

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Mary Gergen

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford and Laura Ball

*Toronto, ON
June 19, 2007*

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Alexandra Rutherford, PhD
Project Director, Psychology's Feminist Voices
alexr@yorku.ca

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Toronto, ON
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MG: Mary Gergen, Interview participant

AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

L: Laura Ball, Interviewer

AR- An interview with Mary Gergen in Toronto, on June 19th, 2007.

MG- My maiden name was McCanney, middle name is Kathryn. I was born December 12th, 1938 in Tyler, Minnesota, which is in the prairies, out in southwestern Minnesota.

AR-The first question I want to ask- and this will just lead us who knows where- is how...tell us a little bit about the evolution of your identity as a feminist. How did that happen?

MG- You know, because I do social constructionist work and work in narratives, I realize I have choices about the story I want to tell. And there are many stories, and whether they fit together or not is another question. But, let's say that I was the oldest grandchild of about seven or eight grandchildren- who knows, numerous little babies- and the first girl, the only girl in that group until my sister was born. So, I spent my whole childhood being the oldest female, sort of boss of the tribe. So, I think that started me out in thinking that I was a special, smart person who could be, you know, an independent person. Then, I remember in high school, I was a car hop and then promoted to cook. And I remember having this conversation with this other woman who I worked with and I said, "You know, if women just got together, they could control the world." So those are my childhood stories about it.

So I think that I...you know, I did well in school and I went to college. I didn't have huge aspirations because my father was not really a feminist, but he certainly wanted me to have an education. But he didn't...I remember we had an argument once where he said that girls shouldn't be paperboys because boys needed that job to learn how to, you know, take care of money and do work and be disciplined, and they didn't want to waste that job on girls who wouldn't need it. I mean, this is part of the world I lived in at that time.

AR- Did you have any reaction to that at the time?

MG- I argued with him.

AR- You took him on.

MG- I took him on. But, basically I was very respectful of him. And they had a traditional, beautiful sort of 'Leave it to Beaver' marriage and my mom worked, I think, one day and then didn't like it. But she made great cake and bread and took care of us very well. (3:00)

So I went to college, and I ended up in a sorority- I went to the University of Minnesota- and I ended up in a sorority that was, like, the number one in academics of all the sororities and fraternities. So the pressure came from my sorority sisters to do well in school, and to succeed and graduate. And at that time, there were not that many females who graduated from college.

AR- This would have been the late 50s, then?

MG- This was 1960.

AR- 1960.

MG- And I was on a fast track. And I wanted to have a career, and I wanted to get married, and I wanted to have children. So I did all that by the time I was twenty three.

AR- Wow.

MG- And then, you know...while my children were little I started to go to graduate school. And I think I more or less assumed equality, assumed that I could do anything. And my academic achievements were enough that really I just managed to do quite well. I did have one sexist experience and that was when I was in graduate school, just going part time because I lived near the university and I wanted to do something interesting. I...no before that, I was graduating and I had the top position in the Education and in Psychology [Dept]...I was in Education and English and Theatre. And I went to my advisor and I said, "You know, what could I do [about] going on to more school? You know, give me some ideas about a Master's degree or something." He said, "You're Catholic, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "And you're engaged?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, go home and have your babies." And I never forgot that one.

AR- That's helpful [sarcastically].

MG- You know, I was taken aback by that. So then, anyway, I eventually ended up getting a- eventually, eventually- getting a PhD and becoming involved in Women's Studies and continuing on from there in a Psychology-Women's Studies kind of commitment in my professional life.

AR- Okay, well let me slow down before we get there.

MG- Okay.

AR- You got your PhD at Temple, is that...?

MG- Yes. (5:26)

AR- So tell me about how you got into Psychology and Women's Studies. How did that transpire?

MG- I had a Master's degree that I had just gotten with my, sort of, left hand. And I had hopes that when my children were a little older I would become, like a counselor, or something. But I didn't do that. I had a Master's degree, and I worked as a research assistant at Harvard. And I began going to Psychology meetings and realizing that the times had changed and women were getting their PhDs and women were having jobs as professors. And I had this huge crying jag, I remember it was in... on the way to APA in Toronto, thinking I'm a failure, you know. I'm just this, you know, sort of wannabe psychologist, I don't have any status or position. I'm just this little housewife, helper, part-time worker person. So, I decided to go back to graduate school and get my own PhD, and then start developing my own professional identity in a more fulsome manner. And I went to Temple and I think my feminism was always there but more latent. And it was not a commitment born of suffering as much as of a notion of justice and more out of a position of strength than of vulnerability. Actually, there's some research- I don't know if you know it- that, in general, feminists of my ilk, feminists in Division 35, say that other women suffer a lot, but they didn't suffer so much. So, I think it's a way of constructing your life that does not necessarily bear witness to suffering and to exclusion. And I had an access to a graduate program and I had a woman as a dissertation advisor. But, actually, I went to her because she was a woman but I don't think she particularly was happy to have these women students all clustering around her. Back off.

