

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

**Interview with Nancy Henley**

*Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford & Wade Pickren  
Hollywood, CA  
January 29, 2005*

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NH – Nancy Henley, interview participant

AR – Alexandra Rutherford, interviewer

WP – Wade Pickren, interviewer

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AR: I thought we would lead up to some of the issues we just talked about by asking you to tell us a little bit about what first attracted you to psychology. You did your undergraduate and graduate work at Johns Hopkins. What got you interested in psychology?

NH: Well you may not like the answer. Out of high school I went to (it was in Washington DC), I went to what was Wilson Teachers College at the time because it gave me a scholarship and I had a very good psychology teacher there. I really had loads of questions from reading and found it fascinating and I talked with him a lot. I completed only three years there because I married after that, and got caught up with raising a child and stuff like that, and took night classes and finally ended up in the Johns Hopkins evening school, as it was at the time - **Coy College**, I guess it was called. When I went to transfer my credits I'd taken a number of education courses and psychology courses and I really had more in psychology than anything else, and so it was easy to complete that. But I was interested in that, I had been in a double major in English and math at the teacher's college.

AR: So you started out thinking you would go into a teaching profession and reoriented to psychology. What prompted you to do graduate work in psychology?

NH: I just wanted to keep on going. I guess I enjoyed finding out things.

AR: And at that point did family and ahh, children, what was...?

NH: Yes, I had one child. I had a very supportive husband. Although his idea of why I was going to graduate school was that in case he should die, I would have something to fall back on, so I could get a job. Which I think is a good idea too.

AR: And so you worked with James Deese during your graduate work. Can you tell us a little bit about the work you did with him?

NH: I should mention I also worked with **Clinton De Soto** who was a social psychologist there. Deese was my dissertation sponsor. Well, I got started on doing research right away - actually before I entered the program. I guess I was very interested in language

and that's how I got connected with James Deese. Probably took his psycholinguistics course and spoke with him about it. So he took me in under his grant.

AR: At that point, with your interest in language, exactly what kinds of work were you doing in language, linguistics?

NH: We were looking at semantics, at new meanings of words. I'm trying to think...Deese was doing a lot of work on association, finding out meanings of words according to the words that they were associated with mentally, that is, if you asked a person to give the first word that came to their mind. And that built up a kind of semantic net. He had a lot of publications on that. I'm trying to think how I started. We did something on family structure using an experimental psychology approach, and I guess it was errors in associations or something like that. I also did another experiment in concept reproductions, which was looking at how meaning became attached to a word - we used made-up words - and how it transferred, and things like that. And then I did my dissertation on a semantic set of animal names to see the structure of that set. Then we did a subset and a large set, and so on.

AR: Can you describe how and when your interest in *gender* and language evolved?

NH: Actually my interest in gender came out of my activist work that had started somewhat before I had heard of the women's movement. I was at the University of Maryland, UMBC, and got involved there in the concerned faculty group that we started up. Actually, I can tell you how I got into that. In teaching social psychology one of the African-American students came up to me after class and said he saw that I was interested in things about race and that there was going to be a meeting - I guess of students and faculty - about, not affirmative action, it wasn't called that at the time, but anyway, I can't think of the word. Anyway, about issues of race, and so I went to that and through that met faculty and the other students working on those issues and got to working with them. And we worked very closely with the students there. And so from that then I guess word of the women's movement sort of trickled in, and someone made a comment one time, "We should really have someone here who is interested in doing that." And I said "I will." So I got very interested in that and I thought that was an appropriate area for me to work, and it was interesting.

Very soon after that I was doing work on gender, I guess partly because of the women in the APA - we were beginning to get together, women from the regional - we were EPA members too then, we got interested in gender and from there, since I was studying language, I wanted to bring them together and so I got into that. And how I got into non-verbal communication was another story.

AR: Before we get to that, can I ask you to speak a little bit about your postdoc with Roger Brown at Harvard. What was it like to work with him? How did your work on gender and language, given the title of your postdoc project, how did it work out?

