

**Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project**

**Interview with Peter Hegarty**

*Interviewed by Jacy L. Young & Alexandra Rutherford  
Toronto, ON  
November 19, 2012*

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**Interview with Peter Hegarty**  
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**Toronto, ON**  
**November 19, 2012**

PH: Peter Hegarty, Interview participant

JY: Jacy L. Young, Interviewer

AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

ER: Elissa Rodkey, Audience Member

MP: Michael Pettit, Audience Member

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JY: Just to start, if you could state your full name, place and date of birth for the record.

PH: My name is Peter Hegarty and I was born in Dublin, in Ireland on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1969.

JY: Fantastic! Well thank you for sitting down with us.

PH: Thank you for having me.

JY: Our first question tends to be about the emergence of your feminist identity. But I don't know if you have a feminist identity necessarily. So, I wonder if you could tell us about your relation to feminism.

PH: I don't know if I have a feminist identity either. I can remember about 10 years ago identifying as a feminist in conversation with a colleague of mine, who has been very influenced by feminism. He made a strong argument to me, at that point in time, that men couldn't identify as feminists. That was an interesting one, and so in that discussion I was saying, "What happens when a man identifies as a feminist? What happens to the category of feminism? Does it change? Does it become more legitimate? Does it lose some of its bite?" I suppose we were thinking about those kinds of things. I kind of remain unsure about identifying as most things, I think, really. That sense of unsure-ness is very influenced by some feminist writing, particularly some of the writing that Judith Butler did in the early 1990s, about the problematic nature of speaking as a lesbian and how that presumes you're speaking for a group. I think those questions have stayed with me.

So I think if you are a man, and you speak as a feminist, my colleague had a point. I think you then may be speaking, or claiming to speak, on behalf of a group or a movement that you may not understand very well. I certainly have that ambivalence about being recruited into this project. One of the things that is going on in our experimental work at Surrey at the moment, is we're thinking about and doing experiments about when men and women study the psychology of women, and whose claims are seen as more legitimate and more objective, or more biased in that kind of context.

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And men come out fairly well in our experiments at the moment. So I was a little bit ambivalent about being on the [*Psychology's Feminist Voices*] site for that kind of reason. So I kind of want to have a little bit of distance from saying "Yes, I do identify as a feminist" and certainly not that I can speak for feminism in anyway.

JY: Well, how did you get into psychology in the first place? What attracted you to the field?

PH: I think a few things. I was always very interested in puzzles and games and I grew up in a family where puzzles and games were valued, and I think that was an influence. When I was three years old, there was a very important Cold War event, which was the staging of the Bobby Fischer-Boris Spassky chess match in Reykjavik. For a brief, shining, and rather strange moment in western history, chess was extremely trendy. My older sisters taught me to play chess when I was three years old, so I have been sort of playing games and thinking about puzzles ever since. My route into psychology, really my first interest in psychology, was in cognitive psychology and in the study of thinking and reasoning. I did my undergraduate dissertation with Ruth Byrne, a cognitive psychologist in Dublin. And then when I went to do my PhD in the US I actually, initially, started off on a cognitive psychology track. So that was sort of my route in, or one of my routes in.

JY: Right, and at some point you switched more to social psychology, no? Was that during your PhD?

PH: It was during my PhD and it was because, I think, this is obviously where feminism became increasingly important. I was always thinking, not only about puzzles and games, and cognition and thinking, but also thinking about why we value certain kinds of rationality. And why they are inculcated through education and other things might not be, and why certain kinds of rationality, like conceptual skills, are particularly highly valued and so on. Going through my education I found that stuff comparatively easy, I had a bit of an easy ride in that regard, but I was also aware that it was overvalued, and that created effects. Some of my friends were not so good at that stuff and there were consequences, right?

I was interested in those kinds of questions and I didn't have an awful lot of room to go with that within cognitive psychology. When I did go to do my PhD, I went to Stanford University and there were some things that were sort of going on at that point in time. Claude Steele was starting to develop the stereotype threat stuff, with Joshua Aronson, this was the 1990s. Social psychology seemed to me to be a space where you could ask questions about thinking, but ask them with a sort of wider range of questions about value, questions about politics even, and those sort of, more meta-theoretical questions of why do we value certain kinds of thinking or why do we teach people to think in the ways that they do. That was sort of the shift into social psychology. It happened about then.

JY: Was this also the time you got interested in the history of psychology or did this come later?

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PH: Yeah, it was. I think moving from... I really value the undergraduate degree I got in Dublin, in a number of ways. It was very broad, very holistic, it was very self-directed. We were just left to the library to read stuff, but expected to read stuff. Some of my enduring friendships are from that time as well. But I think when I moved to the US I became sort of acutely aware of the geography of the discipline. Things that seemed to me to be in particular categories of psychology were in different sub-disciplines. I had gotten some of that wrong. So that was interesting. The other thing that was happening was the discipline was fast moving. Cognitive psychology was becoming cognitive neuroscience already; there was a scanner at Stanford and some of that work was already starting to happen. And that was not so interesting to me as a development, because at that time that was sort of mapping structure to function kind of work, that wasn't so interesting to me.

Much more interesting was the stuff that was happening around the Bay Area around situated cognition. I was exposed to the work of people like Jean Lave, for example, by taking classes with Jim Greeno. And Herb Clark's work on psycholinguistics was beginning to move in that kind of direction a little bit, as well. So through Jim Greeno and Herb Clark, I was sort of reading that stuff in their classes. And that was another way of thinking about the social nature of thought that was very useful. So history did come in. It was becoming obvious to me that there were historical questions there. Also, I think the way I had of thinking about cognitive psychology before I went there was inclusive of things like the philosophy of science, was inclusive of things like [Karl] Popper and [Thomas] Kuhn, and so on, but it wasn't in that disciplinary formation. So that was a problem. Also, I came out after I moved to California, as well, so that was another way I began to question some of the narratives in psychology about science, in particular. Because you can't escape the conclusion that the period of exponential growth in psychology, the post-war period, was also the highpoint of homophobia in the discipline. So that sent me on a search for different narratives, and that sent me into the library, looking for history, I suppose.

