Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Wendy Hollway

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford and Kelli Vaughn-Blount

Cumberland Lodge
Windsor, England
July, 15, 2010

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WH: Wendy Hollway, Interview Participant
AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer
KVB: Kelli Vaughn-Blount, Interviewer

AR – An interview with Wendy Hollway in Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, England. On July 15th , 2010. Please state your name and date of birth for the record so that the tape can be identified.

WH – Well, my name is Wendy Hollway. I was born in 1949, April the 20th, in the north of England, New Manchester.

AR – Great. The question we usually start off with to get the ball rolling is to have you tell us a little bit about how you developed your feminism. Sometimes we phrase it in terms of your feminist identity, if that something that makes sense? But how did you develop into a feminist?

WH – Well, the personal was political, fortunately, by the time I was about twenty. The time was perfect and I am sure that it is absolutely key to what happened to me in that period of my life. It was very much through my own experiences of finding out how I was treated as a woman and then the ideas were there to be found. I remember the first time this friend of mine actually mentioned a book which had something like "sexual stereotyping" in the title; it was an American book. I did not really pay attention to it; I mean I did not grow up as a feminist and it was not right at the beginning. I cannot remember what year it would have been, but probably the early 70s. And [I was] thinking "Yeah" you know "what's that?" And it was hanging around and I have not actually looked at it. This man that I was in a relationship with picked it up and said "what's that!?" (laughs) and I immediately thought it might be more interesting than I thought before. I did not know particularly why but there was this defensive charge in the way he said this which maid me think "Oh. Okay there is something to this…"

AR – Maybe there is something interesting in there…

WH – But, you know, that was just one tiny little thing. But I think, looking back now, the other thing is that my mother who was not from a feminist generation at all. She was that first war generation who go married and started having children immediately after the Second World War. She is her own person and always has been. And of course I grew up with that, you know, taking it completely for granted. But the way she lived, what was actually a very conventional life with respect to being married, having children, and not

ever having a paid job after the war, was actually exemplary in terms of her sense of freedom, equality, and self-esteem. I think I must have just taken that from her without realizing it. So there was no way I was ever going to let a man oppress me, I mean I just would have noticed straight away that that was somehow unfair.

AR – But, somehow she imparted to your very strong sense of yourself.

WH – Yes, but in a very taken for granted way. So it was not even something I would have to fight for, actually.

AR – You mentioned that you also had certain experiences in which in which it was brought to your attention that you were treated differently because you were a woman. Can you recall what some of those experiences might have been?

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WH – Well, I remember later when I was in Japan. I was with my partner at the time and we were staying with a male friend of his. He was introducing us to friends. And I might as well not have been there, and I was just unused to that. Oh, and something else, going back to when I graduated, I very foolishly got married. My new husband and I were looking to decide where to live. He had a university job and we went to a [inaudiable] and kind of post kind of thing to looked at it. And the woman took me into the kitchen to show me the kitchen and the man took around wherever he took him. I noticed and it surprised me, I mean I was sufficiently naïve to not expect that because by this point and I mean I was at university from ‘68 to ‘71 so it was very new times and it was very revolutionary and sort of critical. Young women at that age could just take for granted that they were equal territory to the young men who came. But then something had changed and I associated that with my marital status.

The other thing was that the moment I got married some official government agency wrote to me as ‘Mrs.’ and then my married name. And I could not believe what I was seeing, and they insisted that I change it on my passport. And I then, I am just stubborn, went in to the battle with them about keeping my own name. I was not Mrs. Croft, I absolutely was not, that was my mother-in-law. So after the first three months, which is how long it took me to realize what was happening, I changed back all the official places and I had the argument with the passport agency. In that passport, it said on the very back page “Wendy Hollway is the wife of Mr…” because they wouldn’t let it be. I mean obviously it would now but we are talking about 1971. So these little personal things, when you discover that you are not your own person and you should be.

AR – So a lot of it was connected with the fact that you got married, it sounds like in a way.

WH – Yes, yes, so I changed that around before very long. Since then I [was] not married again in any of my relationships even though I am in a long term relationship. I mean it just did not seem like a necessary or desirable thing to do, really. I mean it has got a

down side in terms of what happens to children when relationships are unstable. But then they are unstable whether you are married or not largely.

AR – You mentioned of course, that that was a period when the women's movement was really heating up. Can you tell us about ay involvement you may have had politically in the women's movement?

WH – Yes, but it's not the major theme, I think really I have always been an academic feminist. But I moved to Bristol at some point in the '70s, I cannot remember exactly when. And there was a very active women's movement there and I didn't know anyone when I moved there; I moved for a job. That was the community that I found and enjoyed being with and getting involved in. So I did what was around; I mean I cannot remember exactly what it was. But I do not have a theme of activism and by that time I was doing my PhD pretty much on the side or beginning to think about what the themes would be. So I was concentrating on that in some way. But it was being fed by the women's movement just as a matter of course really.

AR – So tell us how that came together in your work as an academic?

