That was actually a very important research area that I was quite excited about investigating. I was fascinated then-- The whole Solomon and Bathsheba-- I mean she comes up with that. I mean, if you ask her to tell you a story it's going to be about Solomon and Bathsheba as one of the-- To find out how critical--and Sheba--how critical the queen of Sheba was, again, as a figure that had to do with Ethiopia, or even Coptic Christian religion and in Ethiopia and at the same time; the whole Jewish, Hebrew theme. So there were a number of things that I discovered embedded in just what she naturally wanted to focus on which had great legitimacy and integrity, historically, and from an ethnographic research point of view as well, which again, sort of reinforced the fact that a great traditional artist simply embeds the culture as a real microcosm of the



culture, which I think I've already mentioned to you. That was extraordinary to see how, then, at another level, the sort of patterns of speech, patterns of movement, patterns of thinking, patterns of singing were all so consistent with one another that I could play around with them so easily, laying in the soundtrack. Even though we'd done it two to three months later, it was just there, it just fell into place almost, the way she said and the way she moved and what she was thinking about was all there. So it was one and the same.

SMITH: The next film that you made was Reflections on Choreography, which is considerably different. What was the problem that you set yourself there, in that film?

SNYDER: There was what was much more to capture an existing piece of choreography. One that was very interesting and quite powerful theatrically. But I did want to--and I do more than I do in the Bayanihan--do some of the sort of moving into more filmic explorations in order to heighten or to-- Again, what I hoped was to get at the essence of what Marion [Scott] was trying to do. Again, on the other hand, there's sort of another level of consistency. Filmically what I sought to address, more than doing ethnographic films, which we've already talked about my feeling that-- One couldn't do that. Was to-- The attention on the artist. So it's very much, again, to sort of try and get at what Marion says about what she's working at in the choreography and her concerns as an artist, as a choreographic artist, and then how it actually plays itself out in the work itself.

SMITH: I was trying to-- Well, watching that, I was trying to imagine it on the stage and it seemed-- I couldn't make that translation back and many of the visual images seemed purely cinematic instead of-- I'm thinking perhaps of the circle one, circle

section, where the way it plays on the film is something that would not be experienced in the theater.

SNYDER: No, it wouldn't. Though, again, even with the overlapping of takes and shots there, the camera didn't, again, violate-- I didn't do a total reverse positioning, for instance-- I think what I hoped-- And it was exciting to be working with Marion, who knows what she wants and what's right. She's not always articulate about it and I felt if I had really violated what her underlining intention was, that she would let me know. In other words, this was a big challenge to me to do some heightening of reality. Now, that sort of circle thing, I felt was-- If you really examined the aesthetic experience of what you were seeing on stage, what you would come to in yourself as viewer or in yourself as artist was somewhat what I had, then, put on film. It wasn't--

TAPE NUMBER: XV, SIDE TWO

MAY 11, 1993

SMITH: So you were saying you weren't playing around with--

SNYDER: What I was trying to get at was what I felt was a new understanding of that piece, in a sense.

SMITH: Does part of that have to do with your conception of film which--you've written about film--tends to focus attention on one thing in the frame, whereas a stage performance can often have, particularly in choreography, multiple things occurring simultaneously?

SNYDER: Yeah. Although Marion's work doesn't tend to be very diffuse, there is a center of focus in her choreography. But for instance, in that very section that you're talking about, where she's sent all of the dancers really into--scattered them widely and then brought them into the center, the scattering widely was to sort of to eventually bring the focus back in the center. The reaching out in space was the exploration of space in order to allow it to be more emphatic in this sort of coming back to the center of the space there. So that's what I was trying to experiment around with there.

SMITH: That seems to me a very particular and a very typical problem of the conversion of theatrical to film because on the stage, the dispersion of the cast and then the concentration of focus is a very different experience because you actually have almost a visual expansion and contraction of space, whereas with film the space is--the film frames tend to establish what the spatial dynamics are. I mean, how do you recreate this? How do you go about recreating or reprocessing that sense of space, the space that you are watching expanding and contracting, not simply the focus, but the space?

SNYDER: I'm not going to answer you directly because it was one very interesting and one very challenging and ultimately we were defeated by this problem. [Laughter] Because there's another section in the choreography, where Marion was very interested in the vertical space and actually had a set constructed where the dancers climb up into a region of proscenium space that's rarely used. It was almost the top of the proscenium space and unless I pulled back so far, which I actually couldn't even do in-- We shot this in a studio in Hollywood so we had quite a lot of space to work with. But even with that, I never could get back far enough to really encompass that vertical space that was very important to her with anything that I felt would be-- I mean, if we pulled back so far, this would be a little line in the middle of the frame in order to really-- So we finally gave up on it. She makes a comment in her narration about the fact that there was the reaching up and up and up and we couldn't do it on the film. Perhaps if we'd had more time-- I mean, it's funny as we talk about it now, I could have seen a filmic solution to that problem which again, would have-- I don't think it was. We would have had to do an even more complex setup, that we couldn't do, which would have been actually to move the camera into the center of that group and to go-- And, as I was saying, back a little while ago, where what was width I treated as length. I could have also treated height as vertical length, in a sense. In other words, if I shot the camera up this long piece of scenery and with the end, in what was, in fact, the lights-- That's why we didn't do it because it was ceiling and it would have just ended us in the ceiling lights and I didn't want to violate that kind of off into the wings kind of thing, which some filmmakers like to do. But anyway-- SMITH: Of course, you could have dressed the ceiling for that shot.

SNYDER: Yeah, we could have. We could have spent a long time to do that. We didn't have that time. These were UCLA students at a point in time where some of them were really technically quite limited as performers. I've been unhappy about that film because I didn't really think the dance stood up well, but largely because of the performance. I like it quite a lot as a film. And I think it did what I wanted it to do, which again was sort of at another level--and this is a time, space thing too--the fusion of the artist with his work because that's something that I think we're not aware--

I'm going to say a peculiar thing now, almost all of my films really, I mean, there's an educational reason for them, Richard, even though, educational film is something I detest because I think good education is good communication. But there's a sort of an audience and a problem and a reason. And I think, particularly in the field of dance, the encounter with a serious major artist and the interface with the artist and their work-- Now again, this was the same kind of theme that I wanted to address in the [Mary] Wigman film [When the Fire Dances Between Two Poles]. There I was maybe inspired by the very fact that I found some footage that I felt would allow me to do that. But here with Marion, because there really aren't the kind of-- This does come back to the kind of work that my husband [Robert Snyder] has done. I mean, you come to know Henry Miller very well and you feel him as a major artist, thinker of our time. Yet there are parts in Bob's film where Henry reads and muses, reads some of his writing. So there's a real fusion-- It's an encounter with a major artist and you sort of have a sense of--to say a very cliché thing but I will-- what makes them tick, in a sense.

I think that's very important, educationally.

SMITH: Using the Reflections on Choreography film as an example, I wanted to get you to define, for the purposes of this interview, the distinction you've made in your writing between the idea phrase of film and the breath phrase of dance and the problem of linking them in some sort of continuous and logical manner. SNYDER: Well, at the base of that statement is the real distinction between the sense of time and the sense of space that I'd already talked about this morning. However, in Reflections, following the one that we just talked about, there's another interesting one, where the dancers really come together and I overlap phrases of movement. And I'll be quite honest to say that I was somewhat fascinated and, in a sense, took some thinking from Hilary Harris's Nine Variations on a Dance Theme in that when he overlaps, a movement starts and goes and then in terms of cutting, then the movement starts again. And the movement starts yet again and it's sort of a wave on wave and wave of movement, which adds up to a larger sort of sense. That I would say for me is a filmic example, a filmic example of breath. It's not the breath of one movement that finishes itself, it's the breath of that whole of the larger action that I saw going on there which I found a very interesting and exciting moment in the choreography, which I thought was what Marion was trying to do when she sort of piled dancer on dancer on dancer and it was-- So that's when I begin to put those two things together.

SMITH: Do you want to get some water?

SNYDER: I think I'm going to be okay. I'm still looking for the breath phrase, the vitality of the dance. But I'm hoping that I'm finding a way to understand it in filmic themes, where the very fragmentation-- or it's not quite fragmentation here, it's an overlapping of time here--serves to deal with that question in a way that I think is inherently in the movement phrase, but in the reality of the proscenium situation

couldn't be dealt with that way. And I would love to experiment more with those kinds of things. Well, I'd love to work with other choreographers like Marion. I mean, what was hopeful to me at the end of all of this was that I think she was very pleased with the work, that she didn't feel, even though I had done experimentations, that they were violations of her work, but really did heighten them. Even though we had more funds and so forth, still, there were a lot of limitations financially and time. The technical time. I think we were in the studio for one day only so--

SMITH: You shot that on sixteen or thirty-five?

SNYDER: Sixteen.

SMITH: Your next film was Baroque Dance [1675-1725], which you did in 1977. And that's yet a very different kind of film. It does have a very instructional kind of quality to it.

SNYDER: I think it'd be useful to talk about the process there. This we'd actually hoped might be the first in a series of films that we would do under NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] sponsorship. We did get NEH money for this. Again, it wasn't a lot more than any of the rest, but it was a little bit. But the actual process was very exciting for me because I was working very, very closely with Shirley Wynne, who is a scholar of baroque dance, whose work I respect enormously. And in a sense, even though the film comes out very differently, there's something analogous in that I wanted to seek, to understand the sort of the essence of Shirley's thinking about the baroque. I mean, Shirley becomes what Marion had been and what Wigman came to be; sort of the artist, thinker at the center. Even though this was about scholarship, that was nevertheless, the process-- And we had a very wonderful working relationship where she was very comfortable with even my theoretical or scholarly

suggestions that came out of the process of engaging with the material. The portion that has to do with gesture was very much sort of stimulated by a whole intersect of things but I became particularly fascinated about that in both watching the movement in her working with her dancers and in looking at the drawings and studying things. I felt that the gesture was something that seemed to just shoot out at me. So I said to Shirley, "This is what I'm feeling about this. I'd love to do a sequence when we take and we look in great detail at the gestures and sort of play around with them and follow through with them. And how does this feel to you? Would this be a violation of the integrity of the material you're thinking about?" No, she was very excited about it. So, and I guess some other themes, although they were all there-- But I mean, this is where things begin to overlap. Again, little emphasis of the whole masking tradition. From my ethnology and from even the theme of transformation, mask is something that fascinates me and again, it comes out in the Wigman films.

So these were some themes that I had an appetite for, that Shirley didn't seem to feel-- So, in a sense, this is the same kind of dialogue of the filmmaker in relationship to the other source, be it the artist, be it the scholar, that I was engaging with Marion.

Although Marion was much less articulate about all of this process. Shirley's a very-- I mean, we could get into really good discussion--never really came into a debate--but of the appropriateness of a particular filmic interpretation of all of this.

SMITH: What were the factors of the considerations that went into your decisions vis-a-vis camera placement and mise-en-scene?

SNYDER: Well, in almost all of the films-- all of those that would be thought of as belonging in a theater, in one way or the other--I translate that filmically to seeking a kind of a limbo situation, and I don't know, sometimes I'm not quite sure that that's the



right decision. But what I want to do is to then translate the viewer, the experiencer, really into the heart of the experience. And for me the stage, except when there's a clear something in that space, and I don't know what I would have done with a [Martha] Graham and a [Isamu] Noguchi set. I mean the Noguchi set is a very prominent and key element in Martha's concept of her stage space. So that gives a local reality to stage space. I think of proscenium space, however, as eternal really, I mean, not having a particular quality to it, unless it's very much clearly defined by the choreographer as having a quality to it.

SMITH: So you saw these dances as being performed on a proscenium stage rather than as, say, in a ballroom.

SNYDER: Right. And we do try and introduce that at one point. I mean, there is a sketch of the place that they would have taken place in. Now, again, this is based on my thinking about time and space, all right? When issues of cultural or historical something enters into consideration, I feel it's very important to try, as much as possible, not to have a contemporary filter enter into that. Now, I'm not saying this very well, but all of the things that were used in the baroque film were largely of that period. Now, the costume was beautifully, but very contemporarily, made for that film. Actually, the largest cost of the whole film were those two costumes that Malcolm McCormick made based, again, on very careful historical research into texture and into fabric and everything else. But rather than having them try to create a contemporary version of a Baroque stage, the way I solved the problem--and I would still say that the way that I would want to solve--is that we're introduced to that by seeing a picture, circa 1695 or whatever it was, of a little theater in England. So you, as the viewer, look at it, it fills the full frame of the film, film frame, so that in a sense you're there. And

that's how you enter into that space and hopefully then you, as viewer, keep on sort of having that image of the space as you look, as you then see the figures dancing in a space that has no definition at all, so that you could-- I don't think it would work filmically, but suppose if you kept on sort of having an over image of that stage space on the whole time. I mean, that's what I'm thinking that you will do in your mind's eye. I like that phrase, "mind's eye," very much. It's the way I work a lot.

SMITH: It seems also though, that you did not move the camera around as much as you did in Bayanihan, much less the Marion Scott.

SNYDER: I didn't have to. One of the reasons I didn't-- Well, first of all, again, because of the style itself. It's a fairly linear, rigid look at the wonderful notations of the movement through space. It's still fairly linear, I mean, it's, you know, it's a swirl, which I hoped that we would get, but it's confronted from a fairly frontal position.

SMITH: So the decision to shoot things--the movements--back and forth from the camera, was imposed by the material? Or was that a creative decision? SNYDER: It's both. A very much simpler problem, filmically, to deal with two dancers than with a group of dancers. So some of those decisions about where I moved the camera with both the Bayanihan and the Marion Scott film, were generated by the problem that I discussed early: how to get all of those figures into the film frame and certain positions-- You simply couldn't do it. So I would do these more extreme side angles because that would allow me to get all of the figures in.

Now, again, if that had totally violated a number of other considerations that I might have had to take care of it at that point in time, probably, I wouldn't have done it. But given, then, the much simpler problem of these two dancers or a single figure, which is what you had in the baroque film, I then chose largely to focus on what I

thought was the most appropriate and readable position. And you could say there's a much more of a sort of a Astaire consistency about positioning. Now, actually, there is a couple of points when the two dancers are side-by-side, where I chose--again, to a certain extent for filmic spatial needs--to be more in a side position than I am in other portions of the film. Again, because I felt just sort of-- I couldn't have really gotten them side-by-side, full-figure without losing, without being too far back, because again-- Astaire will say this thing about the full body with this sort of understood or implicit understanding that what he's talking about is his full body or maybe his and Ginger Rogers's full body. In other words, the full body filling the frame of the film is very easy with a single person. But if you're talking about the full body and you're talking about even three people, you have to be so distanced from that dancer or those dancers that-- Because the other thing that I think is very persuasive about the film's interface with dance is that it can bring you closer too. You keep on having the potential of being right there dancing with the dancer. And what I don't like--and I think most people don't like, although they may not say that they don't like them-- One of the criticisms about straight record films is that you're not only sitting in the theater, but you're sitting in the theater, probably in almost the last row of the orchestra because that is actually the only way that you can get all of those full figures in that full space. You have to distance yourself enormously. So the problem then of being as intimate as possible with the dancing figure and at the same time, getting as much as you desire. But in most cases the full figure in the frame of the film is a lot of the problem of dictating the positioning of the camera.

SMITH: I have a working, methodology question which is did you storyboard these films before you went into the studio?

SNYDER: To a large extent. The Bayanihan I did very carefully. My version of storyboard, sometimes I literally did really draw a little quick hand sketch of what the camera would be seeing. Or a lot of time it was notation really of the sense of the positioning of the camera in relation to the choreography. So that I would do a very simple sketch of where the bodies were moving in space and where the camera would be positioned in relationship to those bodies moving in space. And this is exactly where those issues of where am I going to put the camera in order to tighten up, visually, that rather extended-- The choreography goes like this and what I'm describing is a random snake as I'm sitting here-- How can I put the snake, not across, spread it across, but put it all in one long line in front of me. That's exactly how and I've already discussed this.

SMITH: All right. I wanted to ask you about the baroque notation--

SNYDER: Well, for the baroque film, since that was about two-thirds graphics, I did again a very careful storyboarding. But with most of these instances I would have a basic Xerox which then I would maybe, talk about what was in that frame, because you did a lot of close-ups and very detailed shooting of graphic material. SMITH:

The notations, as sections of that film-- At first sight it appears to have instructional or pedagogic purposes but then, as I thought about it, there's no way that you could

follow it, given the complexity of the design, so it's an aesthetic devise-- SNYDER:

Yeah. Well, I think there's too-- I feel--and this comes from my concerns, very much

voiced in a lot of my writing in the ethnographic area--is that understanding the

context and sort of being totally involved and in tune with it, so that you really are

living in that time-space, is the most exciting sort of approach to that material. Once

then you get into that, in a way, it's not the reality of this happens this minute and this

happens the next minute. What is the reality of the baroque experience? And the reality of the baroque experience to me said that the [Raoul Auger] Feuillet notation is again an almost total embodiment of the baroque period. And then you do treat it as a sort of an aesthetic experience. Although, I mean, we go and I felt quite satisfied with some of the approaches I took there. We come, we do both have a little sequence of a very detailed bit of the notation which we really dissect and we have, as you may recall, the dancer in slow motion so that we are really identifying every little wiggle and squiggle on that notation and trying to get the viewer to see its correspondence in the notation. So for that very minute, we are, in principle, learning to read that notation. Okay, but then there is, there is along with that, the gestural detail in the notation. What is, I think particularly interesting and important about this system of notation is that it's much more spatial, it's much more interested in the space and it defined. So a lot of that is about the movement of the body in space, so then we actually have another sequence which were marvelous because there again exists these wonderful comments and drawings where you have the dancer starting in the foreground--these are [Kellom] Tomlinson's drawings, these are not me as filmmaker interpreting--with the dancer in the foreground and behind them is this whole wonderful Feuillet notation out there sort of in their dream ground that they're going to move through. So that tells us again, the feeling about the sense of moving through the space with those choreographic designs which then allowed me to go into what is really a very filmic and aesthetic interpretation. For a few minutes, I'm simply playing around with those-- They're very legitimate pieces of original notation, but I'm using them in their sense of design, in their sense of the baroque-ness of them, in their sense of real beauty and aesthetic. And

no longer is it connected with this means this or this you would interpret as-- But we've taken very clear steps to allow ourselves to get to that point.

I would not have thrown that on the screen, if I hadn't led up to that point. That would have been my playing around and having fun and that wouldn't have been acceptable to me.

SMITH: Okay. We've discussed the Mary Wigman film, actually somewhat, so I thought maybe we could go on to Celebration

[:A World of Art and Ritual], which like the Mary Wigman film represents a whole new set of problems because you're dealing with found footage, basically, to create your reality.

SNYDER: I think it's important with the Wigman--to at least give myself some legitimacy in that whole process--we did do a lot of still shooting and we manipulated the stills to a great extent so that-- I mean I was very intentional about moving in and out or up and down on a still to correspond to what she was saying about a particular concern or-- There's the whole discussion in that film about space, which is a great concern of the whole German-- And since I'm very concerned about it myself with something, I was very fascinated with, we looked very carefully for stills, where there was a clear sort of thrust and gesture that was spatial. She was really reaching out in space and I did a lot of, then, as close as possible-- I think there's even one shot where I really follow along the arm. Now, that's a little photograph we're using. And I think it helps it work.

So there's a lot of new shooting in those areas that if we just put together the existing archival footage would have been a very different film all together. And in that sense, it's very much-- It's quite similar in some ways to the problem in the

baroque film and that actually is a dynamic I like very much. If you came to me with a lot of money and said, "Make some films. What do you want to do?" I'm not quite sure yet what I would do. One of them would probably be an Isadora Duncan film and I would use José Clara drawings very fundamentally in that and do a lot of playing around and manipulating them. I'll tell you on this tape, one of the things that I wanted to do with the José Clara drawings was to try and find a way to go from one to the other in order to really almost to create a moving sequence. As you may or may not know now, there's a rather cheap thing that you can buy with computer graphic manipulations called morphing. You're beginning to see it used quite a lot on television now, but you put two images, my face and your face, in a frame and we can morph one to the other. In other words, it finds a way of whatever to move it from what was, from the first to the second in a very smooth transition. This would be an ideal way of working with the Duncan stuff. I can't wait to get back and play with that now. [Laughter] Celebrations. Celebrations was fun, had enormous limitations in terms of the final product because that was put together in thirty-six hours.

SMITH: Including the research for the images?

