Teachers College Oral History Project

Interview with: Robbie McClintock
Interviewed by: Melanie Shorin; The Narrative Trust
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MELANIE SHORIN: Today is September 17th, 2010. This is Melanie Shorin for The Narrative Trust. I am speaking with Professor Robbie McClintock at Milbank Chapel, Teachers College in New York City. Good morning.

ROBBIE McCLINTOCK: Hi, how are you?

SHORIN: Good, thanks. I've read that you have said you thought of education as a process of self-formation. I was hoping you could talk about what that means and also talk about it in regard to your own path.

McCLINTOCK: I believe strongly that education is something that happens in the lives of individual persons and I've been much concerned by a tendency to see education as something that happens to cohorts, large aggregates of either the class or the age group, the whole population when, in fact, education is a personal experience. It's something that takes place in our lives rather than something that happens to us. The reason why I think this is so important is that in my view by far the most powerful agent in education is the student, the person acquiring an education. Yet, when we study education we're always looking at the teacher and the school as the essential locus of the process. We, I think, pay too little attention to the role of the student in the process of education. I myself had, I think, a very fortuitous education in the sense that I had a lot of time to myself as a child in a stimulating environment and then went to schools where there was a lot of trust in the students and lot free rein for intellectual development at the same time that there was a constructive, safe, stimulating environment that we were immersed in along with a lot of intellectual resources that were far more than any one of person, one kid could fully make use of but a rich enough environment that one could go off in this direction and another in another direction. That really sets things up to capitalize on the inner drive of a curious child. Too often we don't pay, I think, enough attention to that and a lot of the problems of education, I think, are located in the tendency of children and young people and adults, for that matter, to see educational work as something

that's going to be done to them in a way that they don't have much of a role in the process and that just undercuts the bigger liveliness of the whole undertaking. I think self-formation is like, in a sense, riding a bicycle. You have to keep moving forward and keeping balance and decide where you want to go with it. It's very hard to stand still on a bicycle. We live by making all kinds of significant choices for ourselves, to do this and not to do that. I think far more than educators often recognize that young people and children are continuously making those choices. As a teacher is speaking, the child in fact has hundreds of options not only to pay attention but to look out the window, to daydream, to do this, to send a note to another kid, and we have to recognize that willfulness in all of us is not an impediment to education but really the drive that can be harnessed in doing it. Early in my career I wrote an essay that's remained fairly central to my thinking about education called "Towards a Place For Study in a World of Instruction." Study I think has a lot to do with self-formation. The source meaning of study is to sort of be furiously engaged in something, to be adamant about something. The idea of study as something that one is compelled to do in a study hall I think is a perversion of the very concept, it's really what one does when you're fully engaged in pursuing ideas that you feel are important. Out of all of that comes a historically definite and unique person and that's the goal of our educational work.

SHORIN: Let's go backwards. When you started you said that you had spent a lot of time alone as a child. Why is that?

McCLINTOCK: I was an only child. My parents were what I call "Depression yuppies" in the sense that they were upwardly mobile [*chuckle*] in an environment even worse then the current one. They were committed to a lot of their life outside the home. While I was always very well cared for, I cultivated an inner world. Then I think that's just become kind of part of my way of doing things is to rely on my own engagement with the environment around me. I grew up as a child probably spending more time with adults than more children do and less time with peers of my own age and I think that that has an effect on one's sense of life.

SHORIN: You had said that you had time for imagination and studying, your mind going off and pursing different things, but what about today's kids with all the technology? Some people say that the over programmed –

McCLINTOCK: Right.

SHORIN: That there's no time for that, that everything's being fed in a way.

McCLINTOCK: I find the cultural surrounding in the present-day world very, very interesting because of the range of actualities and opportunities in it. It's a world that has extremely powerful communicators all around us from the very earliest years trying to sell this and persuade you of that and engage you, trying to get a purchase on this piece of your time or that piece of your time, to command your attention for one or another thing. At the same time, there's an immense amount of choice that each person, each child, each youth has and it's not a superficial choice in the sense that the cultural resources that are available if you wish to pursue them are very deep. This I feel strongly is a change that we're in the midst of but that it's far more profound than whereof or that we know what to do with. The current college student, for instance, has in his or her dorm room on their computer a wealth of intellectual resources in science, literature, art, music, whatever field you wish, that the most cultivated practitioners of all of those fields could not command in their immediate environment up until maybe fifteen years ago. But these kids, they don't really know what is at their fingertips and none of us know really how to make full use of it, how to have an intelligent path of choice when there are so many possibilities. I think that that's where right now we all are suffering somewhat from an overload on our capacities for attention. But I suspect that as time goes on this kind of cornucopia of choice that people are immersed in becomes more and more second nature. There will be possibilities for personal development that are perhaps going to be quite extraordinary as far as cultural attainments and the like.

SHORIN: How does Teachers College fit into this philosophy and how does it remain relevant?

McCLINTOCK: I've always felt a little bit of an outsider within Teachers College. For one thing my own education was entirely through private institutions and that, I think, has always been a little bit apparent in my style [*chuckle*], I guess is a way of putting it. That itself is not quite the ethos of Teachers College. Teachers College is a very interesting place to teach in because there's an immense diversity of students and student interests. I've felt that the search for a place for study in a world of instruction has been something of a losing game throughout my career in the sense that the idea of instruction dominates our understanding of education. I think it has increased in the post-War period partly because the sense of schools as agents of opportunity that one should exploit has shifted to thinking of schools as an agent of public policy and also familial policy that you need to acquiesce to in order to move ahead. That enhances the idea in my mind that the educational process is a causally effective process that will be done to people. But I kind of like trying to go against the grain of that. I've always been drawn to reading and studying critics and one of the best of them from the mid-twentieth century, Dwight McDonald, had a wonderful book of essays called *Against The American Grain* and that's going - I think that academia and

intellectuals should try to resist what's coming naturally to the larger world. I like my role here as not a naysayer but of someone who's trying to keep minds open to an alternative way of seeing things. I'll leave it at that for this second.

SHORIN: There are so many directions to go, but one of the things that I read about is that you seem to – that's going against the grain is your feeling about this proliferation of research.