NH: I got an NIH special research fellowship that was called then a postdoctoral fellowship and called to see if I might work with Roger Brown. I had read his book *Words and Things* and you know, it sounded wonderfully fascinating to me. I called his office and the secretary took my name and got him to the phone and he said, "Oh, Mary, how good to hear from you!" - Mary Henle was the important name in psychology and I knew immediately, that he, or the secretary, had mistaken me. But anyway I explained the situation. I actually had a proposal on child learning. The idea was whether the learning of, I can't think of the words, umm, if I think long enough I'll think of the words, but anyway some of the cognitive learning processes that children learned about numbers and so on, I wanted to see if they correlated with the child's learning of language. The same sort of concepts, actually I guess it was transitivity – do they learn transitivity in numbers and do they learn transitivity in language around the same time. And so that got the award and Roger said I could come and work with him, but he warned me that it was very hard to get child subjects there. They had other projects already going, they had sort of tapped out the area I guess, and he was not very positive about the possibilities of my being able to get children to study. And so I came up with this alternative idea about non-verbal communication and gender. And part of that, yes, part of that must have come from...yes, his *Social Psychology* was out by that time. I guess the first edition came out in '63. So he had placed stuff about language in that and power and language, and I thought I wanted to see how gender related with that. Somehow I had gotten into non-verbal communication, and was looking into the gender implications there. So that's what I switched to and did a number of studies under him.

AR: And how was he to work with?

NH: Well, he was a wonderful person. I did not work very closely with him. He had a lot of students working with him and in fact on that floor, where he was, and various graduate students, we had a women's group and **Patricia Greenfield**, maybe you've heard of, was one of the people in it. I can't think immediately about others. But umm, we met every week at least and talked about issues of gender and psychology. It was probably more issues of gender in their lives than anything else. But so that was supportive to work with the people who were working with him, which is often the case in graduate study anyway. So I saw him now and then, he was certainly supportive of everything, and you know an interesting person, but I didn't work closely with him.

AR: Ok. You mentioned this group of women that got together to talk about gender. Was Naomi Weisstein around Harvard at this time?

NH: No. She had already been... I think she was in Buffalo at that time. One of the State Universities of New York.

AR: Did her, had her presence at Harvard had any impact?

NH: Not specifically her presence at Harvard, but of course she wrote the very important paper that influenced us all and certainly influenced me a lot. Kinder, kirche, kurche... It was really good.

WP: I have a question. You are talking about this context now, the late '60s and into the early '70s. Finishing your dissertation, working with Roger Brown, and in between... you were at UMBC. What were for you, you mentioned gender issues, that covers quite a few things, what was for you as a person and as a scientist what did this mean for you, in terms of the Hopkins department, your role at UMBC as a woman? You were married, you said and you had a child at this time, how did all of this play out for you?

NH: Well, there are certain moments that I can mention to you. Very interesting about Hopkins for one thing. They had in their listing with the APA - you know, early there were these little booklets that had a few words about each school. Many actually had blatantly in their listing, "Men Preferred." And Hopkins undergraduate was an all-male school, and so I went and met with Deese in advance, you know when I had applied I guess, and sort of satisfied him as far as I could see that I did not plan to have more children. And I mean he said something to that effect, that my family was complete, that he could take a chance on me or something. So that was how I got accepted. Though I had also, I should say, excellent scores on graduate tests and things. But while I was there I certainly felt I was treated well and in fact, this is what I also had been told by another faculty member, that it's very hard for women to get in but once they are there they are treated equally. And at the end of my time there - the punctuation mark on the other side of that was 1968 - that was the year the full-page ad appeared, I think in the back cover of the American Psychologist, from **William McGuire**, I guess at San-Diego, UC San Diego then, it was a job search thing and a long narrative, and it's all about the man they were going to hire. The man has to be this, and he was to be this, he would do this, and everything. And you know this was another reminder that it was a very male-dominated field.

Also at that time another marker that you may be familiar with was that in the journals, in the reference lists, men's names were listed with initials only. Women's names had to have their first name so you could see they were women. And if you look back in the old copies you will see that. I went and xeroxed a page of references once to show people who had never heard of that. So there were a lot of reminders. Let me take a sip here. [Sips water]. And I think those are things that were on women's minds as they were discussing things. I think for academic women it was sort of being second-class and you know we suspected a number of things. We weren't sure if we were getting less pay, or you know not being promoted or hired as much and things like that. And in fact that early group was one that began collecting the data. I began doing that at the schools that I was at, at UMBC, and then did it at the University at Lowell, but I went back to Hopkins on a sabbatical leave and they were just getting to the point of sort of organizing women and I think I helped collect data there. But anyway, it was just getting information about women and men at the various ranks and stuff like that and printing it up. And it had to be done at each school. None of the schools would accept that, in fact, you know, they must have the same problem. But anyway. Getting data from APA, through APA, about women in the various divisions and you know women at various ranks and things like that, I guess.

AR: Was APA responsive to those requests, or what was that like?

NH: Hmm. I was not one who actually dealt with APA about it, but I think that they were responsive. People were able to get information anyway. I don't know how much we got on our own for that.

WP: In this period, the Association for Women in Psychology, or I think it was first Association of Women in Psychology, it changed, ahh...

NH: You're one of the few people who knows that (Laughs).

