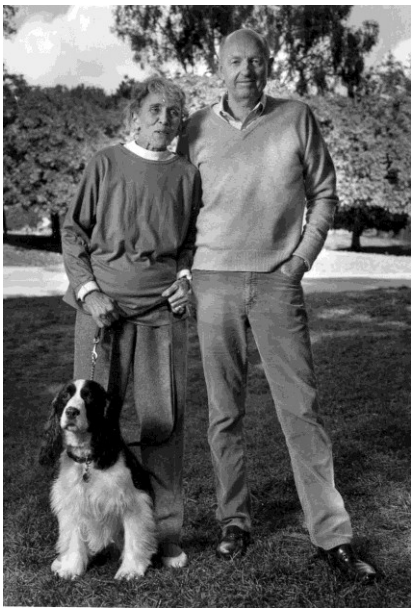
Robert L. & Ruth H. Munroe



- Robert
  - Born in 1932 in Maryland
  - A.B. in Anthropology (1958) University of California – Berkeley, Ph.D. in Social Anthropology (1964) Harvard University
- Ruth
  - Born 8/15/1930 in Youngstown, Ohio; died 8/22/1996 in Pomona, California
  - A.B. in Sociology (1953) Antioch College, Ed.M. in Measurement and Statistics (1959) Harvard University, Ed.D. in Human Development (1964) Harvard University

Major Employment

- Robert
  - Research Professor of Anthropology, Pitzer College: 1964-present
- Ruth
  - Instructor to Professor of Psychology, Pitzer College: 1964-1996

Major Areas of Work

- Psychological anthropology, comparative studies, human development, ecological anthropology, methodology, East Africa, contemporary U.S.

SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Robert L. "Lee" Munroe and Ruth H. Munroe

Interviewed by Margaret Faust and William L. "Don" Faust
February 22, 1995

M. Faust: Interview of Professor Robert L. Munroe, otherwise known as Lee Munroe, who is a Professor of Anthropology at Pitzer College and Ruth H. Munroe, Professor of Psychology at Pitzer College. The date is February 22, 1995, my name is Margaret Faust, and I am a Professor of Psychology Emerita from Scripps College and William L. Faust, otherwise known as Don Faust, will also be interviewing, and he is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology from Pomona College. This is tape number one and we'll start the interview scheduled for SRCD with the general intellectual history. We will begin with describing your family background along with any childhood and adolescent experiences that may be of interest. Include educational, occupational characteristics of your parents. Where you were born, where did you grow up, what was your schooling like, any military experience and early work experience. Which one of you would like to begin? Ruth?

Ruth Munroe: I'll begin with, I was born in Ohio, northeastern Ohio in 1930. I had parents who were what we would now call under-educated. My father never went beyond junior high, possibly even grade school, I'm not sure. My mother finished high school with some great effort. Her own parents were members of a religion that didn't think much of sending girls to school, so even high school was a struggle for her and several of her sisters who finished. In both of their families there were seven or eight siblings and of all of those the only people that were educated beyond high school were two brothers of my mother, who managed to get engineering degrees in some kind of correspondence course. They were actually very successful civil engineers. No one else in the family ever, in either of those families of that generation, ever went to college. My mother was a reader and took us to a library because our town had no library, that was some seven or eight miles away on the bus, in order

to get books to read to us. I think that both my brother and I ended up as readers because of that very early experience. I think my parents expected that we could do anything, my brother and I, and they didn't much make differentiation between us. It wasn't that he was a boy and he would do something, and I wasn't a boy and therefore I wouldn't, they just sort of thought we'd do something. Whatever we wanted to do with our lives. I think that it was probably not anticipated that I would ever actually go to graduate school; at that point I probably didn't even know what graduate school was when I was growing up. But I did fairly well in school and was then able to go to Antioch College. I think it was probably at Antioch that I actually understood what was going on in the intellectual world, because I immediately met people who had grown up in New York, who had grown up in cities where they went to art galleries and I had barely ever been to a major city. I was once in Washington, D.C. as a young child and that was sort of it, besides a little bit in Pittsburgh and Cleveland, which I lived between. There it became obvious that I could do all right in competition with people who had a lot more education. I had a fairly good education at a small high school, I had 40 I think in my graduating class. I think 15 of us started first grade together and finished graduating. So it was a very stable community. The others had trickled in along the way and many of them had been with us for some years.

W. Faust: Did you have any favorite professors at Antioch?

Ruth Munroe: I was not a very serious student at Antioch for the first couple years.

Robert Munroe: I heard about that a lot.

Ruth Munroe: I did what I had to do to stay there, and I loved the conversations, but I didn't really work very hard at classes. Then what would have been my -- Antioch was five years at the time and I think it still is, on my third year I went to New Haven to a nursery school and worked. I loved it, I thought it was wonderful, and I had there the director of the nursery school, probably had a master's degree in child development. She was very encouraging to me and thought I should go into child development.

M. Faust: Who was that?

Ruth Munroe: A woman named Evelyn Eastman. She thought I should go into child development because she thought I was a natural. What I knew was I liked kids. I really enjoyed teaching, I had two-year-olds. I went there on a co-op job from Antioch, but then the head teacher of that group, the two-year-old group, resigned while I was there. So she said, did I want to stay, so I stayed out of school a year. For many years as I taught I would say to students, "Don't stop college for anything except something you want to do more. Don't just quit and just hang out, because you probably aren't going to gain a lot from that." But I gained a great deal that year, I think. A lot of Yale friends and a lot of experience with young children, mostly two-year-olds but some of our kids were of course up to five in general nursery school, and I loved it. I began thinking about general patterns of behavior then. Then when I was going back to Antioch I really wanted to get out with my class, I guess that would have been my fourth, I think I misstated that. I wanted to get out with my class but I didn't have enough credits, although Antioch had a system at the time that if you took exams you could get credits for courses and I'd passed a fair number of those and gotten some credits that way. So Evelyn Eastman suggested I go to one of the land grant colleges for the summer, and Minnesota turned out to have a good summer program. So I went to Minnesota for the summer after my experience in that day care center and took courses out of the child development institute there, the Institute of Child Development, also some in education. I ended up somehow with six courses that summer, I don't know how it worked out with the credits, but there were two summer sessions. Three or four of those were straight graduate courses in child development and I just took that challenge and said, I'm going to beat the curve and did in nearly every course. There were several graduate students who were taking the courses and the first exams, Edward said "Who, who did that 85 or 90 or something" and I said "Oh, it was me." And I just loved it, because it was the first time I'd read research studies. I never knew there was something like this sort of thing. At Antioch we had read general things, I suppose we had

read some research studies but not a lot. I thought it was wonderful, I thought data were wonderful and I still do. I just think nothing delights me more than data, it's just sort of exciting. When the students just go out and do something or when we have data.

M. Faust: Were there occupational experiences besides the one that was coordinated with Antioch College that you had?

Ruth Munroe: I wouldn't think anything that was relevant. I always worked. I was a big library goer when we got a library in our town, then I worked in the library when I was in high school, and I loved that. I loved books almost as much as data. I think we should go to Lee.

Robert Munroe: I grew up in a working class family. My father had a tenth-grade education. This was in Baltimore, Maryland, I was born in 1932. My Mother had a sixth-grade education. I had a difficult adolescence. I think the fact that I played sports all of the time made a great deal of difference in keeping me out of more trouble than I already was in. I had a terrible high school record. What made a difference for me was that after high school and a year and a half of work, I joined the Army. This was the equivalent of Ruth's Antioch experience. This particular company I was in happened to have 50% of the personnel with some college experience and 20% who had college degrees and this was brand new. The level of conversation was something I'd never experienced. So I knew then I was going to go to college. So I began college at the age of 23, but by then I knew what I wanted to do. So I looked in, I guess it was a Lovejoy College guide, for anthropology institutions, schools that offered anthropology as an undergraduate major, and there were only about 18 or so in the country at that time.

M. Faust: How did you know you were interested in anthropology?

Robert Munroe: I happened, while in the Army, to read George Gaylord Simpson's book *The Meaning of Evolution*, and I said, this is for me. I did switch from physical or biological anthropology to cultural but that did it. I learned later, in fact just recently, that Simpson wrote gracefully by hand with hardly even a scratchout, everything he did. There was this magnificently written book that attracted me and I said, this is what I want to do, and to find out that he had done it just casually, almost, that he could write that way, it was a marvelous discovery after all these years. So I owe it to him in a very direct sense. And Berkeley, with hardly any tuition, was a real possibility because it was offering this and I had no money. There was a little bit of GI money coming at that point, $110 a month or so, but I needed a school where there were no tuition charges. So knowing nothing, I only applied to Berkeley, but I had taken some Army tests that I was able forward, and I had this terrible high school record, but they said in the letter of admission that based on those scores we are going to let you in and that was a great break.

M. Faust: Way across the country?

Robert Munroe: So I was in Washington, D.C., in the Army when I applied. So that's how it all worked out. I went to Berkeley and from that point went straight through to Harvard. And I became interested in something called Culture and Personality as an undergraduate, in those days it was called, and David Schneider offered a course in it. That excited me, and a friend said, "You know I'm going to Harvard because that's where all the good culture and personality work is done." So again, knowing nothing still, I only applied to one school and was admitted, fortunately, to Harvard. So there were a lot of good breaks there, in the sense that if I'd been turned down who knows again what I would have turned to.

