David Marr

Interviewed by Eirik Steinhoff

The Evergreen State College Oral History Project

Interview 3, September 8, 2016

Marr: […] just in the sense that it's the pre-history of Evergreen, the Evergreen that became, the Evergreen that took shape as a result of specialty areas.

Steinhoff: Okay. This is why I wanted to come back here, exactly.

Marr: So you've got the first year classes, 1971-72, and I think the full implementation of specialty areas in '77, you can check the date [for specialty areas]. You've got five or six years there where we're kind of trying to find our way. And as the economists would say, when the specialty areas were installed the curriculum was rationalized, it was regularized and rationalized to a significant extent. But this piece that Rudy Martin and I wrote [the "M&M Manifesto: My Snowman is Burning Down"] was—I'm sure you've read it.

Steinhoff: More than once.

Marr: [laughs] I'm not going to repeat anything that's in it other than to say that it was a big deal.

Steinhoff: This is what I'm curious about.

Marr: As you can remember from the final page, we called for an all campus open meeting, and boy was there one. Old Lecture Hall 1, I'm not even sure if that space is still there or if it's been remodeled out of existence, but it was the largest public space we had that was indoors. And it was packed to the rafters.

Steinhoff: Faculty, staff, students?

Marr: Yes. Everybody responded to the call. And Rudy and I were down on the first floor and we just sort of went over some of this and took questions, we talked it all out, and at the same time as that was going on, do you remember the Marcuse Seminar that I mentioned?

Steinhoff: Yes. Exactly.

Marr: Well a couple of students from that wrote their own manifestos. I can even remember the title of one of them, it was called, "The Charter of the Speckled Band."[1] [Richard Alexander, a planning faculty member, also wrote a piece at this time and circulated it throughout the campus.]

Steinhoff: Wow.

Marr: And it ["The Charter of the Speckled Band"], like this one [the "M&M"], was a polemic against Woodstock anti-intellectualism as we called it then, grooving in the grass. It was a plea for serious intellectual and academic work. Rudy and I, as well as others, worried that Evergreen was becoming a toy college.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: So the lines were drawn in some ways. And when I say this was a big deal what I mean by that is that after the meeting and [all through the 70s] and for the next, well, 30 years, I would meet people who weren't there but who had heard about it and would say, "Oh, you and Rudy wrote that? I just read it. That's got some interesting stuff in it." So, it lingered on and had a reputation. I mean, I leave it to smarter people than I am to figure out the significance of all that, but it wasn't a flash in the pan.

Steinhoff: No. And it also, the first one in particular announces itself as responding to a problem and a malaise that sets in by March of '72, so middle of Spring quarter of the inaugural year.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: But then coupled with the description of the problem it offers a set of solutions, and there's an informative force that they're carrying. But also there's an invitation in beautiful language along the

[1] By Andrew Daley et al. Andrew was easy to spot on Red Square, with his red handlebar mustache.

lines of, “We will create Evergreen. If we recognize the situation in its full scope of both the problem and the terms that organize it, if we adequately recognize it, we will create Evergreen.” “We must clarify the experiment itself,” Evergreen *as* an experiment, “We must forge an identity.” And then the last sentence, “We are eager to join others in creating Evergreen.” So there’s political language there, but there’s also this kind of, I mean, we’ve introduced Arendt into the conversation,[2] there’s [also] a kind of poiesis, the creation of Evergreen.

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: And then also this idea of can we think what we are doing?, the charge that she gives to, well, anybody that wants to participate in the human condition.

Marr: That’s right.

Steinhoff: So I can understand kind of the stirring way in which this was received, both defensively but also excitedly.

Marr: That’s right, it was both defensive and excited. And one element of that in the first one[3] was that the scientists, and I take a second seat to no one in my admiration for Evergreen scientists over the years, really didn’t know [many of them, anyway] what the hell to do because they were trained departmentally and disciplinarily in ways that were far more—I don’t mean intellectually rigorous but professionally rigid. You know, they simply had, they were formed by their training in ways that made them think, “Is there a place for us here? How in the world are we just going to have a free-for-all college and still do serious chemistry, biology, physics and so on?” And they figured it out, they began quasi-departmentalizing. And I don’t fault them for that if only because I can’t think of another way to do it either.

Steinhoff: Indeed.

[2] In 1972 I hadn’t yet read Arendt.

[3] The first of two “M&M Manifestos”; the second one was published to the community two years later.

Marr: I would have, I mean in hindsight I would probably use the lexicon of renewal. Same thing, basically, but if Evergreen is going to be any good as an institution, one of the things, not the only thing, maybe not even the primary thing, but one of the things that has to happen is this constant renewal.

Steinhoff: Yes.

Marr: How often does it matter for people to think how [to renew the place]? But to get set in our ways and to think we've got it fixed and set and we don't need to worry about anything from now on. We just need to keep the power going and keep everything plugged in. I think that's daft.

Steinhoff: Absolutely, absolutely. It also goes, what you're describing, not imperative to renewal but an incentive to renewal in order to maintain that continued encounter with potential. New generations of faculty, new generations of students, new things break in the world that need attention.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: But, that impulse imperative incentive on the one hand cuts against those or is offset in some way by something you described last time around the—"Well, I wasn't in the first planning faculty." "Oh, I wasn't in the class of '72 but I came in '74." So there's that kind of, "I'm not one of the original chips." And so the question becomes renewal on what terms, or also by what authority?

Marr: Oh boy, that's the truth. Yeah, that's a very shrewd observation, the "by what authority" part because it is a floating craps game, the academic authority at Evergreen.

Steinhoff: It is.

Marr: There's no department chairman, you can be a convener of the humanities specialty area or of the social science this or that, but it doesn't mean you have any [or much] power.

Steinhoff: Exactly.

Marr: And probably the chief reason is you don't have any money.

Steinhoff: Bingo.

Marr: You don't control the budget. That's all centrally located in the dean's office and the vice president's office.[4]

Steinhoff: That's right. But so the risk, I guess the challenge in articulating this impulse or imperative to renewal would be how to do that without falling prey to ancestor worship. To just say, "Oh, those guys did it this way, therefore we must also."

Marr: Oh boy, but did we hear that.

Steinhoff: Oh, I'm sure.

Marr: We on the receiving end heard that all the time from— Well, to be blunt about it, I didn't respect people who said, "This is how it's done because that's how they did it then." I thought, "That's rather intellectually timid."

Steinhoff: Absolutely.

Marr: You know, come on, why are you here?

Steinhoff: There's not action there.

Marr: I mean it isn't as if you're going to insult the founders if you don't do exactly what you think they did.

Steinhoff: Exactly.

Marr: But, so, we [Rudy and I] got a lot of that. But, you know, so that's what this was about, these two manifestos. The second one of course was—we don't need to talk about that one very much I don't think, unless you have some questions or something. But, the second one occurred in a different political context.

Steinhoff: I would be curious to know more about it.

[4] But of course the budget-heavy, facilities-rich sciences and arts had institutional links to the budget that the "pencil and paper" humanities and social sciences lacked.

Marr: The first one, I mean I'll set it up. The first one had nothing to do with, it in no way challenged the authority structure, assuming anybody could find it, of the college. It was really just kind of a moral sermon, basically, to get people to do what we thought we were all supposed to be doing here. But it in no way contained any attack on deans, or vice presidents, or the president, or the board of trustees or anything, it had absolutely nothing to do with that. The second one did.

Steinhoff: Okay.

Marr: Because the college's politics was in disarray. [Washington's economy was in recession; the Legislature was making menacing noises].[5] One of the original deans was making a bid for power. He wanted to be president.

Steinhoff: Who was that?

Marr: Merv Cadwallader.

Steinhoff: Okay.

Marr: And I'm sure that there will be somebody that says, "No, he wasn't trying to do that." But I'm convinced [and Rudy was as well] he was. And of course the chronic budget problems in the state of Washington as they affected The Evergreen State College were more pronounced then than they were in the first year. Specialty areas had not been instituted yet. I can't give evidence for this, but I'm pretty sure the idea [for specialty areas], whatever it was named, was gaining momentum because if you just look at it, you have to have some sort of notion of that in order to constitute a DTF. And the DTF has to work for a year, you know, it takes time. So that's the key difference I see between these [two manifestos].

Steinhoff: Got it. There was more consequence, perhaps, if we're working with the hypothesis that these two documents, the first one as a kind of sermon, the second one as a kind of intervention, that

[5] Ever hopeful, Charlie McCann, in a meeting with Rudy and me during these dark days, said: "A college that can get by one more year, can get by one more year."

then constitute together the pre-history of the specialty areas as a form of rationalization that would be adequate to the wish, the experiment of the school.

Marr: Yes. And adequate being the key word there because nobody, I don't think, wanted to kill the thing. The old cliché about how you hold a bird, not too tight or you'll kill it, too loose and it flies away. They think these things up in psychology class or something. But that was a real belief, that we've got to do something more orderly and more predictable than we've been doing, but we can't fall into the old ways because we are superior to them, don't you know it?

Steinhoff: That's right. And you're also responding to new circumstances. One of the points of crisis articulated in the second one is under-enrollment, which you wouldn't have known to the same extent when you wrote the first one.

Marr: That's exactly so. There's a periodicity about under-enrollment from about that time on. Every time it reared its head the same kind of response could be heard. "Well, we can't do anything about this, we can't do anything about that, but the one thing we can do something about is the curriculum. And so let's give serious thought to beginning a nursing program, [or a program to train] dental hygienists." [Let's make the curriculum more in tune with the real world.]

Steinhoff: Right. Business.

Marr: Business.

Steinhoff: Exactly, this kind of stuff. Cool. So maybe we can put a pin in the two "M&M" manifestos for now and if things come up we can come back to it.

Marr: Oh, sure.

Steinhoff: I will say, I think I shared this in an email with you that I read out to students right at the end of the quarter in fall the second page of the second one which is where your aria on, "The Reunification of Knowledge," comes out. So I gave them this and they were reading as I was reading and the students *really* responded to it. I mean, I'd been doing that program, we read some Thomas Kuhn, but then we

also read some Ibn Khaldoun, so we were looking at these epistemologies of history. And part of the context was that Rudy Martin had died, which was why I went a googling. I was like, "That name sounds familiar." And then I saw your name there too and I was like, "Wait a second, I think that guy emailed me about something once." So I was slowly piecing things together and I actually started reading this and realized, "Holy smokes, this thing has its finger on the pulse right now." And then in one of those whimsical moments that doesn't happen that much at other schools, I said, "I'm going to put this in front of the students and see what they make of it." They *loved* it.

Marr: That's interesting. [I wrote the passage you're referring to.]

Steinhoff: They said, "I understand what Evergreen is trying to do now. Why didn't you say this on the first day?" And I explained, "Well actually, you know what, I hadn't read it on the first day."

Marr: [laughing] That's wild.

Steinhoff: This is not per se to do with the "M&M" manifestos, but it allows me to ask a question that I do want to pose, which was what was Rudy Martin like? What was it like to work with him? He was your guy that brought you in, you knew him from Washington State. It would be nice just to hear a little bit about this person.

Marr: Well, we were the closest of friends from the first time we met in 1968 [at WSU]. Our families had a lot to do with each other from then on. We were office mates. I don't know if you had—I think that someone told me this, that the memorial service for him was taped, but I think—the tape [is] available.

Steinhoff: I've watched about a third of it.

Marr: Oh, have you? Well there you go.

Steinhoff: I got a sense of just how big a person he was. And in my sort of speculation I recognize him as a kind of hub.

Marr: Yeah. He was, he was a very good teacher. He was an unusual teacher in the sense that he was both academically solid and a kind of social worker. He was the kind of teacher that if the kid was in trouble he'd [try to get to the root of it even if it meant delving into the student's family life]. You could call him at night and say, "I'm really having trouble." So not very many teachers are like that. But in I guess it would be '72, the college, we put together a policy on the rotation of deans, it was a novelty. And the idea was to rotate members of the faculty through the deanship. Well, he was the first dean to be rotated. He was not the first dean to come from faculty, but he was the first one to come through under the auspices of the dean rotation policy.

Steinhoff: Got it.

Marr: The first one to come [from the faculty] was Oscar Soule. He became an assistant dean for the year 1972-73. [Under the rotation policy] the existing deans, the three founding deans, would be phased out, would rotate out into the faculty, meanwhile the other people would rotate in. It stayed at that with—it stayed at three deans for maybe two years or something and then it went to four deans.

Steinhoff: Yeah, okay. So initially that wasn't part of the model, the rotating in?

Marr: No.

Steinhoff: Got it. There was a kind of steady state administration layer and then introducing this rotation creates this kind of a permeable membrane.

Marr: Yes, yes. Let's see, what else can I say?

Steinhoff: So this is to say very early on he becomes part of the administration.

Marr: He becomes part of the administration, but it was very unmistakably evident at that time that although, yes, he's part of the administration, the faculty own him.

Steinhoff: There you go.

Marr: They have [always, since the rotation of deans policy was put in place, had] a very proprietary attitude toward their deans.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: And so, they don't own him in the sense they control him, it's just that he's one of us. That still lives at Evergreen.

Steinhoff: Yeah, for sure. And so when it was time to compose these manifestos I'm just curious to hear are you at school when you're doing it, are you here or are you at his house, at the other house? What's the scene of composition?

Marr: That's basically what it was, yeah, [sitting around a table at his house or my house]. You know, I don't think there was anything interesting about how we did it, we just produced drafts, compared them. [We'd take this from his and this from mine and put the pieces together] and kept shaping it and shaping it.

Steinhoff: And it's based on conversations, presumably, that you were having ongoing.

Marr: Oh yes, right. That was the odd [or distinctive] thing about the early years, probably all throughout the '70s, certainly in the first year or two, is that you couldn't walk across campus in 5 or 10 minutes, it was physically impossible. I don't mean because of the topography, it's that you'd go from one conversation to the next. By the time you get to where you wanted to go to begin with maybe an hour has gone by.

Steinhoff: And you may have even forgotten what you were going for.

Marr: You may have! [laughing] I don't think that happens anymore very much.

Steinhoff: No. I mean it does, but when it does you know that there's something crackling, there's something that's up.

Marr: And that's good too.

Steinhoff: Good, I'm glad that I was able to hear a little bit because it's, I think you're aware of this stimuli for getting this project going was, "Where's Rudy Martin's voice?" He's gone, nobody sat down and talked through this stuff with him.

Marr: No, that's true.

Steinhoff: So, a real loss has been palpitated.

Marr: It's a real loss. And I'm the closest, for whatever it might be worth, for telling you about all this stuff [having to do with the manifestos and with him as a faculty colleague. In all other ways the recollections and thoughts of Gail, his wife, are as pertinent as anything I can say]. I mean we were not of one mind about everything when we wrote these things. I think he was less self-consciously intellectual than I. He had come [with around ten or twelve years of teaching experience,] a few in high school, most in junior college. [For my part, I had two years of college teaching experience in addition to four years as a T.A., and was] a kind of smart-ass intellectual. It would be a gross simplification to say that I was all head and he was all heart, but there was a kind of head/heart distinction between us. He was much more social than I was, naturally social. My students once said, "We think you are born at the front door of Evergreen and you die when you leave [the building]. We wonder how you can go from one"— That came from the Marcuse Seminar students. Rudy was very friendly and outgoing, I tend to be shy. So we made a good combination in some ways, but I do think, I said this at the [memorial] service [April 2, 2016], he was one of the only, I could count them on fewer than five fingers, natural born academic leaders [we have had].

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: He had leadership ability and it came from within, and was widely acknowledged, people would look to him as a leader. It probably also matters a great deal [that] there was a kind of a race conflict at Evergreen [from the beginning].

