

INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

PREFACE

The following manuscript contains the edited transcript of an interview with Harry Woolf. The interview was recorded at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, on December 8, 1993, and was conducted by Patricia H. Labalme. It was the first of two interviews. Dr. Woolf was Director of the Institute for Advanced Study from 1976 to 1987.

Harry Woolf was born on August 12, 1923, in New York. After serving in the US Army from 1943-1946, he attended the University of Chicago, earning a BS in 1948 in Physics and Mathematics and an MA in 1949 in Physics and History. He received a PhD from Cornell University in 1955 in the History of Science.

He taught Physics at Boston University from 1953-55, and History at Brandeis University 1954-55 and at the University of Washington, 1955-61. He moved to The Johns Hopkins University in 1961, as Professor in the History of Science, and chair of that department until 1972, when he became Provost of The Johns Hopkins University.

In 1976, he was appointed Director of the Institute for Advanced Study and Professor-at-Large. He retired as Director in 1987 and became Emeritus in 1994.

He is the author of The Transits of Venus: a Study in Eighteenth-Century Science, and editor of a number of works, among which are Quantification: Essays in the History of Measurement in the Natural and Social Sciences, Science as a Cultural Force, and The Analytic Spirit: Essays in the History of Science. He has served as associate editor for the Dictionary of Scientific Biography and was a contributor to and the editor of Some Strangeness in the Proportion: A Centennial Symposium to Celebrate the Achievements of Albert Einstein. He also served as editor of ISIS. An International Review Devoted to the History of Science and Its Cultural Influences from 1958-64, and currently serves as editor of The Sources of Science (139 titles in print as of 1994) and as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of The Writings of Albert Einstein.

Dr. Woolf is a Fellow of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung medal. He holds honorary degrees from Whitman College, American University, The Johns Hopkins University, and St. Lawrence University.

The reader should be aware that the following is essentially a transcript of the spoken word and attempts to preserve the spontaneity and informality of the original tape and that the views expressed therein are those of the narrator.

INTERVIEW WITH HARRY WOOLF

(The first of two interviews)

Date: December 8, 1993
Place: Princeton, New Jersey
Interviewer: Patricia H. Labalme

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE ONE:

Labalme: This is Patricia Labalme and I will be interviewing Dr. Harry Woolf on December 8, 1993, in Princeton, New Jersey. So now we're on record and shall we begin with our first question? Is that a comfortable question in which I said, what did you know about the Institute, what brought you here?

Woolf: Yes. One, in the academic world we all knew about it. And we knew about it for reasons that (interestingly enough) have little to do with its internal substance. We knew of its origin as a political story, that is, of its founding in the midst of the depression and of its capture of the European academic culture during and after its collapse under the assault of an ascendent Nazism and Fascism. We knew it because of the heroes and heroines of the scholarly world who came here and whose names sounded and resounded everywhere. We knew of it again later in a second and lesser way, in a sense, when the internal troubles, that came during my

predecessor's administration,¹ the "tempest" in a teapot, from the public's point of view, although the roots of academic quarrels go way back, as a visit to Swift's "Grand Academy of Lagado"² will easily demonstrate, that which reached the public scene in the post-war years had its own intensity and bitterness. And the joy with which the press, then and now, leapt into the fray to attack, to criticize and to expose, to denigrate and above all, to take joy in the process as they still do is as sad a commentary on the state of the culture as it is possible to make. In the process, the press missed then, and frequently does now, the substantive, the subsurface, the steady, almost biological pace at which the learning and research process goes on here as it does in many other institutions.

There was, of course, the obvious magical name, Einstein, and later the subset of arguments and counter-arguments around Oppenheimer. We knew about their early differences, i.e. Einstein and Oppenheimer. We knew about the greatness of the one in one kind of knowledge, the purity of Einstein's research, and the greatness of the other, Oppenheimer in this case for

¹ Carl Kaysen, 1966-1976.

² From Gulliver's Travels (London, 1726).

example, which was less in the specific contributions to physics, although they were significant enough, than in the great enterprise of the war and the management of the research effort that produced the bomb. And that of course created mixed blessings, that included an ambiguous reputation that continues to the present; for example, to be concerned with the purity of the scholarly endeavor in the case of the sciences, the attempt to understand nature as it operates actually--and the uses of evil (the bomb), allegedly for good. An ancient story, and in some sense one that should be the concern of the Institute in its other components. So that was the general reputation. I had had in my own limited career after the war some exposure to the new physics. I worked for the Atomic Energy Commission before it was called that, as a student at the University of Chicago. I joined the former bomb project in its post-war program and in that time it changed its name from the Manhattan Project to the Argonne National Laboratory. For me, it was contact with some of the actual hands-on physicists of the wartime effort. It was very exciting. So when the Institute loomed up on the horizon for me, romantically I had half-associated myself with that endeavor.

Labalme: How did it loom up? What was its first looming, can you remember? In terms of your personal connection

here.

Woolf: At that point it would have been through the people, the fundamental physics problems, the recognition of what the country had done in bringing a particular sector of its intellectuals together for a greater cause than would have been a case before. So some of my teachers, the people I worked for on the project immediately after my discharge from the army in 1946, when I arrived at the University of Chicago as a student.

Labalme: As a physicist?

Woolf: I actually took my first degree in mathematics. I was a physics major. And they had just then eliminated the baccalaureate in physics, and since I wanted my bachelor's degree and I had enough mathematics-credits, so to speak, to get the degree. But I did most of my work in physics, and I worked then on what were called the capture cross-sections of the atoms. I've already forgotten half of what I did then. And the names, like Oppenheimer's, were of course exciting. I also came to know him briefly, starting at that time, first as a listener, at lecture visits, and then in some symposia where we met and chatted, in what I think was a benign moment in his own life. He was quite ill and died about three years after that, three or four years after that. At that late stage, I can't remember the dates.

But I was thrilled by the conversation we had, which was philosophical and tender in a way that didn't seem to emerge in certain aspects of his public persona. So when the Institute came to call for me, which surprised me no end, I was quite enchanted. By--now as it appears to me in retrospect--by the romantic aspect as much as by the actuality. And by the belief in the kind of research and the advancement of knowledge, the advancement of learning, that I thought and still think by-and-large characterizes this life. The hard part for me now, retrospectively, is to limit a tendency to be cynical (especially with regard to academic arrogance and the abuses of privilege) which is a common characteristic of the academy. It's clear -- we'll come back to this because I want to talk about the nature of the Institute as I understand it -- it seems clear to me that the ideological elements in the establishment of an academic institution, that the beliefs are more important than what the actual record reveals, let's say, of what occurs; belief and values are powerful animating forces in all human careers, and especially in the world of learning. Ironically enough, it would seem that the learning process itself would set the style, bring the critical faculties to bear upon decision making, but in truth I believe that most of us make decisions after the critical faculty

has shut down and something else takes over and we want to do it.

I had just turned toward administration only a few years before the invitation to come here, quite by a fluke. I may have told you this story in earlier conversations. I had finished a book and I had not started on a new project, I was then Chairman of the History of Science Department at Johns Hopkins, a mighty department of three people, when I got a call to go over to the relatively new president's office at the University, Steve Muller. I remember saying to one of my friends, "I wonder what I've done? I've never been in that office. I must be in trouble." Then out of the blue, he invited me to be the University Provost. I had never done any administration other than running this little department, which was no department to run, but three colleagues engaged in a common goal, a common task. And he offered me the Provostship of the University. I said "What is that?" He outlined it and I agreed, I said OK. Overnight. It changed my life. It took me out of the study to which I was (without knowing it) never to return in the same way, although I accomplished other things in the world of learning, I think, including additional scholarship. And I found it very exciting to be engaged in the management, in

setting the direction for an institution of learning. I found that my scholarship such as it had been, as a student of the history of science and technology, armed me very well for dealing with a large variety of scholars, a great mix of personalities, as extreme as pure mathematics on the one hand and the sociology of literature on the other, and with the kind of humanity that comes to find its place in the academic world. Especially in the period after the second World War, when the Academy had entered the public fray, taken power here and there, and I had to deal with its own assessment of what it meant to exercise power in society.

Labalme: Say a little more about that. That's an interesting concept.

Woolf: It's an issue that continues to intrigue me and with which I'm continuously and very powerfully engaged even now. Naively and optimistically, we--the Academy, believe in its own virtue, and given the opportunity to exercise its own virtues, believe we can make a better world. In truth, we're probably no better at it, and maybe even worse in some cases, than those who are less powerfully motivated in the profound sense of having an ethical or religious cause. I think what happens is that once we get called to court, as it were, it exhilarates us. We don't ordinarily have power except

perhaps to grade a student, and we tend to then associate our opinions based on whatever scholarship and experience we've had, with truth that is natural to the world as it is. And so when we exercise those opinions, we think we're doing God's work, whether we believe in God or not, and I think the exhilaration, the opportunity, and the danger of the Academy in power, is exemplified in those experiences we've now seen retrospectively between the end of the second World War and the present, when schools of thought came to Washington, whether in economics, or in social policy, or in health care, to make broad policy for the nation. It's a complicated and permanent problem. How do we take the knowledge we generate and filter it in a balanced way into the body-politic, into the body active? Another re-expression of that ancient conundrum, the crisis of behavior between the vita contemplativa and the vita activa.

Labalme: Do you think this was something that came after the second World War, the Academy involved in public policy much more than before?

Woolf: Yes. There are roots of it, of course, before, in the first World War for Americans, that is. For example, the National Institutes of Health, the premier research organization in the biological and life science field in the world, was born in the first World War as a

division of the Chemical Warfare Service.

Labalme: I didn't know that.

Woolf: To protect the health of the soldiers. And it was not very difficult to enlarge that afterwards, to protect the health of the nation. And so that great achievement to this moment, and beyond, is a by-product of that moment of power, when the Academy is called upon to assist the nation at large. We see that now on and now off all the time. Most recently, for example, in modern physics, in particle physics, with the continued, sometimes justified, sometimes not, arrogance of the physicists in the wake of the second World War to think that society would forever provide them with the biggest toys ever made. And now we see, we have to retreat from that.

Labalme: Yes.

Woolf: And there is a fashion in science when our attention shifts from one sector of science to another. And to some extent, without going into the discussion of why this process was so poorly managed, it might have been achieved otherwise, but we all have our separate stories.

Labalme: Which project, the Supercollider?

Woolf: The Supercollider. See, there we have a classic example of the arrogance of a sector of the profession, the habit and the authority intellectually justified,

socially not necessarily, from the past triumphs, a momentum from the war, a moment when society under threat says, come and help us, and grants us this enormous leeway, and license. The new frontier now lies within the life sciences. The life sciences are a new frontier in part because they are now at the micro level where the physicists have been at a long time. Where some of the interdigitation of these disciplines is itself the frontier and where the measure of success is quantifiable in such domains as genetics, the neurosciences, and in understanding basic life processes. In some sense, the potential for sin within us is greater than ever, because now we've put our hands on life itself.

Labalme: And you felt this, to go back to your Provostship at Johns Hopkins, very much a part of that scene?

Woolf: Yes. Very exciting for me. I wasn't Provost very long, before two years had passed--and I mean this not in a vain sense--that the academic community external to my University began to seek me out for this or that opportunity. I knew then, almost by the end of the second year, that I would not stay long as second in command, much as I enjoyed working with Steve, and a number of presidencies were offered me and they weren't right, whatever the reasons, and the invitation to come here, came just at the right moment. A year later or a

year sooner wouldn't have worked. And in spite of some problems here, in spite of some difficulties, I remain happy with the choice I made. The price was high, in other matters, as it turned out. It might have been high anyway. But--and the details, as they say, is where the devil resides--these emerged after I got here.

Labalme: Tell me a bit, going back, is there anything about that process of contacting you that you recall? Was it Mike Forrestal, do you have memories of the Search Committee process?

Woolf: Yes. There the personalities began to emerge, which later proved to run true to their initial impressions. I can't remember what the first contact was; I think it was a call from a member of the faculty, probably Steve Adler. Steve came to see me to say that there had been some prior filtering and would I be interested?

Labalme: Had you known Steve?

Woolf: No. Didn't know him at all. Only by name. I remember very distinctly sitting with him at the Faculty Club at Hopkins, a table for two, and one of my colleagues in the physics department at Hopkins, Ehud Pevsner, a very distinguished physicist, saying not long afterwards, "They must be after you, or why else would Steve Adler come to see and talk to you. And not to me!" And that's typical also.

Labalme: Yes.

Woolf: And then he shared that with another good friend of mine, a very fine physicist named Leon Madansky, and so Pevsner and Madansky knew in their bones long before I knew! The next visit that I remember was Howard Peterson, Dick Dilworth, and Mike Forrestal. They came to see me on a weekend in my office at Hopkins. And we chatted about the Institute and mostly about Hopkins and me. Obviously they were searching me out. I tried to search them out but I didn't get very far.

Labalme: Who conducted those conversations? Was that Howard Peterson?

Woolf: Howard was formally the Chairman. And I wasn't drawn to him at all! It was his roughness, and a certain incompleteness, a tone of hostility. Not to me, not to anything in particular, but later on--I have to be careful now because I don't want to impose on that moment the knowledge of a later time--a hostility to the process, to the Institute itself, and they asked me what did I see in the Institute, as opportunity or accomplishment or purpose, and we had a free-for-all talk much as we are now chatting. And I didn't know the literature about the Institute at all, I'd never read anything about it, and other than exposure to the media noise that had emerged with regard to the Kaysen matter, I'd never read any document about it. As it

turned out, there weren't any--other than some in-house private correspondence, things of that sort. I knew a lot of the names of the faculty, of course, and some of their work. And Oppenheimer's name loomed very large, of course Einstein's above all. But I knew that that was already an ancient image. He had died in 1955, and he was already a historical figure before that in a certain sense. Magic. Something to conjure with as it turned out later, in the actual task that faced me when I got here. But this glow of high European intellectuality, in my own family life, in my own growing up in New York, and being of European origin, I think romanticized that for me. I'm not telling you that I'm European, but my whole family was. I was born here practically at my family's arrival--the only American-born member of my family. I was still in the process of thinking about the Institute when--I had pretty much decided that if they asked me, I would go. But I was still thinking about it and I hadn't said anything to anyone, when someone here released the story to the New York Times, where it made the first page.

Labalme: I didn't know that.

