

## SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Norma & Seymour Feshbach

Interviewed by Ruby Takanishi  
In New York City  
October 30, 2003

**Takanishi:** Okay, we're going to start with the general intellectual history. And the first set of questions have to do with your family background, your childhood and adolescent experiences that you think are relative to this oral history. We also want to have some information about the educational and occupational backgrounds of your parents, where were you born, grew up, your schooling, military experience, and early work experience. So Sy, you want to start?

S. Feshbach: I'll begin. My -- both of my parents were born in an area called -- in Europe, Eastern Europe, in an area called Bessarabia, which borders -- which has been at one time in Romania, and other times in Russia. My father worked in a fur industry, my mother was a homemaker. I was born in New York City and I grew up in New York. My parents moved around quite a bit in my elementary level, and finally got stabilized around junior high. I did the sixth grade in a half a year and the second grade in a half a year, the eighth grade in a half a year and the ninth grade in a half a year. So by the time I went to high school, I got out at -- I think I was about fifteen and a half or sixteen. Probably not a good idea; you have to have some kind of fun. In any case, the high school I went to was a special school in New York City that you had to take -- Townsend Harris -- you had to take an examination to get into it. And to be honest I think the reason that I went there was that you had to take a test to get into it and I think, it seems to me, that I'm much more competitive than I was aware of. So I took the test and I got in and that was great.

Any military experience? Lots of military experience. I was in World War II from 1943 to 1946. I was in the infantry and I went to OCS, became a first lieutenant eventually. I was on a task force in the ocean to attack Japan when we dropped the bomb. So we started going to Japan, we liberated Korea. This was in '45, but there was no fighting in Korea at that time. And I had a variety of interesting experiences in the military, which I won't go into because it would take too long to go through Army stories. Then for --

N. Feshbach: All of his former students know them by heart [laughter].

**Takanishi:** Okay.

S. Feshbach: For further military experience, I was recalled during the Korean War. I had a -- I was getting my Ph.D. at Yale University and this is in 1950-51 -- 1950, as we walked through Yale, and we could observe people in the Reserve started marching students in the Army Reserve. And my wife, Norma, would ask me, "Have you any chance of being called?" I said, "No, they will be called because they're taking training," and so on. I was an inactive Reservist. I was the first person at Yale University to be recalled into the Korean War, and this time Infantry. I served at the Pentagon and did a variety -- I had my Ph.D. and did a variety of experiments and studies that were related to social science, including an evaluation of the first Army participation -- first military participation in a nuclear bomb exercise, which was rather dramatic for all concerned. As an additional comment in assessing anxiety, the only ones anxious were the scientists doing the study.

**Takanishi:** Or at least reported. Which nuclear experiment was this?

S. Feshbach: It was the first time there was a bomb that was dropped in an area called Desert Rock. And we were a certain number of miles away. I'm still hesitant about saying the number of miles, although it shouldn't be a secret. And we watched the bomb, and they had troops present. The

purpose of the exercise was to persuade soldiers that the A-bomb was like any other bomb, except bigger. And one of the great ironies is that the military officers became convinced by their own propaganda, as it were. And so every year subsequent to that time, they would move the troops up closer and closer. I mean we did these exercise every year. And then I became quite aware of this when we were, kind of many years later, watching on television, there was a public service announcement: "If you participated in any of the Desert Rock exercises, please report for a physical because many troops were overexposed." We were kind of far away. I think others were much closer.

**Takanishi: What are -- and after this experience -- I mean, you were recalled and then you were released and --**

S. Feshbach: Then I went to the University of Pennsylvania and directed the teachers.

**Takanishi: And how many years were you there?**

S. Feshbach: At Pennsylvania?

**Takanishi: Yes.**

S. Feshbach: 1952 and I left there --

N. Feshbach: '61.

S. Feshbach: -- in '60 -- well I was on leave for two years, '61 to '62. So I was at Berkeley and Stanford. And then I never returned. I went in '64 -- no, '63 to '64 I spent a year in Colorado. In '64 I went to UCLA, where I spent the rest of my academic career.

**Takanishi: Okay. So let's turn to you, Norma. What about your own background?**

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi: Family background and growing up.**

N. Feshbach: Alright. I came from an intact family, but my mother was a very difficult person. And it was there I first, as a young child, eight, nine, and ten, developed ideas that there was certain ways you should treat children and that she -- the way she treated us, half of the time, didn't conform to what I felt were appropriate ways to raise children. And I think it was when I was seven, eight, and nine as I first thought about positive ways of bringing up children. And I don't know where I got my ideas from, maybe from reading, which, you know, we used to read instead of going, but also the movies. And I sometimes think that the movies socialized me.

My parents -- my mother worked all through my childhood, first at home and then in the factory. My mother had come from actually an upper-middle class professional background, but she came to this country with her nanny. And while initially she did very creative work, like design baby clothes, during my childhood, as she worked in the factory she was an enormously competent woman, but very difficult. My father was very nice, warm, loving person. And many years later, in my analysis, we figured out that I got my strength from my mother and fortitude and my warmth from my father.

I was also a very, very sickly child, and spent many years alone home, since my mother worked. And I missed a lot of formal schooling, all through elementary school. But by the time I was at the end of junior high school and high school I was well and capable of doing many activities. And in fact when I graduated from high school I won an award for having done the most service to the school. And that was, to some extent, being president of the stamp and bond congress that was during the war, of being the editor -- feature editor of the school newspaper, and of -- and I guess one of the important heritages that I got from being Jewish, rather than my parents, is the notion of service. And I

remember one of the times when I was ill, I pleaded with my parents to buy me *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and they did. And that book had a very -- both my selection of it and my having read it had a very lasting influence on me and my activities, that reflected in my academic and professional work is the whole notion of diversity and equality.

And I really -- as I said, when I look back it's -- these are ideas and values that I did not absorb from my family, but from having grown up in New York City, which was a very -- even then a very diverse community. So I think my interest in kids came a little bit from my criticism of how my parents -- my mother -- raised us, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the Jewish tradition of service.

**Takanishi: Where did you go to high school and --**

N. Feshbach: I went to Newtown High School. And as I indicated, even though I missed a lot of school, I still graduated from high school at sixteen and a half, almost seventeen. And through an odd set of circumstances, because my mother was ill, I went to City College rather than Brooklyn College, because City College had a late registration. And certainly City College had an enormous impact on me, intellectually. And you won't believe this -- an intelligent young woman -- I thought that if you went to college, you didn't have homework to do. And the first week I didn't do all my homework, and there was one history class that I never caught up in sixteen weeks due to the fact that I didn't do the readings in one week. But City College was extremely demanding and you know I was attracted to psychology, but I felt that it was City College and I should be practical and I should major in accounting. Well that didn't last very long, and then I thought of going to education. I was always very attracted to education, but I was not attracted to the people who taught education courses. And so I began to major in psychology. And at City College women had to have a joint major in if they were in education. So I graduated in psychology, second in my class to a young man named Seymour Feshbach who was first in the class. And that's where we met. And I was going to go for my master's to Northwestern, but we had a very -- we're going to be married 90 years, even though we've been married 56 years, we actually -- he proposed to me after our second date. So much for long courtships.

And so there would -- I considered two intellectual experiences that were very formative. One was City College and the other was the indirect learning that I absorbed while I was at Yale. Even though I didn't get a Ph.D. at Yale, I subsequently got it at the University of Pennsylvania in clinical psychology. Yale had stopped giving master's degrees, although they let me take courses and I was a TA in the department. But I used to attend a seminar series that Yale sponsored, I think it was Friday afternoons, and whether I worked or didn't work or had children, I invariably went to these meetings, which had Spa and QB and Stainbrook, and the best intellectual minds, very psychoanalytically oriented, which I was at that time, but it was also very clinically oriented and I absorbed and was exposed to the best minds in psychiatric, psychoanalytic, and clinical perspectives. And I think I learned much more there than I subsequently did for my Ph.D.

**Takanishi: Say a little bit about the years that you were at Penn and then what happened afterwards, in terms of any work -- the work experiences.**

N. Feshbach: Yes. The years at Penn were not, I would say, very exciting. For one thing, I already had my master's. I had commuted from New Haven to New York for my master's, which I was again exposed to some very exciting minds: Rene Spitz, Ernst Kris, Ruth -- what was Ruth's second name?

