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Founding the Aesthetic Studies Major at UC Santa Cruz: An Oral History with Professor Pavel Machotka

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Founding the Aesthetic Studies Major at UC Santa Cruz:

An Oral History with Professor Pavel Machotka

Interviewed and Edited by Irene Reti

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2016

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Interview History

Pavel Machotka was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1936 and grew up during the Nazi occupation. His father was a sociologist. As a boy, Machotka studied English. After his father helped lead an uprising against the Communist Regime in 1948, the family was in danger and needed to flee Prague for the United States. Fortunately, Machotka's father had studied at the University of Chicago as a postdoc from 1934 to 1935 and was offered a position at the University of Chicago. Pavel's English skills proved useful after this immigration, when he attended high school in Chicago.

Machotka was awarded a Ford Pre-induction Scholarship to attend the University of Chicago at age sixteen, where he majored in social psychology. It was there that he saw his first Cézanne painting and fell in love with Cézanne. Cézanne was to become one of the focal points of his life's work.

Machotka went on to earn his MA and PhD from Harvard University, where his dissertation incorporated a social psychological study of aesthetics. After teaching at Harvard for a few years and then spending five years as a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Colorado Medical Center, Machotka was recruited by the University of California, Santa Cruz to join College Five (now known as Porter College).

Machotka arrived at UC Santa Cruz in 1970, when the campus was only five years old. He was hired by the Psychology Board of Studies and by Provost James Hall of the newly forming College Five in a time at UCSC when academic positions were jointly held between colleges and boards of studies. In this oral history Machotka describes the UCSC of the 1960s and early 1970s as “full of uncertainty and enthusiasm.... The atmosphere was one of experimentation, happiness to be here, some confusion, enormous energy for doing things. We felt we were in on the beginnings of a lovely experiment.”

It was that atmosphere of possibilities which created the climate for Machotka, Provost of College Five James Hall, Jonathan Beecher, David Swanger, Ivan Rosenblum, Eugene Switkes, and a few other colleagues to design and found the innovative interdisciplinary Aesthetic Studies major, housed in College Five. Aesthetic Studies was one of several interdisciplinary majors offered by the UCSC colleges. Others offered at that time included Modern Society and Social Thought (Stevenson College); and Latin American Studies (Merrill College). The 1972-73 UCSC General Catalog includes the following description of Aesthetic Studies:

It is specifically intended for students who 1) wish to devote concentrated study to certain fields of aesthetics such as art history,

sociology of art, or aesthetic theory and psychology, or b) who wish to devote themselves to the practice of arts not represented by full boards of study and degree programs, or who need greater flexibility in combining the practice of several related arts. Four distinct “paths” exist within the major in Aesthetic Studies: a Studio-Performance path, an Aesthetic Theory and Psychology path, a History of the Visual Arts path, and an Art and Society path.

The heart of this oral history is dedicated to a conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of this innovative major, which attracted and graduated creative, brilliant, and accomplished students and exemplified the best of UC Santa Cruz during its early period, but ultimately fell prey to some of the systemic problems with the campus at that time. Aesthetic Studies unfortunately did not survive Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer’s reorganization of UCSC in the late 1970s, which eliminated college majors and most college courses. Machotka was provost of College Five during this period of transition (1976 to 1979) and discusses some of his feelings about that reorganization and the early years of UCSC.

After reorganization, Machotka continued to teach in the psychology board,

becoming chair from 1988-1991. He also chaired the Academic Senate (1991-1994) and served on several Senate committees. Those activities are also covered in this narrative. Machotka took early retirement from UCSC in 1994 as part of the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program (VERIP) but continued to teach and conduct research at UCSC for several years after that, until his move to Umbria, Italy.

In the early 1980s, after years in academia, Machotka decided to devote himself to the practice of painting, for which he received some mentoring from his colleagues at UC Santa Cruz, especially Professor of Art Donald Weygandt. Now an accomplished painter, Machotka has exhibited his paintings in Santa Cruz, the San Francisco Bay Area, Prague, and Italy. He has also authored many books on the psychology of art including (*Painting and Our Inner World: The Psychology of Image Making* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, New York, 2003); *Style and Psyche: The Art of Lundy Siegriest and Terry St. John* (Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ: 1999); and on the painter Paul Cézanne (*Cézanne: Landscape into Art* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) and *Cézanne: The Eye and the Mind* (Marseille, Crès Editions, 2008). Since retiring, Machotka has lectured around the world, participated in international congresses, and served on editorial and advisory boards, including Ph.D. dissertation committees and two scholarly journals

concerned with the psychology of artistic creativity.

I conducted two oral history interviews with Pavel Machotka on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at McHenry Library on the UCSC campus. I learned that Professor Machotka was visiting UC Santa Cruz from Italy to accept the Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeriti Award. The Regional History Project was happy to interview Machotka as part of a series that we are conducting on the early history of the arts at UC Santa Cruz. While Machotka was in Santa Cruz, I also had the pleasure of hearing him give a lecture to UC Santa Cruz's Emeriti Association: "Psychology and Art, and the Case of Cézanne." Many of Machotka's former students attended this lecture and it was evident from the enthusiasm of the audience that Machotka is a beloved mentor. The Panunzio award honors UC emeriti professors in the humanities and social sciences. Machotka is the seventh UC Santa Cruz professor to receive this award; only UCLA and UC Irvine have as many awardees.

The completion of this oral history has involved transcontinental collaboration between Italy and Santa Cruz, which has been facilitated by the ease of Internet communication and by Machotka's responsiveness and experience editing publications. It is quite unusual to conduct, transcribe, edit, and publish an oral history in less than two months time! I transcribed and audited the interviews

and emailed the transcript to Machotka, who reviewed the text with careful attention and requested some minor edits. I also wish to thank Nikki Silva, of NPR's Kitchen Sisters, who is an alum of Aesthetic Studies and a historian of UC Santa Cruz. Silva provided me with a recording of a reunion of Aesthetic Studies majors at UC Santa Cruz in 2013. Thanks also to Ziggy Rendler-Bregman for her work in organizing that reunion and in documenting the history of this extraordinary major.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—Irene Reti, Director, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz

January 6, 2016

Early Life in Prague

Reti: Today is Tuesday, November 17, 2015 and this is Irene Reti. I am here with Pavel Machotka. We are going to start out, Pavel, talking today a little bit about your early life and childhood, and then how you came to the United States, and your early education. Then we'll move on to talk about Aesthetic Studies. So why don't you start by telling me where and when you were born.

Machotka: I was born in Prague in Czechoslovakia in 1936. In 1939 the country was occupied by the Germans, after the Munich Pact, and it was, in fact, occupied by them until 1945. That becomes relevant to what I have to say in a moment.

I went to grammar school in my section of Prague where we lived for two years. And then my father heard that there was a school downtown, which secretly taught English. He didn't want my education to be limited by what the Germans permitted. So he sent me there, and among other things I got to know Central Prague. It was tramways that took me there, which was lovely, actually, and it taught me something about the importance of Prague as an old city.

In any case, I learned some English. I had no idea that I would ever use it. This went on until 1945. That year is significant, not only for the history of the Czechs, but actually for my father and then for what brought us to the United States. He joined a group that planned an uprising against the Germans. He joined it in April 1945 and the uprising actually broke out spontaneously in Prague and in other small cities on May 5, 1945. (My school's principal was shot on May 2 for

directing his school.) Without going into any of the details of how it was led, it finally succeeded in getting the Germans to surrender to the Czechs. That becomes important too, in terms of the future history, because the day after that surrender was signed, the Russian tanks rolled in, cleaned up the remainder of the few Germans, and took credit for the victory, by which they meant they would ultimately control all of Czechoslovakia.

They reproached the Czech National Council, the body of which my father was a leading member, with having done absolutely the wrong thing in accepting the surrender. What they would have wished was a failure of the uprising, as in Warsaw. That's an end of a small parenthesis.

All the members of the council that had directed the uprising were essentially shunted aside by the returning exile government a few days later, because they had a certain popular mandate, and when the Soviet armies rolled into Prague, followed by various functionaries, it was clear that the whole matter was to be a Russian matter.

Three years later, after the communist coup d'état, my father had to leave Czechoslovakia immediately because he was told by a student of his, who happened to know the facts, that he was about to be arrested. So he left. And the rest of the family, my mother, and my two sisters, and I were to leave, were to find our own way, which we did with the help of the Underground. I happened to go first because they wanted to split up the large family, and it turned out that my mother followed by a similar route a week later. We found each other in

Germany, waited for several months for a visa to the United States. Why the United States? Because my father had studied at the University of Chicago as a postdoc in the years 1934 to 1935.

Reti: Oh. And he was a social psychologist?

Machotka: A sociologist. He returned to Chicago on an invitation in 1947, in November, just three months before the coup d'état. He returned to Czechoslovakia with a contract to teach sociology at the University of Chicago next year for two trimesters. Thanks to that, we got to the United States relatively quickly.

The University of Chicago

And now I'm in the United States, becoming really familiar with the language very quickly, as kids do, and beginning to think of myself as somebody who has to work hard in school in order to get into a good university and so on. I did all of that, to put it briefly, and then got a scholarship, which had just been announced—the Ford Preinduction Scholarship, so called—which selected certain sixteen-year-olds, in other words students in the tenth grade in high school, for college entrance if they passed an exam.

So I got one of those scholarships and was admitted to the University of Chicago—not by my choice but by the choice of the powers that be. Apart from the welcome connection to my father's history, that turned out to be important for

my thinking about undergraduate education, which I'll get to later when we come to the UCSC colleges and all these questions.

Reti: Okay.

Machotka: Important because I was astounded at how rigorous the teaching at Chicago was, but I'll describe that later.

At the end of those four years I didn't really know which way I wanted to go, maybe toward art history or maybe toward natural sciences. A vocational interest exam, which I took to find out something about the ranking of what I was interested in, showed me with highest interest in natural sciences and art and art history. But I decided instead to apply for a program in social psychology. I did apply to one and I got in. To this day this chutzpah frightens me. I think things were done like that then. Now one applies to ten graduate schools. But I knew no better, applied to one, and got in.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Machotka: (laughs) It's only worth mentioning because it says something about the times. And here begin the questions that I had to ultimately answer through my profession, or through a position in a university. My thesis advisor, Gordon Allport, said, "Yes, Pavel, you can do a thesis on aesthetics, as long as it is from a psychological point of view." So I thought about it and came up with doing a developmental, and a cross-cultural study at the same time, in France and the United States. I got a Fulbright scholarship for that. Having done half the

research in France—this is now the years 1958-1960—I returned to Harvard, repeated the same study in Harvard’s suburbs and wrote my thesis, which was, I think, minimally good. I wouldn’t call it by any better name than that.

And now I had a PhD, and I also knew that if I wanted to, and was good enough, I could certainly continue with the study of aesthetics. As it was, the first position I was offered after my instructorship at Harvard was at the University of Colorado Medical Center. I’d been there briefly as a summer visiting scholar helping lead a program in mental health. I was interested in clinical psychology, which followed naturally from my interest in personality, as a graduate student.

Reti: Hmm. So this was not related to aesthetics.

Machotka: It was not related to aesthetics. On the other hand, the advantages were extraordinary. They offered me a very good salary. They said, “Pavel, three-quarters of your time is yours. Do your aesthetics and so on. And just make sure that you’ve evaluated our project, which should take about one-quarter of your time.” Well, it did, actually. They guessed correctly and they were certainly honest about it. I did do some research in aesthetics and some planning for further research, which I carried out once I came here.

But I realized that a medical center was not the place for me, that there were not enough people to talk to, say, about aesthetics, or about psychological research. And I decided to look for another position.

