

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Hilary Lips

*Interviewed by Kelli Vaughn
Newport, RI
March 14, 2009*

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HL: Hilary Lips, interview participant

KV: Kelli Vaughn, interviewer

KV: First thing [I will] do is I am going to ask you to state your name, place of birth, and date of birth just for the historical record, if you will.

HL: I am Hilary Lips. I was born in Ottawa, Canada, June 17th, 1949.

KV: Excellent, thank you. One of the things we like to start all of the interviews out with is a general question about your feminist history. Tell us about the emergence and development of your feminist identity.

HL: I am not sure how to summarize, but actually when I was an undergraduate student at University of Windsor, there were starting to be some women there who were interested in women's rights. I think sometime in there I read *The Feminine Mystique*. I sort of went from thinking that these women are crackpots, like we had no problems obviously any more, to realizing that yes, we still had some big problems. That was the beginning of it, and I went to graduate school at Northwestern University in Chicago. There was the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, an extremely important and active group at that time, and we started the group of us, the Evanston Women's Liberation Center. It was in the suburbs just north of Chicago, where Northwestern is. That was an important group for me while I was in graduate school. I did a lot of reading and talking to people because of that group. That sort of deepened that whole feminist analysis of things.

In psychology there was not a whole lot going on at that point. But Naomi Weisstein, who was a member of the Women's Liberation Union and also a member of the Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band, I don't think I ever actually knew her but she was a presence in that group. We read her article, *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*, and she did such a powerful critique of psychology's approach to sex differences that that was probably what made me think about psychology per say, [and] what feminism [has] got to do with psychology.

KV: That is interesting. I noticed that you dedicated the first [book], *Women Men and the Psychology of Power*, [and] the 1979 book to [the Evanston Center], [which] also starts out mentioning the Naomi Weisstein article. I actually have got a question about that, but

I want to hold off on that. Tell me a little bit more about the Evanston Center and your involvement with them. I was intrigued, I have never heard of them before.

HL: I think a lot of [people in the group] were women who were wives and mothers in Evanston, and then some of us were students and some were wives of professors in Northwestern, and for whatever reason we were all in Evanston and I really forget how I first got the word that something was starting there. I was sort of in at the beginning, I think what happened is somebody put fliers up around town, and said, "You know, we are having this meeting [and] if you are interested in women's liberation, come to this place this night." I went and we met in people's living rooms and then a church gave us their basement to meet in. I forget which church, [but] that became actually a center. They eventually gave us an office, [which was] amazing. They gave us an office in their basement that we could use permanently as our center. We had our meeting in their larger basement and it was a very thriving group for a while.

One of the things we did was we supported women running for office. Shirley Chisholm was running for president some time in there and we all had our Shirley Chisholm buttons. I have still got my Shirley Chisholm button. A couple of the women in the center decided that they would run for local office so we helped them. We stuffed envelopes and so on. Also, [for] the equal rights amendment, we were trying to get the equal rights amendment passed in Illinois. It had to be ratified by so many different states, which it still has not been all these years later. At the time it seemed just incredible that something as simple as that would not be passed. And we stood on street corners in Evanston, with our little petition boards, trying to get people to sign. So we did that. The Chicago Women's Liberation Union had a free legal clinic and for a while we had some branch of that in Evanston. It was sort of weird that most of us had no legal expertise at all, but women would come [who] wanted to have a divorce or something. Usually it was marital, and what we did was we learned the basic law and then we referred them. We answered sort of basic questions, and referred them to law students usually. So those were the kinds of things we did.

KV: Do they still exist?

HL: I have no idea and I have lost touch with all those people.

KV: What was that like for you personally coming from the place that you were at, college-wise, to suddenly be at Northwestern at that time in your life as a woman, kind of a budding student, with all of this going on around you?

HL: It was really exciting. I thought I was very brave to move to Chicago. Growing up in Canada, nobody could have ever told me that I would end up in Chicago, big bad city [and a] dangerous place. My family and friends were scared for me when I moved to Chicago, but to me, I was very adventurous to do that. It was like going to the frontier or something. [It was] so strange. Also, being a Canadian, I am sure you know this now that you have been in Canada for a while, Canadians often have a stuck up idea about the United States that "we are better." I certainly thought that, but in terms of women,

certainly Canada was no further ahead than the United States. I could not ever make that argument. It was a very exciting thing to be involved in and I really felt like we were pushing back something; we were making a difference. I guess we were at the end, it just took a whole lot longer than we thought.

KV: It always does.

HL: Yes!

KV: Now, you said you kind of got interested before you left Canada. Northwestern has a huge feminist history in some ways. Did you know that going in? I mean, were you looking for a woman-friendly environment or somewhere where there was a lot going on? Why did you pick Northwestern? How did you end up there?