Woolf: The first nastiness, or more kindly, the first impropriety that I ran into. I considered it unethical and undignified. In fact I got letters of apology from

Adler and others. No one identified who had done it. And it was a front page story by Israel Shenker that I was being considered and would accept. And no one at Johns Hopkins had been told. Steve Muller who was away (I was running the University that week), Steve Muller called me and said, "What's this?" I told him the story I just shared with you, that I probably would take it. So there was a kind of looseness and embarrassment from the very beginning of the reality of the appointment. That sort of behavior persisted for a long time, and probably still does. It's one of the negative aspects of living in this microcosm. You have to trade in prior knowledge and early gossip. You can't really trade in much else. It became one of the elements of management difficulty. Also because, as it took place in the wake of the troubles, the directorship was somewhat disarmed. I was asked about that, whether the absence of a more formal authority would be tolerable. I said, you can't govern by formal or informal authority. You govern by cooperation, by a kind of continuous communication and a kind of wooing, and I thought we could manage that. To some extent we could and to some extent we can't. I still think the directorship here is an anomalous position. It isn't that one wants more authority, but the problem of intellectual direction for the Institute as a whole,

the problem of choosing new zones of scholarship, the problem of moving toward new intellectual territory, is not well-defined or normalized in any way and remains anomalous and difficult, creating conspiracy and inviting prima-donnish treachery. For example, to swing in and out as we will. In some schools we have actually narrowed considerably our intellectual reach, e.g. Historical Studies. In some we have preserved the frontiers superbly--Mathematics. Whether that's a reflection of natural cronyism, natural commonalities in the developmental background of individual scholars, or not, I don't know. I think that's part of the factor in choosing new colleagues. But the absence of an outside authority, another authority other than the professoriate itself, to deal with direction and the assessment of quality, was a very serious one. And that's one of the reasons I requested and we started regular visiting committees. Recognizing that visiting committees to begin with are extensions of the crony system. But that's the price you pay for the first use of the review process. Eventually you normalize the procedure. Then you can get a more critical community of judgement to address itself to the problems that emerge in the normal life of an institution. I'd had that experience at Hopkins, in assessing--we had sometimes to eliminate a department, and deal

simultaneously with human terms and intellectual terms; sometimes we had to grow a department in the same way. And while a university gives you more leeway, more flexibility, more assets sometimes, the human problem is just the same, just as intense, just as difficult. And there is no single answer. I don't mean to imply by what I'm saying so far that a Director should be given authority for this purpose. That would be unhealthy in its own way. But greater constitutional strength is called for. I once suggested to the Board that after my time they should consider making the Director the President of the Institute and of the Corporation, accomplishing the double task, thereby, of strengthening governance (academic and civil) and forever eliminating the external image of the Institute as a part of Princeton University! Nevertheless, some evolutionary dynamic is unfolding here, through the two successor appointments that have taken place. I guess to make a personal comment on that, for reasons that are complicated, and you will know some of them, no one has asked me for any counsel or invited me to participate even informally in the discussion of these issues. Neither the Trustees nor the two Directors who have succeeded me, except in two cases, one with each, when there was trouble. And then not much for deep consultation but for affirmation of what they intended

anyway. That's perhaps normal. I'm a little disappointed, saddened by it. But naturally I feel myself pure.

Labalme: Harry, were there other things you thought about the Institute besides the position of the Director--that of course would concern you most--but before you came, you said, there was no literature, so you were really dependent on these conversations with Trustees.

Woolf: Right. And I knew by the way, speaking of that, that one of the things I had to do was create a literature for and about the Institute, almost from day one. So one of the things I set out to do was to start a newsletter. Well, you can imagine the faculty reaction.

Labalme: You told me a bit about it, but tell me again.

Woolf: Well, I won't go into names. Well, we might. I can remember asking the faculty to tell me, one to one, what are you working on? What are you doing?

Labalme: Yes.

Woolf: "Why do you want to know? It's none of your business." You know, absolutely a piece of theatre. So I laughed. And it seemed to me that I tried with humor, I think because it's my nature anyway, to say, "You're kidding! You think I'm going to try to capture your mathematics, or your history or--" I said, "You know, I have to go out into the wider world and raise money, and I can't

ask people for money unless I tell them what's going on. If you don't tell me, I'll have to do the best I can without your guidance." And I must have had that kind of conversation a number of times with a number of people. In mathematics, of course, with the most recondite of languages (in spite of my having a degree in mathematics, I don't speak it). I remember a conversation in which I said, "Tell me what you're doing," and Professor X said, "I couldn't possibly." "Well, give me a chance. Maybe I'll miss out after the second sentence, maybe after the first sentence. We'll stop." "Nope. It's impossible. Why do you want to do it?" "Because, as I just said, I want to tell others." And I said, "If you don't tell me, I'm going to try anyhow." "Well, will you clear it with me?" I said, "Certainly not. Will you clear your comments with me when you talk about the Institute?" "Certainly not." So, the first newsletter came out. I didn't clear any of the sectors with the History or Mathematics or Social Science or Natural Sciences Schools. I sent it to the faculty along with others, of course, when it was ready, in this format here [indicating copy of first newsletter]. And appointments were made to come and see me. And one of the questions raised was, "Are you going to do this again?" I said, "Yes." "Will you send it to me first?" "No. But I'll be glad to listen

to what you have to say and I'll ask questions and you can see by that if I understand..."

Well, to make a long story short, very little clearance occurred. I can't remember the number of these that came out, several issues. As it turns out, I have only one of a particular time. And I sent it out to lots of people in the academic world at large, as well as to foundations, to certain corporations. Not in a general way, but to particular persons that I knew about, or in some cases, knew from my Hopkins days, dealing with the external community or with Hopkins itself. And my other activities on boards and so on, brought me into contact with real people with real names. So it was not an advertisement, it was sent specifically to people who might have an interest in us. I got wonderful letters back. "The first time I know what's going on!" "Terrific!" Then the faculty reacted. "Are you going to do it again?" I said, "Yes." "Will you clear it now?" "Well, did I make mistakes? Was it wrong?" "No." "What's wrong with it?" "It's too humorous." One reaction. I said, "Then you're stuck. I can't change." It wasn't that humorous. But who knows what humor is from one individual to the other? Anyhow, Howard Peterson used a phrase. He said, "I see what you're doing,"--it was a good phrase--"You're

going public. The Institute's going public." I said, "We have to." The endowment was way down and if we were to find new support we could not depend on the emergence of secret angels.

Labalme: Well, that was part of your mandate, going back to what they told you about the Institute. Surely you had discussed the finances....

Woolf: Absolutely. I said that no way are we going to save this place without creating anew constituency. It was very fragile, more than anybody knew, I think the endowment was under \$50 million at that point. There had been no increases in salaries for three years.

Labalme: It was \$51.7 million in 1975, but it was--you're right.

Woolf: Yes. I can't remember what the unofficial number was when I came. It was around 50, a little under 50, or even 51. From the point of view of our expenses, from our projected size and operation, it was clear that we were eating up our assets. "Going public" meant telling a selected community the importance of our kind of advanced research, free and open research without commitment to application; that one creates, say, a kind of style, a body of knowledge, and sets a direction. That's all. Occasionally applied consequences will tumble out of that and as history has demonstrated, when they do, they can be enormous, worth as much perhaps, if one could calculate, in terms of

social value or even economic value, as 50 years of a dedicated singularity, of research in a set direction and within a fixed framework. So what we believed in as an institute had to be taught, that the free mind operating not in an undisciplined way, but the disciplined free mind, is part of what humanity and its advancement is about. It isn't the whole story, it isn't better than anybody else's, necessarily, it isn't better than Princeton University or Harvard or Hopkins or Chicago or whatever, it's part of the fabric of the whole system. I felt the Institute belonged as a special institution in a family of institutions, that if we conveyed that, then the alumni of the university here and there and the support of the universities here and there or of foundations or of museums, would find some resonance with the life of the Institute. I thought we could attract new members for the Board and capture attention outside conventional academic domains, and that's one of the things I set out to do. And that's what the Board, or the committee that interviewed me, also bought, when we came down to talking about a program of action. I said that the Board was going to have to become visible, and I hoped that the Board would become unanimous in its contributions. It never did. There were very peculiar rationalizations for not contributing to the I.A.S. by

people of considerable assets, several with whom I had and have very friendly relationships.

Labalme: I know.

Woolf: And it puzzles me that I can still hear from one of them that I like very much, Marty Segal saying, "I didn't come on this Board to give money." "Yes, I understand that, but you came on to support what it does. How will you support what it does?" "Find it elsewhere. Get others' attention. All of that." For some none of that ever occurred! So we lost something in the absence of unanimity. And retrospectively now I understand it better because they were still in the battle positions they had occupied before I came.

Labalme: Well, let's talk a little about that. That's pretty important, don't you think?

Woolf: Yes, I think there was an enormous distancing between the Board and the faculty. How great that distance had been when things were normal, I don't know. But I felt they were abnormal in my first couple of years here, compared to what I had known at Hopkins. What's more, individual members of the faculty had established separate lines of communication with Board members.

Labalme: Talk about that, because a Board and a faculty tend to be a bit adversarial, don't you find?

Woolf: Sure, somewhat, and there should be some distance. And it shouldn't confuse their separate responsibilities--

and that's what I think happened and occasionally continues in the present. Board and faculty have been melded too much. One should know what's going on, encourage some natural relations to develop between members of the faculty or the administration and some members of the Board, all that is the normal unfolding of human relations. But I think the Board did not understand what the faculty was doing. Also, some of the faculty, especially some of the older European members of the faculty, were arrogant and insulting vis-à-vis the Board's intelligence! They thought all it should do was to give money, just as they thought that all the Director should do was affirm what the faculty wants to do, and when they talked about management in the troubled times between the collapse of the Kaysen administration and my arrival, there were proposals made as you know for rotational directorships, for the Director to sit simply as a super-clerk! That's where they would like to keep it, and yet they know it can't be that way, because it ...

Labalme: Nobody wants to be clerk.

Woolf: Nobody wants to be clerk, and nobody good wants to be clerk, and the person who wants to be clerk is not going to be able to speak for the institution in terms of its real function and purpose, its intellectual existence. Anyway, there was that kind of tension.

And I think that persisted in varying degrees to the end of my administration and I dare say, it continues in one form or another to the present time.

Labalme: But as they talked to you, invited you to come, you became aware of the degree of tension, not just between Board and faculty, but ...

Woolf: Between faculty and faculty. Oh, very much so. When I came, to be very specific, the residue of fratricidal warfare remained with wounds that never closed. In the dining hall, if X was sitting there, Y would not enter. Would not enter! In this vast room, they would not even sit, even with those on their side of an argument. There were people who would not speak to each other, and others who spoke to each other in only one form of discourse which meant using vitriol and suppression. Members of the faculty had kept notes and framed different histories of the same experience, like Rashomon. When Y came to my office I would hear one version, when X and Z came, two other versions. When these were being presented to me, partly to justify a particular position, or to woo me to their side, I said, "It's no use. I'm not going to write the history of the Institute and I'm not going to find truth in this process. Let's look ahead." I brought in an outline made in 1976.

Labalme: Really. How interesting!

Woolf: Of the structure, of the administrative organization.
 Labalme: That somebody made for you?
 Woolf: I asked that it be made. I can't remember who made it at the moment.
 Labalme: Would that have been Mike Morgan, do you think?
 Woolf: No, it was just a staff person, a secretary or somebody. In May 1976. Looking at the Schools for a second, Historical Studies, I rattle off the names. Clagett, Elliott, Gilliam, Habicht, Lavin, Setton, Thompson, White. Who's left? Habicht, Lavin. Look at Mathematics. Borel, Harish-Chandra, Langlands, Milnor, Montgomery, Selberg and Whitney. Who's left? Langlands. Natural Science. Adler, Bahcall, Dashen, Dyson, Regge, and Rosenbluth. Who's left? Bahcall and Dyson. That's it. Social Science. Geertz, Hirschman, Kaysen. Who's left? Geertz. The changes have been tremendous. And it began when I arrived, indeed was already underway. I talked Rosenbluth, I remember, into staying an extra year. Don't go now, I said. We can't start a search committee my first year. So in some sense that I didn't appreciate at the time, my romantic Institute vanished in the first year or two that I was here. Of the earlier Institute of the 30s, only an echo existed through the wartime, and then came the immediate post-war period, when a kind of "normal" academy began to emerge. Not in their own eyes, but in

the eyes of anyone looking at what school classifications meant. The appointment process was very ambiguous when I arrived. One could still name one's successor. Lavin in History, to everyone's regret, appointed by his predecessor.

Labalme: How did that work? Well maybe, I think what we'll do is take a pause.

END OF CASSETTE NO. 1, SIDE NO. 1:

CASSETTE NO. 1, SIDE NO. 2:

Labalme: OK. Let's go. We were talking about the naming of successors.

Woolf: Yes. And the changes, if one looks back as we did just a moment ago, in the faculty as it existed then. The problem of appointments therefore was critical--next to the problem of money which we can talk about as a separate subject. We'll probably weave in and out of that. It was clear that everything had to be done, let me put it that way. Everything meant staff refurbishing so to speak, physical plant, faculty had to be renewed with seniors retiring and others leaving out of academic discomfort and/or personal matters. Almost for the first time (the scale was not insignificant given our numbers) faculty were leaving before retirement. If you look at that list, Elliott left before retirement.

Labalme: But that was later.

Woolf: That was later. But that's only in Historical Studies. At that point they were leaving by retirement mostly, when I came. Although in Natural Sciences Dashen and Rosenbluth and Regge left before retirement. Some reasons were personal, like Regge going back while he was still alive to die in Italy because he had M.S....

Labalme: We were talking about the staff, the refurbishing.

Woolf: There was a lot to be done, and there wasn't any money. It was a question that arose, for which I was, in part, unprepared. Had I been more experienced with this kind of institution to match what I had already acquired of university management, I probably would not have come, given that every component of the Institution was not only fragile, but in difficulty and isolated and cantankerous to boot! But sometimes innocence is the best basis on which to launch a quest, if you look at all the burdens and crosses, you'd never initiate anything. So that aside, we had to juggle all of this at once. First of all we had to save the place from itself. That meant normalizing the life of the faculty and the appointment process.

Interestingly enough, one had to produce a near normal social life for the community. These enmities of the

past, the non-communication, the criticisms they developed, each of the other, in the dealing with the Kaysen problem and the assault upon him or the defense of him, nurtured separation. So a round of social activities. We used the Director's house to have lots of dinners, to create all these other institutions that are now part of our normal life. The dining hall, the Friends, the club aspect, the quality enhancement, these were conscious attempts to break grounds for community, to bring people together in circumstances that were less than absolute, like dining well together. It was also a device, these were also devices, such as the Friends, to reach out into, first, the local community and through that to the larger community, for a variety of purposes. First, to make our case for intellectual and physical existence, to justify it to this larger public, and to do so to a public that was already partially interested, locally out of curiosity, frequently, social snobism in part, but also out of good and honest purposes. All the mix of human values and behavior. And through that and using that as a basis, once it was self-sustaining, to reach into the nation and beyond the nation for membership and to commit the funds in the normal way that Friends exist elsewhere. No one claims to have invented a new organization, just one modelled from

elsewhere. To further the purposes of the place, including the creation of monies that could be for those things that are a little gray between academic and other enterprises, but vital.

