

This is the transcript to a video of excerpts from the Psychology's Feminist Voices symposium, *Across the 49th Parallel: Gender and Migration in the History of North American Psychology*, at the Eastern Psychological Association Annual Meeting, March 2012, Pittsburgh, PA. The session included three imagined conversations between the following psychologists featured on the Psychology's Feminist Voices website:

Esther Halpern & Hilary Lips:

<http://www.feministvoices.com/esther-halpern/>

<http://www.feministvoices.com/hilary-lips/>

Leola Neal & Paula Caplan:

<http://www.feministvoices.com/leola-neal/>

<http://www.feministvoices.com/paula-caplan/>

Lisa Serbin & Mary Ainsworth:

<http://www.feministvoices.com/lisa-serbin/>

<http://www.feministvoices.com/mary-ainsworth/>

The Imagined Conversations Assignment is one of many ways the Psychology's Feminist Voices site can be used in teaching. For more information visit:

<http://www.feministvoices.com/psychology-s-feminist-voices-teaching-resources/>

**Easter Psychological Association Annual Meeting
March 2012
Pittsburgh, PA**

**Across the 49th Parallel:
Gender and Migration in the History of North American Psychology**

**Esther Halpern & Hilary Lips
(Pelin Gul & Anastasia Korosteliova)**

“What is the role of women in international psychology? What are the factors that contribute to our migration and, in turn how does migration influence our research?”

Prompted by the beauty and tranquillity of her surroundings, Lips allows herself to dose off. And in her dream, Lips meets Esther Halpern.

EH: Shalom, shalom! May I sit beside you?

HL: Oh! Sure! Nice crown by the way!

EH: Oh, thanks! It is going to be Purim in Israel soon! And I am going as the fairy queen of international psychology!

HL: Good idea! I have just finished reading your paper on the International Organizations in Psychology and learned that you served as the president of the Council of International Psychologists before! I wonder what got you interested in the first place in international psychology?

EH: Hmm... Good question! Actually, I hadn't consciously understood the importance of indigenous psychologies until I moved from the United States to Israel. I must say that inevitably this move had a huge effect on my personal and professional life.

HL: How is that?

EH: Although my publications in Israel continued to reflect the kind of work that I did in North America, my work has really been shaped by the sociocultural and political factors of Israel at the time. I realized that the structures of Israeli family, education, and society were so much different than what I have seen in Canada and the US.

HL: So how did this shift influence your work?

EH: I continued publishing in the fields of educational psychology and developmental psychopathology, but I started to focus on these issues from a cultural perspective. It is like once you experience a cultural shift, there is no going back.

HL: I see, interesting! I know what you mean. For a long time, I resisted including culture in my work on gender and power. I thought gender was already complicated on its own, and there was no need to confuse things even more by adding more variables.

EH: But how can you separate things that are so dependent on each other?

HL: Yes, exactly! So I gradually realized that you cannot separate two things that are intertwined. Culture is what shapes gender and in turn socially inscribed gender roles affect our culture. Certainly, I couldn't come to consciously realize this until I immersed myself in American culture. It is interesting how I've always thought that Americans are strange all these years when I was a grad student in Chicago. Now I sometimes think that Canadians are strange.

EH: Interesting that you say that! I have spent a significant portion of my training in Canada and the US. To me Canadians and Americans are pretty much the same. They eat burgers, speak English, and value individualism and self-expression. In Israel, we ...

HL: Oh no no! Stop there for a second! The fact that Canada and the US share a border and a language does not necessarily mean that Canadians and Americans are the same. If you take the similarities perspective, then we can say that anywhere in the world, people and their psychologies are not all that much different.

EH: All right, no need to get too defensive!

**Leola Neal & Paula Caplan
(Elissa Rodkey & Isuri Weerakkody)**

It's January 2012 and Paula Caplan has returned to the University of Toronto to give a talk on her book *The Myth of Women's Masochism* to the school's students and faculty. An unexpected guest happens to be in attendance.

PC: Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be back at the University of Toronto after all these years. Many of you may know me for my book *The Myth of Women's Masochism*. Some of you may know me for being a "feminist," a word that many in society perceive as threatening. To those I say: learn what feminism really is. Feminism has allowed women to showcase their talents both on the local and global stage.

LN: Wow. Things really are different in the 21st century! I never gave feminism much thought, but it sounds like being a feminist is very important to you.

PC: Wait. Who's there? Whose speaking?