Steinhoff: I'm interested to hear about this.

Marr: I mean you remember the late '60s.

Steinhoff: I don't remember, but I've read and heard about them.

Marr: [Those years, especially after the assassination of Martin Luther King, bequeathed to America the specter of the angry young black man.] Rudy was not *the* angry black guy, he was *a* friendly black guy. Very affable, [genuinely] interested in *everything* about you, and your kids and the wife or husband and the dog and everything, he was just that way. In white America the angry young black man scared the pants off most [white] people, just the specter [of it]. [Rudy was *naturally* and guilelessly not that guy.] But at Evergreen starting about 1980, with the arrival of Maxine Mimms, I think it was '80 or '81, he was no longer the [most prominent] black guy here. He wasn't the only one then[, of course,] because one of the people he helped get hired here the same time I was hired was Willy Parson, he was a microbiologist from WSU, and later another was Stone Thomas, and a few others who [also] came here through his influence.

Steinhoff: His recruiting.

Marr: Mmmhhh. Still, the race conflict over who is going to be the number one black [person at Evergreen] started with the advent of Maxine. It was always a quiet conflict, it never really blew up into anything much. But she undertook the project [to establish an Evergreen program] in Tacoma, in the inner-city. I once said to her, "Maxine, it's not the Tacoma campus, there is no Tacoma campus, it's the Tacoma program." [She didn't like that, nor did her allies,] because even though I was right her idea was to build it into a Tacoma campus, and in fact she succeeded over the years. But there was at the best coolness between the two of them [Rudy and Maxine] and there was a kind of a division amongst white people[, in part, I thought, over whose black authority was weightiest in the affairs of the college.] Rudy was [a proud bourgeois man][6] and in some ways a very conventional academic. She was a conventional

[6] Rudy and his brother were the two children of the Rev. S. R. Martin and his wife Primrose. Rev. Martin began his ministry in a storefront church in Texas. During much of Rudy's youth his father was a bishop in The Church of God in Christ, in Monterey, California. When Rudy joined the planning faculty he was one of three "PK's" (preacher's kids); the other two were Byron Youtz and Charles Teske. Though Rudy had long since fallen away from COGIC , his church roots remained. I took to calling him The Reverend in his later years, and several of my colleagues at the memorial service remarked that Evergreeners were, to him, his flock. In Evergreen's public discourse about race

empire builder.[7] He was not interested in building any empires. He was just, he had academic credentials that he was proud of, not because of the pedigree or anything but because he knew [what] good academic work [was]. The Tacoma [operation, at least at first,] was mixed, there was a lot of skating , some of us [including Rudy] thought, even though one of the people I admired very much, Willy Parson, was up there for much of his Evergreen career.

[Recorder shut off.]

Marr: Let's take a look at the cheat sheet and see what we've got.

Steinhoff: Sounds good.

Marr: You asked me earlier if there was any kind of presiding genius or two over the formation of the college. I think I rather hastily said no, and then backtracked a little bit and said well there were many references to Meiklejohn and Dewey, [invocations, really], and the [various] great books [programs at several universities] and all this stuff.[8] And that's basically true, and so I still think that there wasn't *a* presiding genius, but there was I think an emerging, [formative] tension between what I would call for shorthand purposes the great books approach, and education for democracy. So it's basically, how would you want to call that? Hutchins vs. Dewey? I don't know.

Steinhoff: Sure, I hear that.

Marr: So I don't think anyone was a rabid adherent of either of these. Depends on what you mean by rabid, I suppose. Rather, the way the tension played itself out was more like if someone was getting a

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over the years Rudy took pains to identify himself as a "western black." I do not recall any time when he explained what he meant by this, or recall any of his hearers asking him.

[7] Maxine saw at once that Evergreen had failed to attract black students and seemed to have no plan, beyond hand-wringing, for attracting them to "the college in the woods," a characterization often heard in campus public discourse about student recruitment at the time. If black students won't come to Evergreen, Maxine said, Evergreen will go to them—in Tacoma. The Tacoma Program was founded in 1982.

[8] Sporadic references in faculty discourse about the nature and purpose of education, especially during Evergreen's first two decades or so, brought to the fore bits and pieces of the leading ideas associated with the University of Chicago under Robert Hutchins, St. John's College, the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Strawberry Creek experiment at Berkeley, and the San Jose Tutorials Program, among others. There was, of course, much overlap between Meiklejohn and Dewey insofar as the former was keenly interested in the place of the great books in the education of a democratic citizenry.

little too much onto the great books side they'd get nailed by someone from the other side and vice versa.

Steinhoff: Got it. They were like buffers.

Marr: Yeah. But, I thought that the questions were perfectly good and sound questions. Like, what is an education for? I mean that's an important question[at a self-proclaimed alternative college] and don't you have to inquire into that question before you can actually take up second-order matters like "Well, if it's for that, then how do we implement it?" You know. And I think that's good. Little by little the curriculum and the faculty were dividing themselves along the lines of, how can I say this? Here's one way of looking at it, shouldn't the first year programs be foundational in the sense of exposing students to the great tradition, right? And the answer that came forth was not at all clear. It's just that curriculum would be devised in such a way that when you looked at it for next year or for the next two years, there would be one or more "Great Books," in quotation marks, programs. One or more socially oriented and politically activist programs and so on. Then of course there would be the quasi-departmentally organized science offerings and arts offerings. So that's kind of how it went in the late '70s and '80s.

Steinhoff: Okay, the specialty areas sort of congeal around these kinds of poles.

Marr: The specialty areas were there and you had to affiliate with one or more of them as a faculty member, you couldn't not affiliate. And then you'd generate curriculum under the auspices of your specialty area. The question then emerged right away, "Well, what about first-year [Basic] programs?" Because specialty area programs sound like just what they are. Then the tussle came over whether the basic curriculum, the basic programs, which is half the college or something, are they simply going to be preparations for what happens in the specialty area later on? Are they just [introductions to specialty areas]? Or what, I mean what are these things? So the little question became the big question of sequencing and so on. We never really got away from any of that. It kind of just bumbled along, producing curriculum like that. Always in the end curriculum was to pay its way in terms of enrollment.

There was never any question about that, there was simply not enough money and there wasn't enough latitude in the budget to operate any other way. You know, if you're going to consistently offer programs that no students want to take sooner or later, usually sooner, you're not going to be able to offer those programs.

Steinhoff: And so who is making that intervention?

Marr: The deans. The deans and of course there emerged a counsel of conveners, as they were called later. We more or less have that now still.

Steinhoff: Right, the so-called planning unit coordinators, yeah, I see. And so, what?— a team would get together, compose a program, submit it for approval or say this is what we're doing and then there would be much push/pull, how would that work?

Marr: Basically, yeah. You'd go to a retreat, say, and I always had the view that good programs originated as affinity groups of faculty members [rather than through quasi-departmental dictat]. You'd get together with two or three people you'd like to teach with and you'd say, "What do you think we should teach?" Or one might say, "I have an idea, who do you think would be interested in this besides X?" And so I would be there, I'd have X and then someone else would say, "Well, I know someone." Before you knew it you had three or four. And then you cook up a proposal, might be only be a few sentences long, submit it at the first stage of the operation and they'd say, "Oh, we're going to take this one." Then if you get the green light you go ahead and make the full scale plan.

Steinhoff: Got it. What books, what's the actual da, da, da, da. Got it.

Marr: And catalog copy.

Steinhoff: Exactly. That's important. So that's actually a good segue to one of these questions that I can actually just read verbatim off the sheet. "What have you learned during your years at Evergreen about subjects other than the ones in which you were trained?" And then my follow-up question would be, who are the colleagues that you were doing this learning with, and how did that change you?

Marr: These are two of my favorite questions. I just love these questions.

Let's see, I say, maybe this is just because I've been reading this [David] Remnick book [called *Lenin's Tomb*, on the last years of the Soviet empire], I just finished it, that one of the most important things that occurred to me is I got to read and seriously study some Russian and Soviet history and culture. And I did this with Tom Rainey in two programs, one and a half programs so to speak. That mattered a great deal to me at the time because up till then I had studied *no* Russian history other than the thumbnail bits you get when you study the history of socialism and Marxism and [the Communist International].

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: I mean I had read Marx and Engels, but I'd read none of the [nineteenth century] Russian thinkers. I had read almost none of the Russian novelists. So I was introduced to all of that, and *man*! that was hugely important to me.

Steinhoff: So when was that?

Marr: Well, it was pretty late. It was in the early '90s, so a lot had happened before then but as I mentioned I just bring that one up because I have had [the Remnick book] on my mind. And what mattered so much to me and still does is the fact that as an Americanist with basically a Western European-American focus, I've devoted a lot of time to the Protestant Reformation, and to the Tudor-Stuart period, and to the European and English Renaissance [and Scottish Enlightenment]. It's just part of what it means to be an Americanist. And then to come across the Russian past where there is no Protestant Reformation, there is no European Renaissance. What kind of a country is it? And the scales fell from my eyes and I realized how narrow or blind I had been because I had to try to imagine the last 500 years of history without the Protestant Reformation [the cradle of, among many other things, Colonial America]. And I've always had a keen interest in the history of Christianity so that exposed me to Orthodox Christianity and tracing the history of the schism and everything.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: But, it was just a revelation. And then of course when I tied into the [nineteenth century] Russian thinkers and Russian novelists, I've read almost all of the major ones [and return to some of them regularly].

Steinhoff: I hear you. This is a confirmation of the premise of co-learning and having your horizons expanded and a threshold where actually you can't unlearn that now.

Marr: No, I can't. And I wouldn't if I could.

Long before that happened, I suppose, the biggest revelation, the biggest impact [of team teaching] came when I was studying political theory and political philosophy in the '70s. And as I said, once I read Hannah Arendt I was hooked and so I studied all of that [along with the principal works of the philosophical tradition since Plato which lay behind her].

Steinhoff: Right. That's when you were working with Beryl Crowe?

Marr: Beryl Crowe primarily, yeah.

When it comes to other parts of philosophy, I'm an autodidact; I didn't learn anything particularly about the parts of philosophy that mattered to me from any of the philosophers I have taught with, it just didn't happen. I've only taught with two. And of course because of the bubble I was telling you about last time there was no awareness of the revolutions in literary theory [and] literary thought that happened in the '70s and '80s and after. I gradually caught up with that.

Steinhoff: And so you're reading of Peirce was under the sign of autodidacticism.

Marr: Yes, [mostly], I decided after reading Austin and Wittgenstein in the '80s, I had a sabbatical coming up, and that was '89, so I took two graduate seminars, one on Peirce (with John Boler) and one on Aristotle (with Marc Cohen).

Steinhoff: Okay, where was that?

Marr: The University of Washington. I commuted. So we read, by that time I had read and taught quite a bit of Plato in various programs but I had never read any Aristotle to speak of. So we read Aristotle's *Psychology* [and a fair amount of commentary on Aristotle's thought by twentieth century Anglo-American philosophers]. And then of course, as you know, there's a direct link between, as it happens, Aristotle and Peirce.

Steinhoff: Yes.

Marr: Because Peirce is a [philosophical] realist and he gets his realism from the Medieval thinkers, in particular Duns Scotus, all of whom were fundamentally influenced by Aristotle. So there was a nice convergence there.

Steinhoff: Yeah, and it helps to pick up some of the unheard music in Arendt. I mean there's explicit Aristotle references but then there is other stuff.

Marr: That's right. That's true.

Steinhoff: Even though most of it is tinged with that Heidegger flavor, there's still very key things that she's getting from Aristotle herself.

Marr: Yes, that's very true.

Steinhoff: So this is stuff that falls under the sign of the kid in the basement with the second or third biggest chemistry lab—

Marr: Fifth, probably. No, that's true.

Steinhoff: Then that material trickles down to the students, though, right? I think at one point in our first email exchange I was teaching that class called "How to do things with words?" And you were like WTF? Are you reading Austin? I taught him in my career at Evergreen. So students would then get this material from you, right? Some Peirce, some Austin, is that true?

[15:00]

Marr: Yes. I mean for example, that little piece I wrote about what exactly is a project, that's directly influenced by my understanding of Peirce. I mean it's not a Peirceian piece, it's just that the logical rigor [and conceptual clarity] found in his work influenced me. But, I always hung onto my idea of education as essentially, it has to be dialogical in a lot of ways, rather than the empty vessel needs to be filled up approach.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: And so this turned up in my individual conferences with students, turned up in learning to be a better seminar leader than I was. How to make the seminar discussion a real inquiry by all the people present rather than something that looks like a regular classroom [but is in fact a little lecture class, as I knew often happened with colleagues], but rather where they're engaged with each other and involved in a common inquiry. [That's what I'd call Peircean.]

Steinhoff: Yeah. So, what's the secret? How do you do it? What did you come to because part of this process is to actually hear your reflections as tinged by memory, but that is a piece of the craft.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: The dialogical process, to recruit everyone in the room to the inquiry.

Marr: Well for me it started with close textual analysis. That's where everything was, that was the foundation, so I would have students read aloud from the text. Let's say it's Shakespeare or Melville or Nietzsche, and then we'd go over it. I experimented for two or three years with something I called recitations. And each student was told at the beginning of the term that the seminars would be organized around recitations. Which meant that if I called on you, you would be up. Of course this scared the daylights out of many students, and it scared the daylights out of some of my colleagues because they thought, "Oh, you can't put people on the spot like that."

Steinhoff: So are they from memory reciting?

Marr: No, I'd give them a passage to read and then I would ask the student questions about it in a kind of a Socratic inquiry over what's going on it.

Steinhoff: Oh, just that it would be the two of you.

Marr: And everybody else is listening and taking notes.

Steinhoff: That's pretty tough.

Marr: It's like law school. And then once the student is off the hot seat fellow seminarians can ask the student questions and [offer] comments.

Steinhoff: Wow.

Marr: Yeah. And I felt a little bit daring in doing that but I was mightily impressed by the law school method[—and more often than not by students' performances]. A professor calls on the guy, whatever his name is, sitting according the seating chart here, and he says, "Okay, now, in Plessy vs. Ferguson what was going on? Tell us about it."

Steinhoff: Yeah, what are the four corners of the case?

Marr: That's right! Exactly. What's wrong with that? I mean you are on the hot seat, you are under pressure, some people would rather die than have to go through it, but maybe they shouldn't be there then.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: But, I understood the objections to it. And so I would ask students afterwards, in their evaluation conference, "What did you think of that? Did you think you were just being put on the spot?" And they said, "Well, it took me a while to get used to it but I realized it was great. I'm glad I did it. And the objection to it that we were too delicate and can't handle the pressure, is insulting."

Steinhoff: Well, that is the counterpoint, isn't it? They can't handle it.

Marr: They can't handle it.

Steinhoff: That chair isn't ready for you to sit on it, it's still forming.

Marr: So they thought of it, I didn't find one who said, "Am I glad that's over, I wish I'd never gone through it and I hope I never have to do it again."

Steinhoff: Sure, but they probably wouldn't say that to you.

Marr: No.

Steinhoff: But, I hear you. There's this English poet, Geoffrey Hill, who passed away a few months ago and the critics would complain, "Your poetry is too difficult." And he would say, "That's what makes it democratic. I respect my reader to understand."

Marr: I'm with him, I take that view. As my mother would say, "I didn't lick it off the ground." I learned that view from Blackmur, who was *very* concerned about the insult, the institutionalization of the contempt for the audience in American life.

Steinhoff: Insulting the students' intelligence.

Marr: Kind of like playing to their lowest, expecting nothing of them.

Steinhoff: I had a moment teaching in Lecture Hall 1 before it got reconfigured.

Marr: Oh, it did?