WP: Were you part of that original group that formed the AWP?

NH: I would say I was. I can draw a clear line there. I had been meeting at APA with this group of women and in the fall, so that was the spring, then in the fall was the APA conference. I did not attend that meeting at which people organized. There were a couple of symposia, "Women as subject and object" was one of the first. I was not there with them at that very first meeting, but I was after that and was very involved in the very first things that people did.

WP: You were part of the group in 1970 that presented the resolutions. Can you talk about that? I think you sent me some of that material.

NH: I wrote a lot of it. We presented, a bunch of bylaws, no, they were motions and resolutions, resolutions and motions, that we presented. I don't know how exactly I came to be the person to draft those things but I was. I was also the person at that time to be making the newsletter and it [the newsletter editor position] was circulating - different people got it out at different times, and I was the person at that time, so maybe I was more in touch with other people. But the reason that we had all these separate ones [resolutions], I think was, I think it was James Deese that I spoke to who said - you know we originally had the more comprehensive motions - and he said, "You've got to break it down into single things because you know, we'll never be able to pass on something like that." And that's why there ended up being so many of them.

AR: 52 in all?

NH: Yah, it was an awful lot. And the actual writing of those, I think we probably just sort of got the ideas out, and you know maybe I was drafting or maybe someone else was, but I know that I was the one who wrote them up and printed them out and things like that. The interesting thing about that meeting was too, I guess, did we, no that was, I don't think we disrupted it, I think that was the Town Hall meeting, and so we had our own time... Phyllis Chesler, and I think I was there, no I don't think I was. JoAnn Gardner, Phyllis Chesler and a third woman, whose name I don't remember... worked in Washington...

WP: See if it's any of these people on this top list [consults document]

NH: I don't see it immediately. She was with a government agency. I think it will come to me...

WP: Was it Lorraine Eyde?

NH: ...No. It's before that. It was Dorothy someone...

AR: Riddle?

NH: No, she was a different person, younger. This was an older. I see a couple of Dorothys here. I may even be mixed up about it. But I'm sure I can retrieve her name. I can look through my papers, but no, I don't see it here.

WP: It will come to you.

NH: There it is. Dorothy Camara! It's up top. I was looking at the ones down the end. Anyway, this was in front of the Town Hall meeting. Dorothy Camara put forward the resolutions and motions I think and introduced them. JoAnn Gardner who was the most vocal active person and had so much experience with NOW - she was the thorn in the side I think. And she said, she was going to surprise everybody by remaining quiet and so she stood up there and didn't say anything, but she was a presence. And then Phyllis Chesler came on with the demand for reparations, and that was pretty shocking. And Phyllis was certainly dead serious. It was a very exciting time and I should also say at that time too - I don't know if you've talked with others of these people but, yeah that was 1970 - we were starting to have the suite at conventions where we would room together, get several beds. People contributed to the cost and we took the mattresses off the beds, put them on the floor, so some people slept on the box springs, others on the mattresses and it was an around the clock thing, I mean it was just very exciting. **Joan Joesting** and her husband had bought a mimeo machine or a ditto machine and we had that in the suite so that we could print things up as we went along, and we had also had brought a lot of literature to sell. JoAnn Gardner started the **Keanu W Press** in Pittsburgh and reprinted loads of feminist articles, loads of articles appearing in various journals, mostly psychology. And so we got loads of those and we also got ones from New England Free Press which was printing Naomi Weisstein's article. Anyway, they had a lot of reprints at that time, so we were selling these, and buttons, and labels, all kinds of things.

WP: It must have been an incredibly exciting time!

NH: It was! It was! It was unbelievable!

WP: When I go back to what we have at archives at APA, and I've been through Kenneth Clark's papers as well, it strikes me that there must have been some tension with him. Because he was the incoming president in the fall of 1970.

NH: With whom?

WP: Kenneth Clark.

NH: Yes. Yes. I think that was something that **Joan Joesting** said, no, maybe someone else. I think there was concern, I don't remember now, somebody said something that maybe seemed to suggest either that Black men were not supportive of women's rights, or Blacks in general [were not supportive of women's rights]. I don't know how that came out, but somebody said something and it did upset them, or else the women were just upset at him because of something he said. There was some tension and I think some people met with him to resolve it and felt better about it, but it was, yeah, it was really a very dismaying thing.

WP: Emotions run high at times like that...

NH: Yeah.

AR: I think there's actually an article in the *Monitor* where the comment I think you are referring to is reported, that he denied having said it, that women were baby factories and being a Black male sort of trumped being a white woman or something to that effect that he then denied, but had to meet with people about it.

