9-14-1989

Huttar, Charles A Oral History Interview: History of the Hope College English Department

Christine Modey

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/hope_english

Part of the Archival Science Commons, and the Oral History Commons

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/hope_english/2


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History Interviews at Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in History of the Hope College English Department by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.
CM: I was wondering what you thought of the department when you first came here, in 1965 was it?

CH: '66. What did I think of the department? I thought it had some good people here, and I was proud to be a part of it. I appreciated what they had to offer, and I felt good about it.

CM: What about the teaching part of the department?

CH: Jim Prins, of course, was the star at that time. But he is now _____________. I watched him in the summer, in June I think it was, when my wife and I came out to buy a house. I didn't observe his teaching or anything, I just looked at him from outside of the room, and I was surprised to see him teaching in a short sleeve shirt. Where I came from we were much more formal, but I soon found a way to fit into this informality. I appreciated the professionalism and the competence of the senior teachers in the department. From all I could see, they did very well and I learned from them.

CM: I wonder how you felt coming in as someone who had done pretty extensive publishing and scholarship into a place where scholarship was not demanded or even expected from the faculty at that time?

CH: Well, it took me awhile to...if it's true that it wasn't expected, it took me awhile to catch on to that because I took it for granted, and I still do, that this is part of professional life. I have always been interested in the kind of scholarship that my colleagues are doing, and ask questions about it and make it part of conversation. I
think I got on some peoples' nerves by having that sort of expectation where they didn't. I hope that I did some good by showing encouragement and appreciation and that sort of thing. From my own work, I certainly can't think that it was hindered or even not encouraged. When I first came, I was given right off a chance to teach a seminar, a 495 is what we had then. I had some excellent students in it. This was a seminar in the literature of meditation. It was well received, there was a good group of students. And there was so much interest in fact, that I repeated it again the following semester in the fall of '67. I still think of those students that we had in the mid-'60s as among the best students I have ever had. One of them who was in that seminar, a senior at that time, is on our faculty today. He recently published a book on Shakespeare. You probably can't guess who I mean. It was also in that year that with a lot of help from a colleague in history whose name it won't hurt to mention because he deserves to have some good things said about him for all the amusement that his name usually evokes, and that is Robert Peters. Have you heard of him?

CM: No I haven't.

CH: Okay, well that's a story that you might be interested in looking up in the archival index or something. But it has little to do with the English department. I received a lot of help from him and was successful for the first time in any significant way in obtaining an outside grant. I tried before and never made it. When he began to teach, we had to write grant applications. As a result of that, I was able to go to England for several weeks and study in the summer following that the first year here. That was also the summer grants, it's always summer grants for research right from
the start. In that same year, I was elected president of the Conference on Christianity and Literature, which is a professional society I had belonged to for some time. So for that two-year term I was very much involved in correspondence and some traveling and outside professional contacts. I guess looking back, I think that these activities were appreciated by my colleagues in the department. In some cases perhaps smiled at as being okay for me, but not theirs. But going back to your initial question that started this rambling. I thought at the time and I still think that I was offered a position here because I had a record of publishing in part. And the expectation was that I would, at least myself, contribute that sort of dimension to the department, and perhaps even help to form the core of a group of people who would be publishing and doing outside scholarly work. What we have now very much fits that description. We have a majority of faculty members who publish regularly, well half anyway. A number who are very much involved in outside professional contacts and activities. I just received word that John Cox has been appointed to the new editorial board of Christianity and Literature, which also has such people on it as Arthur Fry. John has served that society which I have mentioned before, CCL, as one of the board of directors. I don't need to go on naming names because you have all that information, but we do have that sort of department.

CM: Do you think that now that the change on the part of the senior faculty of the time that they were looking to develop the department with scholarship?