Steinhoff: It's in the process right now. Maybe it's been reconfigured since the M&M days, when you were down in the gladiator's pit. Multiple programs were coming together, it was "Critical and Cultural Theory," organized around keywords. Alright, all you guys are talking about ideology or hegemony, do you know what it is, do you know where it came from? Probably not, we're going to show you some ropes here. So everybody would have this keyword assignment, each faculty member. Early on a student came up to me and another member of the faculty and she said, wasn't in response to my lecture but just the sort of general tenor of the thing, she said, "You don't have to explain anything to us, you can actually just do the thing, don't talk down to us." Then she said, "When I was in high school we had a teacher who had us read Erasmus and then told us that what they were doing in their class was teaching up. Don't teach down, teach up." That was probably my third week of teaching at Evergreen and I said,

"Damn straight, I can do that. Thanks, Nina." So it's in that register of respecting the audience. Not even just the audience but your interlocutor.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: There's the further challenge though of maybe the kid can't read so well.

Marr: I know.

Steinhoff: And because of your under-enrollment crisis you actually just accepted seven students who are in this seminar and there's another 18 and they're pretty good readers, 10 of them topnotch—they'd be blowing the hats off people at Chicago or Harvard—the other rest of them muddling along just fine. Then there are those seven who actually are really struggling.

Marr: Yeah they are.

Steinhoff: How did that work? What was your experience that? I'm curious if over time did you see that become more and more of an issue, has it always been an issue? How did you handle it?

Marr: It's always an issue at this place, in my experience, it was always an issue. But, I also thought of my job as by hook or crook teaching these people to read. But, when I say these people I mean all of them because even the hotshots weren't that good.

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: And it isn't because they didn't have some fancy vocabulary that they could manipulate, it's because—who was it, one of the great Shakespearean actors, it might have been Gielgud, but I don't think so. But anyway, someone from the press corps said to him once, "Well, now that you've done Lear for 40 years, do you see more deeply into the play?" He says, "No, I see more of the play."

Steinhoff: Huh.

Marr: I mean I suppose you could just say that's a cute way of—but I don't think it's just cute, I think if you are a strong empiricist, as I tried to be, you're paying attention to everything, [to what the words are doing], trying to see more of the play and you're not trying to play little high school games about

getting [at hidden meanings] beneath the surface. It's all there. We can go into a philosophical, logical, and aesthetic analysis of what's incoherent in talking about something beneath the textual surface, but we don't need to do that. We just need to pay attention. So that's what I tried to do. It worked as well with the weaker students as I could make it work. I couldn't do any better, I mean I was very mindful of the problem all the way along though.

Steinhoff: Yeah, but I think what you're saying about teaching all the students is an important one because if you're trying to reach the full range of the persons in the room, including the ones that started reading at the age of two, or whatever, and actually arrived having read all of Shakespeare.

Marr: [laughs] Yeah.

Steinhoff: That group in fact at times I've seen they suffer from what Veblen calls "trained incapacity." They already know it all! You can't tell me what this sonnet means.

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: The other thing is, I suffer from trained incapacity because I'm totally inured to this, I've memorized this poem, I know all the tricks, I know how to make a really cool seminar with this poem, but actually that's very boring for me. I know what my job is, I want to make sure you guys learn this part and this part, but I want to set challenges that actually exist for everybody in the room so that whiz kid can learn from somebody that's just actually figured out how a poem works for the first time in their life. And it's not just this kind of hierarchy that everybody came into the room already suffering under.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: But, it's interesting to hear you say it's always been there as an issue.

Marr: Oh, yes.

Steinhoff: I'd be curious to hear about how conversations with faculty, with colleagues went, what the institutional response was as best as you can recollect, because if it is there all along, if it's chronic, that means it's part of the conversation, isn't it?

Marr: Definitely is, yeah. Well, the institutional, I'll take that part first because that's the easiest in some ways, response was to recognize that there are students who need what they [used to] call at Berkeley, subject A. So what are we going to do about that because they come here and they don't know how to read? My response to that always was, "Of course they don't know how to read. Almost *nobody* that young does." But I got nowhere with that because people were still saying, "Oh sure they do, they got A's." I said, "Come on, where do you think you are? The A that they got doesn't [necessarily] signify [proficiency in the kind of close reading required to do college work]. It *might* signify that, but you can't just assume [that it does]."[9] You know, the proof of the pudding [is in the eating], and all of that. But the institutional response was to create a writing center because if they can't read they can't write. Actually the first thing that was talked about was [not the inability to read but] the writing, they can't write.

Steinhoff: That's how it shows up, isn't it?

Marr: Yeah. I said, "Well, I know they can't write. They can't read. There's a connection." So that got invented and institutionalized. You find one at every college campus in the United States. But, I wish I could answer this in an interesting way or a better way, at least, with respect to colleagues and so on.

Steinhoff: Well it's the kind of thing that would show up in different ways in programs. "Oh my god, I thought they would have totally understood what Melville was on," or whatever, something less difficult than Melville, Kuhn or whoever, but didn't they see what Plato was trying to say?

Marr: Yes, right. Well, I don't think I [ever] taught with anybody who had that [silly, benighted] attitude.[10]

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[9] Perhaps the most risible version of the widely held assumption that students come to college already skilled in reading and writing consigns the great nineteenth century American literary canon, from Emerson and Melville to Dickinson and Twain, to the high school English class. It is as though D. H. Lawrence had never written *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) in which he demolished the myth of American literature as a children's literature. "Just childishness, on our part," he wrote. The fierce irony of that remark simply bounces off college teachers who are disappointed by the students turned out by American high schools.

[10] Richard Alexander, a planning year faculty member, once remarked in a public meeting that students are ignorant by definition. This elementary truth was met with derision by some colleagues, as though Richard had impugned students' human worth or had highhandedly dismissed their life experience.

Steinhoff: Okay.

Marr: I certainly never did. Of course they [students] didn't, they don't know Plato [or Melville, or Shakespeare, or Dickinson, or any other complex thinker].

Steinhoff: Or, the other part would be they didn't even read it.

Marr: Oh, well, yes.

Steinhoff: It's clear from the conversation that half of them hadn't even read it.

Marr: I put a stop to that right away because you [couldn't] get in the door if you [hadn't] read it and [were prepared to] show, prove you [had] read it.

Steinhoff: What's the proof?

Marr: A piece of writing.

Steinhoff: Got it. How long?

Marr: Towards the end I was having them write for 15 or 20 minutes at the beginning of [the first seminar for the week].

Steinhoff: Okay. That you would then get?

Marr: Yes, we'd read [aloud two or three of them, volunteered by the authors] in the seminar.

Steinhoff: Well, I was just going to say when you were telling—

Marr: You can't write that thing if you haven't read the Kuhn, or whatever it is. It's just not possible.

Steinhoff: So what would the prompt be to get that writing going?

Marr: I would usually use a piece of text. I would write a little, you know, it looked like this basically. [Draws on pad] One sheet, here we go.

Steinhoff: Here's a little block of text.

Marr: Here's text, and on the same piece of paper, not some other piece of paper, they write [in response to the question I put].

Steinhoff: Do you have any of these still?

Marr: Oh, yeah.

Steinhoff: I'd *love* to see some of that.

Marr: There's nothing to it.

Steinhoff: Oh, I'm sure.

Marr: It's just the essence of simplicity, but this could just be an exchange between Romeo and Juliet that takes six lines.

Steinhoff: Sure. What would a question be, for instance?

Marr: Well, [first] I'll tell you what it wouldn't be, it wouldn't be a factual question or one to which mine was the only right answer, and it wouldn't be "comment." [It would be a question answerable only in terms of clear reasoning and textual evidence.] I'd isolate a conflict, maybe outline it, one sentence, and then ask them to examine it.[11]

[11] In the Addendum I include, at Eirik's request, examples of these exercises, which I called exams. Here is one:

> 20 min. No books, notes or computer. Please print or write clearly on this sheet.
>
> Write on 1 or 2:
>
> 1. Lisa says to Alyosha, "Listen, your brother is being tried now for murdering his father and everyone loves his having killed his father." She explains: "Yes, loves it, everyone loves it! Everyone says it's so awful, but secretly they simply love it. I for one love it." Alyosha says there's truth in what she says. Then Lisa tells Alyosha of her dream about devils in which, though she repels them, she also feels an urge "to revile God aloud" and does so. Alyosha says he's had the same dream. After Alyosha leaves, Lisa slams the door behind him, then reopens it.
>
> [She] put her finger in the crack and slammed the door with all her might, pinching her finger. Ten seconds afterward, releasing her finger, she walked softly, slowly to her chair, sat up straight in it and looked intently at her blackened finger and at the blood that oozed from under the nail. Her lips were quivering and she kept whispering rapidly to herself:
>
> "I am a wretch, wretch, wretch, wretch!"
>
> Why does Lisa love "it"? Why does she smash her finger? If you hypothetically erased this scene with Alyosha and the finger-smashing (followed by "wretch!") from *The Brothers Karamazov*, would anything of importance to your understanding of the form and content of the novel be lost?
>
> 2. "I am not the real murderer, though I did kill him," Smerdyakov says to Ivan. "You are the rightful murderer." Explain.

Steinhoff: Having gone through the analytical.

Marr: A little bit, yeah. Or it could be, I never liked "comment" very much because it was too open ended, but like it could be something as devilishly difficult—I'm glad I never was asked this—I'd say, "This takes place in scene two. How is it prepared for in scene one?"

Steinhoff: Yes. Ha ha.

Marr: Or something like connect.

Steinhoff: Extrapolate the pattern, other parts of the text, or when you're later in the quarter the curriculum that we've encountered thus far.

Marr: You can work it at any level. So when you do this, and you've got 20 students doing this, then we'd build our discussion [of the text for the day] around that. And so I would give student number one, I'd just pick somebody or they'd volunteer, and then I'd ask them, "Well, does anybody else see it a different way? Or, did anyone else come up with something different, and why?" That's all, basically, that I did.

Steinhoff: This is the recitation except done on material.

Marr: It is[, though as I said the recitation was centered on the text]. Maybe a little less terrifying.

Steinhoff: A little less terrifying and you get to nail *all of them* at once. And then would you collect these at the end?[12]

Marr: Oh yes, and I'd read them, and I'd comment briefly [in writing]on them.

Steinhoff: That's the key.

Marr: And when it worked the best, it always worked well I thought, but when it worked the best is when there would be a toe-to-toe conflict between two people over this thing they have in common. So, that's what I did.

Steinhoff: Nice. Is there a name for this?

[12] During the twenty minutes when the students were writing, I would be writing my own answer.

Marr: What did I call it? I should look that up. This is slipping away from me. [I called them exams.]

Steinhoff: I realize I'm grilling you a little bit, this is lovely to hear actually, I'll ask for that to add to my repertoire.

Marr: Students' default conception of the seminar is it's a bull session [with a college name]. I had one last night in the dorm room. [But of course A seminar is] *not* a bull session, and it is not a mere exchange of opinions or grievances. It's an exchange of [observations of the text] and [hypotheses and] arguments [based on that close study]. And the center of an argument is the reasoning and the evidence, and in this class evidence is in the text. That more or less summarizes it. I don't care what you think about what's going on in Syria, I don't care what you think about anything, I care what you think about this [the text, and why you think it] .

Steinhoff: Exactly, this thing we have in common.

Marr: The thing we have in common. Now, if the thing we have in common is some news piece from something going on in Syria, that's up to the teacher to figure that out.

Steinhoff: It can be the hottest topic on earth.

Marr: That's right, it could be red hot.

Steinhoff: But the point is we're actually going to constrain ourselves. And there could well be reasons to raise objections. Actually what we've constrained ourselves to is including this, but you're making an argument about what's being included or what's left out.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: It's the law school piece again where there's the training around creating a common grammar or a common form in which to exchange just what it is that you think or can do.

Marr: If in answering the professor's questions about the case, the [student] says, "And by the way, I think [the Court's decision] is bullshit." The professor is going to say, well, who cares what you think about it? That's not part of the deal here. You can tell somebody that out in the hallway if you want to.[13]

Steinhoff: Yeah. But it also strikes me that as you're describing one of the consequences of this, and also one of the principles of this way of teaching is that in thinking about Evergreen needs a theory of knowledge which is about unifying, so it's less about interdisciplinary unification and it's more about let's have a common object of inquiry rather than a sort of fragmented, "I heard on Fox News," or, "I heard on NPR," or whatever. Let's work on this common object of inquiry, with the tools and the muscles we've been building in this class together.

Marr: Right. And what that helps to do, and I found that it works without exception, is that some students' natural proclivity to channel authorities, "Well, Noam Chomsky said . . .," is [put to the side]. What we're talking about here is how well *you* can make an argument and what kind of power of analysis *you* can bring to the text.

Steinhoff: Exactly. And maybe there's a skill that is worth learning which is okay on day one we're going to do the Noam Chomsky chunk, and then on day two we're going to do the Michel Foucault chunk, and then on day three we're going to do the crazy thing which is put them in conversation.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: And what are *you* going to say to Noam and to Michel, and why?

Marr: And why?

Steinhoff: And then on the next day you're going to have to argue against yourself. That's the law school piece.

Marr: I agree.

[13] Unless, that is, it is understood by all to be part of the deal. If it is, then the elucidation of "I think it's bullshit" will be part of the recitation.

Steinhoff: But, to be able to do that flexibly.

Marr: You've got it. That's right. One of the beautiful advantages of starting off the year with Plato is that if you begin with the *Meno*, the *Meno* or something like that you can [through Platonic drama] introduce the distinction between opinion and knowledge [to clear the seminar air of opining, making room for inquiry] without sacrificing passion.

Steinhoff: Indeed. Order without foreclosure.

Marr: Yes, because you don't want to kill it of course, but you can't just let it…

Steinhoff: That free for all, the bull session. That's actually a waste of everybody's time.

Marr: It is.[14]

Steinhoff: This is fascinating. So then, were other people doing things like this that you knew? I'm curious in terms of, "Marr's got that trick." And then somebody picks it up once they see how you do it?

Marr: Not that I know of. I mean I did teach with some people where I would tell them this is what I do and I think some of them [tried out their own versions].

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: But, I don't know. It wasn't something that got, I didn't advertise it or anything.

Steinhoff: Yeah, this goes to one of the things on the last or second to last page of the second "M&M," skills sharing, mentoring. I think to this day that remains something that is needed. Especially as new generations come in as students still trained in completely different kinds of departmental configurations, not American studies but cultural studies, not feminism but queer studies. A lot of

[14] I never felt it necessary to say to students the following: "If you have more important things to do than to prepare for each seminar as thoroughly as you can, then by all means you should do those things. On any given day each of us could well have more important things to do. But once inside this seminar room, with your classmates and me, the only thing that matters is our work together. Enter with that understanding." The direction at the top of each exam sheet—No books, notes or computer—and the prohibition on the use of cell phones during seminar discussions distilled key elements of these conditions, which were also set out in the catalog description of the program, in my summer letter to registered students and in the syllabus.

transformations but still by-and-large subject matter, not how to teach, or if it's people are learning how to teach it's often separated from subject matter.

Marr: I know, it's maddening. It's just crazy. And it doesn't work. I don't know when we're going to learn that it doesn't work [regarding teaching as a learnable technique isolated from subject matter].

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: How much more evidence do we need?

Steinhoff: I know. I'll tell you after the academic retreat because I'm going to be doing something with another member of the faculty as a way of reflecting on what are our tricks, what are our tools? How do we use them, how can we share them, how can we make sure that students understand just what it is we're trying to do? The school has a hard time collecting data, as you're well aware.