WH – Okay. By then I had a degree in psychology and I think that goes back to my mom and her mom too. I mean that intuitive curiosity and insight into, what my grandmother would have called, what makes people tick, I mean as simple as that. You say that now, and you sort of almost have to apologize, but that is what psychology meant to me. And

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then you go and get a degree and I was very disappointed, it was a straight-laced red bricked psychology scientific degree. So, I think that is when I just felt critical and found a way to express being critical of this because it did not seem to be about what interested me. It was part of my kind of perverseness, you know: "That's not what I came for and I don't see why I should take it lying down!" I mean I was just stroppy I think, well I think I was stroppy. For example, I remember finding Audrey Lang and bringing it into my essays even though we were not taught it. And I remember [that] the whole degree course gave us one hour on psychoanalysis which was a dismantling of the notion of the unconscious, a kind of disproving of it. And I must have found before then, before I went to university, some psychoanalysis that I had found interesting. I mean it was not a big theme for me but I thought that was absolutely awful that they did that. I have been pursuing psychoanalysis as part of my feminism ever since. In fact it is occupying a larger and larger place in my thinking and that just was not on the cards.

AR – That was something I wanted to ask about, I do not know if Kelli noted this too, but it is such a large part of your work. At least in North America, one does not associate critical psychology as much with psychoanalytic thinking. Now that might be different here, so can you elaborate on what attracted you to psychoanalytic theory, psychodynamic theory, [or] object relation theory?

WH – Yes, this has been gradual. There was never a moment when I thought "this is what I stand for." But I suppose the real core theme in that is that when I read it I found it meaningful, I found it mind stretching, it made sense in my experience, it was complex, it was nuanced, it was deep. It provoked me into thinking thoughts that I have never had. But you know those kinds of thoughts that when you have them for the first time you recognize them. So the something that has always been waiting to be articulated and you read things and you think "Oh, now I get [it]". And it made sense of my personal life, and just you name it, and organizational life and research methods eventually which has become one of my really core themes lately.

So, if it was interesting I was going to pursue it, it was as simple as that. So the fact that there was no tradition, well there was so I will go on to that, but I think I would have pursued it anyway. Well, there was Juliet Mitchell's book, I think it was 1974, it certainly became available in the U.K. so there was this massively important intervention into feminism. So, in a sense I could locate myself around some of those issues. But there was also critical psychology British style, was the bringing in of French poststructuralist thought through Michel Foucault and Lacan. They have always taken psychoanalysis seriously theoretically. They may kind of slag it off, well that is putting it too lightly. But I mean dismissing it very critically, like Foucault does. But it was there [and] it was thought about. And so that very formative period when the five of us were writing *Changing the Subject*. We were a group of friends; we got together and had creative weekends. We got stoned, it was the seventies. We got together and we were excited by these ideas. And I must say that group taught me such a lot just because of the way we all talked together. We had lovely weekends [and] it was a playful way of learning. Playful in the fullest sense, in the Winnicottian sense, which is that play is the basis of creativity. So by the time we had written that, and it took quite a long time, I was formed in a certain trajectory as a critical psychologist and that book was one of the classics that made critical psychology defined in the way it was. But that came hard on the heels of

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my PhD thesis. When I think back now, the way I use psychoanalysis in that thesis, it makes me thoroughly embarrassed because it was so superficial - but you have to start somewhere. And so I picked up certain ideas, like splitting for example. And some people comment when they go back to that early work, they call me a Lacanian. I could not recognize that, I do not feel as if I know Lacan's work at all. But I used one particular idea from it. I have always done that, if I think an idea is useful I just take it and do what I want with it. There is a dangerous side to that but I do think that it can be very fruitful. There is nothing sacrosanct about these ideas to me, if I think I can use them then I take them with me. So there has been quite recently a critical debate about the extent that you can use psychoanalysis outside the clinic in psychosocial studies. And I just took it and used it. Obviously, bearing in mind that it is never the same once you take it outside the clinic. That involves a whole lot of thinking about how to apply it both ethically and methodologically and ontologically and everything else. But I have always done that and I continue to do so. It is a very fruitful way of working. I cannot remember what question,

but I remember that I was talking about the beginnings of critical psychology in the U.K. It is just an extremely different tradition from North America.

AR – Yes, it is.

WH – But this critical thought, I remember in my thesis for example criticizing or critiquing the notion of sex role stereotyping as really not getting one very far. And my disappointment with psychology was still quite central, probably, to the way I was working. So dismantling the kind of standard social psychology, even if the kind that North American feminist, which was where feminist psychology really grew up in the first place. I did not rate it; I conducted a critique of it. I did something different, and the tools for doing something different were not really very available so I was making them up as I went along. And they were kind of maybe psychodynamic in a more general sense of the term rather than being very psychoanalytic, but that has continued.

The topic of my thesis was gender relations in heterosexual couples and gender power relations particularly. That just came out of my own interest, and this is a theme all the way through - I had questions to ask about it, and I turned it into a thesis. I mean it was absolutely unheard of then, there was no tradition of qualitative methods, there was no tradition of feminist research not in psychology anyway, there was no supervisor that had the first clue as to what I was doing. My first supervisor at Bristol, I registered at Bristol first of all because I had a job there, he sexually…well he got out his penis in one of my first supervisions and with great pride showed me this erection (laughs).

And so I fled, well, I did not flee, I mean I extricated myself forthwith. So I was left without a supervisor in Bristol and then I picked it up later when I went to London. And it turned out that there was a bit of a history of him doing it. But that is just an example of the way there was no strong or indeed any harassment policies in universities at the time and he was an important professor. But at the same time, it should not have happened and it did affect what happened next because I did not have a supervisor in Bristol. But I do not think it was abusive.

AR – It did not feel abusive at the time?