AR- Was she one of the only women in the...department?

MG- Yes, the only.

AR- Okay. And what was her name?

MG- And she kind of got overwhelmed, I think, with female students who thought she would be, like, mother hen. And she was, like, not mother hen, please. Ah, Louise Kidder. You know her name?

AR- Yeah, I do. Yeah, that's neat.

MG- Yeah. I mean, she just was a very professional woman doing her thing and trying to do her thing without being overburdened, I believe.

At any rate, I had this advantage-disadvantage. The advantage being that I had worked for my husband and then became married to my husband and then I had my home seminars; so that I had a strong support, and a colleague and a friend and a supporter. And that was the good side of it, of course. But the bad side was, you know, [being] in the shadow of the big tree. So when I became involved more deeply, in feminist studies, feminist theory, Women's Studies, that was mine, you know. So I had that as my own particular niche to be involved in. And I just loved the literature, I loved the exploration, I loved enriching Psychology with these issues, I loved bringing it into Narrative Study. So...(9:38)

AR- What were some of your first...what was some of your first exposure to feminist works and feminist literature and theory, do you remember?

MG- I'm trying to think, to go back, back, back. I think that I was self-taught, in a way. And I think I probably started with Sociology. The Sociology departments in book stores were where you found feminist literature; there was this little tiny book shelf down at the bottom of the Sociology section. And I would go there in various bookstores, in London and in New York and Philadelphia and find these books and read these varieties of books. Then we had a sabbatical year in Paris, and I was exposed, somewhat, to the French feminist work. And then back in the States, the rising up of...well, Gilligan's book was published in '82. So there was a variety then of points of view, you might say, in feminism. But they were all...I was always a little uneasy with everything.

AR- Yeah, yeah. Well, let's come back to that. But I don't want to skip this question which is: Did you...what was your involvement with the second wave of the women's movement?

MG- Second wave of feminism. Well, the 60s, the 70s - time of social unrest. All of the social movements were together: Civil Rights, Anti-War, and Feminism. So, I would say that probably I was more involved in Anti-War interests than I was in specifically feminist issues of the marching variety. So it was always there and a part of being there, and there also being involved somewhat with supporting women's, like, resource centers that were developing and more or less intellectual activities and writing activities. But, I don't recall that I ever did any marching.

AR- Yeah, yeah.

MG- Sorry.

AR- A lot of people have talked about their feminism being just sort of one aspect of their activism in that period and, you know, so that's...it was just a really heady time for a lot of things.

MG- Yes, yes it was. And Ms Magazine, you know, more or less reading and being involved in probably, some fundraising kinds of activities; but, no bra burning.

AR- Okay. Well, tell me a little about- and Laura, again, feel free to jump in because I, you know, I talk so feel free to kick me or jump in if something occurs to you. Would you like to ask a question, or... at this point?

L- I think I'll wait.

AR- Okay, okay. Tell me a little bit about Women's Studies at Temple, or beyond. Because I know you've been involved in both Psychology and Women's Studies. (13:17)

MG- I don't think there was any Psychology of Women offered, at least not around in Social Psych or Developmental Psych when I was there- possibly in Sociology. When I came to Penn State, I submitted an application to be a member of the Women's Studies Department. But that was voluntary, and they approved me, but there was no financial relationship- it was free. If I wanted to be a part of their department that was fine, but it wasn't...my contract was with the Psych Department. And so they mostly ran on goodwill and voluntary work from members of other departments; they were not in themselves a department. And, in fact, the woman who was in charge of it, I think, was a Master's degree counselor who kind of did things that were womanist, or something. But then during the course of my 21 years at Penn State, they hired a full time person and then they hired some more people who were tenure-track people in the Women's Studies Department.

AR- Who were psychologists?

MG- No, who were this and that.

AR- Okay, okay.