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: So the one thing that comes up is students wander off and disappear, and when they get found again or interviewed they say, "You know what, I couldn't understand why I was doing all of this stuff. None of it added up. I didn't connect the dots."

Marr: Right. I think one of the big innovators here along these lines was Don Finkel. And his methods did gain currency [in parts of] the college. He introduced this idea of workshops, you probably know about this.

Steinhoff: I've heard about this but I'm curious to hear your perspective.

Marr: I taught with Don for three years so I know all about workshops [both strengths and weaknesses]. I suppose what I was just describing to you was indebted to some extent to workshops. Basically it works like this, you describe a problem [that requires you] to find the derivative, and then you produce a series of leading questions, down to 10, and you ask them to answer these questions about the problem.

Steinhoff: Individually?

Marr: No, you divide them into little groups. Let's say groups of four, he liked four. And they can be self-selecting, these groups, or they can [be formed by counting] off in the full group [so that you end up with x number of groups of four]. And you give the groups the worksheet with the problem outlined and the questions, then you [have them] run off [to] find a place to work, come back in 45 minutes, and then [return and reform as the full group].

Steinhoff: So each group has these 10 questions?

Marr: Has exactly the same thing. They all come back for the group session and the results from each group of four are reported out. And then of course there's an opportunity for discussion. So if you've got five groups of four, you've got five reports, each one gets five minutes to report. You can organize it and it's very easy to do. This was very good, I thought, in its way. I don't mean to make a back-handed compliment by saying it like that, but it was especially good in everything, I thought, but literary texts. It was really good in math and science. [It was also useful in conceptual analysis, such as getting students] to understand something about the Freudian concept of ambivalence. [The point of the workshop would be to enable students to *discover* the meaning of that concept by working their way through the questions.]

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: [Don's workshops were useful in teaching] subject matters that lend themselves to being thought of as problems. Where [they didn't] work, at least I wasn't been able to make [them]work, and he never tried to make [them] work apparently because he wasn't interested, is [in the recognition and evaluation of] tone, the idea of tone in a literary work. It's much more likely you could [design a workshop on the basic architecture of] narrative method.

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: If you have a very intricate narrative method on display in a particular novel that you're reading you could work up something around that.

Steinhoff: Right, *Ulysses*, you have the group go off about chapters, separate them out and have the same questions. That could produce something.

Marr: That could produce, yes.

Steinhoff: But tone, I hear you.

Marr: It's tough, it's too subtle or something or too auditory or too aural or something, I don't know.

Steinhoff: With tone there's a kind of epistemological consequence to missing it.

Marr: Yeah! (laughs) You've got it, you miss [the tone and] you miss everything in a lot of ways. [It's in fact unignorable in all writing save, perhaps, technical writing. And sooner than later any analysis of narrative method in prose fiction takes you to tone since they're mutually constitutive.]

Steinhoff: Yeah. Interesting. So you say you taught with Don Finkel three times?

Marr: Yeah, middle-'70s [the first time], god I taught with four psychologists, Diana Cushing, Richard Jones, Don Finkel and me, three psychologists. And then I taught with him again in a program called "Unmasking the Social World." Which was basically, well, it was a combination of neo-Marxist theory, Arendt, and literary works.

Steinhoff: Was Crowe part of that?

Marr: No, it was just Don and I.

Steinhoff: Okay, I think you mentioned Arendt in relation to that last time.

Marr: Yeah, Don had never read any Arendt or Nietzsche and I hadn't read Freud systematically enough so I got that from him (along with Dewey's ideas on education), and he got Arendt and Nietzsche from me.

Steinhoff: Nice

Marr: And then of course Horkheimer and Adorno.

Steinhoff: Sure.

Marr: That was fun. But he had this thing that he used that no one else used because I don't think anyone else could have brought it off, it was called a "self-reflective group." This was a separate seminar within the program, or two of them in this case, because there were two of us teaching together, in addition to the regular seminar each of us led. The self-reflective group had its own reading list. [Don's design of the SRG, as we called it,] was somewhat fiendish actually. He and I would sit at the head of the table and we wouldn't say anything. And it was a [two-hour] social psychology exercise. And sooner or later someone wouldn't be able to stand it any longer and they'd start talking, [usually about the book for the day, as though out of desperation.] [Don and I] would [continue to say nothing]. The authority structure was such that of course they wanted us to say something. They wanted to stop the arguments [over the book or each other] that had broken out. They wanted us to bring order. They wanted us to tell them what they were doing here. And we would just sit there.

Steinhoff: What year was this now?

Marr: 1982-83, I think it was. But then seemingly at random—and this I'm sure drove some students crazy—one or the other of us would [suddenly] intervene. We'd just say something that we thought was penetrating about what had been going on, and then fall silent.

Steinhoff: Wow.

Marr: And this went on for two hours.

Steinhoff: This is that teaching with your mouth shut model, but without the infrastructure.

Marr: Yeah [,one version or aspect of that model]. It was fun, but it was fun in a kind of perverse way. I mean, for me it was fun. And I think the students picked up on the perversity of it too as [over time] they developed a kind of loyalty to their group, to each other.

Steinhoff: Interesting.

Marr: And a kind of sense of solidarity with them. But to them it was absolutely incomprehensible what it was all about. We feel this way but what are we feeling this way about? It was weird[ly satisfying].

Steinhoff: I can imagine.

End of Part 1

Beginning of Part 2

Steinhoff: I feel like we're at cruising altitude. We've got a lot of stuff, I mean we already had a lot of stuff down. I don't think I realized that you taught that many times with Don Finkel.

Marr: Yeah. Don Finkel, I taught one more time after "Unmasking the Social World," it was a kind of a great books program, later. One last thing about the self-reflective group that might tickle you. When it started, first week or two, it was just a matter of time before someone would come up to us and say, "What are you writing down?" Because we were always writing notes. They were talking, we were ignoring them—we weren't exactly ignoring them, but we weren't speaking. "What are you writing there? Can we see what you're writing?" "No, you can't see what I'm writing." Everyone took no for an answer. Typically there was only one person in the group who would ask that. And the social psychology principle at stake there, as I understand it, is that he probably speaks for many [in the group by daring to speak up].

Steinhoff: Right. Interesting. So this is part of that experimental collaborative quality—you wouldn't have done this on your own, I take it?

Marr: I'd never heard of it before.

Steinhoff: You were happy to do the recitation, but this isn't something you weren't going to do. Who talked you into it?

Marr: [Don talked me into doing the SRG. The recitations and the exams that I was describing earlier came much later . . .,] during my last 20-25 years.

Steinhoff: Got it. So there's another 15 years of building up to this, trying other things.

Marr: Building up to it, yes. So I taught with Don [in three yearlong programs]. And then in between the second and third times there was a rather large hiring that went on, middle-'80s. And along comes a guy by the name of Tom Grissom, a physicist. He and I taught together [in three yearlong programs], once with Don Finkel, [then with Sandie Nisbet, and finally] Tom and I alone.

Steinhoff: I see, so he was a new hire?

Marr: He was a new hire. He was an extraordinary fellow. One of the two or three colleagues from whom I've learned the most. You can actually read his story, it's a very abbreviated form of it, but in one of Studs Terkel's books. Tom had [been] a section leader I think it was called, or division leader, at Sandia National Laboratory. So he spent his life as a physicist making [thermonuclear] bombs and then in 1985 he walked away. Only I think two have done so, ever. He's from [the] Mississippi [delta,] a Mississippi story-teller. He was quite interested [in literature and philosophy] and he had begun to develop [his] interest in literature both in his own writing, he wrote poetry and some fiction, and then [further] in the program he and I taught together [1998-99] called "American Fictions" [nineteenth and twentieth century American prose fiction]. But we hit it off very well. I don't know if you have any special place in your heart for physics and math but I've noticed that in the prose style of the great physicists that I've read there is a tradition. When they are writing about something for a popular audience they are the very definition of lucidity. They are really good. And they all sound alike. Tom writes like Freeman Dyson, or Freeman Dyson writes like Tom, I don't know which. But they're just uncluttered, unflappable, coherent, lucid. [Our work together made me regard Tom as representing a significant challenge to C. P. Snow's] two cultures [thesis].

Steinhoff: Yeah, the C.P. Snow model. So they don't have, they're not transmitting tone.

Marr: They respond to it, but they don't—I don't know how to put it any better than that. If [Tom weren't responding] to it [tone] he wouldn't have the connection to Dostoyevsky or Melville or the Greek dramatists that he has.

Steinhoff: Indeed. Was C.P. Snow something that was in the air or that was operative for you—this way of conceiving that relationship?

Marr: I first came across the C.P. Snow controversy when I was a freshman in college.

Steinhoff: There you go. That was what, '59?

Marr: No, '61. I'm sorry, the controversy?

Steinhoff: You were a freshman in '61 but I think that was first published in '59.

Marr: I think it was.

Steinhoff: So that was hot news.

Marr: That was hot news [to educated people but not to me], and I didn't really know what the hell I was reading when I read it [Snow's lecture]. But I somehow got [to it in my] freshman English class and I ended up saying something about it [before the class]. It's one of those things—I'm sure you've had this experience—you think you understand something, and then 25 years later you say, "I didn't understand it at all, but now I do."

Steinhoff: Oh, sure.

Marr: I maybe should have kept my mouth shut. (laughing)

Steinhoff: Right. As long as it wasn't being recorded.

Marr: As far as I know.

Steinhoff: Did you teach that?

Marr: No, but if you were to talk about the C.P. Snow controversy in the '60s everybody knew basically what it was. *Two Cultures*[—the sciences versus humanities].

If I had to make a list of the faculty members that have affected me the most, I know that's the spirit of one of the questions, Tom would be one of them.

Steinhoff: Tom.

Marr: Tom, Don Finkel, Beryl Crowe, [Hiro Kawasaki, Judith Espinola, Jeanne Hahn], Tom Rainey.

Steinhoff: He's [Rainey] a pretty tall guy himself, isn't he? I met him at graduation for the first time.

Marr: Did you?

Steinhoff: I'm just picturing the two of you, is this the basketball team here?[15]

Marr: And of course Sam Schrager.

Steinhoff: Schrager as well.

Marr: Oh yeah.

Steinhoff: Let's get to him in a moment, I'm curious to hear a little more about Tom Grissom though. So you taught with him [three times]. Was he the one that you did some math with?

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: This is also another surface area that's getting expanded and exposed.

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: Math being one of the hurdles you'd encountered with chemistry back in the day.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: Back in the day.

Marr: Well in this program we taught together[in the early '90s] called, "And now, the 21st Century." That was kind of a great books program but with a science, recent history and modern drama focus. So he taught the physics. And of course it was non-laboratory physics, it was chaos theory [and non-linear equations], it was quantum mechanics, it was the Manhattan Project. Stuff that the reasonably curious, hardworking student could actually understand without having [a science major's math background] and would actually get something out of it. We taught with Sandie Nisbet so we had a lot of plays. Some novels. Just one of those combos that you get at Evergreen.

[15] It was obvious to Evergreeners once classes began in 1971 that there were more jocks on the faculty than among the students—this, solely on the strength of a couple of touch football game during the first retreat in July and the conspicuous indifference of the students to athletics.

Steinhoff: Sure. That was going to be one of my questions, did you ever work with a scientist?[16] And here we've got one. Not just a person who professes science but one who is actually engaged in avant-garde, industrial, war-machine making.

Marr: Exactly right.

Steinhoff: Application. So what generation was he?

Marr: Well as I understand it the bomb scientists at Manhattan were generation one, then there's [the second] generation, the ones under the guidance of Edward Teller in the '50s [and early '60s].

Steinhoff: H-bomb.

Marr: I think [Tom's] would be the third generation.

Steinhoff: So is he a little younger than you?

Marr: No, he's a little older.

Steinhoff: A little older, right, that's how that works. Of course.

Marr: I think that's pretty close to the way I would—

Steinhoff: Okay, so he actually had a very—if he started teaching at Evergreen, when, in the '80s?

Marr: About '85. He taught here for the better part of 20 years.

Steinhoff: Amazing. Is he still around?

Marr: Oh yeah, he lives in Albuquerque. We stay in touch. He's quite a guy. He's an archer, he wrote a book on archery. When he [retired from] Evergreen he had something like 13 [self-publishing] book contracts [in the works, fiction and poetry]. I was a dean at the time he was hired, he came in for his interview and he brought with him this gigantic three-ring binder. It was about this thick [gestures to indicate a 6 inch-thick binder] of patents, his own patents.

Steinhoff: That's amazing.

[16] Dave Barry, a biologist and Evergreen's first Provost, was the other scientist I taught with, in a mid-seventies program called "Backgrounds of America's Future," after Barry had been eased out.

Marr: That was interesting.

Steinhoff: That's right, you were dean in mid-'80s.

Marr: '84 to '87.

Steinhoff: Yeah. How was that?

Marr: I didn't like it much. I mean I was given two specific assignments and I was interested in both of them. One of them was the evaluation of Basic programs, and the other was a disproportionate load of faculty evaluations. So I figured, okay, a deal is a deal, that's what I will mainly do. But then if you're a dean you have all sorts of this other stuff.

Steinhoff: Other things. Dog catcher…

Marr: Oh god, brush fires. My wife might tell you that I'm a little bit rigid. I said I have these two things, and I'll do as little of this other as I can get away with, and I did. But three years were enough.

Steinhoff: Were you put up to it? Or did you think this is something I want to try?

Marr: It was something I wanted to try.

Steinhoff: So Basic programs, would that be first year?

Marr: First year, yeah.

Steinhoff: So how did you do with those tasks?

Marr: I think I did all right. I evaluated 60 faculty members in three years.

Steinhoff: *That's* a lot of work.

Marr: That's a lot of work, and I wrote big, long evaluations.

Steinhoff: I was just going to say that your first three-year review comes to four volumes. Anyway, I'm just curious. That's a *lot* of work. Also, you're loquacious, I mean every word is carefully selected and therefore purposed, but you're also a critic. Rigid, but the part I would say was honest. How on earth did you manage that? I mean in this day and age anyway there's a really a culture of congratulation in terms of these evaluations, much more so than—"This part didn't work very well, this part was very good." I

can understand for sure why that is, and I'm not sufficiently experienced to be a full skeptic about that, but there's something lost in not having all the information in front of us when we're having that exchange. I'm curious how you managed that.

Marr: It was a different structure then in several respects. One is that there was the portfolio system. Faculty members were required to keep portfolios with all the relevant documentation in them [self- and colleague evaluations, deans' evaluations, evaluations of students, students 'evaluations of the faculty member, etc.]. The dean [to whose dean's group one was assigned] kept a portfolio too, and not just the portfolio that he or she had [kept as] a faculty member. And in this portfolio would be found the dean's evaluation exchanges with other faculty members. [The portfolio system, then, was a portfolio circulation system.] So faculty members were—they weren't afraid of being evaluated, but what they most wanted to read was in the [dean's] portfolio [which included evaluations by and from the dean and faculty members].

Steinhoff: Sure. Their colleagues are being evaluated, of course.

Marr: Yeah. And when that went by the boards, that was a big loss at Evergreen [, a loss of social glue].

Steinhoff: Right, because that makes you responsible as the author.

Marr: That's right. [As dean] I can't just be a [stand-in for a tyrannical department chairman] but have to give a fair assessment of what I found and of course that means what I read in the portfolio but also what I found when I visited their class. It was like the visiting principal. So there was that.

Steinhoff: What's the evidence for your argument?

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: And also who is the audience? Not just the person who is being evaluated, but other members of the community.

Marr: And I think that the faculty members who would look at what the dean said about their colleagues and what other colleagues said about the dean, because there were no punches that were

pulled as far as I could see. You would learn things about teaching, you really would because of the bubble I was talking about, I'm going to get crazy with this [bubble] metaphor, but it comes in different kinds. Yes, there was co-teaching, there was team teaching, but rarely did faculty members teach together in the same room, in the [same] seminar I mean.