WH – No and I think that it is all about power relationships. And there is a tendency to theorize power relationships as completely monotropic and negative. But I think

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what I brought into feminism is not a fear of men's power, it is just part of my mother's you know who she is and the men that I had encountered. So even though he was an important professor I think I just felt a bit sorry for him. I did not want to continue to deal with it so I did not carry on and register fully. I mean I did keep out of his way after that. But I did not feel frightened. I mean this was only a penis (Laughs).

AR – Clearly he was very pleased with it! (Laughs). Well, you moved then to the University of London and pursued your training there.

WH – By that time I was a lecturer, so I was registered part time. That actually meant that although no supervisor had a clue as to what I was doing I had a sufficient status in the organization to just get on with it and do it. So, I did it almost unsupervised in a way.

AR – One of the things you wrote about in the book that came out of your dissertation was in fact the evolution of a method, how you deal with the material, can you explain how you figured that out? And what method has meant for you?

WH – If there is one theme, as well as psychoanalysis, that you could track though my work is an enormous interest in method. I am still as convinced as ever or more convinced that method is defining of what can be thought and known in psychology. If you do not get your methods right you get very inadequate visions of human being. I think positive methods were dire, that was the start of the critique, but I actually think that qualitative methods are often very thin as well particularly for psychology. I think one of the things about the qualitative term and discursive term in social psychology is that in a sense the ground of psychology has been given up a bit. I think it is turned into micro-sociology and what that means is that we are not asking questions about human subjectivity as the central feature of what we do as psychologists. I have failed to do that at times, but I always have this abiding curiosity about what makes people tick. And so I never really was happy to give that up to talk about how people are positioned. So, in my thesis this idea of positioning and discourses was very strong.

But it was not about discursive positioning only it was about the investment in those positions and that was about discourses of sexuality. When that work got took up, which it did get taken up in quite a lot of places, it got taken up as discursive positions, [and] it got taken up as more deterministic. I had always had a thread of psychology in there. That was just what happened to social psychology for the next two decades, it became very social constructionist, very discourse determined. And that was not what I was doing and I increasingly paid attention to that sort of psychological investment side of positioning. This is British social psychology so it might feel a little bit strange to you. But think of the work of Margaret Wetherell, who is one of my colleagues at the university, absolutely so influential in bringing discourse into social psychology and it was very necessary. But my position always was, Margi and I have had more than a decade of friendly discussion about this, that there was not enough psychology in discourse analysis.

AR – You described you position as very deeply psychosocial. Can you describe or impact that further?

WH – Yes, and I supposed I only started using that term about 10 [or] 15 years ago. I am not quite sure how it emerged as the central thread because before that it was critical psychology that we were doing. I think critical psychology as a cutting edge term lost a little bit of its bite and I think that is because if you are always critical where are you

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building something new? The negative critique was in danger of becoming too dominant in critical psychology. Now I think, I did not then, I get really fed up with negative critique actually. You can critique anything to death if you really choose to and that sometimes kills off potentially useful ideas. Anyways, that was not the rationale at the time, that is a bit of retrospective thinking about it. There was a tradition of psychosocial; I mean Erik Erikson was one of the people to use it. His work had been kind of "the baby had been thrown out with the bath water" in Erikson. The notion of stage, I think, there was a critique of fixed notions of developmental stages and I think he was kind of thrown out but actually I think it is very rich. Again, it is not what I thought particularly then I [have] not been paying attention to Erikson particularly for years. I am really trying to remember why that term came to be so central.

But, I think these things are in the air, I mean I know I have been quite central in using it and certainly in institutionalizing it now in the last 5 years. But I think these things are around and so somebody picks them up. I certainly was not the only one, Steven Frosh was very important in that. But it could not have been what it was without feminism, I mean if you look at the term now, "psychosocial studies", it does not sound feminist. But it is in the sense that the whole of feminist psychology has informed it; it is critical, it is qualitative, all those things that had happened over the last 25 years or so, and of course there are a lot of women who are either explicitly or implicitly are using feminist notions of gender and gender power relations. I mean they are so widespread in British critical social science, they are just everywhere. That is interesting because you can just go a long way without ever having to say "look I am a feminist or I do feminist psychology" in this country. And I think it is probably different in North America in critical social sciences, you know in leftish…

AR – Right, right, no, I think you are right…

WH – …and sociology and my kind of psychology really come together in the psychosocial. So, one answer to your question would be that it was a very determined attempt to be interdisciplinary. The critique that we developed in *Changing the Subject* was the awfully unproductive nature of having sociology and psychology as two binary paradigms so that when you talked about how they actually informed each other in practice you would end up with some very unhelpful notions of interaction. Where the two, the social and psychological, were still thought of as binary terms. And that preoccupied us in *Changing the Subject* and we addressed it in various ways then. I do not think that poststructuralism actually solved any of that at all; it was just on the social side ultimately. So, I suppose the answer is that it was a very, very central part of critical psychology thinking. Feminist or at least gender relations were always the site, the territory, on which I was choosing the problems that interested me most. So that is why it was always gendered I think, because of my own understanding and my own experience that was always gendered. There was always a very close affinity between my own

experience and the themes that I found worth thinking about [and] writing about in research.

AR – Can you talk a little bit about those themes?

WH – Okay, I chose my PhD because I was interested in gendered power relationships in heterosexual couples because I was interested in that in my own heterosexual relationships.

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AR – And you used some of your own journals at that point…

WH – That is right, and you are asking me about the method in there because that was just not done and it was long before reflexivity was an available, acceptable, and valid sort of way of going about research. So it was very shocking to do that. Now, actually in the thesis I actually gave myself a pseudonym and treated it as if it was any other person.