JY: What was the reaction of the people around you at Stanford to this interest in history of psychology when you're in a social psychology program?

PH: It wasn't really on people's radar screen at all. I was odd at Stanford, and I think perceived as odd. I didn't fit the mold. It was a very different experience from my undergraduate degree. People who remember me from Stanford will remember somebody who was angry, somebody who was quite alienated, somebody who didn't fit. I was 6 years in the Bay Area, most of the enduring friendships I made in that point in time were not with people who were at Stanford, but people I met in other walks of life while I was there. So I didn't fit the mold at all. I was quite peripheral and quite marginal, I suppose, during that period.

AR: On that note, can you talk to us a little bit more about the experience of coming out, especially in the Bay Area, which is historically is a very interesting place to be a gay man? So what was that like for you to come out?

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PH: It was very lovely. It was a very, very good thing. It was a very, very good thing. I was very difficult as well. I think what was difficult about it, I mean migration and coming out often go

together in people's lives, because you need to kind of get away to get outside of yourself. So I found myself then sort of negotiating all my relationships with my family again, in letters and so on. As you do. But I think what was very helpful for me, at that point in time, was by accident, it was in the early 1990s, this was before the time of the economic boom and bust in Ireland, for reasons that have to do with powerful Irish diaspora people, there were generous visa programs for Irish nationals to come and work in the US at that point in time. There were two programs, called the Donnelly visa program and the Morrison visa program. So a lot of my friends, who were my close friends from Ireland, were actually in the Bay Area as well, on Morrison visas. I had a lot of support from home, because my college friendship network migrated to the Bay Area, and that was extremely helpful, because I was this sort of misfit at Stanford. So my social life kind of became about that and then broadened out from there into San Francisco and wasn't around Stanford at all. It was very split in a way. I think a lot of people, you come to graduate school and you make these friends and that's your social life. It was a very different experience for me.

JY: Well, given the sort of difficult relationships you had at Stanford, do you have mentors there who have lasting significance to your work?

PH: Absolutely, I would say. My PhD supervisor was Felicia Pratto, who gave me possibly the best piece of advice of my career, which was keep doing experiments, no matter what you do. Because you're not going to get anywhere with this crazy marginal stuff, unless you keep doing experiments to keep translating it in. And that was absolutely right, absolutely right. Another person who influenced me very much at that point in time is, I took a class from a sociologist called Ruth Linden, she had done a few interesting things, but this was a service learning class on HIV/AIDS. I got exposed to a lot of work on cultural studies and AIDS, and sociology and AIDS, through that. That was 1995, or thereabouts. That was a really good experience, that really helped to formulate some projects. I think the other person that I was very grateful, that I had at the time, was an anthropologist called Joan Fujimura, who was doing anthropology around genomics, at that point in time, was doing a lot of gender and science stuff. Again, that was great to have support to really think through some of the gender and science stuff that I was really beginning to get exposed to at that point in time.

JY: I noticed on your CV that you've been cross-appointed, or appointed directly to, Women's Studies and Gender Studies programs. How did that come about, that focus in your work?

PH: That focus in my work, or those appointments, because those may be different?

JY: We'll start with one and move to the other.

PH: All right, so even when I was in Ireland... here's an influential article that I read very early on, on feminist psychology. There's a paper by Martha Mednick in the late '80s, called "Stop the Bandwagon, I Want to Get Off" or something like that.

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It's her take on this debate that was going on about gender similarity and gender difference. A paper she originally read in Dublin, Ireland, which is just more of a coincidence than anything else, but I first read it in Dublin, Ireland as well. We actually took a course on psychology of women and gender in Ireland, which was taught by Sheila Greene and Peggy [Margaret] Fine-Davis. And that was on the books when I was there and this was one of the first things Sheila Greene suggested to us in that class. In the paper, Mednick makes an argument against difference feminism, things like Carol Gilligan's work, to sort of say "look, this is sort of presenting this image which is going to justify sexism again." That really sparked my interest, I got very interested in that question and stayed interested in those questions about difference. When I got to the States and I started to read some of the gender and science stuff, the kind of stuff that is summarized, maybe, in Sandra Harding's book *The Science Question in Feminism*, I began to see that as very disconnected from what was going on in psychology, but very relevant. It was people like Jeanne Marecek and Rachel Hare-Mustin who were bringing some of that stuff across.

But psychology had gotten, I thought, very polarized between this sort of "you are a radical, marginal social constructionist who thinks science is about men's knowledge and therefore could never have experiments or you have absolutely lock, stock, and barrel signed up to this idea that science is an absolutely neutral laissez-faire free marketplace of ideas where truth acts with no social mediation whatsoever." I mean, I'm stereotyping a little bit, but that was the kind of debate that was getting staged in venues like *Feminism & Psychology* or even *American Psychologist* in the 1990s. So my idea, that I developed with Felicia Pratto, was to take that and say well can we look at how people think about differences, think about similarities, and think about the kinds of empirical differences and similarities that psychology routinely produces, and think about those...could we do experiments about that. Maybe we could just mash this up a bit. So that was where we started.

We did a number of experiments which didn't work terribly well, and then in Joan Fujimura's class I had read Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter*, which I read before I read *Gender Trouble*, which was probably an unusual thing to do, but not to worry. In *Bodies That Matter* Butler, particularly the first chapter, makes this defense of her earlier position about discourse, which is this idea that there is this heterosexual matrix, which is an implicit discursive framework that organizes thinking about gender and gender differences. That this is sort of made up by being cited in discourses, but these chains of citationality are invisible, they are not explicit, and so on. That was an idea, when I read that I thought this is very interesting, this is a way of thinking about language that has purchase, I'm not sure where this is going.

