

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Geraldine Moane

*Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford & Kate Sheese
Philadelphia, PA
March 5, 2011*

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March 5, 2011

GM: Geraldine Moane, interview participant

AR: Alexandra Rutherford, interviewer

KS: Kate Sheese, interviewer

AR – An interview with Geraldine Moane on March the 5th, 2011 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. State your full name and place and date of birth for the record.

GM – My name is Geraldine Moane and I was born in Galway, which is in the West of Ireland. I lived there for 6 months with my parents and then moved to the Dublin area. That's where I lived before I left to go to California.

AR – Okay, Great! We're going to get to that, but one of the ways that we usually start these interviews is that I ask people to tell us how their feminist identity developed. I do want to ask you that, but I was kind of fooling around with the idea while you were talking today with maybe starting off with the question of how you became a liberation psychologist. Actually, I'll leave it up to you, if you'd like to talk about how you became a feminist and/or how you became liberation psychologist and/or how those two things came together.

GM – They do come together because feminist and liberation psychology are both about social justice and I think I can probably trace them back biographically to my family because both my parents are incredibly committed to fairness, particularly to gender equality. So in our family, we didn't have the boys doing this and girls doing that. We had an equal distribution of household labour. Things were done according to age, actually, rather than gender. But there was a lot of talk about gender equality and we weren't doing things that way.

AR – Did that come about because of their background?

GM – I often wondered about that actually because that was in the 1960s and '70s before feminism and one of the things I've come upon was the idea that in families of resistance, there is more gender equality. Certainly in my father's side of the family, my grandparents were both involved in the anti-colonial struggle. My grandfather [fought in] the war of independence and my grandmother was also involved in that. There's this notion that it's not necessarily explicit, but because of that there's more gender equality. We've never gotten to the root of where it came from, but both were very strong about it – in social justice issues.

AR – So I take it you have siblings then.

{2:27}

GM – Yeah, there was eight of us, actually. So that may have been another factor in my orientation because I'm in the middle (I'm number 3) of a large family.

AR – So you remember being treated very fairly in terms of gender, [and] that there weren't gendered expectations.

GM – It happened. There's all kinds of different ways, but we definitely didn't have that [mentality that] boys didn't do house work. That was not even remotely in the picture, or [the idea that] the girls wouldn't go to college. They were two things that were very common in Ireland at the time. "Girls didn't need a higher level of education because what would they need it for? They were going to be mothers." None of that.

AR – Was there a point at which you realized that that was an unusual thing, that this wasn't the way the world really worked? Or was there a point at which you really became aware of feminism?

GM – Yeah, I definitely became aware of feminism at one point. In fact, the women's movement started in Ireland sort of dramatically. A bunch of women got together and literally formed a group and they then went on national television and there was a lot of talk about it and books were coming in, like Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer and Simone de Beauvoir. In my university, a women's liberation group started and I had an experience with them. I was doing computer science at the time and I was not aware of feminism at the time. We thought we were going to make money by setting up computer dating. We set up these questionnaires and we were going to match people. This is back in the '70s. I ran into stuff right away with the group because the boys were being quite sexist and we were trying to object. They were telling us the usual stuff, "Don't spoil the fun." We were silenced, as I am now be able to say, although I didn't know it at the time. Anyway, we set up this thing at a restaurant with Olivia Newton John and some male equivalent – John Travolta I presume. So this was going to be the computer dating table and I think actually there was a cartoon as well that was quite objectionable, which we had objected to. We were overridden, and we didn't have the strength to turn around and say, "We're not going to sit at the table if you put that up." I remember being there and feeling uneasy. So the next thing, this bunch of 20 women came storming into the restaurant and Betty Carson (04:47) who was the leader came right up to the table and the guy's literally starting shaking. She literally had the classic hands at her hip [pose, and said], "How dare you put that up! Do you know how sexist that is?! We demand you take it down!" And like that (snaps finger) it was gone. (Laughs) I went straight over to join the group. So, it was a pretty dramatic introduction.

AR – Tell us about how your membership in that group kind of developed.

{5:19}

GM – I kind of went to a few meetings, but what then happened was that another group had started in town and they were called "Irish Women United." They were the most radical feminist group. There was this classic thing that sort of happened to a lot of

countries, [where they formed a] more reformist liberal kind of group and then this radical feminist group. They had produced a magazine called *Banshee* and they were selling it in the bar. I bought it and read it and went, “This is what I want.” I was with a friend as well who had the same reaction. We literally went to the next meeting in town in Dublin. As soon as I went in, I realized this is where I want to be. I stayed with that group, “Irish Women United.” My friend dropped away so I kind of shifted from the campus based to a more city centre kind of group.

AR – And towards a more radical feminism?

GM – Yes, they were very radical. At that time, I defined myself as heterosexual. The whole lesbian and straight thing was not very well developed in Ireland. It was women. There were women’s discos, as we called them, that involved women of all orientations. It wasn’t broken down into straight or gay, it was just women together. There were just a lot of very strong women who were women oriented, but not necessarily lesbian. So I knew I was fascinated by some women more than others, but I didn’t know why. I think that’s part of what kept me there, the fascination piece, as well as the intellectual piece which is really about being radical, and ideas, and talking about feminist theories, developing a charter, having a magazine, going out and doing direct action.

AR – What were some of the examples of direct action that you engaged in?

GM – Selling the magazine was one example. We were going into pubs with a magazine called *Banshee* and saying, “Would you like to buy this?” (laughs). They were like, “What’s this? What’s this?” It was fun most of the time. The famous one was the so-called Forty Foot, which is a natural bathing spot on the coast of Dublin. It was a lovely natural bath. Men used to bath there naked and women weren’t allowed. So it was, “Forty Foot: men only.” We used to make a joke about that, actually (laughs). There was a decision to go and invade the Forty Foot. All these women went and arrived and the men were all caught naked, literally. They all ran off with their bath towels covering themselves (laughs). We all jumped in and of course, we got massive media attention. That was one example. Another well known one historically is the so-called contraceptive train because at that time, you couldn’t get any kind of contraception in Ireland; there was none. No condoms, no ?? (07:47), nothing. Condoms were banned. So this group of women of 30 or 40 got on a train to Belfast, which is in Northern Ireland, which is a different constituency governed by English rule. Their condoms were freely available. So they went and bought condoms at the chemist, or the pharmacy, came back on the train to Dublin, got off the train, went up to the customs guy, waving the condoms and said, “Are you going to arrest us or take this away from us? What are you going to do?” Of course, the guy’s like (gives a stern face). That was another direct action piece that got a lot of attention. [There was] everything from those kinds of well-organized pieces to the kind of smaller and local, immediate kinds of action. Obviously, there was campaigning and all those kinds of issues. So I was pretty active.