CH: I don't know that you can speak of the senior faculty as a group. I think John Hollenbach saw that as something that was desirable. I think Clarence DeGraaf saw it
as something that would be desirable for the department though not to be involved in. And the same probably with Henry ten Hoor, Jim Prins, Ed Brand, Zoe Murray. They would have been simply kind of separate from it. Jim had very recently finished a dissertation on Dickens, which really should have been published. But he never did what was necessary to publish it. He after several years finally he got one or two articles out of it but I don’t know that they were published. I think he got to the point of sending something out. Meanwhile he would complain about how other people were reading his dissertation and using his ideas. Of course, that’s what happens if you sit on good work and don’t make it more public as those things are accessible, available. Joan Miller is an interesting case because she placed a high value on rigorous scholarship. She had been accused by others in the department of teaching too much on the graduate level, not appreciating the limitations of undergraduates, and making too high demands on them. I don’t agree that the demands were too high, but I tended to side with her, to do that same sort of thing. And yet once she finished her dissertation, I don’t know that Joan ever put much of a priority on publishing, observing these principles, expectations in her teaching and certainly valuing scholarship. So there is a kind of run down of different attitudes of the senior faculty.

CM: What do you see as the connection between teaching and scholarship?

CH: In that first year when I did that seminar in meditation, that was something that I was interested in for my own scholarship, and it contributed in various ways to things that I finally published including earlist of all Booker . But even that did not directly tie in with any project I was working on. More recently I haven’t much
opportunity at all to teach in areas that connected with what I was working on. But I learn a lot in my scholarship. I have many interests. I usually have three or four or more projects going at the same time, and they connect in various ways with the teaching that I do. I am certain that the two activities cross fertilize each other.

There are one or two instances when I have been struck by something in the course of teaching a text. Been hit by a novel interpretation, or indeed had something pointed out by a student that has set me off in the direction of a little article. Beyond that, publication of scholarly work and also publication for a more popular audience such as those who read the Church Herald, I like to think of all that as a kind of teaching outside the classroom with a different audience. Because what impels me to write an article generally is when I think I have something to point out, have an observation to make to correct the usual way of looking at something, or perhaps simply have information to impart. But I usually try to tie that information in with a new way of looking at the subject. And that to me is a very important part of what teaching is all about--to help people gain more knowledge and look at things in a different way. But when you publish, then it is with a different audience.

CM: Do you think that it's good to lead your students towards scholarly work in order to...?

CH: I think that happens with a few because they have the intellectual curiosity. They have the desire to be scholars, and very many don't. Maybe it's a calling. Certainly when I say that a person doesn't have that desire, it's not necessarily a criticism. I think if I were to say that a person had no wish to be accurate, or to base his
judgments and conclusions on what he actually knew and to dig around and find out before drawing judgments, conclusions, and to be willing to say, "I don't know,"--to be willing to suspend judgment in the absence of enough information even after you have dug around--these are elements of scholarship. And if a student did not have that kind of attitude, then I would be critical because those are attitudes and approaches that a person ought to take. But to be a scholar, to do scholarship beyond that, including publication, this is a calling.

CM: Do you see the attitudes of students in the department change since you have been here? Or maybe the expectations of students...?

CH: I don't think we have. I have not encountered such a concentration of students willing to work on the things and in the way that those students of '67 did. That is not to say that they are not there. I know that some of my colleagues have been successful at getting good work out of students and publishing.

CM: When you work with any student ______________?

CH: Recently. I haven't taught a seminar for some time. Once in awhile I do an independent study, but not to that depth of a textbook.

CM: ____________________________?

CH: I don't know, partly because of a change in my own interests. I find cooperative research very much more difficult in our field, particularly the kinds of things I'm doing, than apparently it is in the sciences where a lot of that goes on. And yet I notice that this past summer when grants were given for cooperative faculty/student research, there were quite a few in the humanities. For what I do, there is so much
individual reading and interpretation and insight and individual attempt to try to track
down little questions or ideas or possibilities, it might benefit sometime and I might
benefit in my own work by the effort to articulate to a co-researcher. The half formed
idea that I am working on so that we can work on it together. There might be value
in that kind of give and take. I can conceive a situation where that sort of relationship
might work with a student. I guess what I am doing in answering your question is
refusing to generalize. I think every situation is unique. So I can't say why.