MG- Agriculture, Sociology, Criminal Justice, just...Economics, whoever, you know. But, the new hires were coming actually out of Women's Studies programs elsewhere.

AR- Okay.

MG- I taught at a regional campus in Philadelphia. And there we had a small campus, 1500 students and five women who were in the situation that I was in; sort of voluntary Women's Studies teachers. And so we developed a minor in Women's Studies on our little campus totally based on the giving up of a course in Communication for a Women's Studies, English Communication/Women's Studies. And in fact I retired full-time a year ago, but I taught the feminist theory course this year for \$2,500. It was a gift, you know. And they now asked me if I would be interested in doing it next year, so I probably will because I love teaching feminist theory.

And so we offer Women's Studies courses, but then what people do is they try to teach a course in English that will be like English Women's Writers. And that will get to be credited, then, for the Women's Studies minor. And then they can use that as a minor for

another major or they can go to University Park for their last two years and then finish off and even get a major in Women's Studies.

So that's the academic side. Now, also at the other campuses there would be a, you know, a cozy area where you could go and be together and have special programs. But I used to get really upset because all the programs- except for lesbians, and including sometimes lesbians- all the programs were the doom and gloom of being a woman: violence, rape, sexual harassment, cold climate classroom, old age. I mean, anything- date rape- anything that you could think of that was negative about being a woman, you would find at the Women's Center- depression. You know, I thought why not a little celebration of being a woman, and a little, like, comfort and a little cheer, a little optimism about what it was? Not always a doom and gloom scenario. So, I used to write cross letters about, you know- or encouraging letters- how about something like why it's great to be a girl? (17:50) You know, so that's my take on these things. Take Back the Night, for example. I thought it should be a celebration. You would go out en masse in costumes and go into bars and into alleys and into nightclubs and you just fill the streets and control them. You know, there should be a night like that.

L- That sounds fun.

MG- You like that?

AR- That sounds fun. Yeah, yeah.

L- Yeah.

MG- Of course there are now more like Girls Nights Out and Girls Weekends and Girls Vacations, girls of all ages, where people do that. The Red Hat Society- do you know what that is?

AR- I don't know the Red Hat. No, no.

MG- Do you know, there's a poem, "When I'm old I'll wear a red hat and a purple dress"- purple coat, something. And the idea is, at that time red and purple didn't go. And I don't care.

AR- Right. So you were just busting out. Yeah.

MG- And so now there are these women who will wear red hats and they go out and they just are glamorous.

AR- Oh, that's neat.

MG- And it's actually a website and it's actually an organization now and you can buy little earrings with red hats on them. I mean, it's, you know, it's not a half a breath away from commercialism, right, whenever there's an activity or a movement.

AR- Yeah. Well, tell me about...okay, you're at Penn State now, and you're in Psychology although you are developing Women's Studies as well. But what...tell me a little bit about your life as a psychologist and how you began to do feminist work in Psychology.

MG- Okay, yeah. In the 80s, I became interested in narratives and narrative forms. And from a constructionist perspective, your narratives, whatever you tell about yourself- tell me about your life- is not really your story, because your story is already preempted in a sense by cultural forms that you must fit into. And so, as a woman there are sets of stories you have to tell about yourself and if you don't tell them a certain way it will seem weird. And one of the ideas I had which sort of got lost along the way, in a way, is if there's something that's not in a story (20:34) then it doesn't compute; you don't know what to make of it. And originally I was thinking about teenagers having babies and realizing that there aren't many good cultural stories about that- there weren't too many. Like, it's neither here nor there. You look in your childhood fairy tales, there's nothing... Cinderella had a baby and she kept it by the fireplace. I mean, no, it's not in there. So, in a sense, it doesn't matter. You can have a baby or not have a baby.

Anyway, that was the original thought I had that: what are the narratives, and what kind of narratives should be made available that would help people make sense of some of their activities that might interfere with their successful adaptation to adulthood as girls. So that was the original impetus.

So, I thought, what I want to do, then, is study what are the narrative forms available to us. And so some research that I did back then was to take popular autobiographies- the things that people actually read, that everyday people read, not fancy Virginia Wolfe, you know, but just stuff that comes...pop, yeah, you know, because biography and autobiography are highly read. I mean, they're in the bestseller list all the time. So I wanted to compare men's stories and women's stories. And I tried to make some balance, you know, like athletes, singers, business people and then I kind of hit a little gap because there are no women, there were no women entrepreneurs that were making money like Getty or Donald Trump. You know, where's- well, I guess there's Ivana, but, at that time there was Donald. And so I read these different autobiographies and discovered that the men's forms totally conformed to what Joseph Campbell called *The Quest Narrative*. Everything in the autobiography is totally about making the success, whatever that highpoint of success is: Lee Iacocca, President of Chrysler, and so forth.