{8:34}

AR – You mentioned you started off in Computer Science. So when was the shift?

GM – I didn't actually. I was in Psychology. It was always Psychology for me. As soon as I read Psychology in high school, I just decided that's what I wanted to do, but where I went to study, it was paired with either Computer Science or Pharmacology. So I tortured myself with Computer Science for two years and I couldn't wait to get rid of it.

AR – What attracted you to Psychology then, in the beginning?

GM – I don't actually know. It was one of those readers at a local library or whatever they had. The one I remember most was a weird book called "Man's Presumptuous Brain." I've since discovered it. I've tracked it down. It actually based its argument on psychosomatic illness and that link between mind and body. That's what set me off. There was Eysenck, who was a British Psychologist, who wrote a lot of books about sense and nonsense in Psychology. I think I read Freud's interpretation of dreams. It was all about, "Yeah, this is where I'm going;" the idea of being a psychologist and studying Psychology.

AR – So when did the liberation and feminist pieces come into Psychology?

GM – I thought I was going to do clinical Psychology and I started training in that area. I was really turned off by the assessment and diagnosis and objectification part. That was [when I] first started to think critically about Psychology. Then Feminism came along. Mary Daly was a very big influence in my life; her ideas and her as a person. She's very anti-Psychology, like really radically anti-Psychology. She would challenge me and challenge me and challenge me. That really pushed me. I suppose that it started from being critical of Psychology, and realizing there's something really wrong with it that can be damaging and oppressive. That was one strand, which is actually a feminist strand, a feminist critique of Psychology. The other strand is post-colonial because I was very aware of colonization. I started to parallel between what writers of colonization were saying about the colonized people and [what] writers of feminism were saying about the Psychology of women. So that got me following a post-colonial thread and reading Fanon and **Meme**, and people like that. It was through that I got to Martín Baró who, in my mind, was one of many. So it was that combination of feminism and post-colonial, I think. I actually coined the word, "Liberation Psychology" myself independently. I hadn't come across it. I was thinking, "I'm about this political level and society as a whole and how that damages people and about transforming that, which is kind of like political healing, rather than the individualistic model – your individual life trauma is what causes your problems." This was about the idea that your social situation caused your traumas. Healing is about a social piece as well as an individual piece. I coined the phrase, "Liberation Psychology" in my mind. I was just thinking about it, went back home, opened a book by Starhawk called, "Truth or Dare." She's a feminist psychotherapist and she had used the word, "Liberation Psychology" and it was from there that I got to Martín Baró which is why I insist on citing Starhawk every time I use Liberation Psychology because I want it on the record that Martín Baró was not the only person to use that phrase. It doesn't take away from him in the least, but of course it's a bit of a sociology

of knowledge piece, over the last 10-15 years, how it is that Liberation Psychology has become associated with Latin American liberation Psychology with Martín Baró and from there to Montero. I think that's a fantastic model of Psychology. I feel a bit uneasy about the idea that any combination of psychology and liberation has got equals. Having said that, I think Latin American Liberation Psychology is very dynamic and has generated really fascinating ideas and concepts way beyond anything I was doing. I always say, I just invented the phrase myself just purely out of my own thinking. I'm not saying I invented the whole field. I wouldn't have been very happy that Liberation Psychology has come into that area.

{13:02}

I also think there's a feminist piece about that as well. I think Feminist Psychology is Liberation Psychology depending on how it's done. In so many different areas of knowledge, women, generate and work with a piece of something and develop ideas. Then the same ideas get developed by men in different context. Then they get to be the ones to get the label for those ideas and become the leaders of those ideas. I think it would be a really interesting study actually, as an example of that process which has happened all over the place in knowledge, in whatever field it is, but this is a particular one because I see it as happening over a 20 year period. **[There is] A set of ideas that were feminist, about transformative psychology and emancipatory psychology and liberation, [and] in parallel [these ideas were] happening in America, but now we've become associated with Latin America. (14:11)** It's kind of a complex area. I think it'll be interesting to see that being looked at. The post-colonial theme is what we really want to see because the post-colonial theme is about trauma to a people and society as a whole, which is very different from Psychology, which is about trauma to a person in their own life history. So it was that collective piece that I think was really of interest to me.

AR – You mentioned that you started reading all of these writers, Mary Daly and others, but was that supported within your academic training or was this something you did on your own?

GM – (laughs) Sorry for laughing, but there was absolutely no way. Berkeley's department of Psychology was about as positivist as it gets and still is. I was in psychometric – it was originally called personality assessment. I wanted to do personality because I thought that was the theory piece in Psychology. That's what drew me to doing personality. But when I arrived in Berkeley, I found out it was about individual differences and psychometrics and how to measure things, which I coped with because Berkeley was a great place anyway. I think Jean Baker Miller was a huge influence, [as well as] coming across that book, "Toward a New Psychology of Women" because she makes that connection between psychological patterns and society as a whole and domination and subordination. I don't think she talked about systems of domination. That's the phrase I started using. But domination, I think that's a very strong word. I think we should be using that word more, actually. I'm coming back to it because I'm finding with working with Liberation Psychology in communities, people are, especially today with what's been happening because of the economic system, I think the collapse

that has gone on in the U.S. and certainly in Ireland and to an extent, everywhere, people have been exposed the levels of domination that we've been living with, even in western societies. So people are starting to use that word more. She had her book, "Toward a New Psychology of Women" which is about domination and subordination and it's impact. That was the connection between feminism and Psychology for me. What's feminist was giving the social analysis, [such as] patriarchy and psychology was giving the idea that there was a psychological impact there. So there were two parallel strands. I think coming out was the middle of all that; it was part of what got me into feminist theory.

{16:24}

So I was in graduate school and I had my usual dating boyfriends and I sort of half knew that somewhere along the way that I was going to explore my sexuality. Especially going to Berkeley, it was a good opportunity for that and I came out in the middle of graduate school. That was quite a personal journey. I suppose it also put me outside Psychology. It put me to the margin, I think would be the best way to describe it. I think that's what kind of motivated me to look more to feminism and feminist theory and go do that kind of independent scholarship.