Well, I think it's been a smashing success; I don't mean to blow my own trumpet, our own trumpet, in that, but domestically in one sense and externally in the other. It gave me a chance to go on the road using a friend here and there in the organization, to identify an audience, to talk either at a luncheon or a one-hour meeting at an office somewhere, to hold a dinner. I tried and didn't get very far to organize some chapters abroad. In fact, Paul Kennedy and I started a group in England and then it sort of withered. I didn't want to build a staff for these purposes, we couldn't afford it yet, maybe one day they can, maybe now, but those would be the normal forms of growth. Then as everyone knows, the local community here now is very much involved with the Institute, they are invited to lectures and concerts, we started the concert program, we built that portable stage and shell. The idea was to do it at low cost, to use, to identify the attractive components of our physical plant and our cultural plant, so to speak and to give us bridgeheads and paths to and from one kind of community to another. We had to show that even

if we had enough money to support ourselves, that we would not be able to exist if we didn't find community coherence within us, behind us, around us. Because it's not just a monetary problem. The life of the mind has to be understood by other minds that may not be functioning the same way. And so I think one of the jobs of a director is to speak to that, everywhere, all over the world if necessary, for this is a world-class and a world-based institution. And Princeton is a good community for that kind of base. The problem of the relation to the University that this reminds me of is a real one.

Labalme: Did you know about that before you came?

Woolf: I didn't know, no. It was part of that innocence. I was appalled at the exploitation of one institution by the other. And I mean the University exploiting the Institute, which is ridiculous, it's the elephant and the flea. I tried very hard and did not succeed in making good inroads and bridges to the University community. Partly because I discovered afterwards-- again, had I known, it would have changed my likely action--that my predecessor had gone to the University in the time of troubles and opened up the possibility of a merger.

Labalme: Have you material on it?

Woolf: Yes, somewhere.

Labalme: Yes, that would be interesting.

Woolf: There are references to the discussion. The problem was that the University didn't want to deal with this faculty and its tenured existence, but from the point of view of the University it would seem to me--this is pure speculation now--that if they really wanted it, then you would wait until the faculty has died off; after all, tenures do come to an end! Unfortunately, they don't have a medical school, they could accelerate the process! [Laughter] Anyway, that puzzled me, and I hoped for more cooperation and looked back in our records and discovered that we had made half-a-million-dollar gift to the building of the library of the University, we had made arrangements in art history for cooperative purchasing of very expensive books and in fact we had paid each time. And I didn't want to make that a billing matter; we had access to the library, we had access to the gymnasium, like faculty in the university itself. But there was a brittle edge to the intercourse between the two institutions, and when I talked to the president of the University...

Labalme: Bowen?

Woolf: Bill Bowen. Bill was very cool, and--outside of the formal welcoming--very unwelcoming, and to my own chagrin and disappointment, a number of times we had him at the house with other people, Bill went right to

work for the University. Not unexpectedly, but in the bosom of our own estate, as it were, raising money from my people! Frank, for example, Frank Taplin, a very uncertain Trustee then in that sense, and very loyal to the University, to which he had no connection and had once worked for in his own wonderful and exciting way, music and the like. I wanted to start a music program. I had visions that the barn might be a place to have a kind of studio program.

Labalme: You showed that to me, but for the record describe that property a bit, because I remember going there with you.

Woolf: Well, we had an option on the property, on the Eno estate, as we do on the Updyke estate still. When we acquired the land itself, as I understand it and I can't remember where I read this, but it's in the records somewhere, we had the option, should the housing clusters, the Updyke one and the Eno one, be up for sale, we would receive the first offer. In my time the Eno property did come up. We kind of pushed it a little because the Eno who was there was an awful man. The estate came from the Eno Salts, that medicine that was popular--it came in little blue bottles, in the 20s.

Labalme: Eno Salts?

Woolf: Eno Salts. And I saw there an opportunity for a kind

of cluster that might represent another component of our potential activity in the arts. I saw the possibility for studios, both for painting and for music. I saw that appropriately there because in the craft sense, you wouldn't want it here. I thought it would do two things, first it would give us a chance to probe new directions, and if we agreed that we wanted to do so, then we could, a new component of advanced study in music and the arts, the actual creation of music and the arts. I had visions of musicians coming and spending a summer both working a term and maybe giving a concert or two in the process, and we would find (a fundamental element of my philosophy) entirely new money for this, not at the expense of things as they are. And I thought of the barn, etc. as convertible to a kind of summer music festival place, and we had some--I can't remember now--we had some entertainments in which we did things like that. Or I went to some and saw them elsewhere in this area, summer operas, etc. That was one of the reasons I went for Jim Wolfensohn when I first read a little column about him and then called upon him; it was to get some money for music. Jim gave us a \$1,000 at that time for music. And I talked to him about this, and he was very receptive to the idea, and said I ought to meet Isaac Stern.

Labalme: Was Jim a Trustee at that time?

Woolf: No, I just went and found him. I was reading the financial page one day and read about him. It turned out Dickie [Dilworth] knew him, of course, and he was kind enough to invite me once to his home to meet Isaac Stern and I already knew the Indian conductor.

Labalme: Mehta?

Woolf: Zubin Mehta. And here I thought were two wonderful people, Stern and Mehta, to excite about this, and they responded enthusiastically. They saw immediately a kind of advanced study program, and I thought Wolfensohn would then be the right man to build it. So I then proposed him as a Trustee to Dickie and others. Dickie had worked with him on the big Chrysler hoopla, and other endeavors. Dickie had some hesitations, but Dickie was so quiet. I didn't know about these things, it was hard to get a judgment from him. Then and now. No, now it's a little easier. Anyhow that's an aside. So there was the land. I then had a second hope of what we might do with some of the land, the housing proposal. Eventually I saw the Updyke place also coming to us. Then I thought about the economic use of the place, of the land, and came up with Bob Venturi and the housing project. This got quickly misunderstood, first by the community, as the result of distorted leakage from here to the community, and then

the people who were interested in protecting their domains as they saw it, immediately made a public issue of it.

Labalme: Their domains in...?

Woolf: Their private holdings, their land, they saw some fear in this. I never said we would build shopping centers, hotels, malls, or whatever and in fact, emphasized that we would not!

Labalme: This was connected with the housing development?

Woolf: Some of the land. There were two projects for the land use. One would be housing, and I can talk about the housing ideas that we had, and the other would be possibly a Japanese garden, using part of the wetland itself as part of the garden. I talked to Josie Hall who was then mayor of Princeton, who has since died. She was a great gardener. And she said the Garden Clubs of America would give their eye teeth to help you sponsor that, raise that money, get a Japanese twin city to do it. We had a few acres in mind for a preliminary study. It would be, it could be, one of the most thrilling gardens in the world because of the natural flood plain, coming in and out. And my vision was, then drain some of the upper land in a series of descending ponds which would make some of it available for housing, and create a kind of landscape that would be extraordinarily impressive. And I thought that this

would be not only beautiful and worthwhile in itself, but like the other things we had done in the community, be a way of getting a new audience for the Institute. Also this could an experiment in living, itself a kind of contribution that we would make in another way to the advanced state of mankind. And the housing I had in mind was to be like that. I had in mind, after talking with Bob Venturi, to shape some of the ideas, acquiring the Updyke estate as a basis for a community center. We would build houses for families that have children that go away and want to come back and visit, so that they wouldn't have to have 3 or 4 extra bedrooms in case the kids come back. There'd be a kind of inn which would be a conversion of the Updyke core, a cluster of barns and the main house and so on. The inn would be overstaffed so that the residents in the housing units could have party help, and service for the houses that they would have to pay for, and the houses would be built of equal physical quality, but the purchase prices would vary considerably for what was there, one bedroom or four or God knows what. It was a mix of things and I went around selling this idea on a large scale. All sorts of people said, and myself included, we'd buy into it. And so we would keep the land open, we would put the land in public trust, in between the locations of the houses, all with the idea

to defend forever the place from assault by commerce. Well, the message that got translated to the public was a different message entirely, and some people called the Sierra Club on the west coast to come and defend this land from the assault of the Institute. It died. Venturi did the architectural drawings, they were beautiful, we had presentations, people got scared, it didn't happen. We would have produced an immediate gain to the Institute of 15 to 20 million dollars, and an annual income from that, 1 to 2 million dollars, in perpetuity. And we would ourselves buy into it as an Institution (and individuals, if they wished) so as to have a voting interest that would forever protect it. OK. The idea died. It still has to be done sometime, somewhere. I don't want to go into the houses and the kind of things we had in mind--for example, I had in mind as just one example, an energy efficiency that would produce--the house would be in clusters, so that there would be 4 or 5, then some separations of certain space, and the clusters would run, each of them, on a common heating and cooling system, so you would, as owner of your unit, your house, simply buy how much cooling and heating you wanted, by the meter, so to speak. You wouldn't have to maintain it. It would be maintained by--as high efficiency for a cluster of 4 or 5 houses--one system, by the management of the estate.

I thought this would be one of the answers to the energy problems of the future. People who didn't want to deal with it themselves, like myself and many others, I suspect, would have opportunities to explore this kind of thing. The kind of thing you sometimes see on these golf courses where they build houses, like the one up on, not far from here, on Cherry Valley that's just been completed now. And I thought there would be another use of the advanced ideas as peripheral and yet supportive, and furthermore I felt it would protect us from the other exploitation of that land which would have been pushed upon us sooner or later, by taxes if nothing else. And that is of course what has happened. This present process is not bad. All this now underway was precipitated by this first probe. I feel very good, not that some of the dreams were not fulfilled, but that the purpose that the dream continues in other modes by other people, I think that's what continuity is, and I believe one of the important contributions of our time in the administration was to normalize institutional life to the extent that normality is appropriate to this place, and certainly in its economic and other behavior to create options by exploiting what one is oneself, what one has oneself, and assessing these paths and directions in a way that comes from local and immediate

knowledge.

Labalme: Let's talk about this other need for normalization in the relationships of the faculty, well, two sides-- faculty to Board, faculty to faculty.

Woolf: How can the academic life be maintained and how can it grow?

Labalme: Yes. But in this particular situation that you came into with the troubles.

Woolf: It was extraordinarily difficult.

Labalme: I'm sure.

Woolf: First of all, people wouldn't tell you anything, wouldn't give you anything except a political argument. Statements were preceded by "That bastard" or "That terrible man" -- and I said, "I don't know him, so don't tell me that." There were occasional decisions that had to be made, Solomonic in character, and I'm no Solomon, over housing, with faculty. When I first came, Gaby Borel walked up to me, gave me two pennies. She said, "That's for the rug." I said, "What are you talking about?" "You'll find out." I didn't find out for three years. Apparently, just before Kaysen fell, or during the fall, they were going to get a rug, or some rugs for the common room in Fuld Hall, and there was some argument about money--they were all going to pitch in. And she was putting in two cents to buy the rug--symbolic hatred. So I said, "I'll take it and

I'll put it in the endowment" and she didn't get the joke. Eventually I bought some rugs, two of them, I was going to buy three, I never got around to buying the third. Things like that. It was so hard to find out what people really felt other than their anger.

Labalme: But you made certain, you took certain steps to help the community heal. Among them you mentioned once the use of the Saturday lunch, I think you restored it, and getting a liquor license.

Woolf: Yes, getting a liquor license, creating the great ambience, Harry's Bar. Some has succeeded, some has not. The social life that I tried to generate, people welcomed it, they were tired of the other, and even though they would come as they still do, like scavengers, descend on the tables and eat everything they could, I would watch this occasionally, and think, my God, have they not eaten for three days in anticipation of this?

Labalme: But the tennis courts also.

Woolf: But, no, there's another case in point. That was a dump, you didn't see it before.

Labalme: No.

Woolf: It wasn't a garbage dump or anything, but it was a dump of waste brick and rock, just ugly as anything. And so were the other piles around there, just terrible. So in dealing with labor force here, with the working

staff, that reminds me of the whole issue. First of all, Mike Morgan was still around. Mike Morgan was a wonderfully honest man, but Mike Morgan was an old ward-heel politician who ran things not for personal gain in any way, but who symbolically kept some money in his pocket, and he gave some to him and some to her, and nothing to others. Loans, Institute money. Loans for this and that, quietly, and he kept the loyalty, and kept them in a kind of bondage. I didn't know about that in the first couple of years, not until Mike died. I liked Mike very much. His sidekick, Carl Pope, was quite corrupt and lazy. I fired him. He lived on the grounds. Down where those two houses that we restored and then rented out.

Labalme: Oh, yes, the little farmhouses.

Woolf: The little farmhouse. He kept horses and lived the squire's life, walked around, pipe smoking. Never did a day's work in his life. Never..not an inch! When I first came, I asked to see the physical plant, and he said, "What for." I said, "You know, I lived on a ship and I'm interested in this kind of thing. Show me the plumbing," I said, "I want to see the steam generator." So there was a visiting professor here from Hopkins at the time, and Carl Pope went to him and said, "What kind of a guy is this Woolf, he wants to do all that." "Well," he said, "I don't know about that, he's a nice

guy." There was no negative from Johns Hopkins to fasten on to. And we went for a walk and, in the basements of one of these buildings, where the steam was generated, there was water all over the floor. So I said, "What's that?" "Well, that's the way it is normally." I said, "No it isn't. That's a leak. What are you guys doing, you're burning up our money in wasted heat? I want to see that repaired." So we started a whole series of inspections and repairs. Oh, the thing this guy asked my former colleague at Hopkins was, "What does Woolf do, does he walk around?" "What do you mean, walk around?" "I mean walk around and look at things." My friend said, "I suppose so." We did these physical tours. I saw this guy didn't know anything. He was just a foreman who took bakhshish and gave bakhshish whenever he could. He was getting kickbacks from the laundry service, all kinds of other things. So instead of making a big to-do about it, I just stopped it. And there was a cook then in the kitchen, a Polish name, I've forgotten his name too, pre-Franz, of course, and the cooking was awful, classic steam table, terrible. The Einstein symposium was soon to be upon us (I'll bring that up later), and it gave me a vehicle to get rid of him. When I told him he had to leave, he put up a sign on Olden Lane saying, "Woolf is a scrooge." And people were

generally good, once they saw there was interest in quality, not in spying. And I love landscape, and I set out to repair the landscape. We planted trees galore, and all kinds of things.

Labalme: And the tennis courts were part of that.

Woolf: And the dump was down there and I said we're going to do something here. First we've got to get rid of this dump. We can't move it away, so I said, let's bury it. Let's put in some recreation. My plan for there eventually was to have a swimming pool as well on the other side of the tennis courts, between the tennis courts and the little basketball court now, there's a big open area.

Labalme: I remember I came in on that.

Woolf: We were going to put up a glass building on top of that, and I got the architect to draw that, to open in the summer and close in the winter, so that you could swim--it would be financially self-sustaining, we worked out the numbers and all that. Anyway we got as far as the tennis courts. We filled it with soil and other rubble, pressed it with rollers for a year or two and waited for it to settle, filled it again. We built that thing for about 50 or 60 thousand dollars. And the fees have paid for it. And I don't know how many people use it, we've had to repair one of the courts that has sunk a little from time to time. But even if

no one played on it, it just beautified the place. The wooden fencing that's down there, we took down from some other place where it was no longer useful and put it back, and then had them make those sections for the gravel and other things, so there would be some sense of neatness. And we moved those sheds to make a lineup for storage, and we used the barn, half abandoned, as a depot, and I had visions of that area down there around the circle, toward Olden Lane, of those buildings, one of them is a pre-Civil War farm house, and the other is from after the war but in the 1870s or 1880s, so we fixed them up, one was to be a spouses' center, with offices for spouses, and that worked well.