But the women's stories were funny because they were all in their own right. They weren't just the wives of successful people, they were successful people in their own right. And so there was that *Quest* story, but on top of it was another story or two about family, about love, about children. And so the women's narratives in one sense were very complicated but messy; they didn't follow one form. You could be up on love and down on career, or down on both. And the stories were very embodied. They were about bodies. And so you could start to see the importance, for example, of having children. Every women's autobiography described the development of their breasts when they

were twelve. And what that said about who they were, you know, they were early, they were late. You know, Beverly Sills, the opera singer was just disgusted she had such big breast and Martina Navratilova never had any, you know. And each of them is, like, struggling with their identities because of this. Men don't have bodies - hardly at all. Their bodies are like their cars and they run them until they run down. And it makes them so mad, you know, that body failed them. Ansell Adams, the great photographer talks about that. All of a sudden at the end of his life: "My body failed me as I was about to do this tremendous project." And you never heard throughout the rest of the whole autobiography that he even had a body until he's about dead. So their private lives- almost entirely missing. Women's- they were there, there, there. So, I realized that for women, the multiplicity of their lives, the complexity of their lives was much greater in terms of what they could say.

AR- Right, right. (25:22)

MG- Now, I don't want to make too much out of feelings and events that are going on. You know, I want to be careful not to leap too far out of the narrative form to say "And this is life." But...so I tried to talk about the issues of difference and what it meant for women's lives. And then I started writing it in a way that I wanted to, like, question narrative form itself; that narrative form in some sense was a limitation on lives. And so I wrote this one piece where I tried to break up the narrative form, like, into ribbons of text. And I inserted quotations from feminists about issues of narrative and quotations from the autobiographies and then my words about the autobiographies. And just kind of hodge-podged it together. So the feminism took on this issue of form as well as content.

AR- Okay.

MG-But I lost the teenage babies along the way.

AR- Oh yeah, they fell out of the story.

Well tell us a little bit about feminist social constructionism and how that...how you came to that and how that kind of unfolded.

MG- Okay I'll tell one story. 1986. I was offered the opportunity, as I saw it- you know, when you're new in a job you don't know the opportunities from the 'Oh my God, she took it.' They were doing a colloquium series and it was called The Philosophical Colloquium. And it was invited by my colleague who was a philosopher and he asked me if I would do a colloquium. And I said "Oh, yes," and I thought to myself: I want to do it on feminism and what is the impact of feminist thought on various disciplines. And so I invited far and wide, and I had a wonderful colloquium, I did. I had fabulous people came and talk from Anthropology and Religion and Sociology and Psychology. It was international; I invited a couple of friends of mine from Europe.

AR- Who were some of the folks, do you remember?

MG-Well, this is a time when, you know...Rhoda Unger came.

AR- Yeah, yeah.

MG- And Peggy Sanday, who was a well-known anthropologist. She did a ...one thing she did was a sort of analysis of a rape case at the University of Pennsylvania. It's very interesting kind of work that she did, and international things too, of course, as an anthropologist. And I invited Ruth Bleier and another biologist, Ruth Hubbard, who came.

AR- Wow.

MG- I know, I mean, that was very exiting. I had a philosopher from Penn State. My friend Verena Aebischer who's in Paris and Joan Meyer who's in Amsterdam. And then I got John Shotter to come, who's my friend. And then Ken [Gergen] also spoke a little bit, just a little bit. And I had a couple of women from Harvard who were involved in Theology. I'll see who else I can....I had a Jungian psychoanalyst who came. (29:18)