AR – What originally attracted you to Berkeley?

GM – Well again, Ireland in the 1970's – forget Internet, forget everything. It was very isolated. People tended to emigrate a lot. I finished college and I went into a research institute that funded people to go do PhDs. So that was great! I was definitely going to do that! Everybody wanted to get out of Ireland! It was very small and Catholic, oppressed – whatever. You don't know how you're going to get out. The idea of going to the States to be a student to my mind was perfect. I could be a student and the visa issue was over. All I had to do was arrange finance. But I am laughing because I had no idea about American geography. East coast, west coast, north, south, I knew nothing about any of that. I narrowed it down to Berkeley and University of Pennsylvania; there were certain areas I was really interested in. And the University of Albany – it's laughable. I ended up having this choice between Berkeley and Pennsylvania. There I was – I knew nothing about Berkeley, really. I had an American colleague and I said to him, "Oh, I've got to choose between Berkeley and Pennsylvania." He just laughed. He almost just totally laughed and said, "There's no choice here."

The interesting connection here, in terms of colonialism, is that Berkeley is called, as far as I know, after George Berkeley, who's a philosopher. I don't know if he is Irish born, but he's considered Irish in a lot of different ways. When I was studying Psychology as an undergraduate, we were told everything was always British, the post-colonial kind of education. [We were told of] The great British philosophers and he would be included in that. So I had no idea he had an Irish connection. So I arrived at Berkeley and people go, "Oh, Berkeley, Irish." And I go, "What?!" (Laughs).

{19:00}

AR – So tell me, you worked with Ravenna Helson. You mentioned that to me in an email. Can you describe to us what it was like working with her?

GM – First of all you know when you arrive at graduate school, you do your courses and then you have to think about your qualifying exams. You have to think about your research, your thesis and research assistantships and all those practical matters. So the first two years for me were just fun student stuff, but then [I thought] who was I going to work with as a researcher? I heard about Ravenna, that Ravenna was doing this research on Psychology of women and I was interested in that. So I went up to her and went, “I’m interested in what you’re doing.” I did have skills because I worked as a research assistant for a couple of years and she had money, so that was great. So I got hired as a research assistant on her team.

At that time, they were doing the follow-up study, the so-called “Mills Study” which was a longitudinal study on women, which Ravenna started back in 1958-1960. There was a 5-year follow-up to 60-something. She was interested in creativity. So she wanted to know who were creative in college and how they moved forward. And then she kind of left it. Then lifespan started coming on the agenda just around the time I was in Berkeley, which was in the early ‘80s. And she thought “Oh, why don’t I follow up with that group.” They were then aged 43.

AR – Oh, interesting.

GM – So I was employed as a research assistant on that project, with funding to follow up that group of women.

AR – As a person who was doing psychology of women, was she a feminist in her approach? Or was that not explicit?

GM – Yeah, I think that’s probably the way to put it. She would be very woman centered and pro-women, but she wouldn’t call herself feminist. She wouldn’t have used that phrase. I don’t know if she’d agree with me about saying that. I think she was feminist. I would definitely say she was feminist, but whether she would describe herself as feminist or use that phrase, I’m still not sure even though we had a long relationship and a friendship. I saw her the last time I was in Berkeley, which was two or three years ago. She’s going to be 83 this year. And at the time, she must have been in her fifties or sixties. She definitely seemed a lot older to me (laughs). I was in my twenties and [thinking about] the age 43, I was like “Oh my God, ancient! Forty-three.” And one of the great things I got out of the project was to realize about lifespan development and developmental perspective and that 43 is just a whole massive turning point full of potential. And then they were followed up at age 52 and then at age sixty-something. Sixty-two I think. And the recent follow up at seventy-something. So it’s [a] really long running longitudinal project.

{21:37}

AR – Wow. That’s wild.

GM – But I think whether you have a woman supervisor or a man supervisor, I think that makes a difference, depending on who you are and where you’re coming from. I think I was going to do better with a woman supervisor, possibly than with a man supervisor in terms of the thesis because at that point in my life I was very anti-authority and didn’t like being told what to do and [I was] very much inclined to fight back. I think if I’d had a male supervisor, there would have been a lot of tension. So I think I benefited from having someone who understood where I was coming from as a rebellious person, I suppose. She didn’t tell me what to do, but somehow got me on board to do the things that needed to be done.

KS - I know you talked about coming out while you were at Berkeley and I was wondering if there’s and (I don’t know if you were out in terms of the department) if there were any specific kinds of experiences or thoughts there.

AM – I was out in the department. Fortunately for me because it was Berkeley and the Bay Area, obviously, you couldn’t pick a better place to come out. At that time there was huge activity. It was almost at the time when AIDS started coming out in the 1980s, the early ‘80s. So yes. I arrived in Berkeley as a “heterosexual” and I had boyfriends and did all that stuff, you know, graduate students and whatever, and I was in a group and went out drinking and all that kind of stuff. I came out then in a fun way. I sort of went to a bisexual group and went to this group and that group and met other women and started going on the scene and that sort of stuff.

It was when I got involved with somebody that I really was kind of stabilized, if you like, to use the language. So then I came out around the place, to my supervisor, Ravenna, to my friends, and so on. Most of them kind of had been in the process with me, so on the friendship front, I think it was absolutely fine. And on the Ravenna and supervisory front, it was fine. I don’t think I experienced any explicit negative consequences. I think my relations with my male colleagues kind of changed a bit. I think they were not as friendly, in a nutshell. That might range from not being as friendly to me when they met me, to maybe not being as willing to help me with stuff and that kind of networking stuff. That’s where, if there was any kind of consequence, it was around heterosexual privilege in a nutshell, which involves men being willing to do things for you and liking you and being positive towards you and including you and going out of their way for you and courting you and doing all those things. And a lot of that is very helpful (laughs) in graduate school. And I was kind of aware of that being pulled back. I was all in the middle of the whole thing. So it was a **wealthy (24:38)** minor thing. I was just aware of it though. I felt that was the only kind of explicit impact of coming out.