Ruth Munroe: But you had both a departmental citation and a Woodrow Wilson to take to Harvard.

Robert Munroe: Yes, by the time I was 23 I'd finally gotten semi-organized and I was serious. Unlike many other undergraduates at that point, I was studying.

M. Faust: You knew what you wanted to do.

Robert Munroe: Yes, so the delay didn't hurt. That's one of the excellent things about the American education system. It's so open and you can come in at a later age after having gotten yourself fairly straightened out. But the Army had helped, it was remarkable.

M. Faust: What were those years in the army. I'm trying to think when you were there.

Robert Munroe: 1952, when I was 19, in the Army till 1955. Then I began Berkeley in 1955, '55 to '58. Then Harvard in 1958 to '64.

M. Faust: I think you're submitting a vita aren't you, along with this?

Ruth Munroe: Anyway, we ended up getting to Harvard at the same time. When did you go to Harvard?

Robert Munroe: '58, we began in '58.

Ruth Munroe: And I did too?

Robert Munroe: Yes. Then we met a year and a half later.

Ruth Munroe: I went after being out of school for five years and having had two children. I went back to Harvard because I had some friends who were in, actually, the anthropology program there, who had been at Antioch, and they encouraged me to try to get into Harvard, and I was admitted on the telephone for my master's degree in elementary education. I took that for a semester and then I learned I had to go and teach in the schools for no money and come back and go to school at night. Well, sometime during the first semester I learned this and decided fast to switch my major to measurement and statistics. So the second semester I was there I was in a measurement and statistics program that was actually a one-year master's program. They took me in saying, "Well everybody else has had a semester of this, can you do this?", and I said "Oh, sure!" I don't know where I got that confidence, but I did actually. I was admitted to the master's program a week before I got my masters, where I got the formal letter that I was admitted. So I'm more haphazard. Lee was much more planned. But by then I knew that I wanted more, but I didn't know what. I think both of us were benefited by being at Palfrey House, probably.

Robert Munroe: So we're going to question two?

M. Faust: Well, I was going to ask you had you had a background in psychology or statistics and measurement when you were at Antioch, or was this entirely new?

Ruth Munroe: I think I took one statistics course.

M. Faust: So you knew what it was.

Ruth Munroe: But I took a couple of testing courses. I was in sociology, but I took a fair amount of psychology and all of that stuff that I'd taken at Minnesota, had of course introduced me to a lot of statistics. Although I didn't know how to do it. I knew how to read it by then so that helped me a lot. Then when I had gone back to Antioch I took enough sociology really to graduate with my class and I had some psych and child development. I took a class with Stanley Garn out at Fels Research Institute, which was very important to me, I think. It was very interesting and important.

M. Faust: I would think that would be. So that's one of the people that were important to you.

Ruth Munroe: Then in the interim, between Antioch and Harvard, I was at Penn State where my ex-husband was studying. He had junked his sociology degree from NYU and was getting a degree in computers and engineering at Penn State, and I was just home taking care of kids, actually. Toward the middle of that period I decided I wanted to do something, and I signed on as a research assistant to someone in the department of child development at Penn State, a woman named Winona Morgan, who was the chair. Mostly I answered mail at night when she wasn't there. I would draft letters for her and things like that. It was kind of interesting, I didn't know what I was doing, but I did things for her. Then the summer before I left Pennsylvania, I took some courses from Irene Harms, and she was also very important to me, because I was always assumed to have much more background than I had. So I was always trying to catch up in this position, because I really hadn't had much child development and I had to keep working to read and to learn what I was supposed to know before I went into the course.

M. Faust: You'd had an awful lot of it there at Minnesota.

Ruth Munroe: By the time I got to Harvard I was still catching up, I feel, and especially in that measurement and stat program. But it was my element, I loved it. I just thought it was terrific.

M. Faust: You got your degree in that.

Ruth Munroe: My master's.

M. Faust: Your master's. Then how did you two happen to meet, you were talking about this house?

Ruth Munroe: Oh, Palfrey House.

Robert Munroe: It's well known in the lore of the --

Ruth Munroe: Actually Dick Alpert was there as well, Leonard Lansky for a while.

Robert Munroe: The Whitings, John and Bea Whiting, had a research program and they had an entire three story building, an old building. The top floor was condemned, and it was always going to go down but it's still there. But it housed them until William James Hall was built in 1964 or 5. So that all the years we were there we were in Palfrey House.

Ruth Munroe: It housed them as well as one person from human development. The human development program in education, because that's what I had begun to go into, the human development program in education. The big difference between that Ph.D. program, which I never applied for, was that first they did child, which they were not doing in the Ph.D. program in psych all that much. It was right before Kagan and Lesser and various people were there. Lesser came while we were there, and there was much more developmental psych in psychology, but up till then it was primarily in education. But you could get a Ph.D. by taking a language, and I was just trying to get through, I was not trying to ring bells and I didn't know what I was going to do with this anyway. So I was perfectly happy with a doctorate in human development at the time. I now look back and think I shouldn't have done that, but at the time it was expedient and for me it turned out very well. It turned out I behaved as if I were a psychologist all my life, my career life. But most people out of that program have not been that fortunate, have not been able to do that.

M. Faust: This was an introduction then to cross-cultural study? Is that right?

Ruth Munroe: Well actually I had read Whiting and Child. The summer before I went to Harvard, Irene Harms said to me, this would be an interesting book for you, I think. I don't know why. I read that and when I got to Harvard, the first speaker to our class, just as an introduction to the people who were coming into the school of education it was, was John Whiting. I was so excited that I had just read the book and I thought it was marvelous. I thought this is really interesting and a real breakthrough and all

sorts of things. I had some introduction to the files, the Human Relations Area Files when I was in New Haven, through someone else I knew. So I knew about the files, then when that book came out it was very exciting. Then I met John Whiting, or heard him speak. Then we met at Palfrey House through a friend, and we ended up both working there, more or less.

W. Faust: So you were working on the files at that time?

Robert Munroe: In part.

Ruth Munroe: I wasn't, Lee was.

M. Faust: Was it part of your graduate program to do that or was this a job in addition to your graduate program?

Robert Munroe: No, I knew I wanted to work with Whiting because of things that had happened in the class at Berkeley with David Schneider, who had taught briefly at Harvard. When I talked with Schneider about graduate work he said, "If you sit at John Whiting's lunch table in Palfrey House, you'll hear more ideas tossed around at lunch than you'll hear anywhere else in a month." So I knew that --

M. Faust: And was he right?

Robert Munroe: He was. I've never been very creative, that's where I learned to have ideas, through exposure to people who could toss off ideas. I could watch it being done. I learned that from Ruth and also from all the people at Palfrey House. But I was not a creative person. So I think it can be learned, or at least productive research can be learned, through watching people who already know how to. I thought it was an ideal graduate training. The reason that we could both be there is that Palfrey House was inter-disciplinary. John Whiting was the ultimate inter-disciplinarian.

Ruth Munroe: I would say the other people important to me were Leonard Lansky, who was at Harvard at the time, and Wesley Allinsmith, who was in developmental psych. I think that probably Len Lansky particularly was important in forcing me to take myself seriously, for one thing. I think it was he, probably, who got me on the Harvard Ed Review and various things like that. Then I had several colleagues as students, student colleagues who I think were important. The most notable of those would be probably Freda Rebelsky, with whom I've kept up a relationship over the years. I think she was very important to me in many ways. She's a very positive person, who's very outspoken, very positive, she makes a lot of enemies. She is negative some of the time but never toward her friends.

M. Faust: And you're her friend.

Ruth Munroe: She is totally supportive of her friends and just totally, "Oh, you were great!", you were this, and that was very important to me, I'd say.

M. Faust: And for you, Lee, did you have someone like this?

Ruth Munroe: Oh, well, the Whitings of course were important for both of us. But you had other people that were probably important to you.

Robert Munroe: But I think that the experience for that five-year period or so at Palfrey House was --

M. Faust: You were there five years.

Robert Munroe: And I think Roy D'Andrade, who was a fellow graduate student, spouted ideas constantly; it was intimidating, but I also learned from him something about how that was done.

Ruth Monroe: And Tom Landauer was another one.

Robert Munroe: Tom Landauer was another, he too.

M. Faust: OK, we covered this sufficiently in terms of your interest in child development?

Robert Munroe: I think so.

M. Faust: Would you say, Lee, that you are also a child developmentalist, or do you see yourself less as a, less an interest in child development as far as cultural anthropology? Is there a difference there, I guess I'm asking? Your backgrounds or perspectives.

Robert Munroe: Well, I read as much as I can in child development, but I think there is no doubt that I'm an anthropologist the way I think about things and so forth. There's no question, I think.

W. Faust: You've noted the psychological questions and anthropological questions are different. Can you expand on that?

Robert Munroe: I'm going to talk about that a little later with respect to some of the questions that I still want to answer.

M. Faust: Let's move on to ask what political and social events might have influenced your research or writing or your teaching?

Ruth Munroe: None. I don't know of any.