AR – Did your readers know that it was you?

WH – Well, by the time I wrote the book *Subjectivity and Method* I…

AR – You have outed yourself…

WH – I admitted, I outed myself.

AR – But during your PhD, the people who were evaluating your thesis, did they know that?

WH – No, no I do not think so. So, I was really just playing with ideas. I still remember trying something and realizing it would not work and then having to come up with something else. I have got a visual image of cutting and pasting, it was prior to word processing. I remember this little attic flat I lived in, in north of London, I laid them all out in piles of themes. So, all the things people had said in this theme were in this pile. And there they were on the floor and I was trying to find some kind of thematic analysis, order, in that. Because if there was anything being done in qualitative it was kind of thematic analysis; grounded theory was very available by then it was probably the only thing that was. And realizing there I was sitting cross legged on the floor amongst all these piles of paper that the quotes did not mean anything anymore because I have chopped them all up into pieces. So what was I going to do about it? It was a very physical thing because, you know, I chopped them all up (laughs)

AR – (laughs)

WH – And so I had to go back to the full transcript somehow. I suppose that that was the beginning of realizing that some kind of holistic gestalt kind of principle was very

important. So when Tony Jefferson and I wrote *Doing Qualitative Research Differently* which was only ten years ago. We actually elevated that principle into quite a major principle and I feel terribly strongly about it. So there was a rather brief but nonetheless quite thorough critique of computer assisted qualitative data analysis because it is based on the principle of segmenting things and dealing with them in fragments. That is just not how meaning is achieved; I am convinced about that really. The consequences of that bit of method are very unfortunate and that is just one example of so many ways the qualitative method…because it was trying to transcend positivist methodology. But of course you cannot do it all in one go because positivism was and still is so dominant that we always fall back into the shadows of it. [inaudible] But of course you cannot throw out everything with it. So how do you achieve what used to be called objectivity? It is still a very important question. In fact I brought back in the concept of objectivity and a lot of people do not like the fact that I use it. But I want to reinvent it outside of a positivist paradigm, then what would it mean to pursue objectivity in a method? So it is one of the things I am writing about at the moment. Likewise for realism and critical realism. After constructionism, what would realism mean when it no longer means what it used to mean within positivism? So it is about a dialectical thing where thinking goes from one thing to its opposite is not the

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right thing either, it reflects too much where it came from, and so you have to transcend both. So I am often upsetting my critical allies because I am not content to just go along with that and then I do something different.

AR – You are supposed to be about subjectivity and now you are moving to objectivity. (Laughs).

WH – Well, both. My version of objectivity is through subjectivity. So they are not binary terms anymore. But also, this is exemplary in a lot of what I do, I found the term "objectivity" used in a completely different sense in Winnicott for example and there is a tradition of using the term in psychoanalysis. Freud was a bit positivist, but really the object relations they really were not because clinical method was never a scientific method. I mean it just never was, Freud would have liked it to be but it never was. So, what you find is a paradigm alternative to positivism in psychoanalysis that you can take out of the clinical practice and use it for method. And re-theorizing objectivity is just one of many examples of what I do.

AR – Well, we were talking about themes in terms of the actual material on which you work. Your PhD having to do with adult heterosexual relationships, can you talk a bit about the evolution of those themes?

WH – So, gendered power relationships and that is always there somehow or other even though I might not be explicit about it all the time. I am jumping a bit, but mothering is the big obviously feminist topic and that is what I was talking about yesterday as you know that came out of my personal mother. My experience of who I was, was turned over

by becoming a mother; I have just got one child who is now 26. I was not prepared to normalize that. I was not prepared to say "Okay well that is just how it is" because that is the kind of psychology that always interested me "What was going on that made it such a world-shattering sort of experience?" Then you talk to other women of course and you find that's absolutely quite standard. So, it is this ordinary experience and this extraordinary experience. Actually it was a period when there was a lot of feminist work around mothering but it had this rather conflicted either-or quality about it.

AR – What about your own experience was world-shattering?

WH – You just take into account somebody else's life and that changes everything about who you are in life. It is not chosen, it is not thought of in some kind of conscious witting manner. It just happens to you at some level that is absolutely more powerful than every intention that you could possibly put together or every plan. So to theorize it you actually have to go to a completely different level. And it is the kind of thinking that enlightenment patriarchal thought absolutely does not have a clue about and has made it almost impossible to think. But, and you will not be surprised to hear this by now, psychoanalysis does. And so I found a lot of inspiration for that in the work of Wilfred Biel for example, quite a bit in Winnicott**.** And other relational and object relation psychoanalysts like Thomas Hocktan in the American tradition [and] Christopher Bollas. [Post-interview Halloway comments: "I would also like to mention Bracha Ettinger's concept of the matrixial, which is pretty psychoanalytic and thoroughly feminist and takes the exploration of different levels of knowing to new territory. It is systematically alternative to what she calls 'phallic logic'. I had been reading it by July, but have been using it more intensively since."] They are all sort of post-Kleinian in the broadest sense, so they are a long way from Freud historically speaking. But anyway, I could go

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back to be on in particular but it is rather detailed for the overall story, we will see. But it was a puzzle and if there is a puzzle like that in my experience, as a psychologist why shouldn't that be something that interests me? So reading the feminist literature there is the **"**radic maternalism," as it was I think slightly unfairly called. And then there is the feminist dismissal of motherhood as anything special on the basis of gender equality. Everything exists somewhere between these and neither of these can really find it and they are in conflict with each other. So where do you go from there? So it was a great challenge. I mean I did not go into that straight away when I had a child. She is 26 now and I cannot remember how long I have been doing this research. But, when I went to the O.U. and Fenix was there and she had written about motherhood as well. In fact, it was quite a strategic thing to say "Okay well there is this identities program [and] we want to get some funding under it. What kind of a proposal could we put together that would do that?"