{24:43}

The more difficulty it raised was just the journey of it and the psychological experience of it. I found it very [conflicting]. I wasn’t comfortable with it. I hadn’t expected to come out. I really felt a loss. I went through a sort of a loss of feeling that I was normal, or that

I was mainstream. I felt that I was being marginalized and that the life I had expected for myself wasn't going to happen and that I was going to be living a different life. I didn't see the positive side of that in that moment. I saw more [of] the negative side. And also, in graduate school, everyone has tunnel vision. We used to joke... Tolman Hall was the name of the building... that we were rats in a maze. [We just went from] home [to] Tolman, home [to] Tolman.

Most graduate students only went to San Francisco maybe once or twice a year, and that's where my life was. So I felt this huge pull of the lesbian scene and the coming out scene and the need for that, in terms of coming out, and then on the other hand, that very narrow work-oriented scene. That was my biggest pull, that tug of war feeling. I actually met an Irish guy some years later who went to Stanford and had the same experience. He came out when he was at Stanford. We just clicked about that whole issue of feeling torn, and the psychological price of that rather than a social sort of thing. So I wouldn't recommend coming out in graduate school if it's a problem.

AR – Were you involved back then in the lesbian scene, and was there activism in that scene at that time?

GM – Yeah. There certainly was in the Bay Area, in the women's liberation movement and the lesbian movement. But again, graduate school is a strange place. We used to go around campus and go "Where are the lesbians?" Never had we met lesbians on campus. You had to go somewhere else, to the point where the student health service at the time, and this was the early '80s, was concerned about women coming out and students coming out and being isolated, and they actually started a support group in the student health service for students coming out, which I went to, as well as other people. There was that feeling that the campus wasn't a place where things were happening. There was a lot happening off campus.

AR – It was compartmentalized, it was not on campus.

GM – I was involved in activism when I arrived in the Bay Area. I had been involved in rape crisis centre stuff in Dublin, and was in a women against violence and pornography media group in San Francisco and I got involved in that group. I was involved in that for about two years. It's interesting. I hadn't made this connection, but I do see it now: that was my first kind of training in group work, because they were totally into the feminist cause and the egalitarian turn taking. Everyone was taking on different roles and working in a group together in consensus, and all kinds of facilitation stuff. They did the training for everybody who came into the group in that area.

AR – Well that is sort of linked up to the whole notion of participatory research. When did you make that shift, or start thinking that way?

{27:56}

GM – I went back to Ireland after finishing the doctorate and I went back and forth for a few years and I finally decided to stay in UCD [University College Dublin]. At the same time, my life was really into an anti-psychology phase. [It was] really good timing (laughs). I decided to stay in Dublin, take up a job in the psychology department while I'm going anti-psychology. I was really feeling the constraints of psychology as a discipline. Fortunately for me, at the same time in UCD, a women's studies program was starting, so I got involved in the women's studies program.

AR – Is this the early '90s now?

GM – Yeah. In '87, there was a women's world congress, which is happening in Ontario this year.

KS – Ottawa.

GM – Ottawa. Is it Ottawa? Yeah.

AR – In July.

GM – Yeah. Well in '87, that was in Dublin. [It was] the third international interdisciplinary congress of women. I got involved in that and then from there, in 1990 I set up women's studies in UCD and other Irish universities and there was a group and we started the whole thing. I was really involved in that. I taught feminist theory, in fact, for the first five years of that program. Obviously that was a huge learning experience, teaching feminist theory. That certainly developed my social analysis in a big way, and also in a whole other context of feminism. And then of course there's the pedagogy: the feminist pedagogy and women's studies pedagogy, participatory classroom. All the questions about power, knowledge and authority, assessment, and everything was up for grabs. So that I think was hugely influential in getting me into participatory.

Then the women's studies program wanted to start...well we'd always planned the idea that we would have a progression route, and that we would have an outreach piece of the women's studies. In the mid '90s, that started taking off. Several different community women's groups who were in deprived areas of Dublin got funding for a partnership with us at UCD where we would go and deliver the women's studies program in their community and their community centre, to the community women. So this was outreach, as in going out into the community. Well, I wanted to get involved in that. That was my big interest, and I wanted to do psychology. I knew that I wasn't prepared for that because I was a lecturer. All my teaching was huge classes, just as it happened. It was 200 upwards, up to 500. So that was my teaching mode. So I went and trained in group work because I didn't really feel able to go into a community group without some kind of professional training in group work and group participation and inclusion. So that gave me that piece. I did the training in group work, went out, and I will never forget my first class. It was one of the most traumatic times of my life. To go in there to that group who were quite strong already as women and as feminists, and were expecting anybody who

came out there, tutors they were called, to be participatory. I mean, the idea that you could go out there and give a lecture was just not even on the **radar (31:06)**.

{31:06}

So I did all my lovely preparation and group contract and all the rest and I arrived out and I said the first thing you do is **your round (31:15)**, and then you do your expectations. “What are your expectations?” “We expect a, b, c, d...” **How prepared, transparency, occlusion, clear assessment (31:25)**, deadlines. They had a whole list. I was bowled over. I just remember the drama, I suppose, of realizing that there is a reality here that is totally different. Participatory really does mean they’re in control. Well, not quite, actually, because obviously they were being assessed for their certificate, but group work really does mean that you listen and it really does mean that you’re going to be told things and that you’re going to be challenged and that you have to belong.

AR – That you give up a lot of control, right? You give up control and power.

GM – Yeah.

AR – These weren’t undergraduate students?

GM – No, no. They were mid-twenties to late 50s. They already had been through introduction to women’s studies and had all that community political perspective.

KS – You mentioned that women’s studies was very helpful for your development in participatory action. How did you negotiate taking on a liberation psychology perspective in the psychology department, in terms of your career with other people who were probably going a more discursive route, or the tenure system, doing these non-traditional activities?