Coming to the University of California, Santa Cruz

Well, a little bit like that entrance into graduate school, I wrote to a couple of universities, including Santa Cruz. I wrote to David Marlowe, who had been a young assistant professor at Harvard when I was a graduate student. His response was, "Pavel, we were just thinking about you because a college of the arts has opened up and its members should be in all the disciplines, but to the degree possible be interested in the arts." And that was all.

I thought, this is a ticket that I would have written for myself if somebody had said, 'Here's a blank form'—

Reti: Wow.

Machotka: I didn't get the position immediately because it was not funded. Frank Barron, however, fit into the first of the two slots and I then fit into the second one, the year following. And that was then 1970. So I came here in 1970.

I was in College Five. I was in College Five under this implicit contract. I give this to you in detail partly to give you the flavor of Provost Hall, James B. Hall. One Sunday morning in Denver I received a phone call saying, "I'm James B. Hall, Provost of College Five of the University of California in Santa Cruz. I'm at the hotel. I'd like to meet you."

Reti: He was in Denver already?

Machotka: Yes, he had come to Denver, I think to see me, but without having let me know. That was his kind of spontaneity and inventiveness, which I came to value during the times we worked together later. Anyway, he said [deep voice] "Pavel, think of two courses that you've always wanted to teach but couldn't because they didn't fit into any categories. They should be related to the arts. You will teach those in College Five. Then you will owe two courses to psychology." Now, two-and-two is a very generous offer for a college to make, perhaps too generous because even one-and-three was not followed by most faculty who came after.

In any case, I got through the psychology part of the appointment, partly thanks to David Marlowe. I was accepted by them, and then got through College Five thanks to Jim Hall. So that appointment was made to satisfy both bodies. And it did. Psychology and the college.

Reti: What did you know about UCSC at that point?

Machotka: Oh, well, I did know a few things. I had read about it when it started in 1965. How closely I'd followed it, I'm not sure. But I also made a few phone calls to fellow undergraduates from Chicago who had come here to become professors. After long phone calls from Denver, I really learned that everything that I had been promised could be realized. At that time there was no barrier to realizing it because there were no institutional rules, no limits on what you could legitimately do. Tom Vogler told me that I should come. So did Barry McLaughlin in psychology, who had been a fellow graduate student.

So yes, I did know that. And I had Jim Hall's enthusiasm for the college, enthusiasm which was his personality: If it can be done, I'll do it. Or I'll do it with help, but I'll do it. And that is how it all began for me in 1970. Without losing much time he said, "Pavel, I want you to design a program in general aesthetics." I said, "How do I do that?" And he said, "You'll find a way," or something to that effect. You see how the dream was being realized in each of these little actions? It was quite incredible.

Well, if you're ready for the details on that I'll be very glad to tell you, but historically speaking that's essentially what brought me here to the position where I would be designing a program for the college.

Reti: Okay. So, when you arrived on campus what was the state of arts education at UCSC?

Machotka: Well, I'm not sure I knew much about it immediately, but in retrospect, once I got to know the arts faculty, which I did because many of them were in College Five, I learned that these were all people dedicated to the idea of art, to the idea of aesthetic values, to the idea of composition, of thinking like painters. In other words, not to the mechanics of how to become an artist, but to

the underlying values. Don Weygandt, Doug McClellan¹, Patrick Aherne, Hardy Hanson—all considered art to be the most important activity that there was. And they were very good teachers. All different from each other, but very good teachers. Those four names I remember the best and I got to know the closest. They were actually the state of the art and it was a very high state.

I think people who left here as graduates in art went on to graduate schools very well prepared to think, not about techniques of painting, but about the idea of painting, about following an aesthetic principle, let's say. Those words are way too hoity-toity perhaps. But I do mean something by them: in other words, to think in terms of a coherent work of art, rather than in terms of technique, or ultimately, as one learns in graduate school, to think in terms of how to propagate yourself and get a good career established. My answer is not very detailed, perhaps. But I think my reply to your question is very positive.

¹ See Nikki Silva, Interviewer and Irene Reti, Editor, *An Artist with Shoes On: An Oral History with Founding UC Santa Cruz Professor of Art Douglas McClellan* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) Available in full text at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9tn727hf>

And it stayed that way, or it remained the core of the studies of art, until reorganization and at the same time the intrusion of contemporary art—all sorts of other ways of thinking about art than the visual ones—conceptual and so on.

Inventing a New Major: Aesthetic Studies

Reti: All right. So let's track back to—you arrive here and you are tasked by Jim Hall with inventing this new interdisciplinary major: aesthetic studies.

Machotka: Yes.

Reti: So tell me about that.

Machotka: The only thing that occurred to me was that we had very few courses of our own in the college, but the university as a whole had a number of offerings that, if we could borrow them, would fill up our major, or would give us the choice necessary to satisfy several possibilities of study within the major. So philosophy was one of them; *Philosophy of Aesthetics*, for example, was one such course. *Psychology of Aesthetics* was another area. I would be contributing to that, as would Frank Barron, who essentially signed off on this Aesthetics Studies major plan with me. And *History of Art* would be another. Then, of course, all the practical arts would form part of the major. Half of it would be learning how to do an art up to a certain level, and the other half would be to write a senior thesis about that or about some aspect of that, which might be personal, introspective, or it might be objective, dealing with the philosophy or psychology or history of what one was also trying to *do*. So combining practice, in other words, with

reflection, without any specific guidelines as to what the reflection should be, but yes, the reflection had to be there.

And this made it different from the arts, in that one did not have to reach the same degree of competence in the arts, perhaps, as those graduating in a board of study. And it would not make psychologists or philosophers or historians of the people doing a thesis. But it would make them do a thesis.

We'll come to your questions about the criticism of the Aesthetic Studies major, but it's worth it for me to say at this point that, if my aim, to the degree that it was adopted by the college, was to educate people in an interesting way, rather than to have a brilliantly written, organized set of criteria for their curriculum—if it was the first, we succeeded. We had some wonderful graduates. As I think back on those that I worked with closely with, they all educated *themselves* in something by virtue of doing that senior project.

Yes, so that is what it looked like. I was borrowing courses from everywhere in the university. This is the year 1971, I think, and everything was still—if it was not prohibited, it was permitted. I don't know if anybody grumbled, but the Committee on Educational Policy okayed it in principle. The next step was the Registrar. The Registrar was amenable and very happy to accept anything that was furthering the structure of education at the university. So it got passed by the Registrar and then it went to the catalog.

That was essentially how you made up a major if you didn't have any means at the time. I did not give any thought to new faculty because the college had a very

limited faculty budget; it had restrictions on whom it could hire for the boards of study that it was hiring for. I had to work with what was already in the university.

Reti: So for people who might be reading this, who are not familiar with the history of UCSC, this was a time when you could have a college-based major and this was a college-based major.

Machotka: That's right.

Reti: So you didn't have FTE who were assigned specifically to Aesthetic Studies. You were cobbling this together, with a lot of negotiation and invitation.

Machotka: Yes. No better than that.

Reti: Yes.

Machotka: I think most of the people who were physically in College Five and in boards of study in the arts and music were okay with that, and they did contribute. Nevertheless, it was a small number compared to how many one would need who were appointed for that major. Right. So we had a core and the rest we cobbled together.

Reti: What did you do about studio space? Or was that from the art board, so you would use that?

Machotka: Yes, that would be that kind of surreptitious and tolerated borrowing that we did. It was also borrowing of classroom space and studio space, yes.

Reti: Okay. And did you have contact directly with Dean McHenry, the chancellor?²

Machotka: I did have contact with him, but not immediately and I don't think I had contact with him about the Aesthetic Studies major. I'm sure he read whatever I had written about it. But later when I became vice provost and then provost I did have quite a bit of contact with him. I'll tell you about some of it because it's interesting and it will be about the structure of UCSC.

Reti: So we'll do that in just a little bit.

Machotka: I won't forget. (chuckles)

Reti: So you did an exit interview with social sciences when you retired³ in which you said—and I'm just going to quote from this briefly—"UCSC was full of uncertainty and enthusiasm when I came. The atmosphere was one of experimentation, happiness to be here, some confusion, enormous energy for doing things. We felt we were in on the beginnings of a lovely experiment." Can

² See the three-volume oral history with Dean McHenry available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/register/mchenry>

³ See "Pavel's Exit Interview 1995" (UCSC Special Collections Department, UCSC Library).

you expand on that a little bit and maybe tell me a story to illustrate that atmosphere that you encountered?

Machotka: Yes, I put together a couple of notes about that. I think a general comment to expand on is that the enthusiasm was kind of a sense of possibilities without necessarily knowing where one was going to go with them. In other words, we came to a new university and we would ultimately find our way. I'm speaking certainly for myself, but I think I'm speaking for a number of my colleagues, particularly in College Five, because the extra thing that one had to have, besides being a member of a board of study preferably in that field, was a love for the arts, some kind of love for the arts, not necessarily a practical one, but maybe yes. Maybe being a good pianist or a budding painter, or simply interested in the history of art as a normal consumer of it.

So it was not that precisely a directed enthusiasm. However that enthusiasm and the freedom led to a number of interesting activities that a normal university would not have even thought about, or allowed. For example, Sherwood Dudley, who conducted the UCSC Orchestra and was in College Five, could one day say, "Pavel, why don't we do a concert of Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* with you and Grosvenor Cooper?" I was an amateur pianist, not very good. Grosvenor too. But it seemed like a great idea. And if the conductor could invite me, then I would certainly study very hard and try to learn the piece. So I was the second pianist. Grosvenor was the first pianist. I went through rehearsals. I had never felt the sonorous vibrations of cellos at a piano bench. So I felt that for the first time.

Reti: Mm.

Machotka: I have to describe it with that sense of marvel that I had because that describes those initial years.

Well, of course the first rehearsal was dreadful and a disaster. But it all got better. And eventually Grosvenor and I did play the pianos in College Five, in the dining room, where you can't hear the echo of the other person, and we managed, by some miracle, to stay in rhythm. We were very pleased with this. Grosvenor was about twenty-five years older than I and was senior academic preceptor when I came. Grosvenor was a very inspiring teacher of the humanities—I say this from my personal experience, because he was my teacher in the course *Introduction to the humanities* at the University of Chicago—and helped form my interest in painting, music, and literature. So there was a concert that an amateur could give and be supporting a nice, collegiate activity by Sherwood.

A couple of undergraduates (Eric Vinicoff and Damian Martin) decided to make a film as their graduating project. They wrote the script. It was a kind of James Bond film, but with irony, because the James Bond character always manages to screw things up because he's not really all that skillful. But he goes through all the motions of jumping out of helicopters and so on. So I became that James Bond.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: It was a wonderful experience because I was dealing with two guys with a kind of partial competence, and me with partial competence in what I had to do and so on. And yet for twelve Sundays we would film and somehow hammer the film together. I mean, everything you can think of as possibly wrong with a film is wrong with this film. Certainly the sound is funny because they had no mixer. So the sound would go up to the end of the sentence and then would come music. But you know—stop; go; no blending. The acting left a lot to be desired, although Grosvenor Cooper (once again) was expressive and Fred Hunnicutt gave it some of his professional training. But enormous enthusiasm once again, behind this. Those are my experiences and I obviously remember them vividly.

Part of this enthusiasm, or amateurishness combined with that enthusiasm, was the central structure of the university. For example, when you needed to purchase something there was one person to call. And this would take a half hour because you would have to have, almost in Italian fashion, a complete rundown of what has happened to your family since the last time you talked.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: And then the thing would be ordered. But it was very amiable, I must say. Efficiency is important, yes. I mean, anybody who gives you any funds needs to know you're spending them well. They were not necessarily being spent well but they were being spent agreeably. We all knew it was the beginning. It would all tighten up.