SNYDER: No. No. The images came from my long time experience with all kinds of ethnographic film. I think I had approximately four months to work on this really, when the Smithsonian [Institution] asked me to do this. It was to be world dance and so forth. So I sort of initially reviewed in my mind and, in fact, sitting down with a wonderful research assistant, I just said, from the films that I know to exist, what are some of the most powerful images about dance? Okay, let's make note of that and begin to see if we had these all in front of us, what would we do and how would we bring them together? What kinds of themes and ideas? So in a sense, although I've--

Well, I was familiar with this material because of having used it in my dance cultures classes over the years. Almost all of these things were parts out of films that I had at one time or another screened in those classes. And having screened them in those classes, I was intimately familiar with them. I had certain concerns and themes in using them initially in those classes, so, there was already sort of a--



TAPE NUMBER: XVI, SIDE ONE

MAY 11, 1993

SNYDER: I almost let what I thought to be available dictate to me, in a sense. Working with an assistant, we ordered all of these films that I thought had these exciting moments or extended moments in them and began to look at them. I was using a flatbed and a Moviola so that we could look at sequences over and over. And so, I was doing sort of the reviewing and selecting and scripting out here. In the meantime, as I became clear that that in fact was a bit of footage that I was pretty sure that I wanted to use, I would let the Smithsonian [Institution] know. They would order a print and secure the permission to use it in the context of this exhibit. And so, then I arrived in Washington on a Wednesday or something or other. All of these films had been copied onto video tape. They were sitting in a pile in the corner and I had my rough script and I said, "Yeah, pull out the Gelede footage and we're going to start with this run through, select this section-- "All of this now doing it with an electronic video cutter/editor and with this man from the Smithsonian working with me. So what was sort of in my mind and on my notes combined with grabbing it out of the actual stuff and in this period of time--as I say, I think about thirty-six hours--we put it together in a long, rough cut and then we went through and refined it and cut it down and then finally I sat in the same room and did the narration. And it was a very clear time constraint. This was to be a continuous video loop in this Celebration: A World of Art and Ritual exhibit, and very rightly so, they said people wandering through the exhibit don't have the time or the attention to look more than ten minutes at something. So we had, I think, it was a ten minute, possibly it was a twelve minute timeframe to

do all of this. At the same time, now, working on the other side was an opportunity to really voice some of my--for want of a better way of saying--theoretical concerns about the relationship of dance to the larger context of culture, particularly, as it's embedded in ritual. So it was a very important opportunity to put before the public, in a sense, some of my thinking about dance and that also was a challenge at how to put forth some fairly detailed ideas, again, through a script that should be very minimal in terms of its words. So it was full of challenges. Obviously, all of these constraints didn't add up to it being-- Well, there were constraints, so it turned out to be what it was. But I was quite pleased with the results. I really have felt, that I would love to do an enlarged version of that, where the time constraint was, let's say, a half hour or maybe even a forty-five minute film. Again, really using that footage, but going into a little-- Letting it play out more, going into a little bit more detail. But again, the clearance on all of that for something that would be distributed would be a very different kind of a problem and might actually turn out to be extremely expensive. So I haven't really pursued it. But since we've talked a little bit, I think on tape, about the "Dancing" [PBS television] series the other day, I'll just say that one of the things that I felt potentially about the Celebration tape was that the excitement of dance and dancing in the pieces that I had selected really was there. One of the things that I was even more aware of last night was that I feel that the excitement about dance and the experience of dancing is not really in this "Dancing" series. There's a lot of talking about dance and there's an interesting analysis and there are interesting things put before you on the screen, but the excitement, the real beauty-- I mean I still take some of that Watusi footage or some of the Sri Lankans, and there the camera is more

involved. These were also, as really simplistic as the clip of the Pomo shaman in the Celebration tape: still a powerful piece of everything, her and her great body shaking and so forth and you're really very close-up with her. I mean, I thought it was a powerful piece of footage, a powerful piece of footage, I think, which you can kinesthetically respond to. What we haven't really talked about yet, and our time is getting probably short for you, but I feel as though--and I think there are little bits and pieces of what I've done that support this--film can really involve you kinesthetically with dance in a way that sometimes even seeing dance on a proscenium can't do. You can really physically be in the midst of that dance experience. And this is where I think the potential of film is so important, because for the individual dancer, I still maintain that that really is the center of what dance is about for them, why they dance, why dance is such a powerful experience. Yet often times, the observer, the viewer is on the outside of that experience and they really don't connect with it and they're really-- And that's why I think in many instances when you're dealing with people seeing a lot of dance but never having danced themselves, there's a certain amount of interest and excitement, but there isn't the real understanding of what dance is about. This is why I feel I really want to keep on pushing on the connection of dance and film or media, because I think it has the potential of really allowing us to bring even the non-dancer into the center of the dance experience. And what the films that I've done have done along the way now, since each one of them has its own reasons for compromise--and I won't even justify that--is that I've tried then to have the interface of at least the dancer/choreographer/artist articulating that sense of what it is. There are some pretty wonderful things that Marion Scott says. There are I think marvelous things that [Mary] Wigman says. Why did I spend so long on that one

interview where Wigman recalls her experience of the first time she danced on the New York stage? That's about the experience, you know, butterflies in her stomach and she looks out in the dark pit of the theater and--I don't know if you remember, but it's just the loveliest story--she absolutely, shaking with stage fright at that point, said, "I just trembled." And in that shaking and trembling and at the same time, the audience response was-- She talks about the feeling of taking these deep breaths and relaxing and coming-- I mean, I can't think of a better sort of way of, if verbally, making the interface between the kinesthetic and what's being observed. So the artist for me then is often times the-- If you can't get it actually in the visual experience, which I haven't had enough money and time to be able to really experiment, you can-- I dropped into it with somebody else voicing it on through the sound portion of the-- And I do think, again, the interface of sound--that's the conceptual on the kinesthetic, to come back to another running theme of mine that you are talking about or you're being able to put the word and the experience together. No, it isn't talking about, you really put them together. This is where Margalit [Oved Marshall] is so wonderful. You put those two experiences together and they come out as a whole, which is very different from talking about, it's talking with, it's sharing the inside and the outside.

SMITH: You were also dance film editor for Film News magazine. Did you do most of the reviews yourself or did you find--?

SNYDER: Yeah. No, I did almost all the reviews myself. That was, unfortunately-- Rohama Lee, who was the editor for Film News for years and years, was very supportive and generous of me in terms of when they had-- That was a period of probably two, at most three, years and possibly if I-- Your question is a very good one. At that point in time, I didn't actually think about farming out to yet other people so I

sort of-- It was in the period of as I was just really getting involved with UCLA and I just couldn't keep on doing the reviews in the way that I wanted to do them. Couldn't have the time to ferret them out because the material to review was much harder to come by than it is now. Probably the most interesting-- I did one whole essay on children's dance on film, where I looked at about five or six different films. There I was sort of able to not just comment on the film but the significance of what they were talking about and even children's dance through that particular frame.

SMITH: Okay. I think we've wrapped it up for today.

SNYDER: Yeah. Good.

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, SIDE ONE

MAY 12, 1993

SMITH: Okay, today I wanted to get into the foundation of the Ethnic Arts program, which later became the World Arts and Cultures program. And so, my first question is, I noted it started in '75, was it your idea? Were you the person who initiated it?

SNYDER: No. It was interesting, anticipating this session I was really trying, without going back to my files, to reconstruct the history. Alma [Hawkins] did, in fact, play an important part in sort of urging it into being, I guess. And I found myself very excited by the notion. We began identifying other people on campus who we felt would be-- We wanted, initially to sort of experiment to see whether, in fact, they would be responsive to the idea. Now, since we've just been talking off tape about the historical context, I would guess our first sessions on all of this were probably 1969, maybe as early as '68, when we started to discuss this with others. So we are, again, in the context of a sense of the need for educational change and also the potential university environment for being interested and accepting of changes, which was particularly present at that moment. So we reached out and began talking with some of the other faculty. I think particularly of Phil [Philip L.] Newman in [the Department of] Anthropology. He, somewhere along in this period, was actually chairing the department again, even though he was associate professor--

SMITH: Chairing anthro.

SNYDER: Yeah. This was an interim period. But perhaps we sought him out because of that. He held that position only to discover he was really very interested in talking further. Early on, both Bob [Robert A.] Georges, and Michael [O.] Jones from [Center

for the Study of] Folklore [and Mythology] were brought into discussion. My guess is that Bob Georges was in there earlier and, as I think I mentioned in one of the earlier discussions, I came to know, respect, and be very excited by some of Bob Georges' work through a student who we shared together, Alice Singer. So, I immediately thought about Georges as a potential.

I guess and it is so odd that I can't really visualize the moment of conception here at all. But certainly the question of reaching out, utilizing, making a much more interdisciplinary approach was very fundamental to some of our concerns. And I think the sense of trying to really locate the arts in a much broader context was also driving our interest. Interestingly enough, I think even though this was a \*\*period of, let's call it ethnic awakening, a concern for developing something that we might call "multicultural" was less of a concern for us than the fact that we just realized that other cultures had something very important to say to us, to the program about the dynamic relationship of the arts to society. So it pushed us in a very much of a multi-cultural direction, but that really wasn't where we started from at all.

So we began and we had what was really-- My guess is it was as much as two years of sort of just sitting down and discussing this. Arnold [G.] Rubin was another person who came in quite early on. I'd come to know Arnold--a lot of these faculty I had come to know--through students in the Dance Cultures of the World [Dance 140A-B-C] class which, I have mentioned quite often, was a general College [of Letters and Science] class and therefore drew into it many students from many areas. But there would always emerge in class, you know, a handful of students that I found particularly interesting and exciting students and who often times then continued on with me, maybe to do the whole series of three classes because they, in turn, found

what I was saying in class had some real significance and meaning to them in whatever they were doing. They were very often other students from art, from theater, from music and they, in turn, would say, "Oh, yeah, Dr. Rubin's just been talking about this in his class." So I came to know or to begin to feel out these connections and then began to seek out these faculty members. I'm trying to think of some of the other key players along the way.

SMITH: Not to emphasize the negative, but what were the points of contention in organizing the Ethnic Arts Programs? What were the concerns that developed, both within the group and within the university community at large, that had to be addressed in order to get this concentration?

SNYDER: Well, I think this wasn't a point of contention within the group that was then to really write the proposal for the program and to put it through the university. But even though the issue of educational reform was very much out there and there was a great deal of lip service paid to that, when you actually brought to the academic senate an interdepartmental program there was always the immediate concern of, well, Who is really going to monitor it? Whose standards are really going to be met? Is this just a manipulation of the system or is there serious academic work going to be put forth through this program? What are the standards that the students are going to have to meet? How are you going to do that. So even after we got it through the senate and up through state, that was something that was a continuous **questioning**. And jumping chronologically ahead quite a bit, but when we really survived into the eighties-- Because there were other programs--I can't really quite precisely cite all of them at this point in time--but there were a number of other rather innovative programs that did spring forth at this period of time and many of them just didn't survive for a very long



period of time. The impetus that had brought them into being: the commitment of the faculty to innovation and change began to recede. The problem of maintaining a program within the university was very difficult and they often died out. And by the early eighties, the whole question of the place of interdisciplinary programs in the university was one that those who were engaged in them felt very passionately about and I think there was a senate committee that was organized to look at them. I mean, now we get back to technical things again or budgetary things. Who funds those programs? We were in a particularly precarious position because in our initial concept of the program, we were very emphatic that we wanted it not only to be interdisciplinary but intercollege. When we get into an intercollege positioning, this becomes particularly challenging, and particularly because while Phil Newman and anthropology and Bob Georges and Mike Jones in folklore, who were located in the College of Letters and Science, were a very supportive of it, this didn't necessarily mean that the dean of letters and science was persuaded that it was something that was appropriate to letters and science to support. Now, what we both initially maintained, and a stance we held for while, which particularly involved the dance department was-- First of all, we maintained that we could put this program into being without really asking for more faculty or faculty support, FTE [full-time employees]. In most instances, we actually then went on to identify already existing classes within the departments that we felt should be involved, for the records to say. So it was anthro, folklore and mythology on the letters and science side and what were then the four departments in the College of Fine Arts at this point in time, which was [Department of] Art, [Department of] Music, [Department of] Theater [Arts], and [Department of] Dance. I should say Mel [Melvyn B.] Helstien from theater who had been the most

vocal non-Western faculty in theater at that point-- His area was puppetry, which naturally took you out of the Western theater into a broad global theater perspective. Interestingly enough, the term global wasn't really very much in the vocabulary at that point in time. So Mel was another key player. And folklore and mythology's introduction too seemed a natural introduction for these students. What Mel was doing in theater arts seemed like a class that could only just be sort of identified for the students. We did, then, in dance generate a particular class which was a kind of an introduction to ethnic forms, I guess. No, we did utilize Elsie [Dunin]'s class, which was introduction to ethnic forms, and later, then, generated a specific class which was sort of more particular to the World Arts and Cultures students.

SMITH: But within dance.

SNYDER: But within dance, yeah. Let me see. We then said that we, at that point in time, would have only one class that was unique and particular to the ethnic arts students, and that was the senior colloquium.

SMITH: What's now, World Arts and Cultures 190A and B.

SNYDER: Yeah. And this was-- You know, it was what it was. Dance said it would take on both the additional faculty responsibility and I did, in fact, chair that colloquium for the first, I think, five or six years of its existence. So I guess, again, almost until-- Not almost, until I left on my sabbatical in '78, when--

SMITH: Now, the purpose of that class was to allow the graduating seniors to do an independent research project.

SNYDER: Well, no. At that point in time--and this was an important shift that later occurred-- No, we felt, then, what we wanted to do in that class was to identify underlying issues that were common to all of us. And this was great fun and a great

challenge to create the syllabus for that class and the way that we would handle it. Even after we got the major approved, or perhaps simultaneous with the last year, it was in going through the administrative things we spent an enormous amount of time--and again, it was this faculty group that I've identified--in trying to find exactly what we would do and how we would do it. I was very committed. I think we all were very committed initially that it would be a team taught class, although I would take on the leadership of sort of being there for every one of the sessions, of knowing what the thread was that we were working towards and would initially take the responsibility then for reading the final work and grading the papers and giving the grades. So on paper the responsibility looked like mine but I wanted it to be very representative of all of the faculty. So the first couple of years we did it, we didn't find a cohesive enough way of doing this and we just each sort of, each of these faculty that I've mentioned came in and did really a lecture to these students about some topic that they felt was consistent with what they understood the ethnic arts philosophy to be. And I do think that it's important to state that we were constantly really trying to identify a philosophical base to the program. We felt very strongly about that and I think I've identified some of these initial themes. But that was what really was the generating seed of the program, so that we kept wanting to then reinforce that there was, in fact, a philosophy to why there was a program, why we as faculty were involved in the program and what, in fact, we wanted the students to come away with. I mean, we didn't want them to be rubber stamped or indoctrinated, but we really did want them to feel that they'd come away with a philosophical point of view in going through the program. So we did this and my job then was to try and sort of extract from these various lectures some of the points that I felt we should discuss in the colloquium.

The colloquium was also very much a seminar. I was very emphatic that we should do a lot of discussing. That initial colloquium model didn't work terribly well because, while I could sit in class and hear threads that were sort of going through all of the lectures, the students were not enough in tune with what really was behind the program to be able to pick those things up easily themselves. They then felt that it was sort of a series of maybe very interesting but disjointed lectures. And they couldn't necessarily put them together and then come away from what they had gotten out of those seminars with anything that they could really use for themselves. So then we went back to the drawing boards again and tried to think of, is there for us, as faculty, a central question that we discover us all to be addressing that we could put forth as a sort of the topic of theme? And "event" became one of the things that we decided to focus on because all, in various ways-- I mean, if you look at Bob George's writing, his contribution to folklore was to say that there really was an "event" that was happening which was a term that was very much used at that point to describe a process rather than product oriented focus. And again, this was an underlying theme that I think most of us felt we were very much engaged with, which was process rather than product. Or, how do you arrive at product with the understanding of the process? Arnold Rubin was very much engaged in this. His major area of focus was African materials, particularly Nigerian materials. But he saw that and he was a very vocal spokesperson for a theme that was emerging in the art historical approach to African materials, which is that you could not look at a piece of African sculpture or an African mask in and of itself. You had to know the context, you had to understand the event in which it was located. And it happened that Phil Newman's work in New Guinea was on ritual events to a large extent. And again, these were events, and certainly my own work was

just filled with all-- So, we felt that our own work had something to say about this and it was a sort of a theme that we all had some, real vital concern about. So then we tried to build a curriculum on what were various elements that we felt were issues in understanding the concept of event. And we built ten weeks of really-- It was a one quarter offering initially and I think almost immediately, possibly even the second or third year, we discovered it had to be a two quarter. But the first quarter was certainly, then, building this structure.

SMITH: Now all these students were seniors, so--

SNYDER: Most of them were seniors. Now, one of the sort of administrative challenges of bringing students into the World Arts [and Cultures] the WAC program, (the Ethnic Arts program), was that first of all, we tended actually, even though we wanted it to be a four year program, the students that initially were interested in it and responded to it were typically UCLA students who had, for one reason or another, come in contact probably with one of us on the faculty and who had found themselves in their sophomore or even in the beginning of their junior year feeling frustrated by the limitation of just being an anthropology student. That it didn't embrace enough of their larger, more comprehensive concerns. So that we had students transfer into that program who were, in fact, juniors or even in some instances bordering on the edge of being officially seniors now. It prolonged their life in the university, which at that point in time wasn't quite as much of an issue as it later got to be. So they had to take an extra year with being with us. But the consequence was that as students in the program, they might have even been first year students. But officially they were seniors so they were doing the senior colloquium.

SMITH: The point of my question is it would strike me, just looking at it from the outside, that at this point they would, having taken their sixty-four units or whatever it was, have had quite a bit of exposure to the ethnic arts philosophy and its various manifestations.

SNYDER: Well, you see, that's one of the challenges of the program which exists today. For them to even be sitting in classes that are actually identified as required and core classes, like anthropology 101 I guess, the fact of that matter is that when they're doing that as a student, they're sitting in a class with maybe two hundred other students who are in that class because they're anthropology majors or maybe they're even doing it as a general college requirement. And the particular things that are unique issues, or we felt would be unique issues, to an ethnic arts student, may or may not, in fact, be voiced at all. What they're getting is a good, sound introduction to the field of anthropology. And this was true, even in the folklore class, where you're dealing with a class where there are probably twenty-five to fifty students sitting in that class. The ability of the faculty, even if they are aware--and they were usually aware--even though those classes might not even be taught by the ethnic arts.

SMITH: Not necessarily--

SNYDER: I mean, no. In any given year or two cycle, Bob Georges would do that class maybe once in the four to six offerings that it was done in. For the folklore faculty, that was sort of the requirement of the faculty, that they rotated. And each of the faculty involved in folklore took charge of that. And some of the Folklore faculty, like Don [Donald J.] Ward or later came [Donald J.] Cosentino or some of the-- Oh, even Mantle [Hood] was still alive at that point. While they were aware of the program, they weren't necessarily in tune with it. So they would do that class in the

way they did that class. So the problem was that we knew there were connections and we knew that we were building some foundations for the students and that they were being introduced to materials that had a relevance to where we wanted to take them. But we actually did really have to take them conceptually through a mechanism which was the colloquium. So in a sense, except for the fact that the students had some kind of commitment to all of this, else they would have not found themselves being students in the program-- There was the initial literature and the initial discussion about why they would want to be students in the program that gave them some clue. And in most instances at that point, they had then, in fact, sought that program out because they already had some questions about the more traditional approaches to any one of these things that were not satisfying them.

SMITH: Did they know each other? Was there a way for the students in the ethnic arts majors to develop themselves as a grouping or develop camaraderie? SNYDER: Initially we weren't able to do that as well, except that again, the colloquium itself served that function.

SMITH: But at the end of the program.

SNYDER: Now the program-- Let's just come back again to historical facts, where the dance department takes on both the administrative responsibility and any of the financial responsibilities that there might be, and the most important was that our student advisors became simultaneously the student advisor for the dance program and for the World Arts and Cultures program. You know, we didn't actually-- Maybe she did go one step up in terms of her administrative appointment. I think I did fight for that fairly early on, but it was not a large financial change. But whatever it was, it came out of the budget of the dance department. And our own dance department

facilities, at that point in time, were much, much more limited. The building was not the dance building, it was the women's gym and much of the space in the building was open space that was utilized by a number of programs. It's still, to a certain extent, true today. The classrooms in that building are still open classrooms. I think we have first priority on them, but they're not ours to do whatever we want to. So we couldn't just designate a room in that building and say, this is a room where students and faculty can gather or students can gather. So we had no real place for assembling. This has continued to be a problem for the dance program. It's continued to be a very serious problem for the faculty in the dance department because we also have a faculty lounge. Very, very early on we shared the building. And kinesiology was still a part of the-- Almost all of the downstairs faculty offices were kinesiology at that point in time. So our positioning in that building was, you know, quite limited as we grew. But anyway, we couldn't really offer anything to the students, even though we felt it could be a useful thing. But they came together fairly early on in the colloquium. And they did really, for whatever reason, and I think because they realized they were sort of risking-- I've always said that I've felt the students were very special students because they realized they were in a high risk major and they sort of bonded together because of the sense that they were doing something that was unusual, that they were doing something that most of the other students in the university weren't doing, and that there must be some kind of relationship and bonding. Anyway, the students, even in that early, in those very early years, had camaraderie.

Moving ahead a little bit to the discussion-- Back to the colloquium, because it was so central to the program at that point in time, when we got the theme about the event, the format was still that I would have faculty from each of the areas come in.



But they came in now not to do their own sort of independent lecture, but they came in at a point along the way when they felt the topic of discussion, which we had collectively created, was [something] they were particularly interested in or felt that their own work had a particularly important contribution to make to that. So the students didn't see it as individual faculty coming in and doing individual lectures. They saw topics and issues being discussed. But those discussions were very much enriched by the presence of individual faculty, even though, again, I was there all the time and sort of kept the threads of the ideas moving along.

Now, I will take the responsibility. Since I was that faculty member, there were decisions along the way that were very much colored by my individual way of working with students and colored by my own teaching strategies and preferences and so forth. I felt we needed very much then to be responsive. So process, the issue of performance-- And again, I mean, whether it was Arnold Rubin or Mel Helstien or even Phil Newman, they all had something to say about performance. Interesting that we were talking about performance in a way that performance studies or the larger aesthetic area of performance arts is talking about it now. Not performance as you would see on a stage, but almost in the very large generic sense of, "We are engaged in a performance now." I mean, it's the kind of framing that a [Erving] Goffman would put on it. But the students were, in a period of concern where you didn't talk about performance if you meant event or issues of performance. It was relevant to do that rather than just to talk about it. So we had a couple of years when we then tried to put together, as sort of one of the culminating experiences of this first quarter, an event. And I very much let the students take the responsibility for what that was and how it got defined and most of the other faculty members were to be engaged in some way or

other. Well, I can tell you that at a point, some points along the way, they got very courageous and-- Processionals through the center of campus and wearing masks and singing on Royce Hall steps and so forth was a perfectly possible part of the students' agenda. And I supported them doing this. So the rest of the faculty did actually go along with this to a large extent. But I can think now of Phil Newman walking with some kind of something draped off his head across the center of campus and being brave, very brave. I exposed the faculty to some of what they might have really felt as rather strange and maybe even embarrassing situations. So then we began to tone that down a bit.