CM: Can you tell me about your ____________________________?

CH: Yes. This society grew out of an informal sort of fellowship group that kept together.
There was a woman teaching in Seattle Pacific who later moved to Greenville College
in Illinois. But she had a number of friends who were Christian teachers, and she
would try to organize a time for them to get together at national conferences such as
the MLA and the MCTE. Out of this, back around '51, grew an occasional, and then
perhaps later a more regular newsletter, that she sent out three or four mimeographed
pages on something about such meetings trying to meet informally for fellowship and
perhaps to commiserate over the problem of Christian scholars in the scholarly world.
I got in contact with this group at the end of my graduate school work in '55 and then
went into teaching. I had been in touch all along as one does with my own former
teachers who were in touch with this and were receiving Alvin McGallaster's letters.
So I got on the mailing list and I knew about it. In '56, I was teaching at Gordon
College on the east coast, but I came back in June of '56 because I had by that time
completed my dissertation and defended it in December or January. I came out to go
through the ceremony and I bought my own cap and gown and hood which, cost I think a little over $50, I couldn't afford it. It was one of the best investments that I have ever made. So I was out in the midwest, in the Chicago area, in June and at Wheaton College at that time, a writing conference was being held. I don't remember at all who the speakers were, but it was a conference on Christian writing and the study of literature and so on. I went to that, and this was one of the ways in which this group of people got together. At that time, there was talk about organizing in a more formal way. So we did that at that conference in '56, and adopted the name Conference on Christianity and Literature. I recall that there was, as would be expected, some debate about what the actual name should be. I recall being a part of that debate, contributing to it. I don't remember the lines about which it went. But that was the outcome of it anyway. And what they did as formal organization was publish a newsletter which eventually evolved into the quarterly Christianity and Literature. Two years later I was elected secretary which meant that I was putting out the newsletter for a two-year term. It was still very shabby sort of thing. Dittoed, in fact, purple. I started including in a more systematic way items of bibliography which continued up until very recently. Then under the leadership of various people, the conference grew and established traditions and did other things and gained members. Now it is quite a substantial society with a good following, and one that does a lot of good.

CM: ?

CH: In that context, I thought as soon as I said it that I should have used a newer term
because these people by and large were from one wing of Christianity. Evangelical or you might even say fundamentalists which was the term back then that hadn't picked up quite the associations that it has now. At that time, the world of scholarship as the general culture had a lot in it that was antagonistic to religion, offensive to Christians of any sort, and I guess the distinction I am making about this minority group, this extreme right wing sort of Christian sort of folk, is that part of that mentality seems to be a readiness to take offense. A readiness to see themselves as an embattled minority, and as needing to huddle together for mutual support. At the same time, the world of scholarship and literature had some very exciting things going in it for Christians. There was a recognition, for example, that a major figure like T. S. Elliot whose *Cocktail Party* was making quite a stir back then, it was fairly new, and that other men and women of some stature as writers and/or as critics were Christians. Not necessarily Christians of that same narrow sort, but nevertheless their witness was appreciated. I think part of what these people wanted to do was to share discoveries of that sort and to talk with each other, that is to converse about the state of literary scholarship, the state of literature with people on their same wavelength. People who would appreciate where they were coming from, rather then having to either buy into secular assumptions or speak unintelligibly out of their own assumptions to an audience not prepared to hear.