S. Feshbach: Monroe.

N. Feshbach: Ruth Monroe. And Ruth Monroe invited me to be her assistant after my being in the six weeks in her class. But I was living in New Haven, going to New York -- commuting to New York for my master's degree. And even though -- even I couldn't conceive of how I was going to get up to Sarah Lawrence to do 20 hours of assistance for her. But I seemed to reflect a talent in clinical psychology and of course the reason I went into clinical psychology was because I wanted -- it kind of combined my

interests, my academic interest in psychology and my broader social interests in helping people. Clinical psychology at that time was not a place of private practice. You basically worked, especially someone like myself who had worked in children's clinics, and I had some of that experience at City College.

At Penn -- I really was very critical of the faculty at Penn. They did not have student perspectives. They were not oriented towards broad directions. You weren't allowed to use the word Piaget and certainly not Freud. They were very arbitrary. They were prejudiced against women. And when I got my Ph.D. there, and I should say I did extremely well, they did nothing to help me get a job. But many years later they offered both Sy and myself main chairs, so that was a little redeeming. And so I think what Penn contributed was a very sophisticated, at that time, methodological orientation and, even though they were narrow in some ways, a real comprehension and communication of the importance of theory. And this is something that I've tried to impart, not only in developmental but in education, especially in the development of curriculum. So I did get more at Penn than I'm willing to --

S. Feshbach: Not only that, you got an encyclopedia of knowledge of what was in psychology at that time --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: -- because you had to be examined every year.

N. Feshbach: Yes, the examination was so pretentious, you had to be -- especially if you were a clinical student, you had to know everything about everything in the world. And I think the week before I took my comprehensives and my assessments, et cetera, I knew more about psychology than ever before or since.

**Takanishi: Does that pretty much summarize --**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi: Right. Great. Well let's move on to --**

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi: -- both of your -- the origins of -- I think, Norma, you've gone into some of this, but your origins in child development and individuals who were important to this intellectual development, research mentors, and significant --**

S. Feshbach: I'll try to cover some of that.

**Takanishi: Okay.**

S. Feshbach: My early adult experiences were important to my intellectual development. My mother was emotionally disturbed, which must've oriented me to psychology. Certainly because of the chaotic nature of my household, I learned to dissociate myself from that and focus on work, so that I can focus on work intensively for quite long periods of time and ignore all distractions that are occurring outside.

But another factor that was relevant is the -- here is that I have one of -- my oldest first cousin was an extraordinarily brilliant man who became a very distinguished physicist and held a main chair at MIT. And he sort of provided some model. Related to that was the -- my family's -- especially my father's emphasis on learning, intellectual development. I mean this was -- his sense was -- his view was he worked in a factory and that was not for his children. It was that sort of thing. So I became very intellectually involved. Then in my --

N. Feshbach: And you have a long line of very famous cousins.

S. Feshbach: And I have -- and my first cousins, a number of them are quite distinguished scholars.

N. Feshbach: -- in different fields, all different fields.

S. Feshbach: In all different areas, all influenced by -- I think some of it's similar experiences -- some related experiences. I might add that in terms of my collegiate experiences, I majored -- initially I majored in history and then I shifted to a major in -- oh, at first I think I went to business school for a brief time. That's what Norma did. We have similar backgrounds. That lasted one semester and I thought it was not intellectually interesting. And I went to -- majored in history, then I switched to chemistry. And --

N. Feshbach: That was a switch.

S. Feshbach: Yes. Then because it was a hard subject --

N. Feshbach: I just wanted -- our parents didn't know that we switched majors, but we didn't have to consult them.

S. Feshbach: -- and then I get to this new field called psychology, where there were, you know, this Freud and then there were these --

N. Feshbach: Gestalt.

S. Feshbach: -- Gestalt psychology and Roschach -- They were so secretive that the graduate students were taking courses at that time we showed it to them -- It all seemed so exciting. And it involved both social science and history. I mean social science and science. History had both qualities, and I said that's what I'm going to major in. And so I majored in psychology. And significant colleagues or -- that is collegiate experiences in -- well I might add that when I went to Yale, which was the home of behavioral theory and it was a great place. I was very fortunate to have gone there. And one reason is they were very tolerant because I came from a heavily Gestalt psychoanalytic influence. And the Gestalt organismic influence was reflected in my asking very critical questions about learning theory and the like.

In fact when I first came to Yale if there was such a thing as a semantic differential, I probably -- I hate to say this -- would've put Watson in a semantic space very close to Hitler or someone like that. I mean, at City College psychology was a passion. I mean -- well so we had this influence. So that influences still remain with me, although going through Yale, obviously --

**Takanishi: Talk about how you got to Yale. That is did you consider other places or you just --**

S. Feshbach: Why'd I go to Yale?

**Takanishi: Yes.**

S. Feshbach: I was going to go elsewhere, but my father was a -- had a -- was ill -- physically ill and I didn't want to go too far away, and Yale was the closest to New York.

N. Feshbach: You also had gotten American --

S. Feshbach: Oh.

N. Feshbach: You said you got --

S. Feshbach: Yes, then I got into Yale and I got into several other -- decided to go to Yale. So I went to this den of inequity of behavioral science. And I said they were great. Neil Miller was so tolerant. Well anyway, I won't go into that.

N. Feshbach: But you were an outstanding student.

S. Feshbach: But they were -- Yale was -- you know we -- of intellectual mentors, there was Janice, Seymour Sarason --

N. Feshbach: Carl Hoffman.

S. Feshbach: Carl Hoffman. But I would say Irwin Child was the strongest influence. And they -- Irwin Child represented the area of personality. But for him personality and personality development were closely intertwined. And with yet a learning emphasis or a psychoanalytic emphasis or psychoanalytic emphasis, as I did, personality theory -- the personality and personality development are sort of closely related, especially with -- certainly with analytic theory. So that would be some of my origins -- the origins of my interest in child development. The -- also working with Norma and being married to her further strengthened or reinforced my interest in child development.

I'll make a comment with regard to a question that appears later. And this is -- it's a sad but true story. Sad as a commentary on me, but it's sort of -- it's true. I had a strong theoretical interest in psychology when Norma suggested that we do some applied work. I said, "Applied? How could you do it?" It was as if we were corrupting the field. And -- but she influenced me and I was very fortunate and I became interested in applied psychology. So not all with her --

**Takanishi: And what about --**

S. Feshbach: Go ahead.

**Takanishi: I'm sorry, go ahead.**

S. Feshbach: No, I think I've covered most of it.

N. Feshbach: How you got into regression, which is --

**Takanishi: Well let's kind of keep that aside now.**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi: Because I think the personal research area we want to go into. But I want to turn to Norma, and you talked about your origins in child development in your early years and your family and so forth. And you might want to say a little bit more about that, in terms of the origins of your interests. But, you know, what individuals were important to your intellectual development, because -- and you mentioned some of the seminars that you took for your master's degree. Who would you consider to be your research mentors and significant colleagues?**

N. Feshbach: Yes. I'm trying to -- well certainly you know I would include whatever description, certainly Sy, as, you know, if not a mentor, as a colleague. As I said, we argued a lot because I felt -- you know, I had very high academic standards. You couldn't go to New York Academic High School and City College. But I felt we should go further and I'll come back to that in a moment, because the people in child development were very resistant to anything at that time that was practical. You're interested in empathy? You're interested in child abuse? You're interested in elimination of corporal punishment? I was for some time in that group. But see I was a clinician that was masquerading as a developmental psychologist. But definitely I would include Sy as one of my important colleagues, because we did some interesting collaborative work. Although it's very interesting, and this is just a

commentary, when people would see Sy's work they would say, oh, Norma had an influence. Or they'd see my work, they would say, oh, Sy had an influence. People at that time just didn't have the grace to acknowledge that the two of us had a contribution. Wouldn't you say that that was true?

S. Feshbach: It's true.

N. Feshbach: Yes. I would say definitely Ernst Kris and Rene Spitz had enormous, you know, impact on me during the two -- year and a half that I commuted from New Haven to New York for my master's degree. Incidentally I was just married, so I was barely 21 when I was engaging and in 1947, not too many people had a commuter marriage.