HL: It had nothing to do with that. I was getting married my husband had already been accepted to the University of Chicago, and he had already been there for a year, and that was the only thing that got me there. I mean, actually I applied to University of Toronto, I applied to York, I applied to mostly Canadian universities. But that is how things worked in Northwestern. My professors at Windsor told me, "Northwestern, wow! You got accepted there? You definitely should go. It is a really good place." But it had nothing to do with women and I was really thrilled when I got down there and found out that Evanston was the headquarters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and had this huge suffrage-type history. But I did not know anything about that when I moved there.

KV: How were your professors while you were there and who were you working with at that time? How were they responding to these outside activities you were [involved in]?

HL: I think I kept it pretty separate in a lot of ways. I did not talk about it much. When I first got there, there were no women professors in my department, in social psychology, which was my field. It was all men and I am pretty sure there were no women in the whole department actually. Before I left, there were two women who were hired and they were there. I overlapped with them for two years, I guess. One of them [was] my master's thesis adviser, the other one was my dissertation adviser. The social psychology program was somewhat social justice oriented. Donald Campbell was really the lead person in that program. He was very interested in social justice and he was interested in pulling psychology in a direction where we would be responsible evaluators of the social programs that were being put in place.

I worked on a research team that he headed to evaluate something called the Woodlawn Service Project, which was...frankly I do not remember many of the details. [I think it was] a community oriented project, which was supposed to help with the residents of Woodlawn, which was a mostly [an] African American region just south of the University of Chicago where there was a lot of poverty and a lot of problems. The university at the time, [had] a lot of anti-war protest going on and because of that, the university had agreed to allow students to develop and teach whatever courses they wanted. That was their response to students saying, "Down with the establishment." [It]

was their way of saying, “Ok, you do it then, you know, if you think something is missing. Go ahead with it.” So my office mate and I decided to offer a course on sex and gender. We co-taught that course. It was a seminar for just twenty students. Nobody objected, but I do not think anybody in the department in terms of faculty, even hardly knew we were doing it.

KV: What kind of materials were you using to teach that at that time?

HL: It was mostly Xeroxed and mimeographed articles. We did not have a book. But certainly we read the Naomi Weisstein article, for example. I forget. I probably could not even dig up an old syllabus of that. If I had kept one I would not even know where to find it.

KV: Yes I was just going to say, because this has got to be, what, ‘72-‘74 at the time this would have been going on? So there would not be a lot of reading material excluding the articles that were coming out of some classics at that point.

HL: The person who taught with me was Ross Conner and I have also lost touch with him. I do not know what has gone on with him, but it was a very interesting thing to do. And there were some other graduate students there who were interested. Anybody who [was] interested in what [was] happening with women were students more than faculty.

KV: Where did that leave you with mentorship during these years? Was that coming from Evanston, or were you just kind of...?

HL: I do not think, frankly, I had particularly good mentoring. Our faculty was very nice to us, and I think maybe I didn’t know enough to search for a mentor either. I think if I asked for help I always got it but I did not always know enough to ask. So we had Donald Campbell, Thomas Cook, and Phil Brickman. These were the three main people in social psychology. Pretty well everything I studied was with one of them until these two women, Sharon Gurwitz and Camille Wortman, {14:53} were hired. Neither of them was around long enough to mentor me in a sense. I mean, Sharon actually, after the first couple of years, decided she did not want to be an academic and she left and went into business school I think. Camille Wortman was my dissertation adviser, but she was very young. I think I might have been her first doctoral student, and I chose her because she was a woman, [and] I wanted a woman as my adviser. But I think she was floundering a bit at that time. She has gone on to have a very powerful career. I know she did her best but I do not think I knew what to ask for and I don’t think she knew what she should offer.

KV: You have mentioned protesting and power, I am coming to your dissertation period, so social justice was kind of like the theme of the day at that time. You did your dissertation specifically on that area and you have always had this theme, from that time it seems, of power in your work. Why was that issue at that time becoming important to you personally, professionally, [and] kind of developing?

HL: I think there were several reasons. One is that there was this whole social clash going on about the war and there was that sense of powerlessness to affect something so big. No matter how angry you got and how much you protested and demonstrated it did not seem to make any difference and so there was this sense of “something is wrong here.” So [I think that] that, in a big picture [sense,] was it.