**CM:** How is the atmosphere for Christian scholarship?

**CH:** Very good. Excellent. A lot of encouragement for it both officially and unofficially among colleagues. Lars Granberg, and succeeding him John Cox, and others involved
in the senior seminar program have done a lot. David Myers especially has done a lot
to contribute towards that. Another thing that was part of my background, the college
where I taught before had its own quarterly publication called the "Gordon Review,"
and I had been very much involved in that. I had been editor for a brief time and
continued to serve on the editorial board after I came here to Hope. But this was a
publication that always had its problems, and looking back you could see it was too
big an undertaking for a small college. I'm a little hazy about the chronology, but I
think about in '69 that the "Gordon Review" sort of breathed its last, and in the early
'70s this was reconstituted as the "Christian Scholars Review" published by a
consortium of colleges banded together for that purpose. Not a consortium having any
other existence except for this purpose. I tried to talk up the involvement of Hope in
this enterprise, and I was rather surprised, and I still don't feel that I understand it to
be rebuffed in this by no less then D. Ivan Dykstra who it seemed to me should have
been a leader in the effort to do Christian scholarship, but who apparently was very
protective of the sense of a professionalism as a philosopher. This never came out in
so many words, but the best interpretation I can put on it was that he wanted to guard
against any thought of a possibility of his own work as a philosopher being tainted by
any sort of Christian bias. Although certainly the philosophy that he taught, the
philosophy that he wrote, was Christian in its end product. But Hope was not in on
the "Christian Scholars Review" right from the start although I maintained a
connection with it personally because of my prior connections to the "Gordon
Review." Finally after a few years, and I don't quite remember when this was, well,
let's see--it was in '74 that I was invited to be the book review editor of the "Christian Scholars Review." I took that position and I think at the same time managed to extract from the administration the $500 required for Hope College to be one of the supporting institutions. The obligation was $500 a year to help subsidize the publication, plus sending a representative to an annual meeting. That representative would be kind of a liaison person with the faculty and try to get them involved. To make a long story short, that has continued, has become a part of the landscape here. I think for many faculty not much thought about and yet clearly accepted. It is part of what Hope is.

CM: Can you tell me a little bit about ____________________________?

CH: Was it that late?

CM: I think so.

CH: I had the idea that we started doing that in '68 or '69. It did continue, yes. What do you want to know? What do you already know?

CM: I think I have a general outline. One, why the course why was it needed? What were the benefits? Why did it stop?

CH: I think it grew out of a frustration with English 113, now under our new numbering system 113. The way it was generally taught which was perceived by ____________________________. A pretty stuffy sort of thing. A lot of emphasis on the mechanics of writing, a lot of emphasis on grammar. A lot of emphasis on things that turned students off. Part of the frustration also arose from the fact that this requirement had formally been a six-hour requirement, three hours a semester spread
across the year. That had been changed in some unknown before my time to
being a one semester course... (tape malfunctions)... One of the things that we did as a
group in English 15 which became 115 and then faded into 113, was to duplicate, to
publish in other words, on a limited local basis some papers that students had written.
One purpose of this was to give them a sense of reality that they were writing for an
audience and their writing assignments weren't just academic exercises. Along about
then, I can't remember the chronology, but you can work it out, I ran across a book
called *Foxfire*, and I think there were maybe a series of them. These books consisted
of excerpts from a magazine constructed in just that way published by a writing class,
as it happens a high school writing class in the mountains of Georgia, on the North
Carolina border, I think, in which the whole class was set up around the idea of
students going out and interviewing local inhabitants of the... this was a rural area, and
in this way preserving the culture and writing this up. It had quite a wide circulation
at that time, a national circulation. I thought there was a lot of that stuff around here
that deserves the same kind of attention. Not only the Dutch roots, but also other
aspects of Holland culture. So when we had the structure of English 113 courses with
a variety of topics, I set one up called "Foxfire Holland." Out of that we managed to
produce two collections, one for each of the first two semesters after which they were
not paying their way and we could not get funding for that aspect of the course. The
course itself I think didn't last a lot beyond when we were reduced to publication by
xerox on a very limited scale. Where these two were printed commercially and were
quite nice looking magazines. The title "Wooden Sneakers" was the students'
concoction as an attempt to combine the cultural emphasis of their own generation with the local Dutch background of Holland. But the magazines contained a great variety of things including Mexican recipes from a member of the Hispanic community, all sorts of things.

CM: What about Extra Muros starting in 1984?

CH: This was something that I was asked to do I think. The dean's office had always received notices of grant opportunities, which in a sort of haphazard way as time allowed...