McCLINTOCK: Well, there are all kinds of research. To my mind I'm not so much concerned with the proliferation of research, particularly in areas where research is really essential, in the sciences. I think that the academy to too great a degree has lost the talent for criticism and that this is particularly apparent in the promotion and tenure of policies – When I started out, articles in prominent critical journals were the gold standard, at least in many areas, for establishing yourself as a young academic of promise. Now unless it's a peer-reviewed journal, things are sort of dismissed as irrelevant to establishing your reputation as a scholar and the like. It's not that there's too much research but there's a kind of mechanical reliance on it for a lot of decisions, internal decisions within our academic institutions. That pattern of reliance has, I think, begun to make a lot of research academic in the pejorative sense of the term. When one thinks of academic art in the nineteenth century where everything had to be just this way or it was not acceptable. We need some secessions in the sense of the various secessionist exhibitions of art by the Impressionists and the emergence of modern art. I think that that would enliven the intellectual life of the academy quite a bit. Unfortunately, the emotional climate within universities I think is inimical to that secessionist sense. In the sixties it was much stronger but now everybody's running scared. The cult of research I think has to do a lot with that predominance of fear in the motivation of a lot of people, that if you know the rules of research it's possible to produce lots of stuff that nobody's going to complain about and if nobody complains about it then it's kind of okay as long as it meets the rules.

SHORIN: What struck me in something you wrote, was when you described how every year teachers get a book filled with thousands of pages of research espousing different views and theories on education. It is overwhelming and difficult to know what to follow.

McCLINTOCK: In my early work I devoted many years to the studying of Jose Ortega y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher. He's sort of obscure but he was a wonderful writer. He talked about the tumultuous tones, a culture that was kind of overproducing things. I think that we are suffering from the overproduction of scholarly and intellectual materials that is at the base of the extreme specialization and at the base of a kind of incoherence in the university world where it's really very hard to bring a critical

sense to bear on a lot of the conventional wisdom of the time. I get upset by the inability of both the Arts and Science wing of the university and the School of Education wing of the university to, I think, take a strong leadership position in the discussion of education. It's really our government officials, people in the philanthropic structures and a few publicists of one sort or another who set the agenda. A significant piece of that is the abdication of the university in the largest sense of its critical role. What I really see is not too much research but a weakening of the critical role of intellectuals, which is the obverse sense of a kind of over accentuation of the research mission of the university. How to strengthen that critical dimension is – I don't have a set of solutions to it but it seems to me to be a serious issue.

SHORIN: You just brought up this tension, which seems to be so strong at Teachers College, between the professional school and a teaching college. Can you talk about that some more, this tension between the theory and the practice?

McCLINTOCK: That's increasingly been a problem for me. I feel that in many ways I've become a superfluous figure within a place such as Teachers College. I don't think my courses are uninteresting but they do not get many students because the pedagogical program of Teachers College has kind of been broken up into a lot of programmatic specializations and each of those programmatic specializations has a kind of required agenda, sometimes imposed from the outside and sometimes generated internally, but the set of requirements are those courses that are deemed to have a high payoff for that particular professional vision. It's eaten away at the role of people who may want to have a much more synthetic view of their intellectual enterprise, one where it cuts across many different specializations and the like. That's not unique to Teachers College, it's I think characteristic of all schools of education and not only schools of education but most professional schools of different types. Even in undergraduate education, the tendency of business education and things with a direct and immediate payoff of an economic sense for students, to wax in the humanities and some areas of the social sciences, to contract. I don't think that's an eternal reality but it's one that changes in a very slow swing of the pendulum of cultural power and interest. We are living at a time when there's a great deal of anxiety about economic and political issues. But it seems to me that if one looks at a person's spectrum of time commitments and we try to anticipate long-term developments, there's been a steady contraction of the work/time allocation. By "steady" I don't mean an unwavering line but like the stock market it has been going down. [*chuckle*] I would anticipate that that's going to continue perhaps at an accelerated rate when all the concern for long-term unemployment and the business cycle becoming one of anemic recovery of the employment pictures. That, in fact, has been going on for many, many, many decades and the maladjustment of it has been adapted to by the shortening of the workweek on average over time so that what used to be a sixty-hour workweek has

become a forty or a thirty-five. I think that that's going to continue and that work will increasingly give way to commitments of self-expression in one way or another. The dominance in our thinking about education currently, of the skills necessary for the workplace and all of that, I think at some point is going to kind of shift and people are going to say, "Gee, we're focusing on all of those skills but people have all this leisure time and free time," and they're really not necessarily particularly well empowered to make the fullest, most meaningful use of all of that. When that begins to settle into our focus I think a lot of our thinking about what's going to be the important concerns in education will start shifting again quite significantly. But that's a vision from a congenital optimist. [*chuckle*]

SHORIN: A lot of people would say that the workweek has increased in that with Blackberries and computers that there's a blurring of what is –

McCLINTOCK: For many people, particularly the upwardly mobile middle class, a lot of members of that stratum have been I think expanding their income by committing more and more time to the workplace. I'm not a quantitativist but I think there's also a strong sense that many people are underemployed in the workforce and I think a great deal more attention needs to be paid by the public and by professionals to the concept of full employment and just what that means. So it seems to me a little bit crazy to have a significant portion of the population working their butts off to the point where they have no leisure, no time for their kids or what have you and another significant equally well educated portion of the population chronically unemployed because for one or another reason they slipped out of the dynamic job possibilities. These things take time to work out and adjust. At the same time I would anticipate long-term population projections are now – there seems to be a demographers' consensus that the rapid growth of the last couple centuries is topping off and many of the most significant parts of the world are beginning to have an age structure that's weighted towards the elderly not only in Europe and the United States but China and Japan and it'll move into India and elsewhere. The possibility of perpetuating indefinitely the standard of economic growth and progressive material enrichment for the individual I think is historically impossible and undesirable. That seems to me to be the really big problem, how do you revalue things? We are enculturating people to expect more and more and more and we define a successful governmental system as one of being able to produce a higher and higher standard of living crudely measured by material output. Yet that doesn't really make sense in a long-term historical view. What it will mean for the way people educate themselves to, in a sense, come up with a new set of norms that will be more suitable to a historical environment that I would describe as a steady state where a material level of life is rather stabilized at a high level of comfort or potentiality. What will replace

becoming a billionaire as a measure of ultimate success for individuals who want to. That's, I think, something that we're not really paying that much attention to.

SHORIN: How can Teachers College remain relevant to that? I'd like you to talk about that but also this new emphasis within TC on policy, having a policy department.

McCLINTOCK: I think that in the last twenty years or so educational policy has been taken over by economic and political *raison d'état*, the reason of the state. This I see as an abdication of the responsibility of schools of education to insist that education is an autonomous domain of human experience. It isn't something that has its value by an increase in the GNP or of a greater capacity of the nation to project its power around the globe. But it's a lot like health, it's something that has value for people quite independent of the success of the economy or what have you. We've allowed the idea of educational policy to become a matter of state rather than a question of fundamental human concern and I'd like to see – This is when I want to say that I think there's been a breakdown in the critical role of intellectuals and educators, that we haven't really been insisting on the autonomous value of what we do and have harnessed it to other sectors of public life that are important but they aren't education, they're economics, they're practical politics, they're military affairs. I think that the ends of education are human ends rather than political ends or economic ends.