Anyway, it was a diverse group of pretty- oh, Jill Morawski I think was there- very interesting women [Leonore Tiefer was also there]. And I tried to bring the women in my campus together with these women. And then I did a book out of this kind of gathering. They all wrote original papers. I mean, I had no idea how much I was asking. And then I wrote a paper. And in this paper what I wanted to do was figure out if you took feminist ideas seriously- ideas about relationships and connections and openness and honesty, I sort of had a notion of what you might call feminist values- if you applied them to psychological theory and to psychological research, what would the research look like? How would it be different? And of course it would be very different. I mean, the idea that an experimenter has no relationship to the subjects. I mean, everything is a relationship and you must acknowledge that. And then the whole idea that you take subjects and you just rip them out of their everyday lives, tuck them down in a classroom, give them a survey, and now you know about their self-esteem. You know, I mean, so disembodied and so de-contextualized. So the idea of respecting the context, respecting relationship, respecting people's relationships with one another. And then as the researcher, acknowledging your presence when you write about things, instead of acting like 'this happened', you know, 'I had nothing to do with it, it was, like, facts.' And then the idea of 'for the purpose of'.

So that was the, sort of, effort to congeal some of these longings and interests into a practical package where there would be some commitment to a process or to a method that would have a feminist kind of connection. And then, social constructionism was just developing then as a frame. And what that would mean then for, especially for thinking about the language of things. What kind of language do you use. Variables do not come with names. Factor analysis, for example, doesn't come with a name. Naming is a political act. And so, let's be reflexive about what kind of naming we're doing. So that was another facet of the research: integrating feminist studies into Psychology.

Everything that I did after that always had that sort of sensibility to it even if it wasn't like right in your face. And then many things that I did after that were...like, I did a piece for the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* on innovative methods. So, in that sense, trying to bring together methods that I thought would be more, sort of, 'feminist friendly'.

AR- How did that go over?

MG- Oh, fine because it wasn't my task force. So, I was like the little worker bunny that actually gave them stuff. I mean, I had an article out of it. But, I had a lot more in that article that ended up in the introduction to the whole two volumes about why these methods were conducive to feminist ideas.

AR- Neat, neat.

MG- So, that's another thing that I did that I felt good about was in the *Psych of Women Quarterly* they added 'Qualitative' that says...it used to say 'Quantitative Research' and now it says "Quantitative and Qualitative Research", to try to open the door for more diversity in terms of doing feminist research that's not the typical quantitative work. Not that quantitative work can not be useful or that it might not be seen as 'feminist' or 'social constructionist'. It's another discourse, it's a symbolic discourse. And so, if you need it and think it's useful and you have an awareness of its limitations, go for it. (34:45).

L- If I can ask a quick question. Earlier on you'd said that, I think it was in the early 80s that there was this plethora of different feminist ideas that you'd been exposed to and that at the time you weren't quite comfortable with how you'd fit in that. I was wondering if you could speak a bit more to that.

MG- You know the problem with answering a question like that is to...it's very hard to really transport yourself back twenty years, twenty years, and not bring today with you. So, I'm going to pretend that I'm doing this.

So, I never could....I was very much in favor of the idea of supporting women in Psychology and that's where Division 35 of APA really started and I was at, I think, the first meeting. So I was very much in favor of that. But the basic idea was let's join the existing paradigms and clean it up. You know, get the bad stuff out of there; get women and girls to be a part of research. You know, you've got to double the size of your sample if you're going to look at women as the male-female difference. That's costly. So if you just do one or the other; so to try to get more women into the studies and to try to look at women's topics, all of that- fine. But, there wasn't a realization that it was, like, you know, going into the house of the master and really not dismantling a thing. And that to this day the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* is a ghettoized journal and maybe there are a lot of ghettos so that may not be unique today in Psychology. But, there's never been much interest in what the feminists are doing or the women's Psychology group is doing. The only people who have any interest are in the Division of

Sexual Minorities and they sometimes ban together or other minority groups sometimes do. But it has never really had a major impact on the field at large. So, and I think partly it has to do with the fact of trying to play catch-up ball participating and being a part of. I'm a friend of Alice Eagly's and Alice is kind of right in the mainstream there and she said, "I'm a feminist before I start my research and after my research is over but while I'm doing my research, you know, I'm a psychologist." So, I don't know if she'd say that today, but, you know...

AR- She feels that 'feminist psychologist' is an oxymoron or that it's hard to...?

MG- When you're doing Psychology it's a science and it has its rules and it has its ways of doing it. So you can go in there looking at a question of feminist interest. And when you go out and you're done you can, you know, vote for Hillary Clinton or something. But while you're in that paradigm you play the game.

AR- You play those rules.

MG- By the rules, yeah. And the reason- and Unger also talks like that because she says "You got to do that in order to get attention. If you don't do things according to their book, then you're just ruled out." And, you know, that's not altogether false. So, you know, that's an issue. But, you know, that's a sort of discomfort.