NH: Yah yah. He did, I know that they met. I wasn't one of them but I know some people met with him. It might have been the council meeting, it might have been there at APA. There was another incident. I don't know if it ever made it into the records. But at a symposium or a panel in which a number of us gave papers and I gave my initial paper on non-verbal communication there, there were several others... Anyway, in the discussion afterwards some people got up and were discussing this, and questions and a man got up and did, I don't know, did some ridiculing thing, I think about my stuff, about non-verbal communication. And Mary Stewart who was one of our members who was a tall woman, strong woman, who happened to be seated next to him I guess, stood up and to make a point in her response to him, she put her hand on his shoulder as a dominant gesture to make the point. It turned out he was very enraged at that, and we found under our door of the suite a - I don't know if it was a letter, but anyway something from him - it was all typed up - that he was, that he had copyright on this letter, to protect it, or something about how he was going to sue us because he was assaulted by that woman who put her hand on his shoulder, and how he felt and everything. You mentioning emotions running high just reminded me of that. We never heard any thing about it afterwards but he was very angry at being assaulted.

WP: Actually illustrating almost perfectly the very point about how women, whom men often feel very free to come up and touch and pat on the back, the very thing...

NH: Yah yah yah. It was a very interesting moment. And then there was this thing which I had just sort of forgotten about. Ten of us when into the APA council representatives meeting, and that's where we gave the complete list. It was sort of envisioned as

something sort of taking over the meeting. I guess I had written out some guidelines about meetings for activist groups in advance and Joann had reprinted them by that time and she was saying that we should go by these rules, which were things like, take every other seat so that you are seated all around, don't smile so much, various things like that, maybe don't allow yourself to be interrupted or things.

AR: Strategies so that you would be taken seriously.

NH: Yah and I think that they posted Mary Stewart at the door. I think she knew jujitsu or something. She had some kind of judo training. Not that we had lock them in, but it was symbolic and yah, we forced ourselves on them.

WP: At the time, there were other activist groups as well - the Black psychologists, Asian Americans, the early Psychologists por de la Rasa, Ed Casavetes, it was an activist period. It seems to me that unless activist groups were willing in fact to be activist, APA would just ignore them. If you didn't get in their face about...

NH: Yah probably. But certainly the Black psychology stuff had all happened already, but obviously it was ongoing, the whole struggle for civil rights and civil rights within psychology and I guess trying to think, there were also gay activists and I'm trying to think, it might have come right after or simultaneously with the women organizing. And I think that umm, formation of some of the other ethnic groups like Asian Americans was probably after that. Chicano and so on. But yah, it was an exciting time and you all should have been there! It's probably the most interesting period of my life.

AR: Were you at all involved in the discussions about forming a division of psych of women?

NH: Somewhat yes. I guess I may not have been terribly involved. Well AWP was formed first as you know, and so there was a question of did we want to become part of APA, and people I think Joann was probably especially vocal about this point. We should be independent, we didn't want to be co-opted or something like that, so we had to be independent. I think from that came the idea that we could have both. We could propose a division but also maintain the separate organization that was not part of APA and that actually turned out to work well. Some people might have said well you couldn't really have maintained both, but we did, pretty well.

I was not in the group that made the proposal for the division or anything, so you know, it was other people that were involved with that. I can't remember how exactly, but I remember certainly discussing it and it was at first the idea of whether AWP should just disband or become..., in the same way that SPSSI was an independent organization but also a division, I think people thought that we could do that, but the argument was really not to.

AR: And how did you feel about that?

NH: I didn't have any particular feelings about it. I thought that when people had the idea of starting a division that that would be interesting too, but I thought of it as being a very staged sort of thing within the APA structure and didn't know how much we could expect of it. So it was you know, it was, somewhat better than that, but it was certainly a little more academic and staid than AWP.

AR: What was the interaction between all of the events and activities that you were just describing and the research that you were doing? What was the trajectory of your academic career?

NH: My academic career changed very quickly after I got involved with women and started doing the non-verbal communication research, which I presented there in 1970. I guess it seemed to me that it was just very important to go on doing this work and it was clear that there was a lot we didn't know. I mean, looking for research frontiers, nothing had been done, actually some excellent attitude stuff had been done earlier in the '50s and maybe early '60s, but certainly the '50s in social psychology. But the other empirical work, there wasn't [a lot]. And lots of assumptions and things, so a lot of the first stuff was critiquing it and then collecting new data ourselves. But it seemed very important. I think part of the ideology at the time was that one should work within one's group, that you can't liberate other people so you should be working on your own issues or something like that. So I just sort of went directly into that and just about everything I published from there on certainly had to do with gender.

AR: And of course in some ways, I suppose culminating in your book in 1977, *Body Politics*. Can you describe that work a little bit?