It was interesting. It almost evolved-- The students in the program, for whatever reason-- Since I said that while we certainly felt that philosophically we had to engage in world cultures in order to address what we were concerned with, we weren't seeking multi-ethnic students, but they did seem to gravitate to the program very early on. I can remember just being in awe and sitting in the colloquium classes with the great variety of who was represented in that program: Middle Eastern, Asian, African, Afro-American, Central-- We did really have a world representation. I then began to also really try to have the students initially sort of identify who they were and where they were coming from and where they were going to as a part of a foundation for some of our discussion in the colloquium. The issue of identity was a theme that we worked on a great deal; of cultural identity, of-- And we got into a lot of, I think, very important discussions and, I think, very fruitful discussions. And I will only say this in support of that--because obviously that's my personal observation--but that students that emerged--I'm still in contact with a lot of the students that were in that colloquium who I came to have a very important, personal rapport with--although it's

personal in the professional sense--and who I still have communication with. And they very clearly state that the program--but particularly sort of as it was crystallized, I think that would be a right, correct word--was crystallized within what we were doing within the colloquium. It was very important to them and very much influenced what it meant to be an ethnic arts student in later years. In fact, I just-- Amazing. I had a call from a student yesterday, very interesting student, young Chinese boy, who was still Chinese when he was in the program. He's told me now that he's gained his citizenship. I think it's a useful example only because it gives you the sense of the breadth of quality. He felt that the program, what we were discussing in the colloquium, he was very interested in becoming--

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, SIDE TWO

MAY 12, 1993

SNYDER: We're starting by talking about a student named Wen Chu, who felt, he learned a great deal in the program because his commitment was to a career in, initially, police work and he did in fact-- He went on to get a master's in I think it was social work or something or other--I can't quite think--and then in education and he's now-- He called me yesterday because he's given my name as a reference because he's now going to go through a high order security clearance because he's working now with the airports at a high level in security. But issues of ethics, of really understanding, not melting pot because we're still, even, in the seventies when we're being-- Our consciousness--to use some of these seventies terms--was being raised about ethnic or racial issues. The more melting pot model was still very much out there. And one of the things that I think students did feel was that we were talking about respecting and acknowledging the integrity of individual cultures and what they really had to contribute, not asking them to change and to become something else, but in and of themselves and he even had a long discussion with me yesterday saying how that discussion had so influenced his work. He's gotten a lot of awards along the way. That, I mean, in area, that I [laughter] -- It wouldn't have crossed my mind to think that the Ethnic Arts program could have contributed to a career in this area, but it did. So I think we did some good work in that class along the way. When I had to move away from both the leadership and the program, I think I maintained the colloquium for a period of time, even after Judy [Mitoma] assumed the directorship, chair-- I never knew what we really called that. [Laughter] We were not chairs of that program.

SMITH: The catalog says coordinator.

SNYDER: Coordinator maybe. I don't think Judy uses that term but-- Well, maybe she does.

SMITH: When you were coordinator, that was your title.

SNYDER: Right. Anyway, I continued on with the colloquium with a little bit more, even after that. We did add the second quarter. I think that the faculty, perhaps because of the embarrassment I had put them through, was very eager to get out of this notion of the sort of a collective project. And the notion of the individual project and individual research began to take on more and more significance as the colloquium developed.

SMITH: Was that also in response to sorts of general discussions that were going on in the academic senate about becoming more product oriented perhaps?

SNYDER: It could have been. It seemed like there was just a need evolving. I think the students themselves really felt that, I mean-- First of all, they did feel, whether this was a reality or not, that they were putting a great deal of time and attention into the colloquium. It did sort of become the center--even though they were doing other classes--of what they were doing as they graduated. And I think they then felt, "Okay, if I'm putting all of this work into something, it should be more individualized. It should be more significant to me, myself, and where I'm going, what I'm going to do after I've graduated." And I had no problem in that at all. I did really share that feeling. So we began to move in that direction. We looked for a time after I had to give it up, I can't really quite clearly recite who-- Colin Quigley did it one year. Several years Judy did. I think even Mike Jones did it. But there was a trend towards really the project becoming bigger and bigger and bigger. And I would have to say, personally, that I felt

that was detrimental. I think my own perception of the major is now that some of the underlying issues, that I still feel are philosophically very important and very fundamental to that program, are less clearly understood by the students at this point in time. They certainly do feel empowered, as students. And there have been a number of physical changes. First of all, towards the end of the time that I had the leadership in the program, we were given a little bit of separate money, we were able to have a separate office and a separate little bit of space which almost immediately then we created as a student as well as administrative space. In fact, when I was still really chairing the dance program, even though we had a separate office for the Ethnic Arts Program which-- And we did gain a separate administrative assistant position for the program, and Lillian Wu who came into that position and has remained in it. She stayed in that office but it really became an office and student lounge. So that sort of a place of assembly for the students was very important for the program. And when later on we got very nice facilities in the new Fowler Museum [of Cultural History], the space that was literally created for the program, again, had that concept of the central meeting place for the students. So it may be that while it wasn't happening in any one class, just the fact that the students did very much tend to come to that central meeting space quite often and they began to even do a lot of student-generated activities, the sort of the sharing of philosophical ideas and issues may have been going on in a more informal way, but still going on-- Anyway, it still does remain very much of a fact that there's a very, very, very strong cohesive sense within the student body. And they feel very empowered. They're a very activist student group and very successfully so and I think they're seriously so, and they've done some very exceptional work as a student group.

Now, we were very concerned--this is the faculty group--in how we could encourage more students entering at that freshmen level. We felt that educationally in the long-run, we would do a much better job if we got freshmen and sophomores into the program and they really could go through the program in a much more, not sort of cramming in all of this philosophical [laughter] stuff at the last minute. So we did begin to get more and more freshmen and sophomores coming in. At that point in time, then, we said we must start with-- Also the senior colloquium will have another kind of a meaning. And we need to have another class which is more similar to what I was doing in sort of the interim period with the senior colloquium at the freshman and sophomore level. We did in fact get that on the books and Phil Newman started to teach it. Hearsay-- And this is very hearsay, so it's not really terribly relevant. I'm not sure that it did, in fact, quite do that. And again, this is probably a teaching style or some philosophical variance between Phil and myself on what to do. Anyway, so I'm not sure that it's quite in place in the way I, personally, would like to see it. But that again did happen and that is a part of the curriculum at this point in time, though Phil is also retired now and I don't know what's happening with that class. But I think it's a very important class.

SMITH: Were there new classes that developed within the individual departments because of the Ethnic Arts, and later, the World Arts and Cultures programs?

SNYDER: Some. As I say, yes, the dance department did a class that Judy, I think, initiated. I may be wrong about that. It may have at first been Elsie and then Judy. That was a separate class. I think that's dance 80 [Movement as Cultural Behavior].

SMITH: Now the sort of process for that-- Would that first be discussed amongst the ethnic arts faculty and then be presented to the dance department?

SNYDER: Right.

SMITH: Was it presented to the dance department because the teacher was going to be a dance department faculty?

SNYDER: Right. Well, also at the administrative level, that became, then, the dance departments or whatever department was involved; it was their contribution to the larger program.

SMITH: Now, when you were coordinator did you have classes such as Peter Sellars teaches now, which are, I guess, special seminars within the World Arts and Cultures program, independent of any of other departments?

SNYDER: No. No.

SMITH: So that's a later development.

SNYDER: That's a later development, yeah. So let me just finish answering your question first. The next program that began to develop classes that were specific to us was theater arts and sort of under the leadership of Mel Helstien and he was also recommending and beginning to bring into the theater faculty, faculty who were interested in non-Western performance. Interestingly enough, Beverly [J.] Robinson, who, in fact, was our first graduate of the Ethnic Arts program, who went on then to get her folklore degree but in a folklore doctorate, was brought in as a faculty member in the theater arts to bring in African and African-American materials. So Beverly was brought in. Carol [J.] Sorgenfrei in Chinese. Pat [Patricia M.] Harter in Japanese materials, I think. Anyway, so Mel sort of had a small junior faculty under his particular mentorship, I guess would be perhaps the most accurate way of describing it, who were emerging as very interested in getting into the theater arts curriculum as well as just contributing to the World Arts and Cultures, an awareness of non-Western



theater forms. But the contribution of theater arts to the Ethnic Arts program was a good excuse for them developing a series of classes. So they developed a series of classes which were, again, vaguely parallel of some of my dance cultures of the world [classes], which was theater cultures of the world. I don't think they quite called it that, but it has a name that's somewhat similar to that. At least they argued that they were developing those classes in response to a need voiced by the Ethnic Arts Program.

SMITH: It seemed like the one area where you were somewhat weak was art history.

SNYDER: Well, at the time that Arnold Rubin was still alive, active, and very key in that program, the art history program would already argue that they were doing all of this. And I think they were. They had classes in African art, in Chinese, in pre-Columbian, Central South American, Mexican-- They had a pretty well-developed and quite successful series of classes already existing. So there we just bought into those classes, in a sense. In the period of time now, particularly after Arnold's death and the shift of art history from the arts program into the College of Letters and Science and humanities program, I haven't even really, to be quite honest, paid attention to who all is teaching there now, but I know that there are many less faculty really committed to the non-Western area of art history among the faculty now. So I suspect that program has diminished in its interest and concern. But it did remain there. We still have one quite active faculty member from art history, Bob [Robert L.] Brown, on the current faculty.

Then interestingly enough, because it seems quite, well-- The ethnomusicology in the earlier stages of the development of the Ethnic Arts Program, was least supportive of what we were doing. Perhaps because, without them actually saying it, either they felt we were treading on their territory or that they were much more

interested in their identity being as a graduate program and also maybe their positioning within the music department, where it wasn't really till the graduate level that they could have many non-European both theory and practice classes. Anyway, they didn't initially really respond very supportively at all. But they were willing to cooperate enough for us to include them in the program. And the students would then take their Introduction to World Music class. But the feedback kept coming to us that that really wasn't meeting the needs of the-- Oh, I know, what happened was that the introduction to world music class students were required-- It was an upper division class in the music program and therefore no student could take that program without having done all of the fundamentals of Western music in the music program in order to take that class. So even though you could list it as a single standing requirement, when a student actually went to register for a class, they'd say, "No, you're not eligible, you have to go back and do Music 1 and Music 5 and Music 7--" And so the reality of it wasn't possible. So the students said, we need a class where some of these discussions about fundamental musicology are addressed in the same class with the world music. So finally, music did say, "All right we will create a special class for the ethnic arts students." And I believe Bill [William R.] Hutchinson was the first one to teach that class [Fundamentals of Sound and Music of the World]. That may not be accurate, but Bill certainly came in fairly early on and that remains on the books even though, again, there's a lot of concern and some contention because now, ethnomusicology has its own undergraduate program. And I think they feel there's a good deal of confusion as to a student in their undergraduate program, which they're very anxious to attract, and a student in now what would be appropriately called the World Arts and Cultures Program with a focus in music. They don't know that they can make a clear and

responsible distinction between those two and because of money matters, they, then, want a student to be their own particular student. So I don't know how that's going to work itself out in the long run. That's under discussion right now. But I think those were the three areas where specific classes within a department were generated in response to the needs of the program as a whole.

SMITH: How receptive is UCLA to team teaching?

SNYDER: Not particularly. It's very, very difficult to get that on the books. SMITH: Because this would seem to be a program where team would be very valuable.

SNYDER: That's right. That's right. Now, there is--and I'm not even sure that we're doing this anymore-- But for a period of time there was sort of another level-- While I think the catalog could only list one faculty or at best, two, there was no way that I could list within the colloquium all six of the faculty, or the other five faculty members, who were contributing to that program. There was a way on the books, as we got into more computerized analysis of what was going on in the program. Poor administrative assistants would spend a good deal of time in saying, "So and so is teaching five-sixths of this class in the world arts and cultures," and that would officially go under Arnold Rubin's teaching load and under Bob Georges' teaching load. When it came to issues of promotion I don't think that it was taken into consideration really at all, or it could be a liability rather than an asset.

SMITH: Because I'm thinking if one were to teach a class on masking, how do you distinguish between dance, music, theater, and the art history aspects of it? Not to mention folklore, anthro.

SNYDER: That's right. That question is really the essence of, I think, the next steps of what's going to happen in the program. We were foolish enough-- The faculty in the program were really committed enough to its uniqueness and our feeling it was really a

contribution to a new level of education. Most of us just did these things. So we just showed up and did the lecture or we showed up and sat in on the class, discussion, and so forth and we didn't say, are we getting credit for it, are we going to get--? We were just there, we just did it and we got away with it for a while that way. Beginning really, I would say, as early as the late eighties, as the sense of budgetary constraints or another kind of assessment of programs began to become very much present in the university consciousness, why, you just could no longer do that. And as early as our second major review, seven year review-- We had the first review, my impression is it must have been in '76, but I may be wrong, even though it was a seven year review. And then the second--We got through things. I mean, there were a lot of questions about interdisciplinary stuff and blah-blah-blah, and questioning whether there was an appropriate kind of accrediting for the faculty who were contributing and so forth. But we sneaked by. By the next review, which took place after Judy had already become coordinator of the program--but was actually in the quarter I came back again and one quarter when she took a sabbatical to become acting coordinator-- The review had already gone through but the results of the review came through and there was a lot of concern voiced on the part of the administration which we, as faculty, chose to counter with our own concerns which was, yeah, you can close down the program. If you think it's worth anything at all, you've got to put some funding into it. You've got to give faculty some credit for what they're doing. You've got to treat us as a real university entity. Everybody really, had gotten away with kind of hiding us under various kinds of rugs or whatever. So we did give them this ultimatum and we did, in fact, get some-- We got a little FTE-- And the next year, Judy got, through the office of instructional development, a three-year grant which was only really for enrichment. It was quite a

generous, I think it was maybe eighty thousand dollars a year, which was not FTE, or may have been student FTE. In other words, I think we may have gotten something for our teaching assistants, which was one of the-- In the colloquium for instance, we argued that that program needed a teaching assistant in order for it to be possible for a faculty to take it on as a part of their teaching and so on. I can't remember all of the details, but anyway, everybody began to look at this issue of faculty credit, acknowledgment of what we were doing in a real way, very, very seriously. So this whole issue of team teaching or of the real viability from the point of view of the university and now constraints and all of us worrying about our loads and so forth, the notion of an interdepartmental program became more and more questionable, unless as one had some really nice supplemental stuff. I mean, if the program was able to buy a particular faculty member, a good research assistant for two quarters that might have offset the actual problem of taking on another class in the program and not really getting full faculty credit for it or something like that. I'm very aware of what your question was. I think this is why Judy has now really moved to the positioning of no, it needs to be a department and not an interdepartmental program. And from the administrative point of view, there's no question about that being an important move and perhaps even a necessity. However, let's come back to the very example you gave in your question. All right, if you're doing a class on masking and you want a very substantial and important representation from art history, from music, from theater, from whatever, in that class, are you going to get it from a faculty who's now in the Ethnic Arts program as a masking expert or who is that--? What is the identity and concern of that Ethnic Arts, of that World Arts and Cultures faculty? In a very innovative stance, it would be understood that the faculty who were now World Arts

and Cultures faculty, were selected as World Arts and Cultures faculty particularly because they were very comprehensive in their interest. They were indeed people who you couldn't call clearly an art historian or an ethnomusicologist or something or other, but their work and so forth had already engaged them in three or four of those influencing disciplines. And their own work reflected that. And it's possible.

SMITH: How does that differ from, say, aesthetic anthropology? You know, what Jacques Macquet is doing?

SNYDER: Well, no. I think it differs a great deal. Jacques's point-- It's a point of view about anthropology that he's dealing with. That's still very clearly anthropologically based. In later years, really almost after I was less involved with the Ethnic Arts program, Jacques did become very involved with the Ethnic Arts World Arts and Cultures Program, specifically because his interest in anthropology was this whole field that he'd evolved called aesthetic anthropology, and that was a natural bridge. He was a highly respected and highly skilled anthropologist, whose interests had extended or were of a nature that he had a great deal to say to our students. But that would be very different than being a faculty member in the World Arts and Cultures program and disengaged-- The continuing engagement in the central world of anthropology was equally important for Jacques and for his work. If he was disengaged from that, disenfranchised from that, would he feel the same? Would his colleagues in anthropology--? I mean, one of the important things for all of the students in the World Arts and Cultures program is that many instances they, because they're very good students, gain a high respect from their core areas. So the faculty in anthropology doesn't have any problem in saying, oh, yes, so and so and so, is a very good student in anthropology and, in fact, could give letter of reference and so forth, as with them

being identified for their knowledge of anthropology. And this very often then leads them to what they do in their graduate area. But if they didn't have that opportunity, I think I just feel as though, while certain administrative problems would be very much solved, the credibility, as well as the intellectual richness of the program, might be very seriously jeopardized. SMITH: So you're concerned about the program moving into departmental status.

SNYDER: I am. I am. As I say--I repeat over and over again--I understand from its credibility and positioning in the university, there's no question it's the right move--

SMITH: What were the dynamics about the name change? Did that represent a shift in philosophy?

SNYDER: We found more and more that the word ethnic got more and more loaded as a word. We were using it really as people arts, or even as world arts. That's why we were using it, and at the time that we really first did start to use it, that was the way it could be understood. But as racial issues, as ethnic issues became more and more prominent in not only academic discussion but even more than academic discussion, it seemed to imply--and this comes back to my initial comment--we did not-- We weren't seeking to bring in ethnic students, they naturally came to us because what we were discussing, philosophically, had to do with issues that were global. Both students and administration when they saw "ethnic" thought, oh, this is a program, which is-- It's not the African-American Studies Center, it's not the Chicano Studies Center, but it's like that. What they want is an ethnic student. They want a non, non-whatever, Euro-based student. And that wasn't what we wanted at all. So we felt that we had to change the name in order to make our mission clearer and to not leave out others of the very students that we also wanted to draw into the program because it was-- I mean, we just

wanted to engage students who were concerned with all of this and we hoped that we would find white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants as excited about this body of material and as committed to it and as willing to confront their ethnic biases or understand their world view as anybody else and to realize that it was one very particular point of view and not an overarching one. So and I think it was very true that the change of name very rapidly gave us another level of credibility all the way around, surprisingly so.

SMITH: I mean there seems to be also currently, a sizable interest in contemporary urban culture and contemporary U.S. urban culture. Is that a new development or was that there implicitly all along?

SNYDER: That was there implicitly all along. In other words, again, in talking about the study of world cultures, I mean, it's the issue that anthropology also has addressed recently in the new emphasis on urban anthropology, that the study of cultures didn't mean that you would go and study people eight thousand miles away from you. It was the study of culture, and the unique culture in your own backyard required the exactly the same kind of attention and had the same theoretical and methodological approaches and concerns inherent in it. And very early on this was a topic that came up in the colloquium. I mean, why are you looking at this? As I have said on other occasions, I'm not an ivory tower person at all and I hope learning constructively funnels itself back pretty rapidly to the student becoming a contributing member of society. So okay, you're addressing these issues, what community may you discover yourself to be effective of contributing to? It's probably not a remote village in Tahiti. It's probably your community in east, south, west, north Los Angeles. And so many of the projects, early on--



TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, SIDE ONE

MAY 12, 1993

SMITH: Off tape, you've talked somewhat about your feelings about the direction of the World Arts and Cultures program and the [Department of] Dance program. You've been very closely connected with both, of course, and in some ways the merger that's being discussed seems, on a sort of administrative level, historical level, very natural. But what are your feelings about the way those two programs are going? And the kind of emphasis that the university is placing on them?

SNYDER: Well, I think the dance department, as a dance department, has to continue in some ways to be responsible to the professional definition and understanding of dance as it's out there. And a part then of the training and preparation does mean serious study of a particular technique or vocabulary, serious mastery of certain skills that are a part of the field of choreography, as one example, in a very intense and very focused way. I come back to discussions that we were having the other day on what I thought was relevant to the dance students to be aware of in the Philosophical Bases and Trends [in Dance, Dance 158A-B]. I certainly feel that they have to be aware of all kinds of changes that are going on in society and that their work has to be responsive or to reflect that. But there's just a difference in a level of attention. That is the central focus, as far as I'm concerned, for a World Arts and Cultures student. They should be acutely aware of definition of culture or cultures or world views and what changes that are occurring and how the arts reflect, relate, nurture, implement those changes. In most instances, they will not necessarily become a practicing--now I'm talking about the World Arts and Cultures--they will not become a practicing artist in the field. They

are--and I'm going to use a peculiar term that's just coming to my lips now--much more of a negotiator for the arts. Their training is much more in understanding, in public relations in the very best sense or in managerial positions in the very best sense of the word. Now, they may have come from a position beforehand. I'm going to introduce right now something that--and I've got three minutes to do it--[laughter] may seem irrelevant but it's not. As I think we've mentioned, I was, for a brief period of time, directly associated with and have been very interested in the Performance Studies Program at NYU [New York University], which is a graduate program. That program is an absolutely academic program, as it functions at NYU. It is a very effective program and very much at the nerve center of a lot of what's going on in the arts in New York because most of the students that are engaged in that program now, came into that program with, and maintained on the outside, a very high degree of professional experience in one field or another. And that seems to work very well. I think that that is the model in the sense that I think the World Arts and Cultures program wants to reflect, does reflect, and should continue to reflect. But and it is very different from the attention to the practice of the art that the dance department gives to it. Now, the problem along the way is that even those could interface a little more comfortably if I felt that philosophically, even in those classes which could and should connect with things that are going on in the World Arts and Cultures program, like the History of Dance-- The history of dance, in terms of content could be shifted a little bit more to reflect not just Western, traditional, classic, understandings of the history of dance. So there could be ways of introducing the dance student to a broader framework, which I don't think does go on as much as I would like it to be going on and which I--I've already discussed on many tapes now--fought to see going on but I

don't think ever really was able to affect. So right now as they stand, there's a very different philosophical attitude about dance, the role of dance, what the program is about in dance and in the World Arts and Cultures program, which says to me, if there's going to be a change, it only has to mean that basically the dance program, as it now stands, gets wiped out and maybe reconstructed to be in more alignment with the World Arts and Cultures program, even if it maintains an identity on paper that says this is an alliance of the dance program and the World Arts and Cultures program. I think it is the dance program that stands to feel much more changed from this alliance. And now I'm not sure in the very, very, very longest run whether I think that that change, maybe that wouldn't be a change that I would have been very supportive of, but I feel uncomfortable with the way it is happening and the way I think it's going to happen.

SMITH: Are you uncomfortable because it seems to be happening almost haphazardly or do you think it's an intentional change or do you know?

SNYDER: Well, I think there's an intentional strategy on somebody's part there and I'm just going to repeat again what I said. I think it's going to mean the sacrifice of much of the program and certainly, much of the faculty in the dance program. And I'd rather people have been told about this a long time before it happened rather than waking up one morning and discovering that it already happened. I'm sad to see it happen in that way. [tape recorder off]

I've said this before, but if the university had had the courage to really say that the philosophy and point of view embedded in the World Arts and Cultures program represents a change in thinking, that we feel the arts should be engaged in as a whole, and that the World Arts and Cultures program becomes the umbrella program for all of

the arts at UCLA and has as much effect on music as well as ethnomusicology, on art, on all aspects of the arts, on all aspects of theater, even film, even though that's out-- If it really did that, then I would be out there parading now with banners because I think it would have been a major, major step for the university to make and a very, very important one and one that I think is very needed to be made. But I don't see that that's what they've done with this move at all. I think that they've attacked the very weakest of their existing programs and sort of with a little bit of a pretense about something, about acknowledging, and incorporating. This is really swallowing up, and that's a very different way of strategizing all of this.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, SIDE ONE

MAY 19, 1993

SMITH: Okay, here we go again. Today, I wanted to move on to the sort of general question of the university as an environment for the arts and arts education and then, in the process, discuss some of the specific programs you've been involved with and the university outside of the department of dance and the World Arts and Cultures program. I gather when you came to UCLA, the College of Fine Arts had already been established.