SHORIN: Do you think that the education of students in the history of education should start earlier than at a professional school?

McCLINTOCK: Yes, I think in undergraduate or even in high school. To my mind, a really interesting high school course would be a course on educational ideas not in the sense of how to teach or the like but how to think critically about this process of self-formation that we started talking about. A great deal of our literature is all about that and our philosophy and art; yet, somehow educational issues have been defined in a very vocational way rather than a open-ended, personally meaningful way. I think that education as a phenomenon worthy of study should be central to the curriculum of our educational institutions from very early ages on, not from the perspective of educating a teacher but of those acquiring the education. I also think that there's an immense amount of embodied sophistication about education in each person so that infants are making shrewd judgments about what they need to attend to as do toddlers and young children. We, I think, could make better use of that shrewdness that's embodied in us all about our formative opportunities.

SHORIN: I wonder how would it change schools of education if everybody was educated early on in the history of education and the ideas of education.

McCLINTOCK: It's a risky thing from the point of view of the teachers to some degree because it stays we're going to grant students much more actual power and the "we know best" on the teacher's part would diminish. I think it would open up for – I don't know exactly how to anticipate what it would mean for schools of education as such. I think it would mean a lot for the role of the study of education within the university both as a professional matter and as a dimension of the agenda of the university overall. There seem to me to have been some lacunae in the way education is thought about in schools of education that would perhaps diminish in the sense that – I like to play with an analogy of sort of SAT type, at least in the old versions of SAT, that "Blank is to education as disease is to medicine." It seems to me that the proper way to fill in that blank is with ignorance. "Ignorance is to education as disease is to medicine." Now if one goes into medical school there's an immense amount of study of disease going on. If one goes into a school of education there are very few people who are systematically inquiring into the nature of ignorance. It's a topic that for some reason educators shy away from as a matter of study; yet, ignorance is a very interesting cultural phenomenon. Like disease, there are many different kinds of ignorance, of ignorance of developmental stages, or physical – there are ignorances that arise from a kind of malnutrition of the mind and on and on. It seems to me that there would be a really rich body of inquiry if someone would begin saying, "This is the subject that we need to make more sense of." Yet, for some reason – I don't really know why it is because, I'm ignorant about that. [*chuckle*] But it's my faith, I guess, that if our study of education was more attuned to what's going on in the student today and what they can and cannot do, that ignorance is something that stymies a student, that they have to engage. That's the kind of thing that I think would change in the repertoire of inquiry if there was a greater commitment to understand education as a process of self-formation that all people are continuously undergoing. We're all continuously suffering from this ignorance or that ignorance and it would be, I think, something that people would begin to call on professional students of education to illuminate more fully than they are. In a sense we're like a medical establishment that doesn't really take seriously the health of the patients that we're treating, as I fear often the medical establishment doesn't. [*chuckle*] We pay too little attention to the struggle to develop the self and one's capacities that our students are undertaking.

SHORIN: How do you feel about the schools? There are so many more schools now. There's talk about programs being accredited as teaching institutions like Teach for America. How do you feel about that?

McCLINTOCK: In one sense a lot of this is something that you can't really oppose.

SHORIN: Can you say what "this" is?

McCLINTOCK: To me the emphasis on standards, the demonstration of results, the setting measures of quality and continually trying to improve them are all good things in one sense and like any parent, you look for the best schools. As a member of the public, I think efforts to ensure the quality of education institutions is as high as possible, to oppose exploitive programs that promise this but don't deliver and the like. On the other hand, that's really I think a dimension of ensuring that there's a responsible consumer marketplace and it's not anymore the real problem of education than ensuring that there's not salmonella in our eggs is the complete and full problem of human nutrition as it's experienced in each person's home and the like. The question of accreditation and standards and all of that helps establish a base but it's not really going to address the fullness of the human experience of education. Insofar as we kind of become obsessed by establishing the base problems, I think we turn away from the deeper, more problematic and, yet, more promising aspects of education. That's part of the tension between a world of study and world of instruction. The phenomena of the world of instruction, which isn't bad in and of itself but insofar as there is not enough attention to a world of study that it becomes a one-sided process.

[Interruption]

SHORIN: Formative justice, can you talk about that.

McCLINTOCK: Are we still on?

[Interruption]

McCLINTOCK: The idea of formative justice it seems to me is an educational norm that has to do – Justice issues are ones of allocation. Is it just that A gets this and B gets that? There are issues of distributive justice in any society or group of people because there are a limited set of goods that rarely exceed the demands being put upon them so there are issues of who gets what. I think that we have tended to address justice in education as a problem of distributive justice. By formative justice I mean that each of us has potentials that exceed our time, our energy and we have to make choices. Am I going to become Casanova and seduce everybody; am I going to become a great intellectual or a warrior or a this or that? Those choices are allocations of our effort that we have to make and that's a problem of justice.

[Interruption]

[*End of Tape One; Beginning of Tape Two*.].

SHORIN: It is September 17th. We're on card two with Robbie McClintock. Back to your path and the history of TC. We should start with your educational path. Deerfield then Princeton and Columbia.

McCLINTOCK: I graduated from Princeton in the spring of 1961 and came to Columbia as a graduate student in the History Department in the fall of '61. Was interested in educational ideas at that point and I drafted a master's essay on the use of collective pronouns, "we" and "us," in the rhetoric of college presidents over a period of time starting in the early history of Harvard going up through the mid-twentieth century, arguing that the concept of "us" was being used increasingly as a legitimization of all kinds of authoritarian potential positions. That didn't go over well with the professor running the master's seminar. Luckily, I at the same time had been participating in Larry Cremin's colloquium on the history of educational theory. I liked him and he thought my work was reasonably good and the person in the History Department really didn't think that I was at that point a serious historian and said, "When you change your ways you can come back but go away." [*chuckle*]

SHORIN: Who was that?