GM – I did have more of a hold on women’s studies. I was able to negotiate with my head of school that my undergraduate teaching would be in psychology and that my postgraduate would be in women’s studies. So I had a formal agreement that my contribution to women’s studies would count as my **workout (33:01)**, that it wasn’t to be ignored. That was a good thing. Now, this department was sort of a traditional positivist, so I didn’t really have that discursive piece. I think people just ignored me. They just said “Let her do her thing. She’s over there.” [They didn’t mind,] as long as I did my undergraduate teaching. We didn’t have a very strong research culture at that time. There [weren’t] big expectations about publishing, which is why I was able to do that book. I spent ten years just pushing this and developing it and thinking about it and writing it and working it. I wouldn’t have been able to do that, I don’t think, in a traditional publish or perish kind of environment. But I did fall between schools at the end of the day, [between] psychology and women’s studies, in terms of promotion. I got tenure before I started any of this because it’s a different system. I’d already done my five years out and about with temporary appointments and all this kind of stuff. So when I got into UCD, within a year I was made permanent. So that was a safety piece, right there. And I didn’t

have this publish or perish environment. You were left to your own devices. If you wanted to get a promotion, you had to do proper publishing, but you did have a choice about it. And I kind of knew that I was choosing not to do that piece and I kind of don't know what I thought. I didn't care, I suppose. Down the road, of course, you do care more about promotion. So yeah, it took me quite a bit longer to get a promotion to the next level up. It just arose out of the kinds of things you're talking about. Then the next level after that, I don't think I'm going to get there. Sorry. I don't do collaborative team funded ISI publications, medical model [and so on].

{34:45}

AR – It's kind of the bane of our existence, the ISI. So why don't we talk, then, a little bit about your book? The first edition was published in '99. How did that evolve? How did that project come to be?

GM – Ok, [well you have] feminist theory and that kind of patriarchy system and structural analysis, and then psychology. I was teaching psychology of women, actually, in Northeastern University of all places, and I was using your standard textbook in psychology of women, which is topical. You know, [it had] chapter this and chapter that, which was fine. It was still very dynamic, but I felt very frustrated. I felt that it was too fragmented and there needed to be some kind of framework that could hold all these pieces together. That's why I got into the idea of systems of domination. I don't know why I went down this road of modes of control. I called them mechanisms of control to begin with. Well, I got this great idea that it had to be a system of domination. It worked by intention. It was maintaining oppression. It's violence, economic exploitation, political exclusion, [and] cultural control. So those four are pretty well covered by most structural analysis. Iris Young, or anybody who talks about a system, and society as a system, will talk about that. Well it's essentially about politics, economics and culture. Those three will always be covered. I thought violence was really important from a feminist perspective because violence against women was a cornerstone, in my mind, of patriarchy. And then sexuality was something that I thought needed to be covered.

So I spent years pushing out the boat on this system of domination, which in retrospect, I could have solved it all by going off and reading Iris Marion Young, or lots of other people who were doing structural analysis. But I just wanted to do my own thing, maybe. And also, this is the real connection piece, I think: I was a psychologist. I wanted a structural analysis that would be straightforward. Now, laugh at me. A sociologist would laugh at you with that idea because, of course, they spend hours just arguing about structural analysis. But I didn't want that. I wanted a structural analysis that psychologists could use as just an instrument for understanding system of domination. Get it over with and move on to what you're really interested in, which is the psychological oppression piece, and then the transformation piece. So, why I kind of spent so long on it, I suppose, [was because I was] bringing it down to the modes of control piece, which turns out has been the part of my work that's been picked up a lot. The idea that there's this system of domination and what I call the six modes of control, and you go through them one by one. And you can do that very quickly. Now there's a lot more of that kind of stuff, but in

the '90s, there wasn't that much of it. And so I spent all that time with the systems of domination bit, then I went into the psychology of oppression bit, and then there was the impact of it. It was a very linear kind of approach, and I struggled with all of that, but then I said, "Look, this is what I'm doing." I went through and read all those authors that I review in chapter three and that took a long time and the writing of them took a long time. It was a very painful experience, actually, at the time, because as I was writing it, I was really feeling it. [There was] Fanon and **Meme (38:00)** and Miller, Pharr and homophobia and Native American, why I chose them was that they wrote in a very evocative way about the experience of oppression and what it actually feels like. And as I wrote the chapter of what they wrote, it was one of those experiences where you actually experience what you're writing about. So that was that piece.

{38:17}

And then the whole liberation piece kind of just evolved gradually around the idea that it's not just about charting oppression, it's about transforming it, and how you do that. I kind of clicked on the personal/interpersonal political, myself, through various ways and then I found other people that said the same thing, and then I developed it myself. Then I used it in workshops and classes and people really liked it. It worked for them. So it took me another while to develop that whole idea. And so the whole thing took ten years, at the end of the day, from beginning to end. [It] start[ed] with that psychology of women class and the need for this structural analysis, and then from there to the psychology piece to all those authors, and then on to what I call the cycle of oppression (the personal, interpersonal and political), and then putting it out into classrooms and getting the feedback on it, and doing all the workshops on it as well. It all came together in the book.

AR – You described it as very linear, but in fact when you talk about it, it sounds very recursive in a way.

GM – Yeah. It's recursive. That's exactly what it is.

AR – Well, I wanted to take a little bit of a step back and get moving away from (and we'll get back to it) away from your personal narrative, towards some of your perspectives on the field, especially as they're contextualized, perhaps, in your local context, which is Dublin, Ireland. Can you talk to us then, a little bit about feminist psychology, or even the feminist movement or the relationship between the two, in your context in Ireland?

GM – Right, well I already talked a little bit about the women's movement starting in the '70s and it has followed a fairly good development over time in terms of familiar themes, you know, the radical and the liberal and them being institutionalized. It's a very strong presence, the women's movement in Ireland. It's there. You know about it. It's very active and alive. It may not have achieved its goals, but it's definitely there. But psychology is very conservative. Adrian Brock argued that it emerged in and around 1960. We have an argument about this, actually. He says it emerged late, and I say, "No, actually, it's the other ones that emerged early." **Apparently (40:45)** it's a colonial thing,

because Germany and Britain are where it emerged in the 1890s, or whenever it did, so in the majority of countries, as I understand it, it emerged in the '50s and '60s. That's the majority of emergence time. So shouldn't that be the norm by which these colonial countries are early? And we're on time, and then there's late.

{41:08}

AR – Yeah, it's changing the rubric.

GM – But anyway, it emerged and then it was under threat and so very understandably the concern about scientific status [emerged]. [There were] just all kinds of reasons of why it became very positivist, and it is so in all the universities. Then it became very concerned about its professional status in terms of clinical psychology. This is my basic history of it. In the '90s, there was a huge thing going on about establishing clinical psychology, getting up the career grades, and all of that stuff. So there was very little room for critical psychology. And the idea of politics, I mean, that's why I left psychology, or at least I became anti-psychology. They just simply would never get involved in any political debates. We had huge debates about abortion and one of them was about whether suicide could be grounds for abortion. We had a case of a 14-year-old girl. Am I going on too much?