SNYDER: Yes. It was about four or five years old I guess at that point.

SMITH: And was Dean [Charles] Speroni--?

SNYDER: Dean Speroni was dean.

SMITH: At that time were there any echoes of the debates that had taken place about whether there should be a College of Fine Arts or whether there should be a Department of Dance?

SNYDER: No. I think we passed beyond that. I think at that point in time the university was very supportive of the efforts towards the arts. Speroni was a very committed, quiet dean. He didn't rock the boat at all. Of course, he was an extremely good friend of Franklin [D.] Murphy's and it was, I think, really, Murphy's commitment and inspiration that moved the positioning of the arts to where they were. On the other hand, it was certainly true that even at that point in time, the arts were getting less support in comparison. The number of FTE [full-time employees] in the whole of the College of Fine Arts was quite different from College of Letters and

Science. Speroni, also being more of a humanist than he was in the arts himself, there was a sort of concern for establishing and maintaining the integrity of the arts as an academic endeavor. So when issues of the difference between the needs of a dance student or an art student and another student, in terms of their general college requirements and whether they should have two languages and so forth, why, Speroni was pretty clear in saying, no, we must adhere to the standards that have been set by letters and science and we can do the other, but we mustn't sacrifice that general quality of education. I respected that in one sense and then there came times when it seemed like a limitation that wasn't really allowing the arts to develop fully and on their own.

SMITH: You sat on the executive committee of the college, correct?

SNYDER: Yeah. Off and on for I guess almost all the time. I think actually Alma [Hawkins] brought me onto the executive committee even before I became chair, and then of course, as chair that was one of the responsibilities one held. Then afterwards, I again was representative for the department and then went on, at a point, to actually serve as the chair of the faculty that was in the last few years. So I would say that I was fairly intimately involved with it. [Laughter]

SMITH: Well, in that capacity, were you responsible for setting what appropriate graduation requirements would be?

SNYDER: Well, we certainly had discussions about things like that. But if just following on in what I'm saying, there already were pretty clearly established numbers of units, the way anybody's course work was divided between their own field and general college requirement. So we could talk about it but there wasn't really a lot of effort at making any variation in those from what had been set by letters and science.

SMITH: Was that because that's the way Murphy Hall wanted it, the chancellor wanted it that way, or was this the way most of the faculty felt about it? SNYDER: I would say, certainly, dean Speroni had a lot to do with that. And even when in the latter part of the time that he was there and Bill [William R.] Hutchinson was becoming more active as assistant dean or associate dean or-- I can't remember what Bill's title was but he began to sort of emerge to be of major assistance to Speroni. And I think I'm repeating myself, but Speroni, because he was so close to Murphy, really was in complete alignment with Murphy Hall at that point in time. Even when Chuck [Charles E.] Young came in, it was a very sort of consistent pattern. I remember coming out of early executive committee meetings and being rather amused in a sense, because we sort of officially gathered, but it was almost understood that we weren't officially going to do much of anything except that, you know-- It wasn't an active body. It never really was an active body. I tried, when I was chair of the faculty and after we'd already made the turn-around and were already in the School of the Arts, to get more initiative going with the faculty because I felt that we had gotten ourselves-- I mean, while there was a lot of worry and complaining about the fact that all of these changes had been made, the fact of the matter was that the faculty was not very involved or vocal about their concerns really. It was very easy for Chancellor Young to put something across, not really feel much pressure from the faculty. So we could then move on to do whatever recommendations and finally, changes that he suggested.

SMITH: Well, what were the pressures and the rationales for the transformation from the College of Fine Arts to the School of the Arts?

SNYDER: Well, the stated reason was that Chuck Young felt that the quality of work and particularly the quality of the faculty, I think, had much deteriorated in the

College of Fine Arts and possibly-- I mean, it was never really clearly voiced except to say that the transition to a more professional program would be a tremendous asset for the growth and development of the arts. Then there was such a tremendous amount of debate about what was really meant [by] professional. If it was simply the best standards, you know, that was one thing. If it was really very much sort of the isolation of the professional artist in their various kinds of studios and without the sense that their education need encompass more than their work, their particular specialization--

SMITH: There seems to have been this tension for a long time between this sort of conservatory model and the liberal arts model, art education in the college, and I guess it manifested itself in different ways, but--

SNYDER: Right. For a while, I felt that we, in the dance department, had a much more comfortable sense of how those two aspects of the field should be wedded and manifested. And while I was certainly aware, particularly in various levels of encounter with other faculties from other departments, that there were tremendous amounts of difference of opinion and a great deal of tension about this, I guess among other things-- Early on, one of the most notable things that was going on was the tension between the art history faculty and the rest of the arts faculty and to such an extent that they always were really completely independent units, even when they were under the one title of the department of art. And a great deal of, you know, real fighting, I guess, going on there, of which I was only somewhat aware or chose to be somewhat aware. I certainly knew because of my interest in Arnold [G.] Rubin's work--because of his early sort of alignment with the World Arts and Cultures program-- I was aware of Arnold having a terrible battle in order to be tenured, I think, first and then move up the scale. There was great hostility and I think, again, this wasn't really



voiced and since I choose not to get involved with these things unless, you know, it seems I'm asked to in some way-- And I think I was asked to write a letter for Arnold at one point along the way. But I also knew that Speroni and the rest of Murphy Hall were very much against what they thought was both the point of view and certainly the politics of the art history faculty. And, you know, it was very hard to even talk to many of them about--

SMITH: This was when [Otto-Karl] Werckmeister was chair or--?

SNYDER: Well, it was actually probably just a little bit after. But that stigma was there for many, many, many years and, you know, if you ask certain people in Murphy Hall about the art history program, why, you know, those are all communists, they're all radicals. And I think in Arnold's case, because he was so interested and concerned with non-Western art forms and had encouraged hiring of others who also had interest, not-- Of course, Chinese history and pre-Columbian art history is a different kind of a-- It doesn't bear the kind of sort of non-Western stigma that African art does, but nevertheless there was-- They were shifting away from the classical interpretation or understanding of the arts and I think both Speroni and Murphy were very uncomfortable about that.

SMITH: But Murphy was very supportive of the Museum of Cultural History.

SNYDER: Yeah. I think he was. I think-- Well, I'll say this because I'll say it, I think Murphy's quite comfortable with, again, traditional kinds of ways of understanding these things or dealing with them. Put non-Western forms in a museum, that's one thing, but when you're talking and many of the objects are yes, extremely beautiful by our aesthetic, from our aesthetics, but when you're talking about the contemporary African drummer, dancer, mask-maker as a great artist or something of those, where it

becomes much more actively involved, or if even more, you're choosing to say, but this art is something-- This object is something much more than a piece of art. I think there's a little bit more of a tension about that. And then initially, I mean, Museum of Cultural History, of course, has evolved marvelously over the years, but it seemed to me--and I was also on that faculty advisory committee for quite a long time--that, while there wasn't any interference and there was an interest in it, there wasn't the kind of support that, for instance, the Wight Gallery got. It was a sort of live and let live kind of positioning. I remember for a long time, Chris [Christopher B.] Donnan trying to find some appropriate space for them to start building. I think really [Elwin V.] Svenson was the one who really came along in Murphy Hall to really be supportive of-

SMITH: Oh, Svenson.

SNYDER: Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. What about the question of promotions and salary levels for dance department faculty and college faculty in general? Was there a problem in terms of evaluating the work? Was there a problem in terms of getting tenures and promotions approved?

SNYDER: Yeah, there was a lot of discussion about how could you sort of establish appropriate criteria that would make a creative, creative work, an equivalent to a published work in I would say, mid-seventies where we had a fairly active committee within the college that was addressing that issue. It was a problem and it never was completely resolved, although I did feel as though, based on my experience on promotion, academic personnel committees, although being chair, I served less on those than perhaps others because as a chair, you were not allowed to sit at all, I think. Is that correct? I think maybe that's so. But anyway, later on my experience was that

the equivalency wasn't such an issue but there were certain kinds of things. I was always interested in what the attitude was about film. A film--is that acknowledged as a work that's equivalent to a published piece? And there was always the discussion about, well, I mean, a filmmaker-- Even if the label filmmaker is used, which is a more comprehensive term, there are a number of people who are involved in this work. And really, really is it the same as the clear identification and responsibility that an author has for the written word on the page. And sometimes you'd hit very antagonistic opinions about that and sometimes you'd find support.

SMITH: Was it just sort of the luck of the draw who sat on the committee?

SNYDER: Yeah, I think very much so.

SMITH: So, there was no effort in the academic senate or in Murphy Hall to establish standards for--

SNYDER: Well, as I say, there was this committee that was created and they worked for, I would say, probably two years. I think Doris Siegel was our representative from dance. And they tried to put down on papers what kind of--first of all, in each of the arts--other forms of publications one would find and then how it should be judged. Issues that came up a great deal and I think we were quite faulted at points along the way-- For instance, in choreography, the reviews of critics were important.

SMITH: Published reviews.

SNYDER: Published reviews. Now, for instance, UC [University of California] Santa Barbara said these reviews had to be outside of the local sphere. You know, unless it was a review from New York or Austin or Cincinnati or something or other, it was probably just a sort of a local response and much less objective and they wouldn't even accept the local performance as a possible way of receiving reviews.

There was a great deal of argument about what positioning, even in the academic personnel process, the UCLA Dance Company held. Was it really just a rather grand student performance, you know, for the local UCLA community, or was it a professional company that would be accredited in the Los Angeles community as a company equivalent to any of the other ones that were appearing in Royce [Hall]. And I think that the real, what--? I don't know if I'd even call it resolution, but we argued hard for a long time about the professional standards of that. But it never really did succeed in demonstrating that, I think, fully. And I would have to personally say I think that was probably correct. Anyway, now that whole performance thing has been cut back to, I think, a size that is a workable size and is much more honestly a local--high standard, but local--performance.

SMITH: Of course, for a choreography performer, who's a full-time faculty, there's a difficulty of-- I mean, it would be virtually impossible for that person to run a company simultaneously, I mean, a company equivalent to [Bella] Lewitzky or [Loretta] Livingston or etc.

SNYDER: Right. Yeah. Lynn Dally who was on our faculty, I think was just berthing Jazz Tap Ensemble when she was still in the company. But that's a small company. No, that's very true. And I mean, other solutions to the problem is as for instance, [University of] Utah-- Utah really gave a very professional stance to their company and it did tour. I mean, it really was out there in the larger touring circuit. Now, that also meant that those faculty members were not then back home teaching their classes. They were really a professional company under the sponsorship of the university, which had its useful sides in many ways, but it didn't serve your teaching needs very much. I think the intermediary solution was that as did happen on occasion for Marion

Scott. She was commissioned to do a piece for some other companies, or special-- Angelia Leung and now Pat Catterson have tried to have a New York performance every other year in some way. They tend to do solo works or very small group pieces where they can pick up a company and not maintain it on a continuous basis.

Well, I think this is probably the most difficult problem for dance. I was thinking whether there would be an equivalent situation for the performing musician and certainly there is, to a certain extent. But it's a little easier to be able to maintain in an active quartet or even as a position in an orchestra and still sort of be able to disengage yourself from it or come back to the teaching, move in and out of those two spheres more easily, I think, in the way the world of professional performing dance really doesn't allow for that kind of flexibility.

SMITH: Yeah. In terms of your own promotions, you had a number of films and you had many articles but you didn't have a book. Did that pose a problem when your reviews would come up?

SNYDER: It didn't seem to. I must honestly say that I felt very blessed and lucky that at the time my promotions seemed to go through quite easily. I would have gone up for step six had I not taken early retirement. I think I would not have sailed through on that. It probably would have a battle but I was kind of at that point, [laughter] kind of just interested in the challenge. I mean, I guess one could say for that, my dossier looked strong in the fact that I had been actively involved with the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] and even the NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] to a certain extent along the way, Fulbright, you know. So that it looked as though I had some standing and credentials in that big world out there. And I think that was in fact true. And I'm sure that that had something to do with the ease.

SMITH: Okay. I'd like to switch to some of the specific things that you either observed or involved with. I noticed that you were on the review committee for the Department of Art shortly after you joined the faculty, I gather.

SNYDER: I guess it was fairly early on. Was I already chair? Do you have the dates there? Doesn't matter really.

SMITH: Not on this.

SNYDER: But it was quite early, yeah. It clearly was not just an ordinary run-of-the-mill review, I think. It was predicated on some very serious concerns on the part of the administration about what was going on in art and it was a very interesting review. I'm trying to think who all was on the committee. Provost--? No, not provost. Well, I guess he was first provost. Well, anyway, let me see, I was one of two, I believe, who were actually in the arts and the rest were in humanities. We did a lot of talking with people in the community. I remember several long discussions with June Wayne for instance. And yet, even though there was sort of a pressure for perhaps some kind of an agenda, I mean, to be the outcome of all of this, the final result really wasn't that striking. I'd have to say for myself, it was a very interesting and important process to be engaged in. I think I learned a lot about the university and some feelings about the arts and this whole theme of, again, the professional. But in a different kind of a way. Certainly one of the foundations of concern was the whole history of Richard Diebenkorn. Even though this sort of had the actual fact of the matter we'd passed through that, it certainly was a challenging question to ask how any faculty could have really turned him down as a member of their group. And what standards was one talking about in the arts? I didn't have any disagreement, as I think the rest of the committee did, about the fact that an artist of the rank that Diebenkorn was would

even, if they-- If I recall, and this is a little bit vague, some hint about the fact that he was not teaching that much or this or that or the other thing-- I really can't remember what on earth were some of the rationales for his not being admitted, I mean, not been continued in the faculty. But I did feel very strongly, and I still do, that if you're talking about professional and what you mean is somebody who is really outstanding in his or her field that there's no question that that presence, even if it's from time to time distracted-- If one had a [George] Balanchine or, I mean, we've already talked-- If I could have ever persuaded Carmelita Maracci to come on campus, even if she had come once a month or might not even show up for most of her classes-- And I mean, we did have a problem with Mia Slavenska in this way. Yet, the presence, the experience of just the ability to sit at the feet of these people, I think, is an enormous learning experience. And I think it's jumping around or going full circle or whatever, I think it's the problem of what do you mean by a professional. Is it if I just put up my sign and say, I am a professional artist, which most of these-- The people that are at the level that I'm talking about, they don't do that. They're so much beyond that that they don't really care. I mean they are just absolutely committed to their work as artists. So, but it's sort of the intermediary person who claims to be that only to sort of claim a kind of an isolation from everything else and a kind of a privileged narrowness, which I think a lot of professional artists allow themselves.

SMITH: Well, I guess there's the problem of the institutional development of the departmental autonomy when applied to the arts could lead to a concentration of mediocrities, who are afraid of being outshone by somebody like Diebenkorn.

SNYDER: That's right. I mean, there's--

SMITH: And how does the university protect itself, or should it worry about those sorts of things?

SNYDER: Well, I think the effort that has been recently made to have sort of categories--I don't know that I like categories--but of special adjunct appointments accepted that's not what-- I think it may even be in place now. A professional appointment, where you're acknowledged as being there because you have achieved distinction and all of the other sorts of things that one is often called upon as a faculty, not necessarily required of this kind of appointment. I mean, we did talk about this a couple of tapes ago in terms of Margalit [Oved Marshall]. If there had been sort of this special kind of positioning for her, I think her contribution to the department and to the university would have continued and would have been enormous and we wouldn't have had all of the dramas that we did in terms of holding her or not holding her on the faculty because what she was would be, being Margalit in a sense. Just to be a Diebenkorn would be sufficient. Just to be a Schoenberg or a Stravinsky would be sufficient. I mean, you didn't have to, you didn't have to have any other qualifications. Now, this doesn't come-- And those people are out there already. I mean, I think your argument about the protection of mediocrity, I think if you want to be positive about some of the concerns that have been voiced all along and which were particularly voiced in the change of the positioning of the arts, it was that. But it seems to me that-- In many instances--certainly this was true of our own faculty--that the ability to continue on as an active presence and getting that feedback and judgment as well, in the world of the arts at large, was extremely frustrated for all of our faculty. I mean, I would see over and over again, a young and sort of exciting choreographer, who after a while—



TAPE NUMBER: XIX, SIDE TWO

MAY 19, 1993

SNYDER: One of the things that I and a number of us tried to argue from time to time, was where are our laboratories, equivalent to the support of a major physicist or a chemist or even mathematician in other areas? I mean, where their own work and contribution is regarded as so central that the university takes all kinds of pain and trouble to give them a powerfully nurturing environment so that they can only maximize their work. But I would say that this happened not at all in the arts. There was one point along the way when Dean [Robert] Gray came in and he had a lot of interesting visions. We went up to-- What is it? Greybar, the estate that's now the American Film Institute.

SMITH: Oh, Graystone [Manor].

SNYDER: Graystone. And there was talk of the possibility of the university buying that and of that becoming sort of the research center for the arts faculty and, well, it stopped at about there. We had a couple of interesting meetings, the faculty as a whole, with Bob Gray. He had, I mean, he had something in mind. But when we sort of voiced our own interests and hopes for a facility like that, which a number of the faculty in all of the arts were very, very, very hungry for-- Certainly, you've heard the argument of most of the studio arts faculty is that, you know, they have literally no studio space at UCLA. So either they give up being a studio artist or they, you know, they sneak home at ten o'clock at night-- I mean, there just isn't that kind of support. And one of our long and abiding themes in the dance department of not having a really sufficiently exciting theater-- I mean, that's a laboratory for a choreographer. Our little

experimental theater works all right as a stepping stone, but we need a theater where we really could have continuing public performances, not always necessarily UCLA faculty or UCLA entirely-- But something that is an on-going laboratory. I certainly would say that the theater arts was very lucky in getting Macgowan Hall. That's the exception rather than the rule in terms of access to what one would call the working laboratory.

So, I guess what am I saying with all of this rambling is that the faculty was criticized for being mediocre because they were forced into a position of being mediocre because they really couldn't continue to nurture their art, whatever they were, even though they had originally been invited onto the faculty just because of this. So, I found that a very paradoxical situation which I don't see has been very much changed in all of the time that I've been associated with UCLA. And again, I have to watch out that Bennington [College] doesn't keep coming up too much as a theme. [Laughter] But to see that as a structure, where--I think we've already talked about it. There was a very practical decision-making process in having a non-resident term for Bennington. Just couldn't pay the heating bills. But it also was an absolutely marvelous tool for everybody. All of the practicing artists--and there were many of them--used that time to be out either in their studios or out concertizing or whatever it was. They could, very comfortably, engage in the active practice of their arts even as they served on the faculty. And they brought back that. I mean, when we came back in the spring quarter, dance faculty had been touring, the students had been touring, all of the music faculty had been out in various concertizing. I mean, everybody had been engaged in their "professional life" in a way that was very renewing.

SMITH: Well, you mentioned Utah, but were there other major state universities with all of the bureaucratic incrustation that that entails that had developed programs around the arts, where you could say, gee, I wish the UC system could act like this, could do that?

SNYDER: Not really. Not really. I mean, this is a fatal flaw. I think Utah really is the most prominent example and academically they got criticized a great deal for that very reason, but-- Ohio State [University] has had a-- It's not that they've-- They've been more generous, I think that's the only way I can say it. They've been more supportive of their faculty and their students in their professional work, even though they don't have a touring company and a repertory company in the same way that Utah had.

Other than that I can't really think of any examples that would be a great deal different than UCLA, except for that fact that I think that possibly this is an issue in-- My sense was after sort of-- When the whatever, the big five or the big eight of the Utah, Ohio, [University of] Illinois, Florida [State University] at Tallahassee got under way, we were all for a while in sort of an equal position, had equal respect in the academic world of dance. Nevertheless, it was true that an Ohio, or certainly a Florida State, and I think to a certain extent Illinois, encouraged their faculty to take more sabbaticals and to get out, to do their professional work in the context of sabbaticals. Or they did more of bringing major guest artists onto their faculty in visiting positions, so that there was more of a both reaching out or bringing in than seemed to be the pattern that we maintained at UCLA.

SMITH: Do you think [University of California] Riverside has come up with another set of answers to this problem from what you can see?

SNYDER: Well, even though they have a couple of extremely talented and important dancers, choreographers-- Fred [Frederick L.] Strickler has certainly been in the field and is a wonderfully talented and gifted person, and now in a fairly narrow sphere because he's gotten so involved with sort of the art of tap dancing. But nevertheless, he's been on their faculty in various positions including chair for quite a long period of time. And now, Sue Rose, who I consider to be an exceptionally gifted choreographer-

-

They have an undergraduate program that really is introducing the dance to the general college student in a sense. What they have been really pushing on for the last, ten years I guess, is their graduate program. I would venture to say that their graduate program, from the humanities point of view, from the point of view of dance scholarship, is really the strongest program in the country now. But again, it really is dealing with dance in a way that would appear consistent to the academic community as a whole, even though again, their own leadership, for instance, in Susan [Leigh] Foster-- Susan is a very interesting scholar because she also is a very interesting practicing artist. And she feels very strongly that those two things have to interweave. I wouldn't say go hand-in-hand because she's sporadic in her movement forward with those two things, but it's very-- Her academic work is very, very much enlightened by her work as a practicing artist. But it's a very different kind of a-- I wouldn't say that what they are doing has a real equivalency to any other program now. If we'd gone on with a Ph.D., I think my response might have been quite different.

SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about the Ph.D. It would seem a natural outgrowth of the decision to do the M.A. program. I guess '62 is when that started, so obviously the department was all for it. Is that correct? Was there unanimity within the department?

SNYDER: No. I think that that was a part of the problem. There was a core of us who felt it was absolutely the natural next step. The next level of contribution that we could make to the field as a whole, particularly as our various components of our M.A. grew stronger and stronger as sort of sub-fields: the ethnology program, the therapy program, there wasn't an active resistance from any of the faculty, but I certainly would say there wasn't an active support.

SMITH: So the performance faculty was indifferent to the question?

SNYDER: Yeah. I think they were indifferent. They felt it was a good idea, but if it didn't interfere with what they were doing, and--

SMITH: Did they already have the M.F.A.?