So that's one. I think the other thing I need to say about the beginning affected other colleges much more than College Five. Much of the faculty and the first provosts of the first colleges came here in midcareer. And those were fairly committed to the collegiate idea. The British faculty members remembered what Cambridge or Oxford was like and how wonderful it was for a few upper-class students to learn by contact with faculty and fellow students. Cowell certainly always had that as its motto. Stevenson perhaps a little less so, but then it was already taken by Cowell. Stevenson did its own thing. Those two colleges were at first administered by Englishmen. That's one thing. But also, kind of midcareer Englishmen who wanted to contribute to education. They were no longer pursuing further research, or having help with research from graduate students.

But other mid-level faculty felt the same way. Maybe they had done a few significant things elsewhere and now wanted to be in this promising system in which the Cowell motto would probably be important: "The pursuit of truth in the company of friends." So that too is part of the initial atmosphere. It was not all that amateurish. It was based on the experiences one had had and wanted to develop further. So those are a couple of observations on that atmosphere.

Reti: Thank you. Do you have more to say about the conception of the Aesthetic Studies major?

Machotka: I think I've said what I could about the conception of it. Personally, I could say that in a way part of it was a kind of externalization of things that are important to me: the psychology of aesthetics; the psychology of creativity. I was

going to go on and study that anyway, but building it into the major was a kind of projection of what I was most interested in. But that's how everything is done, isn't it? Ultimately.

Reti: Of course.

Machotka: Yes, hmm.

The Natural Landscape of UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Let's talk about the campus as a natural landscape, a landscape of inspiration, perhaps.

Machotka: Yes, well, it's not only all the redwoods that were impressive and which remain impressive, but the sense of the buildings being inserted into the woods, that sense that every building stopped at about the point where it started to destroy the roots of the nearby tree. A trunk could be six or seven feet from the wall but its roots had to be protected. That all was done. I think I could not find traces of anything that was cut down uselessly. That is admirable—this beautiful architecture and the beautiful sense of wanting the building and the people occupying them and the students coming in as being part of that nature. Santa Cruz was, from the start, a campus inserted into a space rather than a campus occupying a blank, flat space, which is most often the case, for very good reasons. That infected one's ideas about what the campus was striving to become.

Reti: How so?

Machotka: Striving to become connected with the simpler things of life, not necessarily with a city. A city pushes you immediately towards ideas of career and certain kinds of movements, certain kinds of living situations. A forest—well, it is like a fairy tale—(chuckles) it could be a negative fairy tale, but it wasn't—in helping you feel that there are dreams to be realized. I think this use of the space helped further that idea.

Reti: Did you see that reflected in the kinds of art that the students were engaged in?

Machotka: I wish I could tell you that. I'm not sure. Among other things, all beginning art students have some idea of what they would have liked and admired and would like to imitate that or further it. So there is an influence of many sources. But I cannot say specifically that that environment was pictured in the paintings of the art students. And music is always abstract and it's always the same anywhere.

Reti: Of course. What about for you? Now were you already painting at this point in your life? Or did that come later?

Machotka: I was beginning to paint, yes. I was beginning to paint in the privacy of my space. I talked about it with some of the senior painters, especially Doug McClellan and Don Weygandt and Patrick Aherne. Eventually it got to the point where the frankest of them, Don Weygandt, said, "Pavel, why don't you learn to do this right?" A thing I had to hear. However by then—I had been experimenting with painting while I was a provost living in the Cardiff House.

And then came reorganization. I resigned as provost, or was resigned, I'm not sure which of the two happened. But I knew that that was the end of that function for me under the new system.

I moved off campus, kept on painting, and at that point I got Don Weygandt's occasional criticism, and then ultimately the injunction to learn to do it well. That was 1982, probably.

Reti: So that was a little bit later.

Machotka: After reorganization.

Reti: The story is unfolding. But you did mention in your remarks that you sent to the reunion of Aesthetic Studies majors at Alumni Weekend in 2013, you said that Aesthetic Studies had an effect on you as well. You said, "I think my psychological research became more informed by the world of art and of course I eventually turned to painting and became a specialist on Cézanne. Students may not realize it at the time but influence goes both ways." I think that's fascinating. It's so true that the students think of the professor imparting their wisdom and teaching but they don't think about how that is shaping the professor as well.

Machotka: Yes. And that went on until my last five, seven years, until the year of 2000, after VERIP. I'll tell you about that last.

Working with Psychology Students

I'm not sure if the students taught me, or whether the idea of teaching students may have taught me. I was not going to do research in the traditional psychological manner, so now I'm speaking about psychological methodology. I was always interested in personality, and the way in which personality either determines or influences what you're interested in—for me, of course, aesthetics at first, and eventually also creativity. But aesthetics itself, preference and liking—that I began to plan shortly after my arrival. I do think it was the spirit of freedom here—and now I mean intellectual freedom—that helped me design my studies differently than I would have had I stayed where I was, or had I found a position in a normal university.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: (laughs) The word “normal” can be a negative one. Here I use it to suggest that a university that is normal in its departmental structure can also encourage normal methods of research. I cannot tell whether it was my joining a university still in its formative stages, or my readiness to do things differently, or both, but I began to be dissatisfied with my research. The normal way of relating aesthetic preference to personality is to correlate scores on a test of preference with scores on a personality inventory. If you get a nice table of correlations, you can try to interpret it and then publish it. But I discovered that interpreting was really an academic, if I may say so, exercise: “Yes, I have this correlation and

look, it's statistically significant. What I think it means is"—and I didn't want to ever just guess at what it means.

So I started studying personality by means of a questionnaire. I was very close to psychoanalysis, or the psychodynamic theory of personality, to put it more broadly. So I dreamt up a questionnaire with about thirty questions in it, all open ended, about the stuff that interests psychologists and psychiatrists in practice: relationships with figures in the past (parents and siblings and so on); the development of those relationships through time and their present state; the connections with individuals of your own age, romantic and otherwise. A lot of it was on interpersonal relationships, but also religion, also prominent fears. The things that make up that kind of dynamic psychology.

That turned out to be a very good questionnaire. I mean, it could have been perhaps made better. But if it was administered by someone who knew how to explore the answers—and I trained all my students in learning how to do that—then it gave one very good information, information that turned out to be highly reliable.

Now, this is not really about me or about the psychological methodology, but it worked extremely well the way I used it and the way my students administered it. So that then became a book—*The Nude: Perception and Personality*⁴, about what psychological dynamics underlie, say, the liking for sentimental nudes, or the liking for perfect nudes as against imperfect nudes, both of which are aesthetic questions, or masculine versus feminine nudes, which is a very common question. Looking at several variables at a time, and studying them with something akin to clinical methods, was really in part the result of the freedom I felt here. I later used that in other ways, but now we're talking about my final years here.

But yes, what students taught me: they continued to teach me. I put together a different research project, one in which I studied the relationship between personality—measured the same way, clinically—and the making of art. We used a computer so that everybody would be using the same instrument. I taught them how to use Photoshop. I had them do images in certain ways and then compared the images with the material found in the personality questionnaire.

⁴ New York: Irvington Publishers: Distributed by Halsted Press, 1979.

I did some statistical studies which, by the way, reflect the other half of my liking for intellectual things as a senior, namely natural sciences, or precision. I really had to very carefully verify all of my interpretations of people, even though they were based on a lot of evidence, were not just clinical fantasies, I did that. And as a result it turned out quite well.

But now to the education of the students. At the lecture⁵ some of the people who had worked with me [on those studies] were present. They considered that year, their senior year, spent very productively. In our research meetings we had training in methods and in design (such as keeping the image making and the personality interviews fully independent), and, later, serious discussions about the meaning of what we were finding. If someone tested a subject in the image making part, someone else would give them the personality questionnaire, so there would be no contamination. So they learned how to do these two things and then we interpreted the stuff together always as a research group. Each

⁵ Here Machotka is referring to his November 10, 2015 lecture sponsored by the UCSC Emeriti Association entitled "Psychology and Art, and the case of Cézanne." On this occasion Machotka was awarded the 2015 Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeriti Award that honors UC emeriti professors in the humanities and social sciences.

student wrote up an analysis of the participants whose image making they had followed and got an original senior thesis out of it.

Reti: And these were students in Aesthetic Studies or is this psychology?

Machotka: This is psychology. By then there was no Aesthetic Studies. A lot of this stuff was done between 1994 and 2000. But that wonder of learning from, while working with students, was there for me and it was there for them. And they've remained lifelong contacts. We don't see each other very often; I'm somewhere else. But we are in contact and it was good for them. I'm happy to add that to saying that it was good for me. But yes, it was certainly good for them.

Reti: Okay.

Machotka: Yes, a good education within the context of our requirements—that a senior project, a senior thesis, was still required everywhere [at UCSC]. And so I could make up a research project of mine requiring contributions from advanced students, each of whom would take a defined aspect of that overall project and turn it into a senior thesis. It became theirs, and resulted in a substantial piece of work.

Reti: Absolutely! For an undergraduate, yes.

Machotka: Yes, Santa Cruz was good even apart from the colleges, totally apart from the colleges, in having this individual study possible as the final requirement for graduation.

Reti: Yes.

Machotka: Right. But we do need to finish with the Aesthetic Studies, don't we?

More Thoughts on the Aesthetic Studies Major

Reti: Yes, we have a lot of threads going now. So Aesthetic Studies—did it change over the seven years of its existence?

Machotka: Hmm. I think not very much. Now, I was not connected with its administration after the first year or two. David Swanger and Eli Hollander took over, David Swanger I think principally. So if there were changes, I might have been blind to them. But I don't think there were all that many changes. I think we had so much flexibility that we could work with students who wanted to do that kind of interdisciplinary thing in various ways and did not have to change the requirements. Of course it all came to an end but no particular development I could tell you about.

Reti: Well, okay in terms of the sad story of the end—I came across *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Aesthetic Studies Major, College Five*. There is no date on the report. I found this in Special Collections. It was very interesting reading. They went out and solicited comments from faculty and students about what was working and what wasn't working. Some of the criticisms had to with relying on temporary lecturers who were on soft money. And also the lack of emphasis on helping students get a job later. So maybe we can talk about some of these criticisms and what was going on.

Machotka: Well, to start with the ad hoc faculty that we had to hire—the criticism is absolutely true. The university gave us soft money each year for a few positions, which we were prepared to fill, or filled with the same people repeatedly. But it never gave us any money permanently. I used to go to Vice Chancellor Cota-Robles every year with what we called the Dog and Pony Show to show what we had done and why we needed money for continuing to do it or maybe even expanding it. Cota-Robles was always absolutely generous about this. To the degree he could, he gave us money. So no complaints there. But I certainly have complaints about the system. So I proposed once a system by which we would be funded for at least two years, but ideally perhaps five years. I wanted to call it Permasoft Money, but the term never took on because the concept never took on.

Reti: (laughter)

Machotka: (laughs)

Reti: I never heard that one before.

Machotka: But anyway, I was hoping to avoid this uncertainty. But it was explained to me that the University of California had that constraint anyway because the Legislature gave it money each year and would discuss how much to give it, anew, each year. So that was a major problem for the university and it was a major problem for us.

The advantages were that we did get some very good practitioners of, say, photography, which we introduced—we introduced that to the campus, by the way. That was one of the side effects of the Aesthetic Studies major. And did we introduce film studies or was that the appointment of Eli Hollander? Tim Hunter, who was a friend of mine from quite a ways back and was quite a director, he did a few hard-hitting films and taught film making for us. We did study film in some way before it became part of a board's offering. So those two things.

So that was the advantage. The disadvantage was that it was exploitative. Later, as board chair in psychology, I participated in the exploitation also, people given minimal amounts of money to break their backs to teach students, to have the opportunity to teach students. It was an ugly thing then, and now one reads in the papers that it's simply widespread everywhere and everywhere considered to be ugly. I despised that. I thought we should be in a more dignified position. (sigh) Criticism taken.