On the personal picture, maybe I will tell you something about the Evanston Women’s Liberation Center dynamics because I really think that it was a key thing in my whole interest in interpersonal power. When we were organizing the Center and trying to maintain it we had weekly meetings, large meetings, of 30 or 40 women at once. We kind of got to know each other, not well but well enough. Most people were pretty collaborative but there was one woman in the group, she just thought she knew more than anybody else and she thought she defined herself as more truly radical than everybody else. Nobody was quite pure enough for her. She had a very loud voice and a very emphatic manner. She terrorized everybody. I mean literally, by that time everybody was so relieved if she did not show up for a meeting because you could actually talk and get something done. And we allowed her to terrorize us. I mean, it was 30 or 40 of us and one of her, and I used to wonder, “How does she get the power to cow this group of women? Where is that coming from?” And it started making me think of power. Because we really gave her that power, very few people argued with her because she would be so cutting. You would be cut to ribbons if you started arguing with her, and most people did not want to risk it I guess. I do not know why we were all so scared; there was nothing she could really do to us. But people were really afraid of her, so it really made me think a lot because I felt that this one person had this huge influence and there was no reason for it logically, but psychologically there was. And a lot of it came from [the fact that] she was claiming that she had a better analysis of the situation; she was more feminist, more left, and more pure, therefore. So it was a kind of legitimate power that she was claiming but I did not have that word for it then. I think that is strange that that’s something that made me so angry and frustrated at the time, [but] led to a very long and productive interest in power.

{20:34}

KV: I think that is interesting because when people think about power and gender research, I think a lot of time, they do not think about the within gender dynamic that can be so crucial in forming our ideas of that. So actually, I think that is great, you do not hear a lot of women say, “We do not get along,” and that is where that comes from, a little bit. You do.

Coming out of this period that we are talking about, you sort of (and I do not want to phrase it as fade away because I know you are out there), but you have this really great dissertation that comes out and you have a few publications, a few presentations, and then suddenly you emerge with power in ‘79. Another area of research comes up during this time. You start publishing on pregnancy, which I found to be a very interesting. I was familiar with power research but not with the pregnancy research. I was really intrigued to see this kind of feminist prospective on this area. It is just that you see motherhood a

lot but you do not see it framed quite the way you did that. How did you come about getting into that area? And why did it kind of hold on with you?

HL: Well, one of my colleagues at the University of Winnipeg became pregnant and I was just so intrigued by the reactions to her pregnancy. I am a social psychologist, and people would look at her and they would say, "Gee, since she became pregnant she is so irritable," or they would say, "Ever since her pregnancy, have you noticed how much happier she seems?" They would make these attributions to this person and it all had to do with the fact that she was pregnant. First of all, it was interesting to me that everyone was so focused on the fact that she was pregnant. Secondly, that they were attributing her moods to the fact that she was pregnant.

One day I was walking through the hall and I saw a student standing outside the classroom door looking in through the window. She was sort of staring and laughing and I said, "What is going on?" and she is like, "There is a pregnant professor in there." I had never really thought about the social implications of being pregnant, but I realized that there were just so many ways in which people's opinions were being shaped about this person by the fact that she was pregnant. It was just really interesting.

Then, since I was teaching in the area of gender, I started looking at what was there. Was there any reason for this? And I could not find any, really. Most of the research was very crummy research. It was case studies and people who went to the doctor because they were having problems. There is such variation in what women report, I could not see any systematic[thing that] happens to women when they get pregnant in general. What pattern could we discern? So I decided it would be really interesting to try and make some comparisons. I think also, at that time, I was still thinking that I might someday be pregnant. I had not really decided at that point whether I should have a family or not. But I think that that is one of the reasons, also, why it was so fascinating.

KV: Yes, it was an interesting counterbalance of the two that you suddenly bring these areas out together with the power and the pregnancy. Personally, you started thinking about trying to decide family wise. Where were you at, personally, in that later '70s, because it sounds more like you have really kind of brought feminism and psychology together for you. You were saying earlier it was really separate almost in grad school. How did that end up becoming okay to be together in your work life?

HL: Well I think because I had a job. I wasn't a student anymore and I was in a department [where] it seemed like it would be okay to try to put those things together. I know that a lot of my colleagues have been in places where their work on gender or women was not respected. But it was not the case at the University of Winnipeg. I am sure there were individuals that were not that keen on it but they were happy to have somebody doing research and doing something interesting, basically. When I started teaching in that area, that became the way to pull the two things together. We were teaching a course on it, so by definition we were teaching psychology. It all came together that way.

{25:38}

KV: Now was Nina Colwill at Winnipeg at that time?

HL: She was at the University of Manitoba. She was a graduate student in a doctoral program when I first met her, and eventually she and I worked together when she was a graduated student to do *The Psychology of Sex Differences* book. [She] got her doctorate and taught in the management department at the University of Manitoba.