NH: That come out of my stay at Harvard I would say. When I was a post-doc there '71-72. **Zic Reuben** was there, who was starting the series with McGraw-Hill, editing books in social psychology I guess, and he invited me to do it. And so that's how I got involved. Basically all I can say is, I did an awful lot of work, because I was also teaching. I guess in between that, I wasn't teaching. I was working on the editorial collective of the journal which started out as *Radical Therapist*, and then became other names, *Rough Times*, and then *RT*, and then *Journal of Radical Therapy*, and then *State and Mind*, but anyway...

AR: Well can you tell us a little bit about that journal? We noticed it on your CV, but neither of us was familiar with that publication.

NH: Yah, I've been, well, you know going through all my papers and things, and disposing of a lot of journals over the past few years and so going through those ones too, umm, that came out of the 1970, Miami convention. I think people from South Dakota, or North Dakota, anyway, from **Myknop?** had just started publishing this, they brought their first copies there to that convention. I was very interested, I talked with the people there. And I guess, yes, I know, I'm trying reconcile the dates, but yah, it was there. The name, the person behind that was **Michael Glen**, a psychiatrist, and he told me they were moving to the Boston area. And it so happened I had, I had gotten my research grant

given to me probably in 1970. I could have taken it then but I had postponed it a year and I guess knew by then maybe that I would be working with Roger Brown and was going to Boston, and so I was very excited and asked if I could work with them.

So when I got there, I got in touch with them and started working with them which meant I was meeting once a week and writing articles, editing others. And working with subscriptions, and printing, taking stuff to the printer. And I also, after I finished my postdoc, I started doing typesetting too and I guess at first there, when I was one of the main, I guess all of the people - the editorial collective was small, but we had some volunteers - others of us were getting a small salary. It might have been \$300 a month, or else that was my stipend at Harvard I don't know, it might have been just a hundred a month, but anyway, I got some extra money doing the typesetting and stuff like that. That was that was very interesting and very exciting.

AR: What was the mandate of the journal?

NH: It was really to question psychiatry and psychology especially in the assumptions about mental health and mental illness. Thomas Szasz's book was out, was affecting people, and in England there was the anti-psychiatry movement and there were other things going on around the world as it turned out, Italy and so on. So it mostly started out with people concerned about issues for mental health, mental patients. Oh, and critiques of Freud of course. Phyllis Chesler had written her book by then I think. Came out in 1970. So there was a lot of critique of psychology and psychiatry going on and it was responsive to that. It was seen, you know initially it was for therapists, called *Radical Therapist*, and it was published for mental health professionals. A little while after that, the mental patients' movement got going too. Ex-mental patients, who also you know had the same ideas, that they were being screwed by a lot of the ideas of therapy. And in fact, it turned out women especially were [being screwed] too. Rebellious women often were now at that time being put into mental institutions by husbands and families who thought they were crazy. So it was responsive to all of that. When the mental patients movements got going, we exchanged journals with them and published articles you know with that input too.

WP: And that's when you changed the name to *Rough Times*?

NH: I think so, when it became clear that it wasn't just about therapy. And also the criticisms of psychological research were coming in, and that was part of a larger philosophical movement about objectivism and so on. So you know those books were being published and it all meshed together.

AR: And how did that play out for you, being involved in this critique of many aspects of psychology, including the philosophical issues?

NH: Well it certainly broadened my knowledge a lot to read materials from all over the country and then all over the world and talk about them with people who were very interested in them. And at the same time I was meeting at psychology conventions with

psychologists who were critiquing the basic studies in psychology and so on, and producing new studies. So I just learned a tremendous amount. I certainly still call on all that knowledge. So it was very broadening for me and undoubtedly changed me a lot too. And I at the time, actually it was part of my moving to Boston, I ended my marriage, or I left my husband. So there was a lot going on, but it was just, sort of, independence. It was feeling also that one didn't have to be the person who did all the cooking, cleaning and writing - doing research, writing articles, teaching and everything else.

AR: So it was personal?

NH: Yes, yes, it certainly had an effect on my life. And at the same time too, I was learning a lot about other activist movements by also being, I guess I was from the beginning, even before the women's movement, but the ...

End of Tape 1 Side A

Beginning of Tape Side B

NH: ... there was activism going on. There were meetings from people around the city. I met people from the other groups and so on, and so that was just you know also very broadening. It was very educational. It spurred me to read other things and to understand more about what was going on in the world, and the need for social change. And I probably got to know more people in Division 9 [SPSSI] and what they were doing, and I had respect for that. So it was all, everything was interconnected. Need I say...

AR: It was the time when a lot of things converged.