McCLINTOCK: I'd rather not go into who, it was a prominent person who had what I would take as a very conservative view of what history should be all about. I then showed the offensive [*chuckle*] draft to Cremin and he said he understood why it wasn't liked across the street but he didn't hold that against me. So I started working with Cremin at that point. Two years later I actually went back. I had wanted to write my dissertation on Jose Ortega y Gasset, whom I mentioned earlier, and Cremin said that you had t to have somebody from intellectual history and graduate faculties to co-sponsor it with him and I scratched my head and Jacques Barzun, who was then provost of the university, was really the most logical person and I screwed my courage to go talk to him because he was kind of reputed as someone who would not give you the time of day if he didn't like you or didn't think it was worthwhile. I got in a very interesting seminar that he and Lionel Trilling, who was a major literary critic of the time, gave all year long on European intellectual history and kind of flourished in that along with Cremin. So I felt that I went back into the History Department with Barzun in a way that kind of overcame my earlier travails. I was very much committed to the study of the intellectual history of educational thought and in the mid-sixties the job situation was a complete inversion of what it has been for the last two or three decades and I got a job

as an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins long before I'd finished my dissertation and was there two years and then Cremin asked me to interview for a position at TC and I did and was it was offered to me and I took it and I've been here ever since. I kind of say that I've been at Teachers College all my adult life. I came as an assistant professor into the then Department of Philosophy in the Social Sciences, which no longer exists, committed to the study of history of European/Western educational thought and all through my career, including the time that I've worked in technology, I've felt that that's the real focus of what I do and that my interest in technology has been because it is a powerful force in shaping the way people think about education rather than something that I do for its own sake. It's of interest to me as a condition that people have to take into account not only now as our technologies change rapidly but the changes in communication technologies have always been from the ancient Greeks on through all of Western history a powerful leavening influence in the way education is thought about and engaged.

SHORIN: I'd like to hear about TC when you arrived, the climate.

McCLINTOCK: It was, to my mind, the heyday of a very interesting vision of what TC should be all about. When I arrived Cremin that year published the *Transformation of the School* and it won the Bancroft Prize at that time. In the late fifties there had been a period of intense public criticism of schools of education and the public educational establishment. Arthur Bestor's *Educational Wastelands*, Hyman Rickover in – I forget the name of the books but Admiral Rickover was – the schools were letting the public down. Then within Columbia University itself in the fifties I think there was a view coming out of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Columbia College that Teachers College was not up to snuff in comparison to other schools at Columbia. There was a sense that the study of education needed to be made more rigorous, more challenging, engage more actively the fundamental intellectual standards of the culture, a little less specialist and the like. I had kind of gotten interested in the study of education because of all of those critiques and felt that it was a time to engage Teachers College in a way that would bring it more fully into the mainstream of activity at Columbia. They say that ducklings sort of imprint on the first – if it's their mother, it's their mother but if it happens to be a pigeon that comes by [*chuckle*] at just the right time they – I imprinted first on Columbia and then found my way to Teachers College but I still think of myself as a Columbia faculty member and my allegiance is to Teachers College as a part of Columbia rather than as an independent institution. I saw the climate at Teachers College then as one strongly committed to articulating or developing the institution as an integral part of the university. I think it's in the last few years moved back towards that commitment but I think that – For complex reasons Cremin built his reputation at a very expansive period in higher education and he had lots of ideas about what to do with those expansive potentialities and he had the ability to communicate a vision that was

moving to all sorts of people. But then he became president just at the shift in the level of resources and the onset of prolonged academic contraction so he had to develop his presidency in a way that went somewhat against his natural capacities as someone who would lead and enthuse in a process of change. He, I think, was less well adapted to a process of conservation in a period of contraction and so I think the subsequent climate within Teachers College was more one of circling the wagons and being in a self-consciously independent institution a little bit worried that Columbia would take over rather than facilitate. I felt that a lot of what I tried to do with technology was more fully backed at the time by the powers that be at Columbia than the powers that be at Teachers College.

SHORIN: Who were those people then and in what ways did you feel that you weren't –

McCLINTOCK: Mike Timpane was aware of my interests in technology and really gave me the opening to develop them. He helped originate the Institute for Learning Technologies and actively furthered it through a sequence of projects, a key one being a project at the Dalton School. We became for a time – "we" being the people associated with the Institute and its projects and the Dalton Project – fairly visible in technology in education activities and Jonathan Cole who was then provost of Columbia was also a trustee at Dalton and knew of the work of the Institute and the Dalton Project pretty directly. He had a key associate, Michael Crow, who is now the president of Arizona State University, as vice-provost in charge of what was called the Strategic Initiative Fund. At that time Columbia had some very, very, very lucrative patents, that have now gone out of patent but were producing millions of dollars of royalty each year, a substantial part of which went to the central administration and that was channeled into the Strategic Initiative Fund. Mike Crow and Cole thought highly of the work of the Institute and we received several million dollars of seed funding over the years from that fund and a lot of institutional administrative support, which kind of was happening at the same time that Arthur Levine was president. I didn't handle the politics of that I think as astutely as I might have, with what Arthur perceived as a kind of end-running around TC's structures. For a time the Institute was seen as a major vehicle of initiative at Columbia and a kind of rogue group at Teachers College. You know how they have these sort of inflated things that they hang down between a big boat and a dock [*chuckle*] and it goes -- that was my image. The dock was Columbia and it wasn't going to budge and TC was banging back and forth on it.

SHORIN: You mentioned Arthur Levine end-running around TC's structures. When you first came there were three divisions. Can you talk about how the school was organized and how it changed.

McCLINTOCK: The other big thorn in my [*chuckle*] – TC used to have a divisional structure of actually five divisions, I think it was. Division I was really co-extensive with the Department of Philosophy in the Social Sciences. It was a group of about fifteen to twenty faculty members who are now kind of dispersed throughout the college, philosophy, history, sociology, economics, anthropology and international and comparative education. This was the kind of creation of Cremin. As he was rising in influence, Division I was kind of reorganized as his domain to make of it what he, as the head of it, really wanted. I think through the rest of the college it was perceived as sort of a privileged enclave and in a time of expansion that was more or less okay. But in a time when there's a greater and greater emphasis on cost-effectiveness, it was not the most cost-effective component of the college. It had a lot of intellectual prestige but it didn't have a large enrollment or a key role in the sort of practical concerns of the college. When everybody is being asked to sort of sacrifice their interests, it's natural that there's an animosity that builds up against that. I think that Arthur Levine perceived that and the reorganization, in my view at any rate, was in a sense, something that he initiated and encouraged to do away with the Department of Philosophy in the Social Sciences as the sort of lynchpin of that whole reorganization. I have difficulty separating my personal interests and my sense of what would be good for the institution but certainly from a personal point of view I think it was a great loss and I think it's a trend or it's the result of a trend that is not unique to Teachers College. Similar enterprises have been significantly cut back or done away with at other institutions as well. It's, I feel, part of the loss that I was speaking about earlier of a critical capacity that the institution might exert, one that has enough intellectual strength to it to go against the grain of current conventional views of things. That said, I'm not at all sure that we would have had that capacity had it not been disbanded and dispersed. The problem of the dispersion of it is that it becomes harder to sustain a certain kind of critical consciousness I think. By "sustain" I mean not only articulate it fully within the intellectual life of the institution but I have been upset intellectually and emotionally by some of the tenure decisions that we have and haven't made in the last ten years where I think that people who, were there still a Department of Philosophy in the Social Sciences, would be a key part of it and would have aggressively been promoted, failed to get tenure in a way that I look at as simply intellectually irresponsible on the part of the Teachers College faculty and administration. But it is a reality; it's not only a reality here, it's a reality in most schools of education, that there's been a serious contraction in the kind of work that was being promoted when I was a young person. I don't think I would have gotten tenure were I forty years younger. I'm not even sure Cremin would have gotten tenure today.