And then, I can't even remember how I came across it, but I came across that article by Dale Miller and his colleagues on how people explain gender differences and I thought, "This is really interesting." And I could really see the connection between what Butler was saying about these kind of implicit forms of normativity, which shape the way we think about difference and then what people were sort of saying in cognitive psychology around this norm theory that Miller had worked out with Kahneman sometime earlier.

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So I thought, “Ooh, now this is really what I want to do, actually.” Here is something, this is very, very obscure, but this is really a point of similarity, actually between what Butler is doing and somebody like Daniel Kahneman is doing. Right, okay. And it’s really quite there. I mean if you read Kahneman and Miller’s paper on norm theory from the late ‘80s they are saying there are these implicit representations that represent normativity, they are in working memory, they are constructed moment to moment and they can change, but they often don’t because of incumbent things. It’s very, very similar to the way Butler is talking about discursive formations, albeit within a kind of computational framework, rather than a discursive one. So instead of sort of polarizing that debate into “there are scientists and social constructionists,” I decided not to worry about that epistemology too much, and to just crack on and do some experiments, and that’s what we did around that. So we did lots of experiments around how people explain group differences. And more recently, Susanne Bruckmüller has done some very nice work about what the consequences of the asymmetric explanations are for the way people feel about others, the way they stereotype others, and more recently she did some work on how it makes people feel about themselves. So through that, that is sort of where feminism came in.

To get back to the other part of your question, of why I ended up working in women’s studies programs. I think, I was a very unusual kind of person, I wasn’t a Stanford fit in a lot of ways. What you had to do to be a Stanford fit was actually only revealed to me afterwards, I realized what I would have had to have done, in some ways that were very surprising. I have an anecdote about that, but... I think basically by the end of the 1990s things like gender studies, things like queer theory were having their moment, or having their growth moment, and psychology departments were interested in this, but interested in people who could also do psychological science and there weren’t a lot of people around who could do both. There weren’t a lot of people around who were interested in doing that kind of translation work and I was interested in doing that kind of translation work. Actually, all three of the paying gigs that I’ve had in North America were sort of psychology *and* women and gender studies, in one form or another.

JY: And I’m just curious, what’s your impression of working in both fields at the same time, or being appointed to both fields at the same time?

PH: It’s something I kind of miss actually a bit in my current job. I don’t really have that, because I’m in a psychology department. It’s nice, because you do get a sort of source of information about that, and of course, with any kind of group identity you feel the difference most acutely, so you feel more like you’re the person who is doing the gender studies stuff, the day you’re in the psychology department, and you feel like the weird person who runs experiments the day that you’re in women studies. That’s just social identity theory. It feels like that, right? This is caveat number two about identifying as things. So I felt that, but I mean, it felt very different in different places as well, because I think that articulation between psychology and women and gender studies is very different in different places. The last place where I was in that kind of situation was in Michigan, in 2006, where I think it’s very healthy, it’s very developed. There’s an awful lot of people.

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There is a well-populated fuzzy boundary between psychology and women studies at Michigan, whereas at some other places I think there isn't a well-populated fuzzy boundary and I think it's healthier if it is. There was another man, Ram [Ramaswami] Mahalingam, who was in Michigan. We used to go to frat bars and you know, the two men in women studies, drinking in frat bars together. So that was quite fun when I was there

JY: Well, what did it feel like to be a man in women's studies, being often I would assume one of the only men in women's studies?

PH: I think people readily explained it by the fact I was gay. I say that's the biggest thing. I think it's very different for gay and straight men, very, very different, because that's sort of immediately, "oh, that's why." So people can kind sort of slot you in quite quickly on that basis. Although, it was very interesting, the first job I had, which was in the College of Staten Island in CUNY, and CUNY had had a hiring freeze for about 20 years, so there really were two cohorts of people in women's studies there. People who had been hired in the 70s and people who had been hired in the 90s. And things like gender studies, studies of men and masculinity, sexuality, gay and lesbian studies had really changed in those 20 years. So those two cohorts of scholars were really thinking in very different ways in some ways. It was a little bit tense at times to be a man in that environment, until you got to know people and you got people on board that you were okay, and so on. It's funny, you do encounter men in the profession who will very quickly tell you the story about how awful it is and how they were discriminated against in the women's studies environment. No, I haven't had that at all, not at all. If anything I'm an undeserving benefactor of the glass-elevator, right? The psychology of women section conference in Britain actually sometimes has that reputation. Several male psychologists in Britain have said "oh, when I went there I was beaten up and..." and it's a space where very few men would go. I've only gone once, but I had a very good time when I went there, sooo ...[laughter]

AR: No, I laugh because Wade was asking me, he said "Do you think I could go to that" and I said, "Sure."

PH: Yeah, I mean the time I went I was kind of representing the lesbian and gay psychology section and doing a particular thing, so I kind of had that cover again. It's probably not particularly useful but...

JY: When it comes to lesbian and gay psychology, that you have been involved in, and women studies and genders studies, how do the two sort of go together for you?

PH: They don't always. I kind of just followed the reindeer a bit on that. There was a period a few years ago, when I was kind of thinking "I am actually doing nothing about LGBT psychology at all. I haven't for about two or three years. That's interesting. Why has that happened?" And it was just other things that were about gender were just working really well. The book I was writing about sexuality had moved away from queer stuff and was about sexuality in a much more general sense. I was writing about things like masturbation and so on.

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It just felt that had gone away for a while, which was fine. I was kind of happy about that actually, I was happy to move away from that for a while. I might move back to it now in a different way, so it doesn't feel like ... it's one of those things where I think in some places people see those things as conflicting or competing for air time and I've never thought those were particularly useful debates to engage at all.

JY: You mentioned earlier the University of Michigan, and I know you were involved in setting up and running a summer program on LGBT psychology. I wonder if you can you tell us about that, how it came about?