Robert Munroe: My feeling is that it is only a matter of, with us, trying to answer research questions, and the larger political events can close off an area where you can't visit it any more, that kind of issue. That's really --

Ruth Munroe: You mean a geographical area. Well, it's also true of intellectual areas. For example, we were studying sex differences in our -- sex differences, four-culture research, but there are some things you cannot write.

Robert Munroe: Well, I think that <u>was</u> more true, but that's the point.

Ruth Munroe: It was hard to believe in any hereditary influences for a while because that was shut off, and now that's not shut off, we can believe again. I think those kinds of things were negative or were suppressing influences on what we might have written or done research on. But I don't think we had strong other political or social events influencing what we were thinking about.

M. Faust: Well, I'm very interested to know what were your primary interests in child development at the beginning of your career, and I'm also interested in tracing the development of those ideas throughout your career, if you see a pattern of development in what you've been pursuing. So what were your initial interests in child development?

Ruth Munroe: I have to say I read through these questions, and I thought what would I say. (Do we think this tape recorder is still working?) I think we have had a continuity that is continuous only to us probably, and we will probably talk about that later. My own interest, I look back, and I think my special paper, which was a qualifying paper in graduate school, was on the effect of father absence, and I'm still interested in the effect of father absence, and I don't think we've gotten to the core of it. I think there are many things that dual-parent families give to children that single-parent families have trouble doing, and I think that the presence of a male, particularly in male children's lives, and perhaps in some different ways in female children's lives, is important. But I don't know, I still don't know how, I still don't know exactly in what way. I think males add a note of authority and order to many homes, and I don't know exactly how they do that, because obviously all males are not overly authoritarian,

but I think there is something, maybe even having to work together as parents adds order. I don't know. Maybe you could have unrelated others acting as parents, that would create the same thing if they were two adults who more or less were equally responsible for children. It might be, you would get that same thing, but I think that is an important thing, and I think probably the single kind of ideas that sums up how I feel about sex differences and how I feel about what I think has been the outcome of some studies, some of our own and some of others, I think it's Davis Lynn who said that one of the problem-solving things that males have to figure out, young males, is what it's like to be a male. So they are oriented toward problem-solving, and I think that's kind of an interesting thought that I've always sort of wondered if you could get at in research. I'm going to let Lee talk about strengths and weaknesses of our research and published amounts, especially weaknesses of published manuscripts and various things.

M. Faust: Could we go back to that one about your primary interests in child development. I know you were interested in father absence in the beginning and continued to be interested in that, and I just wondered how you got into that. I mean, why was father absence important for you?

Ruth Munroe: Well, perhaps because I lived with two children without a father for, not actually very long, but long enough to see that I was certainly different. A year and a half or so, that may have influenced it. But I'd say in the larger picture, I'm interested in personality. I'm interested in personality differences of adults as well as children, and how they get that way, and emotional development. Social-emotional personality development I would say that I have been interested in all along. (OK, Lee.)

Robert Munroe: I think that early -- at the beginning -- within culture and personality, which really was completely outside psychology, but this special field in anthropology, was interested in finding, what's the term, "infantile determinism," that factors in infancy determine much in culture. That's later a very psychoanalytic in some ways. The closest thing in psychology would be, and I think, there, there's some connection, the effects of early experience. So that was the link, and that has remained. With respect to our methods, I think a continuity that one can find is a behavioral orientation -- not behaviorism, but behavioral observational interests. That an observational approach is really our preference in some ways. Ruth developed this technique called the Spot Observation, which was a form of time sampling, but it was adapted to field conditions. She really thought of that way back at Palfrey House, where we were doing observational studies in a controlled situation. Then she adapted that in the field when a problem came up in trying to observe kids on a continual basis, or a continuous basis, and running a narrative approach just wasn't working properly, and she developed this "spot" technique, and I get credit in writing for that, but it's all her idea. But I think the observational approach really has been our preference throughout, too. There has been that continuity.

Ruth Munroe: And of course we were at Palfrey House when they were analyzing -- when the Whitings were analyzing observations from the Six Cultures stuff. That was part of the reason I wanted something shorter than a long narrative approach. Because we would read, and these were ten minute observations, or fifteen minute, were they? Oh, five minutes, they always seemed much longer.

M. Faust: They started with narrative observations and you wanted to make it something that was more quantifiable in the field, from the field.

Ruth Munroe: Well, I thought it was going to simplify analysis; it turned out it didn't. But nonetheless it certainly simplified observing, and it certainly brought reliability, whereas with narrative it's very different; you don't even know where to start with reliability when you have narrative observations. They are a lot richer, and Bea Whiting still thinks of our spot observations as kind of a background and not real, I think. But I think we got a great deal from the use of this kind of observation. They're described in an infant paper we published in --

Robert Munroe: In 1971, that was the first description of the technique in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. With respect to shifts in our work, I began with the comparative -- that's an

anthropological comparison rather than comparative in the psychological cross-species idea -- but it was Human Relations Area Files comparisons. I think the primary shift has been that when the Whitings began in East Africa with their large-scale project, the idea of field stations -- that were eventually, if they had worked out, they would have had such field stations all over the world. We learned then to do comparative research (which is now called primary comparative research), which is to do the field research rather than to do it out of the archives (out of the Human Relations Area Files). So that's been the primary shift, towards field emphasis rather than doing it out of the library.

W. Faust: That's required you to do a lot of -- hasn't it, I was going to ask you that kind of question. Look for the things you want to look for and focus in on them.

Robert Munroe: That's right. In fact that demonstrates the weakness of that, in a way, because if the Whitings' field station concept, if you've got 30 units around the world, and if you've got 15 sites within each of them, which is what he wanted, I think -- 450 different locales -- if you come up with a particular problem and it's not one of those (and it can easily be), you find something where there's an extreme kind of treatment in some way and it's not one of those 450, then you've got to go somewhere else. There were a lot of reasons, and we may talk about that a little later on in institutional contributions, but in any case, they gave us the idea, and we did follow that up later with our own research, using that overall methodology. So that's been the primary shift.

M. Faust: We could move then on to the strengths or weaknesses if there are any in your research and -- contributions.

Robert Munroe: I see our strength as being a data-oriented approach.

Ruth Munroe: Naturalistic data. I think that's the important thing, in terms of people who are child developmentalists, I think the naturalistic would be -- a lot of developmentalists obviously are data-oriented. I think that we are very impressed with what goes on in the child's natural setting, and have been all along, and it's very difficult to record what's going on. I developed a little maxim for that, which is, Don't try to record everything at once. Anything important will happen again. So that if you want to look at aggression, go in and look at aggression, or look at the things surrounding aggression, look at the "who's there" maybe, the things you think influence aggression, and the kind of aggression, and get that down. But don't try to look at the same time at social interaction in general, or friendly overtures, or at anything else, just look at aggression while you are there. It splits things up in a way, it allows you not to fully appreciate everything, but if you try to fully appreciate everything you either get zip on the reliability, or you are selective and you don't even know what you're selecting. So I think that's probably the most important thing for observers in natural settings that we have -- it isn't going to be a single event if it's probable. I mean, of course, there are going to be single events that are important to kids, but the chances of your being there when it happens for any one kid are very low.

W. Faust: That's right, you have to focus on some --

M. Faust: It's what's happening all the time that you want.

W. Faust: And you're distinguishing from taking something from the laboratory or manipulating variables, in the field, here you're watching them in their real family settings, where they would be even if you weren't there.

Ruth Munroe: Right, and you hope they are behaving as if you are not there, and you do everything you can to minimize your presence, and of course in many of these cultures we have not done the observations ourselves. We train observers to observe because our own presence would be too upsetting, which is why I developed the spot observation to start with. The spot sbservations are done from a distance: what do you see -- your first photo-snap of that setting -- if your infant's there, and you were looking at infants this time, what's going on around them, and that's what you record on the

sheet of paper. You then walk in and find out what's going on, but you try to be out of it and get everything, really, before you're inside. That's probably our strength.

Robert Munroe: I think the major thing is that we've had little guidance in the way of a paradigm, a single guiding framework. We're hypothesis testers, but we don't have a guiding theory.

W. Faust: What -- help you through this time because the older theories -- behaviorism is a replacement theory that's had its bad days and you can flow right through that.

M. Faust: I see some similarity between the constructs, or concepts, that you are interested in -- the ones that the Whitings used for writing a child book and the way you -- behavior comes close to that in terms of a motor -- affiliation and so on. I wondered if there were any changes that you've seen in your theoretical framework, and I see two different kinds of theories I think. Maybe Lee as the anthropological theorist I read a lot of abstract and theory and some of those talks or papers and then I'd see other child development kind of theories about how children change. So there may be two different kinds of theories.

Ruth Munroe: Which may be why we don't actually operate very well theoretically, and haven't really -- I would say we have very strong things that we operate in the same way. Very strong sort of bents, if you will, or biases, and things we just stay away from. I think that probably what we have been most interested together in are, in fact, "Whiting questions." Whether we approach them the same way is another issue. But I think we have stayed interested in the kinds of things -- when I say "Whiting questions," I say personality -- which of course a lot of people are interested in, but I think we are, certainly, "of" the Whitings and are very grateful to them, because I think they've been important to us because we have continued to work with them. We are probably being interviewed because Bea Whiting said to "Don't forget the Munroes."