S. Feshbach: And she also worked at the Betsy Ross Nursing Center.

N. Feshbach: Yes, I also taught at the Yale Nursery School and had the opportunity to hear Edith Jackson and a lot of the people from the Gesell Station would come across the Yale Nursery School children, faculty, and students, and they'd also broaden their research base, that these people would come and give lectures. And -- but I always tell people that -- no, that Ernst Kris made me a better psychologist and Rene Spitz a better mother. And you know we saw hours and hours and hours of motion pictures that Rene Spitz had taken. And aside from what he said, the opportunity to watch these infants -- and of course there was a clinical interest as well, because some of these children were from the orphanage and children's psychological function in decrease and some were, you know, children of the incarcerated mothers, which, you know, kids the first year were more normative. But Ernst Kris was extremely challenging intellectually. And even though later on, you know, there were certain experiences -- you know, I'm very critical of psychoanalysis. But with the approach -- the problem solving approach, the theoretical interest, I mean, is really exciting. You know if somebody -- classes really fighting, as an undergraduate, you know, Murphy, Martin Shera -- you know City College was the center of psychological thought. And as I said, the opportunity to combine the education and the psychology that even then I felt, well, wouldn't it be exciting to have a program that could combine those things. And as you know very well, years later I tried to create such a program that would integrate education. Have I left anything out in terms of --

S. Feshbach: I'd like to just throw --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: -- make -- describe an incident which should highlight some of the differences between Norma and myself, as well as similarities. We both have this Gestalt background. We both were -- had this psychoanalytic influence in orientation. And Norma, though, was more open, I think, to various theoretical views and whereas, despite the fact that I went to Yale and I was sort of very versed in learning theory, I still viewed it somehow politically as a mechanistic you don't treat people that way. And so -- and then one of our children, I think our daughter, was climbing up -- she was an infant and climbing up steps.

N. Feshbach: Nine months old, yes.

S. Feshbach: And we didn't want her to climb up the steps. So then all of a sudden, well, let's reinforce her for every time she goes down --

N. Feshbach: Partial reinforcement.

**Takanishi: Yes, sure.**

S. Feshbach: And so I said are you going to do that for our child? [Laughter] And it worked, and she trained her to --

N. Feshbach: Go up the steps and come back.

S. Feshbach: -- so that the child went up the step -- I think where she'd been reinforced. Or another incident, in which I -- because I was a source of the problem, I took a picture of my daughter in the bassinette and the flash disturbed her so she didn't want to go in the bassinette. So Norma said we have to gradually decondition her. And she deconditioned her. And so she was, as I said, much more open in many ways.

N. Feshbach: But what was funny is people were publishing papers about those one case deconditioning and I had about a hundred.

**Takanishi: I think that's a, you know, very important, what shall I say, to have for the record because it's not only more open, but that she used it. I mean she was actually using it in real life.**

S. Feshbach: On the other hand, I will describe one with our youngest. He became attached to a blanket, as our oldest did. And our oldest, we had the experience of a blanket getting shorter and shorter over the time, and tattered and torn. So we didn't want that to happen to our youngest. And here we both agreed, we had the child become attached to more than -- to different blankets so that, you know, when we went someplace we didn't have to be in a fix. So we had a red blanket, and a blue blanket, and a yellow blanket, and a pink blanket. Well anyway, after that anytime we went somewhere we had to take all seven blankets. [Laughter]

N. Feshbach: This is a true story.

S. Feshbach: So much for learning principles.

N. Feshbach: While we're talking about children, you know, Sy and I replicated the very famous Murray study. And I'll say that that was Sy's idea, the whole issue, not -- organized the study, but he felt that there was an important difference between supplementary and complementary projection, that kids who would look at a frightening person, an adult, would see the adult as threatening and the child would be afraid. So I put it into operation. And so, you know, we would work back and forth sometimes. When I had an idea, he put it in operation. So we did that out as a Halloween party, at our children -- at Jonathan's birthday, and then later on we had the signs -- we don't -- but after that study and we said that we were never going to frighten children again. And we wrote that in a research article. And though we confessed that, not so much at the Halloween, but at the science study, when the kids thought they were going to be participating in a scary study, they got very frightened. And we pointed out -- we felt very ashamed and we pointed out the ethics of that. And that was more than 40 years ago because when you just upset -- what we had done and with nothing compared to what people were doing with children and adults --

**Takanishi: Well I think this is kind of a good segue to the fourth question here.**

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi: We've spent quite a bit of -- I mean insufficient, but I certainly -- spent some time on sort of the personal origins and in your case, I think, you know, the relationship between you and Sy and how this affected your intellectual history. But it's very clear, and Sy you mentioned the semantic differential in Hitler. The -- you know, what would you say were the political and social events -- I know Sy talked about the war, of course. And Norma you talked a little bit about the --**

N. Feshbach: Jewish tradition.

**Takanishi: -- the Jewish tradition, the prejudice that higher education institutions had towards women and -- professional development.**



N. Feshbach: Not at City College. They equally discriminated against men and women.

**Takanishi: Okay.**

N. Feshbach: But at Penn.

**Takanishi: Right, at Penn. And yes, I mean, you know, that's a whole other discussion --**

N. Feshbach: Yes, yes.

**Takanishi: -- the public, private university kind of thing.**

N. Feshbach: Right, right.

**Takanishi: But what would you say were the political and social events that have influenced your research, your writing, and your teaching? Because I think that's a very important question, you know, for both of you to talk about.**

N. Feshbach: Well we both had the same kind of political history. I was a little bit more radical, which I'd just as soon not go into --

**Takanishi: Why not?**

N. Feshbach: Alright, I'll go into it. I was a member, in high school, of the Communist League. And you know -- which at that time had great promise, you know, equality, each according to his means, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But I was very concerned about its authoritarian -- I felt uncomfortable when I would get a notice and it was addressed to Comrade. And I just felt that I was subscribing more to the ideas than -- and I felt -- I don't know why I felt anxious, but I felt very anxious like it was almost an affiliation to another country. And I didn't feel disloyal to the United States, and so I separated myself from that when I went into college and they pursued me and -- but I think that that's a reflection of my interest and concern of people who were less of -- who were vulnerable, for whatever the reason. And especially, to this day, the pain of children is absolutely excruciating for me. Now maybe I -- it had its roots in my own pain, but it's something that I still experience and that I still try to do something about. And that is very troubling at the moment because all through my childhood and adulthood things got a little bit better and a little bit better and a little bit better, and they seemed to be turning the corner in a very, very major way in which the resources of our country are going to be such that there is going to be no opportunity to make provisions for the less fortunate, the less -- I think this is a very, very troubled time. And the reason I feel so threatened by it is because it is threatening, but I don't have the energy, since I'm 77, to take it on. You know I think this is a really a lousy time in the history of the United States and I see the real threat of the Bush administration as preventing, for so many years, resources that will be available for education and medical care, for legal help, for the people in our society who are less fortunate. So clearly now I'm not saying so much the research on empathy, but certainly my interests in practice, my interest in policy derives from my political interest.

**Takanishi: And you, Sy?**

S. Feshbach: Well I think there are certain similarities. I went to a -- in addition a public school, in the afternoons I'd go to a Jewish education, Yiddish, not Hebrew. And I was a Jewish socialist, and I believed in socialism through evolution, not revolution, so in that sense. And so we had this strong social commitment and I was -- ultimately it became integrated into -- which I've mentioned before, into pragmatic programs or intervention programs that I've worked on with Norma. But the social commitment or feeling that we had to do something that was useful socially was extremely important.

And the -- I might just sort of note parenthetically that I was a -- I worked, because I had to, a while in high school and college, summers or weekends, I'd work in the fur industry. And I was a member of the union. And the union was run by a -- was taken over by a communist group. So in 1939, 1940 -- the early years, they were anti-war and not quite pro-hit, but certainly saying that the war -- that England and France, before the United States had joined, were imperialists. Then when Russia was invaded, in two days they took out the old posters and pamphlets and put in whole sets of new ones, greatly supporting the war. And I was totally furious of that.

N. Feshbach: They're still doing it today, you know.

S. Feshbach: Yes. Which convinced me of the rationality and the fact that this -- anyway, it made me sensitive to the -- certain of the left-wingers' views.

N. Feshbach: They were exploited.

S. Feshbach: So Norma -- in that sense both Norma and I, I think, are -- we share very similar political attitudes.

N. Feshbach: Except one difference. You know, we were very active in Philadelphia. We helped integrate our neighborhood. Sy chaired the educational committee, which -- that if we integrated the neighborhood to make sure the education -- the schools were good. I chaired the playground facilities that we helped build. But there was one important difference. I felt that the social interest that we had -- and I think this is why I fear so much, but I felt that I wanted to incorporate everything to my teaching -- not to my teaching because I'm very careful not to bias students. I think it's -- but into my research and into the common programs I developed and the research I did. Where with Sy, since he was so much more of a pure theorist than I was, although I think I've done some good academic work too, was on the one hand his social work, his activities, and in the other hand, you know, his academic programs. And so it's not that he wasn't without practice, he directed the -- at school. So -- and spent a lot of time bringing in money just for the school. But it was a little bit more compartmentalized and I felt, well, we could do the kind of research to show teachers that they didn't have to physically punish the kids. Do you know what I mean?

