Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project
Interview with Helen Malson

Interviewed by Lois Donnelly over Zoom™
June 27, 2022

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Conducted over the Zoom online platform

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Lois: I'm Lois Donnelly, interviewing Dr. Helen Malson on 27th June 2022, over Zoom. And we're discussing their life and career in the context of feminism and its history within psychology. So first of all, then, I suppose, do you want tell me a bit about yourself, so in terms of the trajectory of your career and the topics of your work?

Helen: Yes, sure. So my first degree wasn't in psychology. I studied human sciences at Sussex University in the 1980s. It was a really interesting, inter-disciplinary degree. So it included biological sciences but also philosophies, philosophies of science, European literature, anthropology, Marxism and a bit of psychology. But essentially, by the fourth year, if you couldn't find a course in the entire university that suited you, and you could persuade a tutor, a lecturer, to take that module, you could design your own module. Which I did, with a friend of mine who was also doing that course, Tonya. And we persuaded a lecturer in clinical psychology to do a course with us on feminist perspectives on psychoanalysis, so looking at, yes, feminist psychoanalytic theory, which was just really, really interesting.

And I'd got really interested in gender psychoanalytic theory throughout those four years of the degree. And that kind of consolidated things for me. But I guess I had kind of thought about my PhD area… I was really sure, from about the age of ten, that I wanted to be an academic. My dad was a technician at Southampton University and he was always talking about what a cushy life lecturers had, and I thought, right, that's the job for me, (laughs). Sadly, things changed enormously between then and actually starting a lectureship, so I never got the cushy number I was after.

So I knew I wanted to do a PhD and I knew I was interested in psychoanalytic theory and the way in which it talked about the significance of bodies and their translation in a non-deterministic, non-biological way, into gendered subjectivity. And it was during a seminar about Sylvia Plath - and I don't know quite how all the thoughts came together, but it occurred to me that women's distress, which had been theorised in a lot of psychoanalytic work in terms of hysteria, might be understood today in terms of anorexia. Or by today, I mean the 1980s. So I had those kind of thoughts around what I wanted to look at, yes, gender and bodies and something around distress, and focused on eating disorders and around psychoanalytic theory.

And that's really where my PhD idea started. And so since then, although I have sometimes done some broader research into gender subjectivity and media representations around gender, the majority of my work is around eating disorders.

Lois: Yes, okay, that's really interesting. So you started off, then, maybe not fully knowing that you would go into that psychology arena, so -

Helen: Absolutely.

Lois: - what kind of attracted you, then, to your degree, first of all, and then to head into psychology?

Helen: Well, really, it was a misconception of what psychology was. Because I had come across Freud and psychoanalytic theory more generally, in anthropology and in literary theory and in cultural studies, generally. And it just did not occur to me that it wouldn't be an enormous part of psychology, and so I was quite surprised, really, at a lot of what mainstream psychology was about. Totally taken aback. What stopped me from then moving out - and I did think about moving into cultural studies - was the work of people like Henriques et al and Potter and Wetherell's early discourse analytic work. And those were really I suppose the inspiration for then what my PhD was… well, that, and getting really into Foucault through Henriques et al. So I did a genealogy of medial discourses in which anorexia first emerged as a medical object and then interview studies with women who identified as eating disordered, and did a discourses analysis of those.

Lois: So was that your PhD?

Helen: Yes.

Lois: Okay, that's really interesting. So shocked about mainstream psychology in a bad way, then, in terms of… ?

Helen: Yes, I guess so, yes. This idea that it was a science, having come from a mixture of philosophy, English lit, European literature and thought, those sorts of modules. But also being in a biology lab and doing mass spectroscopy and extracting DNA from fly bodies and doing genetics and stuff, I was like, you seriously call this a science? It's just a questionnaire. So, yes, in many ways I was just very surprised about what was going on. But just went, okay, I'm using Henriques et al. and discourse analysis and I'm just going to get on with it.

Lois: Yes, so the more societal and cultural things within psychology, I suppose?

Helen: Yes.

Lois: Okay, that's great. And so how did feminism come into that, then? When did your identity as a feminist maybe develop?

Helen: Oh, probably around about being about ten, I guess. My parents were quite religious, from a Catholic background. We moved, and I went to Catholic schools from when I was about age ten, but they also had The Guardian delivered every day so I was familiar with that sort of '70s, '80s feminist writing, to the extent that it appeared in The Guardian. And I was increasingly frustrated with things like not being allowed to do woodwork and so forth. So I guess I came into my undergraduate degree with a feminist perspective. I'm not sure how much I would have labelled it as feminist, but certainly a kind of distinct and personal awareness of the restrictions that went along with being a girl and then a young woman. And how those were sometimes quite different, in different contexts.