PH: Yeah, so I went to Michigan in 2006 for a semester and got into cahoots with Abby Stewart, who is fantastic, and if you can get into cahoots with Abby Stewart I strongly recommend it.

AR: She's been high on the list for many, many years. I've got to get down to Michigan, I've been trying to get her.

PH: Yeah, she's well worth getting into cahoots with. So we kind of start to think about this issue that we mentioned earlier about where are LGBT scholars coming from in psychology and what's developing people. What is the future of that field and how is that going to reproduce itself? And that sort of thing. And we kind of alighted on the idea that there are no structures or forces at all in the field that counteract the kind of hetero-normativity and fear of identifying with that domain, which is sort of endemic, which some people like [Maryka] Biaggio had begun to pick up in her work with interviewing people who were doing clinical psychology routes.

But Abby and I were both picking it up anecdotally by just talking to people. There is a literature that says people don't get this in departments. It's very obvious that there aren't conferences about this. National sections that are LGBT psychology in the US or Britain tend not to have their own standalone conferences. There aren't really sort of routes, there aren't places you can bring your graduate student other than spaces that are hetero-normative, in one way or another. And all the effects that that might have on informal socialization, networking, even dating at conferences, this is what people might do, right? All that kind of stuff. There's an inequality there. Something that needs to be addressed.

So we came up with this idea for the summer institute and we ran two of them: one in 2008 and one in 2010. And people just had our arm off. I mean, we got loads and loads of applications for them. What was lovely about reading the applications was that people really were organic intellectuals. We aimed this really at people who were going at a research career in psychology, because there are things for people who are going to provide mental health care and counseling and stuff like that. We weren't at that end of the discipline. The people who were applying were in graduate school, or they were maybe postdocs, or they were on a tenure track, still very early career, but they all kind of had a leg in something else, do you know what I mean? They all kind of worked in a queer youth group, or an aids organization, or something like that, and they all had something very substantive to sort of speak about that.

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So they were all kind of doing some kind of translating in from LGBT communities, in one way or another. Then when we got them all together for a week in Michigan it was great. We do have survey data around people's experiences, which we published earlier this year in *Psychology & Sexuality*, but I don't think that really does justice to it. I mean they really were among the most exciting, vibrant, joyful, happy academic weeks of my life, those two weeks, they were just *woah*. I think they just really exceeded everybody's expectations of what would happen. I remember the first one. We decided, there's a little gay bar in Ann Arbor, and we decided we would have a barbeque there the first night, because it would be appropriate to start the whole thing off-campus, in a community space. So Abby, Nicola Curtin, who was a PhD student at the time who was one of the co-organizers of this, who is now at Clark, so Abby, Nicola and I are sitting at this barbeque, and it's like you do when you have a party, you're kind of anxious: will people come to my party? Will they have a nice time? Will this mean I'm popular? This busload of people come off and we're like "hi," and then two minutes later we're like "ok, this party is going to be fine, we don't need to worry" and it kind of just went from there for about five, six days and then we all got on the plane and went home.

I mean people really absolutely exhausted themselves with intellectual work and networking and discussion at those events. They were really, really great. Then after 2010, all three of us kind of felt we were moving on with other things and made efforts to pass the baton to somebody, but nobody took up the baton, which is fair enough because it's a big job to do. This year we finished the last of that project, which is we invited the students to do collaborative projects emerging from the networks that they had formed at the institute. At the 2010 institute one of our mentors was Meg Barker, who is one of the editors of *Psychology & Sexuality*, so we did a special issue that just came out there of all the student collaborations. So that's the summer institute, six years of my life, but it was good.

JY: It sounds like a lot of fun.

PH: It was a lot of fun, it was a lot of work and it was a lot of fun and it was very worth doing. It felt like it was kind of transformative actually, for a lot of people, self included.

JY: Great, I wonder if anyone else has questions.

ER: I do have a question, I'm not sure if now is the best time to ask it, but I was looking at your 2007 paper on power in the history of psychology and I was kind of thinking about how power and feminism, and if I understood this correctly, your point was that we can't escape bias. So even as we are outlining the way that power functions in psychology we are exerting power ourselves, and so I was just wondering if you had any thoughts about what the ideal state for psychology is in terms of feminism and its relationship to power and how do you, I don't know, I guess, this is a very complicated question. Basically, maybe what ways in your career have you found of resisting these forms of power that have worked and what do you see as the ideal method of addressing this?

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PH: I don't have the answer to that question. Let me try to explain why I don't have the answer. It's too big a question, I think. But, I think it's interesting to see why it's too big a question. I think there might be something useful in that that helps us figure out where we want to be and where we can go from here. So in your question, you framed it a little bit around the question of bias, which I've resisted doing very much in my work. Bias is a word that trips off the lips of psychologists very quickly and it's probably our default way of talking about subjectivity. I've labored very hard to take that word out of papers. If it's in there at all it is because of coauthors, and it's a problem, right? Because I think when we start to talk about bias, it implies an impaired subjectivity, right, immediately. It doesn't just imply something that is asymmetrical, or queer. It implies something that's problematic. It's a little bit slippery, it's an explicator, it's not explicit in the word, but it's implicit, and that's where the slippery power is. My field, social psychology, is just ridden with the whole study of bias. *The* way of thinking about subjectivity and social thought is bias. So kind of want to peel it back from there.

The reason I do is because I can't answer your question. I can't describe what the ideal state is, and I think when you start to talk about biases, implicit in your talk is the notion of an unbiased position and a biased position, what god given right would you have to do that. So I don't think you can describe the ideal in that kind of way.

That paper, the 2007 paper, I call it getting dirty and I wanted to sort of stick on that notion of dirt, and the ambivalence about dirt, to call attention to that problem of the ideals. So dirt is something that we often want to excise from environments and psychologists do that a lot. But I also meant getting dirty in the sense of getting sexy, getting pleasure and sometimes psychologists want to clean things up so much that they forget about pleasure altogether, or how important it is, or how unlivable life is without it. Health psychologists are often thinking about "oh, wouldn't it be great if people ate less fatty foods." But, you know, I don't want a life without Mars bars, you know? For some people, a life without smoking is not very bearable, or a life without condom-less sex is not very bearable, or a life without caffeine is not very bearable. People have their pleasures. So I kind of wanted to do a little of that.