NH: Yah yah yah, it was amazing. You could also see an effect of what you were doing. You could really see change happening. The mandates to hire for diversity, to hire people of color and to hire women and so on. Changes in the language, changes in business, and government, and so on, all sorts of things. And you know we've certainly lost a lot of it, but I think a lot of it also is personal changes. The young women today may not think of themselves as being at all activist or anything. But there are things that they would not accept that we had accepted many years ago, they have moved way beyond it. So, it's very very exciting.

WP: Was it during this time period when there was a group of women - I don't know if it was AWP or the beginnings of that Task Force on Women in Psychology that was formed - was this the time period when APA basically was forced to change the way it listed authors, the whole thing about moving towards blind review of journal articles. Were you part of that, or do you know about that?

NH: No, no I don't know about how that changed, but yes. I don't know exactly the year, I guess I found out when I went back to find an example of it in the journals, and I don't know how much it might have been affected, I don't know if the women's movement...

WP: One of the things in the archival material I dug up indicated that it was in response to women's concerns, and not just the change of the names but actually sending manuscripts out for blind review, so that reviewers wouldn't know that women were the authors or men. Unless of course, they, well they took all identifying marks supposedly off... ??

NH: Yes - well that certainly is a big change. I did not know that was due to women's agitation. I somehow thought it was also going on elsewhere. There's the problem even without it, having prejudice with women's names, that people with big known names would be more accepted and so on, so, that was always there.

AR: You've spoken a little bit about when you were in graduate school and the very overt sort of "men preferred" kind of stuff. When you actually went out on the job market, did you encounter any of that in your personal job searches?

NH: Hmm, I think not. I think that - well for one thing, where I applied at UMBC it was a new institution. This was maybe its third year. It was just getting started up, it had to do a lot of hiring, but I think it had a fairly progressive dean doing the hiring. I did not particularly feel it. I did find out though, that another guy who was hired from the same PhD class, not in psychology but in sociology, who was much less productive than me, got five hundred dollars more in salary just because of being a man. So, you know, I was aware of that.

AR: So it wasn't so overt in the hiring at that point, but more invisible sort of discrimination in terms of salary.

NH: Oh yes - things you would never know about. And things that were hard to prove. Whether there were problems in being promoted and stuff like that.

AR: Yah. So I'm kind of getting now back to your chronology so I don't know if you want to add anything more. You were at Lowell for a period of time before you then went to, came to the west coast, to be director. I assume because, I mean maybe you can talk about this, it looks like when you came to the west coast, you came partly to be the director of the women's studies program?

NH: Yes, it was essentially that. I was hired for the women's studies director position at UCLA and the reason I applied for women's studies jobs at that time was that I was feeling that I would like to be able to bring these different sides of my life together. You know it was not entirely integrated. I was doing stuff that was, teaching mainly, there was really not much opportunity for teaching anything about women, there was certainly no women's studies program. Now at Lowell, both at UMBC and at Lowell, I was there when courses started up on women, people started courses at UMBC. When did students, no, you know I'm not even sure, yah, no, I might be confusing it, certainly at Lowell, no it was UMBC, ok,. There was student pressure. What they organized was a course in which they arranged for different faculty to come in different weeks and give lectures.

AR: On various issues related to women?

NH: Yeah. So it was a student-initiated course, but they had, the feminist students had found the feminist faculty so to speak and so they got that going, and at Lowell I think it was feminist faculty there already who instituted such a program. They began, they offered - I should say we because I was involved in both of those - the first course, which was individual women for individual weeks, or two weeks at a time or something like that in each different field in which you have somebody there.

AR: And at that time, both at University of Maryland and at Lowell, your primary appointment was still in psychology. How did the psychologists kind of react to you participating in this more interdisciplinary women's course?

NH: Well, I certainly know about some. At UMBC it was a little difficult. I think the psychologists in general were not a problem. There was one who happened to be the chair of our department, a woman who for some reason sort of had it in for me and it might have been part of the fact too that I was part of concerned faculty, but I think it was about the feminism. She told one of my colleagues, another psychologist who I wasn't particularly close to, but she told him to stay away from me because I would drag him down, or something like that (laughs). But I think in general, actually we were not in separate departments at that time, it was a social sciences division so I was close to a sociologist colleague. I was quite good friends with other psychologists, and I co-authored with one and was quite close to another.

AR: And at this point was the idea of a psychology of women course, had that been kind of introduced yet?

NH: No, I don't think so, there was probably not enough. What we were doing with, when we first began teaching such a course even was these reprints, because there weren't books, so we had to find articles and get reprints from all over. There wasn't the tradition of making your own reader, so it was just getting all of these things Xeroxed for your class. At that point, the first classes in women's studies were being developed and that's how things started out. I don't know where the first classes in psychology of women started.