Steinhoff: Of course not, you've got your flock of 20 and I've got mine.

Marr: Yeah, that's right. So you do get together in big [program] meetings and that's good, but still there remains this little encapsulated—who knows what's going on in that seminar room.

Steinhoff: Silos.

Marr: Silos.

Steinhoff: Or sub-compartments or what have you. This [the portfolio system] is a way to pick up some news, get some info.

Marr: That's right. And I did come across some interesting discoveries when I'd visit seminars because I would always read the book [which was up for discussion on that day]. If I'm going to visit your class for the purposes of your evaluation it's not going to be like watching television. If you're reading Melville that day, I will read Melville for that day. So part of my work as a dean was to read all of this stuff.

Steinhoff: Participant observation.

Marr: That's right [,though I never spoke unless asked by the faculty member or a student]. Because how in the hell am I going to assess your ability as a seminar leader if I don't know what you're talking about? It's just the visiting principal all over again, and I at least didn't want that.

Steinhoff: I regret to say that I actually asked the dean that visited me most recently to please read. I said, you don't *have* to but here's the text by Roman Jakobson that we're reading.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: We're talking about the poetic principle and you might find it of interest. I realize you're a biologist, however, just FYI, this is what we're doing.

Marr: Good for you, but I think it should just go without saying that the dean does not step across that threshold unless he's as prepared by reading the book, or whatever it is, as anyone else that's in the room.

Steinhoff: I think one thing those deans need, for sure, is just more resources. As to what you're talking about, the brush fires and all the other things, the gales of pressure and different vectors.

Marr: I know. I'd argue with the other deans. I'd say you have to read the book. And they said, "Oh no, we don't have time."

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: I said, "Well then it's nonsense."

Steinhoff: I can see why you were dean but once given how seriously you took the charge. And also the focus that you brought to the position because it actually seems like a space that demands a multitasker. Also the other part about you don't have that much power relative to the funding thing.

Marr: Yeah. And when it came to faculty evaluation—Barbara Smith was one of my fellow deans. One year two members of a faculty team that had three or four faculty members in it came to us [at the start of fall quarter] and said, "Okay, is this the year you're going to do something about Bill Brown?"

And I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "You know what we're talking about. He doesn't do any work. He's lazy. And he's on our team."

And I said, "If you give me the documentary [evidence of his incompetence] I'll do it."

So the school year began, and [when] evaluation time came around they wrote their evaluation letters that said that we don't think that this guy should be reappointed because, and they gave their reasons[—a fully documented case for firing]. I was the dean that received that stuff and so I had to tell [Bill Brown] we're not going to recommend that you be reappointed. Barbara Smith, to her credit, she was involved in this too. She was very good friends with him, but she said, "Yep, this is right." Well, he

challenged it and that broke the bubble that surrounded us [in isolation] from the outside world of [by then established] case law on faculty appointments.

Steinhoff: Right, around the tenure thing. I see.

Marr: Because he had been here forever. We went through the formal appeal process within the college. I wrote that stuff and then got the arbiter and it went to a higher authority. But in the course of [this process] the assistant attorney general [assigned to Evergreen] told [us], "You guys are out of date. He may deserve firing but you can't fire him because he has a stake in his position according to the case law." Okay. And that then led to a big DTF that overhauled the whole faculty evaluation process. [The] system you have now [provides for] various gradations of faculty. All of this kind of faculty portfolio stuff [appears to have become] less and less relevant. Your faculty portfolio is quite relevant, of course it is. But the dean's portfolio, that's suddenly gone [, and gone with it a vital piece of the social fabric, I'd say].

Steinhoff: Right, the culture of congratulation emerges. I was going to ask what did Bob Brown teach, but I guess I should ask what didn't Bob Brown teach?

Marr: Yeah, Bill Brown. What helped to make it a little bit complicated was that he was black. He was a geographer, and he was married to the dean of the library, to Jovana Brown. They're both dead now, they both died on the same day a couple years ago. So, that's how that came out.

Steinhoff: Interesting. That sounds like high stakes, high pressure and major consequence actually.

Marr: It was a major consequence, big change at Evergreen.

Steinhoff: One of those formal negations that is no longer operative: "no rank."

Marr: That's right. In 1973 Sid White, who was an artist [and art historian], and I started a little magazine called *Evergreen Symposium*. And we [invited] Charlie [McCann] and other people write for it. Well, Charlie only wrote for it once. But, he said in the piece that he wrote—no wait, that's not true. He didn't say it in that piece. He said it in something else he wrote, it was for an outside publication. It was

an article he wrote called, “Academic Administration without Departments at The Evergreen State College.” And what he said in that was that we know how to hire but we don’t know how to fire.

Steinhoff: Interesting.

Marr: Anybody who is a department head or dean outside of Evergreen who read that article would [have said] well of course you don’t, you don’t have departments. Look at your title, that’s what departments do, they hire and fire and occasionally the dean intervenes whatever the case may be.

Steinhoff: So I’m curious to hear your broader reflections on this structural issue. It’s a quality control question and also a responsibility question. In what ways might this structure get abused? That’s putting it very harshly, but I’m curious to hear your perspective on this question of responsibility.

Marr: Well, I think the old system, the one I outlined, was weak. It was kind of like the Articles of Confederation, it began with [was founded on] friendship, and friendship above everything. So it’s true, yes these three-year contracts were supposed to be renewed but the renewals were pro forma, [almost] no one had gotten fired. So is that right? Is it realistic to think that any institution can make no errors in hiring? Well, anyway, it was weak and something had to be done. What was done, the merits of what was actually put in its place I don’t know what to say about that. If you say there’s a culture of congratulations now I think what it was before was a culture of “I won’t say anything bad about you in writing. If I have anything to say when our team gets together and we talk it out, if I have anything to complain [about] that I haven’t already complained about, we’ll deal with it then [in a team meeting]. But we’re not going to put it down in black and white, we’re not stupid.” But I don’t think that obtains much. I mean that wouldn’t be an accurate description of what goes on now, would it?

Steinhoff: I think it is. Absolutely. The bad stuff isn’t getting written down. But I’m also thinking about your first three-year portfolio where you actually are critical of yourself. I’m also thinking about some of the stuff that shows up in the Richard Jones book [*Experiment at Evergreen*]. Some of it might even be with you where maybe he’s quoting an evaluation that you’d written of him. He’s got some faculty peer-

to-peer where there is some pretty solid critique being offered. With care and with real investment, "You're a good teacher, I'm going to tell you what happened in that lecture. Or why that seminar collapsed." Or you're going to analyze why did my seminar collapse? That seminar imploded and you were going to actually take the trouble to write seven more paragraphs about it.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: For your dean. That's not going on now. I can say that for sure. And I made the mistake of actually doing some evaluating of myself and of some people I was teaching with and realizing, "Oh, I can't share this." Because I'd been reading your stuff. This is not 1972. I also don't have tenure nor am I on the tenure track, I'm just going to be a little more strategic here.

Marr: That does worry me. I was just lucky that I came here when I did and it didn't even cross my mind not to offend people. [Uppermost in my mind was to work well in a team of colleagues who got along and were serious about our work.] I'm generally nice enough[, I suppose]; I'm not a pain in the ass as a rule. I mean I don't go around [deliberately] offending people, but I didn't have any fear that I might say something or piss somebody off and it might come back on me and pretty soon I'll be out looking for a job. *Absolutely* not.

Steinhoff: Right. And that's in part a consequence of having strong colleagues, good colleagues, being in a space where you understood that you could be heard.

Marr: Yeah. And there really was a widespread ethos of: "Let's speak our own minds here. Let's do it."

Steinhoff: Right, let's have that courage of speech.

Marr: Psshh. It's much more admirable to be courageous at some other place than it would be at Evergreen. It was just near expected to speak your own mind and not to be thought of as being courageous in doing so.

Steinhoff: Precisely.

Marr: You just do it. I mean if I were teaching at the University of Minnesota and I wanted to make sure that I didn't get turned down for tenure, I have no reason to think I wouldn't be just as careful as I would need to be, I mean it just depends.

Steinhoff: This raises a question. Were you ever curious about what else is going on out there, where else might I teach? Or were you like, oh, thank heavens this place is here because I might have been out in the woods otherwise.

Marr: Actually the answer is yes to both of those. I often did think of trying to get out and going somewhere else. But, you know, I didn't know if the Titanic was going to sink. But I thank the colleagues that mattered to me the most to leave with me the belief that this is really worth doing. So it really came down to that.

Steinhoff: Right, I get that. Sure. So there's an element of just practicality, there's some kids—

Marr: Oh god yes, that's for sure.

Steinhoff: And that's the real responsibility.

Marr: I think too that most of us sensed that you just don't build a new college overnight, it takes a while. Even if it doesn't take 300 years [as] Charlie McCann said it would. Come on, Charlie, not 300, can you get [it] down to maybe 75? He wouldn't budge.

Steinhoff: Yeah. You think you built a college? Not you singular, but plurally, what's your sense at this point? Here were are [at the] 50th anniversary within the next couple years, it's going to be talked about, and what is your sense?

Marr: I have to hedge a little because I've been more and more out of touch with what's [been] going on [since I retired in 2011].[17]

Steinhoff: Sure.

[17] I retired from full time teaching in 2008, then taught three one-quarter programs (2009-11) on a post-retirement contract.

Marr: When I have gotten back into touch periodically over the last five years, which is maybe three times or something, I've been discouraged. I would have wanted to see more reckless abandon, less self-congratulation. "We're doing everything fine. Make sure you tell the new presidential candidates how wonderful we are." I [was struck by how widespread that sentiment is and found it] disheartening because it seemed to signify complacence. It [Evergreen] should be more wild and wooly, whatever that might mean. I mean, Charlie once said Evergreen was never meant to be an experimental college, it was meant to be an alternative college. And to him the difference there was very large. Definitely an alternative [in which, of course, there are experiments of various kinds in teaching styles, curricular design, administration], hence all the "no's," right?

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: But, not experimental in the sense that, I'm not sure what he meant actually, where anything goes. What I worry about now is that Evergreen may have produced a great number of self-appointed full professors, with the comparatively light teaching load that goes with that rank. Related to this is the steady decline, evident for at least twenty years, in team-teaching. That structure has built into it the vitally important practices of serious self-evaluation and serious colleague evaluation, along with the faculty seminar. I hope I'm wrong about all this. Because if these things fall away, what remains may or may not be any good but it is hard for me to know, too see what is "alternative" [about it].

Steinhoff: I think the catchphrase now on the website says "progressive."

Marr: Yeah, I don't go with that. I don't like political terminology being applied to a college. I'm very much old school in that regard. [I wonder if "Smugly Progressive" would be more honest.]

Steinhoff: I don't think the marketing team had a political ideology in mind. Although, that's how I and folks I've spoken with hear it.

Marr: Well, the questions on the sheet repeat the term "social justice" four or five times. I don't think that the aim of the college should be to train students to be international change-agents, as a colleague

once recommended. I don't think so. I don't think that should be the purpose of it. But if it is to be the purpose, or one purpose, then something is going to have to be done beforehand overcome the historical illiteracy of Evergreen graduates bent on such a mission.[18]

I guess a more specific answer to your question has to do with the [drastic] decline of the humanities [at Evergreen]. I've spent a lot of time, as most people educated in these fields have done, paying attention to outside-the-bubble events. I know pretty well what the history of the humanities has been in higher education in the last century. Evergreen has lost a huge number of people in the humanities over the past twenty years. In the early years, Evergreen arguably had too many faculty members with graduate humanities degrees, especially in English. And now the opposite [is the case]. This change at Evergreen has taken place against the backdrop of a national decline and simultaneous transformation of the humanities and the rise to ever greater prominence of STEM fields as well as, of course, business . What is a liberal arts college today under these conditions? is the [obvious] question. And that question in turn is not so indirectly connected to graduation requirements and distribution requirements. And once you take up these questions you're back into the whole business of what we mean by "alternative college."

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: It seems built into Evergreen periodically to hash over this question of institutional identity or self-definition. But it just seems to me if you look at the faculty roster [and the curriculum], and you pick out the people who—let's just take the field of history, how many people with doctorates in history do we have? And even more precisely, how much of the curriculum is historical—real history, not the past presented as a melodrama of Victims and Oppressors? And I think the answers will be sobering.

[18] Historical illiteracy, both cause and consequence of the radical presentness and tendentiousness infusing much of the curriculum, desolates students' and teachers' capacity for self-criticism. Serious study in the liberal arts, especially in history, philosophy and literature, can nourish that capacity.

These are empirical questions that have empirical answers and we can just look at the faculty composition and the curriculum and find out. And you can do the same for the other mainstays of the humanities—philosophy and literature, and languages, of course. There's a present tense orientation in the curriculum which I find alarming. We, at least in the first 30 years, taught some Plato, and Locke and Hobbes, within and in addition to the history of the modern world. We should have done much more. To do even less, as seems to be the case now, only guts the liberal arts core. The excessive emphasis on recent events is not new as of the last decade or so; it's been a weakness form the start. At Evergreen 1960 is old. You might as well be studying 1360, and I think that's bad. I have always thought there should be more faculty members in the medieval period and the ancient world. And by the way, what exactly does "social justice" mean in a largely ahistorical context? Nothing, so far as I can see.

Steinhoff: Yeah. Your counterargument might be: Yes, but what's been added to the curriculum would be all kinds of faculty who have an expertise in cultures, and modes of expression and etc. That weren't present in that first wave, in that opening gambit, when if you lift the lid on the number of faculty that have English Ph.D.'s it's *four* Chaucerians.

Marr: I know. And probably four specialists in the English Romantic and Victorian periods.[19]

Steinhoff: But so instead that might be a way of thinking of it as, actually, yes, the job of a college is to introduce students to "the great tradition" but also maybe there's a debate about what is that tradition?

Marr: Exactly.

Steinhoff: What has it excluded, and how do we make sure that there's actually a way for that tradition to not be this calcified structure but actually to think about the tradition as a thing that is an instrument of transformation, which can include, then, the transformation of the tradition itself. So suddenly you're able to think about not only Locke and Hobbes and company, but also here's W.E.B. Dubois talking about reconstruction.

[19] Charles McCann, Sandra Simon, David Powell and Charles Teske.

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: Or just even *The Souls of Black Folk*, if we want to go for a specific text that basically is canonical now, let's have the freshmen read that. They will benefit from having read Plato as well because certainly Dubois did. I'm with you entirely on the gap in history both as a discipline as represented by faculty with those Ph.D.'s, and as a layer in the cake of any given program. That is a real problem, and you can empirically demonstrate that. But I think another thing you might want to pull in is what about this other range of cultural expression? I might even argue in keeping with Evergreen needs a theory of knowledge. And that theory of knowledge is not only that it should be reunified, but needs to inspect its exclusions.

Marr: Yes. And everything you just said, under the rubric of a counterargument, was going on from the beginning. It hadn't been going on enough, though. There never really was a belief that the western tradition is set in stone and all we have to do is master it, period, shut up about everything else[—though there was the obligatory tendentious charge concerning the evils of "the white male canon," especially during the '80s and after with the steady rise of campus identity politics]. That was never part of anyone's thinking here, and it certainly wasn't a part of anyone's practice. And there was always a movement to bring in, just like you said, other forms of expressions, other traditions, and in fact it happened. *The Souls of Black Folk*, along with the history of slavery, was being taught in the second year, if not also in the first; I know because I did it, as did others in those early years. But as all this was going on we somehow went from four Chaucerians to no Chaucerians to no Chaucer.