S. Feshbach: Then say it.

N. Feshbach: I wanted to integrate them.

S. Feshbach: I would say that ultimately I don't think I was that far apart from Norma. That is, I wanted to do -- I felt research should have a strong theoretical bent. And until later that I realized that you can do research that's applied that also has some theoretical value as well, which is sort of a simple insight, but it took me a while to appreciate that. But I think my -- I became, as we'll talk later, involved in the studies of aggression. And I think that in the back of my head was the fantasy that aggression was a major human problem and by doing work on it maybe I could help invigorate that problem, even though my approach was theoretical at first. But I think that was somewhere --

N. Feshbach: But you wanted other people to make the linkages.

S. Feshbach: But I was somewhere in my consciousness.

N. Feshbach: Yes. We're being very open with you.

**Takanishi: Oh, I think it's very important to be open.**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi:** And you know and I'm -- you know, I mean I think certainly on aggression, it's something that's very front-and-center today. You know October 30, 2003.

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi:** So --

N. Feshbach: But the psych guys, students in psychology -- and he's in developmental psychology -- was that if you're interested in practice you belong in social work. I would have these arguments with Elliot Rodnick about parent training and he would say that's public health, and I would say no that's combining psychology and education to go into parenting. And then later on he did research actually. And he was a wonderful person. I mean these people were not mean or rigid they were just so -- they had such barriers. They needed psychology to have to state -- physics. And that's why they were so resistant to dirty their hands. You want to ask something?

**Takanishi:** No, I know that point, I -- and was socialized into it. So I recognize it immediately. So my question is how did you --

N. Feshbach: Buck them.

**Takanishi:** Yes. How did you do it because the whole atmosphere -- I would say, probably into the '80s, you know, maybe even still true. I mean, I think we have had some breakthroughs now, but where psychologists can do all kinds of work and feel that they're recognized and so forth. But I think it certainly went into at least the early '80s.

S. Feshbach: You know in a strange way, one factor was we're both clinical trained. And --

N. Feshbach: Yes, I want to say later on why I went into clinical --

S. Feshbach: I mean, you know, and clinicians in academic settings were sort of viewed --

N. Feshbach: Second class.

S. Feshbach: -- viewed as second-class citizens. Well that, in a way, it puts you on sort of a marginal posture, which helps you to deviate, if you will, from the psych guys. And I think that was one factor. Now eventually, as it turned out, the graduate students in clinical were so good that -- department attitudes, maybe not totally but at least overtly, coalitions became more acceptable as it were, by the hard scientists. Who knows, those attitudes may still be there but --

**Takanishi:** Well I think there's been a lot of change that, you know, we really can't get into or whatever, at least today. But I want to sort of -- go ahead.

N. Feshbach: At Penn I not only had to defend clinical -- first of all the way you do this, buck a little bit, you take a course in statistics and you embed it in your students experimental. You take a course in learning and you embed it in any of the students who are majoring in -- but at Penn I had to defend the concept about clinical -- personality. And I would do it by saying you know there's variance, experimental manipulation, and it's not variance. So then they would say, you know, maybe, but -- okay that's -- I think Sy really puts his finger on it. It's the clinical people. And the point is we were expected to be as good in methodology, statistics, theory, and yet also know personality, motivation.

I want to mention two reasons how I went from clinical to developmental. There were two reasons. One was I was really interested in preventing problems, again before they had notions of primary prevention, secondary prevention, and therapy. But I was really -- I really attribute this all to the fact that I spent so much of my early childhood in bed and had to figure out things. So you really wanted to get into the household and prevent the dysfunctional behavior from ensuing and you went back from

clinical into developmental that way. And the other reason, and this was more fortuitous, is that we went out West and I taught one year at Stanford and one year at Berkeley. And on a part time basis I taught six or seven different courses, and that really was an incredible transformation because I was interested in research, having that background it was inevitable that I'd want to not just practice but do research. And I was not interested in doing research on tests or therapy on couples, although there wasn't that much therapy that clinicians were doing. And in the context of teaching these different courses, students would say to me, well, you know, in the early '60s it was really in the infancy of good child development. Historically there was psychoanalysis and there was the Gesell birth weight, and descriptive. And so when students would ask me, well, why is this so, and I would say, well, maybe this, and then I'd say you could do this kind of experiment. And every day I was, you know, designing experiments and I thought this is my field. So those two years at Stanford -- and I was in a context with the best developmentalists in the country, and yet I totally revised the laboratory program for the undergraduate developmentalists at Berkeley. It was just like a duck to water. You know?

**Takanishi: Well I think this is a good --**

N. Feshbach: Yes. Okay.

**Takanishi: -- point to address this last question under intellectual history because it really is saying how would you, Sy and Norma, characterize the development of your ideas in child development and their evolution? You know, I mean, is it sort of this straight-forward kind of linear progress or, you know, sharp turns and sort of step backs and go wandering down different paths. I mean I think what you both have said already gives -- you know, addresses this question, but I think it's a very important question and so I just want to give both of you the opportunity to address it.**

N. Feshbach: Well Ruby, that chapter for the Mussen handbook on children's aggression. And I think that that was formative to some extent.

S. Feshbach: Well but --

N. Feshbach: We had other things but I remember --

S. Feshbach: No, but in terms of straight-forward fashion versus sharp turns, I would say I would think my own intellectual development, especially in regard to the area of child development or perhaps psychology more generally, has been more or less straight-forward. Now that is, I was psychoanalytically influenced, I became very critical of it. I went to a school -- a graduate school which focused on learning theory, but attempted -- was very sympathetic to psychoanalysis. Neil Miller had an influence, John Dollard had an influence, and so on. And there was an effort to integrate psychoanalysis and learning theory. So it was all sort of compatible. Now there have been major changes that have taken place in psychoanalytic theory that have affected me. So we don't know when we talk about oral stages, but we talk about attachment and early attachments, which is sort of -- battle. I don't know if you would call that a major -- but I think that's sort of an evolutionary development. But changes, they're major changes, but they're -- it's not a sharp rejection or anything of that kind. I would say the biggest change that occurred, largely through Norma's influence but also through other circumstances, was an effort to introduce social issues of pragmatic concerns --

N. Feshbach: I think though -- I think most people think personality. And I'm not talking so much for myself. I think this is true of Sy and this is true of Irwin Child and other people, they ultimately -- they're groping with some of the issues of personality and they have to keep going back. And I just can't remember all the people I've observed that in.

S. Feshbach: See as an example, when I got out of -- when I was -- when I finished my Ph.D., the one who offered me a position -- still at Harvard, before he had gone to Stanford. And that was very compatible. I couldn't accept the position because the Army took first priority, you know, because --

N. Feshbach: That's when they called him back.

S. Feshbach: -- called back into the Korean War. But it just -- to just underline --

N. Feshbach: Well Sears is an example.

S. Feshbach: Sears is an example.

N. Feshbach: It's an excellent example of going back. And because you ask questions, which inevitably then brings you -- not so much to using kids as subject matter, but to try to get --

S. Feshbach: And another example was the Whiting and Child Cross-cultural Studies in which they attempted to relate early childhood experiences to adult beliefs about the causes of therapies of illness. So again, both learning and analytic.

N. Feshbach: Also something should be said that in the '60s -- the '70s we began to get invited to a lot of -- was it the '70s? When was Jack Block's -- '70, early '70s. And so there were two -- one is we were invited to give papers, so we were pressed to formulate certain of our ideas and that's what happened with Jack Block. I went to empathy and you went into, you know, other cognitive controls. And then we were exposed to all of these people. So they influenced us collectively. You know people like -- well I would say Jack Block was one, Jean and Jack Block. Who else?

S. Feshbach: Right.

N. Feshbach: Yes. Well definitely. But I say Sroufe, Kline -- I mean and we were open -- I mean we were -- so we -- you know, and that's what happens when you get active, it becomes geometric. You know, and also in my own case, grappling with trying to develop a program and we were there in its very long beginning. And it does force you -- and then you bring in young people and they influence you, so it's kind of a snowball. But I would say in my own case -- I mean -- and I've only been moved by the plight of children who are in pain, but I enjoy observing children who are not in pain. So I just enjoy kids. I enjoyed my own kids. I've enjoyed my grandchildren. I mean it's just a topic of high interest to me. And intellectually it is, and I'm still teaching and I still enjoy stimulating other people to be exposed to something exciting of the field. But if you remember it was my feeling that anyone who works with children, whether it's psychologists, educators, pediatricians, be it anyone who makes their money off kids should be concerned too. And to be part of the army trying to do something for the kids. And I'm a very intense person. [Laughter]

Takanishi: Sy, why don't -- Norma why don't you --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

Takanishi: -- go ahead. And this might be an opportunity, Sy, for you -- because I'm just going to ask Norma as well -- you know, I think the general intellectual history part of the oral history is really important. And whether there are any kinds of questions or issues for you that, you know, we haven't addressed that you would like to talk about. I mean I think we've -- you know, I mean, it's just amazing the ground that we have covered. But I think it is an opportunity, before we go onto the next section, to see whether there's anything, you know, you'd like to say. I think that, you know, the one thing that I would ask is, you know, clearly the -- what you and Norma have done was, from my perspective, kind of going against the tide, and what was that like because, you know, I'm somewhat younger, but I still remember how, what shall I say, set everybody was, not only in their specialty, because that's another issue we're going to get into --you know specialization has gotten very big -- but also, you know, the tension between, quote, scientific applied psychology certainly was very strong during most of your career, probably until the '80s. So I'm, you know, just interested in how you kind of negotiated all of this.