Then, the whole idea from the standpoint position that experience- your experience- is the truth. (39:05) It just can't be. Experience is formed in a cultural context, its meaning. When you open your mouth to say how you feel, you're in culture. And that can't be avoided. And we are given, within us, we are already...we are invaded to the bare bones with cultural meanings. So we can't have any pure experience. And so those are the...And also the, you know, that women's reality is better? I mean, that was the other side of the coin: play with boys or women are better. I'm not sure how this is going to fly in Cincinnati. So that's...

But I do think that a social constructionist position can be very exciting and it can be liberating and, as I said earlier today, you can do anything as long as you kind of put the brackets around it: 'In this work I am doing this, recognizing that this is a constructed reality of the moment...of the day, of the year.'

AR- Well, it's emancipatory in the way it allows you to then choose your discourse or frameworks, right? You can choose to be the Alice Eagly for the moment, you can choose to be the, you know, this social constructionist...well, the feminist standpoint person for the moment...

MG- Right.

AR-...and so on. Do you have another question? No, okay. Well, one of the questions I had, that is a more theoretical question, I suppose is: as you became more...maybe this

isn't the right language. I was going to say, as you became more committed to a social constructionist standpoint...

MG- You can say that.

AR- Okay. How did... one of the things I struggle with is: how is social constructionism different, or what does it...how is feminist social constructionism different than just social constructionism?

MG- Right, right. I would say that social constructionism is, let's say, a philosophical position. The feminist part is the add-on which is my particular value stance. And so it's like hitching this wagon to the star or the star to the wagon. And it wouldn't have to be together.

AR- Okay.

MG- But for me, it's very congenial. The other thing that you can move into from a social constructionist position that is very congenial to feminism is: if people together create their realities, then the emphasis is on the communicative patterns among people, that it's through collaboration and cooperation that discourses are produced. So, it emphasizes a kind of a cooperative- you know, this is sort of sweet feminism- but, you know, people together; a relational processes through which reality is created. So you can start to focus on relational processes, and that can be a topic for research. And I see that as very congenial to a feminist- doesn't have to be- but congenial to a feminist perspective.(42:49)

AR- Okay. In your estimation and your opinion, what impact has Feminist Psychology, in all of its stripes, had on mainstream Psychology to date?

MG- Well, if mainstream is kind of the small metal box in the center of things- nothing. But, there have been outgrowths in every department, in every subdivision. You have eighty people here, you probably have developmental psychologists who are feminists and who study women's issues and so forth. In your department, or your division- whatever it's called- probably in Social Psychology you have someone doing gender issues. Gender issues are probably happening all around, and maybe even in the heartland, somewhat. But there are some, what I would call anti-feminist forces too. And the one that I worry about, concern myself with, is the Evolutionary psychologists.

AR- We'll keep our eye on them.

MG- Yeah, keep your eye on them. Yeah, I mean, the naturalizing of gender differences and aggression, you know, the whole drill. But I think what happens...I have a theory of change. It's the childhood game of "Captain May I." Do you have that in Canada? Or "Mother May I"?

AR-" Mother May I," yeah.

MG- “Mother May I.” While the authority figures’ backs are turned, people creep. They creep away from wherever they were and then they act like they were standing still. And I think in that sense- the sort of creeping at night- there are sensitivities. For example, people don’t use sexist language in the same way anymore. They don’t just say ‘he’ when they mean ‘he or she’. So the sensitivity to language has increased. The importance of gender issues has increased. The importance of women having a backlash if you step out of line has increased. So, the presence of women- in fact, Psychology has now become a feminist science. And the more you go toward the human side as opposed to Perception or Neural, the more women you get. And that’s going to have an effect and I think it has had an effect. And I think as- I see you have the Handbook of Qualitative Research on your bookshelf, wonderful book- that the more people experiment with qualitative methods, the more they try new ways of writing, the more they use the internet to do things they couldn’t do in print the more there’ll be a liberation and a loosening, you might say- for men and women in the field. And so I take back my total negativity that I started with. I talked myself into a really important change that’s going to happen in this century as there are more women and more willingness to experiment and more sensitivity to the literature that you may read that’s in Sociology or in qualitative inquiry or the more you take risks doing interesting things. I noticed, for example, that there have been some books written by women who have done experiments with their bodies of various sorts and then written about these experiences as a way of reframing a feminist issue; and yet doing it from a kind of post-structuralist, post-modern position. And so it’s not like ‘this is the truth and my body tells it’ but ‘I did this and this is the experience that having, and maybe I could look at it this way or that way’, recognizing their own poly-vocality. (47:34) I mean that’s another thing. You know, what is the self, what is identity? Can we see it as multiple? Can we see our voices as poly-vocal?