KV: Yes, I noticed she was the editor of several of the later books and several of the ones in the '90s, and I was intrigued that you were at the same locations. So I did not know if she started there and you sort of developed and maintained this friendship. Actually in that first book, there are several editors that were students [and there was a lot of] input from graduate students and that was really intriguing to me. Was it something that you have sought out to do?

HL: I think partly, but it was not so much [that I was] trying to find students, but trying to find people who were interested and knowledgeable enough to do it. So [with] Nina, yes she was a student but I think she was actually older than I was. She was an adult. She had a family and two small children [and] she was in a very different place than most students. We were very good friends and now we are very far apart and we exchange Christmas cards and do not get to see each other very much. We are not really in regular touch. Another student, I think Anita Myers, was one of those. She was an undergraduate student at the University of Winnipeg at that time, in the honors program. She was very, very interested in this stuff and, you know, you take collaborators where you can find them. I mean, we did not have a graduate program so the honors program was the source of students who would work with you. Anita was wonderful. We had a great time working together.

KV: Feminism was obviously making huge strides within psychology since you had graduated and by that time (we are cresting into the '80s [now]), you have had APA [American Psychological Association] Psychology of Women develop, [and] you have had CPA [Canadian Psychology Association] Section on Women beginning to develop, which you have had quite a bit of involvement in. What kind of work were you involved with within the discipline as far as the growing movements of women in both areas and countries?

HL: Well, I went to the first AWP [Association for Women in Psychology] conference when I was a graduate student and that was in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I remember three of us drove from Evanston down there. I never was particularly involved in AWP in the sense of the organization [that is,] helping it. I have been to most of the conferences actually. I mean, here they are celebrating [their] fortieth anniversary. I do not know how many of those, but I have probably been to 35 of those conferences, but I have never actually been involved, except in the Distinguished Publication Award Committee. That is the only involvement I have had. I was very involved in CPA. I was very involved, [and] I am trying to think about all the different things I did. I was the coordinator of that

section at one time, I was the secretary treasurer at one time, and I was just a very active member and that was my home within CPA. I really made a lot of good connections and good friends in that and we supported each other a lot in our work. They still have the preconference institute that used to be a very powerful thing because it was a way to get us all together before the larger conference and so on.

KV: When did you get involved with that? What time period? Were you in from the beginning?

{30:48}

HL: I do not think I was in from the beginning because I probably was still a graduate student in Chicago. But once I got back to Canada and once I joined CPA, I joined that group and it was a small enough group. Actually that is the wonderful thing about Canadian psychology, and everything in Canada: it is smaller so it is easier to become involved. You do not feel like one little piece in a huge group.

KV: They have done some really interesting work over the years. I know that you were kind of on both sides of the fence there at one point because [you went] from Northwestern and then back and then you sort of came back to the U.S. What was the difference in those late '70s early '80s of feminism developing in both countries? What was Canada doing regarding feminist psychology at this time?

HL: In terms of feminist psychology, I think Canada was just sort of the Interest Group on Women and Psychology at the time, it grew up instead of a section and I think we were pushing to have research on gender become more high profile. We were pushing for more courses and more comfortable places for women graduate students to go. Then within the association there was a push to have more women in the executive boards, stuff like that. In many ways I do not think it was very different than the U.S. in terms of what the issues were. I was not personally very involved in the struggles that were going on in the United States. I used to come to APA more regularly even than I do now, actually. Now I only go every few years. I don't remember them feeling that different.

KV: What kind of response from CPA and from the academic community in Canada, as sort of 'this movement was going all berserk,' were you getting as the backlash and kind of the push back? Phyllis Chesler [was] introducing the amendments here and APA kind of [went] its [own] direction. Were you seeing the same thing at CPA?

HL: I think I have missed some of the early stuff where that was seen and I am sure you have interviewed Sandra Pyke. She could probably tell you stories.

{33:30}

KV: Yes, there are a few!

HL : She saw a lot more of it. She and a few other people, who were just a couple of years ahead of me, probably saw a lot more really active, open resistance. I think by the time I came on, the resistance was not so blatant. There may have been a lot of people who were dragging their feet. It was not a clear “women are not important” kind of thing. Some of the stories that Gwen Keita told yesterday about APA [are the] same kinds of thing. It has been years, I think, since you have heard those kinds of really blatant resistant comments.

KV: It’s almost kind of a move towards benevolent sexism. This is the benevolent sexism error.

HL: Well you know, I do not know if you are going to ask me about the CRIAW stuff?

KV: I was, yes.

HL: Okay.

KV: Feel free to go ahead and tell me now.