SHORIN: Can you be more specific for people watching this twenty-five years from now?

McCLINTOCK: [*chuckle*]

SHORIN: Who got tenure then that's not happening now and what kind of person, what kind of work –

McCLINTOCK: The kind of work that gets highly valued now is work published in the two or three leading peer-reviewed journals of a person's specialty. The way to get tenure really is to block out a well-defined sphere of research to produce papers that you know or you are confident will be judged well by a reference group of, say, twenty or thirty fairly visible persons whose work you can identify and emulate. It's hard in the current environment to block out a line of work that may take a long period of time to develop because you won't have the requisite number of prominent publications by the time you're up for tenure. The work that will become highly controversial is generally not going to do you much good or work that takes a lot of risks because it will – What does taking risks mean? It means going against what the most highly established people are taking as the right course of action. Peer-review works, to my mind, very well in scientific areas where peer review doesn't focus on whether someone thinks something, agrees with something or not, but rather it focuses on the quality of technical performance that goes into the production of the material under review. In areas that don't have a rigorous set of technical procedures, peer review, I think, becomes more a popularity contest and not so much a competence assessment. The softer areas, which are often areas where people are engaging in critical discourse rather than validated scientific claims, I think get weakened in this sort of environment at a loss to the public because a lot of that critical discourse is important.

SHORIN: What's your feeling about tenure in general?

McCLINTOCK: The two people who I think are the most outspoken colleagues in my experience, one is now still very active, the other is dead, neither had tenure. I think a case can be made that the tenure system, which is supposed to be the defense of academic freedom and the autonomy of our intellect and judgment, rather is a system of conditioning young scholars to staying within the mainstream and not breaking out. In that sense I think it's a highly questionable system. On the other hand, it may be like Churchill's sense of democracy, "It's the worst possible system except for all the others." It may be something that we shouldn't give up lightly but I think that we do have a responsibility to make sure it works for its essential purposes and not its sort of accidental other qualities. There's also a great deal of difference between the way a tenuring system can be administered and, frankly, I think too often the questions asked in the process are not the right ones. I've been impressed by sitting in or participating in tenure decisions in a variety of situations. There's a broad spectrum of how rigorous and creative they are. One of the features of Teachers College is that of all the component schools of Columbia University it's

the one that is not integrated into the university's tenure system as a whole, it's autonomous. I think that that's a mistake. That's not a popular [*chuckle*] position to take but I think that the university's tenure process is at once more rigorous and more creative in the sense that it will probe more deeply for reasons to reject and for reasons to award than our system does. I think that's in the long run a good thing although it's in the short run – a lot of people don't want to go into it.

SHORIN: Can you tell me more about Cremin and your relationship with him, maybe a story about him, because of all the people we've spoken to you had the closest relationship.

McCLINTOCK: Cremin I think was a person of immense charm, immense energy and focus. I think his ability to manage his time was extraordinary. Without being a grad grinder, he was always charming, attentive to people's interests, quick to sense what you were hoping to do and encouraging in the sense that he would – If he wanted to say no, it would be by his not doing much about it, but if he wanted to say yes he would be very welcoming and constructive in his facilitation of what you wanted to do.

SHORIN: Do you have a specific example you can give me of a yes and a no?

McCLINTOCK: When I wanted to do my dissertation on Ortega y Gassett he could have very easily said, "No, that's an inappropriate topic. There's nobody here who can really work with you or knows much about European context." He didn't feel he did. But instead of simply saying, "No, that won't fly," he said, "Well, in order to do that well, this is what you need to do." He didn't compromise the standards that would come to bear on the effort but he did kind of clearly point to a path that I could follow to carry it out and never had second thoughts then afterwards. I think that he threw out – I mean his style of leadership was one of encouraging people to take the risks that they really wanted to take. Building the Department of Philosophy in the Social Sciences was something that before he became president he was very deeply engaged in and I think that everybody who was kind of drawn into that felt his critical enthusiasm in the sense that he wasn't just a booster of things but he would encourage and push at the same time. That I think was a very valuable quality in taking institutional initiatives. When the winds shifted and one had to cut back –

SHORIN: Financial winds?

McCLINTOCK: Yes. I think it was more difficult for him to realize his style of leadership.

SHORIN: He was president from '74 to '84 so it was still sort of a sixties feeling in the seventies.

McCLINTOCK: Well, there was a sixties feeling in the general culture but in the deployment of academic resources it was clearly a decade of major contraction. I think if one were to chart increases of enrollment and the like, they began to level off just about exactly 1974, plus or minus a year or two. There had been I think a mentality of "we can keep a dynamic process going" up until then, that this initiative would lead to that initiative and on. Having to reverse that – sometimes a flattening of expansion is more traumatic than an actual downturn once a mentality of contraction has fully set in. People's expectations were for new initiatives to flow and having to cut back on those is traumatic.

SHORIN: Was he aware that he wasn't necessarily the right person for that time?

McCLINTOCK: There may be people who were a little bit closer to Larry who could answer that. He was someone who could lead both by example and encouragement but he was hard to get close to. This was a feature of the rigor with which he would manage his time. You couldn't just say, "Hey, let's go get a cup of coffee and schmooze about these issues." Particularly during his time as president I have little sense of what his inner assessment of things was. Somebody like Ellen Lagemann might have a better sense. I think Larry's papers are under a sort of time embargo but I think it would be very interesting to get into the correspondence and the like to get a better idea of what he really was thinking in making a lot of decisions. He was a little more accessible after he stepped down as president. He was not enthused with what was happening subsequent, although, as a person who was no longer responsible he was not going to meddle. I mean he certainly stood aside but I don't think he was happy about that.

SHORIN: Like what? What were some of the –

McCLINTOCK: Well, just the climate, the direction of either both education policy writ large and what was happening within Teachers College itself. One of the things of getting older is that one's time sense is getting squished together so I haven't really charted out on a chronological – what was happening in '84, '85, '86. But it clearly – it's the onset of the Reagan years, it was not a time that were happy years as far as he was concerned.

SHORIN: What about the legacy of his work as a philosopher of education?