And then I also wanted to question notions of methodological purity as well, and that kind of purification impulse, particularly in the history of psychology community. Maybe there are kinds of experiments that people are doing that are useful here, that can be brought in. I mean, we all know about the quantitative sort of purification impulse in psychology, but there can be a qualitative one as well. And so, having lived in these kinds of between-ness, and enjoyed some of the pleasures of in between-ness, that's kind of what I wanted that paper about power to say. Forget about the ideal, forget about the unbiased. Where are you now? What's the fun in what you're doing now? And, where would you like to move from here? It was a little bit of that really.

That's the paper I wrote that had the biggest Mary Douglas influence in it. I think there's something inescapable about what she says about the way human groups impose order on the world, which the world necessarily doesn't fit. And then you have a range of options about what to do with those bits of materiality that don't fit. You can call them dirty, you can get rid of them, you can kill them, you can re-categorize them, you can make them sacred.

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There's a limited range of things that you can do, or that society's typically do from there. So I wanted to think about those kinds of responses that we have around methodology in psychology. What does psychology do with qualitative methods? It can get rid of it, it can kill it, it can turn it into quantitative methods by quantifying it, we can make it sacred and say that it's the most radical thing that has ever happened that will save the world. There's something about the way we're doing it that is similar to the way Mary Douglas is talking about it in that book. So that's why I can't really answer your question.

AM: That was a pretty good answer.

JY: Well, let me ask you more about your work in the history of psychology, and how you continue two parallel research lines; doing history of psychology on the one hand, but also continuing to do experimental work. How do you navigate the two?

PH: I don't see them as necessarily being [separate]. I mean it's time really that's the one. That's where really it hits you, it's time where it really hits you when you work across fields like that. Keeping up with everything. You have to spend a day or two with Mike Pettit and realize that you know absolutely nothing about the history of psychology whatsoever, you haven't read anything. Or, some of my other colleagues, you don't have to spend long with them to realize I know no statistics at all. So you kind of have to take that on. There's a focus in my work on particular kinds of phenomena around gender and sexuality, and I think increasingly what I've figured out, through this more recent work on graphs, is that staying really close to phenomena is something I really value. And staying close to phenomena means collapsing disciplinary walls, and I'm willing to do that because the phenomena are more important to me than the disciplinary formations.

For me doing experiments about how people construct the difference between gay and straight people in their spontaneous explanations, and how they do that by drawing down stereotypes about gender inversion. If you present them with data that suggests that gay men are more effeminate than straight men they'll reify it, but if you give them data that suggest that straight men are more effeminate than gay men they'll say: "Well, the gay men were lying to the interviewer." Those kinds of stereotyping experiments to me are absolutely related to historical work that I've done on texts like Terman and Miles, 1936, where you see those kinds of things being reified in the discourse to begin with. Those are not separate in kind, that's all the same stuff really. And if you think about it in sexology, people are continuing to cite Terman and Miles, and its history is still contested. They are kind of related to each other still. I don't see them all as necessarily different from each other.

In recent years what I've gotten more interested in is quantitative kinds of history, like bibliometrics. Ways of looking at past and events and having quantitative representations of them, as a way of talking about structures and discourses, and repeated patterns and discourses in a way that I can talk to psychologists, as some of the more qualitative work that I've done in history doesn't translate so easily.

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Along the way I've kind of figured out that it's very dangerous to show historians graphs. They really don't like that, that really frightens the horses. I've learnt that the hard way; put up a picture of a graph and historians run away. You figure these things out slowly. So yeah, I don't see those things as necessarily unrelated and, in fact, I'm always on the lookout for ways to bring them closer together. Recently, I've been doing work on word order in sentences. I wrote a paper on word order last year on why people, when they talk about romantic couples put men's names before women's names and how people then draw on gender stereotypes when they order names. And now, the thing I'm interested in at the moment is looking at reversals in English word order in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, looking at corporate analysis.

So again, it is an interest in taking the phenomena and sort of taking one method, whether it's from psychology, or history, or sociology, or wherever it is from, and seeing how far you can go with that, and then not being afraid to just switch gears and look at it from another perspective, and do that for a year or two and see where you come to in the end.

JY: Have you ever had pressure, either explicit or implicit, to give up the historical part being that you are in a psychology department?

PH: Nobody's ever come around and said "Why are you doing that?" I think that's because I continue to publish paradigmatic social psychology stuff as well. Talking to other people who work historically in psychology departments, they're under different kinds of pressures around that kind of stuff than I am. Because of those kinds of choices and those kinds of engagements that I've made, it's not so much of a problem. In my current job, I've introduced a lot more teaching around the history of psychology in my department. I've supervised a PhD student who worked exclusively in history. Another has just started now - Katherine Hubbard, who is working on projective testing in Britain. I teach courses, PhD students come, they publish work at the same time I'm publishing and so that kind of works as a way of doing it.

But I can imagine that pressure would come around as well, and I think it's very different as well, or it has been very different, it may change in the future, but it has been different working in the UK than I think it would have been working in the US for the last 10 years. Because there's so much qualitative psychology in the UK. It's quite ordinary to see qualitative papers in the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, I've published one or two of them myself. Also the government is interested in qualitative work and will fund it. The government is interested in public understanding of science, and research that has social impact, and so on. The whole sort of ethos around what is science and what is psychological science is very different in some ways than it is in the United States. I can't say too much about Canada. For that reason I think it's sort of easier.

JY: Do you have a favorite paper that you've written, a favorite article? Pick among the children?

PH: That's hard. I think I really, really, really like the paper we had in *JPSP* [*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*] two years ago on graphs.