And mothering and identity it has got so much going for it because if you want to take a relational approach, which broadly we would both want to do, then the way that the mother's identity is taken up with the child actually theoretically promises to blow holes

in these kind of western father-ego-centric models of identity which of course are based on masculine models. And it proved to be an extremely powerful terrain on which to work on the kind of identity theorizing that I was already doing. But in between time I had done that work on fear of crime. Well, fear of crime never particularly interested me but that was another of those sorts of pragmatic lets-go-for-a-grant under this program kind of thing. And I suppose later work, to position it in terms of grant getting and what was happening in universities and how you had to start going out for grants. So instead of just playing with what ever I wanted to play with you have to go out and think "Okay, well, I am going to try to get money here and there" and so on. So that is what I started to do and that was with Tony Jefferson who is my partner. We have written a lot together and he is a criminologist so we did something on fear of crime which is just totally utilitarian really. And I wrote a lot from that that was not really about fear of crime because I was not particularly interested in fear of crime. That was the methods book "Doing Qualitative Research Differently" which has been very influential. We have been asked to do a second addition for that, so we might.

AR – Another theme that appears to emerge at least in the titles of some of your work is the notion of gender and work behavior or organizational behavior. Did that come out of any personal experiences or was that one of these kinds of strategic [choices]?

WH – It was I got a job in an occupational psychology department and I had to teach that stuff. I never really wanted to be there but I needed a job and I that is the job I got. And I got interested in that. I mean a book I wrote that is still in print and being used for teaching is called "Work Psychology and Organizational Behavior". It was a kind of Foucaultian critique of power/knowledge practice relations in work psychology. I do not think there was anything explicitly feminist in there it just came out of the teaching I was doing. But then I did a course called "Equal Opportunities" there which was the first time it had ever been taught there. Well, you just use that perspective and of course you think a bit about your own working life. I think the only place where I had to struggle for my kind of psychology when I went back into psychology departments after a long while being in gender studies, applied social sciences, development studies,

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and occupational [studies]. I mean I have been in everything but straight psychology because it was such an inhospitable place to be. So I went back into a psychology department when I was reasonably senior which made it easier. I started teaching qualitative methods which were hardly taught before that. It was a very straight-laced scientific-type department and they did not like my work and they were not about to recognize it though promotion. To cut a long story short, I actually took a case out, I cannot remember exactly what it would have been called, when I did not get my promotion there. There had never been a woman psychology professor in that department and it was very obvious that it was not so much because I was a woman, it was because I was a woman doing qualitative feminist critical psychology because most of them thought it was rubbish, well some of them, and it was a male dominant department. And I won that case. When I was there in that university I was also working [to] help to set up a

gender studies institute with someone in sociology. So I was also doing work there but they had to be a bit separate because of the nature of the department. Anyway, I won my case and I reapplied a year or two later. I did get my chair in psychology there and another woman in the department got one with in the space of a few months. We were the first women professors in psychology and that department was going for a very, very long time.

KVB – Around what period are you talking about here?

WH – About 15 years ago, certainly less than 20 years ago. I cannot remember the exact date but I have been at the O.U. for 11 years so it was a year or two before that. 15, 14, late '90s.

AR – Late '90s, wow. Do you have anything to add?

KVB – One thing I was going to ask because you were around the same time period. You had another thing in your research that I thought was interesting that kind of stood out. You suddenly had this research exploring things like Guyana and Tanzania. You started getting more of this international interest that does not seem to show up in other parts of your work and I was kind of curious what was going on?

WH – I got a job in a development studies centre (Laughs).

AR – (Laughs)

WH – I moved around quite a bit. The lead up to that was that I had been back to London and that is where I was teaching in occupational organizational psychology. I had my child when we were still in London and both I and her father were quite keen to move out of London, we both came from the north of England. So we decided [that] we want to move back to the north. So we sold up in London and bought a barn in the Pennines and converted it. And I had the one year out to be with my daughter that was on top of maternity leave during that period. And at that time I felt like I was perfectly happy not to have a job, I mean I would have happily stayed away longer. I was writing "Subjectivity and Method in Psychology" at the time and Ella was just starting nursery school. And then we ran out of money and I needed to get a job. I was looking around local universities, Bradford was local to where we were living and that is where I found a job. It was called 'development and project planning (Centre)' and it was funded by a lot of overseas aid money, British government aid money and intended to be ex-colonial countries, hence Tanzania. I ended up running a "women into senior management" training course and I followed up the women every year and recruited the next lot going

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through Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. And I did that for about 4 years and I did a piece of research on women's opportunities for promotion in the Tanzanian civil service. But I did not like doing training rather than "proper" academic work, if you like. So as soon as

I could I changed and got a job in women studies in the same university. So, I moved sideways but I have worked in so many different disciplines which is why my publications look so widespread.

AR – Has your identity as a psychologist ever been challenged? I mean I sense in your talking about your work that you are very much a psychologist.