And then doing a module on structural anthropology, there was a really interesting… I can't remember her name now, but a really interesting feminist anthropologist took our seminars and I remember getting really interested in the way in which structural anthropology is written from a very masculine perspective. When they're talking about reciprocity in structures of kinship, there was nothing about how that's different if you're the object of that reciprocal gift-giving, if you like, in terms of women being swapped between kinship groups. And this tutor was really enthusiastic and engaged with my questions about that, which I suppose gave me that confidence to go, you can be a feminist academic, that would be something interesting to pursue.

Lois: Yes, that was quite early on, then, on your path, I suppose?

Helen: Yes, definitely, definitely. And so yes, something like anorexia, because bulimia in the 1980s wasn't really… well, at least, I didn't know about it as a category. And it was, in some ways, quite high-profile. There were people like… Lena Zavaroni was a famous celebrity who had anorexia and it was variously sensationalised in newspaper reports and documentaries and those sorts of things. And I just thought it was just a really interesting, really contemporary expression that kind of mirrors, in so many ways, hysteria, as both a kind of a hyper-conformity and a resistance to those gendered norms and restrictions.

Lois: Yes, that's really interesting. And so your feminist values, then, were quite engrained with the topic and the direction that you were going in?

Helen: Yes, yes. And I guess I chose well, in some ways, because I am still doing it.

Lois: Yes, so I was going to ask about that, because obviously, as you say, your work is a lot around eating disorders and body image and stuff. So can you maybe tell me how those projects have developed over the years?

Helen: Yes, sure. I suppose probably the main way that they've developed is becoming a bit more applied in terms of, after the PhD, the next projects that I was doing were around the experiences of treatment for eating disorders. So I did some work at the Maudsley with Janet Treasure, interviewing people there about their experiences of treatment. And then in Sydney, when I moved over to the University of Western Sydney in the late nineties and worked with Simon Clarke, who ran the adolescent ward in Westmead Hospital, which is just in inland Sydney but served an enormous area. So there were people from quite suburban and inner-city districts but there were also rural people coming in, too.

And from there, I guess, it's got even more applied, in that now I'm a director of an eating disorders health integration team. It's a team of people - academics, clinicians, people with lived experience, people from the voluntary sector and so forth - across lots of different organisations, and we're funded by an organisation called Bristol Health Partners, which is, again, a multi-organisational structure of NHS trusts and universities. And that's just got me… again, I'm still researching treatment issues and those sorts of things. So one of the projects I've been working on is around experiences of seeking help, through primary care, for an eating disorder.

But I'm also involved in, I guess, less research-y, more product-based kinds of things, and service developments, so the team supports local service developments. We've been involved in developing an eating disorders support app, with a local GP who specialises in producing mental health apps, those sorts of things. And with Paula Saukko, I've been working recently, we did some interviews with people about their social media use, and then we did a video. We worked with the people at Beat, which is the big national eating disorders charity, to produce a short video on safer social media use. So, yes, at the moment I'm combining research projects with more hands-on, I guess, applied work.

And other things that we do are public engagement events, sort of arts-based events. And I'm involved in… there's a steering group that's been developing plans to reorganise eating disorder services locally that I've also been involved in. And that's just really interesting. So it's not so clearly labelled as feminist but equality issues are still obviously… well, not necessarily obviously but they are a big part of that agenda, too.

Lois: Yes, absolutely. So how do you think maybe your feminist values impact the way that you do that work?

Helen: I think both… the other co-director, Sanni [Norweg], who is a clinical psychologist, both of us are very keen to make sure that the perspectives of people with eating disorders are informing and shaping what we do. And we've got a peer co-director who has experience of an eating disorder. And we have public engagement events where we ask people to comment on what they think we should be doing, what the priorities are, for them, in terms of research or service development and those sorts of things. So it's, I guess, about reshaping the place of people with lived experience in research and services.

Because I think in eating disorder research and treatment, a lot of the time people with eating disorders, their views have been often dismissed as, it's the eating disorder talking. So unless you're just fully compliant with what you're told you ought to be doing, then there isn't a lot of space, or there hasn't historically been a lot of space. That said, I've noticed that at eating disorder conferences there is also beginning to be a wider real shift in problematising that marginalisation of eating disorder voices.