WP: There are a number of priority claims here. Bill McKeachie says University of Michigan...???

NH: Is it. Yah I know at UCLA, there were some women, Irene Frieze and others, a number of different women who have become big names I guess, who were graduate students at the time it started, and taught apparently the first course there. But I don't know if...that's interesting.

AR: So around 1980, you came to UCLA to be director of the women's studies program. Can you speak a little bit about that?

NH: That was a lot of work too! I was also at that time editing the *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. So then we were getting enough stuff written I guess, something to teach with, and books were coming out by then. I guess as I said, Chesler's book came out in 1970, and Judith Bardwick's book was the first psychology of women text. Probably came out in 1971 even '72, I don't recall. So I was editing and developing new courses and learning how to teach a course in women's studies. I was doing two courses in women's studies as well as psychology of women. So there was a lot of work, but it was also very exciting and very interesting and the steam hadn't gone out of the activist movements. Ahh, actually I guess it had somewhat, but women's studies was just getting organized there and I was the first so-called permanent director of women's studies. They had had a program and had various people heading it from the faculty or something, but not with a real appointment as that title. Students were enthusiastic and women's studies itself was quite controversial and people didn't know what to make of it, so there were a lot of jokes about it. I got one course release from psychology because of editing the journal, maybe I got a course release because of teaching women's studies. But anyway, I was settling in. I met a lot of new colleagues and learned where everything was, but ahh...

AR: It was a big personal transition as well...

NH: Yah it was a big change and a whole new coast. Actually I had been out there before that. I was a visiting professor at Pomona College, it was just the spring semester I guess of 1979. I had really liked being out in southern California. So much so that actually what I felt was getting out there, was like coming home. It just seemed to me that it was home for some reason and so I was very glad to go back there. I'll tell you one thing that was interesting, having been on the east coast all my whole life and taught at several schools along there, I taught at Hopkins before I left as a graduate student. When it was nice weather we would take the students outside and sit on the grass and conduct class outside and so when I got to the UCLA I started doing the same thing and I realized that nobody else would do that. I mean now and then you do see a class outside, but I realized that they have nice weather everyday, so they didn't have that tradition. Students looked very funny at me when I said it's such a nice day, let's go outside for class.

WP: I want to ask a question about women's studies. This is something Alexandra has brought up. Often there has not been much cross over between psychology and women's studies at many places, it's almost like they are not related to one another. Was that the case at UCLA?

NH: Probably just the one. **Ann Peplau** had been teaching it I think, yah, I can't remember what it was called. Anyway, then Ann and I later introduced a graduate course, but there was one undergraduate course. Jackie Goodchilds might have been teaching the course on work behavior of women and men or she started soon thereafter....

WP: My tape ran out... (changing tape).

AR: The institution I'm at right now, the women's studies program has been heavily influenced by one psychologist from the department. Her women's studies life is almost completely separate from her psychology department life and the psych of women course hasn't, I don't even know if it's cross-listed in women's studies, I'm not sure.. Even though there have been individual women psychologists who have been influential in women's studies programs, it seems that somehow it still exists as this really really separate thing that psychologists do, it's very different from what goes on in a women's studies program.

NH: Well yah, I think that's a good observation from both of you, I think that women's studies did not make complete inroads into psychology as it did in other fields. **Barry Thorne** in Sociology has written about this for Sociology. When you look at history and English literature and so on, women's studies is really very important there, very integrated with the field and clearly a part of it. I think in psychology, certainly for a long time we have had to fight for the idea that this is a course that should be part of the curriculum, I think it was seen as a -you know- an extra course, if there was time to offer it and if someone could offer it, they could. But other things were much more important. And to a certain extent I imagine that that is still the case. I don't know how much it's offered at UCLA but I know that they did some cutbacks recently to core courses which might have cut back on the offering of women's studies. And so I think in psychology, although certainly in the other areas of psychology, the subfields of psychology, there are things about women that are being taught, it's not gotten integrated somehow. It's a separate area and people can teach and do teach full courses without getting very much into issues of gender.

WP: It seems like critical theory has, as you've said, made more of an inroads in women's studies and that's more intellectually exciting to many people than *psychology* of women. I do have a couple more questions that are probably, that will be fair questions, and one is, I'd like at least for the camera, so that we have this on film, is for you to talk about the impact of your book, *Body Politics*, because that seems to be one of those touchstone books that a lot of women especially refer to. But not just women, men refer to it as well as women as a critical book. Can you talk a little bit about that? And your assessment of its impact?