WH – Yes, but I did not claim it for years because institutionally psychology was a deadly place to be. So I worked with sociologists [and] I was in applied social science. Social sciences was kind of more where I felt at home. So I would not have been explicit about my identity as a psychologist. Just that in my research I wanted to ask certain questions, it did not matter what I called them, but they were not ones that sociologists were asking or social constructionists really. Although I had been right through poststructuralist social constructionism. I just called it critical psychology, I suppose, at the time.

AR – I guess what I am referring to is that fact that you have never been distracted by this notion of the death of the subject. You have always been very much focused on the subject, not in isolation of course, but that is a very psychological mind set I think.

WH – Yes, I have not had any patience with that idea.

KVB – How did that work as far as your interplay with the actual psychology community during all this time? Because you are kind of doing your own thing in the 70s and then by the 80s when the British women's movement within psychology and those things are going on. How does that work with your professional world?

WH – Well, by being around women studies and setting up gendered institutes and all that kind of thing. Obviously there were ways of being linked into feminism the whole time. My networks that crossed between friendship and academic colleagues were feminist ones and critical psychology ones. But all of this was women, wasn't it? I mean critical psychology was totally dominated by women because we had that kind of qualitative critical sort of history already from consciousness raising and what have you.

So there were men around but that was not a clash with the feminism at all. I did not get into trouble with orthodox psychology until I rejoined the psychology department and I have just described that that was not comfortable and I was very glad to leave. I went into the Open University after that and that was a God-send because well, psychology is located within the social sciences and it is so possible there to be interdisciplinary, to be psychosocial. Which is not to say [that] there were not the other kinds of psychologists around, but we were in the majority. I mean there was one point in that department when were four women professors and it was just a wonderful place to work. So I felt as if I had found home in terms of the psychology that I was very comfortable with. And I am still there. I do not think that there is any better place to be as my kind of a psychologist in the U.K. Just on that topic actually, I mean institutional structures are obviously very important in these ways and you know we have this research assessment exercise.

Psychology as a discipline goes in with the scientific subjects and it has been very difficult for social, critical, feminist, qualitative psychologists to find a home in that. And one after another, each of the critical psychosocially inclined psychology groups has gone in with their sociology colleagues. It is alright in a way but it depletes psychology

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institutionally. So, politically there is a real kind of conflict about where we put our energies; whether we just leave psychology behind and say "Well it has had it" and that becomes more extreme in its adherence to positivism and so on. But, I mean there is some of us who do both and there are some like some of the women who are in this very conventional department now, you know, they are doing it. So some do and some do not. And most of what we do is not that planned in the sense that the right job comes along for you at a certain time or in my case I have a baby and I want a bit of time out or I want to move back north or there is only a job in development available at that time and then such and such happens. I mean I do not believe in planned careers, mine has never worked like that and I think even those who plan often cannot control the future like that. So you make the best you can out of the situation you find yourself in.

AR – One of the questions that I had that sort of links up this notion of where do you position yourself in terms of being a psychologist or identifying that way and this notion of having an impact on how psychology in general, main stream and otherwise, gets theorized is: you wrote in your 1989 book, you said "I hope to show how a psychology which understands people is possible" how far have we gotten?

WH – God, a long way since then actually. So that is what? 21 years ago. I mean you forget what you write don't you? I mean it is a nice sentence I like it. (Laughs)

AR – Well, I like it because it resonates with both of us. [We] are sort of marginal visa vi main stream psychology and that we do history of psychology. One of the reasons I graft in towards history, I cannot speak for Kelly, is I just felt like psychology was inadequate to understanding human experience in the way that I was doing it and had a couple of choice points but chose historical methods as a way of trying to understand psychology. I think both of us get a little bit frustrated because we do not see this kind of mainstream psychology as you described it. It seems to be getting more and more arid in a way. And yet there is all this other stuff going on that is also psychology. So what is that relationship? Do we care?

WH – I am not going to beat myself up about institutional neuroscience taking over psychology. I mean it is a much bigger trend. But what I did, and again it was not terribly planful it is just that it seemed to come up with people thinking like I was, I started to institutionalize psychosocial studies. And it is thriving in the U.K. I mean it is absolutely thriving. So, we have had three annual conferences and there are various journals that relate to it. And here we have a network and website. It gives us a community of like thinkers. There are plenty differences within us so we have got plenty to chew on. So I think that psychoanalysis is essential for that project but there are plenty who do not, who

are Foucaultian in one way or another. So, at the moment psychology departments are just doing what they have to do and I am not that worried about it really. I think a lot of things are out of our control. I think control is a self serving fantasy to some extant, we like to feel in control but we are not on the whole.

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AR – What role [does] a historical level of analysis play in your own theorizing?

WH – Well it is very important and there is a textbook which some of us at the university wrote for the third level social psychology just a few years ago; called "Social Psychology Matters." Hellene Luci and Ann Phoenix and I were the editors. So you can see the kind of feminist psychology strength in that department. And I did all

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the history of social psychology stuff because if students do not have that perspective so that they can take a step back and think "Ow, well psychology is like this at the moment but that is just at the moment and it came from there…and it could be going here…there…and these are the different tendencies". And so they have this really big overview by the time they get into that book. Then we develop the kind of different paradigms within social psychology from there. So I think that those O.U. students who use that book really have that bird's-eye view which in most psychology departments, they do not use history in the way that they should, the do not have a historical perspective on their own discipline I think that is so unfortunate, I really do. So I hope that history informs all of the psychology that I do in that respect and the history of methods too because when you see methods in the historical perspective you realize that positivism is just a kind of excrescence in the mid 20th centaury really. I mean, it is a kind of boil on good inquiry really and it will go in its own time.