S. Feshbach: Well some of it will become, I think, articulated as we discuss specific research areas. And one goes with the tides and against the tide, depending upon the social context working at the time. I don't have much to add about going against the tide, except to say that both Norma and I were so intellectually committed in general to our views that we are -- you know, we're strong in here and even if it's not in our personal interest, you know, we sort of stick to our guns.

But I think that's true. Well I might make -- so far as general intellectual history, we went -- our early careers in academia mostly, and especially in graduate school, was at a time when the big theories and conflicts -- Tull and Skinner and Freud, and so on, were the -- when we needed excitement in psychology. And people did a lot of rat experiments in the effort to get a basic model of learning, which they applied to human beings. I remember Clark Holliday putting an equation on the blackboard when we were at Yale. And it was an equation having to deal with -- response and it was a lot of figures on it, the number of reinforcements and exponential function, and so on. And he said that all that had to change to apply to humans -- this is derived from rats -- was some of the constants in the equation. I mean that was sort of -- that was a strange time. Now that's completely obliterated, nobody thinks that way anymore, and they don't do experiments like that anymore. And so that's been a major intellectual change, that statement, in psychology. And I certainly -- I don't think I ever was too -- I never believed it in the first place, so I didn't have -- but psychology has changed. One sad change that has occurred is something you've already alluded to -- time when not only were you a -- although she obviously got a broad educational experience at Penn, but clinical, social, developmental, personality were all interrelated --

N. Feshbach: History.

S. Feshbach: -- you know, all interrelated. And I worked -- when I was at Yale, I worked with Irving Janis, who was a social psychologist, who also taught a great class which Norma took with me, and that was --

N. Feshbach: Yes, I would say Janis was a good mentor.

S. Feshbach: Good mentor.

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: He taught a great course. It was just extraordinary, and so on, so that we were -- I don't want to say generalists, but we certainly ventured outside. And in an area like Norma's work on empathy or my work on aggression covered -- is involved in, certainly, social behavior, it's involved in clinical, relationships --

N. Feshbach: Emotional.

S. Feshbach: -- emotional development, child development. So it's hard to take a -- it lends itself to a broader view of the --

N. Feshbach: Can I just say --

S. Feshbach: -- development of the child.

N. Feshbach: -- clinical training more focused on motivation and personality and developmental, rather than on technique.

S. Feshbach: Good point.

**Takanishi: So more theoretical?**

N. Feshbach: And data and content.

**Takanishi: Right.**

N. Feshbach: Content. Yes. And where today clinical training is so much technique. And when I used to do field -- site visits on the --

**Takanishi: Okay. Well I --**

S. Feshbach: So that's my feeling on that section and I think we're almost ready for the next section.

**Takanishi: Alright, this is the second hour of the oral history interview with Norma Feshbach and Sy -- Seymour Feshbach, on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003. And we are now moving from the general intellectual history to personal research contributions. And I think that here the questions are very focused. We've gotten into some of it but I think we can still go deeper into some of the statements that were made earlier about your interests, Norma, in empathy, and Sy's interest in children's aggression, and so forth. So why don't we start off, and this time with Norma, and ask Norma what were your primary interests in children and children's development at the beginning of your career, and then start to move down the questions.**

N. Feshbach: Well my master's thesis had to do with prejudice in children, but it was a kind of modest exercise and we had the pictures of children and good situations and negative situations. And children had to select either a Caucasian, white face or a black face. But you know it was a very modest investigation. But it was interesting and it came out, you know, basically what we knew except -- so that was my first excursion. My Ph.D. -- you'll find that a lot of my research is very much related to my social and personal interests. And the -- always used to say when I did research about the classroom that Norma doesn't have data but she has evidence. And my doctoral dissertation had to do with nonconformity, and nonconformity in a situation in which nonconformity was good for the group. And again, I mean if you look at my history you would place me, you know, with people who are nonconforming. And I think my nonconformity was a little threatening to my husband, and it was certainly very threatening to the people on the street where I lived. I mean just going to graduate school, just commuting. When you first get married and commuting, and I had these wonderful friends and they sat me down one night, you know -- I guess they had one of these sessions where you have today with drunk people, with alcoholics -- and then they got five of them and they said to me, you know, the fact that I was living in New Haven and commuting to New York, just married, that it was either a sign that my marriage was not working or it was a mistake that I would ensure my marriage wouldn't work. And it took a lot of guts, G-U-T-S, on my part not to be influenced, because these were very well-meaning people. These were people who are still friends of mine today. And they were just very, very concerned because it was almost not heard of. It was unheard of. I went for my Ph.D. between '53 and '56. This was -- I don't know, what was the question? After I got started on --

**Takanishi: What were your interests in?**

N. Feshbach: -- so obviously the fact that I did this dissertation on nonconformity, which was something very, very close to me. It was a good -- it took me a long time to publish it and I think it's very well respected. But I think that Sy -- and then my research career was characterized by writing and doing research with Sy who did a number of very good studies on projection and we did some writing on aggression of children. But it was very clear that I was an assistant professor and he was a full professor. And they would attribute everything I did to him, so we made a very conscious decision that I would go on my own research way and he would go on his research way. But you know we shared grants. And I had a major role in doing a lot of the mechanics of grants and he had a lot of major role in writing the grants. But I was very good in taking the conceptual problem and translating it into research design. That was kind of -- and initially I did a whole series of research which was a topic of my Minnesota dissertation on reinforcement styles in parents that were reflected in kids. But actually I

was the one who started out how children's reinforcement styles varied. And I did it at the same time, I guess, that has -- and other people did it with parents. But I was interested in children's learning styles and I thought a reflection of learning styles would be having -- with each other children. And so I did a series of studies and -- in different social classes in this country and in Israel and England. And again, this was done in the early '60s, so I guess I was a little bit early in trying to get generality of certain relationships across class, across ethnicity, across country.

And the reason I went in -- I'm just thinking of this, is that Head Start and other kinds of research on less advantaged groups was being done and I felt that they were really coming up with meaningless or not significant variables in kids. And I was looking for more variables in children. So again, I think in terms of the research, that whole research was again trying to integrate education and psychological principles. And I forgot that I did all of those studies. And then I was also very concerned with teacher-child interactions and I did a series of studies on teachers' preferences with kids varying in personality. And I also did a whole series of studies on the influence of the teacher as a model and Maxie Benson got me all these people and we developed these video tapes showing teachers who would be supportive and reinforcing the kids and other video tapes of teachers being critical of children. And then developed -- you know, this was in the '60s, the heyday of all the modeling studies, and I -- so all of that was related to education, teaching, and again very much related to positive social behavior, positive training and discipline behavior on the parts of parents and teachers to children.

And that was, I think -- then the empathy studies -- what happened is that Sy wrote this very significant paper on differentiating between instrumental and goal-directed aggression for site review. And he wrote a lot about empathy and aggression and made certain assertions, which he didn't have any support. And I said these are testable hypotheses. And so it was -- yes, we began -- and I had done some research on social comprehension which ultimately became one component in my empathy model. And I was really there first. [Laughter]

**Takanishi: Okay.**

N. Feshbach: Even though I haven't done two million studies on empathy, I really did some of the early research on empathy. Okay. And so then I said all I have to do is get a -- in empathy and see how it relates to aggression. And of course this little measure in empathy, you know, took years to develop. And it has been used maybe ten thousand times and I've only used that original measure in five studies, but it did help.

So I think the interest in empathy, again, probably emerged from my clinical background because the concept of empathy was an important variable or was an important potential variable in the clinical interaction. The presence or absence -- you know, especially with lodges who helped, I think, raise that issue. It wasn't necessary for therapists to have empathy -- is empathy training. So I'm saying while it wasn't a conscious influence why I did the study, I'm sure it was there in my -- mass confronting it. And so you know research breeds research -- that once you look at the relationship between empathy and aggression. And again I think all the research that I did on the teacher-child interaction regarding styles, that was totally my own research without Sy. But the aggression and empathy stuff again started adjoining.