M. Faust: Well, also they identified some very important childhood experiences that were likely contenders to influence development, I think. So a lot of your work you've continued on with because they've turned out to indeed be important. The impact of your work has been much greater than either of you will admit, and in its current status, I think, it's terribly reliable. OK, the question of the impact of your work and assessing its current status -- all I would suggest is that both are much greater than either of you two Munroes would be willing to accept. That the current status is very high or that the impact has been great.

Ruth Munroe: I think probably the thing that has drawn attention to us in child development most is the small book we published called *Cross Cultural Human Development*, originally published in --

Robert Munroe: 1975.

M. Faust: '75 and then '94.

Ruth Munroe: And it has been re-issued by Waveland Press in 1994, with a new foreword. I think that I have met many people in, I would say my primary home (known in terms of associations) is the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology. Within that, I have met many people, many from different countries who have known of this and used it. So it had an impact cross-nationally that we didn't really expect. It's not that it sold millions of copies, it's that certain selected people teaching developmental courses in out-of-the-way places came upon it and used it. It's been very interesting to see that we have been associated with the developmental camp in cross-cultural psychology, I think largely because of that book.

M. Faust: Because of the stage progression. Has it been translated into other languages besides English?

Ruth Munroe: No.

M. Faust: No. So these are English speakers.

Ruth Munroe: Yes. These are people teaching in English-speaking universities, most of them. People in India and some of the African countries, and in places like that. Of course, in anthropology we are seen in a whole different light. This book has been published largely because of anthropology. Lee could talk about that.

M. Faust: I would be interested, too, to hear about the republishing of it, and especially how you could condense into some 15 pages or so of the introduction what new and important things that pertain to cross-cultural human development that are different, that have changed in the last 19 years since the first edition of the book.

Robert Munroe: Well, I have a different concern, and that is fossilization. I've watched it happen to older thinkers, and I've always said I'm going to read like crazy and try to think in newer terms that come; otherwise, I won't be able to participate, probably.

M. Faust: Lee is going to say a little bit more about fossilization and the way in which he didn't want to become that fossilized.

Robert Munroe: That concern extends not only to ideas but also to our data. We have, literally, well over half a ton of data. We have students involved that are graduates, analyzing it with us, and it's getting older and older, and I am concerned that it's going to be cast in the wrong terms, that editors will say that the findings are interesting but it's 25 years old and so forth. That's a major concern, and I think one of the things we've got to do along with that, turning out the old material, is to start new projects.

Ruth Munroe: A lot of our data that Lee's talked about are things like folktales that students have written, and dreams, and things which I don't think are quite as subject to dating as some of the other things.

M. Faust: Well, do the area files have built in self-correction as time changes?

Robert Munroe: No.

Ruth Munroe: Well, they publish new works on some of the cultures but it's not necessarily systematic, and sometimes you use writings that were not in the files.

M. Faust: I wondered if it was an inherent difficulty as you always have in longitudinal studies where the data that you have in infancy where technologies that were available at that time, but don't include new kinds of things and so you always relate it back to that. Or whether there is a self-correction in it.

Ruth Munroe: We don't use the Human Relations Area Files that much, for certain kinds of things we do. Our data is stuff we have collected in the field.

M. Faust: Is it going to go into a file for access by other people, or is this something you want to use?

Robert Munroe: We don't know, but the Human Relations Area Files, I think, would like to keep current, it's just that it would be an immense expenditure and the funds aren't available for that kind of thing anymore.

Ruth Munroe: Speaking of those files, one of the things we have participated in is Allen Johnson, an anthropologist at UCLA, has organized a time-allocation study, and we have contributed a volume for

each of the four cultures where we worked around 1980. The fourth one is not out but it's finished. In that set of publications we all got together and agreed on the kinds of questions we wanted for background. They are very much like the file questions, actually. So we all contributed background material that was similar for our societies. Then our actual observations are also --

M. Faust: Your methodologies are similar, the way that you get the data. More or less.

Ruth Munroe: Similar enough that one can do this. They aren't exactly the same.

M. Faust: It's a very powerful technique, I think. One of the strengths that should have been mentioned up here in your work, I think, is collaborating in that time-allocation study, which will comprise how many cultures?

Robert Munroe: He has about 15 now. He hopes to expand it to about 60, because he's in contact with a lot of people who have data that, with enough manipulation and modification, would fit the format that he has.

M. Faust: That's got to be an interesting story right there, to hear about the problems and difficulties of doing that.

Ruth Munroe: We actually haven't had much of that difficulty or problem. That's been primarily Allen's baby. Once we all got together, those of us who had data like that, he has taken it from there and formulated a code and various things that is different from the codes we have used. Although fortunately our data were able to be coded quite easily.

M. Faust: I expect that they got some of their ideas from your work in the first place.

Ruth Munroe: Perhaps.

M. Faust: Well, you've mentioned some of your published works that represent your thinking about child development and your cross-cultural human development. What are some of the published or unpublished things that in addition might represent your thinking about child development? Which ones seem most significant to you -- and you don't have to answer the "wrong-headed" one.

Robert Munroe: I actually think about it in terms of questions that we want to answer more than publications. There are three that I still am fascinated with. I think they are only peripherally related to child development -- that's the difficulty -- what I see as related. One is what Ruth already talked about quite a bit, and that's the question of father absence and its effects. We still would like to pursue that. A second is the question of the couvade and male pregnancy symptoms, which occur widely and apparently in all cultures (all that we've looked at) and try to get at the meaning of that. We have found it to be related to various psychological phenomena, but I would like to really intensively study it, say in the United States, and go back through the items on the original thesis. To go back and to see what was working and what wasn't, and try to pursue it better, so I'd like to go back to that again.

Ruth Munroe: But I'm not very impressed with that anymore.

M. Faust: But sex roles, a different situation you are?

Ruth Munroe: Sex roles I am interested in.

Robert Munroe: And then finally for me, and I'm not sure Ruth has much interest in this question at all, and that's the relationship between social-level phenomena -- institutions -- and psychological variables.

Ruth Munroe: Oh I am interested in that.

Robert Munroe: And that's something with Don Faust that we did, the small-group study. I've tried to think of ways to get at this question, both the couvade and our infancy study (which started out originally where Ruth invented the spot observation technique) were getting at issues like this. Essentially the infancy study had to do with the Freudian idea about the nature of the gods after indulgent treatment of infants. In pursuing these kids, and we've now had two follow-ups on them (once when they were five, and once they were twelve) originally looking at them when they were a year old, we've found continuity in affective development, and also apparently effects of the early experience, early treatment by mothers. The first time we had cognitive effects, and then they washed out by age of twelve. But these are completely different questions from what we started with -- an interest in institutional-level phenomena and social phenomena. In the same sense of McClellan trying to take Weber's idea of putting together two grand social movements and saying there is a social-psychological mediating effect. That's been the kind of question I've wanted to get at, and I still would like to pursue it, and people like Joe Aronoff with small-group work are asking this kind of question. There are bits and pieces of it, and what it is really, is a great question and I remain interested in it and would like to go back to thinking about ways to pursue it. But that's one that probably would be defeated in any sense of getting any kind of closure, but one can get some kind of progress. That I still want to pursue. So those three questions.

Ruth Munroe: And we had published on each of those just little bits of things, so that I'd say that we have certainly been guided by those questions. We have some others but we haven't done anything that we can say wrapped it up, or wrapped up our interest, or even sort of felt we had some closure on something. I think that we have had little contributions. I have to say that, and Lee likes larger issues more than I do, I like to say that every little study chips away at the variance. Who knows how many little studies you need before maybe you can put together a larger variable. But I see that human behavior is so complex that I don't think we are going to look with one approach and say AHA! now we know the answer as to why a kid does this or that socially. I think instead we are going to have a lot of little studies that combine things. I'm glad to see that we are moving towards the inclusion of cognitive but not the inclusion of cognitive with respect to the exclusion of everything else. The balance to me is very important. I'm sure that how a child cognizes social interaction is very important, and I'm also sure that some of it is so ingrown, inbred perhaps genetically, or perhaps in the first year or two, that it never gets cognized. That whether a child goes up to a stranger and smiles or goes up to a stranger and does something else is partially subject to his or her cognitive control. But a lot of it is the child and whatever that is in there, and it's not cognized, and I don't think it can be. I feel the same way about emotion. I feel the studies that are trying to get a relationship between cognition and emotion -- I reviewed a paper a few years ago and all I could think the whole time I was reviewing it was, of course emotion is cognized or is a cognitive thing, once you ask a question about emotion. If you are going to get your results by asking people how they would feel under that circumstance, you certainly are going to get a cognitive answer to anything emotional. But if you watched people, I don't think you would. I think part of those things are all coming together, and I think that's the strength of the field of child development more than any other field, than perhaps the kind of cross-field that we're in, which even goes further in allowing us to look at things. Is it everything? There are no simple answers, and we're going to chip away at the variance, and I'm perfectly happy having chipped away at something. I hope we will chip away at a little more. But I don't think we have some strong favorite publication or some strong -- let's take that back -- although Lee did publish a Freudian study that I wouldn't, although it went by my data as well, I wouldn't put my name on it. He got to writing it in such a Freudian fashion that I decided, I couldn't stop him, I really couldn't stop him. He was determined to get this out, in a very Freudian way, I just couldn't collaborate on that one. I let him have my data.