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I really liked it because it felt to me that when I wrote that paper, I mean it took two years to get to review, there were six versions of that paper, three and a half of the six experiments that are in there were not the first version right, so it's...

AR: So you have to like it now.

PH: I have to like it. I like the action editor very much. I respect her enormously and I think she made it much better and that's what she does. She's one of those action editors that makes your paper better and really works with you. And that was a case in point. But what I really like about it is that in that paper I got something really concrete about some of those early ideas that I was trying to get to about difference and constructions of gender difference back in graduate school. It's a paper that cites Sandra Harding, it's a paper that cites Foucault, it's a paper that cites Latour and William James and Bernal. There's a lot of history of psychology in that paper, a lot of science and technology studies in that paper, and it deliberately makes the point about the difference between studying subjectivity and studying bias. It has a very relativist kind of trick at the end, and I'm very excited about that because it's in *JPSA* as well. That's kind of part of it. It is there in a very, very mainstream venue, that sort of changing the relationship between the margin and the mainstream, is what's interesting to me.

They were fun experiments to do, I'm going to talk about them in a talk in a minute. The effects were very large, they were easy experiments to do. I just did another one recently and the effects are huge again. And it was a way, studying that stuff on graphs was a way of looking at how something that is a very androcentric convention in psychological science is just there. It's real, it exists, it's hiding in plain sight, nobody's noticing it, because of our ways of thinking about graphs were totally off the table of that debate about gender difference, that was so loud. Which just wasn't thinking about visualization at all, and similarly the cognitive psychology stuff on spatial thinking was just not interfacing with feminism at all.

A little bit like the Kahneman and Judith Butler moment it felt like, here I am, sort of taking something and putting things together, but actually it felt like something new that I was bringing to that, because nobody was really talking about graph order before. And the earlier paper was cited by the APA publication manual, which was great. There is now stuff in there about graph order, so people who like to study the publication manual because they are interested in the history of all kinds of objectivity, will have to contend with the feminist influence of Peter Hergarty in the future.

JY: Well, it was one way to make a difference [*laughter*]

AR: You know, when you were talking about that paper and the experiments that you did, and the large effect sizes, it put me in mind of a place that you started with, which was your interest in puzzles and games.

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And my experience with social psychology, sort of classic social psych experimentation is, it is a puzzle, it is a game. How to design a really good experiment to show something. And it's a problem, and it's a problem solving, puzzle solving kind of exercise, and I wondered if that also resonated with you?

PH: Absolutely, yeah. People bring different kinds of skills to social psychology. Some people bring theatre skills and they do big behavioural experiments, and you can tell. I tried to do big behaviour experiments for my PhD at one point in time and I was terrible at it. I wrote a paper about how it all went horribly wrong. But I feel I'm better with those kind of puzzle kind of, social cognition, two sides of A and a clever independent variable. That's more where my head is as an experimenter, it's in that kind of stuff. Getting people to explain data, or draw graphs, or generalize data is fun for me. It is absolutely back to that kind of puzzle-solving, doing-a-trick kind of thing.

I really like, there's a paper that Jane Oakhill at Sussex and her colleagues have done recently on the surgeon riddle, do you know the surgeon riddle? This still works, right. A man and his son are out one day and they're in a car crash. The man is killed and the son is rushed to the hospital, and then the surgeon comes in to operate and pulls back the sheet and says: "I can't operate. It's my son." In Sussex now they're still getting lots of people to fall for the riddle, and not realize you have to say, "Who is the surgeon?" Well, it's the mother. People don't get it, because 'surgeon' just immediately brings up the mental imagery of men so strongly as a category. I remember as a kid people doing the surgeon riddle on me, when I was a kid in the 70's. And now she's made this little piece of knowledge about it, and they are doing more experiments on it. That stuff is very interesting to me, sort of how that comes about. I think it's a very simple example of how movements like feminism have engaged with cognition, have engaged with thought through irony, through shifting norms and so on.

Think about things like [Douglas] Hofstadter, to cite another man who was influenced by feminism. Hofstadter's paper on person purity in language, where he kind of takes the whole sexist language debate, writes as if he was defending sexist language, but makes it racist language. And I just sounds so awful, you read that stuff out in class and you just feel terrible reading it, because it just feels so racist. But it's really a clever use of irony, because he never says it in the paper, but the whole point is: well if you would not accept this for racism, why is it acceptable for sexism? And there's a lot of irony like that in feminism, and there's certainly a lot of irony in gay liberation.

I love those early kind of heterosexual questionnaires that people put out, and they got used in diversity training later on: "How did you first know you were straight? How do people react when you tell them you're straight? Do you think it's a phase you are going through?" Those kinds of things and they are kind of funny, but make a really important point about our epistemology around difference, which is there are certain kinds of questions that cannot be asked of certain kinds of identity. They just don't seem intelligible to us, whereas they are kind of routinely asked of other kinds of identities.

I think there is a lot to be done there, maybe one of the things that queer theory can do for psychology, and what lesbian and gay studies can do, is combine politics with humor, and combine politics with irony, in a productive kind of way. And maybe there really are resources there to do things. Maybe.

JY: Well, we have been going on for a while, but I do have a few more questions.

PH: No take your time. I'm happy to stay as long as people are happy to stay.

JY: All right, well I'm wondering, given the fact you came out in graduate school, whether over the course of your career you've experienced discrimination as a gay man in psychology?

PH: Again, I think that's a really hard one to answer. We all know the Faye Crosby study about how people see discrimination out there, in the world, but don't see it in themselves. I think it is also one that I have to answer very carefully as well, because I think it would be very easy to give a yes answer to that, and that would be very counterproductive, particularly in a document like this. So again, I'm thinking of Biaggio's paper on the LGBT people who were going to go forward in clinical psychology, and the extent to which people felt that doing LGBT work would be detrimental to their careers, would be the death of their careers, and so on. I think it's very important to not immediately say: "oh yes, yes, I've been discriminated against, because of course that happens." I think in some ways that can kind of perpetuate things, so that's important. As I've said, being gay probably made it easier, in some ways, to navigate that kind of psychology, women and gender studies space that I have been in a lot of the time.