But also I was very much interested in sex differences. And I remember I was listening to a presentation by Daily in the neurological clinic in the early '60s, and maybe mid '60s, maybe late '60s. And I asked her what was the sex difference. And she said, "Oh, you ask me a very interesting question because in my time they were not differentiating boys and girls responses." And again, I think in my early studies on empathy, I did two things. I first differentiated boys from girls, and similarly got the information from fathers as well as mothers, because at that time there were very few studies. And I understand why, subsequently, that I've struggled and have had to use mothers -- I'm just rambling on, I'm not sure whether this is -- because I've done -- I've had a number of different lines in research that I've done, so I hope I'm not rambling.



**Takanishi:** There -- I think there's some key questions here --

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi:** -- that are really important for the oral history. What you would consider published or unpublished manuscripts that best represent sort of your -- what you would consider your contribution?

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi:** You know, which of your studies do you think are most significant? And then, it's really interesting, the question here says most wrongheaded, but you know how do you --

N. Feshbach: Says what?

**Takanishi:** Wrongheaded. So --

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi:** I mean I'm just reading from here. But you know what would you -- how would you --

N. Feshbach: I would say okay -- yes, the early paper, which I actually -- Brendan Maehr -- were studies in personality research, which I gave to him in 1975 and it came out in 1978, in which I laid out the field of empathy. It was probably one of my -- I've written so many papers -- it was probably one of the most significant, I mean, I think in terms -- if you look at the history of -- that kind of laid out, you know -- and as I said, I've written a lot on that. Then of course my Minnesota symposium paper.

**Takanishi:** Okay.

N. Feshbach: Which integrated some of these learning positions. And then -- I guess I should raise this question here that I had written a lot of chapters in a way more than I have a number of -- obviously I -- you know, I graduated from UCLA as a professor eight, so I have a number of individual published papers. But this issue of trying to take a number of different studies and put them all together in the chapter, so it ends up -- and I know that's not the preferred method. You don't get as many references. She's -- the question is what do I consider some of my most significant work. I would say my 1978 chapter and Brendan Maehr, which on empathy, my -- I think my chapter in which I introduce the notion of chronic stress, which Lazarus later used as hassles, which I --

S. Feshbach: Also your Minnesota symposium?

N. Feshbach: Yes the Minnesota symposium. You know I guess my article in 1968 with Kiki Rowe, with the measure, because that, in a way, you know, I guess -- and this -- I hope I don't sound -- but Max Heardsman, who is a now professor at City College, says it's not how many hits you have, how many homeruns -- how many runs batted in. And I guess some of my work -- you know the fact that I developed measure, then that hundreds of people did research on empathy. They went beyond me but it opened up the feeling. Even Deborah Stipek, you know, 30 years later when she said I didn't know you did that thing on -- talked about mothers' and fathers' reinforcement. I'm trying to think, you know, I have over a hundred --

S. Feshbach: I was going to mention --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: -- your joint work with --

N. Feshbach: Certainly my curriculum with Sy and two of our students on affective and social -- it was interesting, empathy was such a foreign concept in the early '80s that they took out the fact that these were empathy training exercises and talked about -- the title is "Affective and Social Exercises." So the curriculum there. But I've done a lot of work since, and I'm trying to think -- yes, certainly the whole notion of training in the classroom of -- and that was later. At first, you know we did these field studies, which we took the children out. But I have a whole set of chapters which I would like to kind of look at my curriculum vitae. But as I said, it's something that the field doesn't really value.

Oh, here. Here's something. An article by Sy and myself in 1987, in which we looked at -- it was a short term longitudinal study from like age five and a half to eight, in which we showed that affective measures predicted school achievement in third grade. Well that's a very hot area now. And I know something -- but I would say also we -- a chapter by Sy and myself, again in the late '60s, looking at the relationship between empathy and aggression, which was 20 years before the hot issue of altruism and aggression.

And I would just like to kind of look at my vitae and come to a -- if I might supplement this history -- which ones I think are my major contributions. I think the development of our training program is a major evolution training in child development in this country. It was the first time developmental students were required to carry out -- And as I said, the integration of the -- you know, that was one of the first training programs that was awarded to a school of education. So I would say the model of training, as well as my research and some of the work that Sy and I did in the whole area of corporal punishment in schools, some of it seminal. More recently, you know, we've been concerned with trying to develop curriculum models for use in elementary schools, for the purpose of, not only reducing aggression, but promoting ethnic understanding. We've been not as successful in the area. I don't know -- if I can delay it.

**Takanishi: Yes.**

N. Feshbach: Part of my problem is I've been all over the field. I've been all over the place. And maybe if I had --

**Takanishi: No.** I mean I -- from my knowledge of your work, I think you pointed out the major --

N. Feshbach: Yes, yes.

**Takanishi: -- pieces.** And -- but I think it -- you know, we should note for the record that you didn't see the questions before today.

N. Feshbach: Right, right.

**Takanishi: So you know you don't -- didn't know --**

N. Feshbach: I didn't have --

**Takanishi: -- you were going to --**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi: -- so I think -- yes, I think you should certainly supplement the record by --**

N. Feshbach: What I personally think are the major contributions.

**Takanishi: Right, right.**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi:** Because I think that's, you know, the function of the oral history, is that you are able to, you know, reflect and express your opinions about things that are just on the vitae, so --

S. Feshbach: I would like to add something, which I think Norma underestimates. I think that her most recent work, in which she is taking some principles of empathy -- her model of empathy, and derived -- transformational principles to modify curriculum that can be used in any classroom and subject matter -- well, not in any subject matter. You wouldn't do it in math, but it can be used in teaching -- intellectual teaching, social studies --

N. Feshbach: Social studies, art.

S. Feshbach: -- teaching geography, art, a variety of literature, that any teacher could use it. And I think this is going to prove -- still prove to be very important. Well, I think important. And --

**Takanishi:** Okay, well let's move to you, Sy. And -- because I want to go back to both of you about this question about experiences with the research funding, but let's leave that aside for now.

S. Feshbach: Primary interests in child development in the beginning of my career.

**Takanishi:** Right.

S. Feshbach: I think I've already made it clear that I saw the side of continuity between the early childhood and adult personality through psychoanalytic lens. And I would say initially I was interested in general motivational processes that apply to adults, that apply to children and I didn't think of working--when I worked with children, which I did at the time, of the specific cognitive stages at which children were, when they're working with the general motivational processes. So for example, in my work toward a dissertation I tried at a preliminary study with children, I was interested in the problem of substitute goal behavior. If you can't achieve your principal goal what factor, elements, what kind of substitute do you then arrive at? Now that's not a question we ask any more in psychology. Well it's an important question. It's a Slavidian question.

N. Feshbach: It's what the fear --

S. Feshbach: If you don't like the varsity basketball team, what happens to your motivation, do you choose another one? That's the question, what happens to that? And so when I worked with aggressive behavior my interest was in individuals who are being stimulated to be aggressive, I wanted to reduce it. So what kinds of activities would be germane to the reduction of aggressive behavior, other than directly afflicting harm on the person that you're aggressing against? So within that monologue was substitute behavior. And so I worked initially -- oh my initial -- as I said, I started to do some preliminary work with children and I discovered it's an -- I wanted to arouse aggressive tendencies through frustration. And I found that children who were frustrated reacted about 25 -- frustrated -- child A frustrated child B, how did child B react? Well 25 percent of the time child B felt sorry for child A, because child A was delaying the process of frustrating. 25 percent of the time child B left the field, as it were. They said it's not worth it, continuing this task. 25 percent of the time child B doubled his or her efforts to succeed and make up for what child A was doing. And 25 percent of the time they became angry. So the point here is I left the children and then worked with adults, whom I could really get angry, because I didn't want to get children --

N. Feshbach: Children angry.

S. Feshbach: Alright, so we got adults really angry and we looked at fantasy expressions as a means of would that reduce aggressive behavior. And I found out that it's -- that the opportunity to express hostility at things served to -- on measures reduced aggressive behavior. Then I followed this up with another study, which is -- in which I had children now -- imagine I could be working with adults or with

children, I wasn't thinking of the specific cognitive levels of children as I should've at the time. I had children work with aggressive toys and non -- play with aggressive toys and non-aggressive toys over a series of weeks.