AR – It was the critiques of operationism in psychology that actually turned me from doing that kind of work into doing historical work the learning about the history of the use of operationism and why it is that we still cling to it in psychology when it was in fact just a wart. Okay, so I am going to revert a little bit to the protocol just to ask you a couple more questions to finish up. You can jump in too if you have questions either from the protocol or not. But, can you speak a bit about, if that makes sense for you, about mentoring? Did you have influential mentors that you would conceder?

WH – No, I do not think I did. I mean we, and there was a number of us, were the first generation that were doing this and we really did not have figures in the generation above us who could lead us into these areas I mean it did not exist. I mean I found people who I got a lot from in my peer group but I think that is not really quite what "mentors" means.

AR – Well, I suppose it is not. But can you speak more about your collaborations with your coauthors on changing the subject because it sounds like a really rich experience.

WH – Well, we started this in the late 70s and it was so much of a different culture then. There was time; I mean there was before all that speeding up that took place in the higher education sector. So, there was plenty of room for creativity, we met for weekends [and] we went for walks and [so on].

AR – How did you find each other? Were you all located at the same place?

WH – Okay, now I was still at Newcastle at that point and this kind of semis dark copy of a paper came around that was in the end the big editorial article in a new article called "Ideology and Consciousness" which made a big mark on the British scene. It was in a sense the beginning of critical psychology but it was not just psychology it was very Foucaultian. But it addressed psychological issues and I found it incredibly difficult to understand because a psychology degree does not kit you out for theory, really is so poor on that. I labored over it, but I remember reading it and rereading it and so on. This feminist friend of mine had shown it to me, another psychologist, and I was inspired.

Now it turned out that a few years later I actually went to live in London and all of this stuff was happening in London, not outside. And so I met Valerie Walkerdine, I cannot remember exactly how. We were positioned similarly in age and critique and feminism and so on. She was one of the authors of this semis (5:01) ideology and consciousness piece as was Kuies Ven and Jeulian Henry Keith**.** And they were three of our changing the subject group and Cathy Urwin came in a little bit later. Now I have just been working with Cathy on this becoming a mother project, she is a fully trained psychoanalytic psychotherapist, child psychotherapist and adult psychotherapist so she ran the observation side. I mean all these people I am still friends with. But I do not know, how do you kind of come across a group? And I remember we got together, we were probably stoned, one weekend and we were free associating on what we could do to make a radical intervention into psychology. I remember we came up with a project that we called "undermind" which is a pun; you undermined something and it is under the mind so it had this psychoanalytic dimension. We were going to go and give talk in psychology departments and we were going to rouse the students and we were going to do things differently and write in the "Psychologist" and [so on]. Well, in the end we wrote a book so in the end it turned into a very different project. But you get this sort of trajectory and we were all radical psychologists.

And there was that current of radical psychology from the 1970s which was a kind of critique of psychiatry, it was quite North American, a lot of it. And in Europe, people like David Dangolbe who was very influential to those who had done child development and education which was Val and Cathy. So it grew into something else and we did that together. So that was the first collaboration and it was a child of its time, I mean it really was we do not sit around doing things like that once you have to produce [an] X number of publications for the next research assessment exercise and you are a manager. I mean in those days, we were in our twenties and we were children of the sixties, very hippy in a certain kind of way still. And then I think back to, you know, I have been head of department [and] I ran a research centre. The changes that took place in academia during my career life time have been so huge. But they have also been opportunities. And the

funny thing about the R.E.E is that if you published it did not really matter if it was some radical thing as long as there were journals to publish in. You could kind of show up well in these exercises. So finally enough it was an opportunity, and we loved what we were doing so much that we were very energetic and we were writing like crazy. And so the other collaborations with my partner Tony, that was across disciplines. And just in that period we write a lot of method based stuff together. That is nice because we could write outside the institutional setting and he still reads everything I write because he knows it better than anybody. But we do not live together. I have a sociologist friend, one of who's areas is LATs, Living Apart Togethers, because it is a new sociological phenomenon in Britain. I am a LAT, I have been a LAT for 18 years with the same partner. The kind of unorthodoxy of my living arrangements continues to suit me and him.

AR – What about it suits you?

WH – I love having my own space, I love being on my own, I love just having it how I want it. So when he is in my house he is in my house! And we do it, you know, it's the way I arrange things. And when we are in his house that's different. But we are usually at my house. And I live up in the Pennines and it is beautiful and it is in the country and I increasingly love calm and quiet. I have a full time fellowship now, which I have had for nearly two years already. And the intensity of concentration that I can achieve in that setting; when if necessary I will not see anyone from Monday morning to Friday night is perfect, it really suits me. And I just think that I can reach a depth of intellectual creativity which is normally not afforded [to] academics because we are doing six things at once. I used to have to do it that way but now I do not and it is wonderful. And I really do not want anybody to come and get in my way when I am in one of those spaces working, I just love it.

AR – That is amazing.

KVB – I am curious, because I am a graduate student, what would you tell graduate student females coming in now? Because you are saying how different the academic world is and you could not have done the type of work that you did [because it] was often a product of the time or what was going on. What would you tell female students who want to explore radical psychology but in the environment that we have now?

WH – I think it is quite hard actually. When I was still teaching undergraduate psychologists I put on an optional module called "psychoanalysis, gender and sexuality" which attracted loads of students because it is a sexy title. But, it was just another module. It was very compartmentalized from the other modules because the modular system does not help you make links and think across, which I think is unfortunate. So they did it, I think most of them did as little reading as they could afford to do because it seems to be the culture, they have part time jobs [and so on]. And they ticked it off after the exam and there were few that were inspired by it. But it was an overlarge group because psychology departments are absolutely heaving with students.