Robert Munroe: Somebody finally cited it and I waved the citation at her. But I would say that these questions that Ruth was talking about are within developmental psychology. What I was talking about are things that I can see related to questions of development and early experience, but only from this

anthropological view that I have. So I think she is much more clearly a developmental researcher. My questions typically will relate back to an anthropological issue, I can't help myself.

Ruth Munroe: Well, I think that we both do that, though. I mean, I would say, anyway.

W. Faust: Well it seems like there are bigger questions that demand some kind of theoretical breakthrough to really move ahead or some kind of methodological new way of measuring or something like this unless you take a step -- or you do study after study after study, then you've got the methods. You've got it, you can make this other big phrase that you're talking about, you've got to change something, or something new has to happen in the society.

Ruth Munroe: Well, I think measuring culture is the big issue. I would say that you are right except that what we have done so far is assume culture. That is, we haven't tried to measure culture, and I think that's what people have to do now. I think culture is separable. I think there are cultural elements that are separable, and how much I subscribe or not subscribe to X in my culture probably influences how I develop within that culture. Well, we better go on.

M. Faust: Go on to number five, about the funding of your research over the years.

Robert Munroe: I just think we've been very fortunate. The Whitings were able to get us to the field, all the way through. All but the last of the times we went, it had something to do with their support. At that point in the late '70s when we did our last fieldwork in the four cultures, that was NSF-supported.

Ruth Munroe: Through the anthropology program.

Robert Munroe: Through anthropology. But we've been very fortunate.

Ruth Munroe: And the analysis was supported through a funding, a second three-year funding analysis.

M. Faust: But you have to write up the prospectus, don't you? You have to write up what you're going to do and probably do to get this kind of thing?

Ruth Munroe: For NSF, oh yes.

M. Faust: So it isn't just given to you, because you do good research.

Ruth Munroe: No, although our participation in the other field projects, we went to British Honduras and Lee was there and Lee's NIMH grant that came through John Whiting. We went to Africa the first time, and also the second time, through a grant that John and a number of other people including -- I guess we had a little input from -- grant application we did through Carnegie Corporation. That was funded for some years, they've funded a developmental unit in Nairobi, and that's how we got in. So that was really because of the Whitings and because of our -- and their faith in us. When we had our own funding, then I would say one other thing, Pitzer College has been extremely generous with respect to funding. Most people wouldn't probably say that, but we've been sent to meetings, we have been funded from small research grants, and in many cases that was all we could have used because we didn't take sabbaticals, we took leaves to go and do work. Then on our sabbaticals we would analyze and write. But Pitzer has been very generous with professional leaves and paid leaves, because we were paid through leaves. They could have said, “We want continuity,” as many small colleges do. They could have not loved us because we kept running off, and they have given us money for some analysis and in so far as possible, they have given us support with respect to people who know the computer systems. So I think that for an undergraduate institution we have had very, very good support.

M. Faust: How about student support, research assistant support, do they help you with that, too?

Ruth Munroe: Oh yes, we could always get work-study students. Then we could hire other students on funds that we got through the Research and Development Committee, and then through the graduate school as well, through the graduate school we have had graduate students work on our studies on various aspects.

Robert Munroe: I was calculating last year: after thirty years at Pitzer -- that's a total of 60 semesters -- 15 of them have been free to work on something, eight sabbatical, and seven were leaves of some sort. That's a full quarter of the time that has been free; otherwise, with the teaching load, there would have been almost nothing else. So we're very grateful to Pitzer.

M. Faust: Institutional contributions is next. Have you worked other places than Pitzer, talk about those dates and capacities and institutions where you've worked.

Ruth Munroe: Actually we came directly to Pitzer, which was non-existent, as you know, when we came.

M. Faust: What was the date when you came?

Robert Munroe: 1964.

Ruth Munroe: August of 1964. We have stayed at Pitzer the whole time with only these trips out as we just mentioned. We did teach at Makerere in Uganda for part of one of the Carnegie supports. It was before we were actually sure on that project whether we were going to try to affiliate with Makerere in Uganda which was actually a superior affiliation, but the political situation was slightly different. And also Makerere wanted more control over the Carnegie money and University of Nairobi didn't much care about control but they had very little social science and Makerere is an old institution that has a large tradition of African research, certainly an anthropological association. So at the time we weren't sure what we were going to do, so we went and taught at Makerere for awhile. Not for long, maybe for a month, or six weeks?

Robert Munroe: It was a six week course.

Ruth Munroe: Then we went back for exams, I think. Other than that we haven't had any other affiliations. We've been right here. Oh, you wanted to talk about CDRU, Lee?

Robert Munroe: I think that would be the second question.

M. Faust: That's the second question, do you want to talk about the role of research science that you've been connected with and you certainly have been?

Robert Munroe: I think that the Whitings' child development research unit in East Africa with which we were affiliated from the very beginning, and then re-visited four years later when it was first kind of small and then really kind of at its height. Then in 1978 again, so it was 1966, 1970, and 1978, at which time on the last visit it was pretty much defunct. It was still there formally but it was very weak. It acted as an umbrella for our research, gave us clearance. So all the kinds of things that can take up months of your time, and many anthropologists would spend even a year for clearance, that was all avoided for us because of that.

M. Faust: Why was it defunct? From lack of funding?

Robert Munroe: My own feeling is that the concept, as grand as it was, in practical terms couldn't work. The ideal was to keep current ecological data on every community, of which there were perhaps

15 in East Africa. We watched someone send to us, while we were here at Pitzer, an update on changes in the community.

Ruth Munroe: On the community in which we had worked.

Robert Munroe: Where the deaths and particularly the births were occurring at such a rate that the record-keeping was immense. I think it just was overwhelming. I think it had to fall of its own weight. It's a grand concept.

Ruth Munroe: And despite the villages with very high stability, there would be people on that list that we never heard of. That somehow or other we'd missed on our census, they had been wed and they came and built a house on a little corner of land. So it was almost impossible to look at our data and probably 80% of what they did was an update and we could understand it. Another 20% though, I mean there were people whose names were different. That they suddenly told them that they were somebody else, and in fact when we went back the second time we moved into the same house we had lived in, and the very first night we were staying in that house there was a funeral. Funerals are very loud, public wailing and things. So we had these people right down the road from us, and we asked someone who had died and they told us a name, and we'd never heard of anyone with that name. It turned out it was somebody who had given us a totally different name. We had no such census record, you know, a totally different name. It wasn't until the next day, then we saw that it was the husband of so and so that had died, and he was someone we knew. Then we said, well we knew him by that, and they said oh yeah, I think he used that name. It was sort of vague.

Robert Munroe: All of this was simple background data and not child development data. Yet it was critical, but there was no way to keep it up without an immense investment. I think people were run ragged for a few years trying to keep it up and saw that it couldn't be done, but it was very important for us as institutional support for the first two and even the third year in getting formal clearance.

Ruth Munroe: I think that's the only well known -- indeed it is not very <u>well</u> known -- research site that we had much to --

M. Faust: It sounded like this Palfrey House was a similar sort of --

Ruth Munroe: Of course, many people passed through there where we were trained and that certainly was part of our graduate training. But once you left that graduate training you weren't really officially a part of --

M. Faust: But you were invited back I'm sure?

Ruth Munroe: Although interestingly I'd say there are second – well, your student Barbara Rogoff is a relative of ours in that she went and worked with the Whitings. We now know her, whereas we didn't know her when she was here. We met her through her Whiting connection and we will meet people who are like second and third generation Whiting students. So they feel like family to us.

M. Faust: Absolutely. I feel the same kind of thing, sort of like you're the grandmother of these people who studied with someone that studied with you. I noticed you cite Barbara Rogoff when you mentioned your spot observation methods, you cite yourself and then Barbara Rogoff.

Ruth Munroe: Because she wrote a little paper on them. I would like to go back to our contribution and just say --

M. Faust: I would like to ask you about that handbook.

Ruth Munroe: We have a handbook in cross-cultural human development published in 1981, in which we have people whose importance in child development is not great -- except perhaps for Charlie

Super and Jerry Kagan is in there -- in which we tried to get the cross-cultural meaning of human development and some of it is very good, I think some of the chapters were, actually.

M. Faust: Is that one that Edgerton contributed to?

Robert Munroe: He was not in there.

M. Faust: That was another, the methodology book I guess. OK. How did you ever get this whole thing together? It seems like a tremendous task.

Ruth Munroe: It was, we knew we would never edit anything again, and then we did, I think. We edited a journal issue for John, after that? No, before that.

M. Faust: Oh Douglas Price --

Ruth Munroe: So there are some straight developmentalists and there are some cross-culturalists and there are some who merge those. In any case we should have mentioned that book as among I guess our contributions.

M. Faust: Tom Weisner. OK.

Ruth Munroe: Now see Tom Weisner is another Whiting student. We didn't know him at Harvard but now we know him.

M. Faust: Now you know him, and I guess Lee goes and -- don't you go to UCLA and participate in some of those things? Didn't you participate in a handbook more recently, this one on methodology?