I did a recent piece for a narratives’ book where my colleague, **Sara Davis**, and I went out and interviewed people and then we asked them if they could tell their story differently; because even if you get an interview from somebody, first of all, you’re with them. I’m me today for you, with you. I would be somebody else in another encounter. And so you interview somebody but the interview is really a mutual achievement. And that voice that you gather that day is just one voice. And are people aware of that? And it turned out that if you asked people could they tell their story in a different way- we asked them to tell a significant event in their life, anything. And then we said: could you tell it in another way? And people were more or less able to do that. But it was funny. I asked the man who does the handyman work at our house if he could tell me a story. And he told me a story about walking off a job; that he didn’t know why, he just did it. And then a week later he’d come up to me and he’d say, “Another reason...” And it started a whole seed of poly-vocality in him. So, what does that mean for our interview data? What have we gathered? We might as well at least reflect about it and maybe signal in our writing or our presentations, signal this little, you know, ‘this is me and you, today, here, for this purpose, and this voice.’

AR- It's a point in time, it's a snapshot. Stephanie Riger has written some interesting stuff about snapshots versus videotapes and what the analogy would do for how we do research in Psychology, which I think is quite interesting. Although, this is a videotape, it's still a snapshot in a way, you know, of one point in time, one interaction and one relationship.

Let me go back to what you said earlier about anti-feminist forces. And I just was curious if in your own career or personal life, for that matter, has there been... have you had any experiences with those anti-feminist forces in your own career? Have there been... have you had experiences at Penn State, for example, when, you know, you've been doing not only feminist stuff but narrative stuff and social constructionist stuff; not exactly the same kinds of things that a lot of other people are doing. And what has been that experience for you?

MG- Well, I recognize that I was a member of the department that is probably as traditional as you could ever hope. But because I was in the hinterlands- I used to think of it as like the Soviet Union and they thought of themselves as Moscow and I was out in Kiev, or... you know, Kurdistan or something. So they let me have a lot more freedom than I would have had if I - if I had been in that department I would have had a lot of difficulties. I wouldn't have gotten tenure, I think, because for one, where would I have gotten research money? And what kind of research money did I really need? I mean, partly my research was organized so I wouldn't need a lot of money. So that was one thing. I mean, and I recognized that I was a second class citizen in many ways from their perspective. But because I had a whole international group and other people that I could be in connection with, I was okay. But I did recognize that I was, you know, the Hungarian citizen, or whatever, in this realm. But I, on the other hand, had views about them. (52:05)

AR- It goes both ways.

MG- It went both ways, right. So that was one thing. The other thing is that there's not as much hostility as there is indifference, in some ways. But I do want to say that if you do feminist work- look at the program of this conference. On the last day you find the feminist stuff, when people may have gone home or whatever. If you look in the audiences, they tend to be segregated audiences too, very often. So there's a kind of an expectation that you're going to be treated as kind of second class and you kind of, you know it. And then how do you deal with that, you know? It's also possible that maybe a guy who runs rats feels the same. Who knows?

AR- Yeah, yeah.

MG- The concern I have now is this pendulum swinging so strongly to the Neural and the Biological. I think it spells difficulty for anybody who's not in that biological camp. And all the mappings of the brain and stuff going on, it's not necessarily going to be the best thing right now for us.

AR- Well, that leads me to a question about your thoughts on the future of, I was going to say Feminist Psychology, but maybe I'll just leave it as- what's your... what are your thoughts on the future of Feminism and Psychology?

MG- Yeah, yeah, that's interesting because of course the editor of *Feminism and Psychology* journal sees that as a relational thing. I would say that right now of all the Social Sciences, except Economics, Feminism has a harder time in Psychology than it does in some of the other disciplines. Although maybe that's the grass-is-greener phenomenon, I don't know.

AR- But I've heard so many people repeat that- other than Economics and maybe Political Science...

MG- Oh, right, right

AR- ... Psychology is one of the most conservative disciplines, yeah, yeah.