LN: My name is Leola Neal. I'm a psychologist myself. Or, I was. Now, I'm a ghost. But, enough about me. You've got me really curious: how did you become a feminist?

PC: I am not really sure to be honest. I think that my feminist way of thinking is something that grew in me as I navigated through my career. As I carried on with my education from my BA to my Masters and then to my PhD, I continued to face barriers that I knew my male colleagues did not have to face. Observing and talking to some other women in research and academia, I knew that I was not alone in the battle that I had to fight to establish myself. To be honest, I don't understand why more women don't embrace feminist ideology at least sometime in their career due to the obstacles that are thrown at us for simply being female.

LN: Unlike you, I don't know that I ever experienced difficulties in my career that were specifically a result of being a woman. But, you know, I spent more than two decades as Dean of Women at the University of Western Ontario, and it certainly became obvious to me during that time that women in academia faced certain challenges that weren't experienced by men.

PC: I find it hard to believe that you never experienced difficulties in research because you were a woman. I wonder whether you were just unaware of the inherent sexism that existed in academia even today?

LN: Hmm...maybe. It certainly wasn't obvious to me at the time and looking back I don't know that I can identify any particular difficulties in my career that were the result of my being a woman. I do think, though, that I was very lucky in that right from the beginning there was real support for me getting an education. My parents were not very educated themselves, but they really pushed the importance of education. As a result, "I can't remember not wanting to go to university." I was only eight when my father died, but in his will he specifically stipulated that my sister and I were to be educated. And when it wasn't possible to complete high school in our small town, my mother moved the family to London, Ontario. This meant not only that I could finish high school, but that I could attend university. So, I was very lucky with my family's support for education.

**Lisa Serbin & Mary Ainsworth
(Florence Truong & Meghan George)**

LS: Oh, Mary! It's so nice to finally meet you! It's such an honour for me, though I'm sure it's less of an honour for you, since you think my work is "too behavioural."

MA: Well, dear, that's because it is! You call yourself a clinical developmentalist? You need to be more clinical in your approach! That's what I told Johns Hopkins when they were considering you as my replacement when I retired. That being said, I've been following your work for some time and I'm quite interested to meet you. We have a lot in common, you know. For starters, we both have ties to Canada and the U.S. I know from experience that there is not a huge difference between them, but you must have faced some challenges when you made your big move.

LS: Well, because I moved to Quebec, there was a language barrier, of course. That was one of the hardest things to adjust to. But I had taken some basic French courses back in college and high school, so I could get by, at first. Then I had to start writing grants, which, in Canada, was a whole new process. Add to that the fact that some of these grants had to be written in French, and that's where my challenges came into play.

Concordia was a great environment for me, though. I got to set up their new clinical program, and I went from being one of only a few females on faculty, to a school where a much larger proportion of the teaching staff were women. So while there were definitely some challenges, I was struck by the immense number of opportunities. But you must have made bigger moves than I did!

MA: It was never my intention to do as much travelling as I did. My initial move to London was purely because of Leonard. With him being a student and I a professor, our relationship caused some controversy being at the University of Toronto together. He decided to finish up his PhD in London, and so I went too.

LS: Did you find there was much of a culture shock, moving to London?

MA: Oh no. Working with John Bowlby and learning his research methods may have been a bit different from what I was used to, but the real shock came when we moved to Africa. As you can imagine, life was very different there. I happened to get funding from the institute that Leonard was working for, but the subjects I was now working with were very different than the ones I saw in the lab in England. The way in which these women, or communities, rather, raised their children put a whole new spin on the attachment and security that I was interested in.

Once Leonard's appointment in Uganda was over, he got a job in Baltimore, and so I applied for and got a job at Johns Hopkins. I was surprised at how easy it was for me to find a job back in the west, since I had been away from mainstream western psychology for so long. It was nice being back in North America after so much travelling. Of course, my travelling wasn't done yet. Years later, when Leonard and I divorced, I moved up to Virginia to be close to my friends.

LS: Wow, you seem to have followed Leonard's career a lot. Well, like you, my motives for moving to a new country were driven by my spouse. My husband at the time got a job at McGill, and since his career was a bit more difficult to find work in (he studied music), and developmental psychologists were in demand, we moved to Montreal where he was offered a job and I could easily find one. He ended up working at McGill and soon after that, Concordia welcomed me into their psychology department. At that time, the Parti Quebecois had passed the Official Language Act of Quebec, so many of the non-Francophones left Quebec. Universities had trouble filling the gaps left by such a mass exodus, so the hiring of Americans was actually pretty common then.