Steinhoff: Bingo.

Marr: And that, I don't think, is progress.

Steinhoff: It's a counter exclusion.

Marr: It is kind of a counter… You see, these various discussions like we're having right now have taken place at least since the '70s.

Steinhoff: Oh, I'm sure.

Marr: And the dominant response has been, in so far as you're looking at consequential responses, to make Evergreen a small university. It's a seemingly incorrigible tendency and direct consequence of the absence of a grounded institutional identity as an alternative liberal arts college. The reasoning goes like this: You know, "Well we don't have anybody in China, we don't have a Chinese historian. Is somebody going to stand up and tell us that China is not important in the modern world?" No. "India?" No. And if we can only hire two people this year in our specialty area (which is the only one for which history hires *would* be authorized) , and the choice is between hiring somebody in American history and somebody in Chinese history, isn't it obvious that we have to go with the Chinese historian because we don't have *anything* there. *And besides since we are all Americans we already know our history*. Nobody wants to say that because it would be just too stupid on its face. But whether it is said out loud or only quietly agreed upon, that, believe it or not, is the reasoning. To be an American is to know (enough) American history. So it's been kind of like that.

Steinhoff: I hear you.

Marr: Do you know about the big controversy that happened about 10 years ago surrounding the hire in British literature?

Steinhoff: No.

Marr: Well this is almost unbelievable but for that very reason may tickle you. The Culture, Text, Language planning unit was authorized to hire somebody in British literature. Okay, so they conduct a search. The first thing that the search committee decides is it can't be British literature, that's imperialism. So we can't have British literature. Well, then what are we going to do? What are we actually looking for? I mean if you have British literature you're sanctioning imperialism, aren't you, and colonialism? Even as recently as twenty years ago it would *never* have occurred to anybody to say such an absurd and historically ignorant thing, much less would this juvenile idea end up as the official stance

of a hiring committee. So what are we going to do, are we going to just camouflage "British Literature" so we don't look like we're hiring from the Rudyard Kipling fan club? Eventually it all kind of got mushed around in an Evergreen way and the name got changed somehow and Trevor Speller got hired.

Steinhoff: Interesting.

Marr: 17th Century.

Steinhoff: British literature.

Marr: But don't say that. This is dumb and servile. Evergreen should not constantly, compulsively, be demonstrating it bona fides, forever virtue gesturing, when it comes to its "progressive" identity—it reminds me of the *Beyond the Fringe* routine about the Second World War.

"Well, I was against it."

"I think we all were."

"But I wrote a letter."

Steinhoff: Indeed. I hear you on how— At some point in one of the "M&M"pieces there is a discussion of mobbism. I'm not making an equation here but there is something that can happen when a certain zeitgeist gets transformed into something as powerful as the invention of a faculty line which then becomes, especially at a school where you can't fire anybody, basically, there actually is a real question about how do you describe the position for lines that you want to fill. I can get it on the one hand, but then if the consequence is that you're still just going to hire another white guy that's just going to teach a bunch of white guys, which actually isn't the case. Trevor is an omnivore and he's a very responsible member of the faculty in that respect I think. The last class he was teaching before he got ascended into the deanery was the post-colonial British novel, the one before that was the colonial British novel. He actually has a track, you know, if students want to do an English major type thing within this larger context they could have done it. And they weren't just getting the dead white men to my understanding anyway.

So this is a slight tangent to go to a different topic in a way. So as a consequence of case law being discovered by the state's attorney general and tenure being more or less muddled in by the back door, now it's not tenure but conversion.

Marr: Speaking of the 17th Century.

Steinhoff: Exactly. Which gives a new meaning, or renews the meaning of what covenants were in the first place. Just don't go read what Moses did, whatever you do, don't go back to that text. So there actually then becomes a two-class system because then you've got the folks who've got tenure and then you've got the rest of us who actually don't. But the difference being, as it's practiced now anyway, the adjuncts do the role of the deans. The deans say, "Hey, we've got an opening over here." And it's not like we're servants or anything, but more like, "Would you like to co-teach a class on forensics?" "Oh sure, I'd love to." As opposed to, oh yeah, I'm just hanging out here and I'm going to meet this person—where there's no place to meet anybody—and they're going to ask me if I want to teach with them. That does happen sometimes but that two-class system that's emerged tells the lie to the claim of faculty autonomy, which is another one of these buzz-buzz things. "Faculty has too much autonomy at Evergreen that's why it's so messed up."

Marr: Is that common now?

Steinhoff: That's a thing that's been said about—

Marr: Because that's been said [by some deans] for 30 years.

Steinhoff: Of course. I mean, one of the diagnoses is this is an apolitical situation, we don't have a definition of the common good and as a consequence there's a premium placed on rampant individuality. So it's the adjunct faculty who are providing the conditions for continuing faculties' autonomy in so far as the deans can do their tinkering with the curriculum not by telling their regular faculty what to do, but by inviting adjunct faculty to do this job as a kind of a take it or leave it thing. I mean, I'm kind of overstating the case, but you get it.

Marr: I do get it, yes.

Steinhoff: So that's all a big, fat, roundabout lead up to, were you in the mix at all around the union stuff when that emerged?

Marr: Well, it was coming in just as I was going out. Although, as it happens, there were two other faculty members and I who tried to start a union in the early-'70s. And we had one, but it fizzled. This current union is obviously a real union. We wanted to affiliate with the Teamsters. *[Laughs]* But we didn't get that far. So as I say, I'm not up to speed on that at all. But what you described just before you asked the union question though, I would not say what you said matches my understanding of things. It was in the '90s when part-time study, as it was then called, was greatly expanded. I was against it in this sense, I thought it should be there to provide things that the regular curriculum can't provide [as well], but we think are important. For example, foreign language teachers often made the reasonable argument for teaching foreign languages taught there [in part-time and] low-credit courses, introduction to French, intermediate French and so on, and maybe a few other things, in math, say, but a small scale operation. But, no, it got very big, and quickly to help stave off under-enrollment problems. Evening/weekend came to be the untouchable part of the curriculum in at least two senses, the one you described about curriculum and teaching and so on, and in terms of the RIF policy. Because when the RIF policy was originally formulated, and it stayed as such for years, the college was going to survive a RIF because we could fire the evening and weekend people, the RIF cushion as they were called, and therefore satisfy the government that way.

Steinhoff: Got it, reduction in force. It's your stopgap, this is where you've got the buffer.

Marr: Yeah, that was our buffer, but when something gets too big to be called a buffer you can't use it as a buffer anymore.

Steinhoff: That's right.

Marr: And that's what happened. And now, with what I think are deleterious effects that you were talking about where it becomes a pillar of the two-class structure that you've got.

Steinhoff: Yeah. Let me counter-argue myself though, I'll just put it this way, I'm getting paid $50,000 a year.

Marr: Because of the union?

Steinhoff: No adjunct gets paid $50,000 a year anywhere.

Marr: No.

Steinhoff: I'm not sure if it's because of the union, I don't know what your perspective on this is, but as so far as I know the faculty voted on something about a point system, said everybody is getting paid the same, the scientist gets the same amount as the business teacher gets the same amount as the English major. As opposed to other schools where scientists get paid way more if they're sexy, the business guy gets paid even more, and the English teacher, psh, they've got no clout.

Marr: Exactly right.

Steinhoff: They're making $40,000 whereas the scientists are making $100,000. So it's an equitable pay scale done on a point system and the adjuncts are making 90 percent of what the regular faculty make but on the same point system. So my Ph.D. counts, my publications count, my years of experience count and I get healthcare. So I can say two-class system, mainly it's just okay your little story about faculty autonomy is an important one, but it's insufficient to actually describe the situation. But, I also want to be clear that it's a paradise. I can say adjunct to make the first class feel a little bit squeamish, or maybe to accrue some revolutionary bona fides to myself, but actually I'm in a very stable position relatively speaking. And my understanding was that that 90 percent on the equal pay scale was a decision that the faculty made at some point. I don't know the history there.

Marr: I don't know anything about that either.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: And you're absolutely right, if you're just about anywhere else, if you're an adjunct you have four jobs, or two, whereas you have only one job.

Steinhoff: And [if I'm anywhere else] I'm getting paid three or four thousand bucks a pop, and I'm driving from San Francisco to Santa Cruz to Oakland.

Marr: For that matter, look at St. Martin's College.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: My *god*, even the regular faculty make nothing, the adjuncts make less than nothing. It's pathetic. My grandson just graduated from there and he was involved in the union activities so I got a little bit of a taste of that.

Steinhoff: Another thing that's come up over the years would be this question of accreditation. Where the inspector comes around and he's like, "How on earth am I supposed to inspect these guys?"

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: Every single time a new story has to be told. So there's something back there in the mist, maybe not even that long ago, GenEd, these kinds of things. Am I pushing the right buttons?

Marr: It's all very real. GenEd, god, Sam Schrager and I were involved in that. When it came to the final decisive vote there were only two votes against GenEd, Sam and me. My argument was—I don't even remember this well enough to talk about it for more than a second or two. I said I was not going to vote for the right thing for the wrong reasons. And if people can't make a better argument for GenEd than they have made so far, I'm not going to vote for it.

[I'm not sure what your question about accreditation is.] Patrick Hill who was the provost in the '80s when I was a dean, we were due for an accreditation review. And he said, "Well, these are semi-serious exercises." Where the college gets its paperwork in order and prepares for the visit by the accrediting team. I didn't quite know what he meant by that because I took it like everyone else, I took it with dreadful seriousness. So the way it worked then, I don't know if it's still this way, but the accrediting

team reads what the institution gives them, a bundle of self-studies prepared by the various units. The accreditors read the self-studies and say, "Okay, here's what you say you're trying to do. And here's the documentation as to whether you've actually done it. And it looks like you've pretty much accomplished it. Except over here, you could do a little more here." It's just at the most a slap on the wrist if you don't do so well, otherwise it's just kind of rubber stamping things. I think that's more or less how it goes now.

Steinhoff: My understanding was that it was one of these waves, these periodical waves of accreditation and responding to the inspection, the critique that the Expectations and even the Academic Statement for that matter as forms that describe what's expected of the graduates, why the college is organized the way it is.

Marr: That's right, and the Statement being the more recent of those.

Steinhoff: It sounds like quite the hot faculty meeting if there's votes and you and Sam are holding a certain ground.

Marr: [Well, let's not confuse the GenEd controversy, which was circa 2000, with accreditation, which has occurred periodically.] We were in a tight spot because we couldn't provide an adequate answer to the question of what is an Evergreen degree beyond 180 credit hours? That in turn brought to mind Charlie's, when Charlie was asked about this years and years ago when he was being pressured from all sides to give in on graduation requirements beyond 180, and he wouldn't do it. But it provoked him to say, "Well, just because it's only 180 and nothing else is spelled out it does not follow that the place is without academic standards because academic standards obtain in the interaction between the faculty member and the teacher." Now if they don't obtain there, he didn't say this but he clearly implied it, the game is over anyway. But he trusted that if you have a competent faculty member working with a student that's where the rubber hits the road. You don't give a laudatory evaluation for crappy work, you don't not blow the whistle on people. You do what Rudy Martin did, for instance. A student of his meets with him in his office and Rudy says, "Okay, here's the story, you can't write. And here's what the

institution provides to help you with that." Well, the student had never heard that before, the kid, he went on to graduate from law school because after his meeting with Rudy he eventually learned how to write and was able to continue with his college work. That's the kind of thing Charlie meant, it's not too hard. Too many people thought that the existence of distribution requirements somehow proves academic standards have been met. That's false. The only proof that academic standards have been met is the say-so of the competent faculty member assessing a student's work. Absent that, distribution requirement are meaningless.[20]

Steinhoff: It's a craft mentality.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: As opposed to an industrial one. Where you're trusting the worker to tell the apprentice whether they're using the tool correctly or not.

Marr: That's right.

Steinhoff: Whether they've made the thing or not.

Marr: You don't want to have very much slippage if you're making parts for a jet engine. The tolerances there are severe. I don't want to push that analogy very far. So those of us that were opposed to the GenEd thing, I don't think we did very well but I also don't think that GenEd, I don't know what the results of that were later, the institutional consequences.

Steinhoff: That's the thing, how do you measure it? You can tell people about your foresight, you can tell them about your expectations.

[20] Well, I now say in hindsight, not quite meaningless. There's a worthy justification of distribution requirements to be made on the grounds of exposing students to a large smorgasbord of what the college has to offer. I don't recall this argument having been made. Beneath my own opposition to GenEd lay a strong skepticism that Evergreen possessed at the time, or could be counted on to acquire in the near future, a sufficiently academically diverse faculty willing and able to teach the required courses or programs that fall under the heading of distribution requirements. The severe weakening of the humanities by the time GenEd was being "debated" was an open secret. Without a vigorous humanities faculty it's hard for me to see GenEd as anything more substantial that an effort to align Evergreen with the then-latest academic fad in higher education.

Marr: That's just crap, I want to know whether they'll be required to do this, that or the other in order to get a degree.

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: Are we going to talk about requirements or just talk about this vague thing called expectations? It just seems like blather.

Steinhoff: Yeah. I will say as somebody who got hired two weeks before the first program I taught started, I mean my partner had been teaching there for years so I got some stuff by osmosis, but oh now I actually have to crack this case. Being able to find that online for the new timer was hugely helpful. There was no orientation, retreats, there was no nothing, there was just like there's 25 kids on this bus, actually, there's 30 if you want to ride on it. So you've got five overloaded and you just don't let them in if you don't want to, but we need somebody to drive this bus. We've got the money for it and we can help you as much as we can, we trust you, you seem like a good enough Swiss Army knife, you can figure stuff out on your feet. So for me, actually I had never heard about Evergreen before Miranda applied for the job.

Marr: You mean we weren't that important?

Steinhoff: Her cousin had gone here but I still didn't know what it meant. He just graduated from whatever, whatever state college, it just didn't signify a thing. I mean I'd gone to Bard where Peter Elbow had started the Language and Thinking Program, I've taught in the Language and Thinking Program since 2001 so it turns out there's some relationship with something of an Evergreen ethos. I'd been writing criteria sheets instead of giving grades at Bard. But so to be able to actually find online Five Foci, Six Expectations—for me, that snapped a few things into focus.

Marr: Okay, then. That's good to hear.

Steinhoff: But it's as a consequence of there being nothing else.

Marr: Yes.

Steinhoff: I think that there might be a way of describing what those things supply now is a way for people to organize, especially new people coming in, to organize their own potential in relationship to what the school says about itself without having to be at the mercy of an oral culture. You know what I mean?

Marr: Oh yes.

Steinhoff: And this is me also trying to think in terms of, well what's the next 50 years going to be, and how are we going to do that one? Big question. Maybe I'll just ask you then, you said of your colleagues who you were working with from whom you learned the most, there's one name that's come up again around the GenEd stuff, but you said Sam Schrager.

Marr: And before we get to that I'm going to check on something downstairs.

[Recorder turned off]

Steinhoff: So I asked about Sam Schrager, when did you meet that guy?