And Beat, for instance, have eating disorders ambassadors who are people with lived experiences. So it's happening more broadly as well - I guess the other ways in which being a feminist impacts on what we do is obviously promoting qualitative research, so getting those people's voices through qualitative research.

And a less pathologising perspective for our research, of course, too. And being very aware of the kind of equality and diversity aspects of service provision, so part of the work that I'm doing at the moment, which has been looking at, as I said, people's experiences of seeking help. And it's involved interviews with carers, as well as people with lived experience, and with GPs. And there's clearly quite a stereotype, or set of stereotypes, really, obviously about young women but also about who has an eating disorder and what does an eating disorder look like?

And although white young women who are thin have trouble accessing services and being taken seriously, it's being very aware that it's potentially even a worse situation for people that don't fit that stereotype. That kind of… locally we don't even have, at the moment, binge eating disorder services. And that's something that's changing now, the steering group is putting those services into place, but given how common binge eating disorder is, and those kinds of experiences that you might call in that direction, it's telling, obviously, that the services haven't existed until now.

Lois: Yes, that's really interesting, I'm glad to hear it's shifting a little bit, that's great. And so I suppose in terms of talking about collaborating and working with service providers and the NHS and stuff, what is that like, to work beyond academia?

Helen: I really like it, there are less egos, and the health integration team is just a really nice, collaborative, supportive environment. And I guess partly that's also because you're choosing to work with these people and they're choosing to work with you and you don't contractually have to. It's also got its own obstacles and barriers and frustrations, obviously especially at the moment, because there's been a massive increase in eating disorders during the pandemic. So things are… in terms of colleagues' workloads it's even worse now, but there is that… they have their clients and service users as a priority. So sometimes it's hard to get hold of people or hard to get things moving or continuing to move, and so forth. And of course the NHS has its own hideous admin, that's no better than university admin to deal with.

Lois: I'm sure, yes. And so I'm just interested to know, do you see your research actively impacting on the way that service is provided and things?

Helen: Yes, I think so. Certainly the work that I did with experiences of in-patient treatment in Sydney then became part of nurse training events whilst I was there. The work that I'd done looking at experiences of primary care is now feeding into the eating disorders training workstream of the steering group, so that it's written into the plans to improve training. And so I've been involved in drafting the training strategy document for non-specialist staff and individuals and so forth. So, yes, and that is I think also a really satisfying part of working in this more applied, multi-institution setting, is that things do happen more directly - not always, but sometimes.

Lois: Yes, I can imagine it's really nice to see things changing.

Helen: Yes, and with the [Eating Disorder Support] App you're involved in discussions, so that wasn't a research project but you're involved in those discussions and helping to organise events where people with lived experience come and talk about what they think should be on the app and so forth, and then it's there and it's got 6000 downloads and good reviews and those sorts of things. And that feels like… I mean, obviously I enjoy having a journal article published, but you never know if anyone's going to read it, do you? Whereas you do know with this, it's a thing.

Lois: Yes, it's more public-facing, I suppose.

Helen: Yes.

Lois: Oh lovely, okay. So, do you have any particular piece of work or accomplishment that you're most proud of, then?

Helen: I suppose definitely the work that I've done with Sanni and the other team members in the eating disorders HIT [Health Integration Team]. I guess I'd say my books. And then a recent thing that I've been really proud of is some work that I did with Andrea LaMarre, Michael Levine and Su Holmes. And we co-authored two papers together that were part of an entire discussion which was around feminist approaches to eating disorders research and treatment. And that again was a really nice collaborative experience, I think there's something really heart-warming when you feel like you're all working together and being supportive and supported. So we got that published in the Journal of Eating Disorders, which also feels like a massive achievement. Because the bigger eating disorder journals, the mainstream ones, tend not to be so enamoured of qualitative research or feminist arguments and so forth.

Lois: How do you find that? How do you work with that, day to day?

Helen: What it means is that I just end up generally publishing in more feminist, community-oriented journals. And I think that feminist eating disorder research generally is kind of a bit scatter-gunned because of that. Feminist work on eating disorders kind of covers… obviously there's some in psychology but in media studies, cultural studies, anthropology, social work, nursing. So it's kind of across lots of disciplines already, and then because people like The International Journal of Eating Disorders are kind of a bit sniffy about it, yes, you can find it anywhere. So it's hard to find as well, sometimes.

Lois: So do you have an idea why they prefer those more maybe quantitative kind of papers?