Labalme: Was that the one that was originally for the Einstein Centennial papers, or the Einstein publishing project?

Woolf: There was a proposal that was made when it was empty that they wanted to put the project here--the money was raised elsewhere--we offered them that as the headquarters. They didn't want to do that. Yes. The offer was for that purpose. And my long term vision was that we could build in between those buildings around the circle other buildings to make a complex if we needed it, and still there's an option. And then the residence there that Pierre Deligne is in, I saw that they violated what was my rule that nobody stays there more than a couple of years. Because it's

subsidized and so that we could use it as a swing space. It's been sold to Pierre Deligne. It'll never change now. We've lost the option of having a residence for visitors who come for a few months and were not regular members, and the Director should have kept that possibility open. Anyway.

Labalme: But these were all steps in bringing the community together.

Woolf: OK. So then the landscaping. We set up our own nursery, we bought the trees when they were very small, and again the idea was to use the existing staff. When I first came, there was this wonderful group of Italians, much larger than it is now, that would drive around, and you may recall, on tiny little lawnmowers, maybe before you came. But they were this [about three feet] wide and self-powered: 8 or 9 of these guys would come out every morning, and they would yell out, "Bon giorno, padrone!". So I said, before I got Allen, to the same guy, "Why don't we get mowers with wider span and use fewer people and less gas, you know." So we gradually did that. Never throwing people out in any sense, except one or two really bad ones. But getting some efficiency, getting some esprit, and we did all the repairs on the brickwork, Angelo. I found Angelo. I said one day, "Can anybody here do stone work?" "Well, Angelo is a stone mason." We've been

able to do within the working day, with a regular salary, when through this other guy we used to contract out for things that we could do ourselves, at four or five times the cost--bakhshish again?. So, there developed a kind of esprit, it was part of saving the place, and dealing with everybody.

Labalme: Yes. And these are examples of how much required your attention, really.

Woolf: Yes, and I still hadn't gone down the road....

Labalme: And the financial fabric?

Woolf: As you know, we did very well. By the time our administration was over we had more than tripled the endowment. More than that--the invisibles. We had repaired the whole place and tripled the endowment. We had repaired lives, we repaired physical plants, and grass, all around the place. I feel very good as I walk around.

Labalme: I think you should.

Woolf: I look at the willows that are now 60 feet tall, we put them in when they were that big.

Labalme: This building, this office....

Woolf: This building, yes. My theme, my controlling philosophy is I always have 14 lines--I've got to write sonnets, I don't have full freedom. And this was a 14-line building. What could we do to make it work? I believe when there are rules, when there's constraint

in the arts and the sciences, I think greater art and greater sciences are produced. It's not the opposite of freedom, because you're free, but there are boundary conditions you have to deal with. And that's what this place presents. The question is what lies ahead.

CASSETTE NO. 2, SIDE NO. 1:

Woolf: It's part of the same issue, the same matter, the annus mirabilis, the Institute's anniversary and Einstein's in combination. As part of the linkages among the many things we've talked about now. I was looking for some sort of celebratory moment to reach out.

Labalme: Well, you talked about the annus mirabilis--it's actually in the minutes of your first meeting with the Board of Trustees. You came during the summer maybe?

Woolf: Yes, I came up for the summer.

Labalme: This was October 1976. You mentioned already...

Woolf: Yes. I was already looking ahead, at that point. I felt that as part of going public, as part of finding issues to join ourselves together, what could we celebrate, because we needed something. Well, it turned out by chance, in searching for the celebratory events, that we had a founding year in the Einstein centennial. So I thought of that as the annus mirabilis for us, all of it coming together in the

Symposium. And we were able to do a lot with that to bring the community together, because we could celebrate Einstein's career. We could have faculty participate, we could have the distinguished scholars and scientists of the world in the domain of his work come, so we had for example, nearly all the Nobel Laureates in physics who were alive came to the Symposium. We got money to cover the whole thing and then some. We got a Chair as you know, from New Jersey, that Adler now has. Of course, at the time it covered the total salary, but not since. That was an interesting kind of maneuver, let me talk about that for a second, because I felt I knew [we could get] the Chair, but we couldn't get it from the State as an endowment. I went to the Secretary of Education for the State, I forget his name. And I said, shouldn't New Jersey honor the fact that Einstein came here, for the benefit of all of us and the world and so on? We talked it up. He said, "I can't give you money unless I give it to other institutions; I can't use State money for a private institution exclusively." I said, "Well, why don't you set up Einstein Chairs in several places." He said, "I don't have that much." I said, "Well, you don't have to fund them all--set them up." That's what he did. And the other Einstein New Jersey, Einstein chairs, have never been funded elsewhere as

far as I know. In any case, it is not public knowledge.

Labalme: Really? What a clever move, Harry.

Woolf: It's a line item in the State budget. Now one day they may cut it or kill it, maybe even now -- but anyway, there it was. We got other endowments, other Chairs. We have a regular Einstein Chair, and we have fellowship funds. It's all in the record. The point was not only to make money for the endowment for the future of the Institute, but again to speak to the public, to speak to the community and have the community speak for itself, choosing one of its own heroes, even though some people were cynical about Einstein, you couldn't be cynical about this. Then we had the fortuitous experience knowing that we couldn't use our Polish cook for this event, to go find a caterer. We found a caterer, and there was Franz cooking for the caterer, and the food came and it was spectacular.

Labalme: And he was just part of the catering staff, at that time?

Woolf: Yes, and I asked him, at the end, we had five days, I think, or four and a half days, of dinners, lunches, each better than the other, and who's done this? Well, Franz had. I said, "Let's go get him." I asked Allen who was already with us to offer him a job and I said,

"Find out what his salary is and we'll do better." And I met Franz at that point, and I liked him, realized he had a great culture of his own, a learned man who could be part of our in-gathering: it was a lovely time! And we were all on a roll, and it really worked. But it seems to me, Patsy, that it takes each of these things (each an increment) as a piece of an unfolding design which I think, has to be in the consciousness of its leadership. A piece at a time, a small piece, it's a mosaic, you're laying out of a design, you don't know what the ultimate picture is, but an institution so created will be organic, whole, alive, and evolving. And that has to be true intellectually as much, it has to do with our physical world, [which] should reflect our intellectual values and vice versa. That's what makes it possible for beauty to be present and to flourish. That's what we should be doing. Mathematicians do it and understand it in some sense, but their notion of beauty is tied to their intellect and their concept of learning, of understanding things. And we should do that as a whole. If we do that enough I think we won't have the sort of fratricide that has arisen here, at least without the polar intensity of the past.

Labalme: Why not? What will ...

Woolf: I think because some sort of citizenship has to be

built up, some loyalty to the institution, the Institute.

Labalme: How does that vision get developed, of the direction in which an institute like this should move so that it draws others into ...

Woolf: First by always being first class, whatever it takes to stay first class. Also by having, among other attributes, an amorphous edge, that is, pushing somewhere where they haven't been before. And one of the things we should have is an exploration fund. For example, one of the things I tried and failed at--the life sciences. I was and am interested in the life sciences. The life sciences in our time have various components. There are meritorious theoretical components, which used not to be the case. In the old days, theory in the life sciences was laughed at because it dealt with whole life forms. In our times, theory is narrower, more specific, as in notions of enzyme behavior, or theories of molecular behavior, etc. There are theories of dealing with the communication system of the body, or of living matter in general, and so on. So I thought one of the potential directions for us either in the School of Natural Sciences or as a separate School eventually, if it were to require it, was to undertake a probe. What's happening in the life sciences? Is there

anything appropriate for us, since we can't have laboratories? Is it appropriate at this stage where it might not have been years ago? At that time Freeman was interested in the life sciences and in fact was preparing lectures he later gave in England on the origins of life, a sort of second Schroedinger, which he did. And I went to see Freeman, I said, "Freeman, here's the idea I have. If I find the money, would you be willing to be the faculty person to carry this message?" He said, "Yes." So, with Dick Dilworth's help, I went to the Markey Foundation and they agreed to put up substantial sums. Well then I got some advice from Paul Berg and three or four Nobel Laureates in England and elsewhere, who were all contributors to this field, as the persons to guide and be advisors to a two-three year probe or program to bring people to engage in the kind of talk and study that typifies other fields here. And if it took, intellectually speaking, then we might consider adding a program, a School eventually, or whatever. I also felt that we would not have difficulty in finding the money for it, in the pharmaceutical world, in all the other areas where this is very exciting, and it would be in fact a new domain for us, both to find money and to undertake intellectual leadership. We were rolling along and one day Freeman says, "Harry, I've changed my mind. I

said, what do you mean? Oh, I don't want to lead this, you do it." I said, "I can't do that. You know the history of this place. If the Director does it, it's dead." We returned the money. Or we didn't take the money in that case, and we returned some lead money I had from Betty Johnson. It's a shame. And it's part of both the freedom, the independence and the irresponsibility that gets generated in this community.

Labalme: Why did Freeman withdraw?

Woolf: He was working on something else. Freeman is a wonderful odd duck, and there's no gainsaying his intellect and power; [he's] an intelligent critic and student of life's phenomena and his mind is quixotic and rapid and moves from one territory to another. It's his privilege. He encouraged me and I read that to be a supportive process. This is the first kind of conversation we're having about this, except a few other private ones I had, but never admitting it formally. I bring it up in part because it precipitates other items, but also one of the eventual problems we have to face: how do we look for, identify, new intellectual territory and explore our entry into it or not, without sacrificing what we do well? In this case I had a list of outside committee members, all there except for Freeman. We needed somebody inside, it can't be in the administration,

even if in the future the administrator should be a professor at the same time as director, which I think is a bad idea. We can talk about my assessment of the differences later on. I don't know the answer. I know that the practice has to be undertaken. Now the School of Natural Sciences has occasionally brought someone in theory, in the life sciences, but that's not the same thing as having a program. That School is driven by differences among them, each individual out for his or her own cause.

Labalme: The School of Natural Sciences. Yes.

Woolf: You got a smarmy character like Bahcall, whom I have learned to disdain. He is totally untrustworthy. A strong scientist, a professional in every sense, but a political animal always, with a capacity for deceit and flattery (and betrayal) to get his way. Adler's off in his own corner doing his thing. Piet Hut is a disappointment. Freeman, of course, is a quixotic genius. It's not the School that was there before. But the group in physics with two younger men now shows a lot of promise. They're both in an esoteric component of the field. So, it's OK, I'm not being hostile to what the School stands for, but its stature has to be determined by other scientists by the process we already have underway of visiting committees, etc. The visiting committees have to be strengthened in their

independence. When I first started them what we did was create a list of names brought into being by the Director and the School faculty. I'll put some on, you put some on. We agreed on the whole list, and then I as Director would pick the committee from that list. I hope that still goes on, I don't know. I think Murph's interlude was not healthy for all kinds of reasons and some of it ties to that kind of attitude--there was the sense that I can do that, so you don't need a committee. I think that's a mistake in any leadership position.

Labalme: Right.

Woolf: I remember when I was editor of ISIS I went to a conference on the history of science. A man, a casual friend of mine, gave a paper. I was a brand new editor, I'd just been on that job for about a year. He walked off the platform and said, should I send it to ISIS for publication? I said, no, and as gently as possible, it's not good enough. I lost a friend. I didn't realize that the thing to do was to have him send it in, have the process review it.

Labalme: Let things take their course. Talk a little about Director's Visitors and how you used them.

Woolf: Yes. Again what I had in mind then were two things, one was probing for new directions. The other was that there are large bodies of activities, intellectual,

cultural activities, outside our reach, always will be, we're never going to have an Institute large enough to represent all the exciting things going on in the world. And we need to perturb our colleagues and ourselves by other presences, individuals of great accomplishment, and in turn perturb them. And I thought one way I could do it was to raise new money for this new activity. The old rule, never at the expense of what you're doing. And have Director's Visitors, and to avoid conflict with the faculty, the Director would only invite as Director's Visitors of his nomination people in fields not undertaken by others here. They could propose to the Director, I suggested, Director's Visitors in their own fields, if there was some reason for having them other than just getting an extra person, which they all went for, of course. So in the first instance I responded frequently to the faculty's request but of course not always and never automatically. I remember Lavin asked me for the woman who comes from Canada, I forgot her name....

Labalme: Phyllis....

Woolf: Phyllis Lambert. One of the Seagram family.

Labalme: Right.

Woolf: I said, OK. I thought also that I would like to build bridges to the faculty for the Director. And it's the

old story, you've got to have some bakhshish sometimes, something to give, otherwise there's no bridge here. So those were the moves. And then I brought, as you know, architects, and ...

Labalme: Aba Eban.

Woolf: Aba Eban. Yes. That was very exciting.

Labalme: What about Isaiah Berlin. He was one of your new ones.

Woolf: And I brought him one time. I've already forgotten who I asked, but ...

Labalme: The Luers.

Woolf: Bill Luers. And Bill said I changed his life.

Labalme: Yes. And Timerman.

Woolf: Jacobo Timerman. I'd forgotten the list. I wish we'd continue to do that. It's a way of giving the Director some fun and making him a member of the community in a way that doesn't affect the tenure of the academic choices. It makes him a citizen of that other part of the Institute. If you make the Director a citizen of the other part of the Institute, then

Labalme: What is the other part of the Institute?

Woolf: Well, the academic part. Otherwise he's just the administrator. It gives him an academic role. And you've got to do that.

Labalme: Let's explore that a bit, what you felt cut off from.

Woolf: Yes. I felt, for example, at Hopkins, where I stepped into the Provost's chair, I lost no contact with the

faculty. We dined together, a huge institution compared to this one, always managed to have moments with the medical faculty, with this and that.

Labalme: But as Provost that was part of your job, to have that connection.

Woolf: Yes, but if you don't make an effort to do it, in no time at all, you're getting it second hand. You're getting it only from those who call you. They come to your office for an appointment and the informality, the sense of what's going on without reporting, is lost. And here where the scale, one of my dreams of coming here was I would be part of the discussions, my own head would continue to grow. I have a feeling now it's a kind of fear. I can't imagine what the hell they're afraid of, but it's a fear, it's a fear that some have, if you know something in their field, you somehow endanger them. That's one factor, there may be others. Maybe this administration, you're not a member of this faculty, even though I made that a condition of coming, partly because I feared the other. It didn't mean anything anyway.

Labalme: The condition of you're coming...

Woolf: The professorship.

Labalme: Professor-at-large.