NH: That has been one of the most gratifying parts of my life. Many times at conventions or when I have spoken somewhere women will come up afterwards and say to me about the impact that the book has had on their life, the book changed my life or something like that, and of course, every author would like to hear that. So I've certainly been very happy that that has affected so many people. And you know certainly finding out about the things I wrote about and writing about them I'm sure changed my life too, writing the book changed my life in lots of ways as I understood more as I wrote. I did have the feeling of putting sort of everything I knew on the topic into the book, that I felt afterwards ahh...you know, someone spoke to me about another book and I felt you know, it's all out there, there's nothing else that I have.

WP: For the tape though, I'd like you to summarize, what would you say are the three or four major ideas that you really felt were important in *Body Politics*?

NH: The idea of *Body Politics* was that male dominance was maintained and supported a lot through non-verbal communication, unconsciously, most of the time, by people, and non-verbal communication - being non-verbal - was not something people talked about, so people were unaware of it and therefore women and other people being dominated could be subordinated without their knowledge, and could also be showing signs of submission without their knowledge. So that was something I first tried to document - that the differences in the non-verbal behavior of men and women were correlated with differences in the behavior of powerful and non-powerful people. And a corollary of that was that when women do try to use the gestures of power that they often are not accepted in that way, and often are seen as sexual gestures, and already coded into the culture of sexual gestures. Those are probably my main things.

AR: I was just going to say that that analysis of power is something that is so important and central to the feminist contribution, and I wonder what your assessment of that analysis is. Do you think that the fruits of that analysis have been fully taken advantage of in psychology?

NH: It might well be. It might have been chewed up and spit out.

AR: Maybe a fairer question is, what's your assessment today, looking back now. You were involved in the very beginning of the feminist consciousness in psychology. What do you think as you look back, what is the status of the field now? What would you hope for the future for feminist psychology? What do you think has been done and what do you think still needs to be done?

NH: If I forget that remind me - I remembered as you started talking something that I should also make clear - that I never felt that the ideas originated with me. And I put in the preface of my book certainly Roger Brown's ideas, what he had written about power. He had written about non-verbal stuff, in language, he had also showed the ahh, kinds of language that distinguished the power relationships and I felt I was applying that, but also there were others who had written. Erving Goffman is another one who had observed differences, some of them non-verbal, because of power differences and I certainly you know took that. And there was also another woman whose name I know very well and probably am not remembering, but anyway who had written some of these things in an article that was not widely published. But I tried to give her credit. That the dominance was being conveyed in conversations between men and women and a whole thing in women might be trying to dominate but a man could non-verbally put them down or suppress them without anyone even knowing that happened. So I felt that the pieces were all there and I just sort of catalogued it and tried to put it together in a coherent way.

And as for what I think has come of the ideas I put forward, I did a review a couple years ago. I was asked to look back and - I guess twice I've been asked that - and I guess I feel that there has been a lot of research on various aspects of this and not only did it sort of

fill out, or fill in, and maybe support some of the things that I had put forward, but also people were finding out and taking it to new places, that is, nuanced ways of seeing what happened. You know in certain circumstances it would be this, in other circumstances it would be that and so on. So some very exciting things, I thought, had been developed in the understanding of non-verbal communication of power. And certainly there's more to be done in that, but I think it's developed very well.

WP: That's pretty much the question I was going to ask. The other thing that I wanted to get, I should have asked you the very first thing, even before Alexandra got started is to state your full name and where and when you were born. We always always do that.

NH: Sure, well I was, before married, I was Nancy Eloise Main. And I was born in Florida, I think I'm registered in **Palatka**, though my family always talked about it as **Pomona**, so I thought I was born in **Pomona**, but they lived in **Pomona**. I lived in Florida for the first few years of my life until my family moved to Washington DC which is where I grew up. And so, I was born in 1934. October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1934.

WP: Great.

AR: I think I'm pretty much done. I have a question about feminist identity, which you have sort of implicitly answered by sharing with us a lot of aspects of your life, but maybe I'll ask it anyway.

NH: I'm not very articulate on feminist identity. But go ahead.

AR: When did you become aware that you were developing a feminist identity?

NH: Uh, well, I don't know that I can pinpoint any particular place but I was certainly developing it in those early years of meeting with those few women at conventions at EPA and APA. I guess that the labeling, the self-labeling came when I was going to teach a course or also working within other activist groups and I had to be the sort of feminist spokesperson or something like that, and that's probably how it developed - in those ways of knowing that I was representing myself to others as a particular person, in a particular way and that represented it to myself.

AR: And at the very beginning, just coming together with other women.

NH: Yah. That was very very exciting. And they were good women. And they were hard-working women too.

AR: Ok, thank you.

NH: Well thank you! This has been interesting.