Marr: It would have been '97, and then we taught for the first time in '99, and since then we've taught in five programs together. And as of '97 he had been here for eight or nine years. One of the things I objected to in the early years was something I called creeping social science. By which I meant the reduction of the literary text by way of the heresy of paraphrase, to a statement, kind of a simplistic reductionism. And when I met Sam it became clear to me that even though he was a social scientist[21] he was not bent that way, so that was one of the reasons I wanted to teach with him. I didn't know it fully at the time that he was [not a creeping social scientist], but I really had that on my mind because—a reductive approach—was stupid and I had no time for it. So he and I just hit it off very well, we got along very well and we still do. He's a rare combination of rigor and gentleness, he's quite a guy in a lot of ways. And I think, too, that I learned from him something important about, you talked earlier about the

[21] This is probably wrong, to classify folklore as a social science. My point concerns reductionism, not academic classification.

professional deformation which everybody undergoes, of course. Well as an intellectual historian even though my training was in the social history of ideas I nevertheless, I think, had a strong tendency toward a professional deformation of a different kind which was that I didn't have a strong feeling for the folk, [for the everyday social part of the social history of ideas]. And he helped me see that [weakness]. He introduced me to it, though he didn't know I didn't have a feel for it. But through our work together I transformed my understanding of the origins and consequences of the always present split between intellectual elites and everybody else. Actually I had first explored this tension years earlier, but working with Sam deepened it for me. When Norm Jacobson and I taught a summer program on the migration of European immigrants to America (I was the very junior partner in that teaching team) this problem came up for me for the first time and began to be clarified. Norman once said, "Well, I am at once an intellectual and a mass man." When he said that, that really clicked with me, not least because of my working class origins and somewhat misspent youth. George Santayana once claimed that the great thing about American life is not the life of the mind, it's football, jazz bands and kindness. And if there was anybody who was a non-Emersonian, Brahmin intellectual it would be Santayana. But he saw this, he saw this thing about America that is true, I think, that even the most self-conscious intellectuals are split, just as the larger culture is. They even refer to watching professional football as a guilty pleasure, some of them, the dumber ones, as if you needed to do that, to apologize for mixing it up with the great unwashed, even though they may have come from the great unwashed themselves. But, when I got to teaching with Sam I learned more fully what this might mean in terms of understanding America as a historical fact, the fact of America is the fact of the contorted, contradictory relationships between thinkers and regular people—in intellectual life, politics, law, economic life, education, war, past and present. So I'm very grateful for him. We went through several programs where little by little this problem unfolded for me.

Steinhoff: Yeah, and again dialogically, not just with Sam but also with the students.

Marr: Oh yes, very much so.

Steinhoff: And what it also puts on the table, I think, is there's race, there's gender and there's class. And that third one, class, is usually invisible. So there's the Stanley Fish essay, "Is there a text in this class?," and the questions I sometimes pose are: "Is there class in this class? How would you know?" Especially given that we all call each other by our first names now, and even the teacher is wearing ripped jeans.

Marr: That's right. When I went to Germany, when I went to the Free University of Berlin to give a paper on William James, I walked into my hotel room where the television set was placed so the first thing you see when you open the door is the screen, and it said, "Welcome, Professor Doctor David Marr." I said, "Holy crap!"

But, no, class is much on my mind. I mean the holy triad of race, class and gender always struck me as silly. Not the facts of race, class and gender, of course[, but their use as a pretext for ideological ends on campus and as an academic fad]. It's the invisibility of class at the same time as the blatant consequences of it. Like what happened in Ferguson, Missouri a couple years ago. How can anybody understand that if class is left out of the analysis? I mean you can't have a 90 percent white police force policing a 90 percent black community if it weren't for the comparatively withered historical development of the black middle class in that area. No sturdy, self-respecting black middle class would have put up with it for a second, it wouldn't have come about, it just wouldn't have. Try to imagine the tables turned. I'm very much concerned with this problem.

Steinhoff: It also raises a different question, I'm curious now that we've put class on the map, you didn't come from an intellectual family.

Marr: God no.

Steinhoff: And I'm curious about that then. To make an interview question of it would be, what did your parents think of what came of you?

Marr: They didn't understand it. My father was not overbearing, but he was a very strong man and probably because his schooling ended after sixth grade the only way that he could understand what I was going to do after I got through the first four years was to use the word education (as in "he's going to be a teacher"). That seemed to settle it for him. My mother went to 11th grade and because she read a little maybe had a feel for what I was up to, but in any case in her eyes I could do no wrong. I suppose both of my parents saw me wearing a white shirt.[22] If I hadn't moved out here I don't know what would have happened, stayed in the Midwest. Could have gotten a job, I'm sure, but geographical mobility and class mobility are interconnected, as any pioneer could tell you.

Steinhoff: For sure.

Marr: Especially in a country as big as this.

Steinhoff: Yeah, where you get so far away.

Marr: A little bitty country like England, it's a different matter.

Steinhoff: And what about your siblings then? Because there is quite a range, right?

Marr: Yes, two older sisters and one younger one and none of them went to college. I come from a family and a culture where the male-worship was palpable. Not because the women were weak, but just because that's the way it was.

Steinhoff: Yeah.

Marr: The women were not weak, and they weren't pushed around by their men but there's no question what they admired most, it was a man.[23]

[22] The obligatory blue work shirt for male professors was not yet in vogue.

[23] Garrison Keillor gets at this truth about the Midwest of my youth in the description of his fictional Lake Woebegone, "where all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average." Male-worship was at once a sign of patriarchy in decline and deference to the man as a good provider.

Steinhoff: What the default setting of the discourse was, yeah. That was a piece of early history at Evergreen too I imagine, in terms of how many faculty are there who are men and women and like we were talking about earlier, how many people of color on the faculty?

Marr: Yeah, that was glaring after everybody got together that first year [1970-71], there was one black guy. In the planning faculty there were no women and one black guy. The next year there were some women and one more black guy. Rudy saw to it that a couple other non-whites were hired, but they didn't last. There was Don Chang, he was an Asian American who was hired the same year as I, but Rudy was teaching in a program called "Contemporary American Minorities," he was the black one, there was one Indian [Darrel Phare, a Lummi[24]] and then there was one Hispanic [Medardo Delgado], and neither one of those guys stayed at Evergreen long. It was very agonizing in terms of how to handle the race and gender thing.

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: And of course what we called the first wave, I guess technically second wave of feminism was barely underway, but it was getting underway by the early-'70s and that had direct bearing on the hiring of women.

Steinhoff: Yeah, and I'm sure students were pushing.

Marr: Some, not so much, more on race than sex. Most of the pushing and pulling occurred within the faculty, with the deans and vice president.

Steinhoff: That would make sense. In an earlier conversation you spoke about how relatively speaking young the faculty were.

Marr: Yes, boy, that's like one of those things like class almost, it just disappears[, or is hidden from view]; it has to be constantly brought back that everybody was so young. That's really true.

[24] Mary Ellen Hillaire, also of the Lummi tribe, joined the faculty in 1972.

Steinhoff: And so then you also got to watch everybody age together when you work at a place for 40 years.

Marr: I know. And die off. A lot of people I had connections with are dead. Don Finkel died when he was only 56.

Steinhoff: Not on schedule. That must have been felt by the college as a loss.

Marr: That was an all-campus event. I asked Bill Arney, "Do you think he held out?" Because he had lymphoma. "Do you think he held out until the faculty got back together in the fall?" And he said, "You're damn right he did." He died shortly after they got together so everybody could be there for the big memorial service.

The thing we haven't talked about that is just as important as anything at the college level as anything having to do with unions or faculty evaluation or [minorities or] anything like that is the Olander presidency. I think of it as *the* fundamental turning point in the college. He was president starting on January 1, '85 until they finally got rid of him, I don't remember, '92, '91, something like that. Things changed [under Olander]. It's hard to describe but there was a toxicity that developed under his presidency and because of him. Up until then we had the greatest president, Charles McCann, and we had a couple other stand-ins.

Steinhoff: Dan Evans was in there.

Marr: Dan Evans was in there. And then this guy comes along, takes the college by storm, people were intensely enthusiastic about him. He turns out to be a kind of—in the end he turns out to be a fraud. He wanted to make over the college in some sort of image that he had of it. So that included specifically getting rid of Patrick Hill the provost and bringing in his own provost. Well, he couldn't get away with that. He wanted to make his mark on the college, he didn't want to be just president of a college, he wanted to change it. In what ways it wasn't clear, but in any political situation like that he's going to get

some people to his side. And so, paradise is lost, right?[25] He had some supporters, not many because the utopianism of the college was still alive and there was a sense, never articulated very clearly, that this guy doesn't really fit. He can claim that he was a runner for the mob in New Jersey and use that as a weapon. He can say that when he comes up to an opponent he can't defeat he might threaten him with two broken collar bones. He was given 15 minutes which was the protocol at the time for a faculty meeting, he wanted to come and address the faculty and the agenda committee said to him, "Okay, fine, we're working on our agenda. We've got a spot here from 2:15 to 2:30." He didn't like it but he came anyway. When his time was up, Don Finkel who was the chair of the faculty and running the meeting he said, "Okay, Joe, we've got a couple other things on our agenda." He said, "I'm not done yet!" And he tore into Finkel, attacked him publicly. All but physically, threatened him, there was no question about it. It was just a disturbing violation of [Evergreen-style] propriety and decorum. So he had to go, and that's when David Hitchens and Craig Carlson got on the case and started researching his credentials which eventually led to the discovery that he maybe had falsified one of them or misrepresented one of them, it was a flimsy charge, basically, as these things go. But, it worked and they got rid of him.

Steinhoff: But it took a while it sounds like.

Marr: It took a while and he succeeded in getting Patrick out of his way. Patrick had two straight years of paid leave. I once asked him how he was doing on his long sabbatical. He said, "You know, I've concluded that being on sabbatical is the natural condition of man." I said I believe it.

Steinhoff: And you'd been a dean under him, is that right?

Marr: Yes. One of the first things Olander did is he met with each of his deans, there were four of us, privately to see where we were. That's not how he put it of course. But he was feeling out the ground to see how much support he would have if he wanted to make a move against Patrick. He came away from

[25] Evergreen-as-paradise is lost as a condition of its being invoked.

each of those four meetings empty handed, and he was extremely disappointed. It wasn't too long after that then that he burst into a deans' meeting and he said, "I'm going to make you all associate provosts starting today." Barbara Smith said, "Oh no, you're not going to do that." (laughing) And so that fizzled. But it was the same attempted maneuver. So, no, he had to go.

One of the funniest things that happened, I don't know if you know this story but when David Hitchens and Craig Carlson were out there, super sleuths, they discovered that a prominent figure from one of the main mafia families in New York was in a federal prison in Arizona. I can't remember, it might have been Joseph Sclafani but it was a well-known name. I have it somewhere written. Don't ask me how they did this, but they managed to ask him a question over the phone. And the question was, "Was Joe Olander a made man?" And all they could hear at the other end of the line was uproarious laughter. "Are you kidding?" I mean he knew who Hitchens and Carlson were talking about, he knew Joe Olander. He was a charlatan, an academic charlatan who also could speak Mandarin.

Steinhoff: Right. What about that part?

Marr: He learned it in the Air Force.

Steinhoff: That sounds like a serious crisis.

Marr: It definitely was. We never recovered from it, I don't think.

Steinhoff: What was some of the damage as you see it?

Marr: I think a loss of that original utopianism, it just got bulldozed. And after all, come on, this isn't the '60s forever. [I think many Evergreen faculty suddenly felt licensed to voice that.] The whole late-'60s atmosphere of educational reform, my god that's when the State University of New York went crazy, they founded college after college after college, New Paltz, Old Westbury, I don't even know what the other ones were but there was a bunch of them. And then a strange thing in the state of Washington at Evergreen [and the expansion of the community college system here].

Steinhoff: Yeah, Santa Cruz is in there.

Marr: Right. But whatever lived on in the original Evergreen dream was pretty much defunct, I think, by then.

Steinhoff: But it's the charlatan that makes it visible somehow.

Marr: I think so. It certainly helped a lot to do that.

Steinhoff: So would a part of that be that we were so duped that we actually fell for this guy and thought this was the way to go? Sort of like, this is a bad analogy, but drinking the Kool-Aid type thing. "Oh boy, we were so bubbled that we thought this was going to be the next step."

Marr: I think there might be something to that. I hadn't thought about that. Kind of a shameful acknowledgment. When he was interviewed there were three finalists. One was a guy by the name of Stott, and the other one was this young woman from Iowa, I call her the Catholic school girl, she had that kind of demeanor and she was ho-hum, earnest, dutiful but not very interesting. This other guy [Stott] comes in from Philadelphia I think it was, somewhere in Pennsylvania, he's actually got ideas and seems like a really interesting guy but comes in under a cloud. And then the cloud that he comes in under is only known about fully later. He [was rumored to have] violated something having to do with gays on campus [at his university]. Well, that's sinking. And then Olander came in and he was charismatic, he was handsome, he was very presidential, I can't resist the combination here of qualities for… But, he was quite captivating and he just brought down the house. And when it [his public presentation during his interview] was all over, I was walking back to my office and to my credit or discredit I thought he was a fake from the beginning. And I turned to Chuck Nisbet who is an economist, who was just bubbling over, and I said, "Chuck, what did you think of that guy?" he said, "Oh god, he's just wonderful. We are going to be so lucky to have him." I mean it was quasi-orgasmic in the room. It didn't take long before it all just—so, maybe that was a sign of desperation.

Steinhoff: Right.

Marr: Because if there's one thing Charlie McCann never was, it was flashy. This guy is all flash.

Steinhoff: So then what happens? Is that when Les Purce becomes interim president, is that the solution?

Marr: Well, he becomes a vice president of something under Olander, not provost.

Steinhoff: No, it was the other part, the money stuff.

Marr: I think so. And then he leaves for WSU and is an administrator over there for a while, and then he comes back as president.

Steinhoff: I think he was interim, I think he was a placeholder for two years or something.

Marr: But he eventually becomes the president here.

Steinhoff: After somebody else.

Marr: Yes, she [Jane Jervis] was [a scholar] in medieval history of science and her husband was a physicist from New York. She was president for four or five years, and then along comes Purce.

Steinhoff: Yeah. What was your sense of those two, relatively speaking?

Marr: I thought that both of them were competent managers.

Steinhoff: Then there's also a PR problem, which is you need to make the legislature not shut you down.

Marr: Yes.

Steinhoff: For having stepped on that big of a banana peel.

Marr: Yes.

Steinhoff: There's a board of trustees who are on the hook for that too.

Marr: Oh, yes.

Steinhoff: So that's a huge deal. Having presidents that can keep the legislature in the pocket, keep them close.

Marr: You're exactly right. That's more and more their job, I mean at a poor state college like this one that is their job[, more than private] fundraising . If you're at Ohio State or Chicago or something you raise [private] money.

Steinhoff: How crucial do you think it was that Dan Evans stepped in for the second presidency?

Marr: I don't know, I mean, it was okay. He certainly had a way with—he was the darling of Washington politics, of the Washington Republican Party. He was a patrician white guy from west of the mountains, had tremendous prestige and everything. But he did get snookered and he was plenty pissed because some of the right-wing legislators when he was president managed to get through a more serious shut-down measure. And he was mad because he got outfoxed politically. His people hadn't prevented it, so he went straight down there [the Legislature] and got rid of that shut-down measure.

Steinhoff: He told a pretty good school story about the school at the new president's inauguration. Just in terms of there are all these other great colleges in the United States teaching, using the techniques and the structures of the 20th century, and the 19th Century, but Evergreen! It was *really* nice. Just have that guy do the NPR commercial. It was just a really good, clean, short story.

He had another story about sailing. He was the governor and hadn't become the president. A friend had a kid with whom his son had been sailing or whatever, and the kid was really excited because Evergreen was right here and he could still sail with the dad and go to college and not have to go away. So the dad calls the kid, "What are you learning in college?" And he said, "Sailing." And the dad is all mad because he's thinking why aren't they actually learning stuff? Calls Dan Evans and Dan Evans does some investigating as governor and learns, oh, they're reading *Moby Dick*, they're learning about marine biology, there's stuff about the physics of meteorology and they're building a boat. That's what's going on. The kid can just say sailing, but actually it's the full package.