McCLINTOCK: I find it surprising how quickly people stopped reading his scholarship. The *Transformation of the School* I think is a really well written book and well researched. His three volumes on American education to my mind are a little bit too mechanical in the way they frame things. They don't read to me with the same intellectual vigor and tension that *Transformation of the School* does. That's partly the result of aiming at comprehensiveness so everything has to have its place. I think also particularly that volume two and three were produced while he was fully engaged in what are really more than full-time other activities so they had their two or three hours a day but not the interstitial time where people can really think about how to set things up, so I think they're authoritative but not particularly engaging. Larry's view, one that I think is very correct, is that we need to think about education much more comprehensively than we have been, that the schools and institutions of higher education are just a small piece of the educational problem and that what schools can and cannot do is shaped very largely by the surrounding cultural climate. I think that contemporary educational discourse has moved far from that, that the pressure is to make the schools carry almost all of the burden. The Comprehensive Education Project in Harlem is in a sense an exception to that but whether it's the standards movement or the entrepreneurial kind of "let's break the system up" with all kinds of vouchers and the like, the focus is on changing the schools. For Larry the focus was on engendering more educational responsibility in the cultural process writ large and that seems to me to have decayed far beyond what it was then. The intellectual honesty in the culture at large I think is a value that's decayed in extreme ways and very dangerous ways. I think Larry would be appalled at the sort of public discourse that is going on currently and has been building over the last three, four decades. I mean it was beginning –

SHORIN: About education or –

McCLINTOCK: It is about education but the idea that – What sort of intellectual standards are being promulgated by some of our major media. Anything that commands an audience is okay. That implies certain standards of judgment about the nature of truth, about fundamental values of honesty, integrity, seriousness of purpose. I think the media, which were a major educational concern for Larry, are less and less responsible to anything but their bottom line and their bottom line is really now the preference of often one or two moguls of highly questionable interest and commitment, it seems to me. I don't think of Rupert Murdoch as a great educator. He may be a very astute entrepreneur and manipulator of journalistic properties – and that's just one of many examples.

SHORIN: You're sort of saying that the media is the educator now.

McCLINTOCK: Yes. It's an immensely difficult problem because the first amendment really – How does one discuss educational responsibility in a free press, understanding a free press as one that can really say anything without any consequences? Now we don't want to impose pedagogical censorship on the system but how – This is where I think the decay of educational criticism – this isn't going to be a topic of educational research. But a lot of people are free to act in an environment that has no critical pressure being brought to bear on it for prestigious or powerful sense. That troubles me.

[*End of Tape Two; Beginning of Tape Three*].

SHORIN: This is card three with Robbie McClintock. Off-camera we started to talk about when you first came to TC and how the institution has changed culturally and in other ways since you first came here. Can you talk about that?

McCLINTOCK: I think there's been some surprising continuities and some obvious changes and some subtle changes. TC, I think when I first came and still is an institution relatively hospitable to and responsive to many of the issues of inclusion in our society. It has had more minority students than many other institutions and many other components of Columbia all the way along and it's certainly been more open to the role of women in higher education all the way along, which is not to say that it was not susceptible to patterns of exclusion as well, but if one took circa 1960 the status across a wide spectrum of institutions, TC would be at that end of the spectrum that was more hospitable to the role of women and it's, I think, remained at that end. It's the spectrum that's been shifting rather than a dramatic shift in TC that's different from the rest of other institutions. As far as the makeup of the student community, where there's been a most dramatic increase I think is in the role of international students, particularly from Africa and Asia that's increased dramatically. In the sixties TC was a leading institution for the study of international education; it certainly had a number of international students but they weren't a significant proportion. In some ways we do less formal study of international education but we serve a much more distinctly international clientele. From my perspective in a sense the most disturbing significant change in the day-to-day texture of activity within Teachers College has been the institution's response to the traumas of 9/11. Everywhere in the society there's a greater emphasis on security but TC had always been kind of open to the community at large. Nobody was interested in identification at the door and we were of the community in a way that I think we are no longer quite of the community now that everybody's carded as they come in through the door. That's just one visible component of a greater emphasis on questions of liability and things that when I was first here one wouldn't think twice about that now I think the institution is much more vigilant in thinking about. From one point of view probably that's a good

thing. One manages risk, as they say, more consciously and actively. But I often wonder really how substantial those risks are and whether they merit that amount of vigilance or not and what we lose in focusing on them in that way. Early in the development of the Institute for Learning Technologies we quite spontaneously encouraged a number of youth groups in Harlem to come up and make use of our resources and kids would come in and out. It was prior to 9/11 but the institution began to say that was a bad thing to do, that it wasn't sufficiently organized. What would happen if something happened? Can we trust – And that's been a change that I think I regret. It's not a change unique to Teachers College but it is a change that I think has shifted the tone of Teachers College within the Morningside Heights community. What strikes me as strange is that anyone can go into the physics research building across the street that actually has a lot of things that if I were a terrorist I would want to do something with or to, but that's not a tightly secured building, whereas Teachers College in the last decade or so has greatly raised the degree of security that we exercise on who comes in and who goes out of our buildings. I find that to be a noticeable change that goes along with a greater risk aversiveness, I think, among our students, among our faculty, our whole society. I'm interested in how we as persons assess risk and I wonder whether that should become a more conscious focus of a dimension of our education. It's a matter that's sort of a little bit sensitive to talk about in that we're quite oblivious to the degree to which driving in cars is a major social risk that produces forty thousand or so accidental deaths annually in the United States and many, many times that world around yet nobody really focuses that much on it. Whereas terrorism, which has vastly fewer casualties is a major object of public policy and things.

SHORIN: I want to make sure we get to everything in this short time. You mentioned your Institute and I know that your heart has been always in historical and philosophical educational foundations but you've had a big administrative role in computers and technology. Could you talk about your path and also the history of that computer technology at TC?

McCLINTOCK: I got interested sort of accidentally. I was, to begin with, a critic of the technological effects in education but I got interested in it [when] I spent almost a year as a special assistant to the Secretary of HEW in the Ford administration and saw advanced word processing at use then and thought that that really was a good thing. I got a Videk text editor, which was like a Star Trek console that one would sit behind and do one's word processing, which on can now do on a [*chuckle*] little Netbook or anything. But I got interested in the technology at first simply as a way of facilitating my own writing efforts. Prior to the advent of the microcomputer I began seriously to think about what its cultural influences would be as a communication innovation. I kind of foresaw some of the directions that it was going so when the microcomputer hit I was prime to start fiddling with that. Mike Timpane was aware of

those interests that I had and asked me early in his administration to become chair of the Department of Communication, Computing and Technology. As part of our activities with that he channeled initial resources from Ben D. Wood, who was a Columbia patron who had made a great deal of money as an early builder of IBM to start the Institute for Learning Technologies. Communication, Computing and Technology were sort of the teaching side and the Institute for Learning Technologies was an externally funded with a small endowment research and development group. The two interchanged and interacted. Communication, Computing and Technology as a department had a period of growth in the initial enthusiasm with computers and technology, our enrollments went up quite a bit in that. The environment for the Institute for Learning Technologies to raise funding externally was pretty good as well. After a while I stopped chairing the Department of Communication, Computing and Technology but for fifteen-plus years I directed the Institute for Learning Technologies. We had a series of projects that all focused on the use of computer networks as information tools to change the intellectual constraints under which students and teachers worked in educational institutions. We did work from kindergarten through the university.