{34:40}

HL: Well I was just going to say it is sort of a very interesting contrast because CRIAW [Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women], besides being interdisciplinary, and there were not many psychologists involved actually which was interesting, but it was also very much more aimed at mainstream politics. I mean, we were trying to influence **legislatively** (35:04), we were trying to get money allocated, we were trying to get government support to do things, which is a very different kind of experience. Maybe [it was] because it was started by a number of political scientists, maybe that is how it moved in that direction, but it was quite a different experience from the psychology involvement.

KV: How did you get involved in that? That was very interesting to run across.

HL: That was another very Canadian thing. In Canada, I do not know if it still operates this way but I suspect so, everything is supposed to be well represented. You [have] got to have French, you [have] got to have English, you [have] got to have representation from the Prairies, you [have] got to have representation from the Maritimes, you [have] got to have big schools [and] little schools. It’s got to be fair. So CRIAW had to have representation from every province, and I think they were basically looking for a representative from Manitoba at the time and they wanted somebody who is already self-identified as a feminist. I think what happened was, the person who called me (I will not be able to come up with her name but I know it perfectly well but anyway), she was a political scientist, and she knew my book on power [which] was an interest of hers. So, she called and asked if I would be the Manitoba representative and I said, “Well, what do I have to do?” and she said, “You just have to come to meetings twice a year and we will pay your way,” and I said, “Yes, ok I can do that.” That was really interesting. I did end

up working for them for many, many years [and] I hope to run a conference one year. I was the treasurer for a year, I think, something like that.

KV: Were there other psychology people involved?

HL: No, very few, very few psychology people.

KV: Interesting. It's kind of interesting that they specifically went for a feminist for that position. Did you...?

HL: Well, I mean it was a feminist organization and I don't think they went for a psychologist particularly. I think they did want as many disciplines represented as possible. I had noticed actually over the years that psychologists, we have very great organizations in psychology, feminist organizations, but we are not very involved in women's studies organizations or any interdisciplinary [organizations]. You know, it is weird.

KV: I am really glad you have brought that up. [In terms of] women's studies, I am a big fan of the cross over and the interdisciplinary stuff. Throughout your entire career you have managed to keep a foot in both psychology and women's studies. How did that become important and why was it important to you as an academic to be on both sides of the fence in your professional life? It's not even just your study, it was a very active work choice.

HL: I think it started because to find support [and] to find collaborators [and] to find people who thought the same way, you had to go outside your discipline because there were [just] not enough. First of all, there were not enough women, period, at that time. As I said, when I was a graduate student my entering class was seven men and three women. The other two women dropped out and there were no female faculty. And that shows you how much psychology has changed so much; there are so many women now.

{40:19}

So you try to find people who are interested, and at the University of Winnipeg there was a small group of us, in different departments, who were interested in women and in feminism and we formed our own little informal organization. I forget what we called it. We called it the Professional Action Committee on Education, no word on women or gender but that's what it was about. We used to do things like, at the university open house we would put [up] a display that had a quiz about famous women and try to get people to understand how little they knew about women and things like that. Eventually we, as a group, helped lay the groundwork and get the women's studies program started, but for years it was just the little group of us who got together and supported each other. I think that's how it became important to me that I would find support from women in other places and I would give support to women in other places and so that became important. But I never could completely make a cross over to women studies and it's partly, this is a psychology bias, [because] a lot of women's studies people, I found, are

not interested in data and [as] a psychologist I am interested in data. So I always have found it a bit strange. I go to a women's studies conference [and] nobody wants to see my graphs and charts and if I go to a psychology conference, most of them (if it's not AWP) are not really interested in my musings about this that or the other thing to do with women. I think both are important actually, and I have always been sort of sad that they do not cross over a little more.

KV: Do you feel like you ever found that mentorship with some other women in women's studies or within psychology over the years? Because it seems almost like you are creating that mentorship network through those areas.

HL: I think I created a lot of supportive networks [but] I do not know about mentorships. I think my mentorship has come in little chunks at critical moments. Like Irene Frieze, I do not know if she is one of the people you are interviewing...

{42:02}

KV: She is. We have interviewed her.

HL: Ok, over the years I have had contact with her at critical moments. [For instance,] I met her at the first AWP conference and at the time I was a graduate student she was a professor. She was doing interesting research. [It was] not that she reached out to mentor me or that I reached out to her for mentoring, but she was somebody I admired, and I thought she was doing research [and] teaching at a very respectable place so you can obviously make a career going in this direction. Then a few years later, I saw her... I think it was probably another AWP conference or maybe it was APA. I was telling her a little bit about my power research and I said I was having trouble keeping it contained or something and she said, "Well, you know what I think? What you are doing without knowing [it] is you are writing a book." That's what made me think to write that book.