AR – No.

GM – [It was] the so-called "X Case" in 1992. She was 14, she was raped by a neighbour, and she got pregnant. Her parents took her to England and you couldn't have an abortion **[in Ireland] (42:26)**. It wasn't even a remote possibility. So somehow they informed the police that they were taking their daughter to England so that they could take a case against the man. They could take DNA on the fetus before the abortion. When the police heard this, they said, "No, you can't travel. The right to life of the unborn has to be upheld."

AR – Over the ability to even...

GM – Over the situation to travel. But that's how bad it got. And in the middle of all this, she became suicidal. She was literally imprisoned. She wasn't allowed to travel. She threatened suicide and it was massive. You can imagine the public debate over this.

AR – Imagine being raped, and then being imprisoned.

GM – Well, she was literally kept in her parent's home. She wasn't actually put in a prison. But was she going to be? How would they keep her at home? It was horrible. And there was the possibility that a young woman could be **[imprisoned] (43:16)**. But in the middle of all this, suicide was on the agenda. [They were saying,] "If we let them have an abortion and they're suicidal, they'll all pretend they're suicidal," and all this stuff. And would the PSI [Psychological Society of Ireland] come out and say anything? Not a word. They would not get involved in this debate, even though it was obviously

something that psychology should have a lot to say about. Well, you can see by the way I'm talking, I was overly, overly outraged by this.

{43:39}

AR – PSI meaning the Psychological Society of Ireland, just for our transcriber.

GM – Psychological Society of Ireland. Yeah. Oh, transcription, right.

So the Catholic Church is the other piece in all of this. It was the Catholic Church that was involved in setting up psychology. As we all like to say, the Catholic Church knew it was going to happen, so they said, "Get in there!" (laughs) and of course, they influenced the field. We haven't really had a history of that, actually, how the Catholic Church [was involved]. [Adrian's] (44:05) doing a lot of work on that, but I'm not sure if he's written it up yet. So, between all of the Catholic Church conservatives, and all the other issues, it just wasn't going to get involved. It remained very conservative, [which] is the bottom line. I think people left psychology. I think that's why it has, unfortunately, not developed enough of that kind of critical mass, because I would have left if it weren't for women's studies and the way that I was able to work that connection and again, have my freedom. But if I'd had to do the normative stuff in psychology, I would have left. I think a lot of people who were social activist oriented just didn't go near psychology. They went into social work, sociology, you know, the other areas. So the end result being that there hasn't been that strong development of critical psychology. It's probably less than ten percent. [There's] maybe one or two people in each department.

AR – That might not be that bad compared to some other places. So when you talked about the lack of response from the PSI in this case, were there any feminist psychologists in Ireland that spoke out at all about this?

GM – Well, you see, then you have this debate. Yes, within PSI, a group did form. They produced a document on the research on abortion, which is incredibly helpful. It didn't make its way into being a public statement from PSI, but it did become available. Most of the debate at that point was...actually I forget exactly what the debate was. Was it about that abortion was harmful or not?

AR – Yeah. Having an abortion then results in psychological distress, mental disorders, et cetera.

GM – So there was a group within PSI. [They were] women who were feminist oriented, and feminists, who got together to get that document out, but they weren't able to speak as psychologists within PSI. So then what do you do? Then you're just an activist. They did have a role, definitely, in the whole thing. And there's always been women in psychology in Ireland who have been outspoken and supported women's rights and been feminist, but they weren't in the universities, except for one, Sheila Greene, who was a very strong feminist as well.

{46:25}

AR – Can you tell us a little bit then about the evolution of the special issue that we've just been speaking about? Because that is an amazing collection of pieces. How did that come together?

GM – I don't want to be unfair. I think I'm being a bit unfair to psychology in Ireland. It's a bit more eclectic than I'm saying, but it's still conservative in a lot of ways. Ok, the special issue. It gets back to what I was saying earlier about liberation psychology and how there was psychology of liberations, social psychology of liberation, community psychology. [There were] all kinds of phrases that involved the word 'psychology' and the word 'liberation,' which today have become associated mostly with Latin America. Ten years ago [they] weren't. It was more eclectic. I started using the phrase myself 'liberation psychology,' partly related to Latin America. I found it appealed to people because it's a challenge. They don't think liberation and psychology in the same breath. Liberation is a very political concept, and psychology they think of as clinical and counseling therapy. So I enjoyed the kinds of reactions that it provoked. I started using it.

So I suppose I must have heard about Brinton Lykes (47:38). Obviously you know people by their last name in the literature. So I knew there was this person 'Lykes' who was a feminist in liberation as well. I was kind of involved in feminism and psychology because it comes out of Britain and I would go to the psychology of women section in Britain and Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger and Rose Capdevila and those people were all there. It was in the air for a while that I would work with Brinton Lykes, but it didn't happen initially, which is probably just as well. This would have been the early '90s, or mid '90s, say. No, sorry, it must have been about 2000 when it first got into the air. I think we might have had some email and it didn't happen. So life and time went by, and then it was Rose who literally said to me in 2006, perhaps, "Come on, let's do this. You and Brinton." So I emailed Brinton, and obviously it worked for her, the timing, as well. We hadn't actually met at this point, Brinton and myself. I think it was my contact with Rose that really midwifed it, if you like. She midwifed it.

AR – She's a good facilitator that way.

GM – She is. She's great.

I found out what all the practicalities were, which was effectively putting a proposal to *Feminism & Psychology* and all that. Brint and myself worked on that. I call Brinton 'Brint,' but I don't actually know if she likes that. I don't address Brinton as Brint, but in my mind I call her Brint. I call her Brinton when I need her. So Brint will slip out every now and again.

GM – So anyway, my short hands: Brinton, F&P, whatever. So we put the proposal together and I think that was fairly straightforward, if I remember, and the deadline to get it into F & P [*Feminism & Psychology*] was whatever it was. The deadline for submissions was March 2008. So up to that point, it was kind of an abstract idea. It really

was a very simple thing, relatively speaking. [We had to] put together a proposal, have it approved by Feminism & Psychology, put together the core of the paper, send it in [and] have it published. That was the easy part.

AR – And how did you present this to potential contributors? What was this going to be about?