MG- Right, right, in the United States; I'm not sure, I think Canada's pretty close. I'll tell you where action goes on. And that is, except for the United States and maybe Canada, think of Britain and the Commonwealth Colonies, the other ones. There's exciting stuff goes on in Britain, really exciting stuff. And that's where you'd find a lot of good things. Nicola Gavey in New Zealand is now going to be the head, co-editing *Feminism & Psychology*. And she is what I would call a post-modern feminist psychologist. But there are exciting things that go on there. (55:11). I think for some reason they have a support group with each other. It's a small enough country. I don't know why, but they do do a lot of exciting things there.

AR- So do you have any advice for young feminists in Psychology or future feminists in Psychology?

MG- Alright, let's see. For Laura. I don't like the advice: behave till you're tenured, because I think it's a self-mutilation. You'll be dead then and then what? So I would say always keep a sort of a creative, rebel, spirited, backburner thing going that is alive in you. And if you have to conform to certain kinds of rules and regulations, you do it I guess. And you don't cause a lot of trouble so people hate you. But, you keep alive and you be curious, and you look outside the limits of the field and you try to influence politically where you can. And join together and find others who might be interested in going in the direction you're going in. You know, be daring, but not foolhardy; if you can do that- do both of those things. Yeah. I think you can get away with more than you think you can, because sometimes people don't even notice what you've done that's a transition from 'this is the really real truth that I've discovered here' to 'this is one way of putting things.' You know, there are ways of signaling that allow you more freedom. And you stretch it where you can.

AR- That sounds like good advice. I'm conscious of time although I can think of a million things I want to ask you, but maybe I can continue afterwards. Let me just ask

you one more question which is: is there anything that we haven't asked you that you would like to share that you think is...you know, that you would like to express that we haven't touched on?

MG- Well, another day, another point of view, another thing to say. I think when you're finished you always feel like 'Oh, I'm not done'. One of the things that I mentioned earlier today that I didn't mention now is that what I've been doing lately is performance things, and writing things that are like little play-lettes, or something that breaks the mold of traditional form. You know, you can't always do that but sometimes there's an audience where you can try something out. At APA one year- this is another interest I have that's a feminist interest, and it's a more general interest, but it's an interest against fear. I am against fear. I'm against being secure. You know, like locking and keys- I'm against surveillance. In general, I see ourselves as sort of imposing our own prisons on ourselves in many ways and especially women. I noticed there was a little message that said that if you want to get let of between stops on a bus in Toronto between nine and five if you are a woman that you can. Well, maybe that's okay. But it makes you think, 'I'm in danger here.' So what I did was I did a mime. I was inspired by a mime show of a Russian comedian in London that was 'Slava and the Snow.' And so I did a mime performance in which I was this woman and I had on camouflage and I had weapons and I had a backpack and I had a mask. And I crept around, you know, afraid, you know to...anyway, I tried to illustrate the limitations- where they could go at the extreme- of being afraid. I did another one on aging- I have a special interest in aging. And I did...I only did it once because it was miserable to do- but I did a sort of a striptease in kind of a May West costume. I had on a blonde wig- this was before I was blonde- I had a blonde wig, and jewelry and a hat. And I took off all these different layers of clothing. You know, did sort of ridiculous things that old women shouldn't do; they should disappear. (1:00:23)

AR- Right.

MG- That was the idea.

AR- Well, that's the philosophy of the Red Hat group too.

MG- Yeah.

AR- Right?

MG- It was kind of the Red Hat thing.

AR- It's like, here we are.

MG- And we're not disappearing.

AR- Yeah.

MG- So, illustrating it instead of giving a speech about it. So that was another thing I did. But, age has its benefits in that respect too. So that's just performance. And performance is coming alive. And partly the internet is supporting that too. Right now I'm an editor along with somebody who's really doing a lot of the work in England for an electronic Sociology newsletter coming out of Berlin where people are writing about performativity and what they're doing in terms of blending the media; you know, the video and the text, and who know what. It could be many, many things in the tech direction that could be happening. And the thing about the internet is it kind of bypasses some of the gate-keeping functions of the traditional science. So, you know, if it's 'this is going to be peer-reviewed' so people are going to be able to put that on their CVs. So that's a way around. I don't know what you can do in History. I guess you could go around. Sure you could.

AR- Oh yeah, there's lots.

MG- Lots you could do; lots, lots.

AR- Let me end there.

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