Ruth Munroe: Oh yes. We have written chapters but this one we edited. We haven't edited another one.

M. Faust: Yes. OK. Well let's move on to the teaching, as a teacher of child development research and trainer of research workers. What courses have you taught and we want to know if you see any tension at all between teaching and research. It doesn't sound like it from what you've said so far.

Ruth Munroe: I think teaching kept me up with the fields that I would have lost. Not in child development but in anything else in psychology. But teaching intro psych certainly keeps you abreast of what's going on in the field, I think. I largely have taught child development and introductory psych and then we taught a course together for many years, Socialization and Personality in Cross-Cultural Perspective, which we really enjoyed a lot. I think the students took it as much more possible tension between us then they did for the subject matter. Nonetheless we had some good students.

M. Faust: It was well enrolled too.

Ruth Munroe: Yes, we were usually very well enrolled.

M. Faust: You don't teach that anymore? You don't teach that course anymore.

Ruth Munroe: Oh, I'm not teaching.

M. Faust: You're not teaching at all? So you don't do co-teaching anymore. But you did quite a bit of that, didn't you?

Ruth Munroe: No. That course.

Robert Munroe: But that was almost every year.

Ruth Munroe: And we like that course a lot. I liked it because Lee did a lot of the work. He liked it because he's more uncomfortable than I am in front of a class so it was fun. But we taught only undergraduates. I think that of the students we've had that have gone on to graduate school, we have not really produced one (with the possible exception of Valerie) who has done our kind of work. We thought Jan Hitchcock would, she went to Harvard.

Robert Munroe: We've had some who have been interested in what we do but even when they've stayed in child development they've gone to other things.

Ruth Munroe: Ann Snipper might have stayed in and didn't. Anyway we haven't had a lot of students who have worked with us directly who have gone to good institutions where they might have done cross-cultural. I think I'm limiting to that. One student I can say is an exception to that is a student who is now just about finished at the University of Georgia and who was very influenced by us and has been working on cross-cultural Big 5 in children and personality in children. She consciously said to herself, who do I want to be like? Whose life to I want to lead, and said Ruth Munroe's, and said I've got to do something that will allow me to go and lead that kind of life. She is indeed already participating in conferences with her Dutch colleagues and they have just gotten a big grant on which I am a consultant. So I think that's probably, if she stays in it, probably about the only student that really is going to go along and do exactly the same or much of the same thing.

W. Faust: But you don't demand really conformity, in thinking or clones.

Ruth Munroe: Certainly not.

W. Faust: So you didn't expect them to become -- expected them to walk on their own and do their kinds of things.

Robert Munroe: Much of that was derived from the Whitings too, very permissive as teachers.

W. Faust: Let them think their own thoughts.

Ruth Munroe: Well it's hard to clone when you have undergraduates. I'm not sure if we had graduate students that we wouldn't have leaned toward that. I think we might have whipped them a little to get out there and do some of the things we wanted them to do. I feel I would have. I think you are very permissive. I mean Barbara Rogoff, for example, just gives every credit for what she is to what she learned from you, Don.

W. Faust: She had published before I ever touched her.

M. Faust: There was quite a few of your -- that credit you with that just not --

Ruth Munroe: Well I'm sure that you also have students.

M. Faust: I have students but he has a lot more, he has a whole glug of them from the '60s. SRCD --

W. Faust: We have a reunion every other year, whenever it meets.

M. Faust: And a bunch of them get together and it is fun to see them. But most of them aren't doing what you did, they'd be scared to death. They're doing all kinds of interesting things, we learn a lot from keeping up with them. Well Lee I don't know whether you want to say anything

about the tension, if any, you see between your teaching and research or whether you see them as complementary or what or -- related to child development.

Robert Munroe: I think that Ruth stated it, that I've always been uncomfortable in front of the class, and the wonderful thing that's happened now is that in Pitzer's building, one of the two new buildings, there is a research lab that I'm able to use. It's essentially for me. Even next year after which time I'm no longer teaching full time, I'm going to be teaching in there what is called a research-apprenticeship class. This is an attempt to replicate the experience with the Whitings. It took me thirty years to evolve it and finally get to it.

Ruth Munroe: Interestingly I wrote it up for psychology and wanted psychology to rotate the person who did it every year so it wouldn't fall only to one person. My psychology group was so, I think afraid, that somebody would get it more than one year or something, that they didn't want to pass it. So actually we used the write-up for Lee to apply for it, as the basis for what he then wrote asking for it. Just as a coincidence, Pitzer was building new buildings and they said what do you want and Lee said, Oh I want a lab. So it's really the cultural or social anthropology lab.

Robert Munroe: Yes the cultural anthropology research lab, but I'm the only one at this point using it. But we're moving our data into it, all the data that's hidden away in closets and things is going in there.

Ruth Munroe: And when the other anthropologists try to take it over we're going to have a rule. Lee keeps saying we have to be gracious.

Robert Munroe: They're protecting it for us from the institutional, from other imperialistic designs.

Ruth Munroe: It has a round table as Palfrey House had. You can't cook pork chops in there as you could in the Palfrey House kitchen. We used to cook lunch everyday at Palfrey House on a little two-electric-burner thing. I'm sure it was against all regulations, they wouldn't let us do that here.

Robert Munroe: But for three years prior to this I've been offering a research apprenticeship each semester but we've all been crowded into my tiny office, and now we have space. It's the way I've always thought teaching ought to be, and it looks as if it's panning out and I look forward to doing that into the far future.

M. Faust: Describe your experiences in so-called applied child development research or in applied --

Ruth Munroe: We have nothing to say about that.

M. Faust: What about putting theory into practice?

Ruth Munroe: I don't think we've ever put anything into practice, except talking to some of the ministers, like the minister of education in Kenya, and would say judging from what we've seen maybe this or that would be useful. But that's about as far -- and I'm sure it never went anywhere, but that's about as far as it's ever been.

Robert Munroe: By the way, that does remind me that one of the reasons the Whitings' project had some difficulties was that the Africans first of all had no psychology in their higher learning institutions, and second they couldn't really see much of the relevance of child development research to their pressing social problems. So that they at a certain point were not so interested in supporting.

Ruth Munroe: Although they were interested because a student who worked with the Whitings went back to Harvard every year. So there was a lot of -- and some of those students are back in Africa working at fairly important positions. None of them exactly in child development but one of them is a

fairly influential person in curriculum development in a special place where they do that in an institute. Our experience with SRCD is also very limited. We have gone to one SRCD meeting.

M. Faust: I met you there.

Ruth Munroe: I would say that the, and that was in Denver in 1975 at the invitation of who, Pat Draper? Did she organize that? I think Pat Draper organized the symposium. We have really not participated, I have not participated in any organization until my kids were out of the house and pretty grown up and I didn't have other responsibilities. So I didn't regularly go to any meetings. I've never been to APA, I'm just not a joiner I guess.

M. Faust: But you're a member of SRCD.

Ruth Munroe: I've been a member since '64. I would say it's been extremely influential in terms of what they published, in both the journal and the newsletter and the monographs. I think that they have influenced us incredibly and given us of course a view of what's going on. I think particularly SRCD should be lauded for the fact that, depending on the editor of course, they have been more or less encouraging of things that were not quite so tight methodologically and quite so over-analyzed like the sort of things that have been in some of the journals.

M. Faust: Also it's specifically inter-disciplinary, which many of the journals are not.

Ruth Munroe: And I think that's been important. Now when Sandra Scarr was editor of *Developmental*, she also was very inter-disciplinary because she's very interested in cross-cultural things. Because she was around Harvard when we were there and she had some exposure, she never really worked in it, but then she did go to Bermuda and do that study. So I think that was at least partially due to what had happened at Harvard with the Whitings. So I think that we can say that we are indebted to SRCD for their encouragement, their unwitting encouragement. Their publications are very important and of course we have had a lot of contact with a lot of people who have been active with SRCD. Our only active association, as I mentioned before, International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology has been important for me. I was Secretary-General in that association for six years just recently. That has been an affiliation which has led to contacts around the world, if you wanted to go almost anywhere now we could certainly find people that would help us work there. Lee's primary affiliations have been with the Society for Cross-Cultural Research (which is a small society) and with AAA, the American Anthropological Association. And specifically since it started, with the Society for Psychological Anthropology, and he'll take over I think next year. That's a fairly important position which he won in a hot contest, I think.

M. Faust: Did you give your presidential address already or is that coming?

Ruth Munroe: No, he <u>was</u> SCCR president -- that's the presidential address (I'm definitely not a part of that group).

M. Faust: So your experience, you don't need to describe your adverse exposure to the convention in Denver, just mention it in passing.

Ruth Munroe: It was very exciting. I thought it was really, and I think if I were a conference goer, and I often thought after that, I should really go to the SRCD conferences.

M. Faust: Well, it's small enough, or it used to be small enough, that you really -- and now there's so many things happening at once it's very hard to divide one's time.

Robert Munroe: Just one anthropological note. I've felt there is tremendous difference in the seriousness of tone at the SRCD meeting.