Woolf: I suggested the title, a very funny conversation. I don't know if I ever told you. They said, well, what

do you want in order to come? Money was no problem, I was happy with what they offered me and so on. I wanted some arrangements for the joining of my previous pension with the one generated here, mechanical things of that sort. What else? Well, I said, I will not come without a professorial appointment. Oh, I'm not sure we can do that. What School would you want to be in? I said, none. What do you mean? I said, I don't want to be parti-pris, automatically in the eyes of others, for the School I might be put in, even if they would have me. I didn't want to go through this ritual of their judging me, I'm not the scholar they are, I've no pretenses to that, but I've done some scholarship, I've passed muster in the institutions in this country and some of the honorary bodies, etc., etc. So, they said, OK, I said we'll call it professor at large. They said, what's that? I said, I don't know, we'll find out. I said I don't have to have them simultaneously. I want it understood when my directorship ends which is at your desire with one year's notice in the normal course of things, anytime, my professorship at large is there. I need not apply for it. I said I need that for other reasons, I need that for security. You're asking me to step into a cauldron and something of a viper's nest while at the same time the domestic life of the Institute remains unsettled, as well it might be

after revolt and regicide! That I needed that to undertake a critique and reconstruction of the life of the Institute. It also served, constitutionally speaking, to create and maintain a level playing field for the Director and the faculty. So they agreed. But I had to remind them of that when the time to step down came. And so I expect they'll never do it again. But I can't understand why anybody wouldn't ask for it.

Labalme: But it didn't net you in the end the academic connection.

Woolf: That's right. Except by a few people on an individual basis when we could talk shop and who really kept me in touch with things, that was fun.

Labalme: You were unusual when you came because you did bridge the humanities and the sciences in a rather unique fashion and in some early minutes say of the School of Historical Studies you attended faculty gatherings. How did that go?

Woolf: I was invited, and it was clear that I was invited, and I thought it was good. I had hoped that other faculties would invite me as well, but they only did when they wanted to discuss a particular item of business. Mathematics would do that occasionally. Social Science, I had an early informal gathering with them--I doubt they had very formal meetings anyway. There were only two on the faculty until Michael

[Walzer] came. Natural Science asked me I think once or twice for a specific item. Then, oh, I tried in my early days here to sit at the tables at lunch.

Labalme: Yes. Yes. How was that?

Woolf: You'd have thought some infectious disease had arrived. You know, at Hopkins I used to sit with the scientists, I'd sit with a group and I'd be flagged down and dragged to sit down with them. Here you'd have thought you'd just killed their mother-in-law or worse yet, their mother. You had a big Chutspa to sit down there and dine with them. So I ended up mostly sitting with social science or history and outside of that with particular persons from time to time, Bombieri or others like that.

Labalme: Were you every seen as siding with one side or another in sort of the healing of Kaysen wounds?

Woolf: I don't know. I hope not.

Labalme: Yes. I never heard that.

Woolf: I don't think so. I think, I tried in full consciousness, I may have done something I don't know about, to be totally honest with them. Not to say one thing to one and another thing to another. I tried not to favor anyone. I had some difficult off-the-record decisions to make, for example, about the allocation for housing for faculty. Borel and Claggett wanted the Wheeler house.

Labalme: Which is the one that the Clagetts rented. Yes.

Woolf: Which is a deal John Wheeler had arranged with the Institute. He was never a permanent member of the faculty here, but an arrangement had been made, and as it turned out, mechanically speaking, Clagett came to me first. And I approved it. And then Borel came and attacked me rather strongly. I said he came first, I didn't know there were any rules about this. Yes, but I've been here longer. I said, would you have liked it in reverse? So things like that. A few of those.

Labalme: Yes. Very, very difficult.

Woolf: There were moments in my office when people said things that are never repeated, and I think that test, if that's what it was, made for the reasonable judgement they have of me being fair.

Labalme: I think that is the judgement, and that healing did take place.

Woolf: It had to be. Otherwise it would have been, had the period of my administration not gone well, the kiss of death for this place, in the wake of the Kaysen troubles. And it's vain probably to say so, but I think several of us, you and I and others, helped save this place, by giving it both a positive signal for the future and by refusing to become parti-pris to one side or the other in the fallout from the past.

Labalme: Yes. Earlier on you talked about the physical aspect

as well as this psychic aspect. And they do go together I think.

Woolf: Absolutely, Patsy.

Labalme: A sense of dignity.

Woolf: I thought, my God, if this place doesn't have that, or can't generate it, the whole game isn't worth it, neither here nor anyplace else. Now, what's interesting, is the number of imitators, and the other institutions that are now called Institutes of Advanced Study of one kind or another. Several of which we spawned, several of which I was part of.

Labalme: Such as ...

Woolf: The Berlin Wissenschaftskolleg and a number of others. We should take comfort in that too as an institution, as we are the progenitor of many, many good institutions.

Labalme: Even as they compete.

Woolf: Even as they compete. That's ok.

Labalme: And then you're reaching out, you have brought in a whole series of the annual reports.

Woolf: Look at this. Why is this discontinued? Murph discontinued them.

Labalme: They've started again.

Woolf: That's good. I'm glad. It's a shame. There's nothing, you can change the character of the content, all that's got nothing to do with it. We have a

responsibility to tell the world who we are.

Labalme: Accountability.

Woolf: Accountability. Absolutely. And one of the things that's been absent in the history of this place, not only this kind of accountability which is easiest...

Labalme: The publications.

Woolf: The publications, but the accountability in the behavior of the faculty. Responsibility.

Labalme: Yes.

Woolf: My clash with Bahcall, for example, is fascinating in its own way. It came over computers. For seven or eight of my ten or eleven years, John, who is a flatterer, who'd come and say of the wonderful new administration, best director we ever had, I'd come to work with him, fine. One day when I got a grant, a promise of money from IBM, a promise of free machinery, their state of the art, big computer, I went to John, I said, here's an opportunity. Well, I don't want to use the IBM. That's OK, you might consider taking it and still have the other computer there. I don't want it. I said, OK. You're the user. After that event, something turned in this man, after 7 or 8 years! He assumed I was trying to impose on him the use of an IBM machine, and absolutely turned the other way. And then at my retirement, he had the terrible hubris to get up there and speak in friendly and personal terms about my

past and his as if we shared friendship and philosophy. I was furious. Anyway that's part of the spoilage I think that the extraordinary privilege of being a professor in this place sometimes produces. And we can't do anything about that, that's character, we're not going to teach them anything in that respect.

Labalme: Are there, and stop me when you want to stop because we'll have other opportunities when we can spend another few minutes.

Woolf: Let's wrap it up.

Labalme: Yes. Are there any other particular personalities you remember, think of with affection, the faculty or people whom you...

Woolf: Oh, yes. Everybody in some way was extraordinarily nice to me. Some in one degree or another, some who didn't know how to be, and only afterwards did I realize what they were after, Borel, for example, would come and we would talk about the flowers, or something. He couldn't get to the subject. finally I said, Borel, what is it that brought you here. And Borel said to me one day, you're the best we've ever had. I hope it's better now. But up to that point, that's fabulous considering how you and I have had difficulty communicating, I appreciate that immensely. He said that at the end of my tenure. And Montgomery said that to me over and over again. And I had a great

appreciation of him because he would come down to my office in the morning, we were on the first floor, or I would go once in a while to him, before anyone came in, and we would talk about everything. He had known every director. So I had some rewards of that sort. I think mostly this group doesn't know how to do that. There's something warped, and nowadays it's warped by other things, by ideology, by sexual orientation, by all kinds of hoopla. I think the real problem will be always for the director to generate a mood, if the mood is one of reasonableness and fairness, and non-hostility to a particular subject or school. There's gossip that there's some hostility to some of the schools in the present administration. I don't think that's true.

Labalme: Some possibility of...

Woolf: Hostility in the director's office, to some of the schools. I hope that's not true. But that kind of talk is always going to be present in one form or another just because we are the kind of community we are. But I still think it's a great institution, even more necessary to the future than it's been in the past. I wish it were a little more engaged with other subject matter. I worry about the narrowing of some schools, e.g. of history, I worry about the fragility of social science. It's all worth fighting for. It

really is.

Labalme: You fought for it.

Woolf: I really feel very good about my time.

Labalme: You should. Why don't we conclude this now. Thank you
very much.

END OF CASSETTE TWO, SIDE ONE

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH HARRY WOOLF
(The second of two interviews)

Date: December 20, 1993
Place: Princeton, New Jersey
Interviewer: Patricia H. Labalme

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE ONE:

Labalme: This is Patricia Labalme and I will be interviewing Dr. Harry Woolf on December 20, 1993, in Princeton, New Jersey. I want to make sure we're audible...OK.

Woolf: Let's take up, an easy issue to begin with because it's tangible and physical: that is the uses of our estate in the broadest sense of that word. It seemed to me as an administrator and to the extent that there was any creative possibility in being an administrator, the one domain in which to play well (in the best sense) is to look at the boundary conditions that constrain one, physically, economically, the dimensions that are tangible. It seemed to me that we had property here that was attractive and interesting, we had a physical plant that had decayed, there was some growth in our minds as there had been in the past, and I'm not talking about the intellectual outreach at this point, but just the physical growth--there was always an urge for physical growth, more members, etc. We wanted to initiate or maintain or enlarge, depending on when you take your point of origin, the visiting short-term population,

the visiting lecturer, the participant in the seminars and the like. The question was how to do it, how to use what we had as the natural constraints within which to operate. My own behavior, philosophically, and I suppose to the extent that one knows oneself, historically, is less to grow outwardly than (at least at first) to refine what's within or perhaps to do both if possible. My favorite personal metaphor or personal choice of description is that I have 14 lines and my assignment is a sonnet. Well 14 lines here were a lot; there were more likely 2. At best you might have a proverb or a couplet, when first I came. It seemed to me that one of the things we could do was besides undertake to revitalize the physical plant which needed it badly, and we'll talk about that in a moment, was to look around where the wounds were more serious. What opportunity did we have in this community at large with our physical facilities? We had housing, the member population which changed, we had a lot of it empty, we had space in which to bring in visitors for short-term occasions. We also had long-term space which might be used, might be developed in the best sense of the word "develop," appropriately, and in tune with our general function as an institute.

Let me talk about that for a moment, because it brought all kinds of issues to the fore. And that was, of course, the dream we had of

exploiting some of our land in a very careful way for development purposes. Nothing taught me a greater lesson about the politics of human existence than to observe the message as it left my office and the form and the context within which it arrived at another location, there, of course, to have its contents misinterpreted. I made it quite clear, I thought, at the beginning of this process, that first it was exploratory, secondly we would do nothing to violate the integrity of the preserve. Indeed, our plan was supposed to help preserve it, the forest and the open land that we had, and that we would not do anything of a sort that would be seen around town at large or elsewhere in the country to assault our responsibilities in preserving the "domain"--no high rise, no market place, no mall, and a whole list of no's were very carefully set out, I thought! To avert misinterpretation, I invited the community to form their own organization to protect the woods, and indeed made a contribution to its financial health. It turned out I created an enemy! But I thought it was the right thing to do so that a discourse would unfold. I then invited in, one at a time, publicly, but acknowledging it so that everyone knew, the various heads of local organizations to say: this is what we're beginning to think about, this is what we do not have in mind to do, and as you can imagine, immediately they left the office, they announced we were doing the opposite of what I said. And some of the community immediately invited the Sierra Club which had no

local representation, from California and elsewhere, to come and attack the Institute's proposed plans as anti-environmental! It hurt me personally very much because I was a passionate outdoorsman myself and a preserver, I thought, of landscapes and the forest primeval and the like, and I hiked and skied and did all those things. So it took a long time and much effort to correct and convey those intentions. We never quite did! Even the faculty to whom I had made the same statement at first with guarded positive approval but afterwards taking up the gospel, the cause as outlined by the others, came to be more or less against it, but not entirely.

What did we have in mind? I thought that we could develop some housing of an innovative kind that would itself be a representation of ourselves in our own domain in this territory of the mind, of an appropriate local society. One of the ideas we had was to create clusters of houses with a wide open landscape taking only a very small portion of the lands that would be suitable for this. The clusters would be operated as a kind of cooperative in which the heating, the air conditioning, would be set up so as to operate for four or five units, whatever the size of the cluster would be. The owners, they would be true owners, but would buy their heat and cold as they liked it. If you liked to live at very low temperatures in the summer, you paid for it. If

you liked to live at very high temperatures in the winter, you paid for it. So that a kind of social efficiency and an economic efficiency could take place in which the houses would be all equally well built but different in price according to size and scale. There would be some sort of village quality to this and I had anticipated that one day we would inherit or acquire, since we had first option on it, both the Eno and the Updike estates. And some of that came about, we have first option to this day on the Updike, that those buildings themselves might one day be a kind of community center for this project. I envisioned a kind of housing in which there would be a guest house or two on the grounds, maybe at these central sites, managed by an oversupply of staff which would serve two functions, to manage the guest facilities, so when you, the owner, had company, you didn't have to have extra bedrooms in your own house, you could put your guests in the guest center and book it at modest expense. You could also have staff for your own entertainment, or party, or other services, drawn from this permanent staff at the center, and paid for by the owner as needed. I thought it would help solve the servant problem, the maintenance problem, and the need, or the absence of need, to overbuild for one's private facilities, for children that come and go, and other visitors. This would be a component of the social experiment without socializing these things, and still preserving one's independence and freedom. So there would be common athletic

facilities at the site, tennis courts and a pool, the obvious things. This would not prevent an owner, and the sites would be large enough, from doing the same for himself if he or she wanted to. And we looked into this sort of thing in a number of ways including having some apartment-like units in another cluster. We got numbers, we got experts to calculate it out, we looked at the land, we looked at the wetland portion and all the other parts, and we got real numbers that were very promising in their return to the Institute and people who heard about this, people were lining up, saying, "I'd like to get into that," your friends and mine, that we know in town, myself included. We got an architect, after some competition, a distinguished architect, Bob Venturi, who was terribly stimulated and he made some wonderful suggestions, now in our archives, about what might be. As for a portion of the wetlands, in order to preserve them, I came up with the idea of making a wetlands park, a Japanese garden, a wet and dry Japanese garden, of which there's only one or two in the United States, on a scale that would be very exciting. We thought of this as a possible gift from Japan. This would preserve the wetlands, give the public some access to it in a managed manner and give us a landscape of great beauty, because one of the ideas was to drain the landscape in the park into a series of descending ponds which in the lower reaches would be wet most of the time and in the upper reaches would have a dry and wet season.

Anyway, without going into all the details of the discussion, down to the presentation of drawings before the faculty and the like, the project got killed. Although the mayor, Josie Hall was enthusiastic about it, and felt quite sure that the Garden Club of America would like it! I was certain however that some form of it would revive, not necessarily the building but the value recognition of the land, the boundary conditions within which we had to operate. As you now know, this is coming off. I knew it would take some time, and there's a lesson for us in other domains too. Institutions have time, especially this one. There's no commitment to produce so many doctorates and so many degrees or solve so many problems. You have time to do things right and if one generation can't achieve it, perhaps another can. If you give yourself to that notion of leadership, then I think you can do things under the most constrained of conditions. And sometimes constraints are healthy. I think we learned a lot from this, we discovered the value of our estate, we discovered who our friends were and were not, we discovered how misinformation gets invented and distributed, etc., etc. In fact, I wish I had kept more close records, it would make a wonderful story someday, but not in my lifetime.