SHORIN: You mentioned the Dalton Project before.

McCLINTOCK: The Dalton Project was the first of our well-funded projects. It had a kind of pre-history in an effort with IBM to develop a project that would involve both private and public schools in New York City that almost got a lot of money from IBM but unfortunately the awarding of that was going to take place just at the time that IBM realized in the late eighties that it was in a tougher economic climate than originally thought. We didn't get IBM funding but we got a lot of money from a patron at the Dalton School to develop a very intensive use of industrial strength technology network throughout the school in the first four or five years of 1990s and that got a lot of publicity and was a very interesting curricular reform project. My colleague Frank Moretti, who was then associate headmaster at Dalton, and I worked closely on it. The idea was to leaven the curricular possibilities of the school with the technology and the funding made available. We allocated a whole lot of the funding not for technology itself but for release time for teachers sort of on a university model of an academic researcher who spends less time in the classroom and more time on their work. We made it possible for teachers to develop technology projects with teaching one or two fewer courses per year and getting a lot of support in developing a social studies project, an astronomy project, paleontology and the like. Some of those curricular projects are as sophisticated as anything that's now in use. Unfortunately, we discovered the complexities of intellectual property and much of what we did is unmarketable because we didn't even know that one needed to put a

lot of forethought into the intellectual property sides of this, so copyright issues of some of what we did are complex.

SHORIN: On that note, actually, I know that you created a study guide Website and also that you believe in taking charge of your own education. Are copyright and plagiarism going to go by the wayside anyway?

McCLINTOCK: I'm of the school that would like to see copyright disappear. I think that technologically the right to make copies was something that made a great deal of sense with printing presses and other forms of mechanical reproduction of things. With digital reproduction it doesn't make much sense at all because there are substantial sump costs in establishing a highly capacious network environment such as the Internet has become but to copy something digitally is a trivial but highly accurate endeavor so that a copy is indistinguishable from the original and it is negligible in cost. So what does the right to make copies really mean? Very little. Insofar as it's going to be something perpetuated legally, it's going to be perpetuated not because the technology makes it difficult to make copies but because we allocate a great deal of effort to enforcing in civil and criminal law a right that has become sort of technologically meaningless. We're in a transition period where a lot of things that are possible physically and desirable intellectually are not feasible legally. I think law is responsive enough to the material realities of the world around us that that's going to change somewhat. The public domain is an expansible realm and the intellectual commons, which is the essence of science really, we don't copyright most scientific – until fairly recently. I think more and more intellectual production will be put directly into the intellectual commons without really going – it will be in a technical sense copyrighted but under copyright claims like the creative commons that really says anybody can make use of this material provided they don't do it for exclusive commercial purposes.

SHORIN: What is the thing that you're most proud of during your time as chair of the Institute?

McCLINTOCK: I mean the Dalton Project was an early important thing. There were a number of unsuccessful projects or quasi-successful projects. We had a project that followed and tried to sort of spread the philosophy of the Dalton Project into small public schools in New York City that was funded by the federal government at a pretty high level with a lot of cost-sharing from community groups and the like that I think was – let me put it this way, it and the Dalton Project, for that matter, went against the grain of the then and now conventional reform efforts in education in that they were premised on the idea that you can create an information environment in schools that empowers student self-direction to a much

greater level than has historically been feasible in workable schools, which was very much at odds with the standards movement and the accountability movements, all of which ultimately turn on the claim that we can predict what a good student should know and therefore we can test to see that they do or do not know that or have learned that. In a fully developed, technologically empowered educational environment that prediction breaks down. A good student could take innumerable paths to a fully developed intellectual self. I am resolved not to be proud [*chuckle*], I guess, in the sense that I think most of what we did technologically so far as been a failure. The Dalton Project for complex reasons disappeared.

SHORIN: Funding?

McCLINTOCK: With little bits of residue in the school. The Eiffel Project, which was a broadening of that – we had a yet much more ambitious project that almost came to be in the New York City Board of Education but never even began to get off the ground because of the dot-com implosion in 2000 and the outcome of the Green-Bloomberg election. In modern architecture some of the most influential buildings were not built, Louis Sullivan's *Chicago Tribune* design and the like. So I'm not too regretful. I think whether I have something to be proud about or not will depend on what's happening twenty, thirty years ago[sic] and it'll be a posthumous pride [*chuckle*] if I can claim it or it can be claimed on my behalf. The historical realization of the potentialities of communications innovations as powerful as the digital one are things that unfold over fifty, a hundred, two hundred years and no single individual really has a decisive role to play. But I think that the projects that we initiated and thought through will in the long run prove to be indicative of the kinds of developments that this messy, chaotic historical process is all about.

SHORIN: Can you talk about the next chapter, the John and Sue Ann Weinberg Professorship and what that has been about?

McCLINTOCK: That's been something I'm very proud to hold as the first Weinberg Professor. It has enabled me to devote myself again more to my historical and theoretical interests. Ten years ago I was pretty tired of the never-ending process of building houses of cards that could get direct external funding. I think that running an institute such as the Institute for Learning Technologies is an endeavor highly risky of burnout.

SHORIN: Is fundraising a big part of being a director of an institute?

McCLINTOCK: Yes. The difference between an institute and a department really, a department is financed through tuition payments by students; institutes and centers are financed by externally funded projects. The Institute for Learning Technologies had a small endowment that made possible a few continuing activities but then you're on a rollercoaster of how much funding you get externally determines what you can and cannot do. One of the points of contention between TC and Columbia around the Institute for Learning Technologies is that Columbia wanted to try to push the Institute up to a really very high level of funding externally. Columbia has a thing in environmental sciences, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Institute, that has a budget of $150 million a year with lots and lots of different projects, an increment of a million dollars here, five hundred thousand – Once you get up to that level there is a kind of momentum that an institute has that has made possible then the core of Columbia's Earth Institute. If you're down where ILT was where we would get a $7 million grant for five years, actually that's quite a bit of activity, particularly when it's amplified with cost-sharing arrangements. Then if that gives out you're suddenly going from a staff of twenty or so full-time equivalents to nothing and that's very traumatic and not a lot of fun and doesn't lend itself to a continuity of activity that's very useful. My experience in working with the New York City schools is that they are very skeptical of groups from institutions like Columbia coming in because they say, "Well, you'll be here for three years and then you'll disappear." That's not our choice but it's a reality of the funding process. The challenge for externally funded activity is to get it up to a level where it has real staying power. I think that the available funding in the field of education is so fragmented and TC, unfortunately, has a tendency to have lots and lots of very small institutes and centers and that depends on a willingness of people to kind of exert a certain amount of heroic effort. You don't build institutions on heroic effort, you build institutions on systems that can become self-sustaining. This is a beef, a concern, a problem I think that goes – the institute climate at TC is let's let each person do their thing and let's not have a really big center that soaks up all the available external funding. I'm glad not to be doing it anymore and I'm very thankful for the Weinberg Professorship.