Helen: Yes, the usual reason. It's gate-keepers who take a more positivist - or arguably post-positivist - approach, where RCTs [Random control trials] are best; where still, I think, a more pathologizing conceptualisation of eating disorders predominates. I think so.

Lois: So could you tell me a little bit about your involvement with Psychology of Women and Equalities section of the BPS, then?

Helen: Yes, it's something I got involved with as a post-grad to start with, and I stayed involved for several years, so I was on the committee and things, until 1999 when I moved to Sydney and got obviously less involved. And then I've been involved on and off but in a less intense way, until recently.

Lois: Yes, and obviously you're now currently the chair, so that's great. And how have you felt like that plays a part in your work, being involved with POWES [Psychology of Women and Equalities Section of the British Psychological Society]?

Helen: I suppose it's the informal or less formal, networking aspect of POWES, feeling that you're part of a community. So those instances where, as a feminist qualitative psychologist, you might feel slightly isolated in your views; that knowing that there is a whole section there of like-minded people is nice. And, yes, knowing and working with different people, often through POWES. So for instance I knew Victoria before I started at UWE [University of the West of England Bristol].

Lois: Victoria Clarke?

Helen: Yes, yes, and I guess earlier in my career people like Anne Woollett and Paula Nicolson were important mentors.

Lois: Yes, that's really great. And how were you first introduced to POWES?

Helen: That would have been through my supervisor, Jane Ussher, she was an early POWES member so she took me along to POWES conferences.

Lois: So you started fairly early, then, attending those?

Helen: Yes.

Lois: Nice, yes. Okay, brilliant. So are there any other feminist organisations that you're a part of, that may be similar to POWES?

Helen: I don't think so. I mean, I guess you could call part of Victoria and Ginny's story completion group… I guess it's implicitly feminist.

Lois: Yes, that's great, that's really interesting. So that focuses more on methodology and that kind of particular story completion. That's interesting. Okay, so what do you think, then -

Helen: Sorry, I was just remembering that also actually myself and Julie Kent, she's retired now but was a professor in sociology at UWE, and we started a gender studies research group at UWE, which went really nicely for a few years but just didn't have institutional support, so eventually just fizzled out, really.

Lois: Interesting. Is it difficult to start groups like that, without that institutional backing?

Helen: I would say so, because people have to give their time without it being factored into workloads. There's no institutional recognition of what you're doing as well, so it's kind of an uphill struggle, I would say, to do things when you don't have that kind of support.

Lois: And do you think it's more difficult, if they're feminist-based groups, to get institutional support?

Helen: I would say so, and I think also part of the struggle that our gender studies research group had was that it was deliberately trans-disciplinary, which made it go across faculties. And at the time working across faculties was, de facto, a problem.

Lois: Interesting.

Helen: - because of budgets and so forth.

Lois: Okay, great. And so I suppose since you've been at POWES it's been part of your career since fairly early days, then? How do you think POWES has developed over the years, do you think?

Helen: I suppose probably the most obvious things is it's now got an E in the title, and along with that is a much wider appreciation of the importance of taking an intersectional approach. I think I remember being on some sort of panel discussion in the nineties about, although it wasn't called intersectionality, it was around those issues. To what extent should POWES be interested in disability rights or racism or whatever? Or would that detract from our focus on gender inequality? So I think those debates were still happening in the first few years of being involved in POWES, whereas, I think, at least the majority of people, I would say, see them as common sense now.

Lois: Yes, that's really interesting, it's kind of shifted, maybe?

Helen: Yes. And I guess the other thing that's changed is, people's workloads are massively heavier than they used to be, and academia is a much more gig economy, in some ways, for some people , at least.

Lois: Do you think that impacts the way that POWES works?

Helen: I don't know, I think that's a tricky question, but I think it makes it harder for people to do things that aren't part of their contracted job.

Lois: Yes, absolutely. And do you think, then, that POWES will or should develop differently in future?

Helen: I think that's a really tricky question. I think theoretically, methodologically etc., no. But in terms of the jobs that are required, if you like, to keep a section going, it would be nice to see some more sort of, I guess, financial support or some other kind of support. I don't know about you but I don't have my role at POWES factored into my workload at all. So maybe seeing if the BPS can be involved in pressurising departments into recognising those sorts of roles; maybe there's some other sort of support that could ease the way in which people can get involved and take part in POWES. And of course there's equality issues in that as well, aren't there? Who is able to take some time, extra, on top of everything else?

Lois: Absolutely.