So that was part of it, and then we did little things, to come away from the big projects, these we actually did. We set out to replant. I saw the

swampy areas near the road and put in those willows. A number of things of that sort, got some guidance from people who knew plants and forests. I decided we could run our own nursery for the needs of our trees, so we bought seedling pines, the Japanese black pines among other trees. I hated the parking lots, so we enclosed them in those trees. And we did very well economically in doing it in that way, and we should continue to do that. The nurseries themselves are attractive. They keep the land open. If we balance the uses and plant one kind of tree one year, or one season, or one period, another another time, we can balance the land itself. I thought there was great virtue for all of us. We did some cooperative bug picking in the woods, we started that...

Labalme: Bug picking?

Woolf: Yes, there were plagues coming through our woods, of insects, as the professionals in the community told us, so we could volunteer days when all of us came out and picked bugs. We were told this would be effective if we picked them off the trees up to a certain height, and it was. And it created some esprit de corps, and that was part of my intention, by that and a number of other things we did, in the Friends organization, in the dinners that we began bringing people to and the like. The hardest thing here, it seems to me, is to build and maintain an esprit de corps. There's such a natural suspiciousness.

Labalme: Why is it natural?

Woolf:

Or so it seemed to me. I don't know why it is. Maybe it's because privilege which is so rare, real privilege as this community has, not just the faculty, the whole community has, people are frightened to reveal it for fear of losing it. They have the time to deal with this component of their lives and the most common reaction, of course, is to hunker down and exclude rather than to solve the problem by some form of inclusion and some form of breadth. It would be very hard to reconstruct the different issues of the sort that came and went, came with the problem of office space, of the remodeling of all these buildings. Take this one, for example, the room we're sitting in was the roof at one time. Here was the same philosophy of constraint. Instead of building a new building, how can we maximize what we have? We had no basement in this building. Let's make a basement, and we could drop a number of our facilities down into the basement, save the cost, the enormous cost of building, make it a better building while we're at it, by better insulation and better heat design, and let's go up, because it was in some sense, an unfinished building with that rather abrupt end, right angled end at either end of the building. So this cluster of offices we added on this side, and that on the other end. And people don't know now that this was not part of the original design. And that's my sonnet again. I thought that it would be fun never to tell them. The same happened in hidden and invisible ways. We replaced the boilers. I think I told you a

story last time, perhaps I didn't, this same assistant to Mike Morgan, asked a visiting member of the School of Historical Studies from Hopkins before I came, whether I walked around.

Labalme: You did mention that.

Woolf: Yes, so we walked around and saw the boilers and saw they were leaking all over the place, etc. Those are in some ways happy thoughts for me, because in the face of all sorts of trivial, relatively trivial hostilities, we got a great deal done. I thought with each accomplishment, it would be easier next time. Well, up to a point that's true.

Labalme: What about the apartments?

Woolf: Yes, the apartments are another problem. They were built under minimum code at a time when you could get away with the walls that were two inches thick and nothing in them. We had damp moisture problems, we had leaking roofs, we had disrepair in the worst sense, and the question was whether to repair them or to knock them down. If we knocked them down, I knew we'd never be able to rebuild on any scale that was significant. And again it was, let's make the most of what we have. So we got some architects to look at the options that were open to us. They built us or designed dummy models of all kinds including laying on great big mansard- like tops and putting insulation in them. It was ugly. But the idea was to save as much of the original architecture,

because it was an architectural contribution at its time, and the only sacrifice we had to make was to put up a new roof, a tilted roof, and then we could put insulation inside, get rid of the leakage, put in heat where it should have come in instead of in the ceilings as in the original design, and they're still in those ceilings (coils of copper-tubing). We couldn't take them out, so we put something in the floor. And we added to the tops of existing buildings again, another floor in some cases, and we were able again to operate them more efficiently, to include a larger member population, and not to add a building to the site. We extended the library here into this building. That was sort of a mistake, but it was the only choice we had at the time.

Labalme: Extended...?

Woolf: On the second floor, the library at the other end of this building.

Labalme: Yes. In other words, increased the mathematics library.

Woolf: In the light of the new building for mathematics, it's something of a mistake, and it was very expensive, we had to put in steel beams, to carry the dead weight of the books. But one had to compromise, and the pressure from the School was enormous. There seems to be a reluctance in faculties everywhere to walk more than three feet to get a book, or five feet for another facility! Now the relocation changes that. And there was something in overinvesting in the remodeling in that case, I think. The steel beams were not worth the effort, but there they are.

Labalme: But there's no library in the new building.

Woolf: I know. But now they seem able to walk-- so we've added years to their lives via exercise! Perhaps as we talk about other matters, other aspects of this particular use of the physical estate will come out. But I think it's an important component of management of any institution.

Labalme: Of course. But what about the apartments--there were new apartments?

Woolf: Let me finish that story. There are two clusters of buildings in the original set, one from the very beginning and then a later cluster which was better built. We looked around where we had one story units, we could add a story in some cases. We didn't do it in all, we probably should have done it in all while we had the means. Because what we did as you probably know, was we got a loan, a federal and state loan combined. It turned out that by the very judicious management of that loan we actually made quite a lot of money, and it turns out, added millions of dollars, literally millions of dollars, to the endowment, as a result of that. Nothing illegal of course, just the fact that we did a lot of the work ourselves after the original bids, we finished up the unfinished parts and so on. It also gave me a chance to come back to that side of it, to invigorate, perhaps to reinvigorate, I don't know what the situation was before, the labor force here. We had a very loyal labor force but one thought you were living on a latifundia in southern Italy. Like something out of Il Gattopardo! We found that there was talent for

stone work and so on, all this stuff we'd been contracting out for, at very high cost, and so as you now know we have some people within who do the work beautifully and love it and salaries are higher and work is better done, because one lives with it. And the same thing could be carried over to the kitchen and all the management story that we needn't repeat, at that place there. So there was a lovely esprit de corps. We went from driving little tiny lawn mowers, 6 to 8 of us at a time, and it looked like a parade of military sort, to a few big ones that did the work efficiently.

Labalme: What about the Space Telescope Project? Was that connected in some way with the number of apartments, the increase in apartments?

Woolf: No, what we hoped for there, the opportunity came up, looking to the outside now, for what the Institute might further do in its own future, to compete for the management and the operation of the Space Telescope Institute. A number of people within the Institute faculty, John Bahcall in particular, were very enthusiastic about this. Lyman Spitzer from the University. And I was enthusiastic for it, and I agreed that we would try to put in a bid to run it. Now running it meant building a building, which would be the physical location of the management and the research part. The actual operation of the space telescope would come out of the natural bases for it, in airfields and space institute sites, but the science and the planning and the dealing with the consequences of

the work would take place in the academic hall that was its management. In the end, it was slightly embarrassing for me because I was attached to all the institutions that competed for it, Hopkins in particular, attached by sentiment if not by physical connection at that point, but I was still on the board of Fermilab which set out to be a manager also. I wish we had gotten it. I think it would have been a wonderful development for us. We had the space to build the building for it. In the end, Hopkins got it and built a beautiful building and Neta Bahcall went down there to work for a while, and it's an interesting and significant program. In the light of the present one doesn't know, maybe that's also a lesson that if we tie ourselves to too much technology directly we may have to bear the burden when the fashion changes. So we all learned lessons, myself included, out of that. One of the lessons off the record, but I don't mind putting it on the tape, comes under the old adage, no good deed shall go unpunished. And the people I worked with here who didn't succeed in getting the project became sour about other things, and I always thought that was a factor in the discomfort that emerged between Mr. Bahcall and myself. I think that's all to say at this point about the apartments, the buildings. I'm not against building the buildings, I was certainly for the building of the mathematics building, put taste and quality of it aside. I always felt they should be completely financed before they're built, not afterwards. But

that's another story.

Labalme: You mentioned that we would talk about the uses of the estate, beginning with the physical plant. Do you want to address the uses of the estate in other ways?

Woolf: Yes, of course. The other side of it was, here was a precious location. Here was a capacity to do some other things, to have other meetings, to bring the community carefully into the household. Not just selfishly in terms of financing the future of the Institute, but as educators and to show the world that these are not strange animals doing research in mathematics, etc. Now, we ought to talk about the founding of the Friends. I think we already talked about that. The place that we have, it was the framework within which to have an organization like that. Also to invite occasionally, carefully, other organizations, transient, from other locations, to have a special meeting that would be unique to us, in this unique location. It would have been advantageous for us to be visible in these other communities that they represented. I've always done that, and I think it's been to our great good. Now the question is to control it, and there's some pressure, some which came to me long before I stepped down. For example, the NAACP and a number of other local community organizations that really had nothing to do with us, some to which we gave hospitality and to others we did not, that reflected the local pressures. As long as they were within the boundaries of

acceptability, one could make, had to make some choices. So Louise Morse being a strong advocate of the NAACP, when she asked me if it would be alright, to say yes. So there was some thin but legitimate connection to the Institute and its life and the people. It doesn't have to be that way. We can do it for its own sake. The danger there is to overexploit our staff and overexploit our physical plant and then finally to violate our privacy. There are no absolute constitutional rules about doing this, one way or the other, but there has to be the good taste and judgement of the director, the staff, and the people who recommend, and use it. I think by and large it was and is a good practice. It clearly has continued. I think we're approaching some danger points. We're beginning to have large scale conferences which are really exploitive of the staff and the physical plant itself. And we have no funds for renewing the plant. In other words, we don't build in an overhead of the right kind in these meetings, and most academic institutions fail at doing that very well anyway. And we're more fragile than an alumni-rich, numerous body out there to defend us as we have in our colleges and universities. And even there we have problems. What else did we do in using our estate? Well, we had a lot of academic conferences. And that again I think came to a higher level than ever before in my time, and I think it has persisted very well, and the faculty likes to have the freedom to create, with proper institutional approval, a session for

this or that cause and so forth. And I think the Institute is better known, and more widely known, and less falsely known, as a result of those activities among others. We also tried to outreach as you know with our publications in some cases.

Labalme: We talked about that.

Woolf: We talked about that, there's no need to repeat that. There are probably some other things I left out.

Labalme: Yes. What about the intellectual estate in a sense? Does this fall under this rubric?

Woolf: Well, there one had to go through the faculty first, and to encourage them to think about the conferences--the particular best example. Occasionally a small scale seminar and visitor program can be used.

Labalme: I'm thinking really of the appointments in this broadest sense, and what your connection or non-connection was, what role you felt you could play or could not.

Woolf: OK, let's swing to that because I don't think of that in the same sense, although you're right. It's the broader sense of the estate. What did we have intellectually that represented a kind of gravitational attractive force? We had our faculty. The satellites that they attracted, the bodies they attracted would be those that were most ^{within range of a kind of} in the field of the effect. If it was anthropology, it would be other anthropologists. Since our anthropologist possesses one of the broadest intellectual gauges ever

assembled in any single mind, that's a very wide field of attention indeed. Occasionally in our discussions, faculty and myself, whether one to one like this in my office or one on three at the lunch table or whatever, I would make some suggestions about a thematic outreach. I considered those just seed plantings. Occasionally one of those would sprout and something would come back. Mostly these seeds were created by the faculty themselves and they would sound things out with me, and I would either be encouraging or discouraging as the case might be.

In raising new monies for the Institute I created, as I had at Hopkins, a director's fund. I felt in nourishing the intellectual estate, both from the point of view of maintenance as well as growth, and growth not only of the same kind but expansion in the fields of interest, it had to be in the best sense of the word something the faculty had to ask for, something the director could give. Maybe vice versa if possible, but in the normal structure of organizations, the members of the organization ask the head of the organization for this or that. Money is as good a device as any I know for creating a tension, a healthy tension, that is essential between the two parties. The director's fund could then be used, not for the director's personal pleasure or his vanity as an intellectual, but to respond to such requests. And that happened both in the form of

invitations to people, either of the old and established vintage like Isaiah Berlin, when Morty White wanted to work with him the first time on a joint book. Could we bring him as a director's visitor? Yes, of course. In some cases, there were others who were not in the field of anyone's interest and then the director brought such a person with the idea of stimulating an interest in the subject or finding an intellectual content in it, or just for, in the best sense of the word, for intellectual fun, which all minds need and all organizations have to have a way of doing if they're healthy. So we were looking for growing tips and hopefully some would take and some would just be meritorious in their own right for that occasion. There, growing the intellectual estate was nourished directly by an asset. I hope that that fund still exists, whatever its name, I hope that's still doable. I think it is, but I can't imagine anybody who comes onto the scene and sees its existence would ask for its demise. There were more formal ways of growing the estate which was to try to look at new fields. Now there I don't remember what we talked about, my interest in the life sciences, for example.

Labalme: A little bit, yes.

Woolf: There, I thought, was a golden opportunity and it's still there, in which a science or a set of sciences are emerging with a real body of theory and which for a long time (where they were sound at all), they were essentially sound because they were experimental, and now we know

that sometimes the distance between experiment and theory is very short, that in the neurosciences for example, the nature of the mind, how it works, how it works when it's ill, how it works when it's healthy, what its attributes are, called for an approach of interest to us at this kind of institute from two ends. One, the theoretical end itself and the other, the empirical end. Not to bring the empirical enterprise here but to be cognizant of what was tumbling out of the laboratories at an enormous pace and scale, that demands explanation by being fitted into a larger body of thought and rationale. The way to grow that, it seemed to me then, was to find an asset, to identify in the faculty an interest and to try to bring the two together. The interest then was expressed by Freeman Dyson, in particular, and the School of Natural Sciences on and off had sort of stabbed at this idea, so it wasn't wholly new. And I believe at some points in the past, certainly during Oppenheimer's time, psychologists were invited. The state of knowledge was quite different then than now, and that distance itself is so short, one can nevertheless say that. So there was some historical background, and Freeman was then working on the lectures he eventually gave in England on the origins of life, sort of a Schroedinger revisited. And Schroedinger's earlier book on the origins of life set up a whole revolution, created molecular biology, and that was a theoretical physicist who did it in a situation of exile from his German homeland in Ireland. To some

extent there were parallels. I thought here was in Freeman a golden opportunity of a great mind, a fascinating human being, coming to grips with the program. So I approached him about doing this and said I would raise the money and we would form an advisory body and I talked to a number of people some of whom I had here as guests, Paul Berg, Maxine Singer, and others whom they suggested and we built an advisory group potential of nobel laureates, of heroes and heroines of the field, and I got a promise of money from one foundation, indeed the first bit of it. Mr. Dyson changed his mind, told me to go ahead and do it. I said the history of a director initiating programs here on his own is filled with disaster, and men like Oppenheimer, far greater than I, have fallen, and I certainly will never even rise. And besides I don't believe in doing things like that; I think the faculty have to be participants, one way or another. So it withered away. In recent years since then, one or two people have been invited. Steve Adler has had an interest in this, and there have been some theoretical biologists here, but I shudder at the phrase. It's not what we're talking about because the theoretical biologists of yesteryear were not "approved of" and still seem to be abhorred by the hard scientists because they were theorizing about life, and it was too gross and too large a subject and too unrefined and too full of bull, or philosophical predilection, to put it another way. I still think there's a glorious opportunity here and in the physical/intellectual

expansion of this place: we should be thinking about what kind of intellectual activity will go on here that is different than what goes on now, so that your framework for the 14 lines is there, and they might emerge. If you don't frame for it, it might never happen. In other institutions, they do things of that sort. In some sense we have spawned a number of unofficial, not quite bastards, but children, in the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, now in Budapest as well, and all sorts of institutes partially or sometimes wholly like the Wissenschaftskolleg, which incidentally refers to itself as Princeton am Spree.