For me, it was going with my curiosities and passions and if students could do that more then it is good because it does not tell them where to go or what to find. It just tells them to follow their noses. But academic work does not actually afford much of that. I think it's deteriorated since I was an undergraduate where things were small and although psychology was dead conventional there were small departments and you could talk to people there seemed to be more thinking space. I do not think there is much thinking space in higher education at the moment. So, it is not a very optimistic picture that I would put really. On the other hand, the young generation of colleagues who are coming up behind me are very impressive and have adapted very well to the different H.E. climate within which they work. So, the other side of the mentoring question that we did not get on to was me mentoring younger people. And certainly with PhD students it is about following their passions I think. If they come to me with an idea, it does not have to fit with my ideas as long as it is really grounded in something that they really want to get a hold of.

AR – My last question is related actually and maybe even overlap so much as to be irrelevant. But what advice might you give to deeply feminist students coming in to the field of psychology now?

WH – Well, I think as they grow older they could consult their own experience and the mismatch might teach them that they need to look elsewhere. I think that unless they built it on their own emotional experience then it is not going to happen. I suppose that is the theme in a number of things I have said now. So they will have to find it in their own experience if it is going to make any difference. Now I think the thing about undergraduate life is that young men and women are very equal. I think that inequality hits with marriage, childbirth, and maternity. So, often when they are at university they feel completely free to be equal. In fact, I think a lot of those strong young women feel rather sorry for those young men who are actually not quite such strong characters. I mean, I think young men are having a much harder time than young women in some ways. Certainly when I saw my daughter grow up, and her group of friends, I think the young women were way ahead. I think it might not hit them until a later stage. So it is a

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bit difficult to expect them to radicalize around feminist issues. Some will, but it depends on their life histories and you have to pick it up where it matters to them. So, it is not programmatic, I do not think I can say anything programmatic. However, I would advise them to not be mobilized by hate and see the world through splitting. In a political movement, hatred of the opposition ('men' in feminism) is corrosive. Hate is a strong word and it covers lesser negative emotions. The word hate is central in Melanie Klein's psychoanalysis and her depiction of two modes of personality organization - paranoid-schizoid and depressive - has influenced me personally as well as theoretically. Splitting in political movements can lead to idealization of 'us' (feminism) and denigration of 'them'. This is never realistic. The depressive position in Kleinian theory describes when we are able to recognize both good and bad in the same object (psychology, men, women - originally mothers) and integrate love and hate. It is the basis for a much more ethical

politics. Splitting of good and bad in psychology can lead feminist psychologists to dismiss what is interesting and important, for example in biology or neuroscience and dismiss any critique of what is 'ours', for example qualitative research.

AR – Is there anything that we have not asked about or touched on in the course of the interview that you would like to [talk about]?

WH – Well, what we have not touched on is the book that I am writing at the moment from the fellowship. I could go on for another hour, [but] I will not obviously. It is probably going to be called "Knowing Mothers, Mothers Knowing". So there are two sides of it, "how mothers know" because it is not though formal socialized expert knowledge that it works. So, how do you theorize that other kind of knowing? And that is where Wilfred Bion's work has been very, very helpful. And again I find a kind of fund of new thinking in psychoanalysis which is just there to be discovered. And it is fabulous but it is very hard because it is hard to get your head around. But, it is a kind of knowing that is not about conscious knowing, about type knowing and it fits with the mothering theme. And so, how do researchers know that because we have to move our ways of knowing as well. And so that radicalizes research methods and epistemology it just turns it really, hugely, into a different type of project and it is very different from all the scientistic and scientific notions that we have been trained in as psychologists. So I think it is going to be a very radical book. And there is so much more to be done in that area which I will continue to do. But this idea of knowing at a different level, what we know and experience when we are not concentrating, like in reverie for example. So, I have just run a "social dreaming as a research method" weekend, for example. And social dreaming is kind of carrying this idea of what level you are knowing what you know from to new extremes.

AR – What is social dreaming?

WH – Well, instead of following dreaming into a kind of individual trope of individual psychoanalysis and one's intimate relationships and parents and things like that you follow it into what it can say about what we know about the social but we cannot express in language or symbolics**.** So, the kind of dreams that people had after 9/11 would be one example. You know the kind of stuff that is probably too frightening in some cases to be able to articulate. But when you find out what people have been dreaming around a big societal event like 9/11 you find that there are themes there that only can come out in dreams. It is another thing about taking an idea and applying it. So I

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invited out the guy who invented it who was originally an organizational consultant called Gordon Lawrence and there were a few people around in psychosocial who had been doing this. You know it is kind of another exciting new tendency. And instead of just dreaming whatever was going on in society I played some stuff from my data extracts. I kind of put it all together in a dream like fashion, the voices, and played that on the first Friday night and then we went off and dreamed. And that came into the sessions

which we ran according to Gordon Lawrence's method for the weekend. So I do not know what I am going to make of it yet, it is only a week since I ran this. But you can see that method can go off in exciting new directions when you cease to think about it as formal cognitive analytic kind of thinking. And that is Wilfred Bion is the star in that respect in psychoanalysis. So there you go, that is my latest excitement.

AR – Sounds like you are playing again.

WH – Yes, yes, absolutely.

AR – Great!