The other criticism was preparing students for a job. Well, that was never our job in *any* field, not in Aesthetic Studies, not physics—one would have to go to grad school—not psychology, certainly. One could probably go through all the disciplines and say, no, we at the undergraduate part of our university have something else to do for the students, to prepare them for this specialized disciplined work. But not a career, or not a job.

Reti: Not as an artist, in terms of skill, mastery?

Machotka: Yes, that's quite so.

You had a question about dilettantism, right? That follows. Could I comment on that?

Reti: Yes. So that was one of the criticisms that came up in the gathering of data for this report, narrative data, was that there was a kind of dilettantism that was being encouraged, that students were not learning a real mastery of the artistic disciplines, paths that they were pursuing. And then there was a whole other question, the question of whether the psychological and philosophical aspects of the program were strong enough academically. So let's talk about both of those. So first the dilettantism accusation.

Machotka: Well, it must have been more dilettantish than the kind of study that a student would undertake in a department, yes. Because it required less time, fewer courses, and so on. On the other hand, dilettantism is a relative term. All graduates of the art board, for example, are dilettantes because they had to go on to graduate school to become something other than dilettantes. So the question is at what point do you consider dilettantism to be really a major disadvantage? Maybe the authors of the report thought that we had reached that point. But it's not a point that worries me very much because as I said earlier, my criterion for a successful program is whether it allows the students to become something significant, allows them to learn a way of thinking and working, gives them the opportunity to learn. But it does not necessarily create the requirements by which they *have* to learn it. So is it a good education, is my question. It's a good

education if the person goes on to either use his theoretical knowledge, or use the practical knowledge of the art. I can think of one of the graduates—Ziggy Rendler—who has not used it professionally but who has become a very good painter, simply on her own. I'm not saying following whatever she had learned by working in the Aesthetic Studies major, but surely by at least having been encouraged by that major and then going on on her own.

I can think of another graduate who actually used the more theoretical part of the Aesthetic Studies major to become the head of a foundation. That would be Chris Berg. A passion for philosophical analysis was his and he ultimately turned it into his occupation; among others, he became president of a furniture company which he built up thanks to his interest in design. I would consider it an education when it allows you to do these things, even though it true that we were more dilettantish, and it is true that nobody became a psychologist or philosopher. But it's also true that they used their knowledge well, or their experience well. I feel quite good about it and anybody who throws the word "dilettante" around will hear from me. (laughs)

Reti: Thank you. (laughs) I'm sorry to bring up a sore point.

Machotka: No, no. On the contrary. I'm not sorry. I think you're right to bring it up. It is *necessary* to answer it. So I hope I have.

Reti: Yes, yes. Okay. And then the criticism that there was a lack of solid academic training—

Machotka: I think that criticism is absolutely right. The question is what deleterious affect on the students' learning did it have? I'm open to the possibility that it was deleterious.

Reti: I had a quote from the Reunion of the Aesthetic Studies students at the Alumni Weekend a couple of years ago. I got a recording of that from Nikki Silva. And on that recording, Professor Jon Beecher, who was one of the professors teaching in the program said, "The demise of the program was partially because of external forces," (which we can talk about and I want to talk about very much, like reorganization, and everything that was going on)—

Machotka: Yes.

Reti: But he also felt that the program died from within because "the studio artists lacked consensus about filling new positions with faculty interested in aesthetic philosophy, sociology of art, perhaps psychology."

Machotka: Yes.

Reti: So that there was this kind of faultline that opened up.

Machotka: That's absolutely correct because one always favors disciplines over interdisciplinary studies. Most people who are in disciplines are only in them and not interested in branching out across disciplines. There are obviously exceptions.

Reti: Why do you think that is?

Machotka: Oh. Well, I'm not sure whether interdisciplinary work, such as publications, books, does not lead more to a public acclaim than to an acclaim within the university. One can always recognize the brilliance of disciplinary study. One *must* recognize that it belongs to what one is interested in. One's colleagues have to recognize it, one's chairman, and so on. And then the journals that read your work. So it is easier to be disciplinary than interdisciplinary, both in your own work—so that talks to the paucity of applicants for positions here—and it's easier to be disciplinary if you're a department chairman or a vice chancellor. Then it's not one discipline but many disciplines, but you favor disciplines, and you want to make sure that Berkeley isn't all that much better than we are. I think I've seen that thinking on the part of all the administrators except the early ones, Dean McHenry and a couple of the early vice chancellors. It's safer to be building up a university that's disciplinary. Safer—that is safer in the eyes of your colleagues, your superiors, and so on. Everything favors the disciplines. Money does too.

So yes, I think the days of the Aesthetic Studies major may have been numbered anyway. It may have been written into the program—inadvertently—because it was interdisciplinary. I didn't recognize that at the beginning, certainly, but I began to feel it as things went on. And as the university reorganized at about the same time as steam may have been running out of the Aesthetic Studies major; in other words, as the colleges' intellectual function was drastically reduced, which then would have reduced the idea of a college major.

Narrative Evaluations

Reti: So before we get into that whole chapter, because that's very rich material—let's just backtrack a little bit. I haven't asked you about some of the key innovative aspects of the early UCSC, such as narrative evaluations. We have talked about the colleges and interdisciplinarity. But I think that's the one we really haven't talked about. How did you feel, as a professor, about narrative evaluations?

Machotka: I was absolutely enthused. I was enthused, mostly because my classes were not all that large. Even up to sixty students I could handle. However, grades kept pushing in against the narrative evaluations. I resisted. With Jasper Rose I resisted, for example, quite passionately. But I came to realize, as I taught larger and larger courses, that if I were to continue with narrative evaluations I would have to cheat, to some degree. With three hundred students, I would have to write out an outline of the evaluation and fill in the words. And at that point it became quite meaningless, so even I had to admit that they had to go. Reluctantly and slowly, but ultimately yes.

An Alternative Plan for UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Okay, and you had mentioned Chicago and how some of your ideas about education that came from that experience.

Machotka: Yes. So here we are in the possible reorganization of the initial organization of the university. I want to mention two things. One is an idea that I

had once when discussing something with Dean McHenry and feeling already as the provost of the college the difficulties in keeping the programs going, by the need to ask for money every year. And then I would see other colleges struggling in their own ways and differently from ours. I said to Dean, "Dean, if you could have thought of it at the time, wouldn't it have been better to have written a program for the university, for example, by giving each college a responsibility for part of lower-division instruction. Now, that would have meant defining a program of lower-division instruction, maybe calling it general education, calling it whatever you wish. But making sure that each faculty member in each college contributed to it."

Reti: Beyond the core course.

Machotka: Beyond the core course. That's right. Or perhaps even the core course could have been restructured in terms that fitted the interest and competencies of the faculty in the college. Or the faculty could have taught in other colleges. If, say Stevenson was going to remain in the social sciences and had contributed social sciences teaching, but there were not enough faculty to go around, maybe you could have found them elsewhere in other colleges. Frank Barron would have been an example in psychology. And then people in anthropology, perhaps, and so on. So it wouldn't have had to be strictly college-bound, in the sense that the college was contributing to lower-division instruction as a college, but mostly through what each faculty owed the university by his membership in a college. This would have required at least the contribution of one course from each

faculty member. This would have been part of the contract, not part of the: "If you really want you can teach a nice course for us." You know.

McHenry said, "Yes, exactly. That's probably what should have been done." So yes, he said that. I'm not saying that as a criticism of him because he could not have thought of everything as he was starting a new university. He was good to discuss with, I must say, on the few occasions that I did.

So that is one possibility, lower-division instruction in the colleges, divided somehow among the faculty, organized and run by a committee of people from all three divisions.

Another possibility occurred to me much later and that's when I began thinking about the education I got at the University of Chicago. The content was designed by Maynard Hutchins, I think in the 1930s, and then went on until 1952, when I entered the university. So I was still under that program. It evolved for later students. A program of required one-year courses: three in the social sciences, three in natural sciences, and three in the humanities—I'm not sure there were any in the arts. But there were art projects we had to do in the humanities, compose a thing in A minor, for example, and other disasters.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: But we tried and we got an idea of the difficulty of creation. The courses lasted the whole year, and we were tested at the end of each trimester, and then, covering the whole year and giving us our grade, at the end of the

academic year. That is not a necessary part of what I propose, but it worked. All teaching was done by means of seminar discussions. An example from the natural sciences: to learn about the development about ideas about gravity you would have a reading in Aristotle, and then you'd have a reading in Galileo. And we learned that the present idea of gravity developed slowly. We learned that about every concept in modern physics, including, for example, the theory of heat. We'd read Lavoisier. I forget what else. We'd have syllabi prepared by the faculty, which had all these wonderful historical things like Galileo writing a Socratic dialogue with Simplicissimus about falling bodies. It was good reading and it opened us up to the development of knowledge, to the idea of the development of knowledge, and it opened us up to how piecemeal and unsure it was, and how things had to build on what had been done before. It's not the best way to be prepared for a PhD in physics but that's not what it was about. That's not what Hutchins wanted and I'm glad for myself that's not what it was about, because like most of the colleagues I've been in touch with, they loved the idea of being made to think.

And so then we would discuss these readings which we all had to do for each class meeting. And everybody would contribute something. A very good teacher would then occasionally help summarize, connect and so on, but not lecture at any point. So the idea was a Socratic dialogue among fifteen students, small classes.

So the Chicago bundle then needed to cover most of the areas of knowledge by selecting from them. And it needed to make the students work hard in order to

do the covering on any particular day and in any particular course. I think it was extraordinary.

Now yes, when we meet another Chicago person we like to think we can recognize a U of C graduate, but that may be just narcissism. But perhaps yes. Questions. One likes to ask questions.

Could that have been something imported into UCSC? This would have required a somewhat different criterion for hiring faculty. I think we would have had to continue hiring either young people who were interested in this kind of education and who might conceivably go on as good teachers but not necessarily ever write anything, but still receive advancement if they were very good at teaching. This would have been a radical idea.

Reti: Yes, how do you make that work in the University of California tenure system?

Machotka: Yes. I'm not sure. I'm not sure and maybe that's why that part of UCSC was doomed because we had to act like every other campus and have first-class scholars and first-class publications and so on. I'm speaking of it theoretically. Yes, it would have required for there to be a certain number of positions, not necessarily all that many—I haven't thought about how many in relation to all the others—but some positions which would be of full professorial rank or advancement on that ladder but would not be required to produce any quality or quantity of writings.

But I was certainly part of the opposite kind of evaluation, that is, as provost, having to contribute to the personnel assessment of people who had not written anything. So I had to use that criterion and offer a negative opinion, now to my regret. At that time it was okay because I was part of a system and I was going to do it right. Now with this distance, I think we should have had such positions.

Those people would teach more courses, probably, than people who would be judged on the basis of their research, yes. They would not have graduate students. Most people who came after 1970 or say 1975 absolutely had to have a disciplinary career, which meant support from graduate students, so if there was no graduate program here, they would need the promise of one. Graduate programs are not always great, I don't think, not if you are also trying to do the undergraduate thing. And no imputation of incompetence here, just that we were trying to do too many things. Graduate programs, even when they were only 80 percent as good as they should have been, took away from the undergraduate programs. It meant having people together in one building, psychologists together in one building, and no longer attached to an interdisciplinary college. It meant all sorts of things. Now, many faculty, including in my field, are perfectly happy with this outcome, and I suspect that in the natural sciences the outcome is even more welcome. And, of course, it is, if your view of the purpose of a university is to provide for your advancement. But my ideal program would have had to be a compromise between ample opportunities for disciplinary work and ample opportunities for the love of teaching. And teaching not by lectures, but by discussion.

Reti: Yes.

Machotka: That is as good as I can come up with, in thinking about this.

Reti: Yes, it's quite a topic to wrestle with. It's so complicated because there are so many aspects.