Labalme: Yes. That's nice. Do you want to address the question of how different schools handle the process of change? You somehow hinted at it. Do you want to say anything more about your concern for that?

Woolf: Let's speak a little about that. And that brings up the question of what authority, what power, what "whatever" does the director have vis-à-vis these issues, these issues of the intellectual growth, the raison d'être, of the Institute. My hope was, whatever his personal accomplishments, that the director of this institute would at least know where the right things are, that he or she be culturally acquainted with what intellectual life is, how growth and death occur, and that there be some gift for popularization in what is being achieved, some understanding, some capacity to understand and to be taught by his colleagues. That was my hope in coming here. I didn't see myself as one with my colleagues

professionally in the actual achievement of publication and scholarly research. I believed I understood what they were about and what they were up to and how to keep nourishing that activity. When you come to look at the particular schools in this respect, the first thing that strikes you when you come here, when I came here, well, I mean outside the unusual conditions of that particular arrival after the fall of the previous director and the great battles among the schools, and the hostility, deeply personal. I mean people, I think I told you, people would not come into the cafeteria if X was sitting there. Sitting there! There were 200 people in the place! How to create an intellectual community still in some ways baffles me. You can't legislate it. You can create some conditions for improvement socially. You have an opportunity when you're forming a new program of playing a very important role if the institution would frame, legitimate your doing so. And one of the problems of management here in the best sense of that word is the emasculation of the director's job in the Kaysen period, and the incremental restoration of it in the post-Kaysen period. Of course, what happens, very modestly in my time, is you begin to reverse the process. Now two directors later the process has come a distance and there's much more strength again in the director's office. Perhaps it's a pendulum-like phenomenon which will come the other way in other times, and one should not allow one's ego ever to get identified with the

location of a place on the arc of that pendulum. I think it's important that the director be a legitimate academic. That his office not be reduced, as some of the faculty wanted to during the struggles, to a "mere management task." Equally no member of the faculty of a school should be the director. All kinds of reasons that one needn't rehash-- objectivity diminishes, etc. Neither should there be, as I think they oddly proposed, (as I remember vaguely in reading over the arguments before I came), that it be a rotating post going from school to school, professor to professor. That never works anywhere. So the riddle remains always partially unsolved, whom to appoint, with what strength, with what purpose. Since it's an odd institution in having unconventional alumni, unconventional self-appointed assignments in the body intellectual, you can't really rely on those who have been here, the alumni, to be the guide, entirely, to the future of the place. Most alumni remember their moment and their glorious time and want nothing to change, like all of us. They want to go to the college they went to and had a good time, where they met their spouses, and everything else of that sort.

One of the things we started in my time was visiting committees. Normal visiting committees, or soon-to-be normal visiting committees, since there had been a visiting committee to consider whether the

Institute should be preserved at all during the crisis time. No matter how great our colleagues are, intellectually they're not necessarily greater than their colleagues elsewhere on the same peer level. So that having to respond to a review process, I always felt, would temper our material, maybe make steel out of the wrought iron, or if it didn't work, fracture the wrought iron and start again. So at first again you pay the price as it were. Your first visiting committee is really the old boys brought back. In setting up the pattern we agreed that membership on the committee should be chosen by both the director and the faculty from an approved list larger than the minimum required. I think that's very healthy and I think whatever the rhythm of it, that it be normalized. One shouldn't have all four schools obviously reviewed in the same year, maybe one a year. So you have a cycle of one every fourth year.

Labalme: Do you think that would be a good pattern, every four or five years?

Woolf: Yes. So that you come back to each school every four or five years. So there's one review a year. Increasingly, depending on the strength of the director and the emerging support of the Board, that review ought to be very serious, in order to examine the publications, in order to examine the reactions to the publications of the faculty, they ought to look for the informal assessment of the membership using the alumni in that sense. It should assemble the critics and make judgements. And to bring that about effectively maybe even if they space it out a little more

infrequently. But not too infrequently. If you get more than four or five years apart, it's not going to work. One should even not only invite the committee of high standing, but pay them. There's something about being paid for being a critic in the academic world, however small the pay, that I think sends a signal that you mean it. It's not a ritual ball to which everyone wears the right clothes and comes to dance.

Labalme: Do visiting committees get paid elsewhere? Actually I'm going to stop with that question because I want to switch.

END OF CASSETTE ONE, SIDE ONE

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE TWO:

Labalme: OK. We're started again.

Woolf: Yes, to answer your question.

Labalme: They do get paid.

Woolf: Yes, in most places. It's not a big pay. About \$100 per day or something of that sort. Maybe \$250, plus the expenses. It's part of the value system of the world we live in. Just like book reviewing. Most scholars will review a book more readily for a journal that pays them than for one that doesn't. Now I don't want to speak of this as if everyone's devilish. And the pay is \$50, sometimes in the old times you got reprints of the review, but some return. But for us I think it's more important that this be seen as a very important task, not for the Institute

for itself only, but its indebtedness, its role in helping to shape a profession, and that there be a system of rewards for doing it, some payment, some other kind of reward, some hospitality at a very high level, good food, good wine, real conversation, and a attempt to minimize over time the crony relationships. Some of it has to happen. There is a reason why the director has to have an academic background and be familiar with how the community works so that he knows when there are cronies being used, when they're not. He has a way of finding out about a subject he knows nothing about by calling his system into being by telephoning others, so those of us like the present director who's been a provost and had a great academic committee for every goddamned subject in the world, knows how to do that. And all of us whatever our field know when we're getting a phony answer or a genuine answer to a question. And we need that to preserve the real vitality. Now you ask, what if they give you, what if the committee gives you a very critical report? You have a tenured faculty. What can you do? Well, you can affect the appointment pattern and since one works at a different metabolism anyway, the scale is much more leisurely and long or should be, fine, then you just adjust to that system, and you can make mistakes. We have made some over time, very small as things go. And the danger is that we can avoid mistakes by becoming terribly narrow. So that we get experts on the cutting of stone in southern

Greece, a very important issue for the building of the temples, but not exactly world-shaking.

Labalme: Do you think that's happened here?

Woolf: I think that's happening here. I think we're getting a narrowing of the reach of the School of Historical Studies. The loss of John Elliott, I think, was a very severe loss for us and had we had the strength and design and architecture in place, intellectual architecture, we would not have let a moment go by without going for a modern historian right away. We should avoid picking people at retirement age elsewhere, which was done too, which however good when near retirement age, again there are exceptions, you can have a flourishing genius, and so on, but loosely speaking, if that happens together with other little things that happen, then the horizon shrinks and the imaginative becomes less possible. There are radical things to do to prevent that. You could have a director's program and the director could play all kinds of loose games, of bringing people other than director's visitors, (programmatic persons). For example, the way Dyson wanted me to do the biological sciences, as a three- or four-year program, which was what I was reaching for in money support. That could be a way of doing it. But it's risky. You'd have to have a kind of council of the faculty from all the schools so that you're not isolated, and if you make a mistake it's not seen as a personal failing but as part of the problem of the...

Labalme: Or the failing of the field that you may be trying to introduce.

Woolf: That's right. And I think it would be wonderful for this place to have an asset of that sort in which there is a little bit of a wild kind of thing going on. Oppie did that in wild persons, but that was a different situation. The danger always is replication of self and the replication is a decay curve.

Labalme: Always?

Woolf: Nearly always. Especially if you take a long enough time-span. It isn't that the classics, for example, that we now do are not worth doing. It isn't as if when one of our classicists retires, we shouldn't get another. But as we plow through the traditional domains of the classics, surely there would be a classicist with a new mind who isn't just detailing the next step in this ^{or that ongoing} important piece of work.

Labalme: Such as underwater archaeology or some of the ...

Woolf: Or whatever. I'm not good at the illustration at the moment--sometimes you can't think of the thing you thought about before. But we can see that in other fields also. Mathematics here reaches out into all kinds of new territories.

Labalme: Why are they able to do it?

Woolf: It's the breadth and fertility of mathematics itself, intrinsic to the subject, that there are profound problems in the space between one and two, infinite series, all kinds of geometric behaviors. And perhaps also it's

because ultimately we know the world of nature, we know the universe we inhabit as much by counting as by assessing the other forms, and the enumeration and the quantification of the universe, as we see it, is a primary form of intelligence about it, so we are interested in weight, motion, measure, and we think we know the world when we do all those things. And different imaginative minds come along with different devices for weighing, measuring, and counting, and in that, like a complex crystal, show us a different facet that we hadn't seen before. It's the same crystal but new and powerful integrative intelligence is released into the body intellectual to give us a richer understanding than before. Now great history does that too, and great scholarship of any kind. Mathematics, of course, is so formulaic, that when a new formulation comes along it's rather exciting. You have the wonderful examples of these great intuitive understandings which have to be proved. And then you get--like the Fermat--the question of this moment. And there are challenges that are set up. We can't do that in the humanities, it has to be something else.

Labalme: Is there some way to accomplish the same thing in the humanities that we haven't thought of?

Woolf: Well, there are, of course, but we have to find them, like the post-Freudian infusion of the psychological dimension into the understanding of literature and so on, clearly is one of those moments and the

excitement about the French post-Second World War schools of thought and the retreat from them. What should be the rhythm of appointment here? If we appoint someone who's hot in some way or another, and he's 21 years old and the area thins into nothing by the time he's 29, you've got him for life. So that counteracts the argument I presented a moment ago about appointing post-retirement people. You want to have some short-term. Or maybe we should begin thinking about appointments that are timebound, 10 years, and we might reserve those for a person at 55, say, with a corpus of achievement already, solid and whose continuation we would welcome. We have to have experimental modes, and if we can find a way of doing that according to the subject of the four schools, let's say, then I think we would create a new Institute again.

Labalme: Should more time be taken at the Board level to deal with this issue?

Woolf: I'd like to say yes to that, but the Board is not a device for this, and I don't really know what, maybe a kind of academic council made up of the director, some faculty members and some outsiders which could play and designate fields and then get reactions, then you bring it to the Board. I'm a deep believer in that device of counseling, and all of us need counseling and some of us can give some, and the trouble with leaving the faculty alone is that it does only its own thing, only those things it wishes to do when moments of fashion arise, like get interested

in satellites or whatever. The Board.

Labalme: Yes, let's talk about the Board a bit.

Woolf: The Board is one of the great good things and one of the necessary evils of all academic institutions. Why people serve on boards, what they expect to get out of it, what they expect to enjoy, are very complex. We have one tremendous asset, or have and still have, which is the prestige of this organization. People get on boards because they want to be identified with a prestigious body, certainly some people in one walk of life who would like to have that recognition in another. Boards are also sources of economic support, especially for the support that's independent, that doesn't come from government agencies and other governments or even foundations which are now increasingly geared into particular intellectual territories. Membership on a board should give those who enter it from a nonacademic background, a business background, an opportunity to expand their lives in these other domains which their reputations as economists, so to speak, on the board as economic victors has earned them an opportunity. Sometimes you pick very well, sometimes we pick very badly in these areas. There's no formula that you can be sure about, except one. That is, if the institution is strong, it will outlive its boards. And we have to kind of ride with the tide of each historic membership pattern. All of us have played a role in getting board members, and you know mine in getting

Jim and so on, other people. The Board here when I arrived was horrible. It was chaired by a man whose mentality was uncertain, who was frequently inebriated, who had inherent decencies and personal tragedies that allowed us to tolerate these other things. But for the first three or four years here, it was an intolerable situation.

Labalme: I just wondered how you helped the Board grow out of that.

Woolf: Well, by being a scout for new appointments. I read the papers, I got names from people, and I kept submitting them to Dickie [Dilworth] and others, and then we began to make new appointments. And I would go usually and call on the person after a telephone call or whatever, or a letter, and sort of sell the wares of this place.

Labalme: Tell me about some in particular.

Woolf: Well, Jim [Wolfensohn] for example, whom I read about in the New York Times financial section one day. John Hunt and I, John was here, and we were always scouting the papers, the magazines, and John was giving me names, and I was bouncing names off of him, before he left this office, as we would have done, you and I. I said, what can you find out about this guy, he's interesting, he's interested in music, and one of the interests in him at the time was the music, because I thought we should have some, I hoped we might have some performing arts, and I thought of the barn at the Eno house as a music hall and/or a studio or two, ultimately. We went and looked it over, and we could see that with

a very small amount of investment--it was far away from the quieter studies-- it would make a wonderful little hall, and some rehearsal rooms and so on. And I went to see Jim about that, if he would be interested in coming with us with the idea of the larger institute of course, and this as an option, and he was very excited about that, and we talked to Zubin Mehta and we talked to Isaac Stern, and they were excited. It would have been summer programs only, to start with. I thought you could bring, for example, a pianist or a violinist or a composer to be a composer or a musician in residence. Like many originals in those domains, their minds are very interesting, in a broader reach, and I thought it would be very exciting to have a small program, but with quality of the highest. And as I talked about it [with Jim] I realized he always does this sort of thing, like having a violin class, you see and so forth. So that was one hope, to go for trustees who would love and respect the place as it is but who also had other interests that might be encouraging for new directions. Then we brought in the big names like Jim's, back to--of course--Dickie. Of course, Dick knew him very well from the Chrysler rescue operation that they had engaged in. I'm always a little uncomfortable with all those prior affiliations. The student of history that's left in me worries about, are there other factors at play? Are there redistributions of wealth being involved here? You can't help that, that's life, and people operate on the basis of personal

connections, victories or losses gained or made one way or another.

One of the good things about boards of academic or non-profit institutions, loosely speaking, is they give everyone an opportunity to be virtuous again, and sometimes, surprisingly often, if one is to be quantified, virtue outweighs fault in these matters. And I think we have to be able to tolerate the idiosyncrasy, ego, all the other aberrations of human nature up to a point, that allow us to build the institution that we care about and the value system we care about. And I feel that way about the Board.

Labalme: What about Betsy Whitehead?

Woolf: Well, Betsy was of course for me the gateway to success here. I'll never forget that first Board dinner which we had in the director's house, and I gave an after-dinner talk about, very much along these lines, why it's worthwhile coming to this institution, why it's worth not only saving but returning to a greater point of leadership than we've ever had, that we shouldn't think of it in terms of the 30s at all, that was an accident of history, and you can't rebuild that kind of institution. That was only a kind of temporary holding tank for the refugees who came and went elsewhere in the country. And I said what we will need will be money and pledges and public revelation of that. And there was a very great reluctance for any of them, even when they wanted to give money, to be publicly noticed for giving it. So Betsy walked up to me after that

evening. Betsy came up to me afterwards and said, I'll help you. I'll pledge, I can't remember the amount now, it was something between 50 and 75 thousand dollars. That was the biggest check the Institute had received in a long, long time.