GM – We presented it as working at the interface of feminist and liberation psychologies, broadly defined, and emancipatory work in diverse contexts. There was a theme of globalization and human rights and five or six others. So the way it goes is [there's a] call for papers: feminist liberation psychology. No, it was “Whither (50:43) feminist liberation psychology?” and it was the idea of this combination. There was a paragraph that said the things I just said about working at the interface and all that kind of stuff. Then [there was] a series of six themes. So I think the very strong message was about work on the ground that was using [and] combining some form of feminist and liberation, and so on. Then after that, you had to email it to people and elicit contributions because [it was] far from being overwhelmed by contributions. Most special issues, I don't think, are overwhelmed with contributions. They do get a lot of contributions. More than enough, hopefully, to make it, but we weren't talking about having to deal with hundreds of contributions. In the end it was a lot of emailing and circulating and passing it on to anybody you know and bringing it in. It was all explained either on the actual call for papers or because we contacted people who probably knew either of our works. At that point I had done the American Journal of Community Psychology article, which kind of put my work on the map a bit, and Brinton was very well known for years. She had been doing participatory action research in the '90s and was widely published in all kinds of journals and book chapters and everything else. An awful lot of people had heard about Brinton Lykes, so that was helpful for me. [It was] very helpful. There's no way I could have done it on my own. In fact, I don't think anybody could do a special issue on their own. I think it has to be collaborative. Just purely from the viewpoint of everything.

{52:07}

AR – Were you surprised by what you got in terms of the content?

GM – Yeah. Actually, I don't know if we had time to be surprised because when the deadline happens, you know, things start coming in. The way I work is I do tend to compartmentalize, so as far as I was concerned, until the actual deadline was over, I knew what was there. I was only going to peek at things. I kind of peeked and saw some interesting stuff, but I didn't really read it all until [the deadline]. And then I really started reading it and I was like “wow.” It was fantastic, actually.

First of all, the variety of stuff and that there were women and feminists out there doing that stuff [was fantastic]. But it was the way that they wrote about it, actually, that was all so amazing. It's very hard to write about stuff that is so process-oriented. You're in there doing this work and you don't have this body behind you, you know, where you do your literature review and you cite it all and everything is set there. I'm not saying that's easy

either, working in an established field, but it's different. You're drawing all these different literatures and putting all these different ideas together and some of them were so well written and challenging. It was actually amazing.

AR – Did you make a conscious attempt to get representation from all over the world?

GM – No. Well, yes, we did in the end. We definitely had that idea. There will be representation from most regions of the globe. So there was one region lacking, which we solved stuff for to get that completion. So yeah, there was definitely that. There was that intention. I was trying to remember what we had in mind in terms of issues like that to make sure to cover [everything]. We definitely wanted to cover regions, and we definitely wanted to cover the different categories ethnicity-wise and sexual orientation-wise and all those different categories to make sure that you had that coverage. They would have been the two big ones, I think. There was in no way a requirement to use a particular model of liberation psychology, or even human rights. It was just a broad sense of some notion of liberation and emancipation. So for example, the ??? (54:18), we didn't mention that or use that, but they were putting that forward as a contribution to the concept of liberation.

I think the call for papers and the way we did it worked to be sort of open. People felt that if they were doing anything that was liberation or emancipatory, they had a chance and that it was relevant, I think, because of the variety of what we got. Had it have been an exclusive thing [where] you must be a, b, and c or you must use e, f and g, we wouldn't have gotten such a variety, I don't think. I think a lot of it had to do with Brinton's connections as well, around the world. [She had] global connections because even though I thought of myself as international, and I kind of was, that was a big stretch for me. I learned so much about global issues out of [it]. I actually had done global feminism as part of my teaching in feminist theory. I had a huge interest in global issues but it's a complex area.

{55:13}

AR – It is. I have one more question before we wrap up. Does anyone want to jump in before I [ask it]? Kate? I know you know about Geraldine's work and stuff. Do you have anything you want to pick her brain about? This is your chance.

KS – I think I'm good though.

GM – I would like to make a comment also though, about that issue of writing something. It's a bit like history. It's tidying it up compared to what's actually happened. If you take what I've done about my work in the classroom, the educational stuff, the pedagogy stuff, I did have a model. I had structural analysis, that and that (gestures with hands) but [with] what you read, there's a big gap between that and what actually happens. I don't know if that's the case with most other stuff. Is it just me? I just wanted to throw that in there [about] the writing piece.

AR – What happens in that writing process, then, to kind of clean it up?

GM – Well, it's the difference between oral and written. There's a flow to oral, there's spontaneity, there's impulsive, there's a choice of the words that are suitable for the moment. And there's the interaction with oral and in a classroom context or any kind of a group context. I've done a lot of work in different kinds of group contexts. It's all very interactive, and process oriented. Yet, when you're writing about it, you think "well there was a model and then there was a measure and then there was and outcome." I find it very hard.

AR – It transforms it.

GM – It does. The Psychology of Women Quarterly one, particularly, I found [that] I felt boxed and that I had to squeeze myself into this mold.

AR – I want to talk to you about that, actually.

KS – Something just occurred to me. You mentioned that you felt very boxed in and very disenchanted with psychology. I was wondering if you experienced throughout your career and throughout your student life any real mentors that really actually inspired you? [Ones] that you met rather than just reading about.

GM – Well, Ravenna would be the first person to come to mind because she was somebody who loved what she was doing and struck out to do what she wanted to do. Then Mary Daly would have been a huge influence in my life around standing your ground and being able to combine being a radical feminist and an academic at the same time. I mentioned Sheila Greene. [There were] lots of other women in the Irish context, then. I think what you see then is that you have the theory and you have the lived reality. I suppose a lot of my struggles are about that gap. [This is the struggle for] all of us. So I think seeing lots of other women, and some men, but mostly women who would have an idea but [would be] compromising and struggling with how you do it. Yeah, Sheila Greene would be one example in the Irish context, and ??? (58:19), and quite a few actually who have tried to work on that boundary where you're trying to break down the box, but you're still working with the box.

{End of DVD 1}

AR – She died very recently.

GM – Yeah. She died just over a year ago.

AR – Wow, that's a passing of an amazing person.

GM – I know. In fact, coming over to this conference was the first time I'd flown over to the states where I wouldn't have been visiting her or talking to her. I was quite aware of that.

AR – Absolutely, absolutely.