Helen: Yes. And I guess the other thing that maybe POWES and other sections could be doing more is thinking more about how we include more people from different, diverse backgrounds and so forth, in the section generally, the committee. Where should we advertise, for instance? Should we be thinking about advertising outside of the usual BPS contexts? And the other thing that has been brought to my attention recently is things like conference accessibility.

Obviously in some ways it was great, in some ways dreadful, having an only-online conference [during the pandemic]. But going back to Cumberland Lodge now, for instance, is that accessible enough? Does the fact that it's in Windsor Great Park alienate people in some way? Or some people, in some way? I mean, I don't know what the answers are to those questions, but they're the kind of things that could be potentially thought about more.

Lois: No, those are good points, great. So how have you found being chair, then, this year?

Helen: It's been great, really. It's been really nice to be more involved. I wish I had more time to devote to it, and I'm sure I'm in no way near alone. It's probably a virtually universal experience feeling like you're trying to cram millions of things into a day. But no, it's been really nice and it's been quite nice to see the BPS, for all its faults, at least moving towards a perspective that takes equality and social issues more seriously - however slowly and belatedly that might be.

Lois: Yes, absolutely. And on that point, how do you feel about the name change, to add the equalities into the section?

Helen: I think it's a good thing, because amongst other things the work that POWES members do isn't only about women. And so I think it kind of points to that importance of moving beyond the interview studies with women, which are obviously incredibly important and valuable but it's not just about gender inequalities, it's about a whole raft of inequalities. And it's about a whole raft of people's experiences.

Lois: Yes, absolutely. It kind of reflects that better.

Helen: I think so. To me it does, anyway.

Lois: Yes. And so you're also a consulting editor for Feminism & Psychology Journal.

Helen: I used to be, I think I no longer am, as of last year.

Lois: Okay, and are you also and editor or POWER, which is the journal of POWES?

Helen: I am on the editorial board.

Lois: So what are those roles like and how does that impact your work, as well?

Helen: I suppose… I mean, obviously I do manuscript reviewing and sometimes that makes me familiar with a particular person and their work, that I wouldn't otherwise have necessarily come across. And sometimes obviously I am reading something that might be outside my usual field of reading, not that

I get that much time for reading! But that does inform my work in interesting ways or they've approached it in this way, that I wouldn't have thought of doing and those sorts of things. And becoming familiar with arguments that I hadn't been necessarily familiar with. So I guess it expands my general engagement with feminist work.

Lois: Yes, that makes sense. Okay, brilliant. So you were talking earlier about POWES as a network, I suppose. And I was just wondering the role that played in your career and also perhaps those mentoring roles and key mentors that you might have had along the way.

Helen: Right, so yes, I suppose I've said, haven't I, Anne Woollett and Paula Nicolson? And Ann Phoenix as well was someone that I spent time with in the 1990s when I was at UEL. So the POWES network and the feminist UEL network, and sometimes ex-UEL network, was part of that mentorship, I think. Which was really useful and valuable to me, in terms of feeling supported and just generally getting advice, really, as a new lecturer at the time, dealing with the big boys' club, and those kinds of things that I think are really useful.

As well as, obviously more practical advice like… well, not that it's not practical to know how to deal with the big boys' club, but just managing things generally. And I learnt particularly from Anne Woollett, who was also at UEL at the same time as me, and Chair of POWES whilst I was the Secretary, was just a really valuable influence on my early career.

Lois: That's great, yes. So really important in your getting started and everything?

Helen: Absolutely, yes. And I guess before that, actually, as well, Gerry Webster ran the human science programme, and who almost all of us [students] kept in touch with for years and years. He died last year, quite recently, but everyone was still in touch, it was quite a small course. And he was a mentor. And then Barbara Lloyd who supervised me during my PhD for a little while, around feminist psychoanalytic theory. And yes, that was really interesting, sitting in her office, which was an enormous office just totally lined with books, a really nice, sunny office, and we would just sit and talk about Juliet Mitchell and Jaqueline Rose and Janet Sayers. And it was just quite relaxed, and I felt very, I suppose, nurtured by it. But she wasn't officially one of my supervisors, but she just spent this time talking with me about feminist psychoanalytic theory.

Lois: That's lovely, yes. That's great, to be able to have those chats about the things that you're learning and reading about, yes. So do you play a role as a mentor yourself now, do you think?