SHORIN: Let's come back to the Weinberg Professorship. You started to say the kinds of things that you've been able to think about.

McCLINTOCK: We need more endowed professorships that will provide a high level of intellectual autonomy for their holders. The actual administration of endowed professorships I think is often very ambiguous in the sense that the expectations and the prerogatives for achieving those expectations aren't as clear as I think they should be. But clearly for me it kind of legitimated what I probably would have done anyway but would have done with even a worse set of feelings than I have had of willfully asserting

my own interests in the shaping of what I want to teach and try to achieve. I'm going to retire at the end of this year. I certainly intend to continue pursuing the intellectual concerns that I am pursuing through the professorship but I think it's more of a full-time – I've taught as much as I can teach.

[Interruption]

SHORIN:– We touched on politics and education and how they intersect, I think, but maybe you want to talk about that some more, and your ideas about the city as an educator.

McCLINTOCK: We haven't talked about city as educator very much. That I think is the central conceit of this book that my wife and I are going to working on for a long time. Why send your kid to college when you can set them up in New York City for four years of a kind of intensive engagement with the cultural resources and problems and issues and life as a city, that it's a very -- particularly now that it's sort of digitally expanded and the like. I think that what a city is is distinct from a rural locality and the kind of environment inviting self-education, understanding education or self-formation, understanding self-formation is something that can be both happy in its consequences or self-destructive in its consequences. It seems to me in thinking about our urban environments – and now globally more than fifty percent of people live in cities of some significant size – we don't pay enough attention to them as seats of self-formation. Should they be designed and planned for the optimal human development within them versus the optimal economic production that might come out of them or this or that. I think we have a lot of ideas or concepts to develop about making our urban environments as liberating to our human potentialities as we can. I think there is an urban pedagogy. Historically when one looks at that urban pedagogy it's generally seen as highly negative, *Sister Carrie* and the corrupting influence. But that's I think more characteristic of a nineteenth-century urban environments under a great deal of stress or twentieth-century environments in urban decay and the collapse of the manufacturing base of many cities and not inherent in the idea of an urban conglomeration. I want to think and speculatively talk about issues that perhaps should be thought about in thinking about the city as an educator. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum has an immense amount of art of considerable interest and quality often in storehouses here or there and who knows where. Rather than have all of its collection in one humongous central place that for many citizens of New York is a very off-putting or – a kid from Queens may be marched off there to walk around in the halls a little bit but why not disperse its collection or is that a good idea, what does that mean? Why not put all of its curatorial information online rather than in files so that people can argue about whether this should be displayed in this way or that way for one or another reason. There seem to me to be a whole – this can touch on - most of our urban institutions are thought of as private enclaves

that are - because making them enclaves is a way of cultivating and defending them. I believe that the impetus of the technology that we have at our fingertips can turn these institutions inside out and make them far more interesting, available, interactive human resources and to think about that is what I want to do with the city as educator.

SHORIN: Where in fifty years, if technology continues and education evolves in a way you think it should, what's the place for Teachers College?

McCLINTOCK: I think there are two roles that are significantly related. One is as the locus of the development of both highly skilled specialists within a complex information environment and the development of very significant embedded tools in that environment. I'd like to see more and more R&D resources go into assessment strategies not so that we can assess what students have learned [but] so that we can embed into the tools of learning much more effective immediate feedbacks available to the students doing the learning. One drives a car because there is an immediate feel of the road. In a lot of learning there is no immediate feel of the road, one doesn't know whether you're making – And I think it's going to be possible to create that kind of feel of the road and sense of immediate cause and consequence and ability to steer yourself as we do with a bicycle. We sense it falling out of balance, going where we want to. That's going to take a great deal of creative effort and schools of education have the skill base to develop those things. A lot of the specialists that would be trained, developed, educated fifty years from now would be people skilled at making those sorts of tools. The other big thing I think would be intelligent critics of what's going on in a very open communications environment so that – by "critic" I mean not necessarily pointing fingers, that's bad, but raising questions, getting people to think about this or that possibility a little bit more self-consciously. I'm not sure in the world I envision what the role of teachers will be necessarily in the sense that they have been historically. I think that it's likely less to be a profession and more to be a vocation in a very traditional sense of vocation, somebody who is generous in giving their time. If I have a question that you know a lot about and I come rather than feeling distracted, one will feel "Great, here's an opportunity to talk," like I've been talking [*chuckle*].

SHORIN: Looking back, what impact would you say TC has had on your life?

McCLINTOCK: On my life. Well, it's been the locus of my professional life. It isn't even that it is something separate that has an impact on me, it's that it's been the locus of my life.

SHORIN: Can you say "TC has been." You said "it", can you just say "TC."

McCLINTOCK: Well, as I said a while ago, I don't distinguish between TC and Columbia, Morningside Heights, New York City.

[Interruption]

SHORIN: When we sat down you had said, "Can I be frank?" Is there anything that you haven't told me that you would like to share?

McCLINTOCK: With any complex relationship there are things that one wishes were different or find that one regrets as opportunities not taken and the like. I am fundamentally disturbed by directions that over the course of my career the field of education has taken that I think are not the directions that I would like to see them and that TC has fully participated in those directions becoming more and more committed to conflating education and schooling in a way that I don't think makes sense. I think in due course that will reverse itself. As a historian I tend to take a kind of stoic historical attitude on these things that this too will pass. I think for me Teachers College has been a locus of my life work which I've partially developed on opposition to many of the tendencies of the institution itself and that's I think a healthy thing for me and for the institution as well, that it wouldn't be – For me, the bible is Heraclitus, a pre-Socratic philosopher. One of his fragments goes to the effect that it is not best for people that everything should happen as they wished it would and that's my feeling about Teachers College. There's a lot that I wished were different but that it is good that there is that tension with one's environment. I regret most significantly the disbanding of Philosophy in the Social Sciences and think that that's a kind of weakening of the long-term responsiveness of the institution to sensing some of the critical changes that need to take place. Somebody will come along with Larry Cremin's quality and institutional leverage and start that anew someday is my conviction, at any rate.

SHORIN: Thank you. This was really interesting. Thank you so much.

McCLINTOCK: Sure. No, my pleasure.

[*End of Interview.*].