Machotka: Oh, just as a footnote to make clear what I'm talking about, obviously the initial professors here, who came enthusiastically prepared to do something great, wanted to create something academically important. But the model was British. And the University of Chicago model was not British. We don't have a class system here (laughs) or at least we didn't have a class system in America, which would permit us to each have five students and meet with us individually once a week. I mean, that was possible in England and it's a wonderful thing for the English, I must say. But they've been giving it up too, bit by bit. It's too cumbersome on the economy. The class system is not as rigid as it used to be. So we could not do that here and that's why something like that Chicago model could have come closer to working here than a British model of tutorials.

Reti: So when you say class system, I'm not quite following you.

Machotka: Oh, the upper classes were the ones who got into Oxford and Cambridge. There were some on scholarships too, but—

Reti: So you have upper-class students from wealthy backgrounds.

Machotka: That's right. Who can essentially pay for the university, in the indirect ways in which they do that, and get individual instruction. Extraordinary. And that's probably why universities began in Oxford and Cambridge and Paris and Bologna and Prague. (laughs)

Reti: Yes. Well, I'm looking at the time. I think this is a good place to pause and then we will dive back into College Five, and by way of that get to some of these questions about reorganization. But first I want to hear about your time as provost and what College Five was like in those days. I know we're doing a bit of spiraling around topics, but I don't think there's any other way through this. It's not a purely chronological narrative, and that's okay because there are a lot of themes that keep spiraling around. So I'll stop this for now.

College Five

Reti: So we are continuing the oral history with Pavel Machotka on November 17, 2015. This is part two. This is Irene Reti and we are at McHenry Library on the Fourth Floor on a beautiful November day.

Machotka: Yes, gorgeous.

Reti: So Pavel, let's start this second part by talking about College Five Provost James Hall.

Machotka: Jim was a man whom I admired very much, partly because he was so different from me. He was so outgoing and so relentless, almost, in his speech. He was a very verbal person, so impulsive that, listening to him, I found myself

in the presence of a torrent of thought, much of it witty and original. What happened essentially between us is that I became his vice provost and senior academic preceptor—if you really want me to define that, I will try—but, informally, we worked together a lot. I became the kind of calming influence and he remained the person that he was. A very nice relationship. A lot of people didn't like him, for reasons that I cannot quite account for. Maybe that he seemed glib; to some people he seemed glib. I would say that he talked a lot and talked fast, yes. A lot of people seemed not to trust him. So I really would like to say for the record that I did trust him. I did admire him. I've never seen him do anything dishonest and I could have, had he done something dishonest—had he said one thing to somebody who'd come in for an interview and then done something altogether different. And he was quite supportive of young faculty, that is he would be very critical in his words, but ultimately, when push came to shove, he would defend them and support them. So I did find him very human in most of the best senses of the term. I'm happy to say that.

And, of course, he conceived of the idea of a college devoted to the arts, I think, unless he was given that as a mandate by McHenry. But from then on he followed that idea. Every person he interviewed should, if at all possible, have an interest in the arts. And I can't think of anybody who didn't in 1970, my first year at Santa Cruz. The earliest year was '69, wasn't it? My first year was '70.

Reti: You mean when College Five started was '69.

Machotka: College Five, yes. So that's speaking to Jim. He showed himself very devoted to his wife, who became quite ill toward the end of their life, and simply took complete care of her.

Reti: Okay, great. Thank you. So you became senior academic preceptor for College Five.

Machotka: Yes. (laughs)

Reti: Tell me what a senior academic preceptor did.

Machotka: Well, this is another lovely word like "dilettantism." (laughs) It carries such a freight of meaning. But at the very beginning the university was looking for titles for its administrators. And in each college they could do it differently. But of course word got around and there were some similarities. "Senior academic preceptor" sounds incredibly important. What it meant at the beginning was really being in touch with the academic standing of students, vetting them for graduation and so on, taking over from the provost some disciplinary functions, or at least investigations, to save him that. Eventually it became also being head of the Aesthetic Studies major. By that point I think I dropped the title "Preceptor" and took a much briefer title: "Vice Provost," which was Jim's invention. There was no such definition written anywhere in the University of California.

Reti: Were there other vice provosts at other colleges at UCSC?

Machotka: I think they did not use that same term. So yes, we were still inventing titles at the time and some turned out to be very hoity-toity, like “Preceptor.” “Preceptor” was a general title being used for a number of functions. But where did it come from? What could it possibly mean? Is it a guide? Is it a disciplinarian? Is it a definer of standards and so on? I don’t know.

Reti: Well, something that I’ve heard in doing these oral histories on UCSC is that at the early UCSC there was a lack of academic counseling for the students. Do you think that that was true?

Machotka: I don’t know that that’s the case. It may be true but I missed those first five even more formative years before College V was founded.

Reti: But even during the time period that you were there—were you serving as an academic counselor?

Machotka: Yes, thank you for the reminder. I’d forgotten. That’s right. Another counseling position got defined after that. That was psychological counseling. Dorothy Levin played that role in College Five. But yes, how a preceptor was supposed to counsel 200 students is not clear to me, but I presume that each one of us preceptors was saved from a fate worse than death by having very few people interested in coming to us. Because each faculty had to act as a counselor as well. So students could always get some kind of academic advice. It wouldn’t have to come from the preceptor.

Reti: Okay. So then you moved on to being provost in 1976-1979. So let's talk about what that period was like. I know that includes changes like the arrival of Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer in 1977⁶. Actually, it starts with reaggregation, so why don't we begin there?

Machotka: That's right. I don't have a vivid recollection of reaggregation. It did take place in College V as elsewhere, some faculty did move to their boards of study (soon to be called departments), and there was a sense of resignation on the part of some, of something being lost, and probably of hope on the part of others. Certainly it was becoming clear that the colleges would not figure in the new vision, whatever it may have been in detail. If it figures in my memory, it's a shadowy image, one that's drained of color because of what was happening to the colleges. And perhaps because it seemed to reflect the personality of the chancellor, who seemed so oriented toward clear structure and so little driven by passion or enthusiasm. Certainly my enthusiasm, too, was waning.

⁶ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Robert L. Sinsheimer: The University of California, Santa Cruz During a Critical Decade, 1977-1987*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1996). Available in full text and audio at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/sinsheimer>

Reorganization and Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer

Reti: Okay. So then Sinsheimer comes in 1977. And we are in the middle of an enrollment crisis during this period. What was that period like?

Machotka: The enrollment crisis is one thing. So we took students who were not accepted say, at Berkeley or at UCLA. They were not bad students, by the way. It really didn't make all that much difference. But we did that. I don't know what everybody thought about it. I think it mattered to me somewhat, in the sense that it was a pity that we had to do it. I did not know how soon we could get out of it but I assume it was relatively quick.

Well, let me start with [Chancellor Mark] Christensen, if I may.⁷ An amiable man with something lacking. I'm not sure whether it was emotional backup for his ideas or whether it was the ideas themselves. But there was also something lacking that was not in him at all but just in the situation. McHenry was an impossible act to follow. And here was this young person who didn't know anything about our campus, and who was trying to learn quickly, but who could

⁷ For a detailed exploration of the Christensen era at UC Santa Cruz see UC Santa Cruz in the Mid-1970s: A Time of Transition, Volumes I and II. Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ucsc>

not do what McHenry did. McHenry could just say, "Well, I think we'll put the funds there," and it would happen. Look, he was a very good administrator. But yes, everyone knew that he had founded the university and so essentially one followed his opinion, on the whole. It was a wonderful way to be an administrator. Don't ever be a second administrator of anything. (laughs)

So Christensen fell into that. I'm glad he left. He was not strong enough for the university and perhaps not quick enough on the uptake, or couldn't—this is now coming back to me—I think our Senate structure is very important and is quite important in most university decisions—that was quite strange to him. He did not know how to handle it, not that I would have known how to handle it.

Reti: Well, was it quite different from UC Berkeley, where he had been?

Machotka: I had that impression. For example, we had no strong [board] chairs. Because every decision—the direction the department would be taking, the future people to hire—was a faculty decision. So the faculty was used to that in everything.

Reti: Okay, yes.

Machotka: Whether it bothered him or not, I'm not sure, but he seemed a little bit at sea with us.

In any case, he went back to an honorable position. Nobody really wished him ill or anything, or at least after he left. And there was no need to because he was very likable.

Sinsheimer was one of two final candidates for the chancellorship. The other was Kai Erikson, the son of Erik Erikson, the psychoanalyst. The Council of Provosts interviewed them both, and put forth a collective opinion, a very cautious one I thought, essentially praising Sinsheimer just somewhat more than Kai Erikson. And Sinsheimer got the position. Now, I think he got the position for other reasons. But I do recall the faculty, or the provosts, who were quite important at the time, being cagey in their evaluation of these two candidates. So they didn't really say, "We like X, who is both very academic and personable," which was Kai Erikson. I suppose I can say all of that [now]. If Sinsheimer were to read these words, I think he would probably agree with me in what I'm saying about the provosts' position. I had favored Erikson at the time. But Sinsheimer had a number of virtues. I mean, he really did his work well. He read everything that he had to read, and so on. He was not a person inspiring intimacy or confidence and I think that was a problem in the long run for him.

But yes, he did want to reorganize the campus. Now here I have to go into a long parenthesis. I'd written a similar proposal to the one that eventually became his for the reorganization, especially for the organization of the arts. I think there is a copy that exists somewhere. I had it sent out by my staff and of course it was sent out too late and by the time we met for our College V conclave to discuss it, nobody had received it. So it was a proposal that remained largely written, filed, and possibly lost or thrown away.

But I really did want to combine the divisional structure with the college structure. And I thought that the provost of College Five might be also dean of

the arts, or maybe associate dean of the humanities or whatever, so as to control one set of budgets. It was a longish proposal, undiscussed, as I said. But I didn't know what the consequences of it might be if somebody had a similar proposal in hand and was chancellor at the same time. In other words, for me the college programs would have been preserved and the administrative structure somewhat simplified. But Sinsheimer wanted to do a deeper cleaning—

Reti: I'm just going to stop you for one second. So when Sinsheimer was going through his interview process, did you have any sense that he wanted to reorganize the colleges from the very beginning? Or did that plan evolve over time?

Machotka: I think it was the latter. I think it evolved over time. I do not recall any conversations about, let's say, the defects of our administrative structure. In fact, I don't remember what the conversation was about. One problem with search committees, and it's a very human one, is that they want to know how much they like the candidates—specific issues and specific proposals get forgotten. It's not unlike elections—that's why some of the Republican candidates in our—

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: --are still able to be candidates: "I like his poise," and so on. That is a fault of mine, for not being able to remember more of what we talked about. But Sinsheimer struck me as someone who was dry and perhaps literal and not quite imaginative enough. That should be said if I've said the positive things that I've

said. But I did find him an absolutely honest worker in his position, and all that. And occasionally he and I could even kid about this or that. Like, if we were looking at an exhibit together, which sometimes happened, we could let loose a little bit, relax and crack jokes about the other. (laughs)

Reti: So reorganization—how did that affect you as a provost and as faculty at College Five.

Machotka: Exactly how I resigned from the provostship is not clear to me but I may have written to Sinsheimer: “You’ll probably want to pick your own person.” I *may* have written that. That’s as close as I come to a memory. But I felt I was done because the college was going to be entirely different and I really did not need to be a part of anything that did not have the Aesthetic Studies major as its point of attraction.

Reti: So did you feel a sense of loss or tragedy around the changes in the college system at that point?

Machotka: I felt the loss but the loss was compounded by my upcoming divorce. And so essentially it was hard to distinguish one from the other. I felt both losses at the same time, and for quite some time.