(end of side A)

(begi side B)

CH: ...release time to put such a thing together which I have been doing ever since. At first there were five issues a year and now it has settled down to two a semester, and I try not only to take what comes in to the dean's office but also systematically look through ads, look through publications in the library that list grant opportunities. Also publish sections on conferences, calls for papers, calls from journals asking for contributions to a special issue that is projected. And a section on faculty scholarly activities, which I think is of interest quite widely in our little community. We like to hear about what our colleagues are doing.

CM: Does it build community among the departments ____________________?

CH: I believe so.

CM: Tell me about the chair of the department, '71 to '73, '74?

CH: Seventy-six, it was five years. John Hollenbach chaired the department before that.
This was a time when there were no stated terms. But he wanted to step down and simply teach for his last few years until retirement. So I was made chairman. He served for five years, I served for five years, then Dirk came in. The whole structure of the department chair position was being refined and now there are specified terms, I think they are three years. Our department...we had a sense of, I won't say strife, but tension in outlook, in the idea of what the main business of the department ought to be between different members. I think there was always a genuine friendliness, a good atmosphere in that way. And yet clearly in need for more dialogue and more coming together. I think that over the years we have achieved that with quite a remarkable degree. I don't think I have the right perspective on it to say what part I might have played in that. But I felt it was an important thing to me to see happen.

In my first year, Bill Reynolds was new on the faculty and Jane Harrington, as she was then, had just begun teaching the freshman comp course. Later on, she went to Notre Dame and lived there for a while and got a doctorate. It was during that first year, '71-'72, that we hired Steve Hemenway to fill a slot. I can't think of anything else of note during that time.

CM: What were you doing as department chair?

CH: Well, you can look that up in the faculty handbook. It's a lot of administrative stuff, catalogue copy, course schedules, evaluations of faculty. Although, there again, that was not a process nearly so detailed, so carefully spelled out as it has since become. Leading department meetings, generally trying to exercise some leadership in various issues before the department. Curriculum was one of these. The nature of the
freshman English course. I think of the other core course, too, the lit course. Let me just give you a reminiscence which has to do marginally with my time as chairman simply because it goes back to those years. I had an office then on the third floor of Van Raalte, the top floor except for the attic. At the east end of the building, above what had at one time been a biology greenhouse and now was administrative offices on the first floor. Looking out across Nykerk and watching day by day, especially in the winter when the leaves were gone, the construction process on DeWitt. It was for no particular reason, nothing momentous happened, the building got done, and it handled it and has gone through many changes itself. But somehow the way my desk was facing the window and the way as I said saw this day by day. The transformation of what had been an intramural playing field into this massive building gave me many visual images that are implanted in my memory. I think sometimes that although Van Raalte was destroyed, the ghost of it is still there in memories such as that.

CM: Was it a good thing to move out of Van Raalte when you did?

CH: We were glad to move into Lubbers in ’75. It was at the very beginning of ’75. Even though we knew that we were getting a second hand building, I had very serious doubts about whether they would be able to get the formaldehyde smell out of it. But they did—I was wrong on that. Of course it was a necessity because Van Raalte was literally falling down. The third floor had been condemned for classrooms because of a ceiling collapse, but continued to be used for faculty offices for about a year after that, I guess, or more. I have good memories of the old place.

CM: Why?
CH: Partly because of the age, the patina, the wooden corridors, all the wood in the classrooms as opposed to essentially brick and cement block and plaster, and various synthetic materials in the ceiling and stuff like that. But it had not been well cared for, the building, and I think it was slated to be torn down even if it hadn't burned. So the fire was a blessing in a way.

CM: Yeah, I just hate to see people out of work.

CH: Well, and it gave us insurance money which otherwise would had to be raised, but there was also some significant loss of irreplaceable things and a lot of time spent in simply recovering from.

CM: Tell me about your interest in Charles Williams?