Had I known, I think I've told you this a number of times, how fragile financially, how cold and unreceptive to salvation the trustees were for the Institute, taken as a whole, and all the other things, I would never have come. It was a deplorable presentation of self, that good people had let themselves become like that, and the hollowness of the institution itself had demonstrated to me after being present, from the staff on up, the buildings and grounds on up. Well, with some help from one trustee, soon, I never was able to get until very late, 100% participation by the trustees. Some whom I like very much personally like Marty, said, "I didn't come on this Board to do that." So the idea was to get other trustees to play the role, or some of the trustees, of being the fundraisers. It was clear my kind of message would not go over with that group, or any other group like them. And this is true in the university, too; my experience at Hopkins was like that. Yet use some trustees to go after other trustees, and sometimes the provost or the president will go after some trustees, or potential trustees, and others. We were so small, we had no team, that's one of the problems

here. And every director has cut staff and then built it again. You have to let it be if it pays off, and not just in money terms, but in good management and the good life. How do you keep a board from replicating itself is a larger problem than how you keep a faculty from replicating itself. In the kind of situation we now have, we have a sort of semi-intimate situation between faculty and Board in which all kinds of false flattery is easily dispensed, and a little of that is a good thing. Not the false flattery, but the closeness, and some of it is not good.

Labalme: What's not good?

Woolf: If a trustee becomes the vehicle of a particular faculty desire, it becomes a pressure point, instead of acting as the conduit only if necessary or saying to the faculty member, go to see the director. Or in somehow making it inclusive. In this little island kingdom that we have here, you get too many islands, and there's no continent; we disperse and we shatter each other. I think it would be hard to manage. Now some of our faculty are very good at this game. They learned it in the Kaysen period. They learned it before that, I mean. Dean Montgomery whom I liked immensely and was very close to me in the years--he'd come down the corridor in the morning, before the office opened. Dean hated Oppie. I never knew why, literally hated him, deeply. I remember when we started the Oppenheimer fund, it was umpteen years too late to do it. At that we raised quite a bit of money. In the form that one had in the

envelope to put in, people would slash it, saying "no, no, no."

Labalme: Imagine!

Woolf: I mean, just hatred. I found that hard to believe. How to make a board vital depends critically upon the chairman, and he has to really care about the institution. I would give you my assessment of Jim, things really accomplished well. Let me do that another time.

Labalme: All right.

Woolf: I don't know the Board now. I see the obvious connections and the sources of the names in most cases. I think it's probably better in its contributory role than it has been in the past. And I hope that it has developed some affection for the life of the institution. I think it's healthier than it's been in a long time. Again, seeing it only from the outside, not because more money is being raised more or less, but I hope it's getting a kind of sense of its own continuity and creative powers, and that therefore as change occurs, as people retire, as people step out, the best will traditionally be maintained. But you can't always be sure that that will be the case and maybe it's not too much to worry about. I think the institution is safe. The endowment is strong enough so that in hard times if we shrink appropriately we have high survival value. If we don't, then a lot of other institutions will go, too, and the world will be changing more rapidly in different directions than we can predict. I think faculty should have a right and a privilege to nominate,

to suggest rather, send in the names and so forth.

Labalme: Beyond the academic trustee, you mean?

Woolf: Yes, beyond the academic, make suggestions. The suggestions could come from anywhere. There ought to be no special privilege for making the suggestions. It's hard to deal with the excessive intimacy, should it occur. This is such a small institution. My experience at Hopkins which was the predominant one, to see and to hear in this respect, the board was large, one could, one had to give them committee duties that were real. Here everybody sits on every committee practically, or used to, maybe not any more. And you could then, the president and provost in particular at Hopkins, knowing the character and interest and so on, could create appropriate committees on which you got the talent that you recruited for the board for that purpose, to function. We do that for the Rockefeller Foundation, too. I'm coming off that this June and I'm on the nominating committee, have been for a number of years, and we sift through categories of finance and others and the like and we try to get a balance on the board. Even at that, I'm concerned that the RF, that we're tilting toward C.E.O.'s, and a little C.E.O. goes a long way.

Labalme: Why?

Woolf: It's a strong spice. Most C.E.O.'s are used to command and to order and to manage, so that the problems that come to the fore, if you have a bunch of them, are management problems. Very few C.E.O.'s are very

imaginative, and in the world of the mind, the intellectual world, especially in the mind to come, the C.E.O. problems and the intellectual problems are totally different. It calls for a greater breadth of character than most C.E.O.'s have. It's where you get a great deal of present mindedness and little, relatively little, as part of the vocabulary, of future concern. At the Institute for Advanced Study and equivalent institutions, we're inviting people to deal with problems we don't know exist yet. We want a mentality and a capability that goes with it, to recognize those problems and then come to grips with them. So we're playing very profound futuristic games. It's exciting, it's exhilarating; it can also be wild as hell, and people who monitor, make sure the budget will cover the expenses of the salesmen, and the engineering department and the like, don't play that game very well, and in general Americans in this category play it poorer than others.

Labalme: Than foreigners?

Woolf: Than foreigners, because the foreigners, in the past at least, all of this is changing, had a much more long-term commitment, like the Japanese, to an institution, like German businessmen and the like. All these things are changing. My problem in thinking about trustees here is not unlike thinking about trustees at the Rockefeller Foundation. C.E.O.'s are not great donors, we come back to that dimension, unless they're giving away somebody else's money, and they give their share that's allocated

in the corporate life. The great donors are the people like we've known who like Jack Whitehead, who made it in most cases themselves, or having inherited it, are free of the burden and want to do something quite romantic. Jack started from scratch, well like Annenberg at the moment, who gave away, you know, more than \$500 million. So we want to find people like that, not all, there aren't that many, you want to have that kind of yeast in the loaf.

Labalme: Tell me about Gladys [Delmas].

Woolf: Well Gladys was just terrific, and how it all began was through her brother whose name I recognized from a chair that had been given to Hopkins in chemistry. Then one day we noticed there was the Venetian foundation, for fellowships. I said hey--I didn't know at that date the connection between the brother and sister, it wasn't the same name obviously, until afterwards--let's find out about this foundation. And we did that through the office. We found out. Then the Kriebel name popped out, I thought, gee, that's familiar, and I learned through research that there was the Kriebel money, the same as had come from the Loctite Corporation. I had a wonderful interview with Gladys. I had these crazy prior interviews with her lawyer, Pat Tannian. He was absolutely nuts, and told me things he shouldn't have told me, about her assets, about her desire to do this. So I said, well, I have to meet this lady. So we arranged to go to lunch in a very lovely French restaurant

in New York. We had a marvelous lunch, and we talked, she seemed lively and interesting, and I said, will you be able to help us. She said, yes. She said, right now. So she wrote me a check for \$1 million.

Labalme: At the lunch table?

Woelf: At the lunch table. So I said this is a real person. She was more real than her money. What was so wonderful about Gladys was at meetings she'd say to Marty or somebody like that, "Why are you making this investment, which gives you 6%, when you could make this one which is just as safe, maybe even safer, at 8%? And Marty would say, "How do you know things like that?" I was furious at this sort of arrogance toward this impressive woman, and throughout the meetings, every now and then, this solidity would come out, beneath the surface. I think she was one of the best trustees we ever had, and I never got close to her, never got closer than we were. She had her life blocked out in other categories. I liked him [Jean Delmas] very much. We had pleasant chats. And when she told me one day that she wanted to make a big gift and talked about it, I was delighted, I said whatever, you know. Then she told me that because of the relationship with her brother that it couldn't be done, but she said, "It will be done, don't worry," and I said, "Thank you very much," and I knew it would be done. And then she said she would leave it when she died. So that was really extraordinary, and I thought that was one of my two categories of

trustees, a person who cares about doing the thing and her means allow her to do it. The other kind is the buccaneer, who hasn't managed other people's monies to make his estate, but who has done it from scratch, and made a lot so he tends to be generous in giving it away. And we had two or three like that at Hopkins and Jack [Whitehead] was certainly that way in the other area that I knew him. We need a few like that. Our Board, where we have the strong C.E.O.'s, tend to come either from the financial world where they manage other people's money, or ~~Charlie Brown, for example, who in the best sense (I like~~ *those who make their way up the corporate ladder, many by means, but turn out to be exceedingly careful, limited, and honest* ~~Charlie) is a superclerk.~~ He's come up through the whole system. It's a wonderful story, it's a story that has a line in it. But he is very cautious, very careful. Had Jamie [Houghton] stayed with us, Jamie I think was much more capable of a strong gesture if he wanted to. I don't know what he's done elsewhere, but I would presume. But he had to save the family business and he did, a great story, what's happened to Corning. I'd have to see the list of trustees since I started.

Labalme: Well, I don't know if you want to take the time now. We'll take a look later.

Woolf: I have to go in about 10 minutes, but I think we need another session.

Labalme: Good. What we can do is get this typed.

Woolf: Yes, let's get the typescript out.

Labalme: And then you will review that. Before you go, you mentioned the

Rockefeller Board and you mentioned Fermi. Do you want to say something about the connections of these.

Woolf: My connections.

Labalme: Yes.

Woolf: One of the things I felt necessary was to be visible. People didn't know the Institute existed, in one category of possible persons of interest to us. Most who knew of its existence thought it was part of Princeton University. A few knew of its heroic struggles. And most people who could give money had no knowledge of it at all. Zilch. Until you mentioned somehow the atomic bomb or Einstein. So we had to go public in a certain sense at the risk of losing some privacy. And I felt one role for the director was to be the agent of that so that at least it would be a correct story, as much as he could do. Before I came here I was already invited to go on some boards, and I went on Alex Brown which was forming its first mutual fund then in Baltimore just before I came here, and one of the partners asked me if I would serve on the Board of the Alex Brown Cash Research Fund, the first one; there are now about 20 of them. And I saw that as a device for meeting people in the larger, wealthier world, business world, to sell my wares and interest some people in us. And I think from the day I came here, starting with that one first, I must have done this all the time, thousands of times. Occasionally it would lead to invitations to speak to this group.

Labalme: Done what, thousands of times?

Woolf: Propagandize for the Institute. First they say what do you do, what's it about? Oh, interesting. Tell us about it. And gradually I'd send them something. I didn't expect any returns and I didn't get very many, especially in the first few years. I then also began calling on all the foundations, on and off, different times. And it began of course with letters of congratulation to me when I arrived, so I used that as a way of saying, this is now a costly letter, you will have to hear me. So it was equivalent of the rubber chicken circuit. I also felt that I had to talk to any organization of an appropriate academic kind that would ask me to do so, and I gave hundreds of speeches to all kinds of meetings. Occasionally I met with the boards of companies when somebody I knew invited me to come to a luncheon or something and talk about the Institute. I also accepted a number of appointments to various kinds of academic institutions, like Fermilab. I was flattered to be asked to be on the board of Fermilab because I was hardly an active physicist. But eventually I became its chairman. I was excited about the possibility of working with a wonderful group of scientists building a big instrument, working at the cutting edge of modern science. My Hopkins connection kept me going with a number of biomedical institutions, and so I thought I would have to balance some of those, some of the non-profit, some of the corporate things, with the role of expanding the visibility of the

Institute in the larger public. And that was the main motivation. One or two things gave me some extra income, I was happy for that. But I turned down a lot of them and as one was complete, I would go on to another, usually in the various academic associations. That's about the story. Very much like the university presidents and senior officers of some universities. And that as I said had already begun for me when I was Provost at Hopkins. Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Probably it depends on how you treat it. I think mostly for this institution it was very good. First of all, they saw I had 2 hands and 2 eyes and a normal body and could understand their vocabulary. First encounters with all these outside organizations were, "Isn't that a queer place you're at?"

Labalme: Really?

Woolf: "How do you live among all those queers? Well, you seem OK." And they're still true in some ways.

Labalme: Such a vast prejudice.

Woolf: Vast. American anti-intellectuals in high places. Wrapped in humor, in irony, but really there! Even at the foundations, in some sense.

Labalme: That's interesting.

Woolf: Yes. There's a sense, well you don't want to give it to that academic division. They'll write a book about it someday and that's it. You want to give it to this group that is forming a new slum clearance project.

That's fine.

Labalme: It makes it difficult to sell the enterprise.

Woelf: I tried to use the foundation's own successes turned upon themselves. For example Rockefeller, the great glory of the Rockefeller, almost 80 years in existence, is the green revolution.

Labalme: The green revolution?

Woelf: The green revolution that made two blades of grass grow where one grew before. That was 25 years investment of time and money, in understanding the basic science of these useful plants, and now RF [Rockefeller Foundation] is making another investment, going 15 years long already, and it will be another 10, in rice bio-technology. We have just finished mapping the rice genome and creating rice that will grow in drier places. That's food for the world. It's the long term. Not that long is virtue by itself, but the foundations and institutes have to invest in that portion of the enterprise because nobody else is. Government increasingly is less invested in these things, and perhaps rightly so. Some foundations like Ford have become virtually like government agencies. The danger is that as the younger generations take over the management of these institutions, they'll want to get personal records made, they're anxious that in their time this be done, and I love Peter Goldmark for that spirit and his great skill in dealing with the agencies of politics. Mayors' offices and presidents' offices, and at the same time, this is a public comment made to him, "I'm worried about your short

term interest, as exceeding your long term interests." And the new board emerging at Rockefeller is increasingly present-minded. And it's happening in all the foundations as foundations brokerage each other to take on big projects. If you're foundation X and I'm Y, and we're going to do this together, our vision [ambition?] will be shorter than if X or Y did it.

Labalme: Why is that?

Woelf: Because we tend to trim to each other, be more cautious, even though in the public sense, we're each putting in 10 million where we couldn't do it, one of us at 20 million. That's loosely speaking. There are some exceptions but that's what the tendency is as I see it. So the uniqueness of the American foundation which is extraordinary ^{because of} ~~is~~ precisely its freedom to play open games, long term investments, to go for people and the subject rather than for some sort of social project. It isn't a question of one virtue being superior to the other, it's just different.

Labalme: That's right.

Woelf: And this institute is like that in its relationship to other houses of learning, and that uniqueness has to be preserved. That uniqueness is especially housed in the visiting scholars. If our schools shrink, if our range diminishes, then the kind of visitors we bring will also diminish. But since we can't, you say replication leads to the other, so far the membership is much more broadly gauged than the faculty. Numbers

alone will do that: 7/8ths of our population is outside, is annual. 1/8th is domestic staff. We have dealt with in the past changing the numeration, so to speak, having 10-year appointments, 5-year appointments, we have some 5 obviously. We should look into that. On the other hand we shouldn't use it as a gateway to retirement, and I worry about that. Again I'm not charging a particular person, but it's very hard to nourish the creative when you go for the elderly, and I'm one of the elderly, and I know that.

Labalme: Well, why don't we stop here, Harry, and thank you very much.

END OF SECOND INTERVIEW