GM – She convinced me that there was such a thing as genius, in the sense that there is somebody who is just (raises arms above head) way off, way out there, pushing bolts out in every direction. [She was] so challenging. You know, even though she was a very difficult person at times, **everybody realized it (00:37)**, she would always challenge you. She would always push you just that one more step.

AR – I was reading some of the reviews of her life that came out around her death, and I didn't know much about her other than, obviously, her work but I think it said that throughout her career right up to the very end, she refused to have men in her classes, but would tutor them apart from [the class]. Was that true?

GM – Yes, that is true. Her argument was that it's a different dynamic and that women are freer to say what they really think and explore their ideas and participate in the women only class. I think she's right that it's a different process in a women only class or a mixed class. Then the legalities and ethics of excluding and including is a whole other conversation, I suppose. And I suppose her compromise was to say "I won't have you in my women's class, but I will take you separately." In the end, it was one of those right wing think tank groups that funded a guy to go and take the case against her.

AR – Interesting. Well I wanted to ask you a big picture question to kind of move us towards the end, and that is what do you think is the future of feminist liberation psychology? Where do you see it going? What's your prognosis?

{2:00}

GM – [There are] lots of different possibilities. Well, first of all, liberation psychology as Latin American liberation psychology is developing and there's a lot of interest in Martín Baró's work and there's a lot of development in Latin America and that's going to be a big development. It needs a feminist analysis, a feminist input. I think that would be a really good thing. So that mix is going to be there. Then bringing liberation psychology into feminist psychology [will] be there because there's just a way in which they work together in a positive way, I think. They're synergistic. I think that a feminist who's very committed to all the things that feminists are committed to will just get a boost from a liberation psychology way of looking at things. So that's going to be there. Then if you think about emancipatory in a bigger sense of international, post-colonial, decolonizing, Chicana, African American...all that stuff. That's all developing. I think it's a very dynamic development of what you might call emancipatory. [It's] the idea of practice[ing] on the ground that is dealing with all these ethical issues of boundary crossing. At the same time, good old positivist psychology will trot along in the universities and the research centres. And who knows [if they'll] ever dialogue more than they ever have. I think we'll still be left with choices. What do you think about that?

AR – What do I [think about what]?

GM – The future of emancipatory.

AR – I don't know. On the one hand, I see what you're saying and I agree that, especially as psychology is gaining energy and momentum as a discipline in places like Brazil, I see liberation psychology as representative of that kind of psychology and as itself gaining in momentum. I think it's going to be a huge force to contend with globally. But I also see American psychology and the attempts by American psychologists to be increasingly hegemonic and to move into the world and force an American version onto other places as also gaining momentum. I don't know what's going to happen with that. I don't know. I think it's a conversation worth having, and people are having it.

GM – Yeah, they sure are.

AR – So I wanted to get your view on it. You're in the middle of it, so I wanted to hear what you had to say in terms of how this is all playing out.

GM – Well, I don't know if there's any rational way of answering that question. I suppose I am an optimist. The forces of oppression can be great, and the forces of resistance are there as well. So you're right. The American hegemony piece and the business model, the individualism, everything [is involved].

AR – They're trying to set up professional schools all over the world to teach people how to be clinical psychologists a la the United States, and it's incredible. So my last question is an easy one. Is there anything we haven't asked you about that you would like to contribute to this interview?

{4:52}

GM – Well, I just made a comment about writing. That was one. I suppose I **fought (05:00)** into the Irish context quite a bit. That's what I'm coming back to because we have got a long history as colonization. I mentioned that. Then we got our independence, and then we got our economic boom, which turned out to be an illusion and now there's a definite feeling of that "back to the history" again. Here's the IMF [International Monetary Fund] coming in. [They're] this super dominant force coming in. [There was] possession, people losing their homes, immigration, unemployment. It's a very challenging, very, very difficult situation. I think a lot of where we're reacting from, over and above any group of people who have that experience, is to do with that feeling of [the] resonance of history. We thought we'd thrown that off. We thought we'd gone beyond that. Here we are in 2011 dealing with this. In fact, 2016 is the hundredth anniversary of our Easter Rising, the declaration of a new republic. So there's a real historical resonance to what's going on. I think this is an area of psychology I'd love to see develop more, which is collective psychology. In other words, a group of people together, having a collective reaction to something where the whole is... what's that expression?

AR – The whole is greater...

GM – The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. So individual people are angry and so forth, but is there, sort of, a national psyche? [These are] very complex concepts. But [in terms of] collective psychology, we haven't even begun to open that area. There is stuff, but there isn't. I think that actually is a part of liberation psychology, to look at collective psychology because after all it is a collective. In the end of the day, oppression is a collective experience and liberation is a collective enterprise. We need to find more ways of thinking about how people can come together into a collective with a collective urge, allowing for diversity in the middle of all that. So collective psychology, I think, is something where I really want to go, myself, in terms of dealing with what's happening in Ireland, but also where I think liberation psychology and feminist psychology will each go as well.

AR – That's great. Are we done?

KS – Do you have any advice that you can share for a young feminist and/or liberation psychologist?

GM – Yeah. Well, find your support. [That's] a really obvious one, but it makes a huge difference having a literature that's available, which has happened in the last ten years, and then having that authority behind you that so-and-so said that or so-and-so published that or so-and-so agrees with you. That's a really fundamental one. There's a huge satisfaction in it because you know [about] the integrity of it and the ethical piece of it and the feeling that you're being true to yourself and you're making a contribution to a social justice agenda, so there's kind of a personal piece and a social justice piece. There's no denying the cost of it either. I don't think it would be right to minimize that. In choosing to go down an emancipatory path, you're in a minority, for starters, and you're just not going to fit the boxes of what is judged to be the valuable thing by academia. I think that's just reality. Some people can manage to work that through in different ways, but I haven't managed to do that and I think it's something to just be aware of. It's going to be a struggle to maintain that path. I hope that doesn't sound too negative. Well, I would say it's so worth while in the end, absolutely, if that's what you're interested in. Are you interested in it?

{8:47}

KS – I think it's very powerful.

GM – Yeah, it's very powerful. Exactly.

KS – Some struggle to **work at it (08:57)**.

GM – Yeah, exactly. Being a feminist is the same. There's all kinds of categories and identities that are minority or contested. People die for that. They die for their identities and their beliefs.

AR – Ok.

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