So there have been huge advantages to it as well, and certainly I think it's one of the advantages of sexuality... I don't think I want to take that as sort of discrimination, because I think discrimination almost feels too passive. You're the target of discrimination, it happens to you, and I think these dynamics are much more interactive than that. I think what's been useful is having a high viz identity, because its marked, allows you to connect with other people that you wouldn't otherwise connect with, and that's been very useful. For two and a half years, I was chair of the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section in the British Psychological Society, so 2004 to 2006. In that context, that was a leadership role, but I was one of very few academics, most people in that section were doing mental health stuff. Among the academics, I was about the only person who was doing experiments. It was Gareth Hagger-Johnson who does quant, individual differences stuff, but most of the people were doing qualitative. Here's a context, where you've got to get completely outside your paradigms to do your work, and I think by virtue of the kind of marginalization of sexuality research, people are marked in terms of their sexual identity and so on, that there's probably a tradition of that.

If you go back 50 years and you look at some of those early papers in social science of sexuality, where it's really interesting who people are citing, and who they're talking to. [Evelyn] Hooker's paper on the Rorschach. She cites [Alfred] Kinsey and then she cites Ford and Beach and that's it.

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She doesn't cite ten papers from *Rorschach Research Exchange*, for instance. Then you look at something like Esther Newton's Mother Camp, the first PhD in lesbian and gay studies in the US, and she cites Hooker. She's citing a psychologist and she's in anthropology. So there's something about that, about being sort of squeezed to the margin, in this very, sort of, thin space, it makes you look across the sub-disciplines. I think that's what's good about it, and what I value about LGBT as a space, you get back to looking at people, as you do in history as well. You look at people in their lives, they're not carved up into social, bio, cog, or whatever, you actually have to think about these things as interrelated and there's space to do that.

I've kind of evaded your question about discrimination a little bit. I think there are ways in which I am marked, which are interesting. Even though I have never published a paper on AIDS prevention in health psychology, I get loads of them to review. That's the thing. Because people think, they look at this... it makes sense for the editor, "look at this, this could be a bit homophobic, let me send this to somebody I trust because they are an in-group member in social psychology and they are also gay." Well, that's a short list and my name is on it. Sometimes that sort of stuff happens, which I think is interesting, and that's fine, I'll review those papers, with the usual caveat. That one is interesting.

Also because you're doing stuff that's LGBT, or that's feminist stuff, or that's gender stuff, people don't see the possibility that you could be talking about substantive theoretical issues about cognition. In my work there's a really, really consistent thread about taking a particular stand on cognitive models that are about active cognitive processing. There's a reason I'm using Kahneman and Miller and not citing some other models of categorization, there's a reason why citing Sloman's work on feature-based induction and not Osherson's work on category-based induction, because forms of categorization are political, and some of those cognitive models are saying things about the agency of people, the contingency of thought, that other models are not. Some of those models, I think, really escape the kinds of critiques of cognition that discourse analysts like Jonathan Potter or Michael Billig would have given about how those are complicit with racism, some models I think really don't. That's in my work, but people don't see that because it's just, "Oh, it's about gender..." So that kind of markedness has a variety of kinds of consequences, you know.

AR: Maybe I could turn that question a bit on its head. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with the power that you may have had as a white male?

PH: Yeah, I mean doing this interview is a case in point [*laughter*]. I think this is real glass elevator stuff. I think that is a really good way to turn this on its head, because I think those things are much more invisible. I haven't written much about race, I'm actually doing some experiments about how people think about race at the moment, which are going really well. But when I've spoken about gender, it has felt to me that I could say things that a woman couldn't say and get away with this and have that kind of white lab coat sort of effect, definitely. Women have said that to me, "I couldn't get away with saying that." And sometimes: "Thank you for doing it. Because that was kind of useful."

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I do think those things are different, and as I say we're studying them in experiments at the moment. Recently it's been interesting, the race stuff, because I have some experiments going on about the invisibility of whiteness, and how people don't get categorized in terms of whiteness. And talking about that stuff very recently engenders a kind of nervousness in an expert audience, usually an all-white or mostly white audience that I haven't seen with the stuff I've done on sexuality and gender. I'm like, "ok, this is different, I don't understand this, but this is different." I'm off my experiential base there, definitely.

AR: Do you know some of Brett Stoudt's work on male privilege? He has done some stuff on white, male privilege.

PH: I know Brett Stoudt actually, but I haven't read that work.

AR: I don't know how much of it's published. He's down at CUNY. A really neat guy, and interesting stuff that he's been doing in private boys schools, basically prep schools, looking at white male privilege. Anyway, we can talk later.

JY: Does anyone have a question?

MP: Identity? Irishness?

AR: I wanted to ask more about your upbringing. This is a good segue.

MP: One of your first historical subjects was Harry Stack Sullivan. I don't think that was an accident. If we're talking about identities, what about Irishness? I know you've been thinking about doing a project about psychology in Ireland.

PH: Yeah, Harry Stack Sullivan wasn't a random choice; he was too interesting for too many reasons. Not least because of what he wrote. It's been interesting, most people in the international scene or in North America, people don't have a category for Irish psychologists, because I could name them. My sister is a psychologist. She works in California, as well. And I had a conversation with somebody once, at a conference, who knew my sister. And an hour into the conversation, somebody else mentioned I was Irish, "oh, you're Irish, I thought you were Dutch." You worked with my sister, how did you think Hegarty was a Dutch name? So yeah, it's kind of off the map a bit, and lots of people refer to me as a British psychologist now, or say well, you're working in Britain. So I kind of get glossed at as British a lot, so it's just there. I tend not to correct that very often. But I think there is definitely an influence. Some of the stuff about markedness, actually, is about being Irish in the US, that's definitely an influence, because Irish people are marked in the US, marked very positively, positive stereotypes by a lot of people as warm, and friendly, and fun. Which can really work against you if you are trying to be an academic. I had one experience where I was on a round table, it was an LGBT event, and you had to talk about teaching LGBT. I thought I would talk about teaching people in the context of running psychology experiments, because who else is going to talk about that at the LGBT teaching event.