KV: Wow.

HL: So there are different things like that. Eventually one year when I was in Winnipeg, I invited her to come and be a speaker. So at various critical points she has said something or been encouraging in some way that has been important to me. I don't think either of us would define her as my mentor, and I can say that for a number of other people who just happened to be there at some time, they said something that was supportive or encouraging or that helped me see something in a new way or gave me an opportunity to do something.

KV: How has that affected your own mentoring style? I definitely understand the kind of 'mentorship by inspiration' in some ways. How did that affect your work with your students?

HL: I think I have tried harder and harder over the years to be a good mentor to my students. When I was at Winnipeg, we did not have graduate students but we had honors

students, so you did get to work closely, one on one, with students and a few of them I took to AWP actually early on. I really did my best to try to just encourage them to work in this area and so on. I think now that I have got graduate students, (I do not have doctoral students [because] we only have a master's program in experimental at {44:58} Radford), but over the years I have gotten more and more focused not just [on] help[ing] them while they are students, but [also] trying to making sure that they get the next step taken as well as I can help. I do try to be a long term encourager and supporter, [and] not just [say], "Ok, you are graduated you are gone." But it is a two way process because some people ([and] I think back to myself as a student and I think I told you that I did not seek out mentoring in fact if anything I probably pushed it away) [are like], "I am my own person. Don't try to shape me." So I am very sensitive to that. If I am picking up from a student that they don't want to be mentored, I don't try to mentor them in any big way. I just try to be there.

KV: I am going to take you in a little different direction. About the mid '80s you start to publish cross culturally. Well you start [to talk about] the inclusion [of cross cultural topics], you start to talk about them in the work, but it's not until in the '90s that you actually start to physically do the work in other places, or at least from the research that I have done. How did you start going off in that direction? Did that become important?

HL: I am not sure that there is an easy answer to it, but part of it is the Canadian-American thing. Being a Canadian moving to the United States and actually having spent a lot of time in the United States, before I moved finally I had been on sabbatical at the University of Arizona a couple of times. But, you realize that even two countries next door to each other with so much overlap in terms of language and culture, we see things so differently. I just got more and more interested in that because if we see things so differently, (and I moved to Virginia I mean people in Virginia see things differently from the rest United States) you really start to think [about] how important culture is.

At the same time the zeitgeist in feminist psychology and women's studies also started to be more and more broad. We should be looking at more and more diversity, always increasing the scope of that diversity, so that was a part of it. I did have a colleague at the University of Winnipeg, a sociologist, who was from India who was always advocating for the inclusion of cross-cultural perspectives. For a long time I resisted that. It's already complicated enough. First of all, [there's] gender, and now we do diversity within cultures, and how to try to expand that to multicultural. That's just too complicated. I am not doing it. But gradually I realized that you can't not do it. You also cannot do it too, [and] that's the frustrating thing. You really cannot understand people in another culture unless you are going to go and live there for a long time. I do not think I understood Americans at all until I actually transplanted myself here. All the time I was here as a graduate student, all the time I was here on sabbatical, I was always a visitor and I thought of myself that way and I never really felt integrated into this culture. I really just kept thinking how strange these people are. Now that I live here and I have lived here since 1989, when I think of Canadians I sometimes think [that] Canadians are strange.

KV: I think that's great [that] you have done visiting scholarships on some of that. You are saying "Immerse yourself into the society." How has that been different as far as the study of gender [and] the study of women looking from feminist perspectives in these different cultures, when even their definitions of gender and the ideas of a feminist, what that is, seem to be so different? Do you find that? Have you found that in your work?

HL: It is really hard to work with. It's more something that you kind of get a feel for and I think it informs my work but I am not sure that I ever get a real handle on it. I spent some time at the University of Costa Rica and feminists there tend [to be] very, or at least at that time, more Marxist defined. They were very interested in all economic justice issues. Not that American feminists were not interested in that, but the situation is just very different. It was fascinating to be in that place, and the language barrier was difficult to deal with, I am sure that there were a lot of subtleties that I have missed even though I went to Spanish classes every single morning that I was there and I did learn a lot, but to get to the point of academic discussions it is pretty tricky.

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Interpersonally, things were so different [there]. I can remember going to one feminist conference at the University of Costa Rica and they had made a big effort to bring non-academic women to speak in the conference, which is something we barely do. They were women who were having a really hard time. They were poor, their husbands basically told them what to do and they had to do it, and yet what was so interesting to me as a psychologist is that these women, these poor oppressed women, you gave them a microphone and they got up and [oh] man! They were not submissive in their speak[ing]. Their speech was very assertive and powerful. But while they were talking they were saying, "I can't do this [and] I can't do that," but they were not tentative in the way they spoke. It's just [that] so many things are different [that] it's hard to make generalizations, I guess.