Perhaps that is one reason why I began to paint more furiously than before because I had to find that solid base in me. (pauses) Yes. And in effect it was just the right thing because it did distance me long enough for the pain to have subsided completely and it pushed me in another direction, from which I could

then draw back into academic research, into writing books or whatever. It was the book about two painters, Terry St. John and Lundy Siegriest, with the title *Style and Psyche*, whom I painted with each week for about a year, and who agreed to become subjects of a study of their artistic styles.⁸ So painting actually also led me back to scholarly work.

Reti: So there have always, it seems, in UCSC's history, been these tensions between the boards or departments, and the colleges.

Machotka: Yes.

Reti: So in the Psychology Board of Studies, how was the reorganization viewed from the board's perspective?

Machotka: I think what happened was that a lot of the board members moved to Kerr Hall. They were happy to be together. I don't think anybody beside me really missed his college. I'm not sure I moved over right then. I moved over when I was asked to be chair of psychology.⁹ Then I felt I had to be close to my colleagues, out of duty, let's say. But I missed College Five. I mean, I founded the

⁸ Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press 1999.

⁹ Machotka served as chair of psychology at UC Santa Cruz from 1988 to 1991.

Faculty Gallery there and lots of people showed their work there. I showed mine there, too.

Reti: So you founded the Porter Faculty Gallery?

Machotka: Right. But not the Sesnon Gallery.

Reti: The little one.

Machotka: Yes. That was so easy to do. It was a question of turning that space over to art exhibits and there it was. I must have pushed for that, and for proper lights and wall colors, but the details of the pushing I can't remember at all.

Reti: It's a lovely space.

Machotka: Yes, yes!

Reti: In 1995, in your exit interview, you said, "Not all colleges were equally successful." Do you think College Five was one of the successful ones?

Machotka: Well, I think it was but I would immediately add that the reasons were structural, not competence or genius or imagination. As I said earlier, if you have most of your faculty to some degree interested in the arts, even though they're not practitioners of it, you've got the half the battle won. The theme may have been defined by McHenry, but it was relatively easy to elaborate and put into effect. So in that sense, we had that going for us. And in no sense is a criticism implied of the others. They all had something else going for them.

Some really didn't work very well. I think Kresge—whatever they called it at first—Michael Kahn was the organizer of their theme. I mean, this would be, shall we say, learning in the *intimate and trusting* company of friends. (laughs) With a mechanism for the constant resolution of conflicts. I think it really didn't work terribly well. It was neither sufficiently deeply psychological—because that was hard to do with that many people—nor was it academic.

I think Oakes may have a hard time finding it but then under Herman Blake it did very well, and quite soon. That also had to do with Herman Blake's enormously dominant personality. The impression I had—I liked him; we were friends—but the impression of him as an administrator was: you better do what I say, or else. He would never have been that brutal about it but he just had a dominant personality. Jim Hall, to some extent, too.

Well, Cowell was successful in its way. It quickly built up its own sense of history and traditions. And it had at least two British provosts, the second one being Jasper Rose. And I don't know whom it had after that. But it established a seemingly British kind of history and identity and firmness. I presume it's carried on but of course I haven't been following. I don't know what's happening at any of the colleges, really. I'm about to find out about Porter because I'll see Sean [Keilen] after our interview. So I'm new to the present but I can talk a little bit about the past.

And then there was Merrill College. I never got a clear impression about what Merrill was able to do but I do know that it struggled quite a bit with its

direction—disciplinary, or political and social, what have you. I'm unable to say, so somebody else will have to talk about Merrill.

But anyway, if there's praise for College Five it really has to do with the beginnings of all that faculty being at least with one toe in the arts.

Reti: So you have that sense of cohesiveness—

Machotka: Cohesiveness, purpose. That's right.

Reti: What was the climate like for students at College Five? I've heard that it could be kind of wild sometimes, in a good way sometimes. (laughs)

Machotka: When I was provost, I was obviously responsible for discipline. But not many cases came my way. Maybe they were handled at some other level. But complaints about noise and what would have, in British prose, been called dissolute behavior—

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: —(laughs) were rife. I'm reading Dorothy Sayers at the moment. Words like that come to mind easily.

Now, there was this thing about art students that is a kind of criticism. They have this identity as being Artists with a capital A, and that gives them license, presumably, to do all sorts of things that the bourgeoisie would not do. To some degree, that affected College Five students. They were not all art students, of course. Only a minority were. But nevertheless it made it easier to be that kind of

student, or a student with that kind of behavior, than if that many artists hadn't been there. But the students I came to know even superficially I had a good relationship with. If I saw a good quality, I simply appreciated it, and there it was.

At one point when I was provost we set up our coffee shop. So one of the things that bound some eight students and me and perhaps some faculty together was what to name it. That may seem very trivial but it's just to say that they cared a lot about this, and that should indicate our connection to the arts—but something serious, or something really witty, or some pun? In short, College Five mattered to them, or the image of College Five mattered to them right at this point.

Reti: Do you remember what they named it?

Machotka: (pause) We were going to name it Take Five, for Brubeck. And I don't even know whether we did. It may have also been named that for a short while and then renamed later.

Reti: So you also said twenty years ago, "We did pay for a price for the college system."

Machotka: Oh, yes.

Reti: What was that price?

Machotka: Well, the price was in that constant undertow of conflict between boards and colleges. Having the boards essentially have almost all faculty

members' time, contrary to the presumed expectation; having them have all the money because they're in divisions; all this certainly made us, as college people (all of us were college people, but some of us more than others), quite hostile to the idea. And essentially the university resolved that conflict by getting rid of the interdisciplinary studies, or any serious attempt at this interdisciplinary studies, of which the Aesthetic Studies major was the first, I think, to go. I didn't know enough about the other college programs to know how well their attempts to integrate the best of their faculty worked. So I cannot comment on that. But I would imagine that the conflict was felt by everybody, even if they were not administrators at the college.

An illustration: a friend of mine, a natural scientist, and I met in the courtyard of College Five and I said to him, "You know, I really do want a course from you." And he blew up at me. He said, "I didn't come here to do any of this crap! I came here to have graduate students and so on." Of course I was right, in the sense that I knew I had been hired under that expectation. And he must have been too, although who knows? Anyway, so if even a friend in the natural sciences could explode at me like that—

Reti: In your conversations with Dean McHenry, did it ever come up how he was planning to pay for this college system? Or whether he had any consciousness that this tension would develop over resources?

Machotka: I never heard him comment on either issue—the tension and how one would pay for this. But he had commented on the question of costs a number of

times. He always said he had promised the president, Clark Kerr, that Santa Cruz would not cost any more per student than any other system, but we'd do better.

Reti: Do better?

Machotka: Well, in educating students. Not necessarily in instructing students, but in educating students. You know the distinction I had drawn earlier, that is, what you come out with in terms of attitude towards yourself as a creator, and curiosity about the rest of the world and so on. So anyway, though he didn't use those terms I think that is what he reassured Clark Kerr would happen. Whether he did any calculations on this on a piece of paper that he never showed anybody, I don't know. He never talked about how this would happen, not having it cost any more.

But it could have been achieved to some degree, or it could have worked better than it had if you had really insisted on every faculty member owing his college or her college a course. And if that didn't happen, no matter what the board wrote about a faculty member being the next Einstein, not serving the college would count against the accomplishments of the last three years. That could have been insisted on. It would not have been Draconian if it had been insisted on from the beginning. You would never get anywhere by letting people join the university as future department members and then saying, "You also owe the colleges a course." No.

Reti: And do you think that that happened, that they weren't forthcoming and clear about what it meant to be a UCSC faculty, in terms of college service?

Machotka: That and other things may have happened. Chairmen of boards of studies may have said, "Look, they talk a lot about colleges. You're going to hear a lot about that and so on. But you can ignore it." I would imagine messages like those got out.

Faculty Promotion and the College System

Reti: Interesting. Did you have colleagues who did not get tenure, perhaps because of their level of college service? Because there is a little bit of an interpretation about UCSC's history that says that there were a lot of young faculty who lost their jobs because they were devoting so much of their time to, not only teaching for the college, but also college administration, meetings. And they paid a price in terms of their careers.

Machotka: That's a very serious question with so many implications. But yes, I can think of one name immediately. And I'm aware of it as having affected others but I cannot think of any examples right now. And with the one name, in fact, I was one of the guilty parties who recommended against tenure. But it was not a question of college service, not at all. It was on the fact that there were no publications. No publications. And that may have happened because of college service, but I don't think so, in the case of that individual. He seemed disinclined to do any writing no matter what. So I feel somewhat bad but not altogether.

But what was really bad about that case was that that person had been led to believe, I think, five years before, that college service would be everything. So it's an illustration of what you're talking about, yes. A very unfortunate one. I mean, it ruined the system, didn't it?

Reti: Well, it's not only college service but also UCSC's early emphasis on teaching, leading people perhaps to believe that teaching was enough, that to be a fabulous teacher of undergraduates would get you tenure.

Machotka: That's right. Yes. I think people *were* led to believe that. I'm sorry that the system wasn't organized in such a way that that belief could be backed up by the rules of promotion. I think anybody who did devoted teaching, for the college or otherwise, but here we are talking about the colleges, should have been rewarded for it, as he or she had been promised early on.

And that takes me back to that University of Chicago-flavored proposal, in that you really need faculty who will only teach—or, more reasonably, mostly teach, but also do scholarship in other ways than original research. Maybe they'll teach six courses a year, not four, and write one scholarly article (or more) a year—in literary criticism, the history of science or what have you, and they will be on the ladder. It could be done. Now, yes, they might be treated as second-class citizens, but they might also be recognized as people who contribute in the way that they contribute. They might lift a burden from the shoulders of UCSC professors, many of whom, except perhaps in the arts, where you have to pay attention to each individual student, would rather teach large courses, have a lot of TA's, and

have everything prepared, and have it the same from year to year, so as to leave as much time as possible for their research.

Reti: Are you speaking about now?

Machotka: Even now. But I'm speaking about what I saw even before I VERIP'ed.

Reti: So you're talking about once the early period was over, perhaps in the 1980s and 1990s.

Machotka: Yes. I think it's very much the norm now, as I understand it, that we're going to compete with (and then they put a word into the incomplete sentence)—it could be UCLA or Davis, but more likely Davis or Santa Barbara.

Reti: Yes.

Machotka: (sighs)

UC Santa Cruz: Still Special

You know, one other thing that I might say about UCSC is that it's an institution with an atmosphere—I've served on various personnel committees on other campuses, as one does, so I do have impressions – an atmosphere of commitment to the campus, more so than I've seen, or have had time to see, elsewhere. Berkeley is big, so the comparison wouldn't be just, nor would UCLA. But Davis and at Santa Barbara—I felt a kind of—the time I visited Santa Barbara, I felt a lack of cohesion. I felt it less at Davis, although I felt it there to some degree too.

But I was always glad to return here, to an atmosphere that I appreciated very much without even being aware of it, being able to define it and so on. I was back home among people who appreciated enormously being here. Most.

Reti: So even as things began to change, through the eighties and nineties, you still felt that there was something special about Santa Cruz, that some of those early ideas were still there.

Machotka: Yes. Well, the problem is the nearly full glass getting down to near the middle. It was getting to be less and less special, but it was at least half full. I felt that already in the late seventies and early eighties, let's say. But it was incredibly special and remains special still. (laughs)

Reti: Yes.

Machotka: Oh, and in retrospect I've nothing but a warm fuzzy sense about what happened to me here, and about the context that allowed me to do the work that I did, about the colleagues I had, about the things that I learned that I would not have learned elsewhere. It is admittedly warmer and fuzzier about the institution of the colleges, but it is warm enough about all that I managed to do within the departmental structure up until my retirement. Fifteen years have passed and I'm even more enthusiastic now, now that a few of the irritations have disappeared, than I would have been in the year 2000. But I was pretty enthusiastic then, as you could tell from my exit interview.