SNYDER: No. The M.F.A.-- We thought that we were sort of pushing on two fronts. It would have been-- Sorry, it was the year that I was on my last sabbatical, '84, I guess. When I went on a sabbatical at that point, it looked as though M.F.A. and Ph.D. were on the horizon as possibilities. And then, again, for whatever reason, Carol [Scothorn] was able to work the M.F.A. through with very, very little challenge from anybody. And when we attempted to do much the same with the Ph.D., we just got all kinds of questions and it was as much to do with FTE as anything else. Now why that hadn't become an issue with the M.F.A. I never-- I mean it was obvious that-- Or it appeared that the administration really wanted to see the M.F.A. happen and they really were very questioning about the Ph.D. and I think that still came back to the stigma. I mean, is it really possible that there's academic, scholarly content in the field of dance such that it would justify a Ph.D.? And I--

SMITH: Now, how did you answer that? I mean, it sounds like you had two sets of objections. One was just sort of practical and budgetary and then the university is always in fiscal crisis for some reason or other.

SNYDER: Right. [Laughter]

SMITH: And then the other is philosophical. But were they advancing the philosophical questions, the questions of the level of dance scholarship in the country?

SNYDER: Well, I have to respond to that, you know, very much from my own point of view. I mean, I thought we did a pretty damn good job of demonstrating that there was a level of scholarship that absolutely warranted moving on to the next step. I mean, from my point of view, just looking at a number of the master's theses coming out of the ethnology program, which really are I think doctoral dissertations, I mean, I don't necessarily even think that that-- I don't say that all with patting myself or us on the back because I think that students did too much and drove themselves too long on these things and we weren't good about monitoring them. So it's not necessarily a plus. But the fact of the matter is, they nevertheless produced damn good work. And when we could demonstrate that students from that program had, since there wasn't a Ph.D., gone on to find Ph.D.s in other areas, still at that point, not a Ph.D. in dance, but that they'd sought out the Performance Studies Program at NYU [New York University], were going through anthropology Ph.D.s-- So there was a hunger and a need and also obviously the ability to move through and sustain, because a number of them now have their Ph.D.s. At a point, it seemed as though we'd just hit the stone wall and it didn't really matter whether we, you know, put down a perfect proposal. The administration really wasn't going to support it. We got very much tangled up in the whole Riverside situation because—And Riverside-- Christená [L.] Schlundt was very smart in her

agenda, because the initial step that they took was an intercampus M.A. in dance history and all of us in the UC system got ourselves quite involved with that.

And so, we were all listed then as faculty for the Riverside intercampus M.A.

SMITH: Which was administered out of Riverside.

SNYDER: But it was administered out of Riverside and their catalog listed all of us.

But all of our catalogs didn't also list all of us. I mean I don't fault Christen . She was smart and we were not so smart. But anyway, so we kept saying, oh, yes, well, Riverside's already got an acting faculty of fourteen people from, you know, UCLA, Irvine, Santa Cruz, Davis, it was very impressive. So that was really moving forward, at the point when-- Well, then we got caught up with the appointment of a new dean, which again, was justifiable for the administration to drag their feet at a point when there wasn't a new dean and it certainly is a responsibility to be trying to put a new program in place when there isn't really that senior support for it. So, I mean, I do understand it in principle, but again, I mean, it was-- So that is what happened. They kept saying, no, no, we can't really consider it while you don't have a dean and at the same time, Riverside was moving forward-- Riverside was also getting, for one reason or another a lot of additional-- There was within the UC system a kind of thrust or strengthening of the Riverside campus, so they were getting money for a period of time when the rest of us weren't. That's dried up now too, but they were lucky so they got-- I think their dance department got three new FTE in a period of time when we were getting nothing, in fact, beginning to lose some. So by the time the new dean was in place and went to the-- Riverside had already gotten through statewide and so, both this campus and statewide then said you know, do we need another Ph.D. in dance? So the timing was strange and bad. Was it just fate or was it our own doing or what? It's hard to know. But the irony, from my point of view was that, at least all of the

years that I was involved with the department was that really that was the commitment which I and the non-performance faculty were really moving towards. I mean, that was our vision. That's what we felt was our mandate really. So the vision and the reality came into ironic confrontation at a point.

SMITH: Do you think it's dead permanently?

SNYDER: I think it's dead, yeah, particularly with whatever else is happening.

Again, it's Judy [Mitoma]'s own vision that there would be a Ph.D. in World Arts and Cultures and if that model-- If the existing model for World Arts and Cultures, there would be the opportunity of having a one slice of that more focused on dance, but again, it seems a way off. And the reality of the field, I'm sorry to say, is that there are too many Ph.D.s out there now. For a while-- Even though it is very true that almost any position is now advertised as, usually starts out with seeking a Ph.D.

SMITH: You mean dance history or--?

SNYDER: No, even across the board at this point. Even an appointment that would be largely in the choreographic area.

SMITH: Really? Or an M.F.A. would not be sufficient?

SNYDER: Sometimes, and usually and often is. There is another clause in all of that, "or equivalent professional experience" so--

SMITH: Because that does tend to undercut of the idea of the professionalization of the arts education.

SNYDER: Right.

SMITH: Just on the surface. And you think this is across the board in the dance field throughout the United States?



SNYDER: Yeah. I think it is and why you can hear a drag of my own feet in my voice is that dance is academically in trouble now. We're now back to a period again which is, if you've got to cut something off, you know, out from this campus, what are you going to do? In many instances, it's been dance or dance has been realigned with whatever else. So that the academic field is in great trouble even though ironically, there are a very active community of dance scholars at this point in time, truly so. I mean, even though this is very topical, but just to point out that in three week's time, I'll be in New York and attending meetings of CORD [Congress on Research in Dance], which is the congress on dance research, the Society for Dance History Scholars, the American Dance Guild, the Dance Critics Association and the World Dance Alliance. All meeting in New York simultaneously. All having from certainly one hundred to probably five hundred and I think CORD probably has a, maybe even a fifteen hundred membership at this point in time. So, lots of interesting things to look at in the future.

SMITH: The next program I wanted to ask you about was your involvement with the Arts Management program. And were you in on it from the ground floor? SNYDER: I think so. Certainly almost. Hy [Hyman] Faine, I guess, was brought in to head up that program. Well, there were two levels of knowing Hy. It just happened actually that he was one of my brother-in-law's oldest, oldest friends, way, way back. But I had originally met Hy through early times in the NEA, in the dance program, because interestingly enough it was really the dance program that identified the need for actually doing something about special management in the arts. And they had some early funding in that area. Hy had been a very important lawyer negotiating a number of the dancer, artist, musician positioning and contracts over the years. So I-- Well,

whatever-- Separately, or because of my own really addressing this question within the context of the NEA, I recognized very much the need for arts management, for a special kind of attention to management, for dance companies. And also--and you've heard me say this over and over again--I felt it was so important for students who were excited and interested in dance, not necessarily to get themselves convinced that the only way that they could succeed in the field was to become a dancer, choreographer, or performer; that that was very unrealistic, probably from their point of view and also from the needs of the field. If the field was really going to grow, we needed a lot of people paying a lot of attention to a lot of different areas and certainly management was one of them. So I was very interested in the program in order to be able to direct both undergraduates and graduates too, if that seemed to be their interest and bend. And some of them really, that was the way they wanted to go. So I-- Yeah, we were in on the early curriculum planning-- I don't think I ever officially did a full class for them. I certainly came and did lectures for some-- I think we eventually got two or three sort of core classes that were very specific to the Arts Management student and then again, they had-- A part of the program was out working--

SMITH: An internship.

SNYDER: An internship.

SMITH: Actually, that was a paid internship, at least, for a period of time I think.

SNYDER: For a period of time, it was and then that turned out to be a little too hopeful and idealistic and we also began to accept, if the student could manage it, we would also support them doing a non-paid internship. Yeah, I mean, the notion of it being paid simply because then again, the standards were at a realistic level-- And each one of the students then had a faculty advisor. And I served as faculty advisor.

SMITH: Did you recruit students into the program? Were there dance undergrads who went into this as a graduate study?

SNYDER: Yeah. I would say probably not more than a handful. But nevertheless that was so. And it's interesting. Quite a few of the active people in dance management, in Los Angeles at this point in time, either went through the program or did some classes in it as students in the dance program. So it had some very positive effect. Then after Hy left, it went through sort of various stages of leadership and began to get more and more, again, business-oriented and their interest and need for us on the arts faculty became less and less. And finally it just disappeared altogether, I guess. I mean it's interesting this sort of the-- It's much more common now just to talk in general about the not for profit management, which includes the widest spectrum of foundations and so forth. And I think maybe that became the more realistic direction for a program under the graduate school of business and management because, again, there weren't enough jobs that were specific to arts management but there certainly were possibilities and they're not for profit.

SMITH: Again, there are philosophical questions as to whether the manager should or should not have arts training of some sort. I guess you could argue it both ways.

SNYDER: Yeah. And that did come up as a point of discussion and well, certainly the students that I had some involvement with and direction of did have a some kind of background and experience in the actual doing of an art.

SMITH: You were also on the advisory board or the faculty board for the Institute of Ethnomusicology. Was that when Mantle [Hood] was--?

SNYDER: Not really I don't think.

SMITH: Okay. I wanted to ask you if you had any insight into the dispute between Mantle Hood and the [Department of] Music and the administration that led to the turn-over, his leaving, and the redirection of the ethnomusicology program. If you don't that's fine too.

SNYDER: Yeah, not really in a way that I could-- I was aware of the process and you know, I knew Mantle quite well and certainly Hazel [Chung, his wife] and did sense that it was something about-- I mean, there were a lot of just personality issues, I think, in there, but somewhere along the way was this continuing theme. Mantle did feel very strongly that to be a scholar in ethnomusicology, you started with the practice of the art and before you became a Ph.D. in gamelan studies, you were a damn good gamelan player and you had probably spent a lot of time in the field, playing the gamelan with other Javanese or Balinese in Indonesia. I mean, this is very much the point of view that he took. And I think that I wasn't as savvy about that. I mean, I didn't realize that that was such an issue. But in retrospect now, I can see that that probably was a very great irritant to a lot of the rest of the faculty, both in the music department and in the college as a whole.

SMITH: Okay. Has there been a close relationship between ethnomusicology and dance ethnology over the last fifteen years?

SNYDER: Well, yeah. I think I would be honest to say that the dance ethnology program really wouldn't have come into being if there hadn't been ethnomusicology at UCLA. For a number of reasons. I mean, Mantle was very interested in seeing it happen and at the point that it was on the boards and then the dance department, in fact, did become a department, this was a part of the strategy of the department. Mantle, at that point was fairly powerful really, so that his support and enthusiasm for us being out there certainly made our progress much easier. Now along the way, it got

to be interesting because there were points when we were sort of in a confused and sometimes almost competitive position because Mantle had structured-- All of his studio classes were called "music and dance of--" and so there were times when, in fact, he was doing dance classes and without an effort being made to really coordinate with our own program. So that situation was particularly sort of emphasized at one period of time with Mantle. Ironically, Kobla Ladzekpo was teaching music and dance of Africa in ethnomusicology and we had his brother [Alfred Ladzekpo] teaching in our department. And what in fact happened then was because Alfred was--the irony of it--actually a better drummer than he was a dancer, and Kobla actually was-- I mean, he's a wonderful mover and his wife [Dizorgbe Lawlui] is a marvelous mover-- She was always sort of a hidden part of the whole agenda.

So the students sort of got clustered together, even though officially, on both sides, they were very discreet classes and there was never any discussion in either of our programs about, well, you know, shall we schedule them at the same time? Shall there be a way of moving the students back and forth? All of which again, you know, seemed very inefficient and really very foolish. But there are those kinds of incidents all along. Although at another level, in the larger world of academia, it really was, the Society for Ethnomusicology which itself was beginning to grow, who really gave the dance ethnology area its first place to be. They were very generous in welcoming us as scholars into their organization and urging us to publish and to have panels. And the first years of our journals [UCLA Journal of Dance Ethnology] the journal was for the Society for Ethnomusicology's journal [Ethnomusicology]. And the first membership that most of us had was with the Society of Ethnomusicology. So I often sort of think of it as a father, daughter relationship. I mean, there was a kind of a paternal concern

for us, which we very much appreciated initially and welcomed. So that we were given a presence both on-campus and off-campus by that relationship.

SMITH: Okay. The next thing I wanted to ask you about is a little different. But you were also involved with the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology and again that is, not to emphasize the negative, but that is now a program that is on the chopping block, I guess.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, SIDE ONE

MAY 19, 1993

SMITH: I was asking you about the folklore and mythology department [Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology] and as I understand it, at one time not so very long ago, it was very preeminent in the field. What has led to its very likely being one of the programs that will be sacrificed in the retrenchment of UCLA?

SNYDER: Well, it, in fact, was an inter-disciplinary program, at least in the structuring of the faculty, which was very, very difficult. The faculty was appointed to various areas, particularly English, history, some of the Germanic languages, and so forth. And yet they-- And their promotions rested almost entirely in the support of the faculty of the program to which they were officially appointed, even though in many instances, everybody knew the reality of the fact that they were there to be involved with the comparative folklore and mythology program. In that sense again, this relates to our discussion the other day about the World Arts and Cultures program.

Definitely, being structured in that way has its very serious risks. These were people that were approaching even humanistic scholarship, usually in a way that was not a classical approach. They were largely engaged in oral literatures and finding a way of interpreting and actually making concrete a subject that was, interestingly enough, like ourselves in dance, an ephemeral subject matter. And I think like, in that sense, their problems as faculty were quite akin to the arts. The question was always put forth, well, how do we really--? If Wayland [D.] Hand, even though he records three thousand tales from the field on health and native healing, is it Wayland's work or is he just a collector? So, you know, so there were a lot of confusions about who these

scholars were. I mean, what was the body of their field, their concern? I guess, for that very reason again, I personally felt a great deal of interest and sympathy and rapport with a number of the faculty who were sort of the more officially engaged in the program. Both Elsie [Dunin] and I have, I think, for almost ever since our appointment to the faculty been listed as--I forget exactly how we're listed, but we're included in the folklore faculty. And really as distinct even from ethnomusicology. Even though we in the dance ethnology classes would often draw people from ethnomusicology, it was not really with the urging the ethnomusicology faculty. On the other side, our graduate classes in dance ethnology were actually listed as possible areas and directions in the folklore and mythology program and a lot of students from folklore and mythology took those classes and it created a very excellent dialogue, I think, for all of us. So there was a lot of camaraderie really between the programs. And I think they're experiencing the fate they are because of the same, very analogous problems to the fates of the arts here in the university, except that there isn't a sort of a professional folklorist, I mean, they're not interested in doing that. I guess there are applied folklorists now, there are applied anthropologists. But they are, I think they're very interesting or some of them are very interesting, stimulating, exciting minds and they're very important members of the faculty. But again, I did at points along the way sit on some of their tenure committees and know again, that my opinion was quite different from the rest of the faculty. And again, because of my own ambiguity really as far as the way I was regarded by some of the faculty, the very faculty that would challenge dance and my legitimacy as a full professor-- I mean, that would be the same problem they would be having with the folklore faculty and if I was in support it was almost unfortunately detrimental to the promotion process rather than supportive.



SMITH: I guess if what you're saying is true, I mean it seems accurate that those kinds of-- In retrenchment, we're going back to the more traditional ways of looking at scholarship, how do we then explain the apparent success of World Arts and Cultures to get support from the administration and is that support stable?

SNYDER: No. I think, I mean, I'll answer the second question first. That's what I'm worried about. I don't think it's stable. I think largely the support is not a recognition or predicated on a real acknowledgment of the importance academically, or educationally of that program, but rather that it's very useful, something that can be put in front of others when the whole issue of multi-ethnic problems is out there in the forefront of things. But as with folklore, I mean, folklore tended to bring to it some quite interesting students. I found their graduate students to be very stimulating to work with. And I served on quite a few, both M.A. and Ph.D. committees in folklore. They came to it because they were interested in a broader way of looking at things. And they were risk takers. I mean, I keep emphasizing that as a very important, I think, quality of the World Arts and Cultures students. They're willing to risk because they really do believe that what they understand about this program is that it's educationally more exciting and more challenging for them. But I really-- Except for the fact that probably the average GPA for World Arts and Cultures students is probably very high and they have managed over the years to pick up a number of, you know, undergraduate fellowships and this or that or the other, the list of student successes also can be documented in fairly visible-- Other than that I don't really think that the university as a whole has any notion about that program or and is supportive of it, in essence.

SMITH: Your answer sort of moves into the next thing I wanted to ask you about, which was you sat on the Special Committee on Cultural Diversity and diversity, of

course, is a great buzzword in the university and this was back in '79. I'm not convinced that UCLA has done a very good job on diversity, but I wonder how this committee functioned and how it assessed the type of problems that existed and what could be done.

SNYDER: Well, what we largely did at that point in time was to talk to the various ethnic studies centers and to access-- Just as sort of a parenthesis, but I'd like to say it, what often makes me very sad is that I think the process of and integrity of individual committees that are set up in the university is very high and they work very hard and they do their jobs very well and very thoroughly and yet the outcome is usually minimal. And I would say probably in that instance this was-- I mean, yeah, the chancellor and everybody could say, "Oh, yes, we've confronted this and did make certain recommendations" which was, I mean, the obvious, you know, "Yes, there should be more cultural, ethnic diversity on campus and the faculty and the students that are minority students should be better supported." Did that really change things? No, I don't think really. But there was the ability of the administration to say, oh, yes, we really looked at this thoroughly and we are, in fact, doing something about it. No, I mean one of the things that I can remember, this is sort of-- You asked a question, I'm thinking about it was that each one of the ethnic studies centers asked for more FTE [full-time employees], obviously. I mean that's one of the things that one does. In not one instance did they get it. Not one. Because another program you could ask me about is American Indian Studies Center which I was very much involved in. Student support of anything declined after that. Now, I don't think it was a direct result, but it certainly was evidenced that whatever got put on paper had really no effect on the reality of things.

I'm going to have to stop in about ten more minutes.

SMITH: Okay. That's fine. You were also involved with the planning committee for the UCLA Arts Center Master Plan. Was that the Graystone building that you mentioned earlier?

SNYDER: Could be. I honestly say now, I don't really quite remember what that was. Dean [Robert] Gray was a very interesting person and there was a part of me that was very challenged and quite admiring of what he sometimes seemed to be saying. I found him to be a peculiarly split personality. You know, in one sense, he'd get very excited about things that I felt were obviously moves that seemed to be in the right direction and almost the next day something else would come out that was just the opposite. And one never really knew where one stood, both administratively and even as a faculty member under Gray's leadership. So he got-- I mean, he had just hundreds of committees going, doing hundreds of different tasks that were meant to be bettering the college. Yet again, nothing really happened.

SMITH: The next thing is the Institute for Advanced Study in the Arts?

SNYDER: Now that, that actually was the Graystone. Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. And we've discussed that. There was another project that sounded very interesting and very sort of up your theoretical alley which was the UC [University of California] Experiential Learning Project. What was that about and how active were you?

SNYDER: Well, that was really sort of an outgrowth from, if I'm right because there were sort of two different things I think, but only one actually used the Experiential Learning-- That was an outgrowth of my continuing membership in the Chancellor's

[Faculty Advisory] Committee on Instructional Development [Improvement]. And at one point in time, the whole question of experiential learning was one of the things that we focused on in that committee and, I'm ashamed to say right at the moment, a woman who still, I think, is quite actively involved in that area asked if I would come on and be involved directly with the program and I did quite willingly. I was very interested in-- What it turned out to be largely--and that was okay--was a sort of encouraging, promoting internships as accredited units of learning in various curricula. And I felt, early on, that that was a very important potential component for the World Arts and Cultures students--at that point still Ethnic Arts--and for any others. I mean, again, I'm sorry to say, I have to come back to my Bennington [College] experience and the non-resident term definitely supported, or was my own early experiential evidence that getting out into the world and really working at something in the context of the larger learning situation was a very productive and very positive one. So I was involved. I went to a couple of statewide meetings and so forth over the years. And that program was a small program. Kept on going after a while, I may have gone on a sabbatical, not gone back to being involved, but it seemed to be doing a good job in a very sort of special way and I think it still is, although I haven't-- I used to have a quarterly publication about sort of identified experiential learning projects. It also was a statewide thrust so that I think this newsletter was to do with experiential learning on all of the UC campuses.

SMITH: You were also on the faculty advisory committee on Instructional Improvement-- Were you involved in the Frasier-Goodlad Reports, in their preparation or in their assessment?

SNYDER: Yeah. I think I was. But I can't really-- There was one-- I don't think it was Goodlad actually. There was one committee whose chair was from the School of Education, which I found to be one of the most ridiculously disastrous committees. I mean we did less than nothing in that particular committee. But I don't think that-- That was not the Goodlad committee. But the Office of Instructional Development or the Committee on, Chancellor's Committee on Instructional Development was a very exciting committee and I did serve on it almost all the time, from its early forming-- It had the luck of being able to be very effective because it had its own budget for a long time. And for a long time, as an outcome of the early questioning about relevant education in the early seventies, it had a fairly large and effective budget and we used to come together-- It was a good, active committee. We used to go, on retreats every year and really confront issues, I think, in a very clear and forthright way and come up with programs with money behind them so that something really could happen.

SMITH: Is one of the goals of that to affect the actual nature of instruction that takes place in the classroom between faculty and--?

SNYDER: Absolutely. That was really the heart of it. And it varied--

SMITH: How do you affect the behavior of an apparently an autonomous faculty member or--?

SNYDER: Well, get back to my now a little bit tired word but it really empowered faculty and students and sometimes programs, depending on what early on, I mean, they were the ones that implemented these media grants. So that if individual faculty who had for years wanted to have some films to use in their particular class and had been told by their department, oh, you know, that's irrelevant, we're not interested in your bringing in media, and they're convinced that it would improve the quality of

their teaching and the students' learning, they could directly go and say, I want \$100 to rent this film, directly. One of the principles of a lot of the grants was that there wasn't any interference from levels of administration. The faculty or they had student mini-grants as well, students could go directly to the Office of Instructional Development and could get a response, almost overnight, to something or other. The mini-grants allowed you to bring in guest lecturers, other levels of student enrichment, field trips. I mean, it was all very tangible and felt very readily-- In later years, the mini-grant has always kept on. I imagine they're still out there. That was a very large part of the granting for a while. There always was the hope that these things would be so effective that the department would then later say, "Oh, my goodness, professor X's evaluations have gone up a hundred percent and he started to use films in his class. There must be a reason. I mean there must be-- Films must actually be useful teaching, learning tools." But that sometimes happened. Later on they would begin to focus-- I mean they were the first sort of program to urge use of computers. And they sponsored a lot of innovative computer programs in various programs throughout the university. Student evaluations-- I mean, each year, we sort of say, "What are the real problems that are going on in teaching or in the learning environment? Is there something that we can do with a nice, little, juicy pocket of money that can really affect and change this?" And I think they did. They really did. Now, it did become powerful in its effect. I think and Andrea [L.] Rich for a while was the head of that and moved on. And I think-- I would say that a part of both of her effectiveness and the leadership of that program and also the power of various things has led to her position now as the executive vice-chancellor. So a way of stepping up if you occasioned-- But it was important. It was in very strong counter distinction to much of what else I've said could make things

happen. There was real rationale for why we were addressing an issue and what could be effective in making, creating change. Very important.