KV: How has that changed your view of your own self as a feminist, your own feminism, of seeing it, being exposed to these other cultures and the way the look at it and think about it?

HL: I think it makes me less sure that I am right most of the time. I think it brings me up short lots of times when I am trying just to understand the situation [and] what is going on here if it's not my own culture. Even sometimes when it is, it makes me realize that things are more complicated than I really think. Sometimes it is discouraging if you are a psychologist [and you] think that you might understand something by studying it. You realize probably you are not going to understand it as well as you like. In a way that's what pushes me into the whole direction of this social constructionist approach, that you can't just nail down the fact. There is nothing, I think, that makes you more aware of that in a really gut level than that cross-cultural experience.

KV: Along the same line we were talking about, the international research and not knowing if you are right, the Naomi Weisstein article, [and] a lot of your earlier work [all

have] some reference [to the idea that] there are two or three different pieces and the idea that we are doing this around the sex differences movement and the study of differences. You always have an interesting take. You[re] always kind of like, “Yes, it’s all about differences but it’s also about...” I love that phrase at the end of the power book: “Sharing of sharing these differences.” Where do you think we are now in feminist psychology? What do you think has happened with that movement that Naomi has started? What has been the good and the bad of studying the differences?

HL: I think it is really complicated. There is the idea that we are focusing so much on the differences and why is that? Why not focus on the similarities [and] why not focus on what women and men share instead of [their] differences? Then there is the perspective [that] you have to acknowledge the differences or you will never get anywhere. I know that when we started, the idea was to show how few differences there really were. I think where we are now, and this is really hard to sum up, I think we understand that the differences are so much intertwined with the context that we live in [that] it is just really hard to sort them out. It’s really hard to say [that] these are differences because if we were living in some other context, in some other way, the differences would be different. I think we are starting to understand that a lot better. I am not sure where we are on differences. I think a few years ago people would have said that the whole idea of setting differences is just out the window [and] we shouldn’t really be focusing on that anymore.

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I think we might have swung back a little bit from that now and I am not really exactly sure why. I mean, I am not exactly sure what is going on. I think the zeitgeist in psychology in general [is that] there is a kind of physiology/neuroscience thing that is taking over many of the fields. Now we have social-neuroscience, which is sort of interesting. Maybe that’s part of it; maybe it’s also that people are more comfortable with the idea that there are some differences and that doesn’t necessarily mean that we should not have equal rights and responsibilities. So maybe that’s it. I think at the beginning of this movement you had to really work hard to prove that women were not any different from men because all the differences were in the direction that women were inferior. You had to show that that was not true. I think maybe we are too comfortable. I don’t know, but I think people are starting to think, “Well yeah, there could be some differences. It doesn’t mean that one is better.” I do not know [though]. I think this is still a very complicated question.

KV: Do you think we have reached the goal that you were hoping for in the late ‘70s, the idea of sharing in our differences?

HL: I think we are closer to it than we were. I chair my department now so I have a lot of female and male faculty members in my department and I think a few years back, maybe ten years ago, I would have expected to run into different reactions to me [and] to my leadership from the male and female faculty members. I don’t now. I watch my young male colleagues work with their wives to juggle family responsibilities. I don’t know if it’s 50-50, but it is certainly taken much more seriously than it used to be. I think in that

corner of the world things changed quite a bit. The differences are not so pronounced, but I recognize that it is just a little corner of the world.

KV: [What do] you think [about the] future where there are people that still wonder [if] we need women's studies [and if] we still need gender studies? Where do you think the future of feminist psychology is going?

HL: I think we still need it. I am not the least dubious about that and a part of my certainty comes from the work I have been doing on pay equity because that is a really concrete measure of how things are. I think you know you can't argue with the fact that women are still earning a whole lot less than men and that might seem like a crass and mundane thing to focus on, it's just a really good indicator of where we stand, I think. When you study that, you start to see all these issues that are as yet to be resolved. A lot of them have to do with families, with motherhood and fatherhood and how that has worked out. How did society help work that out?