Helen: Yes, I guess I do. In terms of probably my undergraduate dissertation students, and in terms of my postgrad students in particular. And I do quite enjoy it, I think in some ways, particularly with the undergraduates at the moment, it's become more important to add in a personal element to it, with a lot of people experiencing a lot of stress around lockdown and so forth. And I don't know about you, but I find that's still there, those heightened stress and anxiety levels. But I also really enjoy, with those students that really get into their research - whether it's at undergraduate or postgraduate level – going forward with them and producing publications and pushing them, theoretically and methodologically.

And seeing them being really pleased with what they've done. So Gill [Ang], who I supervised two or three years ago now, who did their project on media representations of the Kavanaugh case, working through with them to their publication, putting in the prize submission, getting it published; talking with them later, they did a masters in gender in international relations, and just seeing someone flourish like that, I really enjoy. Irmgard Tischner, who is now a professor at Deggendorf, so I supervised her PhD, and then seeing her, working on publications with her and seeing her career blossom, similarly.

Lois: Yes, that's a great feeling, isn't it, to go along with someone like that? Okay, well, I think we're nearing the end. So I was going to ask you, in terms of feminism and psychology more broadly, what impact do you think feminists have made in psychology so far?

Helen: I think it's a pity it's not more, and that's not the fault of feminists. But I think they/we have had an impact, and I think in some ways it's hard to pull apart from some other kinds of things or

approaches, like qualitative research more generally. But there is a wider recognition of qualitative approaches, of the significance of gender. I think inequalities and gender issues - and the other inequalities issues too - often get treated as, we'll have a lecture here and a lecture there, there you go.

But at least there are those lectures now. And in lots of places it's a more serious engagement as well. So I think it's a long way until we see a mainstream psychology text book being feminist, just because, of course you are. But nevertheless they are at least engaged to some extent with those agendas, or at least recognising them

Lois: Yes. And do you think that some institutions, then, are more on board with those kind of things than other institutions, and why do you think that might be?

Helen: I think it's probably… my guess is, it would be more local to the departmental culture as well as the broader institution. I mean, my feeling is that at institutional levels it's often quite tick box-y, and so the way in which feminist approaches or inequality issues generally are engaged with, the extent to which it goes beyond a tick box, is I think quite often left up to the individuals and the culture within a department.

And in terms of the other ways in which feminism might impact psychology, I guess we've still got a long way to go in terms of sexual harassment on campus and pay inequalities. But I'm not sure what the section's role in that might be.

Lois: Yes, that's an interesting kind of… how those come together. So those kind of things you think is maybe the future of feminist psychology thinking about those issues?

Helen: It would be an interesting thing, to think about if or how that's feasible, yes. I think it would be nice to think it could be something that POWES could contribute to, in some way. Obviously, there's the work like the intersectionality and gender and violence research group, and the kind of work going on in sexual harassment. But I guess I was thinking more in terms of impacting directly into university policies and so forth, but I've no idea how you would go about doing that.

Lois: Yes. It would be good, though.

Helen: Maybe see if the BPS could withhold something or other until things are corrected.

Lois: Yes. Okay, and then what advice would you give, then, to feminists entering psychology now?

Helen: Oh, think, carefully. Are you sure? What advice would I give people? That's a really difficult question. It's such a different sort of landscape to when I joined academia. I think, get some allies, make sure you're networked, if you can, and protect your time. I still have trouble saying no to things and obviously it's in some ways a sort of gendered issue and a lot of the time I think it works against us that we agree to this, that and the other. Which isn't necessarily enhancing our careers in a promotion kind of way. So I guess… I'm reticent to say be more hardnosed, as well, because some of those things we do, even if they aren't recognised, are really important. So, I don't know.

Lois: Yes, it's complicated, you're right, that's a good point. So why do you think having allies is important? By allies, I assume you mean other feminist psychologists?

Helen: Yes. Because you can be kind of side-lined. It depends where you are and what the people around you are like, but you can definitely be side-lined.

Lois: From the mainstream psychology?

Helen: Exactly, in that it's not seen as mainstream psychology and it's not seen as, this is where the bread and butter of things are or the centre of things are. It's a luxury, add-on niche kind of approach.

Lois: Yes, absolutely. Okay, great, well I think that's the end, all the questions I've got. Is there anything else that I haven't mentioned that you'd like to cover, about yourself or about feminist psychology?

Helen: I don't think so, no.

Lois: Okay, brilliant, that's great. Just for the record, could you state your gender, please?

Helen: Yes, I'm a woman.

Lois: And place and date of birth?

Helen: London, 1965.

Lois: Lovely, and occupation?

Helen: Associate Professor in Social Psychology.

[End of Transcript]