CH: You already know that Charles Williams was an English writer, publisher, poet, dramatist, novelist, theologian, popularizer. Well, more than just a popularizer. He had an original streak in his thinking. About 12 years older than C. S. Lewis and became a member of the Lewis circle in Oxford. Anglican. Very markedly Christian writer so there was a Christian cast, I think, to everything that he wrote. I read one of his novels, War in Heaven, when I was in college, but didn't pursue or didn't have any particular interest. In about '65, Eerdmans reprinted about 5 of the 7 novels. These were sent to me in a bunch along with a recent scholarly book on Williams called The Theology of Amanda Glove to write a book review. I got into them, read them right through, and was fascinated. I saw a lot of them. And the "F-Shot" was a review article, 20 some pages, essentially an article about Charles Williams concentrating on his novels that was published in '67. I well remember when I first
came here to teach, I hadn't finished that task. It was largely in the summer, it must have been '66 that I read the novels. I remember I would come over and teach in the morning and go home. I remember sitting at a table in the front window of my living room and writing away, and then coming back over to teach another class and so on. I don't know how long that went on, probably only a few days although it seems like... But anyway, that got done. Then there was that summer that I had that grant to study in England, which I mentioned earlier. My former professor and mentor, Clyde Kilby at Wheaton College, gave me a list of several of the people that he had been in touch with and urged me to try to see them. People connected with Williams and Lewis. I did manage to see several of them. A number of the people were quite elderly and have since died. I saw Williams's older sister, who is still living in St. __________, and a very old friend of his named John Pellow, and his widow. Also at that time I met his son, although I didn't develop any kind of acquaintance or friendship with him until later. But I didn't write anything more about Williams. I guess I did have some ideas and pursued them in a couple of papers that I gave at conferences, but just didn't feel ready to bring them to the point of publication until the early '80s when Barbara Reynolds was here as a visiting professor. She was the editor of "Seven," and I wanted to submit something. I felt that I could work up one of the Williams papers that I had given and submitted to that journal. So I did that. It was accepted and published and I have since published three or four other things on Williams and written still more as conference papers. I am now working on a book which I am not writing, simply editing, collecting essays by other people on Williams.
I went to the conference in Germany in November of '86 marking the centennial of his birth--did a paper there. I got involved on various trips to England in the late '70s and then when we were there for a whole semester in the spring of '81. I got involved in activities in London of the Charles Williams Society, one of which was a monthly Sunday afternoon reading group. Coming back from sabbatical in '81, I helped to get a group like that started here. We met pretty much around the calendar, maybe 10 or 11 months of the year, on a Sunday afternoon in various people's homes. Usually in Holland, though people came from as far as Olivet and Lansing. In this way we read through all of Williams' novels and several other books. The format was simply going around the circle reading aloud, sometimes pausing at the end of a chapter for reflection or anything anyone wanted to say. But the main focus was not on discussion and there was absolutely no preparation, which was one great advantage of that sort of format. This group continued until the summer of '88 when a combination of circumstances, my going on sabbatical again, and a couple of other people who were very regular in the group moving away to other parts of the country. And the fact that we had really gone through a lot of Williams's writing, it sort of came to an end.

CM: Why is he so interesting to you?

CH: He has what to me is a very coherent and a very true vision of what the Christian faith is all about. An understanding that brings in the insights of early ages, of people traditionally known as church fathers. Eastern Orthodox as well as Western. He emphasizes sometimes aspects that have not come down to us traditionally in the main
stream of Christian thought. And yet seem to me, he makes them seem, he gives one the sense that they are very important. Insights such as the idea of coinherence, the interdependence of all people and all things, the mutuality of existence. He was also a very good writer. Had a way with __________. He has a lot to say.

CM: What about your fascination with Milton?