N. Feshbach: This was a very charming study.

S. Feshbach: And I -- measures were distinguished between aggressive play, which would be appropriate to the aggressive toys, versus aggression that occurred in play acting that was outside play. They became angry at another child, tried to hurt another child, denigrated another child, and the like. And I found that playing with aggressive toys stimulated a good deal of aggression. So I had evidence then there's a -- some activities reduce aggression and some activities increase aggression. And one factor I thought that was important was the aggressive motivation at the time, that the individual had gave to the aggressive play or the indirect aggressive activity. If they weren't already aggressive, it was more likely to stimulate them. If they were already aggressive, maybe they had an opportunity to serve as a substitute. That was the big thing at the time.

So then I got into this problem where I -- then I gave the first field study. It was an experimental field study, probably the first of its kind, in which I could train the viewing of aggressive television over a six-week period, experimentally randomly assigned children to aggressive TV diet and to a controlled diet. I did this in settings which were private schools.

N. Feshbach: And in what year?

S. Feshbach: This was about --

N. Feshbach: In the '60s.

S. Feshbach: '60s? No, it was exactly 1964. And either in boys' homes, which were children who were either orphaned or their parents couldn't take care of them or they were runaways or something like that. In boys' homes or -- these were all males -- or in these boarding schools which were private schools. So there was something like four boys' homes and three private schools, something like that in this study. And we tried to control aggressive TV and -- now it turned out I had a set of complicated hypotheses, which no one bothered -- because it was more complicated at the beginning, knowing that -- certain kinds of personality predispositions, we showed increase -- no, we showed a decrease in aggression following the aggressive TV diet, whereas most children would show an increase because I was convinced by other experiments that was likely to occur. Well what we found was children in private schools were unaffected by this experimental variation. But in each of the boys' homes, there was a significant reduction of aggression in those exposed to the aggressive TV diet. And that's statistically significant for each boys' home, so that it's almost as if you had a replication -- so that's caused a great deal of controversy and it taught me a good deal of lessons. First, as an incidental note, I didn't want to publicize the study, so that the book came out -- there was a book that came out and I hid it. I made very little of the book because it went against the psych guys and also I didn't want to support the TV industry's free use of violence in their communications. So that -- me out. But anyway, I became known as the catharsis hypotenuse --

N. Feshbach: The bad guy.

S. Feshbach: Yes. And so the catharsis hypotenuse was greatly criticized. One of the strongest criticisms, which I find rather ironic, that children in the experimental world, those exposed to aggressive TV, in one school they came to me, they were very upset because they wanted -- their favorite program was -- children in the control, pardon me, the non-aggressive TV, came to me and said they were very upset because one of their favorite programs was *Batman* and that if they -- and they wanted to watch *Batman*. Well if I didn't let them watch *Batman*, they would be presumably frustrated, and then become angry, so that if the control group's level of aggression was higher or the same as that of the experimental group, they'd say well they appear frustrated and you didn't let them

watch *Batman*. So I let them watch *Batman*. I let children in all the experiment -- the control groups watch *Batman*, their favorite program, because I -- and despite that, the aggressive group -- the aggressive TV group in the boys' home showed less aggression.

I want to get back to this question. And, okay -- now this has never been quite replicated. It's always been very controversial. The family view in the industry and among most behavioral scientists, although not all of them, is that violence in television stimulates aggressive behavior in viewers. Now let me give you my view in indicating how talking about the political goes. And I'm going to publish a paper on that. Yes, it's probably the case that violence on TV does stimulate aggression of viewers. I want to make two comments in regard to that. One is that research on the effects of exposing youngsters to violence on television has been very limited in that they were trying to demonstrate doesn't -- that it stimulates aggression or it doesn't. That is we don't ask the question under what conditions does violence on television stimulate aggression or doesn't. What kinds of people does it have the most effect for? That is we don't have really a -- we -- more of a scientific approach. We had a public policy approach, which is okay in that one could argue that all the exotic traditions in which it doesn't stimulate aggression don't exist in the real world, so who cares about them. We showed that it has this effect over a large population, but not so much interested in individual differences or -- so, but I point that out that we don't have a very -- we don't have the same kind of systematic exploration of exposure -- effects of exposure to aggressive TV as we might have other consequence, or other issues.

But the second point is more germane. While there have been cross-cultural studies, there have been very few studies that look at the effects of exposure to aggressive TV on different ethnic groups. So if I say what's the correlation between exposure to aggressive TV or how much aggressive TV you see and aggressive behavior for black youth you can't answer that question. You can't because you can't find any studies. There might be one that Bertha -- that deals with this.

And yet I have some evidence and there's other evidence that the television has a different role in the lives of black youth, especially -- in blacks, then it does in the lives of white -- middle-class white. And that this cultural context is extremely important in understanding. So that if we go back to the boys' homes studies, many of these children, many of them are African American, they all were poor. And so that these -- the impact of those studies or the effects on them may be peculiar to the particular population involved in those boys' homes. The factor which I was aware of, their low-income levels -- I didn't pay much attention to ethnic differences, which I think are extremely -- so much for that.

So now to get to what papers I think are most important. A paper that Norma mentioned on the theoretical model of aggressive behavior and analysis of aggressive drive distinguishing between instrumental aggression and aggressive drive and distinguishing between aggressive drive and anger. Now, so that --

N. Feshbach: That spawned hundred --

S. Feshbach: So I wanted the angry without necessarily wanting to destroy -- and so William James wrote about anger and the service of moral -- and individuals can be angered by poverty and their response might be to reduce poverty or to eliminate some social problem, not engaging in violent behavior, by virtue of the fact that anger -- and so their -- and also the difference between instrumental aggression and aggressive drive. Amazing -- the question of where does aggressive drive come from? Is it instinctual, is it learned, or, if it's learned, how is it learned? And so there are a number of issues yet that have to be answered. So that's one of my most -- how do I say -- important papers. The TV work, stimulation, has been fairly controversial and important that's going to be. But I think that when I get this latest paper published, looking at -- pointing to the necessity for looking at ethnic differences in cultural context will make that more important. Then I've done -- in looking at other work with children, which I will elude to when we come to the --

N. Feshbach: Attach it.

S. Feshbach: -- next section. In my more recent work, there's also work I've done in learning issues with children, learning problems, which I'll talk about later.

N. Feshbach: Some of the work you've done with me.

S. Feshbach: And then of course the most important work I've done with kids and -- I would say would be the intervention studies that I did with Norma, which we've already talked about.

N. Feshbach: With the empathy aggression.

S. Feshbach: -- training as a means of reducing aggressive behavior.

N. Feshbach: No, but the study itself, that first --

S. Feshbach: Well the relationship with aggression and everything, and also the intervention studies. And the subsequent models that I'm working with Norma on. And then I think I was going to say something -- it's eluding me.

N. Feshbach: The attachment or --

S. Feshbach: Oh the attachment. I've got evidence and -- which has -- in which there's a relationship between children's attachment and -- development attachment, early attachment, especially -- well to the father, and its relationship between attachment to -- attachments. That is, who is -- and their national attachments or national -- was a complicated itself. And what -- for a -- distinguish for a moment feelings of attachment with the -- very rarely use that term, love, love, wanting to be with, close feelings to. And we'll call that patriotic feelings versus national experience, feelings of superiority, wanting to dominate other nations, feeling repetitive to -- and showing that early attachments, especially to the father is much more closely related to patriotic feelings than it is to national experiences. And so that's one of the series of studies trying to look at differences. But showing that the early developmental factors in that area -- and I think that what -- I don't know if that -- as far as importance goes, I think the most important part of that minor research is not in the child development part, but the general trying distinguishing between nationalism and patriotism, those two terms, and looking at -- and showing that while they may be correlated, they are differentially related to different -- early attachment is one but -- one is positively correlated and one is negatively correlated. So that the two can be distinguished. So - -but I'll stick to the child development aspects of it. There's a lot of adult --

N. Feshbach: My field is something I did. I did the first study on indirect aggression in girls.

S. Feshbach: Oh yes.

N. Feshbach: Which now is such a liable research. I did the first study and then I did a second one. And then I didn't work on that area anymore because I thought I had such a negative implication for girls. But some people remember it, like the group in Norway, in Finland. And sometimes Criss remembers it and sometimes she doesn't. But I did the first two studies. And what's interesting about that is that is the first study that I did, Eleanor Maccoby rejected it. It was submitted to *Child Development*. Now how do I know that Eleanor Maccoby rejected it? Because she would always discuss it when she was giving parent talks. And -- called me up, she said, "She's going to make" -- of course 40 years ago - "she's going to make you famous Norma, how does she know about that study?" Because she knew the person who -- because she always talked about it negatively, it was subsequently published, I think, but she said it didn't build on the Sears, Maccoby, and Levin. It was very funny because I -- so that's -- you know I don't know to what extent it influenced the field. I think just the fact that I just did it 20 years before anybody else did it.