M. Faust: In what way? More serious?

Robert Munroe: These were professionals really focusing on topics that just had a completely different flavor to it than anthropology meetings. Anthropologists are a bunch of cowboys, and although they're quiet enough during a presentation there's just a different kind of tone to it. So it was a new cultural experience. Then I never went back.

Ruth Munroe: But we should have.

W. Faust: Well that was SRCD's loss.

Ruth Munroe: I think we would have profited greatly from them. I think that part of the reason we didn't was simply, if you're going to work on research and you're going to write and you're going to teach at a small undergraduate place you've got to keep your nose to the grindstone. You have to resist a lot of things that you could do and I think that was probably one of the things we resisted, was being very active, and our work probably suffered.

W. Faust: Well SRCD has struggled to try to include everybody as you know -- psychologists and it was very hard tracking those and I'm sorry we didn't get you in and keep you in.

Ruth Munroe: I know Tom Weisner has been very active and Bea in her later years has become involved with that association. She actually is so deaf now that it's very difficult for her to go to meetings, because her hearing aid picks up odd tones.

M. Faust: Well do you care to comment on the history of the field during the years you have participated in it? Or major continuities or discontinuities you see among the field?

Ruth Munroe: This is the one thing we discussed.

M. Faust: History of the field?

Ruth Munroe: What's happened since we've gotten into it or as we were getting into it, was certainly the cognitive revolution. That was happening at Harvard just as we were there. The Kessen-Kuhlman Piagetian (SRCD) monograph had just come out (1962) and it was there, but it wasn't dominating, which of course later it was. We discussed these and Lee took notes which I now cannot read. I cannot read his shorthand. I'd say the second thing is that about the time we were in graduate school we developed more but not as a significant portion of child development research, the interaction between the child's responses and what not. That the nature of the child came into the equation more strongly. It was never really very specific when it was first done. It was clearly how the child responds, is going to influence how the mother responds to the child. But where the child got that response pattern was never very specific until recently when we have gotten into temperament. Of course the temperament and the genetic influence on behavior has interested us greatly and I think one of the important papers that Sandra Scarr with McCartney in 1983 and that's in *Child*?

M. Faust: *Child Development*.

Ruth Munroe: In any case I think that paper talking about children finding their temperamental -- their behavioral --

M. Faust: Their contribution to the environment that they're in, that they select.

Ruth Munroe: It was very important, and I'd say it failed to go further to say that the niches are culture. That is a child can find certain niches in certain cultures, but will never find those in other cultures. Of course Sandra couldn't do everything so she --

M. Faust: Although it was an interesting formulation and led to a lot of interesting hypotheses.

Ruth Munroe: And I think the whole temperament research has been very interesting and something which I couldn't say, but believed.

M. Faust: Because you had more than one child.

Ruth Munroe: That's right. I have always believed that temperament is important, that although each child does experience each family differently, it's not that different for sib to sib. I think that probably influenced me, having my own children, but also watching the continuity of their friends as well and watching some of the things that have happened to children I've known. And now looking at some of the literature with the terrible failures to find relationships between anything at all the parent did with something the kid was doing. All those studies for years and years in the '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s really, were looking to see whether you spanked your kid, your kid would spank his friends and a little maybe. You know these were always other things.

M. Faust: We didn't get to hear the end of your comments about the changes in the field.

Ruth Munroe: I was going to say the tremendous influence now and the importance of genetics I think is going to certainly create more complexity, also more variances. I'd say those are the major changes and the fact that now that we are looking not only at cognitive ways but at other ways. I think I didn't say and I want to say one thing about my own beliefs about what's going on with our work and with -- with what's going on in the field with our own work and what we would like to emphasize. I think we didn't do this properly.

M. Faust: All right. Let's do that.

Ruth Munroe: So I will say now just because there doesn't seem to be any place to say it. I think Lee would agree with me that in our work across many cultures (and we write this in our developmental book), that we see infancy as pretty much maturational. That everyone, everywhere ends up walking and talking and if you look at the first year, the first year and a half you're going to see an outcome in terms of general development pretty much the same everywhere in the world, no matter what the circumstances were. The kids, when they got off the -- they walked or crawled. The kids who never crawl in Bali were really -- on the ground in their houses from the Pacific Islands. They end up walking, they end up doing the kind of modified crawl, some of them probably don't, and they just walk. I think those things are so programmed into us that live on. However I think that it is also during that period -- and I think Lee would agree with this -- that culture stamps infants. That there is an individuation process going on and a cultural what?

Robert Munroe: Immersion.

Ruth Munroe: -- would probably be right, that it will never be gone, that it will stay with them forever as he or she grows. I can't be terribly specific about this, but I think it is the way people hold babies, I think it is the way they respond to them. I just saw on the news the other night that if you want to get your baby to sleep, now we know, we look at Holland. Did you see that study?

Robert Munroe: No.

Ruth Munroe: In Holland because they do not stimulate their babies all day, they sleep all night. They get far less stimulation than the American infants, of course Freda Rebelsky found out, found this in Holland 25 years ago when she was there.

M. Faust: Put them upstairs and don't listen for them.

Ruth Munroe: But even today they just don't stimulate as much and this is the answer. You know, maybe, maybe it's the answer but maybe it's something else they do. I don't know, maybe it's genetic. I can't say, but I think that not stimulating them all day, as much all day, isn't the real cause, but it might or might not be. There are a lot of other things that are different throughout Dutch culture. I think as we get more sophisticated about culture we'll measure those things better. But some of the things that happen in early infancy, I think it's very difficult to escape from culture. I think culture, I think genetics sets a certain boundary for every individual -- boundaries that you're not going to sink below or rise above. Whatever it is, vision, muscle strength or something or other. I think you are bound by your genetic background. I think imposed on that is your cultural background, which is going to set other things. That no matter how strong you are if you are a female you're going to use that strength in certain ways and certain muscles are going to be developed and certain others aren't and that's culture. I could give more psychological examples but I want not to use too much time. So I think that culture guides and sets limits just as genetics guides and sets limits, and yet there's a lot of room in that. It's not like this is it and there's no freedom. I think there's a great deal of freedom because those are ranges. I think that in cultures we can't talk about a whole culture that does not stimulate infants, we have to talk about within that culture, the people who do and don't, the people who sleep and don't sleep. There's variabilities within every culture. You can't take a culture and say, they believe in voodoo so the adult personality is like this, because half of those people don't believe in voodoo. Half of those people believe in it so strong you wouldn't believe it, but the other half perhaps don't believe in it at all. So I think you have to look at the variabilities in culture, and psychologists have tended to treat culture as we do SES, not as much anymore as we used to, but they're classificatory variables and it has real problems. Now with the ethnic divisions within the United States also becoming a classificatory variable, where we all know that Black English for example, there is a real variability in how many Blacks speak it, the degree to which their speech has any or no Black English -- a lot or a little. That that may in fact affect what's going on in their house. So you can't say kids who are raised in black families are going on to do this or that because of Black English, or will only be able to construct certain kinds of sentences because of Black English, because they may have been raised in a home that doesn't speak Black English at all. That's very similar to what I'm saying about culture, but for me the important thing, certainly not for the world, but for me, the important thing is that it happens so early and we don't know how it happens. That also fascinates me. I don't know how you impose culture on a kid, but I think it's Margaret Mead who said, how old?

Robert Munroe: Two.

Ruth Munroe: "Beyond two you're never going to get culture out of a kid."

M. Faust: Already instilled.

Ruth Munroe: It's already imprinted with culture.

M. Faust: Sure.

Ruth Munroe: I have to agree with that. I believe, seeing what I have seen, and this is very anecdotal, that that's what is happening. So there's this genetic influence or genetic possibilities, and cultural possibilities, and they interact individually. Of course, laid on that is direct experience in terms of reinforcement and learning, in terms of process that goes on psychologically perhaps, that forms some of our personality characteristics. So there are those three things. I think we have looked at those in different ways, and probably culture is the least looked at, the least understood, because we have, as psychologists, certainly tended to lump and use it as classificatory.

M. Faust: OK. Great.

Robert Munroe: I think what you're trying to get at is both inter-cultural and intra-cultural differences and that makes some sense, but you're trying to look at some of the problems, some of the issues.

M. Faust: So the parents of culture but within each of those you have a lot of variability and you might be able to find some whole difference in the cross-cultures. But within each of those you'll find a lot of --

Ruth Munroe: There are a lot of things that we lump under culture. If it were just one thing, culture, it would be nice, but it isn't. So to study it you really have to break it down the way you have to break down behavior.

M. Faust: Sure.

Ruth Munroe: Well, anthropologists don't necessarily believe that but I do. I believe it can be broken down. I believe the degree to which you believe in sex-role stereotypes that are rampant in your culture, they might predict something about your sex-role behavior. In fact Leo Scararo has an article in a book edited by Kim and John Berry on, what's the name of the book Lee, by Kim and Berry? I don't know, anyway -- no you're not in it so it's not that book. I've forgotten the name of the book, but he studied sex-role stereotypes and the way they influenced people's performance on various cognitive tasks and in fact on the relationship -- that if you believed in very strong feminine-masculine division of characteristics between the sexes, then you also -- for example, if you believed that females were soft and cuddly and not very assertive and all those things, you were also not very good at math and at some of the analytic tasks. Which I found real interesting.