Marr: Yes, that's exactly so, and I know everybody that was involved in that, it [the boat they built] was the Sea Wulf. In fact my daughter went here for one year and she was [among the students studying

those things while under sail]. He's right. The damn kid should be taught a lesson, you don't just say sailing. Fill it out a little bit.

Steinhoff: That's the problem with the writing part, the language skills are as yet underdeveloped.

Marr: It's true. I'm having a good time, I'm sailing.

Steinhoff: Are there other students that come to mind? We've talked about two of them, Greg Renault and John Foster from the early days. I'm also mindful of how for me, I won't speak for you, I ran into somebody in one of the stores downtown and she claims to have been a student of mine at Bard five years ago. And I said, "You have to forgive me, I'm just like an etch-a-sketch. Please remind me." Then she told me two or three things and I could immediately figure out the situation. But the first students I taught at Bard I still remember them vividly, the first students I taught here I still remember vividly. So I'm aware of that impressionable early wave. But are there other students that come to mind?

Marr: Well, there are. I mean I remember quite a few of my students. I hesitate to mention [only] the ones that have made a name for themselves because there aren't that many, and that's somewhat of a prejudicial way of looking at the matter. Although Greg Renault did make a name for himself and I mentioned him.

Steinhoff: I tracked him down, he's google-able.

Marr: Oh, he is?

Steinhoff: He shows up on that masthead from the archive versions.

Marr: I think he became a social worker, I'm not sure. I mentioned Norman Jacobsen, he had a nephew going here that was a student of mine by the name of Matt Jacobsen, he's now a professor at Yale. I suppose that from the '80s I would point to Nancy Koppelman, she was a student of mine. Toward the end of the '90s there was a guy named Paul Felten, I'm still in touch with him. He's a screenwriter, he has a James Franco movie that's out now. There were some people who made a name for themselves.

And others—Brad Shannon, Stephen Walter, Rita Pougiales, Casie Owen, Alexandra Stupple, Dale Favier, Vivica Williams.

Steinhoff: You mentioned a vet when we first met.

Marr: He was Lt. William Calley's "intelligence officer."[26] Chuck Jex.

Steinhoff: He might be working in a National Guard campground up by the base. Somebody said there is the kindest attendant at the campground, Chuck Jex.

Marr: I'll be damned. Because Chuck Jex, he can't be that much younger than I am, maybe 10 years. I had some students who worked with me during my final years whom I admire and remember well—Casie Owen, who works at Microsoft, Casey Jaywork [who] writes for one of the magazines in Seattle.

Steinhoff: *The Weekly*.

Marr: Yes, he writes for that. He has a lot to do with the needle exchange and things like that. I had a student, not a very good student by her own account [though I saw her differently], named Alexandra Stupple. She went to law school at CAL and now works for the state of California. It's kind of fun when they get back in touch, because who the hell knows where they are.

Steinhoff: There's the first step where you write me a letter of recommendation.

Marr: There's always that step, yes.

Steinhoff: Or if the first step is not about a kind of transaction.

Marr: As long as it isn't, can I borrow some money, I'm fine.

Steinhoff: And actually letters of recommendation are really easy because we've already got the narrative evaluation.

[26] Calley was court-martialed in 1971 and sentenced to life for the My Lai massacre (March 16, 1968) in Vietnam; his sentence was overturned on appeal in 1974.

Marr: Yeah, they're not that hard. Especially if you're not just trying to disguise a form letter, but actually can speak from a basis of evidence about what the student [has accomplished and] can and can't do. I have to believe that counts for something with the graduate schools and law schools.

Steinhoff: Oh, for sure, even if they're not going to get a G.P.A.

Marr: Right. I mean, the original rap on Evergreen is no one is going to read an Evergreen transcript, all they want is the grades and the G.P.A. It's true, some didn't. There [used to be, maybe still is] a long-standing antipathy between the University of Washington and Evergreen, they wouldn't condescend to read.

Steinhoff: It's where the reputation increases the further you get away.

Marr: That's true. That was true in New England in the 1840s.

Steinhoff: Ha ha, indeed. The one thing we didn't really dwell on, this could be something we can return to perhaps in correspondence. There's a book you wrote, that's serious and worthy of just hearing a little bit about. And then also that piece I found, the library has it as a PDF, "Extravagant Interest," circa 1982. Both of these, obviously the book is huge, that's a serious work. As is the "Extravagant Interest" piece, different scales but just the amount of thought that's put into that, which I think is '82. I'm curious to hear how you found time to do that?

Marr: The "Extravagant Interest" was, god, we were so broke. The college was broke, we didn't have any money of course. But somehow or another Barbara Smith managed to rustle up some dough to fund about six or eight faculty members in the summer for the equivalent of maybe two weeks salary [each of us] to do something on writing across the curriculum. And so I wrote something which came out as that, Pete Sinclair wrote something, Mark Levinsky wrote something—I think he did anyway—and maybe a couple others. I was right coming out of my first full immersion in contemporary literary theory.

Steinhoff: I saw that.

Marr: I don't think I should have written that. It was clearly an excuse to write about some of that stuff and not do what I was supposed to be doing which was to write about writing across the curriculum. The writing exercises that are in it, I never applied them, I mean I never used them, maybe one or two.

Steinhoff: Interesting.

Marr: It was more this is how I would do it, so maybe you could do it if you read this and you're interested. And the critical remarks [in "Extravagant Interest"] about Walker Gibson I will take to my grave and they will still bother me. I sent him that. I'm really quite ashamed of it. Maybe there are some intellectual aspects of the thing that are worth a second thought, maybe not. But to saddle him with the criticism that his way of thinking about writing was nothing more than a brief for turning out liberal men was dumb. It was stupid. He wrote me back and he shouldn't have, he didn't owe me anything. His first words were, "Dear David Marr, Well!" I just felt miserable about it because I quickly changed my mind, I came to my senses so to speak, and realized that his stuff on writing is the best I'd ever seen as far as teaching of writing is concerned. I'm sure there are many others who have many worthy points to them but his little writing and thinking books were gems.

Steinhoff: I can say I read it right before we started the conversations, so a couple weeks ago. I can describe my experience as a reader. First, Walker Gibson, "This stuff is *great! Wow, I love it, this is so cool*. I'm going to use this in my class in the fall or some variation there on." And then I kept reading and I was like, "Holy cow, David has some really good points here! Should I not use the Gibson? No, I am going to use the Gibson *and* I'm so glad to re-read this part from Moriarty, get this part from Heidegger." And then my question was, "Did David give students this? It's not addressed to students." And then I thought, oh, this is that teaching up thing, where you're going to show them one model and then you're going to complicate the model. It's interesting to hear what you said. So for me, introduced to Gibson as a practical, here, here's a tool, or actually a whole sequence to take students through

coupled with here are some blind spots in the sequence that you best be paying attention to. This is not a silver bullet and you might end up reproducing certain things inadvertently.

Marr: That's a very generous way of looking at it.

Steinhoff: I was reading it in this very way. But now I'll offer my critique, it was on the exercises, "I'm not doing those. Those don't make any sense." In general it was more about what I'm up to. There was a lot of great thinking that I saw there. But the way you just described it, oh these were speculative exercises, not ones that you'd actually done or tested en masse.

Marr: Yeah.

Steinhoff: I can hear you on the chagrin having flourished this critique to the man himself, I get that for sure. But I have to say I got instructed by him and by you. So, don't be too hard in reflecting on that particular piece.

Marr: I just knew, I don't know what I was doing. I wanted the money. So, I sent it to my master's thesis adviser, Bob Sayre, and he said, "Do you really get students to do this?" I said, "No."

Steinhoff: What about the book though, that came out of your dissertation.

Marr: Yeah, it's about 60 percent dissertation and 40 percent other.

Steinhoff: And you're clearly in conversation with contemporary stuff, I mean, you've been keeping up, it's clear in your discussions throughout because it was published when, in 1990?

Marr: '88. [I think back to McCann's] "Academic Administration without Departments at The Evergreen State College." I mean, if you're not in a department somewhere, at least in those days, you kind of don't exist when it comes to the world of scholarship. And I didn't know that, I just thought well, maybe I can get this thing published. The University of Massachusetts Press at that time was open to a lot of left-wing stuff and this was, I guess, sort of left-wing if you had to put a political term on it. It was not meant to be left-wing, it was meant to be just a little account of this tradition [that begins in Emerson as idealized privatism and includes Whitman, William James and Ralph Ellison, among others]. But, it was

clear from the reviews that I was not sponsored by anybody and they didn't quite know what to do with it.

Steinhoff: Which team is he on? What, he wants us to actually read this stuff?

Marr: Right.

Steinhoff: And engage with its tone, and its ambivalence and its power and its problems?

Marr: Right. But one kind of interesting thing that happened though, notwithstanding everything I just said, is that the people who ran the little magazines began to get in touch with me about writing reviews for them. That was kind of fun to do that. The publisher, Richard Martin, was the acquisitions editor at the University of Massachusetts Press. When he moved to the University of Illinois at Chicago to take up I guess was a similar position there, or maybe he was the director there, he might have been a director there. He sent me some manuscripts as a reader. Martin was as disoriented by what was going on in higher learning in the '80s and '90s as the next guy. He was especially interested to see that some of the old scholars were not going to get completely elbowed out by the new theoreticians and the new specialists in this kind of study or that kind of study. And one of them was a Shakespeare scholar at Ohio State, Julian Markels. I don't know if you'd heard his name. But he was an old-line Marxist of a certain kind [Althusserian], not a Stalinist but definitely a leftist. He submitted a manuscript to Martin called *Melville and the Politics of Identity: From King Lear to Moby-Dick*. And so Martin sent it on to me to review. And I was fascinated, of course, it's a very provocative connection Markels is trying to work out here. It was basically an argument about how the modern capitalist world is prefigured in *Lear*, and [how] the old medieval world loses, of course we all know that, but how it is that the capitalist market economy wins out, and then plays itself out in [the dramatic conflicts in] *Moby-Dick*. I thought it was a clouded argument and I just tore into it. I sent him something like 30 pages of commentary on it. I said, "I do recommend that this be published but I have a few remarks." So he sent them on to Markels and

Markels was in this deadly fight with various young Shakespeare scholars, including what was the guy? Oh the New Historicist.

Steinhoff: Sure, Greenblatt and company.

Marr: And I just wanted to say, look, Professor Markels I'm a plain spoken man, I want you to make your argument in plain English, I insist on it. I didn't exactly say those words but that's more or less how it came out. Because he produced these tortured sentences, just tortured. Not because he was Judith Butler or somebody who could write their own tortured sentences, but because his thinking wasn't clear. It just wasn't. And so I would do this with him, take it all apart and then say what the hell are you saying here? That went back to Markels, he made some revisions. I [also] insisted that he read Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America,* I think I was a little too dogmatic about that. He submitted his [revised] manuscript, it got published and in the acknowledgements page he said, "I wish to thank David Marr for some stunning criticisms." He meant it, he meant the ambiguity [double entendre] because I just nailed his ass on some things fully admitting it could be me, I'm too dumb to get this, but as I read the English language this sentence makes no sense. So that was the kind of [publisher's] reader he was stuck with. I enjoyed doing that kind of work. I did a couple others [along with some books reviews].

Steinhoff: That's also intermural; you're out of the bubble.

Marr: Yeah, that's true.

Steinhoff: And you're being introduced to scholars who you wouldn't have necessarily come across otherwise, or read their work. And you're also having to put on a wet suit and engage with arguments that you're aware of but not necessarily in the depths with.

Marr: That's absolutely right.

Steinhoff: So that seems really key. So that's happening in late '80s, early '90s?

Marr: Yeah, I'd say '91, '92, something like that. That's when I also wrote my article on Peirce and his theory of signs that came out of the Peirce seminar.

Steinhoff: Who taught that, by the way, at the UW?

Marr: John Boler. He wrote a book on Peirce, *Charles Peirce and Scholastic Realism.*

Steinhoff: We can time stamp it contemporaneous with Joe Olander.

Marr: Ah, yes. Joe Olander is making his final good-byes.

Steinhoff: So as things are getting a little bit close you found sources of contact and actually recognition, they didn't know how to place you but they read that book. And it wasn't a fly-by-night press, that's a real press, the libraries have that book. Every single library, more or less, all 400 of the big ones own that book.

Marr: Yeah, and it is still in print. You know how the publishing conditions have changed so much because of digital this and that, but it used to be before the tax laws were changed, isn't this true that they could carry their inventory and write it off on their taxes, and then they got rid of that tax loophole and then examination copies dried up.

Steinhoff: They certainly have.

Marr: But it has stayed in print . Which I think is just an artifact of that business, not of the quality of the book. All the other books they had probably stayed in print for 25 years too. And then they made it into an e-book and I get my little letter each year about how much money I've made. One copy of the hardbound, one e-book, per year.

Steinhoff: Yeah, that's better than nothing.

Marr: It is?

Steinhoff: But this also raises a question that the [practice of] "publish or perish" didn't pertain at Evergreen. So you actually had to go out of your way to write a book of that scale that was able to circulate to that degree. And that's abnormal I take it, I mean I know some faculty were very productive. Different for the scientists, perhaps, difference of publishing cycle.

Marr: And different modes of publication too.

Steinhoff: And different modes, precisely.

Marr: I think mine was the first book that was published.

Steinhoff: Of Evergreen faculty?

Marr: Yeah. And Pete Sinclair said, "You broke the taboo."

Steinhoff: Interesting.

Marr: I thought, maybe I did. It's one of those things you don't know it's a taboo until it's broken.

Steinhoff: Yeah, precisely. It's a gift to those of us coming in now, I have to say. We can both be a teacher and be in the mix.

Marr: In those days we thumbed our nose at the mix, and I think we paid a price for that. But at the same time had we not, [even] had there been more than 24 hours in a day, I don't know how we could have done what we did. I mean, you can't reconcile those contradictions, it's not possible.

Steinhoff: That makes a lot of sense to me. But, it also goes to the thing about the bubble; it's no longer sustainable because the kids will puncture it if nothing else does. And there is a whole new generation of faculty who have started in recent years who are either in the middle of productive careers in publishing or embarking on them. Elizabeth Williamson is one that comes to mind who published one book on Shakespeare and his contemporaries, coedited another volume and is now in the midst of almost finishing a second book, on top of all the other stuff she's done maintaining her good standing as a good teacher. I think that's really important in terms of the next 50 years. Whether it's publishing on that normative schedule or not, what looks like a normative schedule, that's a different question. But just to be in conversation, in circulation.

Marr: Yeah, and I think what's interesting to me about that in light of what you said earlier is that seems to go in conjunction with this culture of self-congratulation. We didn't have that in early years. We had the culture of self-importance. That may seem like a fine distinction, but we really thought we were going to be the cat's meow in higher education, we really did.

Steinhoff: Yeah, and that's part of the utopianism too.

Marr: Yeah, and we weren't doing it right yet but we thought, "Of course we're going to get it right sooner or later." As distinguished from, "We've already gotten it right." Let's tell each other how much. God.

Steinhoff: I really hear that. It's a tricky thing.

Marr: It is tricky. [Around 1986] I went down to Berkeley with a couple colleagues for a conference on higher education for people over age 25, special conference topic. And I was just laying it on thick about how we had primary sources, and no textbooks, and seminars, and small student/faculty ratio on the state dollar. And the dean interrupted me and said, "Oh, and [in] the original Greek too?" And everybody laughed and I thought, "Oh shit, what an idiot I've been. I've got to dial it back a little."

Steinhoff: Or at least get out more.

Marr: Yeah. [Laughing]

Steinhoff: I think we did it, David.

Marr: I hope so.

End of Part 2