MA: You weren't living in Canada when you were interviewed for my old job at Johns Hopkins, were you?

LS: No, I moved a few years later. I remember the day of the interview though. I met Eleanor Maccoby the same day. It was a very memorable day. Eleanor was one of my early mentors, you know! In fact, my feminist identity was inspired from reading Eleanor's first book, *Psychology of Sex Differences*. I introduced myself to Eleanor and after I told her about the dissertation that I had just finished she requested to read it. From then on in, she became my "academic grandmother," so to speak, even though she was affiliated with another University!

MA: Hm. I was very busy at that conference, so I didn't have time to carefully look at your CV. Tell me, what was your dissertation about again?

LS: It was about gender socialization of children in preschool. One Easter, I was in a kindergarten class where the teacher divided the class into girls and boys to dance along to an Easter parade song. The boys danced first, hopping around the room making a ruckus, but when the girls danced, the teacher lectured them on how they should be lady-like and elegant. The girls then responded by tippy-toeing around the room, pretending they were at a tea-party. I said to myself, "What the hell are they teaching these kids?!"

**Discussant:
Elissa Rodkey**

First let me say, thank you, presenters, for those wonderfully creative and enjoyable papers. They present 6 richly varied lives and complex migratory patterns which invite further exploration and analysis.

In my comments I would like to address two questions which I believe these papers raise. First, given the number of psychologists who have migrated to or from Canada for their academic work, why have these immigrant experiences so been forgotten and ignored? And secondly, why are these US-Canadian immigrant experiences worth remembering?

An obvious first cause for their neglect is the intellectual or Whig history which was once common in the history of psychology. An historical approach that ignores social context to focus on the origin of ideas will necessarily have little time to devote to understanding the minutia of psychologists' personal lives which led to their immigration. Yet an understanding of Hilary Lips' cross-cultural psychology that neglects her immigration history or a discussion of Esther Halpern's community psychology without the context of the Yom Kippur War would clearly be impoverished.

Another contributor to immigration invisibility is almost certainly all too common American arrogance, or perhaps simply blindness, to ideas originating outside of our borders and preference for knowledge that is made in the USA. Both when American psychologists move to Canada and when Canadian psychologists move here, Americans happily embrace their contributions as our own, oblivious to their actual origins, resulting in an unfortunate colonialist attitude. Mary Ainsworth's 1969 oral history reflects this reality, as she comments on the way in which her professor Bill Blatz's ideas remained

less popular than was merited, or, when embraced, as with his idea of the parent as providing a secure base, went unattributed. In her oral history, when discussing current proposals to departmental quotas to limit the “Americanization” of Canadian psychology, Ainsworth comments disapprovingly “You can’t nationalize talent.” Yet often this is precisely what happened—the value of an idea was decided based on its national origins rather than its merits.

Many of today’s papers successfully identify the cause behind women’s migration. While some of these reasons may have been expected ones (relationships, differences in academic specialties, the social upheaval of war) at least as often, they were surprising reasons: escaping the stigma of marrying a student in the case of Mary Ainsworth, taking advantage of employment opportunities presented by Quebecois politics for Lisa Serbin, and political disillusionment and the desire for bilingual education for her children for Paula Caplan.

This idiosyncratic collection of causes leads to perhaps the most important reason for the neglect: causes for US-Canadian academic migration are diverse and we like neat categories or at least being able to generalize clearly.

As I prepared these comments I realized I am surprisingly well qualified to comment on one particular aspect of the papers: the personal experience of migrating between the US and Canada to pursue higher education. In 2007 I left my hometown in California to pursue graduate studies in psychology at York University in Toronto, Canada. So not only do the debates about Canadian similarity and difference sound very familiar to me, but the more imaginative format of the conversations prompted me to reflect on the sorts of things that future students of history might say about my immigration patterns!

This personal experience with immigration prompts me to make one simple observation which I believe may indicate why remembering these immigration experiences is so important. It is this: immigration is done in pursuit of a goal (whether relational, economic or education) and less frequently, focused on the different culture of host country. Yet this new culture inevitably shapes you, and potentially in profound and unforeseen ways. Yet really this is hardly different than the influence of our home country— it is only more obvious.

We are always creatures of place, place and time, but this influence often remains obscure. Therefore this is why it is critical to consider US-Canadian immigrant experiences: because it makes visible the otherwise invisible effect of place on ideas.