Reti: Yes, you were.

Chair of the Academic Senate

There are just a few things that we haven't talked about, in relation to your UCSC years. Being chair of the Academic Senate for two years.¹⁰ Do you want to talk about that?

Machotka: Yes. Well, I want to preface that by saying that first I was chair of the Privilege and Tenure committee. And from a previous chair I had inherited a number of quite difficult cases, where the resistance from the administration to doing anything for them was considerable. So I fought—I didn't even know these guys beforehand, fellow faculty members, I knew only their names—but I did fight for them and I'm quite pleased that I found the courage to do that. I found it in part in my predecessor's work and in part in myself. In other words, I found more courage in defending other people than I did in promoting myself. I could talk about myself a lot but when it comes to a vicious defense, I could do it only for others. (laughs) So that's about Privilege and Tenure.

¹⁰ Machotka served as chair of the Academic Senate from 1992 to 1994 and chair of the Senate Privilege and Tenure Committee from 1990-1991.

And then shortly after that I was asked to be chair of the Senate. I do remember a number of very difficult issues, which came to the chair of the Senate from the Privilege and Tenure committee (laughs) on which I'd served. So I was in the middle of the same cases. One had to do, for example, with access to academic records on the part of the vice chancellor (no names here). This was condemned by the Privilege and Tenure Committee but came up in discussion later, where the former vice chancellor in question didn't know what the big deal was about. But the big deal was about that nobody has access to academic records except academic records committees and the administrators who have to pass on advancement. But this administrator said, "But there's so much interesting evidence there for helping us plan curriculum, for example." I mean, it's a nice thing to say but absolutely wrong by faculty standards.

Reti: Those are confidential records.

Machotka: That's right. So I had to fight that too, as Senate chair, or at least make a few almost regrettable statements about it in front of everybody else. But I did. I defended the principle. Then later on—because I had been the Privilege and Tenure chair I also defended these people personally to the chancellor. And the chancellor, I think at least in the most important case said, "No, we have to let lawyers handle this." I had considerable trouble with that statement because lawyers work for the chancellor, for the administration, not the other way around. I did in fact appear in court for the faculty member, but did not get much further there. So I never did accomplish what I set out to accomplish, but at least I helped affirm the role of P & T and of the Senate chair.

So yes, I carried out some of that. But otherwise my role was that of trying to keep everyone connected to the Senate, everyone feeling free to speak, and not putting anyone down and not inhibiting them in any way, although I missed doing so now and then. (laughs) Deeply.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: Yes, those examples are very vivid in my mind.

I did institute writing minutes of the monthly meetings of the Academic Council, which consists of all the Senate chairs from all the campuses, plus a few other people, with the president and the big guns. I would write summaries or minutes of that for our faculty and distribute them by email. I think I was the first to do that. Because I wanted to let my colleagues know that if I was representing them they've got to know what is being said and what the issues were.

Reti: Well, and this was very early email.

Machotka: It was very early email, yes! Oh, yeah. And I recall a colleague in Natural Sciences being clever enough to get all the email addresses to me in a folder because they were not generally available.

Reti: (laughs)

Machotka: (laughs) Those were some of the joys, as it were, of being Senate chair. It continued my defense of the faculty, but now at the whole UCSC campus level, rather than at the level of any individual. I don't think my role was

that of defending UCSC specifically. It was defending faculty governance. And I played that role too, I think fairly well, on the Academic Council.

Taking the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program [VERIP]

And then I VERIPed, and there was no longer a question of continuing in any kind of representation of the faculty or whatever. Because there was some talk about that too, but I ended it inadvertently by VERIPing. I could not continue in any administrative position after VERIPing, which is perfectly right.

Reti: Right. And so why did you decide to take advantage of VERIP?

Machotka: Well, like some of my colleagues, I heard about it and I said to myself, this is not for me. Thank you. I'm going to go on until I'm laid out on a slab. And then I read the fine print and I realized that I could teach maybe two courses a year, get my retirement salary, and make more money than I did before VERIPing.

Reti: Wow.

Machotka: That's what I said. So, I just had to take it. And I did and I was very glad I did. It did free me up for a kind of untrammelled work, responsible only to my standards of good work. I think I did some of my best research in those last seven years. And I talked about them early in this interview, in terms of how close I would become to students and they to me. The result was actually just beautiful because I worked with their best talents by inspiring them to do their best work and by constantly meeting with them every week and so on.

Reti: This was *after* you took VERIP?

Machotka: This was after. It may have begun just before I took VERIP but it continued until the year 2000. It may have been a seven-year study, in which case we began in 1993. But I had the absolute freedom of just continuing it without anybody telling me, “You know, Pavel. I don’t know about that.”

Reti: Right. Because you were no longer trying to be reviewed for advancement or anything like that.

Machotka: Right. So I did go on and I think the thing that I missed most was that I wasn’t given as much space and laboratory as I had had. Perhaps reasonably, if the university could redistribute my previous salary, my colleagues could redistribute my space. Well, okay, so I worked in a smaller laboratory but I did the work anyway.

Also because the status was now semi-retirement even though I was at the university as often as before and I’d see students through office hours as well—even though that was almost unchanged, the effect on my self-perception as a person who needs to take care of himself now for the future, planning for what I’ll do after actually breaking the tie with the university, that effect was considerable, I think. I mean, it was all to the good. I knew I would have to look to the future, not that I knew exactly what the answer to that question was—

Reti: What you would be doing with the rest of your life.

Machotka: What I would be doing, yes. I could describe that but this is more about oral history and not about my living in Italy. So for four of us senior [faculty who VERIPed] it was a very good system. We didn't talk about it to each other or anything. It just turned out to be individually good for all four of us.

Reti: You're talking about the four of you who have received the Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeriti Award that you received just this week.

Machotka: Yes. Elliott Aronson, Tom Pettigrew, Bill Domhoff, and I.

Reti: And all in psychology.

Machotka: All in psychology. And there are three others, all in all, in Santa Cruz. One in literature and philosophy, Hayden White. And two others—Michael Nauenberg in physics and Harry Berger in literature.¹¹ Seven awards out of 35 given out university-wide since 1983 is not trivial, and it must say something about UCSC; my best guess, for now, is the encouragement of intellectual freedom by our loose structure and our faculty governance.

¹¹ See the oral histories with Hayden White, Michael Nauenberg, William Domhoff, and Harry Berger, Jr. available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ucsc>

Reti: Yes, I did notice that when I was watching this interview from 1995 you said you were launching a second career as a painter; you were wondering what life was going to be like; and you wanted to spend more time on research. Now it's twenty years later exactly.

Machotka: Yes. Everything except for the research question came true, unless one defines research more broadly. In other words, I couldn't do psychological research without university students, laboratories and so on. I was so far from all of that that I had to do everything on my own. But then I do have distant colleagues in France and in Prague, and with residence in Italy I am quite close to them physically. Visits become easier and with emails everything, all cooperative work between visits, becomes possible. So the part about laboratory research turned out not to be true. The part about painting did turn out to be true. I've had more one-man shows after the year 2000 than before. And I've written more books since then, too—all connected in some way, either through important subject matter or very good publishers, with southern France or Prague. And if you count that as research I'd be fine.

But I didn't know what I was going to do until several years after retirement. The nice words at the exit interview were really only questions, and the answers didn't come back to me until about three or four years later, after I'd begun diving with both feet into the retirement, and starting to write. I wrote a couple of chapters of what might be a future book, and as I wrote more, it did turn out to be just that. The first ones were lousy but at least I had begun writing, and at least I had begun to pay close attention to my subject—Cézanne. That became a

major component of my early retirement years until the book was published in 2008. And in the meantime, of course, I painted.

So conceivably VERIP was a partial preparation for that but I cannot say that it was seamless or anything. I mean, before 2000 and after 2000—the transition was not seamless. But it could have been worse.

Reti: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about related to UCSC? Any thoughts about the future of the campus, or what you see now, coming back?

Machotka: I'm too ignorant about what's going on now.

Hopes for the Future of UCSC

I would hope this: I would hope it would be able to resist the pressure toward a kind of new political correctness, for example, not being able to criticize the actions of Israel. I mean, our president, Napolitano, has made a few proposals about that and they are totalitarian, not to put too fine a word on it.¹² And I'm glad the Senate is resisting. My good old colleagues, people with a similar

¹² See <http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-higher-learning-uc-israel-20150909-story.html>

consciousness of the responsibilities of being a professor. So I hope the University resists that, whether it comes from within or outside.

I hope it resists altogether this fad that has been around for a couple of years: trigger warnings. Trigger warnings are an infantilization of student life. I really cannot tolerate that. It's repugnant morally and intellectually to me. It treats the students as passive, vulnerable, manipulable babies. Absolutely not.

But there will be such challenges ahead. I mean, suppose the political climate becomes so fearful that we commit 50,000 soldiers to Syria, limit the civic freedoms of certain groups (or even all of us), and tighten all forms of surveillance, as some of our Republican candidates would like to see. We're going to see, I think even in the University of California as a whole, not specifically UCSC, a restriction on academic freedom, of thought and of expression. Acts such as the creation of new Manzanars may not take place, but others, responsive to new fears, may. I mean, America is likely to overreact with fear and simplistic solutions, and I hope the university is not infected by them or by the climate that inspires them. I don't have a close impression of Napolitano but with a president with so political a background, I could easily see an excessive sensitivity to the political climate.

Reti: Yes. The early vision of UCSC as an educational experiment—do you think that there's anything that that could contribute now to higher education?

Machotka: I think a successful system like the one that was then proposed would contribute to higher education. But I cannot see anybody quite feeling the

intellectual freedom, the psychological security, of proposing it. An example from 1948, as a matter of fact: the scholarship that I received which sent me to college for four years was called The Ford Pre-induction Scholarship. Now, it was a fabulous thing for those of us who got it. Incredible. It changed my life, sent me to a very good university, and that sent me to another good university. My life would have been quite different without it. But it was a pre-induction scholarship. The Korean War had begun being fought and somebody's reasoning was, someone in the government said, well, we will need more educated officers for the coming conflict.

Reti: That's why it was called "induction." It *did* mean military. I wondered about that when you mentioned it.

Machotka: Yes. Well, as it was, none of us ever served in the army or in the armed forces, but that was the purpose. The purpose was defensive. It fortunately turned out to have nothing to do with defense and everything to do with education. But I wouldn't count on that happening again. Anyway, let's just say that suddenly things get subsumed under military expenditures, defense expenditures. I mean, a naval research office gave a number of psychologists and natural scientists enormous money to do research that could conceivably benefit the armed forces. That money was massive. I think I once applied for it and didn't get it but that's beside the point; I had thought the program was as benign as my pre-induction scholarship. A lot of people did get it and of course—I don't know what it all amounted to, and some of it had no immediate, practical purpose, but some of it also had to do with training seals to blow up ships.

Reti: That's right.

Machotka: Well, that kind of intellectual perversion of what should be a peaceful American life is to be feared all the time. And given restrictions on imagination—"first of all, we've got to defend this country"—that are there in a less defined way, I cannot conceive of another experiment such as UCSC. It was backed up by an enormous optimism in California, in the early 1960s, by the desire to give everybody a public university education, under Clark Kerr, by a Supreme Court presided by a former governor of California which turned out to be very liberal. An extraordinary time. A time which by 1975 we knew would not be repeated and it would gradually dribble away, as turned out to be the case.

Actually, what I read about [Governor] Jerry Brown is relatively hopeful. He's not as skeptical about the University of California as he was when he was a young man. And certainly the reform of voting in California has guaranteed a Democratic majority. That means money to be spent on public works and so on. All that is to the good. But I don't think it will ever meet the optimism of the 1960s.