The message that you get the more you study it is that still the things that women do, whether we are talking about the jobs that they mostly hold or the domestic work they mostly do, are just not valued by the society to the same extent as what men do. Although there are a lot of women doing very highly paid, well recognized work now, [that] didn't used to be the case, and that is a huge advance. I get what people are saying. There didn't used to be women news anchors, you didn't hear women's voices, even women on the radio were a rarity. When I was a kid, you know, it was only male voices that were supposed to have the resonance. Now I know a few people laugh when they hear that, so yeah, we have made a huge amount of progress, but the idea that we are there, I think, is absolutely wrong. I think there is a whole lot of work left to be done and I think if people are not focusing on it in some academic context and helping students... I mean, I am still getting students, [and] a lot of them are like, "Don't sweat the small stuff, we have got it made really," but there are still quite a few students that [gape] and are very surprised when they hear the way things are and they can see that they are going to run into problems in certain ways

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KV: What kind of advice would you give to one of those students who is very surprised and says, "I want to be a feminist psychologist. I want to do this. I am an undergrad and this is going to be my future,"? What kind of advice do you give them?

HL: Well I would say do look for a mentor, [and] do look for support, because I think it is still possible for people to try to marginalize you or to try to trivialize your concerns and the last thing you need when you need to work hard on something is to begin to doubt whether what you are doing is important. You really need to know that you are doing something important and worth while and you need other people's support to keep that vision. So that's one thing. What other advice would I give? I think that is the main advice actually, I mean, there are all kinds of practical advice you can give people, [like] where you are most likely to get a job and stuff like that.

KV: You have kind of intrigued me because you said you would tell them to definitely find a mentor. If you could go back and give advice to yourself, going into your doctoral program, would that be the advice you would have given yourself?

HL: I think so. I think I would tell the old me to go back and look harder for a mentor or at least mentoring from several people. I think I was very independent and I figured that I could figure it all out by myself and I did figure a lot of it out. I think I did fine but I think I could have done better if I would have had somebody. But there were not people interested in mentoring young women graduate students at that time, so I do not beat myself up over it. When I was an undergraduate there was only one woman faculty member in my department. She never mentored anybody overtly, but she was a bit of an inspiration just by being there. I think she provided a possible self for me but I think I was probably too scared and shy at that time to even approach her and ask her for more mentoring but I am sure she would have been happy to give it.

KV: Now, is there anything [that] I have not asked you about, [like] your personal or professional development as a feminist, as a feminist psychologist, or events you were involved in? Or anything that you really wish I had asked or really would like to have down for the record?

HL: I cannot think of anything so much, except that what an interesting experience it has been for me to be chair of a department because when I first decided that I would accept this chair position, several of the women students in the department that I didn't even know, stopped by my office and said, "We are so glad you decided to be chair [and] we are so proud of it." I did not realize that that would make a difference to them. And that was a key thing, and that reinforced my decision and made me feel glad that I had done it. And the other thing about being chair is what I started to say earlier, that to me, it was a really good example of how, in some small way, things are changing and have changed for the better. I work very well with my male and female colleagues, even the few who really would not define themselves as feminists, but we work very well together and there is a lot of mutual respect. I think that that is amazing in a way, that things have reached that point.

KV: I know you have kind of started around the gender research centre as well. Do you feel that you had that same balance with the gender research center?

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HL: The Center for Gender Studies? I don't know whether to call it an organization. It really is not. It is a unit. It is very much [an] all volunteer, no budget, low budget operation and it is mostly women that have chosen to work with it but we have a few men who have been very helpful. Students [were also] mostly women, but a few very interested and committed men [were involved] over the years. I think it is that center that I would like to have seen more successful and probably would be, if I was not a department chair, but you can do only so many things with your time. I think it has been

important, and it is most important because it provided a venue for students to be involved and that is just a key thing.

KV: There has been some really interesting research coming out of those groups. I really got interested looking at it. You may not see it as successful as you would have liked it, but it definitely looks like they have been very productive.

HL: I think we had home coming last month in Radford and one of the things they decided to do is an alumni teaching day where you invite back alumni to teach classes or give talks. We invited a couple of the people who have worked with the center over the years to come back. These two women came back and they gave just amazing talks. They were really inspiring. That made me feel like, "Hey you know we have provided..."

KV: Who were they? Would you mind saying?

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HL: One was Sudie Back, who is now Dr. Sudie Back. [She] works at MUSC (Medical University of South Carolina) in South Carolina. The other was Cynthia Hall, who never was deeply involved with the center but who performed in our conference and who worked closely with Jeff Aspelmeier, who is one of the advisory board members. She is now a doctoral candidate at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. They came [and] I asked them to talk about how they got where they are and how gender had been important to them in their work, and [I asked them] what they were doing now. They did that each in about half an hour, and you could have heard a pin drop in the room. [That] was amazing because a lot of the students were there for extra credit. They did not have to be there. Usually that is kind of a restless crowd, but I think it really was inspiring to those students to see that somebody who was here has gone on to be so successful and have such an interesting career.

KV: I have a feeling that they would have said the same thing about you in Northwestern. Well, thank you so much for doing this with us today.