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One of the other speakers gave this talk about markedness, all about race and markedness and queerness and markedness, that's what the whole talk was about. Then I gave my thing and this person responded by opening the questioning and said: "can you just say the word laboratory again, because you just have such a lovely accent." I was like, okay, well I kind of feel like a ten foot leprechaun now. So it does come around in some really academic environments. I have noticed, I just have to get off the plane and I immediately start talking in a more North American accent, because you are implicitly punished for it, because people start to attend to the accent and not the content of the talk. So I probably sound a bit mid-Atlantic.

What did I take from Ireland? When I was doing the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section in Britain, we threw a ton of programming one year at a big BPS [British Psychological Society] conference. We had a whole parallel LGBT stream running through the conference. And that was actually where we had this session that became the *History of Psychology* special issue that you were talking about earlier. Those talks were mostly given at that conference.

I brought all these volunteer organizations there and we all kind of collaborated, it was really brilliant. And we all went out one night and got drunk and there was another psychologist there who's gay, who is Catholic. Who has kind of retained a strong sense of being Catholic, which I haven't. And he was saying, "There is a real Catholic influence in everything you do. It's all about this idea of you trying to help people, and you're not living a good life unless you are helping people. That's very Catholic and you wouldn't be doing this unless you were Catholic." This is like caveat number three about identity. People can spot things about your identity better than you can, so autobiographical accounts are not to be trusted. They are not necessarily the most useful, the most insightful, or anything like that. Yeah, I think I'll leave it at that. I'm not good at this identity business.

AR: Can you tell us just a little bit more, and I'm not sure how this connects really, I don't have a specific question, but can you tell us more about your upbringing? We kind of jumped from the day you were born to the day you were in college, but you mentioned your sisters teaching you to play chess, and your sister is a psychologist. So can you just construct for us...

PH: Yes. I mean I grew up in Dublin, middle class Irish family. There were 6 of us. I was the youngest of 6. Three of us, in one way or another, have become psychologists. One of my sisters is a cognitive scientist and another one of my sisters is a narrative therapist.

JY: Do you know why that is?

PH: You'll have to interview them. A variety of reasons. Well actually, my sister was interviewed on one of the American TV channels recently, and she talked about this, so you can look for that. But I don't like to tell other people's stories for them so much I suppose, which is why I am kind of reluctant to tell my own, because you always tell other people's when you tell your own and it's not yours to tell. But yeah, we grew up a very academically focused family. My father was very, very religious; my mother was very creative.

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She was here in this town, Toronto, twenty-five years ago representing Ireland in the world flower arranging competition and doing very well in them. Our house was also full of creativity, there are a lot of musicians in my family, I've done a little bit of music, but I'm very far from being the most talented musician in my family. It was very busy, it was very intellectual, and I always had lots and lots and lots of older siblings who were very thought provoking. So that was very good, it was very, very full. I have retained very strong friendships with my siblings as well, and that is really important to me, and that connection to family is one of the reasons why I don't live in North America.

AR: I have one more question then I promise I'll butt out. I wanted you to tell us a little bit about your book, because you have a book coming out very imminently. If you have an elevator speech about your book that you'd like to give we would be happy to have it on tape.

PH: Let me try and develop one on the fly, because I don't. This is a long project. Mike was complaining the other day, because someone was citing a book review, but I have the terrible honor, I've written a whole book about a book review. The book review is Lewis Terman's review of Kinsley's first book on *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, which has puzzled biographers of both men, of which there are several on both sides, as to why this book review got written. If it was in character for Terman, if it was out of character for Terman. I've zoned in on four particular things that Terman picked up on that aggrieved him in the Kinsley's report, which are about: the relationship between the emergence of male sexuality and lifelong health; the relationship between marital happiness and cohort effects; self-report and class dynamics, particularly around nocturnal emissions; and Jewish men's sexuality. And amazingly Terman is the one of the only social science reviewers who doesn't say, "and the unbelievable thing in this is that one third of men have had sex with other men." Those four presences and that absence, then become the basis of genealogical chapters, where I get into the ways in which the IQ testing movement was much more about sexual politics and Kinsley's approach to sex surveying had a lot more epistemology in it and a lot more claims about intelligence than we've recognized, because we have said Terman is the intelligence guy and Kinsley is the sex guy. Through the book I've tried to explain how those concepts are much more mutual influencing than we've understood so far.

AR: Great! Can't wait to see it!

JY: Looking forward to reading it. As we wrap up, I was wonder if you have any advice that you would offer to psychologists entering the field today. Perhaps, ones who are interested in studying gender, studying LGBT psychology, what would you offer them as advice?

PH: I would say life is difficult when you approach it on your own, so beware the traps of academic narcissism, which are incredibly silo-ing for people. Life is much easier when it is approached in teams, so make friends with other people quickly. Academic narcissism can take the form of thinking you have to do everything all yourself, or being the person who does the thing, and you don't, and that can be too much to ask of yourself.

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And in some ways that's encouraged, particularly if you go to a very elitist place to do your PhD. It's something you need to unlearn. Sometimes there are problems that can't be solved by you and your friends, so you need to talk to the elders in the tribe. So get to know the elders. And sometimes there are problems that the elders can't solve, so get to know the ancestors. And you are lucky that you live in a tribe that has a written tradition, where it's all written down so get to know your history.

JY: Well, is there anything we haven't asked you about that you would like to share?

PH: I don't know.

JY: If there isn't that's fine.

PH: I don't think there is. That was great, thank you.

JY: Thank you so much for sitting down with us.

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