Reti: Do you think that some of the elements of this vision [of UCSC] can be incorporated into a 21st century context?

Machotka: Oh, do you mean is it theoretically possible or is it likely?

Reti: Like interdisciplinary study, for example.

Machotka: Mm.

Reti: That's the one that comes to mind. Or maybe perhaps more decentralized kinds of educational experiments.

Machotka: That kind of thinking just does not seem to be there *anywhere*. Nobody seems to be thinking, or saying publicly, that a broadly educated citizenry would be desirable, let alone useful. Have you ever read such a headline in the newspaper? Or anywhere else? No. It's all quite concrete, not necessarily all wrong, but certainly limited by that sense that we now have to defend ourselves. We have no room left for imagination. If somebody said, "Here's ten million dollars to found a university. If you find the buildings I'll give you ten million dollars and you're going to try to produce a hundred scholars in the humanities in the next ten years." Who would take them up on it? The level of imagination, given all the constraints, fiscal and military and so on, is very low. No, I don't see anything happening in the next fifty years, really.

But then, my vision is equally cloudy about the future of American democracy and its government. But that's another matter. There are some dangerous signals and possibly very serious ones.

Reti: (sighs) An oral history is always shaped by the historical moment in which its being recorded, and we're recording this a year before the presidential elections, with some quite conservative candidates getting airtime.

Machotka: There's a book that I read once on a topic that had always interested me because I didn't know whether anything had been written on it—what was it like near the end of the Roman empire, like say in the fourth century, before

Rome was overrun, let's say. What was living like? We don't have images of it, sculptures or paintings, or any histories. Well, one author—I think her name was Mowrey—wrote about it. The title has escaped me and I can't find the book. The point is that most Romans, especially the wealthy ones, were unaware of the dangers to their existence as Romans that the subtle changes in their lives presaged. We, that is as a society apart from our most thoughtful analysts and writers, we are not really concerned enough about real dangers, which are internal, like the distribution of wealth and undermining of democratic processes, and deathly afraid of what is external.

There are countercurrents which are incredibly important to me to read about, especially since I am very far away and I don't see them firsthand. Well, you know all the ways of trying to preserve democracy, the existence of Bernie Sanders himself, his support of the idea that we should have public financing of campaigns, tuition-free public colleges, and all the other public interest measures that he advocates. I think public financing would essentially preserve that which we want preserved. A not exactly popular idea and that is what worries me. But yes, there are a number of incredibly worthy individuals fighting the good fight.

Reti: And what is the place of art in all of this, in your mind—because we've talked about the humanities—

Machotka: Yes, well art—it's easier to talk about the humanities. That's right. Because they are meant to be critical of things from the best psychological and humanitarian point of view. The arts on the other hand can be quite individual

and essentially quite capitalistic themselves. Some artists have become important only by successful publicity. There is something wrong with an art system that can discover no better criterion of quality than success. But the art system does not stand by itself. I mean, the art system is confused because everybody is confused. The public doesn't know what to buy. The people who can buy, buy only in the anticipation of being able to sell at a greater price. It's not like the 19th century when—although it evolved and changed—one always had the sense that there's some good art, and one could think of buying an interesting piece without the slightest notion of what it might be worth later. We don't know what's good, so we get a rough measure of that by trusting that we've invested well. Partly as a result of that, the arts are atomized; almost everything that could be tried has been tried.

Reti: But are you aware of any programs in arts education at universities that have the same kind of interdisciplinary angle that Aesthetic Studies did?

Machotka: No, I'm not. But your question rightly brings me back to the humanities. I think they are by nature both deeply attentive and critical, so I think they are indispensable to all critical thinking, and they are quite independent of the rapid changes in the arts. But they are in retreat, here at UCSC as well, and it is they that are the most urgently needed by society, whether as disciplinary programs, or interdisciplinary ones like the Aesthetic Studies major. There may be pockets of humanities teaching, but I think they're like the monasteries of the past, oases of learning which managed to preserve ancient manuscripts for the future. That's not to say that humanists are not hard

at work. Sean Keilen, the provost of Porter—ex-college V—has a deep commitment to the humanities and to ways of teaching them, and a clear sense of how he can work with the present structure to get them into his curriculum. But it is to say that he and others like him have to push uphill. My terrain seemed level by comparison. But I wish I could be more precise about what is going on where. I'm so dedicated to the things that I can do—a couple of books that I want to write and a bunch of paintings that I want to do—that I don't read all that I could read. That's a great failing of mine.

Reti: That's okay.

Machotka: I wish I could say yes, there is an interesting program there and so on—

Reti: Well, maybe we'll find out from publishing this.

Machotka: You're more likely to find out sooner than I will. But I hope you do.

A Few Final Thoughts on College Five and Aesthetics

Reti: So we're back for one final section with Pavel Machotka. So Pavel, getting back to the colleges, there were some criticisms that I read saying that College Five was really only a place for the arts faculty. And although I know, looking at the roster of affiliated faculty, that there were people like Gary Griggs in Earth Sciences—there *were* other people there.

Machotka: Well, absolutely. There had to be, by fiat almost. New FTE, usually defined by a board, usually would have to go to a college as well.

Reti: So do you feel that there was a place for non-arts faculty?

Machotka: Well, I think there was certainly a physical home for all, and for anybody who expressed any interest in the arts—there were colleagues who may not have been active in the arts and were only interested, but they were nevertheless colleagues, and you could meet them in the corridor or for lunch. They were different from the ones you would have in your department, because if you met them at lunch you would have other things to discuss than shop and if they came to a college colloquium or a gallery show, shop would be the last thing they would be thinking about. So I think, in that sense, a college, not just ours, was a home to a number of disciplines, if you were interested in something besides the one thing that you knew. And yes, there were enough of those and many of them were in College Five, and I would imagine similar numbers elsewhere.

Reti: I came across a listing of a course taught by—I think his name was Othmar Tobisch.

Machotka: Yes!

Reti: And he was a geologist.

Machotka: Yes.

Reti: A very interesting example of a geologist becoming interested in the arts. He taught a course called *Patterns in Nature*.

Machotka: Yes. Thank you. Oh, yes. Othmar was an enthusiast about teaching, about students, and about teaching something about the arts. Well, if you wish for an ideal example of a natural scientist contributing to the college, he was it. He had a hell of a lot to show about patterns in spectroscopic analyses and analyses under different kinds of light of crystals and so on. He knew all that stuff. It was good.

Reti: And then what kind of courses were you teaching for the college?

Machotka: I was teaching a course on the psychology of aesthetics, a review of the psychological studies of artistic and aesthetic processes, so a review of the empirical stuff, which I think was reasonably interesting to the students, not as much as to me. But that's okay, because it was a very specialized topic.

And then I taught a seminar with much more emotional oomph, *Psychoanalysis and Art*. That was about artists and their personalities—weaknesses, strengths, conflicts, obsessions, quirks. Because if psychoanalysis has contributed to the arts in a major way, it's in finding personal conflicts on the part of artists which might find their way into their art. So that course evoked a lot of interest on the part of students. I think they didn't come away with a sense of closure—this is a self-criticism—because there was so much, so many different ways of looking at the psychodynamics of artists. One couldn't make a simple order of it. I didn't

and some students felt I should have. But nevertheless they learned to think about that and at least to write one major paper about the problem.

Reti: And tell me about some of the students that you worked with in Aesthetic Studies.

Machotka: Well, I remember most clearly the ones I have kept up with or who have now and then come to my attention. So I will be unfair to all the ones I leave out. I have already mention Ziggy Rendler-Bregman, who has become a fine painter and poet, and Chris Berg, who had built up a company thanks to his interest in design. I have not yet mentioned Joel Levick, photographer, who became a professor at Stanford, nor William Rubel, who went on to design and publish a beautiful children's magazine, *Stone Soup*.

Reti: Oh, really! I didn't know there was a Santa Cruz connection there. How wonderful.

Machotka: That's right. He was an Aesthetic Studies major. It became nationwide. Then two students worked with me on questions close to my interests, the psychology of aesthetics. Loren Steck conducted a precise study of preferences for complexity in music, showing, against theory, that the preference was quite variable, depending on the context; it was published in a prestigious journal. And Laurie Gordon chose a topic of her own—the psychology of preference for nostalgic art—and found, as she expected, that it was a response to an unstructured childhood, the kind found in communes. Because of a small sample it was unpublished, but it was very well done.

I think also of David Arora, although he was never an Aesthetic Studies major. He was an individual major with me, and his later successful career had much to do with the freedom to work that he would have in Aesthetic Studies—except that he worked in botany, not art. In a word or two, when I opened my doors to my first office hours in September of 1970, he was waiting outside. He walked in and wondered whether I would sponsor him in an individual major in mycology. I said, “Well, you came to a person who is of European background, who likes mushrooms, but who doesn’t really know that much about them. I can identify a bolete and an amanita but you’ll have to do it on your own.” He said, “Well, none of the biologists will take me because mushrooms—they all run to the other end of the room.” So I said, “Well, look, I’ll sponsor you. But you will have to do the work on your own because I can’t study encyclopedias and find out what has been written about California mushrooms.”

Well, David Arora wrote a senior thesis, which was very good and became the basis for the many books that he’s published since then. So if that’s an example of anything, it’s an example of our ability at Santa Cruz to incorporate an individual interest like that, and encourage it, and have it become a career.

Reti: Yes, absolutely. That’s really inspiring.

Machotka: Those are off the top of my head.

Reti: That’s great. Thank you.

Plans for the Future

I think our last question is about what you're doing now, or what you've done in the last ten years or so.

Machotka: In my sixteenth year since retirement, with a couple of books behind me, I would like to write two things next. I've begun one—not very well begun it—on Cézanne's still lives. If you transcribe this, you can say still *lives*, but the art historians insist on still *lives*.

Reti: But this is your oral history so we'll do it your way. (laughs)

Machotka: Well, I like English too much. (laughs) I would like to write it from a painter's point of view, like my other books on Cézanne, because I'm not an art historian and I would not make a good art historian. But I can analyze some aspects of the way each painting was conceived and done and what works about it visually and so on.

And then there is some talk about my writing a book of memoirs and I think I might just do it. The problem will be what audience will I pick and what will I write about for that audience. My students would like me to write about what I did in psychology and whom I met while doing it. In Prague they'd like me to write about how it was that I escaped and became an immigrant with nothing, and then suddenly with something, thanks to the opportunities offered, and eventually a good career. So I may find a way to integrate the two. That's what I'd like to do while I can still write fairly clearly. Because one never knows. I say

that because the friend in Prague who wants me most to do this said, "Well, one person whom I was asking always to do it then turned ninety-two and by then I had to re-do it for him." (laughs) So he said, "Write it before that." A reasonable enough request.

And I need to find a new style in painting now after a hiatus of six months, nine months. A necessary hiatus. I'll get back into it shortly after I return, I hope. And I hope to move in a quite different direction. I've done everything I can in the direction that I've pursued. Originally, I'd finished with landscapes.

Reti: With Cézanne-inspired—

Machotka: Way too Cézannian. And then I started working with the figure. And that was quite original. But I'm essentially done with that. I'm not sure I know where to go. My model with whom I've been working for four years, doesn't know where to go either. I've involved her in the process, which was very rewarding. She would think of things, ways to hold her body or whatever, and I'd come up with a way of composing it in the rectangle. That's coming to a close, as things do. Although we'd both like to continue, we don't know how.

Reti: So you have something new in mind.

Machotka: So I want something new. I don't know what that will be. I really don't. That's the next thing to find out. It's too early for me to mention the possibilities. Within a year you'll know.

Reti: That's okay. As a creative person, I understand you don't want to talk about it right now. But thank you so much for all of these thoughts and for sharing your life story and your philosophy.

Machotka: Thank you, Irene, for all your questions. You made me think hard.

Reti: Thank you.

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