CH: Well that goes back farther to my first encounter with a world literature course as a sophomore in college. "Paradise Lost" was in that, and it was well taught. I felt that I saw in Milton...well, first of all what struck me was again a person of great intellectual power and great insight into Christian answers obviously to some of the basic questions that have always confronted the human mind. His work was obviously solid in its scriptural roots. He had a high regard for the authority of scripture. But he even more than Williams I am sure, was immensely, widely read and acquainted with all sorts of other traditions and brought these to bear. I continued to study Milton in college with a full course in graduate school and then on my own. I developed an appreciation for Milton as a person struggling with living a Christian life. I felt that he has a great deal to say to us. More recently I have been interested in how it is that people are not able to hear what he has to say.

CM: Some people view scholarship as destroying poems. Do you think that in the case of Milton, for you, that the scholarship teaches us better than __________?

CH: Oh, absolutely. Of course, scholarship can destroy the immediacy of an experience insofar as the major experience is an emotional one and requires that spontaneity. I don't know if this is a critically respectable idea, but what I would like to do as the
reader of a poem is to experience over again in my own way, for myself, the kind of experience that went into the making of the poem. And unless the poem was just a spontaneous gushing out of feelings, then it is silly to suppose that one's response should be that, to the extent that a great deal of the poet's own experience, a great deal of reflection, a great deal of the cultural artifacts that went into the making of his mind or her mind, that these all come into the poem. We can only recapture that experience by learning what those things mean, learning to discern those realities back in the shadows behind the poem. And you can only do that through scholarship.

Besides that, let's take another kind of analysis which could also be called scholarship. And that is a prosotic analysis, an analysis of the rhythm, and meter, and rhyme, assonance, and alliteration, and all the technical effects. You've got to analyze. I know that there is a romantic view that when we dissect, we kill something. Yet it doesn't have to be. For me very, very often, the analysis results in enhancing my appreciation for the poet's art. In seeing beauties, seeing admirable achievement in a work that I would not have seen just in casual reading, and indeed, often that I would not have seen if someone else had not pointed them out in a journal article or a book. So I think that scholarship is very important to a fuller understanding, a fuller experience in poetry.

CM: You certainly do more than your share of scholarship, I think. Is there time to do it here or do you make time wherever you are?

CH: Yes, I think it is important to do. I am always behind. Any given project, any given idea for an article or something always takes longer than you think it will. Sometimes
it will be 10 years from the initial, sort of vague conception to what finally comes out. Then even after the thing is printed I am still thinking about it, still picking up further ideas on the same matter.

CM: What about computers in the humanities? You attended a couple of conferences on those.

CH: I was very much interested at one time in the use of the computer, or interested in a bibliography project—a bibliography on religion in literature in connection with the journal published by CCL. I saw the possibilities for computers and really making a great deal more of material available than had been done otherwise. Of course, this is being done now. I was never into it except as very much a sideline, and one of many. The state of the art has gone far beyond where I was. I can no longer have any active participation. They are doing a lot of things with computers. They have got the whole body of Milton's writing on the computer, or maybe it is a project currently underway to do that.

CM: Will you be able to access that somehow?

CH: I suppose, but I don't know that I will. I guess my interests now are not so much along the lines of what I can do with that. There are other people around that can speak a lot better than I can to that question.

CM: For awhile you were the advisor to the Anchor. How was that?