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, SIDE ONE

MAY 20, 1993

SMITH: Here we are. Okay. I wanted, as we said yesterday to continue some more with the bigger issues of arts education at UCLA and obviously you believe that arts education fits into the American university. I think you've expressed that in many ways and your own experiences have demonstrated that, although it's not been completely, one hundred percent-- But I wonder if you could talk about how you would identify the conditions that would make arts education at a place such as UCLA possible and effective. What are both the subjective and the institutional factors that need to be in place, in your view, to achieve the ideal?

SNYDER: Right. Well, why do I think the university is possibly a very positive and I would say an important environment for the arts? I think because the arts really excitingly reflect ideas and cultures and oftentimes they're sort of the cutting edge of whatever those waves of ideas and thinking are that are going on within a particular time and place. In my most ideal perspective of a university as sort of the highest level of education, it seems to me that that is the actual matrix of where all of that should be happening and reflected, that the faculty and the students and the process they're engaged in should again be reflective of and at the same time, at the cutting edge of the experience of that time. So to put the potential, the evolving artist into that stimulating matrix, I think, is very, very important. As I've said on other occasions in these tapes, what concerns me about all of the educational institutions that particularly address the arts as extraordinarily well as they do, and I'm thinking now of Juilliard, for instance.



Couldn't be a better example of the top-notch professional training in music and dance and theater, yet, from my point of view, Juilliard wouldn't survive at all except it happens to be right in the midst of a city which does much the same thing as the university in the vision that I'm talking about does. But the arts training is usually really very one-dimensional. Intense depth into the art itself but not really helping the artist to recognize their vital positioning as an interface to culture.

Those great artists that I feel privileged to have been around a bit, from my father [R. Buckminster Fuller] to Martha Graham to Carmelita Maracci; they got themselves out of a particular world. I mean, Martha had her dancers as her company but who she surrounded herself with was everybody else and was right in the center of dialogue about who we are and where we're going and what is of value to us and all those things. So I just feel as though the potential the university is very, very powerful and critically important. It used to be a court or it used to be the cafe of Paris or something or other that was that kind of a matrix. I guess the cafes still exist, but not so much even those. Anyway, so I think it's very important for the university to recognize their potential in that because they might even prove to be the savior of the arts if they really recognize the value that they have. But it does have to be restructured in a way that there's a real coming together and that there really are--to repeat myself again--sort of matrices for exchange and discussion. And the university doesn't, as a whole, really create those things. That--while we were discussing off tape yesterday but I'll say it on tape--is one of the reasons I think the World Arts and Cultures program has been so successful because almost more than the program itself is the environment it's created for the student, where there really is a place for those students to come together in a way that they recognize. It's not just to sit and have a cup of coffee. They come into

the student lounge of the World Arts and Cultures really bursting with ideas and seeking a place for discussion and exchange. The occasion in the faculty meetings sort of encourages that a little bit with the faculty. But it has not served that well for the faculty and so, there is a different kind of an orientation that needs to, I think, permeate the university and certainly permeate the arts.       We've talked a lot about the

negatives of what has predominantly happened in the arts at UCLA. And one of the things that I think is so present is the fact that we rarely, if ever, come together. We rarely if ever come together. Now, this is, you know, there will be certain-- I, as a faculty member, have sought out other faculty members over the years and have had, you know, interesting exchanges, but it's really on a one-to-one basis or there's a committee that we're serving on or there is a university reason for being together, but that's sort of finding yourself in a place where or wanting to go to a place where you could just sit down and really talk about ideas and what you yourself were tackling. Again, I mean, well, yeah, just thinking that at Bennington because it was a residential college, why I would say, as much as the wonderful structuring of everything, which again did really encourage dialogue almost on a continuing basis, was our midnight to three or four in the morning discussions in our rooms where the students from all different areas were just excited about exploring ideas together.

SMITH: To what degree is this an effect of the sort of entropic effect of being in Los Angeles where people have to disperse and certainly most of the faculty at this point cannot afford to live anywhere near the campus? It seems that UCLA does have less of that kind of interaction that exists, say, at Ann Arbor [University of Michigan], Madison [University of Wisconsin], or other campuses that are otherwise similar.

SNYDER: Right. Right. That probably does have a lot to do with it. I haven't truthfully thought about it in quite that way, but because my other sort of campus experiences have again been in big, big cities-- I mean there wasn't much of that going on at NYU [New York University], for instance, the year that I was teaching there. And well, the University of Surrey wouldn't have even been a very-- Anyway, I haven't really been aware of the dynamics of a place like Ann Arbor or-- But it's interesting you mentioning that because I was suggesting yesterday that while the actual content and even the attitude about dance at Ohio [State University], at [University of] Illinois, at Florida State [University] was very, very similar, there did seem to be something that was a little bit more catalytic about the process even within the dance department and it may very much have come from the fact that there was a little bit more of a sense of coming together, not just officially as, student or faculty program but because you did encounter each other on a twenty-four hour basis, in a sense. SMITH: Earlier you had talked a little bit about your father's suspicion of the university and of course, that attitude is in some ways typical of a generation before the university really exploded after World War II. The sense of intellectual life did not need to be focused in the university and I'm wondering if perhaps the university in the United States has taken on too much, if there aren't other forms that need to be developed to promote intellectuality and experiential exploration.

SNYDER: Yeah, I do feel that. But I'm not quite sure what form or shape. I've often talked with my students and former students about how to create an on-going structure of exchange, maybe called an institute or certainly, I tried a fun experiment one summer which I think everybody felt very successful, but I didn't want to repeat it again. I wrote to all the students that I had addresses for that had come through the

ethnology program and invited any of them, who would like to, to join me on my island in Maine for two weeks. And I was absolutely amazed that, I think, fifteen of them responded positively and coming from Hawaii and in the South and in the East and quite a few, five or six of them came from California and Oregon and-- They really came from all-- And we had a wonderfully intense two weeks together. We were trying actually to see if we could evolve an on-going structure and something did spring for a while, but it wasn't quite crystallized enough to keep on maintaining itself. I think those kinds of things are possibilities. I haven't had enough experience myself with some of these chautauqua-like or these arts communities where one becomes a fellow for a month or even a year.

SMITH: Like the Mc Dowell [Colony]--?

SNYDER: Mc Dowell, yeah. I suspect those are nurturing and beneficial, but they mostly, of course, are there for an already fairly established artist, not for the student or the emerging artist, so that-- But the opportunity to come together in a very intense way. Now it's interesting you started this question with mentioning my father--and we can come back to lengthier discussions about his overall feeling about education--but it's very interesting that he was out there in the universities in a very, very active way from about the mid 1950s on. But the way he came into a university mostly-- And I think, it very much is located with this concern that I'm talking about. He would come in and the way he would work, he would be given, let's say, the graduating seniors or the graduating graduates or whatever for a period of time, a month, a quarter, a semester and, if I understood it correctly, their whole commitment was to working with Bucky Fuller for that period of time. And very extraordinary things did happen for the students and for my father in that process. And it's very much that kind of a

model. Another recommendation, even to make-- Again it's the problem of the regimentation of time as well as space at some place like UCLA. I have participated in some of those intercollege arts symposium or whatever they're called, intercampus arts, which is a statewide funding of a program, I think, usually once a year with a sort of a focus over a long weekend. Students from all of the UC campuses come together, I mean, a selected group, let's say, two or three from each of the campuses. The last one I was involved with was a dance and media one and we lived together for--what--three days, had a very interesting schedule of sharing ideas, sharing experiences together, the opportunity to discuss things and for that rather limited frame of time, nevertheless felt very stimulating and productive. And I've seen quite a few of the students at UCLA who were a part of that-- And they've remained excited in relationship to that experience.

So if there were a way of cutting away the time demands-- And we did discuss this in the department from time to time. Couldn't we just say, all right, a José Limón is with us or recently a David Gordon is with us. Couldn't we simply say that the students would work with them for a month and not having any other kinds of commitments. Wouldn't that be important and nurturing? I realize now that I've sort of put up the model of the whole world entering into the experience through the whole university as I've suggested, I think in these conversations, certainly in some of my writing, I see an artist as the microcosm of the macrocosm. So an intense being with an individual artist oftentimes has the same kind of outcome. If you're with a Graham over a period of a month, you will have touched on every facet of life in the universe, I think, in no particular clear order, but--

SMITH: Well, was the department able to clear people's schedules at all?

SNYDER: No. A long weekend is about as-- Or even-- I mean, what has happened was that, you know, if we had somebody like a Limón there, usually the process was in the context of working on a choreographic piece. Now, the students that were in that choreographic piece were rehearsing with a Limón, but also were getting a great deal more than that over maybe a month's period of time.

SMITH: And they got credit for it.

SNYDER: And they did get credit for it, yeah. So that was probably the closest and most satisfactory example that we were able to legitimately incorporate into the program.

SMITH: But you brought people like Jack Cole in for a period of time, John [J.] Martin--

SNYDER: Right. Well, both Jack and John were over an even more extended period. It seemed to me that Martin was with us for a whole year or maybe even two. Maybe he wasn't with us for the whole year but there was quite a lot of-- With John, unfortunately, the scheduling became more typical. He had--

SMITH: Office hours and everything?

SNYDER: Yeah. He had his own class which was a wonderful place for a dialogue and the individual students could come and talk with him fairly regularly. And he certainly attempted to get out then and sort of get into other classes. That again, is a kind of an intermediary, but sometimes successful model, so if you have somebody like that with you, they then guest, sort of guest lecturer in any number of other classes within the department. And what it gets created is something that feels like sort of a comprehensive presence of that particular individual. It's not quite that, but it leaves something of that impression. Jack Cole did that a bit too, although he preferred to

limit himself to almost entirely work-- He was brought in for the Graduate Dance Center that we've talked about before.

SMITH: Okay. Were you involved with The House, getting that going? Was that--?

SNYDER: Not really very much. I think it came into being while I was chair of the department. But Carol was largely responsible for that and continued to take a lot of responsibility for that. I was very excited about that as a-- It didn't directly respond to all of the things, but it was important in that we had a space that created at least an interesting dialogue between the department and the community. And that was very important.

SMITH: That's too bad that it couldn't continue.

SNYDER: Yeah. It was very sad, very sad not only for us, for the community. Really hasn't been another successful place since that. That really served that function.

SMITH: Is that a question of economics, of needing to find a patron for something like that, who would endow it or convincing somebody in Murphy Hall that this needs to be funded on a regular basis?

SNYDER: Well, it certainly would be useful if Murphy Hall was going to-- It's a combination of all those things. I think the problem is-- I know Carol continued to be very concerned about that even after we were forced to close down The House because the owner decided to turn it into something that he could ask a much larger rent for-- But she looked at other spaces that had any potential of being transformed into a hundred and fifty seat experimental theater. And it was almost impossible to find that without it costing-- I mean, without it almost building from scratch. And others have sought to identify those kinds of-- They don't seem to exist. That was one of the sadnesses of seeing the demise of the Lester Horton space.

SMITH: But even to go downtown to a loft space?

SNYDER: Well, I can't really answer that question clearly. Certainly people have thought about it. I don't know if they've-- Somehow or other even that didn't seem to be a really useful alternative. It's a very, very serious problem. I think it's one of the reasons why the dance in Los Angeles struggles so much. There isn't really a place where there can be a constant demonstration of what dance is.

New York environment for dance changed enormously when the Joyce Theater became a theater for dance, preceded by the Dance Theater Workshop, which is a very small, experimental studio, but was there. In New York you always knew that that was something to do with dance that was going on up there, at DTW [Dance Theatre Workshop]. And you would seek it out. And we don't have anything like that here. Japanese-American Cultural Center has become the closest to that, but they don't serve just dance, by a long shot. And I haven't ever had to rent that space myself, but I gather it's not inexpensive so it's not really an option for the younger companies here.

SMITH: So anything else you'd like to say about the relationship of the arts and the university, either general or specific, before we shift?

SNYDER: No, I think that's probably-- I mean, I did feel after our last taping session that it wasn't clear that-- I mean, I really do think that the potential of the university in relation to the arts is absolutely, incredibly exciting and very important, so I'm sorry to see that mission isn't as successfully fulfilled as it might be.

SMITH: Some departments--well, I'm thinking theater arts, both its stage and its film division--seem to be a little bit more successful in terms of turning out people who then become interesting directors and actors and--

SNYDER: Well, I mean--

SMITH: And dance has not been unsuccessful either in that--



SNYDER: It may possibly be that because of their success that there has been a sort of a shift in attention at UCLA because I think they come as close to a conservatory program or a professional program in the arts as we have at UCLA. It used to be very interesting to me, the difference, the intellectual difference, I found with the theater students involved in the World Arts and Cultures program and the others from the other five areas of focus. They were very much narrower in their base. They were very much more concerned really just with their career, with their very professional outcome. And in many instances, they were in our program because they actually couldn't meet the standards of the theater arts program. They wanted to be in and this was a way of sort of getting peripherally involved. But no. I mean, this is the problem. You get a lot of good professionals emerging from the existing programs but you just don't get to a large extent the greats. Now, you could argue that's probably the number coming through any one program but I would certainly say to you, there are more Nobel Prize winners in fields of physics and chemistry who were inspired by their educational process and were allowed to make that breakthrough within the context of research and education.

Again--the point that I touched on yesterday--I think the model of understanding the creative process as a research process and to endow it or empower it in the same way as the research process in the hard sciences, even in the social sciences-- Providing the space and providing the environment, providing the discourse, providing the need for connection is almost an understatement when you talk about research and the hard sciences. That's what I think should be one of the models of research in the arts, but I'm talking about the creative research of the individual artist.

This again got to be the confusion in the effort to create this research center for the arts that Dean [Robert] Gray had some interest in. When it came down to what he meant by research and what I, as one of the participating faculty, meant by it-- He meant research. He meant then quantifiable things, studies of audiences and audience appreciation or this kind of thing. He meant research that had that kind of a quantifiable research outcome and that wasn't what we thought he meant when he started initially to talk about the research center for the arts. We discovered that we weren't talking the same language to a large extent, even though he was a-- It's interesting because he also is a practicing artist and he got very interested in research on creativity. I always used to get very angry with him because research on creativity I think is the most uncreative project one can engage in. So I think I'm almost finished here. [Laughter]

SMITH: Well, stop me if you need to say anything more, but I wanted to return back to your relationship with your father and we actually left off when you were at Bennington [College]. I wanted, you know, to discuss a little bit what the continuing nature of the relationship was and particularly the effects upon you of him becoming a celebrity. By effects, I probably mean a broad range of things, but from sort of immediate personal responsibilities that might not have arisen otherwise to this sort of emotional, seeing your father in Life magazine over every other month or so--

SNYDER: It wasn't quite that often. [Laughter]

SMITH: If not Life, then somewhere else. [Laughter]

SNYDER: Well, after Bennington, I really went-- I was married the day I graduated from Bennington, as a matter of fact, on the Bennington campus and entered into my own adult life with a very clear marker really of separation from the family unit on a day-to-day basis. It's just about that time that my father's-- Well, he got his first-- He

was asked to go down to the University of North Carolina the year after I was married, in fact, the year after my daughter Alexandra [Snyder] was born. He was asked to teach there for an on-going period of time and then he received an honorary doctorate from them that year. That was his first honorary doctorate. And almost overnight this sort of being on the road teaching began to occur. I mean this was what-- He became more and more recognized for the stimulation and excitement and inspiration he brought to students under the kind of framework that we just mentioned a few minutes ago. I mention this because he was then really, truly on the road, very much as a--

SMITH: Was your mother [Anne Hewlett Fuller] still alive?

SNYDER: My mother was very much alive at that point and she traveled with him, so I was sort of-- The roles were reversed in a sense. I was sort of in a period of being much more stable, beginning of developing my family, and they were traveling a lot. The consequence was that they certainly tried to come and visit as often as possible but the truth of the matter is that probably around Christmastime-- Christmas was always a very important family occasion and my father always scheduled his schedule so that he could, he and my mother could be with me and my family wherever they--

SMITH: So they converged on you or you--?

SNYDER: Well, for a period of time they converged on me. In fact, they continued to have a very small apartment in Forest Hills, New York and didn't really have a home until he had a regular appointment at the university of, Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, which was not until mid-sixties I think, when I'd already moved out here. And even then it was easier for them to come here to have a family Christmas then for me and Bob [Robert Snyder] to pick up the children and go there.

So that was-- And summer somehow, you know, it began to be much more that we would then have time together on Bear Island in Penobscot Bay, Maine, which was a family island. Not just my father, but his sisters and brothers and their children. So those were sort of the two times of really meeting and being together and you know in a sense, as he became more and more recognized--famous, if you want to use that word--I almost felt it was important to sort of disengage myself from our relationship in a way, not personally, but publicly because I felt I might have a great deal of trouble in establishing who I was and what I was doing if I rode on being Buckminster Fuller's daughter. So I think that many, many colleagues in the field of dance had no sense of that connection at all or, you know, or if they did it only had been made after they had come to know me and who I was and what I was about. I would have to really characterize that our lives became more independent. There was never again quite the level of intimate engagement with his ideas and mine or whatever that we had had through the Bennington period and probably, I would say, that hit its height at the Bennington period because I was more confident myself in my own thinking and yet found that much of what I found myself thinking and feeling I could really connect with what my father was doing. I've mentioned before it was great fun for me to have him come up and actually sit in and engage in the kind of discussions we've just been talking about, which he loved to do. And so he became one of the gang in a sense and it's true, a lot of my friends from Bennington felt that my father was one of their friends too. I mean, there was a very warm identification that was set. The very protectiveness that I had for myself in who I was and sort of not getting blurred by the relationship with my father was different from my children. I really made a very

conscious effort to have them be able to engage with my father in, I mean, whatever way they chose, but as it happened then, my son [Jaime Snyder]—

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, SIDE TWO

MAY 20, 1993

SMITH: Okay, you were saying your son, his name is Jaime?

SNYDER: Jaime [Snyder] became a real student and, now I would say, a master of my father's work. In fact, that was very important when we were confronted with the decision of what we were going to do about my father and his work and his past and his archive after his death and chose to attempt to establish an institute of his work [Buckminster Fuller Institute], which I would not have done on my own. But Jaime was eager to do that and was very capable of really doing the major part of the work, as a matter of fact, and I gave him my moral support and as much advice and counsel he needed. But he really sparked that initially. Now that I'm retired I'm actually giving more direct time to the Institute at this point.

SMITH: Is the Institute based here in Los Angeles?

SNYDER: It's now based here in Los Angeles, but we hope as of September or October of this year to have moved to Santa Barbara. We have a very wonderful opportunity up there. This would allow us to be more effective. We've been located on La Cienega [Boulevard], in a building that's been very wonderful for us. It was a building that a young couple [Ruth Katzenstein and John Souza]-- He was an architect and on the faculty at SCIARC [Southern California Institute for Architecture].

SMITH: Oh, SCIARC, right.

SNYDER: And he and his wife, who are of my daughter's and son's age and good friends of theirs, actually gutted an industrial building on La Cienega and we happened to come into the picture just at the time that they were rebuilding. Our little space,

nevertheless was built to our needs, so we have a very excellent enclosed four hour fire wall for the archives with the heat and moisture control and so forth. So internally it's been a very ideal space to get started. But externally, particularly as that neighborhood has-- Well, it's gone through the process of Los Angeles, but it's very much in the area of both gentrification and deterioration. In the riots of last summer, buildings were burnt within a block of us and on both sides and across the street. So that was a very scary moment and we haven't really been able to have any kind of seminars, educational programs there because we didn't really want the public to suffer any ill consequences of being involved with that location, so we'll have a great deal of-- We'll transform a lot of what we do when we move to Santa Barbara. We'll be much more accessible and, I think, publicly visible once we're there. Mostly now our task has been as a sort of a hub of a network of people continuing to work with ideas that were inspired by my father, who are anxious again to be in dialogue with others, feeling many times a little bit still isolated in their work and needing inspiration, needing just to know other people are also engaged in similar challenges and problem solving issues. We have a newsletter. We've become very responsive to all of this. The amazing discovery and evolution of the buckminsterfullerene which occurred after my death when the carbon sixty molecule was named by Harold Kroto, who's English, and Richard Smalley, who's at Rice University, Buckminsterfullerene [Bucky Ball] because they felt that the form that they had identified in connection with the carbon sixty molecule was what my father had identified with his geodesic structures and synergetics. And since its discovery, amazing properties have been associated with it, super conductivity has been much assisted by understanding the structure of the carbon sixty, I mean I could go on-- There's a whole sub-field of physics and chemistry and

physics chemistry, all of those related, that's just devoted to the work of what, even in the most serious press, they call the "Bucky ball." So we're sort of a local-- There's going to be an international meeting in Santa Barbara, not because of us but because of the way things evolve on the buckminsterfullerene this summer. The people working on synergetics, synergetics geometry have come to us and there's a large network of people in that area, people addressing housing, obviously with the current problem of homelessness. Some of his solutions in terms of autonomous dwelling units is a research area that people are very much involved with today. His vision of what he wrote about in education automation in the late sixties, which is very much about what's being labeled as the digital revolution now, of the impact of that kind of technology on all aspects of life-- But again, he particularly felt that it would have a powerful influence on education, that yes, there would be much more home education going on, that you're television/Cd-rom which wasn't in existence at that point, laser-- We're engaged right now in a great deal of discussion about transforming both the archive into digital access, through digital access to presenting his work through interactive media. We're engaged at the moment also because his hundredth birthday will come up in 1995 and there seems to be a lot of activity going on in that. Now the Institute is actually taking a leadership role in creating a traveling exhibit which we're calling a kind of traveling circus in a sense. It's about exciting the imagination for the future really, with his work.