M. Faust: Yes that's very interesting.

Ruth Munroe: And I think that's a very nice demonstration of what we have to do to try to unwind all the --

M. Faust: That's more than saying that if the culture tends, on the average, believes that males should be very, very masculine, in those cultures you find a greater difference between masculine and feminine sorts of behaviors. But you're saying that that in itself has implications for spatial reasoning or --

Ruth Munroe: Right.

M. Faust: Very interesting.

Ruth Munroe: I think we'll do our "hopes and fears for the future" right now.

M. Faust: OK. Then we can do the first one.

Ruth Munroe: Here's your notes.

M. Faust: About your personal interests and your family. Especially the ways in which they may have had a bearing on your scientific interests, contributions, on applied contributions. I know earlier on, you would take your children to assist you in fieldwork and to live with you in a different culture. What kinds of considerations are there? She said she could write a whole book about this. I mean she doesn't want to talk about how you just began to plan and decide whether to do it and how to do it. But I'm interested in that.

Ruth Munroe: Well, whether, how and where, are a lot of things. But the "whether" has never been, the "whether" has never been a big question for us, because when we have the opportunity we go.

M. Faust: Sure.

Ruth Munroe: Of course we forced that opportunity when we got our own NSF grant -- in order to study in other cultures, and not only go back to Central America and Africa but also extend that to at the

time it was an American Indian community we wanted to do as well as American Samoa. We substituted, but the American Indians wouldn't let us in. We wanted to go to a pueblo where Lee had worked as a graduate student and they didn't want us, which I guess I don't blame them, because we described our observers as running in and out of the pueblo houses, and they are very suspicious that someone is going to use information against them in some way, I think. So they didn't really want our observers to work with their teenagers, seeing what they -- because of observing the kids -- we have to really find the kids. I think that was probably wise that we didn't try it. I think it would have been very bad. Interestingly enough the farmers, that were called Newars, that we ended up substituting has the same cultural characteristics, broad cultural characteristics that we were looking for, which was --

Robert Munroe: Now participation and subsistence. So that was important.

Ruth Munroe: That was the most important factor.

Robert Munroe: But back to our children.

Ruth Munroe: Our children? Oh yeah, we took our children with us.

M. Faust: What were the particular cultures, societies?

Ruth Munroe: Well, our older two children have only lived in Belize and in Africa for two years, in Belize for a year and in Africa for two years. Our youngest, Tony, missed Belize. He's been in Africa two and a half years and in Nepal, Samoa, and in Belize for a briefer period than the other two.

Robert Munroe: It all went very smoothly and made a great difference. It's often said by anthropologists that having children makes for immediate rapport in many cases, and it did. It makes you acceptable because people often have questions if you don't have a family with you. So that helped a great deal. From the children's point of view I think it was fine except the second Africa trip when Jon --

Ruth Munroe: When everybody got to be fifteen.

Robert Munroe: When they were teenagers they really rebelled.

M. Faust: Because they didn't have friends?

Robert Munroe: They had to leave their friends and they were in high school by then and it really was upsetting to them.

Ruth Munroe: I think it really was. I think that leaving they never got back exactly the same friend groups they had. I think it is a very --

M. Faust: Were you in Claremont then?

Ruth Munroe: Oh yes, we've been in Claremont all along.

M. Faust: Well I was trying to think what your, I think Julie was about --

Ruth Munroe: Julie and Jon were about eight and nine when we came. So they were in grade school here and in junior high and high school. I think also they were supposed to study while they were away and get credit and they didn't. Then they went back and talked themselves into credits in high school, which really burned me up because I had been telling them in Africa -- we had gotten these courses from the University of California which has high school courses and they were supposed to do these. Oh we had big plans. We were going to get four each, I said we'll get one each first and neither one of

them did anything, of course. Then they got back and they talked their counselors into all this wonderful stuff they'd had and the counselors never asked us. Somebody gave them credits for something. I don't know.

Robert Munroe: But that may have been a mistake, our taking them at that age.

Ruth Munroe: And they ended up going to summer school and I guess they'd been to summer school before. So maybe with the summer school credit they weren't giving them all that much credit. But they had to give them something for that year. I was really upset with that. They came back and Jon just spent a year here and then graduated and Julie spent two years here and graduated; I didn't mind what happened in grade school. In grade school we had two years. We took Pitzer students with us. The first year in Central America we did not. But both years in Africa, all three of the next years away, we took a Pitzer student to two of them, different Pitzer students, to tutor the kids with Calvert School, which is an out-of-home thing and the only person that ever went through a whole Calvert School and Tony did. The third year we took a Pomona graduate actually, a friend of ours, who had graduated from Pomona and gone to law school and just quit law school, because he just decided he didn't want to be in law school (in mid-semester). He quit law school and came with us around the world.

Robert Munroe: They were very helpful.

Ruth Munroe: And he was taking care of, by then he was teaching Tony, who did have some high school things to do in order to get credit. He was fifteen, so he wasn't a great age to travel either.

M. Faust: What else did you have to think about besides education? What about health? Did you have proper medical care?

Ruth Munroe: We were really lucky, because the first year we went to Belize they were developing kits at Harvard Medical, really the infirmary was the medical school for the peace corps. They had these things that you couldn't live without. So I had this whole long thing and they told me how to boil water and all the things to take and it was wonderful. It was very well equipped. The water is probably the most important thing. I learned from them that the rolling boil is 25 minutes, that this ten-minute stuff they said won't kill anything that will kill you. So they said 25 minutes rolling boil and we went through a lot, a lot of boiling in our house.

Robert Munroe: Ruth was obsessive about it but it's antiseptic.

Ruth Munroe: It kept us without local kinds of things. So that was very good. It wasn't until years later a guy at Irvine, an M.D. at Irvine, was trying to help anthropologists and I heard him say the 25 minutes rolling boil and I was real pleased, and I told him.

W. Faust: Why?

Ruth Munroe: Because everybody said, "Oh you're crazy," and "You can eat eggs." Well you can't eat eggs when the chickens run around in parasite-laden places and we didn't eat eggs if they were local. We didn't eat an awful lot of things. We ate very carefully. People only got sick if they -- but it was fun traveling with the kids, in fact I don't know that we could exist without -- our field work has been very, very enhanced by having our children with us except those -- well, maybe even those teenage years probably did help us get away from school work.

M. Faust: We've got loads of more questions, did you want to add something to that? I personally, you don't have to put this on tape, but I would be really interested to know since we are a dual career couple as well, how you divide up the work when you're doing research, in terms of its conceptualization, the actual implementation of it and then the write-up. Who does what of which

part and how you manage to keep your marriage together and be as productive and write as much as you do? I think it's really admirable but I don't know how you do it.

Ruth Munroe: It's all because of Lee.

Robert Munroe: It's really because of Ruth's immense energies over the years, where she's been able to keep working on the acquisition of data. Some of the few times in the field when I have said, that's not worth getting, I've been sorry later that we didn't do it. She always would say to me, even in those cases where we do wind up not doing it, she said, "You should get that." I remember a very strong instance with respect to data on modernization and I only got it in two high schools, we went to eight, and I gave it up after two, and I've been sorry ever since.

M. Faust: Oh no.

Ruth Munroe: I think that it's hard to say how we divide work. We don't always divide it the same. I love analysis and I think by the way a lot of developmentalists are too statisticalized (though it also allows us to do multivariate things which are probably closer to the answer), it's just they're harder to understand. It's harder to understand exactly what's going on when you get to some of these multivariate levels of analysis. But yet I think that they're important. I'm much more interested in formulating problems in methodology than Lee is. I'm much more interested probably in data analysis than Lee is. He does a lot of it but he doesn't have the appetite for it that I have. I just have a kind of raging appetite to find out what's there. In anything.

Robert Munroe: The discovery is really very, I think, the grandest moment for either of us, when we find something.

Ruth Munroe: See, and after the discovery I want to throw it away. I don't want to tell anyone.

M. Faust: And write it up.

Robert Munroe: She's definitely needed for writing methodology sections. She has a much clearer head then I have and I go around in circles when I write methodology. So she's needed for that badly. She still laughs at some of my attempts.

Ruth Munroe: That's true.

M. Faust: So then in terms of interpretation you discuss it probably over the dinner table and breakfast table and you come up with it.

Ruth Munroe: Yes, yes. We definitely discuss these things and we write it down. That's putting it mildly. I think that's as much as we need to say. Lee thinks he writes like that. Whereas I don't so. I think that every sentence of mine is bad because he's such a critic. He still thinks his sentences are beautiful even though I've beaten him over the years.

M. Faust: Oh we have exactly that perception, you each like our own and we don't understand what the problem is that the other one is harping on.

Ruth Munroe: Yes: "What do you mean it's not clear?"

M. Faust: It's not clear. "What isn't clear?"

Ruth Munroe: In any case, I think we've completed this tape recording and you might want to say the ending.

M. Faust: And this is the ending of the interview of Lee and Ruth Munroe done by Margaret and Don Faust on the 22nd of February, 1995. This is side three isn't it? Yes it is. OK.

Robert Munroe: For which we're very grateful you've taken the time.

M. Faust: Thank you, very interesting.

Ruth Munroe: Thank you.