CH: I enjoyed that. That happened at two different points, two different periods. When I came to Hope, the Anchor was a first rate publication. It was winning all-American honors. It was nicely balanced as a reflection of first of all news coverage, and the
whole gamut of concerns of the campus community, largely students, it caters to students. It deteriorated, and much of the tradition of good journalism was lost over a very short span of years simply because the people who knew what good journalism was all about graduated, and there were some bad semesters. There were some bad times when the Anchor was perceived by an editor...let us say, as her property to do with it pretty much what she wanted, and to perceive some very much minority view interests. That perception was shared by the campus community because that is what the Anchor had become. I had had some experience in college on the student newspaper, both in the editorial line and also in the actual production, typesetting, and that sort of thing, layout. I offered to be a kind of hands-on advisor and informal teacher to work with the Anchor staff, to get in there and do layout with them and things like that, and try to impart some of the basic rules of journalism which had been lost sight of. And that worked well, I thought. We did some good work for about a semester, and then again, I think it was a question of funding, of being able to support that kind of activity on my part on the college budget. My role became a little different and not so much involved. Then it kind of disappeared for a few years. And again, the Anchor appeared generally to the campus community to be very much in need of some help to get it into shape and become what it might be. I proposed, at that point to Gordon Van Wylen, to take the incoming Anchor staff for the next year, and in May, at the beginning of the summer, to have a workshop which would be largely a session of goal setting. We did that for a week, or was it longer? It might have been a couple of weeks. I don't just remember, and it seems hard to think that
all that we accomplished could have been accomplished in less time. No, it was a
week—May 21-25, 1984. Out of that came some well arranged plans—that is, setting
some goals. First of all, trying to think through the mission of the Anchor, and the
group came up with this as a mission statement, "As a student run and student
oriented newspaper serving the Hope community, we will investigate and reliably
report the news, arouse discussion and action on significant issues, and provide an
entertaining reading experience." Well, that seems obvious, and yet a lot of that was
not being done. I think the first part, "...student run, and student oriented," that was
certainly true, "serving the Hope community," I don't think there had been much
sense of that. The news reporting, let alone investigation, was very thin and spotty.
There was a great deal of emphasis on an entertaining reading experience. Well, what
came out of that next? I guess I don't have all the papers here. But they came up
with some goals such as to regain the respect of the campus community for the
Anchor. To make reading the Anchor a high priority in the weekly life of members
of the Hope community. To have an impact on the solution to current campus
problems and issues. Things like that. Then they came up with some very specific
goals for the immediate future having to do with the acquisition of word processing,
with providing systematic training in journalism for our staff, and I remember one of
the goals was to be able to turn over to the following year a staff that was trained and
experienced and would carry on. Because one of the problems that had come to beset
the Anchor was the incredible turnover, year by year or even semester by semester.
Partly you could say burn out, because the work was the responsibility of so few.
They would work really hard on it and sometimes couldn't last more than a semester. Have you talked with Beth Trembly about that?

CM: No.

CH: She was the editor, I think for a semester. That was before this in '84. But that was a good experience, and I continue to be in touch with the Anchor, but I didn't try to intrude myself. Back when they were such a fine paper, and they are pretty good again, they had had I guess you could say a tradition of being able to run their own show as well qualified and knowledgeable students without particularly faculty help. I think it was important for them to maintain that independence, although as I have tried to say in the intervening period, there have been times when they couldn't really do it without the help of some more experienced person. Also during that time there were constantly questions raised, by both students and faculty, "Wouldn't an incentive for more student involvement be to give course credit for the Anchor?" That has always been successfully resisted because of the kinds of pressures it could place on the faculty member and on the students involved in grading, and particularly if there were issues of censorship. It needs to have that degree of independence from the strictly academic structure.

CM: Is there anything you need to add or would like to talk about?

CH: I don't think so. You surprised me by the breadth of your questions.

CM: Nothing else that must be included in the history of the English department if I'm to be honest about it?

CH: Well, let me say this about our secretaries, have you gotten anything from anybody
about...?

CM: I don't think _______________.

CH: We have a secretary now who is a very important part of the English department.

One obvious reason for that, well, there are a couple, and maybe you think I am going to say because she is so efficient and gets so much done and manages to serve 20-25 professional people which is amazing. But what I am thinking of more than that is for many people who come up here to the window with a question or will call on the phone, she is the English department. She is the contact that they have. When I first came, I don't know if we had a secretary at all. I think the department chairman had a secretary on a very part-time basis, and one after another there was a very rapid turnover and they were not terribly competent people. I don't know where the business office got them, but I expect that they didn't offer pay incentives sufficient to attract very good people. I always had the dream of having, as a secretary in the department, someone who would be around a long time, get to know the way things are done, would be able to deal with some authority on matters of routine, and particularly deal with students. Also in a very friendly and helpful way, that's important. I think we have got that now, and we are very blessed to have Myra.

CM: Thank you so much for your time.