SMITH: Is there a tension between them, you know, the need to preserve and memorialize and understand his ideas in its own time versus also the need to keep the ideas alive and having them develop beyond what he would have, beyond the point that he had--?



SNYDER: Well, I mean, my ultimate concern is the latter. I'm not interested in just preserving it for the sake of preservation. I think embedded in his work are important tools for current and future addressing of major problems on our planet. But, you know, I mean, I don't think those things are really, can become too-- The problem then of allowing for access to his work so that the user, the scholar, the artist, the seeker of inspiration can readily get back to his ideas and in context, I think that it is important. We were discussing the other day, the fact that his Dymaxion house of 1927 had a room in it that was this sort of educational center. Now at that point in time, even televisions didn't exist. So he had the sort of-- I mean, he identified that access to global information via the radio, but it's understood there as symbolizing that access. So if you just say well, he had a radio in this, he had-- I'm ashamed to say, I can't tell you all of those, but symbolically, you can understand what he was after there. But you have to, you have to also see how extraordinarily, visionary he was to be dealing with these ideas at a point in time when there wasn't any of this technology to really say this is a possibility and a probability and this is really the way we're going to be dealing with it now. So the dynamic between the historical presence of a particular idea at a particular time and where he went with it is a part of our technology of access for the archive. Actually, you'd, I think, enjoy coming over there--

SMITH: Yeah, I would.

SNYDER: --and you must do that. But he was an extraordinary archivist for himself. He called himself Guinea Pig B and Guinea Pig B was to really attempt to document the whole of the entirety of his life as a demonstration of an individual processing through three-quarters of the twentieth century. That is what he understood, why he had this archive. So to keep on having that as sort of our understanding of why it's

there, I think is very important. But it's pretty extraordinary in the detail that he, again, envisioned and how it was to be organized.

SMITH: How does the Buckminster Fuller Institute express your ideas about education and the relationship with experience and theory to the degree that there is a distinction between your ideas and his ideas, which inevitably there has to be?

SNYDER: Well, right at the moment, I'm not sure and not because it can't and won't. It just happens that--and it's actually interesting to make this comment--one graduate in dance ethnology and one World Arts and Cultures student have been very fundamental members of the staff. They sought work at the institute out because they felt their excitement and knowledge of Bucky Fuller was rather consistent with why they also had come to be students working with me or working in processes that I had very much influenced. So it's-- I think the staff is very committed to that kind of articulation between the thinking and the doing. We have been very substantially limited however, by our current location as I just said. So I'm very excited about what we will do as we move to Santa Barbara and I'm also very excited about-- I feel the interactive mode, I mean, interactive technology has a great deal of experiential learning embedded in it. I mean, that you-- In probably more, I mean, I'm really-- In my own next stages of my work, I'm very anxious to also apply that to the learning, understanding of dance and how to not only interface between ideas, which you can do so readily with the interactive technologies, but how that takes itself perhaps out into the room into explore movement and so forth. That's not quite clear to me yet, but I think it's in there, but anyway there's certainly the decision making, the not moving through ideas in a linear fashion is absolutely there in the interactive mode of teaching, learning. So and I think it will be a very exciting one for presenting my father's ideas.

So its there-- I mean, there I suppose it would be, is it me or is it my father? The fact that, as I said in some of the earliest tapes, where we seem to go in very different directions, much of my essential principles of action very much come from my father. So the difference between my father and myself in a lot of these decision-making things, I think will be so similar it will be hard to say, but it's-- So that's what also makes-- It feels consistent to the staff when we move in a direction which I may come, may also come to from my own point of view, but it's one in the same, in a sense.

SMITH: I had wanted to ask you just a little bit about your relationship with your children and whether there is a sort of a handing down of a tradition to them as well and sort of your ideas about motherhood, you know, because you were also a wife and mother while you were doing everything else we've been talking about. SNYDER:

And we haven't talked about that much and yet that's been a very important part of my life. I think the bottom line is that my family has always come first for me and a number of times professional decisions, where I could have been probably more successful professionally if that hadn't really been still at bottom-- Being myself as much as possible I think has been sort of my principle of communicating to my children. And it's interesting, my daughter has gone very much more on, in her own direction, has been very much involved with the arts. She was for a time the assistant director of the Isamu Noguchi Museum in New York which is interesting because of Noguchi's relationship to my father. She arrived at that through having worked with--steps along the way--but her first sort of professional work was with Charlie and Ray Eames, again, dear friends of my father. She had an appetite for their work and what they were doing. Then she went to New York, working with graphics people initially, and then evolved into work at the Noguchi Museum, where she was

doing much of everything, sort of there as that museum opened, put a lot of time into developing the educational programs associated with the museum. So a lot of things that she found herself being interested in I see reflecting both my father and my mother--who we haven't talked about that much--and myself and my husband, but never with-- I mean, I think the one thing that I never wanted to be a carbon copy of my father and I never wanted my children to be carbon copies of me or any of us, I felt it was critically important for them to evolve in their own way, however they chose to do it. It's interesting that my son has been much more directly intertwined both with my father and now, because he's still the-- SMITH: Is he an architect or an engineer? SNYDER: No, he really-- He got his degree in music from UCLA, but that was-- He was doing that at a time when he was actually living with my mother and father. No, I really would have to say he's a comprehensive anticipatory design scientist, just like my father. [Laughter] His life looks very much, has its focus very much, in a very comprehensive way like my father, but he's been-- He's now thirty-eight, I guess. So since he was about twenty-five, most of his time has been spent working with my father and then about my father and at the institute so-- At some points along the way I worried about that for him really. It excites him a lot but I have worried whether he's gotten caught in the trap that I prevented myself getting caught in, that his own identity is not recognized enough, even though he's an extraordinarily, capable young man. He has not gone on for an advanced degree and I don't know what it will be-- I hope he does. He's capable of almost anything. We have to get into issues of--legal issues I'm sad to say--a great deal in managing the institute.

SMITH: Oh, really.

SNYDER: Well, copyright issues. And even the lawyers we work with now say

Jaime's probably better qualified in certain areas than they are. I mean, he's very-- He can move into things in great depth and in great breadth at the same time. So it's going to be fascinating to see what happens to him in his later life.

SMITH: It seems, as I've been reflecting on the interviews, a major theme--and it's actually parallel to the experience theory theme--has been sort of developing the ability to maintain individuality within a well functioning collectivity, whether it's the family or the school, which is a classic theme in American intellectual history. I wonder does that seem right to you?

SNYDER: Yeah. I think that's-- I would not have said it that way myself but I think that's-- Yeah.

SMITH: How would you have said it?

SNYDER: I'm not sure that-- You put the words in my mouth. No, I mean if I'd really reflected on it, probably I would see that those two things are-- There's a very important and positive dynamic tension between really acknowledging and sensing oneself individually and being empowered individually, and the sense at the same time of the excitement of whatever the organization is, whether it's family, whether it's a working group, an intellectual group. It's been interesting to me as the term networking has become more and more, almost worn out at this point in time. But networking--the sense of the spider, you know-- And yet the dynamic of the relation of the spider to the spider web is very exciting. Very exciting. And yeah. And in parenting particularly, the challenge of that. I mean, I tried to let the children really reach out and as soon as they were ready, I was eager and willing for them to move out on their own even though I always hoped that they would know that we were there for them whenever they needed us. And, you know, I feel hopeful that that contributed to the fact that both

of my children moved through really the intense drug period in-- You know, it was the height of it while they were in school and never really got involved at all. And again, found a circle of friends. And it's interesting, both of them, their circle of friends, their school friends are very important to them, now even ten, fifteen years later, in a way that that sense of networking group that we've just talked about is there. I mean, it's not just because they were friends. There's something that is a very powerful sense of relationship that got created with their friendships that have been very nurturing to them over the years. And yet as I say this, at a period when friends of friends of friends were overdosing and you know-- Just went to a funeral the other day of a brother of my nephew, one of my both my son's and daughter's good friends-- You know, totally enmeshed in the drug scene and eventually and unfortunately died because of it. You know, so it was very much there and yet there was-- They and their friends that they discovered had the strength not to get themselves-- I know that they smoked marijuana that was no-- And again I didn't care at all about that. Even though I've never smoked marijuana myself, I've always thought that it should be legalized. I think that it's ridiculous it isn't. I think because they knew that I was open, I mean, I was at the same time--as I said several tapes back--we would openly discuss in some of my classes, where I was talking about altered states and transformation-- Students were sharing with me some pretty powerful drug experiences. I mean, I was-- Yeah. I think I understood it very well and maybe because I was open to all possibilities that's why we had good luck.

SMITH: Okay. I wanted to discuss with you some of your field research and how that developed, sort of the trajectory of your interests. And of course, you were talking earlier today about research into the creative process. And I will ask first the degree to

which your research into Teyyam, which I guess was a form of dance in Kerala, and the Yaqui Easter ceremonies and shamanism are research into the creative process in the sense that you were talking about earlier.

SNYDER: Well, first of all and I think you may have seen this stated in somewhere or other, I don't really consider that I've done field research in the way that, in the depth that I myself would require of a dance ethnologist to-- I mean I really-- I have gone into the field to gain a further level of understanding through experience, but for instance as you will have noticed, I never did write about the Teyyam.

SMITH: Yes, I did notice that.

SNYDER: I felt-- I mean it was a very important experience for me. I think it led me to another level of understanding the ritual process I did sort of try out in some of the questions I was asking myself while I was there in the field. For instance, the model that I had evolved of the dance symbol, whether that had any kind of legitimacy in what I was noting, seeing, observing in Kerala. And I did think that it did. But I never felt that I was anywhere close to being in the appropriate position of writing about that. And all of my travels have really been opening up my vision and perspective more. But again, what I know to be true-- And my students who really are working in depth, in some areas, they have to give their whole life to that one direction.

I feel that what my role has been and may continue to be is as a stimulant for others and their work. And I think that I can only do that by maintaining really this perspective, this comprehensive perspective of trying to understand the largest picture and the interrelationship between things. Again, it's where I see at another level. I mean, I wish that there was more networking in research, in dance ethnology particularly. The group that we tried to organize as an outcome of the meeting at Bear

Island was called the Dance Ethnology Service Information Network--DESIN--which everybody came to hate as a--

SMITH: DESIN.

SNYDER: Sounds too much like a baby powder or whatever, but anyway-- But that the principle was very much there. That if by really internetworking at an intense research level, the thing that really-- The potential that really excites me is to have both the comprehensive whole and that which goes into great depth. And I mean, I felt very lucky in my position in the dance department and my association with the students because in a vicarious sense I entered into the intensity of depth through my involvement with and engagement in their research and I think that I could help them then by not letting them get so narrow in their focus, but to sort of expand them, not to make invalid connections but just to give themselves a larger understanding of the work that they are engaged in. My qualification for writing about the Teyyam would have been ten years of living there in Kerala. And I wasn't interested or willing to do that. I've just begun to be comfortable doing a little bit of writing about the Yaqui which is interesting because of the fact that while that's not been an intense period, I have been engaged in the observation of that one ritual sequence over now, a twenty year period of time. I begin to think that there's a little bit of legitimacy in my observations of that only because I have had this continuing opportunity.

SMITH: Well, I think it's your nine levels of event patterns that you use to describe the Yaqui Easter ceremony. It certainly lends itself to a book length monograph were you to want to do that.

SNYDER: Well, what I'd love to do and again, I won't unless I can-- It's also I have come more and more strongly to feel that I really want to see cultural research largely



in the hands of members of the culture which is being analyzed or-- I would love to do an interactive exploration of that, largely effected by that level's point of view on an interactive program. And if I could persuade some from the Yaqui community about that and I more or less be a facilitator-- And I haven't used that word before and I don't really like it, but that is what I am to a large extent. I try to facilitate others to really make their communication more successful. And I think if I could get the trust of some of the Yaqui to do that, we might do quite an extraordinary essay into a cultural experience really.

SMITH: Professionally trained Yaquis? I mean, anthropologically trained?

SNYDER: Possibly. Or possibly-- Well, I mean, I think of a man right now, Telipe S. Molina, who is a Yaqui himself. I think he came through, possibly, the folklore program at the University of Arizona. But he's a professional Yaqui. I mean, his work is about the understanding of the Yaqui. Again, it doesn't really matter to me whether he has a degree in something or other, I think he has the understanding from, yes, a Western point of view, from an analytical point of view, who is willing to question his own culture in a way that allows him then to become articulate about it to others.

Those would be some of the criteria that I have for a person working in these areas.

SMITH: I don't want to quite leave this subject yet, but I want to branch out a little bit more directly into things relating to intellectual history and the changing waves of influential writers in academia, anthropology, sociology, history and cultural theory and sort of get your reactions to them because these are people who have become, for periods of time, extremely influential, almost hegemonic for a while, and then are replaced by something else and you have to relate to them and deal with them. And I wanted to start by sort of in 1970, who would be the most important thinkers for you in

terms of anthropological theory or in terms of the kind of general theory of things that you were interested in, in dance ethnology, culture?

SNYDER: Certainly, Victor Turner would be one who comes to mind immediately. And I was excited about certain of [Claude] Lévi-Strauss's thinking.

TAPE NUMBER: XXII, SIDE ONE

MAY 20, 1993

SMITH: Okay you were talking about [Claude] Lévi-Strauss.

SNYDER: Yes, what he was getting to in The Savage Mind. I think with Lévi-Strauss, at least in that work and to a certain extent in others, because I say I didn't really go into as much depth-- [Victor] Turner himself was fairly early on. It happened that [Alfonso] Ortiz wrote a book called The Tewa World[: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in Pueblo Society] because all of them were concerned with saying there's another way of thinking and relating to self and culture and it did include-- There was a linkup between the experiential and the mythic. And so all of those works-- I was very fascinated particularly about Ortiz's work because one, Tewa happened to be an area that I was deeply interested in myself and here was one of the first books, a Tewa who became an anthropologist and then went back to deal with his own culture. And so he could look at it. He could both place himself--as you're asking about now--intellectually in areas very much in alignment with, again, Turner's work and Lévi-Strauss's work, and yet demonstrate it through an analysis of the ritual process in his own culture which was very exciting for me. And I was familiar enough with the Tewa material already to see what a leap forward this was as a work. Just a little bit later, I think I discovered Clifford Geertz and that seemed to be very much just another-- I mean, it was again in that same sort of, still asking the same kinds of questions about understanding culture as a whole, as a thinking process, but that the thinking-- No, as a perceptual process and the perceptual process involved both thinking and experiencing and was often then articulated by certain models within the

culture which were the ritual models, which I felt were particularly productive areas to explore. As it happened, ritual almost always involved dance in some form or other. So that would be the link to my specific area of concern.

SMITH: With Lévi-Strauss did the binary methodology that he used, that he borrowed from Saussure-- Was that meaningful to you? Was that useful in terms of looking at dance?

SNYDER: Not really, no.

SMITH: So you just sort of put that aspect of it to the side and--

SNYDER: Right, right. As I say, I'm not really a scholar and I would certainly fault myself in that-- Something draws me to something and I can focus very much on that. I think it's particularly the first three chapters in The Savage Mind which were just very exciting. I went through them over and over and I wasn't-- And that didn't say to me, oh, now, you have to read all of Lévi-Strauss. It probably should have but it didn't. And later when I was aware of The Raw and The Cooked and this and that, you know, interesting. What is it? It was an essay on Oedipus. While the entry point with Lévi-Strauss was very persuasive to me, when I went further-- This doesn't ring true to what I-- I mean there's something, again, that's manipulative about this. I found much of Lévi-Strauss's later work to be extremely manipulative and talking about and saying something-- I mean that was the difference between him and Victor Turner, who's also extremely analytical but when Turner would say, for instance, the theme of blood in the, what was it--? Oh, God. Terrible. I'll have to read these notes to enlarge on this. But anyway, here I felt as distinct from Lévi-Strauss that what he was saying, this symbolizing was very validated from just what happened to that symbol in, as you follow it, traced it in the larger context of that culture. And of course, the following

through on the symbol with Ortiz, I mean, had a-- It rang true, it rang true and at a point. I felt that Lévi-Strauss's analysis didn't ring true anymore.

SMITH: It had become a system.

SNYDER: It had become a system and it had nothing to do with-- Or I think the word manipulative is really what-- I mean, it was manipulating things and this is where I, early on, backed off from Freud and even Jung. Even though I felt that they-- I mean, I don't know that I would have been able to be that articulate about-- But there were things. Even though they were addressing myth and ritual, whether it was the personal myth that Freud was interested in or the more collective myth of-- At a point in time, they then began to say, well, this is happening because, you know, it should happen. That's the way it's meant to happen rather than listening to the culture that had evolved that myth and that ritual and seeing how it was the dynamics of it. Another book that-- Again, without really following through on the work, [Marcel] Griaule's work of the Dogon. While he was a "traditional anthropologist," his commitment to and the way he went into the Dogon culture and the Conversation with Ogotemmeli [; an introduction to Dogon religious ideas]-- It's a book that I used very early on and very fruitfully with my African classes for years and years. And again, it's because it's a conversation with a bearer of native traditional knowledge in their words. So the dynamic of the way they're putting things together was very exciting to me. And it happened that Jean Rouch had also worked with the Dogon and the others had-- So we're coming back to sort of bringing these ideas from my interest in them into the classroom. There was an interesting cluster of material that I could use to help take the students through this material to really-- I mean, what I was interested in is then getting the concept of the thinking process, the thinking, feeling, perceptual process.

SMITH: Did you run across the work of Mary Douglas?

SNYDER: Yeah. Again a little bit. Her work on the body was again, was quite--

SMITH: Natural Symbols has been a book that many people have referred to.

SNYDER: Right, right. And you know, in sort of-- Well, there was a whole sequencing of-- And they tended to be more British anthropologists who were asking sort of specific questions about the function of ritual-- Max Gluckman, for instance--I think of his work in relationship to Douglas--writes a reversal, all these kinds of things. So that was another sort of body of material that I thought-- Or if I saw things that were looking at the dynamic of the function of ritual I was drawn to them. British anthropologists who were working in African materials, I think I found them perhaps on the whole, more satisfying than the American anthropologists. Again, because I think they were systems oriented and I was interested in systems.

SMITH: What about James Clifford?

SNYDER: Yeah. Now, I mean, I think of the more recent ones. Clifford is certainly-- His work particularly excites me.

SMITH: How about Michael Taussig and his work on shamanism?

SNYDER: Curiously, I just haven't read much of him and for no really good reason. I truthfully don't even really know what his focus is. Somebody that I've often said, yeah, next week when you go to the library get-- But I haven't yet, you know. No excuse. Well, I mean, yeah, I suppose, the problem, the actual truth of the matter is that in sort of the last years at UCLA what with both administrative involvements and not-- Yeah, I probably could have accused myself of the very thing that us older professors are accused of. The materials that I was offering in class were working pretty damn well and I didn't as often sort of extend myself into new territory or didn't feel, didn't

find-- Well, I didn't as much, whereas in early years of teaching, particularly because the lack of material was-- I mean I just, I was constantly trying to see if I could find new and exciting things that seemed to be moving in directions that I felt were the right directions.

SMITH: Are you familiar with Pierre Bourdieu? SNYDER:

Not really, no.

SMITH: He's made a big splash in history, but--

SNYDER: I mean, there are some-- Well, this whole kettle of worms, [laughter] I guess it's probably the best way of talking about it, this intrigue, fascination I have with this redundancy that associated with this larger body of festivals which are all sort of the central node of which is the carnival but which go usually from winter solstice to June and just this redundancy of patterns, which I have felt have shamanistic influence. That's led me to be into this sort of the bridge that has been happening of historical anthropological or I mean, [Emmanuel LeRoy] Ladurie's work, that have been into a body of historical material. That's why I asked you way back in our discussion about [Carlo] Ginzburg's work. [I was] quite excited about that because this particular subject matter that I found myself entrapped in is as much historical as it is ethnographic anthropological. Even though I've tried to, as much as possible, have some contact with present day contemporary manifestations of it.

SMITH: That struck me in the two essays I recalled on shamanistic elements and contemporary carnival, but also because one of the big issues in that field of research is what is modernity and how do you define it and have you had to deal with that? What is traditionality versus what modernity is and where does one kick in and the other start leaving the stage?

SNYDER: Yes. And I guess again because I'm a-- I don't like separations and barriers, I like to sort of leak through from one to the other. So that, you know, when that becomes an issue it's more that I'm trying to find a way of linking those things, separating them fundamentally, even though, you know--

SMITH: I mean, someone like [James] Macfarlane sees modernity going back to the twelfth century in Western Europe, and so we're not talking about modernity anymore, we're talking about something that has to do with European culture.

SNYDER: And I would much prefer, I mean, again, whether those would be-- I'd lean much more that way. I mean it may be a very old fashioned way of saying it or maybe a very current way, that it's much more the dynamic of culture and the process, the process that's-- Process is something that always fascinates me and it's-- I believe that it's always going on and will continue to go on, so--

SMITH: This is a little different, but it fits, which is-- And it goes back to, you know, you sort of aligned yourself with the linguistic twin a few minutes ago. But how did the whole phenomena of post-modernism and post-structuralism and deconstruction, etc., etc.--which is also a kettle of worms--raise itself, manifest itself in the dance department and then in the field of dance ethnology? And how did you sort of personally respond to the various manifestations of structuralist and deconstructionist theory? And then post-modern dance?

SNYDER: Wooh! [Laughter] Well, I'll start at the very simplest point of post-modern. If one takes the process point of view, I find myself very fascinated by the process. Those that engaged in the post-modern were asking some very good questions, I think, about process, and then therefore their relationship to culture, to self. I mean, all of these old and tired themes that I've always found myself involved with. And in many



instances, however, I could be totally excited and sympathetic and I think totally persuaded by the process and extremely uninterested by the product. I didn't find myself-- Well, there wasn't an aesthetic satisfaction in the product. However-- SMITH: You mean either book or dance? I mean either scholarly research or creative work or-- ?

SNYDER: Yeah, I think probably so. No, I have to actually think about that for a minute. I'm just thinking about certain kinds of explosions of organizations in the sort of the print media. Some of those were, I thought, quite fascinating. In the dance-- On the other hand, again, as a faculty member, teacher in the dance department, as these issues came along, I had to be totally sympathetic that a student was engaged in thinking about them and in articulating them. And it was very important for them to have the opportunity of experimenting and expressing themselves and so forth and so on. So, I mean, I suppose-- Yes, I would probably in the context of a, say, a discussion with a student on a thesis committee or something or other, say a choreographic thesis committee, I would expose myself to saying, you know, questions of meaning or responsibility of ideas or something or other that might have been quite different from what they were doing. I wasn't forcing them into another direction or another approach but I would insert my concern in all of that.

