

Marianne Bailey
Interviewed by Bob Haft
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FINAL

Haft: This is November 6, 2021, and I'm here with Marianne Bailey again. When we ended last time, you were just about to enter the Sorbonne. The couple that had induced you to come to Tübingen, the wife had been a faculty at the Sorbonne?

Bailey: She had, yes. She'd been faculty there. That was after she taught at the University of Washington. She came back to France and taught at the Sorbonne until she decided to retire. She had an apartment there in Paris that she'd had. I guess people who have old Paris apartments never, ever sell them, because they have a fixed rent. They're worth a lot, but to get something else would cost you a real fortune, so she'd stay in it when she was working there, or when she wanted to be in Paris to see people or something. Or he would stay in it when he was taking the text of his literary journal to the publisher in Paris, different things like that. I would stay in it when I was studying, or when I wanted to work in the library.

Haft: Did you and Bud move together to Paris, or did he stay in Tübingen for a while?

Bailey: No, we kept our apartment in Tübingen because we lived there most of the time and only went to Paris when I had to, mostly for my dissertation research at the National Library. By then, I had to take a couple classes, and I did that when I first got enrolled at the Sorbonne. We stayed mainly in the German apartment, but we traveled to Paris a lot. I'd go to Paris to hear special lectures and things like that.

But when you get past the master's degree there, it's mainly an issue of writing your dissertation, just like it is here. It was more important for me to go to the library, the main Parisian library.

Haft: You never really moved to Paris.

Bailey: No, we never lived there. I'd have to go nearly every month, but sometimes just for a few days, sometimes longer.

Haft: What kind of a commute was it?

Bailey: You could take the train and sleep overnight and get there at 6:30 in the morning, or you could go during the day and arrive at a more normal time. I'd stay at Jacqueline's apartment, and I could go out from there, just take a bus or a Metro.

Haft: What were the classes that you had to take? You said you were required to take a couple at the Sorbonne.

Bailey: Yeah, I had to go. I had to go to things that prepared you to pass a particular exam that I had to take. I studied when Jacqueline was teaching. I heard her lectures on authors of West Africa. I also . . . what were the classes I was supposed to take? There was another one. I think it was in 20th Century contemporary writers. I should say "lectures" rather than "classes." I was a doctoral candidate and my degree at this point was a matter of research and measuring up to the expectations and tasks which the supervising Sorbonne Professor laid out: her lectures and suggestions, her critiques of my dissertation along the way. There was one that was interesting that had to do with—it helped me understand a bit what they expected in terms of dissertation, so since I was in the dissertation writing stage, just starting it, that was helpful. But beyond that, if I was in town and someone was giving an interesting lecture, I'd go. It's surprising, the amount of free play and do what you want, go to what you think will help you once you're at that level. It isn't as if these are all required. You go to school or the library every day. It was more to go to things that were relevant to your dissertation.

Haft: Your dissertation was on Aimé Césaire?

Bailey: Yes.

Haft: Where did that inspiration come from?

Bailey: I have to give credit to a class Jacqueline taught. That was a class I took when I was still here at the University of Washington, and she was teaching there. I was just fascinated by his poetry. I think that's why.

Haft: You carried that inspiration for quite a while, actually. When you went to Tübingen, had you—

Bailey: I had had that class. She took me to visit with him because he had an apartment in Paris, too. Césaire had his work as a poet and a writer, but his real job was as senator, like a senator, in the French Legislature, so he was in Paris quite regularly for a few months a year at least, so we went over and visited with him. I got to spend more time with him in Martinique, but this was in Paris, to see his apartment. It was fascinating because I had such awe of him, and he and Jacqueline were good friends.

His apartment was very simple, very, very. He lived there with his grandson who was going to school at the Sorbonne, was just starting, and Césaire cooked for him. There was nothing fancy or

impressive. It was just an apartment, except he had gorgeous African art on the walls, gorgeous masks. That was interesting.

Haft: I know when you and I taught together, Césaire was always a staple of the program. But so was Nietzsche. Where did he come in to play?

Bailey: I was interested in Nietzsche from way back in my undergrad days. I think Bud had studied Nietzsche in a philosophy class. It was before we went to Washington, so it was when he was an undergraduate. He was really interested in Nietzsche. Then he took another class on Nietzsche at Seattle.

I decided to do my dissertation on Césaire's theater. Jacqueline convinced me that there was not any really good writings on that part of his works. People knew him as a poet, and there were some good books written on that aspect. That's how, really, because I was interested in what Nietzsche wrote about theater, that first work on theater that he wrote, *The Birth of Tragedy*. That interested me.

Haft: Okay, so what year are we now? When did you enter the Sorbonne and how long were you there?

Bailey: I was enrolled there over the dissertation writing period.

Haft: In the '70s, though?

Bailey: Yeah. I graduated from Nevada as an undergrad in '72 maybe. I went directly to the University of Washington and that was for a year. I'm thinking it might have been a little bit later. Maybe I graduated as an undergrad in '72, and then as a grad student in '74, and then '74-'75 at UW, and then around '76 probably moved to Europe. I think that's closer.

Haft: You said you were in Germany for seven years.

Bailey: Yes.

Haft: When you finished your degree, and the dissertation was on Césaire, were you offered jobs in Europe at all, or were you looking for jobs in Europe at all?

Bailey: I still had a really good job. I did a professor's work in Tübingen. We'd call it professor's stages of prestige and money. But I taught like any young professor in Germany would and got paid well at the German university. I hated to leave because I knew probably finding a job in the US wouldn't be as easy as that had been. [laughter]

Haft: Did you come directly to Evergreen from there, or did you teach somewhere else before?

Bailey: No. We went back to Reno for just a few years because Bud's family all lived all around there, and he wanted to go there for a little while. As it turned out, I knew I could get a position at the University of Nevada, Reno, in French or German and Bud could find work there also. I wrote a letter to

someone in a department in Reno. I wrote to this fellow Grotegut and said that we were going to be in Nevada for a while and did they need someone? He said, "Yes, come." He was chair of the department then, this German professor.

Haft: Were you teaching in Reno?

Bailey: Yes, I went back to Reno and the department chair was German also. He was a professor of German. I had always gotten on well with him, and I went there just to see the old place, and it was fun. I went up to say "hi" to him and tell him what I'd been up to, and he said, "Won't you come teach? We really need someone in German." I said, "Teach German?" And he said, "Yeah, the language and whatever you want." I said, "Sure! We'll be here for a while. I don't know how long."

He did that, and I taught an advanced French language class, too, as I recall. Because he remembered me, and we were friends. He couldn't believe I could then teach German already. I said, "I lived there. When you live there, you learn pretty fast. You have to."

Haft: How did you hear about Evergreen? How did that all come about?

Bailey: Let me think. But had enough with living as an expatriate, and he announced that he was leaving his rather good position at IBM and returning home. I could have stayed in in Europe forever. But I didn't. I came back with him but I had promised Dr. Leiner I would return to Germany for one more teaching semester. He was very disappointed that after all those years I was leaving.

Bud stayed on Hood's Canal while was away in Germany and when I returned we both looked for work here in Washington. On one occasion we had heard of Evergreen and drove over to get a look. There I met Barbara Smith. We visited briefly and I described my time in Europe and my educational background. She suggested I keep in touch, and she called me once about a job that wasn't quite right for me. But after two years there in Reno, I got a second notification from Barbara Smith regarding a position in French Literature and German at Evergreen.