SMITH: I'm going to vulgarize now but I think that's largely because in the kind of day-to-day university interchange, what one might face is the more vulgar manifestation of this. But like with deconstruction, a typical expression of that is there is no reality, there is no truth, there is only interpretation, everything is a fiction. Was that an idea that would be raised within the dance, well, in the dance ethnology program?

SNYDER: Yeah, maybe. I mean, yet on the edge of it. Certainly, I mean, I get very much-- I myself, moving along the way, am very much of the persuasion that we create our own realities and that you really do have to understand that. And so, it doesn't go so far as to say then there is no reality. There is nothing, there is a void and all of that.

I mean, I resist that.

SMITH: But an implication of that deconstructionist argument is that evidence is less important than logical construction of an argument and that evidence are merely, rhetorical devices.

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. I would not agree with that-- I mean, I'm just-- I'm trying to-- To the extent that I have really, I personally, have attempted to engage in the understanding of what deconstruction was all about, and I mean, you know, I could give you this much of a section of my library which when these things were first coming up, I was trying to understand what was going on. And then I-- Nothing really seemed to resonate very well with my own thinking, so I didn't really follow through.

SMITH: But your students were-- The students in the dance department or World Arts and Cultures, well, of course, they're young, so they're less likely to be influenced by that, but--

SNYDER: We're talking now actually about—what?--three or four years ago, the last time that I taught my graduate classes, three years ago. While deconstruction had been out there, what, for five years preceding that--

SMITH: Yeah, more or less.

SNYDER: It wasn't really-- I don't think that I felt that any of my students really, really found themselves deeply engaged in the deconstruction premises or arguments

and so forth. And that may, you know, just speak badly of the intellectual acuity of my students. And again, you know, the mark earlier on, if I really had felt that they were really finding the need to address things through that point of view or model or whatever you want to say, I would have been forced to have engaged in it. And I certainly wouldn't have argued against their trying to persuade me about it, but I just wasn't really forced into it in a way.

SMITH: What about Michel Foucault? Was there any influence from him and his discourse analysis?

SNYDER: Yeah. A bit. Foucault is definitely on my list of really trying to have more time to spend. I feel as though I would learn from him and it's-- And again, I really feel as though we're at the edge of some of the things that I haven't pushed myself with in a way that I would really like to.

SMITH: An aspect of Foucault, but it also affects a lot of post-structuralist thinking, is the idea that consciousness is an illusion, that discourse speaks us rather than we speaking language, which has been a popular idea.

SNYDER: Yeah, yeah. It's a provocative thought, but I wouldn't say-- Yes, language again, has been something that's threaded itself through a lot of-- What really does language do and how much are we formulated by the--? I mean it's odd but this was a theme that my father [R. Buckminster Fuller] was very engaged in, that we, you know, very simple examples, but we were very concerned-- If we keep on insisting on saying to ourselves and our children, "look at the sunset" are we ever going to get ourselves out of the model of thinking that, you know, we're going around the sun. That misuse of a term really did shape our reality or misreality. So I think there is a very interesting dynamic between the language one is using and the reality one exists in. I think with

all of these things and again it's-- You know, I would almost say it's a cop-out and yet, I don't really feel it's so. But I mean, there's something that's very fascinating about some of these arguments. What I find so many times is that we go from here and suddenly we're all the way on the other side; the other side of the see-saw is down. And it all has to be this way, or it all has to be that way and when it's-- And that's where I resist because I'm sort of in this, the fulcrum of the see-saw and I really-- And some ideas-- Some are very clear that I'm not interested in any of them. But in this area, I would find myself being quite fascinated in the issue that's raised, not necessarily comfortable about the current solutions that are being offered.

SMITH: I'm not trying to put you on the spot. It's just a question that needs--

SNYDER: No, I mean-- Well--

SMITH: Two people I wanted to ask you about who you cite again and again in your work and they are in your field, one is Adrienne Kaeppler and her concept of kinemia, and the other is-- I'm afraid I'm probably going to mispronounce this--

SNYDER: Joann [W.] K, you can just say-- Kealiinohomoku.

SMITH: Right. Is that a personal relationship as well as a question of theoretical exchange? Or is there--? Can one in the dance ethnology field--? Can you separate the experience of the individuals from the theory?

SNYDER: You can't really. I mean it's such a small field that the personal and the scholar colleague is difficult to separate. But--since this isn't going to be released for ten years--I think Adrienne is a scholar of much greater stature than Joann. Joann is a very good writer and she's able to get her ideas across very clearly and therefore they seem persuasive, but they-- She's not even many times really trying to persuade. She doesn't go into great depth theoretically. She's tossed a few really dandy things out that

excited almost everybody. "The anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance" is a very, very provocative article and I can get an argument going as fast today as I could twenty years ago on that with that piece of writing.

Adrienne has been fascinating to follow through on her long, long engagement with the Tongan material. And each time I hear or read things, I feel that she's gone into another area and another level of depth. She did a presentation in one of our grad classes, I guess the last year I was there, where I really felt that she had hit some extraordinarily exciting material. Not quite sure yet whether it's been published. But Adrienne is a very classical scholar in a sense. She's almost entirely devoted herself to the Tongan or the Pacific area materials. Her theory comes entirely out of her own direct addressing of that material, which I admire her very much for. I think that Adrienne respects me-- I mean, we can have good discussions together, but I think both of us recognize that our approach, our concerns are really in different, have been in very different ways. I mean, again, I need to keep on saying, I really am not a dance ethnologist. I have been, I think, a very good teacher in that area. I think I understand, but I have not been actively engaged in it myself. Adrienne is marvelous because she has been-- She's not a particularly good teacher actually and she's never chosen to really-- She's involved with some graduate work from time to time, but she's largely stayed connected with the Smithsonian, with the Bishop Museum, and in doing her own research.

SMITH: Looking at the literature for dance ethnology, it is also as with dance, a field where women seem to be preeminent and sort of almost unselfconsciously, so that I wonder to what degree women's consciousness and sort of feminist issues have affected the dance ethnology scholarship over the last twenty, thirty years.

SNYDER: Initially it didn't really at all. I mean I can't think of any of either Adrienne or Joann's that really go into that with any kind of conscious concern. Some of the now emerging scholars, Sally Ann Ness, Deirdre Sklar, one of our own graduates, are very much coming in into their work. And I think we'll see more and more of it.

SMITH: In your teaching, as well as in your research, did you look at gender differences? I mean, you have to, it seems to me, in West African stuff, but--

SNYDER: Yeah, I think it's-- Yeah. I mean, that was certainly something that I wanted the students to look at and was frustrated by the fact that there wasn't much literature out there for them to understand the potentials of working in some of that material.

SMITH: And in Bayanihan, you already begin to make some distinctions between male dance and female dance.

SNYDER: I mean at, you know, at the level you're now asking, that's such a simplistic level but obvious-- And a little sub-theme, not as dance ethnologists, but as articulator, even perhaps popularizer of dance which is something that is in the back of some of my concerns is the pointing out of the fact that dance is such a female activity in this culture is very, very, very much the exception rather than the rule, that the role, that the most acknowledged dancer in most cultures is the male with the female as the support to the male. It's very much about maleness a lot of times. So-- I don't think that's a very acute observation, but it's certainly, I mean, it's a point to be observed. SMITH: I

wanted to go back to your fieldwork. I had a broader question, which is if you could trace for us the development of your ideas about transformation and how those ideas have changed over the last, I guess, thirty-five years and the degree to which your fieldwork, which granted, is not the sort of in-depth, live-in experience an

anthropologist does, but how that fieldwork and study and your teaching have combined to develop that idea. I assume it has not been a static idea.

SNYDER: No. I think I first began to articulate it as an idea in my experience, in my choreographic experience at Bennington [College], where I, in that process, recognized that something got transformed and it was a different-- As I came out on the other side of a choreographic process, a number of things had changed. My own reality had changed. Even the layers of understanding of what I had done, I mean, I discovered that it was very multi-layered. I mean, I could go back to a piece and begin to realize there were lots of things embedded in it that I had intentionally embedded in it really, in a sense, but have no real awareness of in the moment of creating, I guess. Anyway, it caused me to think about the process a great deal. And at that point, probably I was talking about it more. Or the first sort of way of seeking to understand that, more than just experiencing it, was in some of the literature on creativity.

TAPE NUMBER: XXII, SIDE TWO

MAY 20, 1993

SMITH: Okay.

SNYDER: And locating it in the creative process of the artist or somebody engaged in art was involved with-- Another something that, you know-- When I really came into focus on it was the field and dance itself. Over and over and over again, as I knew to be true of myself, I mean having danced, there was really no way one could ever really put that aside. And people, once they had danced-- Just, you know, students, friends, who are people-- That talking about the love and the excitement of the experience and I kept-- Why is this so? And when I began to say, that's a transformational experience, I'm not quite sure but certainly it kept, I suppose, initially bothering me and then I began to maybe put some words on it. Before fieldwork, I mean, I think it's very important that almost pre any ability to get out into some kind of direct experience of these things was my concern with discovering that in filmed material. And so, you get then in some film material, particularly early filmed material, let's say because here it might even be travelogue stuff, what often got singled out was the sort of the more bizarre aspect of the dance experience. Often it was labeled the "trance experience." And so, I mean, while I knew that what I was thinking about, in terms of my own personal insights through the choreographic experience, my own insights through my own passion for dance and other's passion for dance, was different from trance, I also-- I thought they might fall into some kind of a larger domain. And then I can't be very articulate from there on in because once that seed has really been sown, you're right then to bring in the fieldwork. Whenever, whether it was in class, working with Mary



Whitehouse-- I mean, any moment observing the students in class, talking with students. This is sort of something that's hammering in my head and a casual discussion with a student in the hallway and they'll say something and I say, "Ah-ha!" I hear this theme and I see this theme, you know. And I did discover-- This will seem like a non sequitur but I discovered that I was very sensitive to sort of precedingness and movement. That something that initially one wouldn't really think was a manifestation of a transformed experience, I would begin to see it, particularly in the films and then be very excited because, let's say, some of the African material, as I got into Turner, as I got into Gluckman or as I got into whoever, what I was seeing and when I was saying, "Ah-ha, I think something else is going on there," I would begin to discover verbalizations of it in the literature. So that began to give me-- I began to give myself credibility for some of my, what were initially really very intuitive, responses. The example I was going to give was that early on, I looked at-- There's a Korean dance called the Salpuri. There's a very good film of the Salpuri that I used to use in the Asian class. It's a fascinating dance. And the early literature about it didn't say that it was a shamanic dance. But I absolutely knew that it was. And I began to talk about that. And lo and behold, and it wasn't because I was talking about it, but slowly the literature began to emerge. Yes, this, in fact, is a shaman's dance. In fact, the whole of the Korean performance vocabulary is largely influenced by the shaman and shamanic materials and perspectives and so forth.

SMITH: I have two questions. One, what told you that it was a shamanistic, or a shaman's dance?

SNYDER: Well, the use of the body. There's a fascinating sort of-- The shoulders are very prominent in the movement and you can see sort of a letting go. There's almost as

though the body moves into another realm of reality. The music is fantastic. And it's almost a-- It's a very syncopated rhythm. And again, sort of allowing oneself-- Which is something that I talk about a lot in class. An ethnologist has to do a lot of dancing in their own body in order to be-- And if you sit there and sort of respond to this, you can't-- I mean, you just are persuaded that there's something, something very transformative going on.

SMITH: I'll drop my second question. You answered my second already. SNYDER: So, I don't know if that answered what you're after. I'm sensitive to that theme probably twenty-four hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days a year.

SMITH: You had mentioned earlier today that you were very much influenced-- The Teyyam was very important to you but you cannot write about it, but maybe you could tell us the ways in which it became very important for you.

SNYDER: Well, first of all, the principle of the functioning of those rituals is the transformation. There is a caste and it's actually a very low level caste. Kerala's still a highly structured caste system. And it's-- The Teyyam are, they're one step up from the untouchables. To be quite accurate, there are three different castes who all function as Teyyam. The first one is really at the untouchable level and the other two are a little bit higher. But they come into a village. Their function is to transform themselves into a deity of some sort, who then the villagers can directly turn to, to pray to, to ask for blessing, to, you know, assure themselves of some positive results for immediate, distant future.

SMITH: Is this in the context of a more or less scripted drama?

SNYDER: No. It's scripted in a-- I think you're using the word scripted not in a written script but in a conceptual script. So there are stages that each of these actors,

and it's a single actor that goes-- Usually in an evening or even in a course of twenty-four hours-- These events can go on for two days. And there's a sequence of manifestations of various gods which an individual actor, performer is responsible for manifesting. And the stages of manifestation are quite similar. Although it is-- One does sense greater or lesser real transformation of this Teyyam. And that's interesting because there is a real-- There is an aesthetic or qualitative appraisal, you know. Some of these Teyyam, who one experiences totally transformed, are more powerful than others. But this is a caste, these people are born into this. This is their obligation.

SMITH: And their profession.

SNYDER: And their profession. And at least part of the time, they mostly had to have other professions too.

SMITH: How does this relate, if at all, to the--I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing it right-- orixa entering into the worshippers in the candomblé ceremony?

SNYDER: Well, I mean, there's certainly-- And this is where the literature on the shaman is very interesting because, for instance, [Mircea] Eliade made some very clear statements about stages in the process for the shaman. In trance or in acute transformation as these are, the individual in some ways goes through very much the same kind of process and manifestations, for instance, I think--maybe I didn't actually give you this to read--but hand shaking, vibrations, vibrations in the Northwest coast Indians that [Franz] Boas-- The greatest dancers not only begin to vibrate throughout their bodies but you can see it vibrating even in their torso which is a very tremendous-- The greatest dancer is one who it begins to vibrate throughout their whole body. So this you'll see. I mean, almost anytime you begin to see this kind of-- The Navaho's call it hand trembling. I mean, it's indicative of this more formally recognized

transformation process occurring. But the *candomblé* would be very different in that the *orixas* discover the people in whom they're going to manifest themselves. It's not their responsibility on a day-to-day basis. The *Teyyam*, this is their responsibility, to manifest themselves in--terrible but I've been away from that material, so long, I can't think of the various--

SMITH: Is a person always the same manifestation? Are they always Krishna or Rama or etc., etc?

SNYDER: Yeah. Now, that's not quite true. You actually can grow up into-- I mean, in that sense it's interesting, it's not a system, it's not totally different from the maturation process in the Kabuki theater for instance, where there are certain parts that are appropriate for the younger. And as you become more and more mature in this process, you're able to access yourself into the more difficult and challenging roles, or that which requires more maturity. So, some of the *Teyyams* themselves are more juvenile or immature themselves, and so the actor can be more-- Anyway, so, what was very exciting about that is that everything really was in place to assist in that transformation process. It, like other, again, mostly Asian performance, forms-- The make-up process, for instance, is fantastic, very delicate, very complicated, face painting, much more so than Kabuki or-- There's a cultural relationship to Kathakali. Have you ever seen Kathakali? Yeah. So, some people will say that *Teyyam* may be the, you know, sort of the earlier form of Kathakali. I don't think that's quite accurate, but there certainly is some relationship.

Anyway, so the face painting itself takes two or three hours and it's clearly as much a sort of a going into a meditative status as the face painting itself. Getting into the costume takes a long time. Even the sort of the environment-- Because they create,

at the point of performance, the costume--most of the costume--out of fresh split palm leaves that are handled in various ways. That also takes two or three hours. And the actor will sit, sort of in the midst, while this is going on. Other members of the same caste group are responsible for the preparation of the costumes, even for the gathering of the flowers because each of the-- It's not only the mask, then they have tremendous headdresses. And again, some of them are very, very-- Eighteen, twenty feet tall, very hard to hold. So, ask yourself, you know, just the act of balancing that. It's a focusing act which is a part of, a tool for transformation.

If I had a checklist in my mind, which I did, you know, I could sort of keep on checking off my checklist and say, yeah, I see. So it was much more than fieldwork into Kerala and to the Teyyam. It was additional field experience in the transformative process. And yes, then that's informing. It's embedding itself in my work.

SMITH: You spent how long in Kerala?

SNYDER: Three months.

SMITH: Three months. Did you intend on going back?

SNYDER: I would have loved to in a way, but I didn't really think that I would.

SMITH: Did you interview any of the Teyyam performers?

SNYDER: Teyyam, they're actually called Teyyam.

SMITH: Teyyam, any of the Teyyam?

SNYDER: Yeah. I was working with a young man, actually was brought to this young student, who had thought that he was going to be able to set up a whole sort of research institute on Teyyam and wasn't finally able to pull that off, but-- And he had originally asked me to act as his advisor on putting together this institute and when that didn't come to being, I got so fascinated by it, I said, you know, I'd be interested in

going anyway. We did have some other scholars sort of coming in and out there. But we lived with a household. And Wayne Ashley actually spoke Malayalam which is a devastating language, I never could even get my handles on it enough to say hello and goodbye. So, yeah, he brought-- We did on occasion bring Teyyam to the house, but not much. You couldn't really. And I would hang around. I mean, I would sit for literally hours perhaps following one through the process of getting ready because, again, this was all quite-- They sort of had a slightly, maybe some cloth hanging or something or sort of suggestion of an enclosure or something or other. But there was nothing there to prevent you from-- So I paid a lot of attention to what was going on.

SMITH: In one of your essays on shamanism, you write really-- Well, of course, the way people have written about shamanism relates to their attitudes and the contestation of their attitudes towards subjective knowledge and, I guess, implicitly in North Atlantic and European and North American societies. And I wonder if-- I would like you to define what you mean by subjective knowledge in relationship to like the zen concept of no-mind or ecstatic experiences and in the various types of transformational experiences that appear to take one away from intellectualizing.

SNYDER: I think I use this term a great deal, but it's inner-knowing and it's crediting that. And I mean, zen is a very clear example. I mean, you know what you know. An example which came actually from some discussions with Joann, because I hadn't directly experienced myself, but she makes the point that in coming to know a Pueblo family, you come and sit in a room with them for maybe, four to six hours and you really violate that experience if you voice anything. It's there because you're there. And you know you're there and they know you're there. And if you verbalize it-- And this is a theme that you can easily demonstrate in many, many ways with American Indian materials. The

Plains [Indians] who receive their song in their vision quest and they must never, never talk about that. Yet, that's the center of their power. So it's these things that you don't-- I think probably the things that you're thinking about there talk about the fact that we have to say, oh, yes, you and I agree, yeah, I'm holding something in my hand, to just-- If I just said, what-- I mean don't have to discuss it anymore. Again, trying to bring this up with the students that-- I mean, all of our educational thing is yeah, okay, you tell me and now we agree about it, rather than in a-- Again, and particularly, this is one of the problems with teaching a number of native Americans. To know is to sit there quietly. You discredit that knowing the minute you ask a question. It's to say you don't know if I have to ask you about it. I have to evidence the fact that I know. So I don't know if I've really explained it. And therefore, then, if, as I suggest, dance is a lot about that inner-knowing. It's in a different realm of sharing and communicating, but it's also the really, the-- Some of my students have been-- Ph.D. dissertations have been seeking to try and find a way of bringing that inner-knowing and identifying it as being critical without violating the fact that immediately you bring it to words, it almost is counterproductive.

Interesting. That probably will be published sometime, not by me, but by Mary Coros.

SMITH: Chronologically, your work in European festivals and contemporary-- I guess it's like Mardi Gras and the Carnival. Is that more recent than your other work?

SNYDER: Yeah, I think so. I mean, it was an outcome really of trying to understand the Yaqui material and then another part of sort of my thinking process is--and this relates back to our discussion about reality--I think we do live in different-- We could talk about cultures as people living in different world views, particularly if they have in fact been introduced to different world views. The Yaqui I think is a fascinating

example because it's very-- There are three world views that are very clearly present and present in the Easter and they talk about it themselves that way. One of them then is the something or other that is consistent with this larger patterning that I had been aware of before, but then when I really tried to say, well, what is it? What world view does that represent? And that lead me into all of this. It represents this cluster of material which is-- It's not Christian, but it is definitely European and it has a number of sort of markers to it, that are just constantly repeated and I kept saying, why are these markers constantly repeated? Which then led me to the shaman because they seem to be, rather than be outward manifestations, even though I mean the psychedelic ribbons that are present, the very strong yellows, reds and oranges and so forth. Whether you're looking at a Morris dancer in Northern England or Spain or the Yaquis, it's there. And I kept saying, well, why is that a redundant--? And it's not. It's not so much the outward as it's something about some of the inward experience as well. As you see that color possibly it has something to do with, also encouraging a transformational experience. Well, why do you want to encourage a transformational experience? Well, now we don't really have an answer, but, you know, there are people whose bread and butter is being transformed and they happen to be named shaman so-- Somewhere along the way, I was also trying to find a research direction that didn't feel as though it was totally violating my own sort of feeling that I didn't really want to engage in cultural materials that I didn't have some direct relationship or responsibility to. So that, if I could find some answers in European materials where I didn't feel I was really intruding as much, that would be exciting and then I did indeed-- I was amazed at the amount of material that I discovered in Europe when I was there. And I, you know, had a very challenging problem in that a lot of them were



to do with carnivals. Every one of them was manifesting themselves in exactly the same way, so I had to figure out-- I mean, I knew of things going on all over and I had to make some choices about what-- And I was absolutely amazed that I decided to go to the Black Forest area of Germany. It would have been absolutely the last place in the world I would have thought that I would-- And it was the Narrens and the whole Fastnacht rituals there are incredible and deeply interwoven into the culture. I mean, to see moderately successful German businessmen who put a lot of their energy over the year and a lot of wealth into their participation active with highly articulated costumes in these Fastnacht events-- Anyway, where I am going the week after next to the Calusari in Rumania, which is another one of the most fascinating of these events-- I'm still very much engaged in all of this. But, as I've mentioned repeatedly, it's very odd because I know that there can be no real outcome that I would give any credence to. It's too big. I mean I keep dreaming that I will be able to create a network of scholars, because there are a network of scholars out there, who have worked in great depth in all of these areas, and that we could bring our research together with new levels of technology so that, I mean-- There is, I just discovered at the Greek meeting of the society, the Study Group in Ethnochoreology, that possibly there is a group in Denmark that has somewhat the same objective, supposedly. I wrote to them, I haven't gotten a response, but supposedly we've been put in touch with one and now I'm going to see what's going to happen.