**Takanishi: Well I think this is a very hard question, so I'm going to just raise it.**

N. Feshbach: Go ahead.

**Takanishi: Which contributions would you consider to be, if any, the most wrongheaded? Are there any?**

S. Feshbach: Well there could be. I don't consider the television -- the notion that -- defining that it's not as harmful as the majority of social scientists feel it is to be wrongheaded, it may prove to be wrongheaded in the long run. But at this moment in time --

N. Feshbach: Do they mean wrongheaded as bringing us into a negative direction or that hasn't turned out or --

S. Feshbach: That's a good question. I don't -- much in the research that reflected it, but -- early interest in oral development, frustration --

N. Feshbach: Yours?

S. Feshbach: I didn't -- you know --

N. Feshbach: But you were in college.

S. Feshbach: Yes, but --

N. Feshbach: It was before you had your --

S. Feshbach: But I did some.

**Takanishi: Well it was also a reflection of the time.**

S. Feshbach: Yes.

N. Feshbach: Yes, what do they mean by wrongheaded? That took us to a direction that we shouldn't have gone on?

**Takanishi: Well I think that -- you know, it's interesting, I mean I think one way of answering it is to look at the contrast. They're saying which of your studies would you consider to be the most significant and I think both of you have identified in your --**

N. Feshbach: Heads, yes.

**Takanishi: -- thinking what it is. And then they say which contribution's the most wrongheaded. I think they might mean, from your point of view, on the other side, insignificant or not consequential, or --**

S. Feshbach: Fortunately I -- you know I'll just mention my college -- which I fortunately did not follow.

N. Feshbach: Oh honey, that was too long ago.

S. Feshbach: It was called an "experimental" -- I put that in quotes -- study of gestation. And of course I never did anything with that, but that would've been wrongheaded and so on.

**Takanishi:** But it's probably still in the psychoanalytic literature that people are doing work in that area.

S. Feshbach: Well I'm thinking that way but that didn't -- I didn't --

N. Feshbach: -- embarrassed. As I said, you know, it's too bad we haven't looked at our --

**Takanishi:** Well I think that might --

N. Feshbach: Well you know little studies you've done on self or something that -- but don't forget, so many of the studies that I've done I've worked years and years and years on. And I mean I've done hundreds of studies that I haven't looked -- and you know certainly in terms of getting -- you know I don't know of all the measures I've developed, I'm certainly not derived too much --

S. Feshbach: No, I think I've answered the question. The future will determine --

**Takanishi:** Okay. Well, so then let's -- the last part of this --

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi:** -- and I'm not sure exactly why it's here, but I think you have question five, is -- the way I interpret it is, you know, sort of the social context, sociology, social structure and organization of research funding, and particularly commenting on your participation in shaping, you know, research finding policy, implementation, you know, your role on study sections and so forth.

N. Feshbach: Okay.

**Takanishi:** Securing support for your work and related matters. So I'm sure that everybody who's sort of lived through all of this will have some thoughts. But, you know, I guess this sort of gets into questions like given your research interests and their evolution and, you know, some of the pieces of work that you consider to be the most important at this point, what were the challenges, what were the stories of getting funding for this kind of work?

N. Feshbach: Oh there was one big thing that never went anywhere. It was the stuff we did developing for the curriculum, the television, and making kids economists and psychologists. We spent a lot of time doing that.

S. Feshbach: Well I would say for myself, there were some areas that did not get funded. But on the whole, I had a long history of being funded.

N. Feshbach: But what were those areas that we didn't get funded?

**Takanishi:** Yes, that would be important.

N. Feshbach: Things that had to do with trying to train kids to be less prejudiced. That's been our least success in getting funded.

**Takanishi:** This is very important.

N. Feshbach: Every time he and I have submitted a grant -- you know between the two of us -- I'm talking not about training. I'm talking we've been very, very successful, especially Sy. And the one area that we've had an enormous trouble getting funded, and which the studies have been exciting, new, was in the area of trying to make kids less prejudiced.



**Takanishi: I think that's important.**

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: I might say that I've got a lot of funding for working with aggressive behaviors. And Norma and I have worked together, we got, strangely, a substantial amount of money -- activity but it was very worthwhile advertising.

N. Feshbach: Well we were invited by MSF --

S. Feshbach: And --

N. Feshbach: If anyone ever needs it, it's really a very good curriculum.

S. Feshbach: And we developed curriculum for getting kids --

N. Feshbach: To be aware.

S. Feshbach: -- to be aware of. And it's amazing, Norma did, I think --

N. Feshbach: That was a long time ago.

S. Feshbach: -- a fantastic study, I think, in which she showed that very young children, from the age of five or something, could be -- could learn to distinguish between the caloric, vitamin, and mineral values --

N. Feshbach: By developing a computer man. I think you knew about that experiment.

S. Feshbach: And it was very charming. And I think very valuable. And hopefully it'll be picked up some time. That was it. But we couldn't -- what happened at the time when we were talking about reducing prejudice and social -- and also aggression, fostering -- behavior, that kind of triad, the -- when we were using empathy individual procedures, and it's at a time now when that's not a very -- the approach is a very --

N. Feshbach: This is more like eight years ago, six years ago.

**Takanishi: It was important eight years or six years ago, as it is today.**

S. Feshbach: -- heavily on learning. That is on cognitive interventions which have -- you know of course is cognitive development. But on behavior modification and that was part of -- much more than psych -- less success I would say in that area. Although a good deal of success for most of our academic career. So I can't --

N. Feshbach: But what -- no, no, we've had very good luck on big grants. And of course I've had a lot of success on little grants at the university level and -- you know I've had -- so in general, I had made -- I'm able -- for research to go a long way and I just am tired, all of that, to try to get another grant and go through the responsibility of coordinating it. Because you know at one time we voiced -- we supported a lot of kids at UCLA. And I think the one area that the two of us have been unsuccessful was nationally, both in private as well as public funding, is when we got into the area of trying to make kids -- we didn't call them prejudiced -- more accepting, that area. And also at -- in the classroom context. You know --

S. Feshbach: -- should've been --

N. Feshbach: Because I think we're pretty good judges of what's doable, and --

S. Feshbach: -- because I think it's important.

**Takanishi: Oh inevitably important.**

N. Feshbach: -- add the --

S. Feshbach: The issue of -- in a way it was really, I think an important effort to get at ethnic tensions, problems that you have in dealing with diverse --

N. Feshbach: Well Patricia Greenfield got it for kids playing basketball.

S. Feshbach: Anyway I would -- I want to talk about the relationship to funding institutions.

**Takanishi: Sure, absolutely.**

S. Feshbach: I've gotten funding from NIMH, Norma has and I'll let her talk about it herself.

N. Feshbach: And who was that that invited you in? And remember in just -- it's the rabbi's wife that you met later on.

S. Feshbach: Well there've been other foundations.

N. Feshbach: Yes.

S. Feshbach: I've been invited for various projects --

N. Feshbach: Out of nowhere they've invited him.

**Takanishi: Right. That's the way it works.**

N. Feshbach: Yes, yes, yes.

S. Feshbach: -- foundations. And I've also, I think, worked with -- I've been on several NIMH --

N. Feshbach: Research --

S. Feshbach: --training. And I have felt that these have been very positive experiences. I like to think I've had a positive impact on. I want to make an incidental comment in regard to federal funding. They suddenly became -- you know, we -- at the universities we have this illusion that the faculty are free to follow their own interests and values in academia.

**Takanishi: Right.**

S. Feshbach: That's only partly true. Yes and no, because the availability of funds, as every funding agency knows, has a powerful influence on the intellectual interests of the faculty. And faculty get attracted to certain areas, so other areas become neglected. And so there's this kind of dynamic and I'll just comment on it briefly. This is known as -- from a public policy interest, I think it was important that the foundations and the federal private groups do offer funding in areas that they think may have public policy consequences. From an intellectual point of view, I think it was -- you know, hopefully there are structures that would enable factory workers to -- you know, intellectual values, other than -- that's a complex issue.

N. Feshbach: I'd like to share with Ruby my first experience on an NIMH panel, and this was on training. It was a very interesting group. The right guys were in their 50s. They were Deis and Harold

Proshansky, Irand -- you know over the five years there was -- okay -- they were all nice guys, very prominent, very, very senior, and in their 50s.

**Takanishi: I think I followed you for the next five years.**

N. Feshbach: Yes, so that was the largest group. The next largest group, you know -- 12, so they were the three or four females. But we were all in our 40s and we were professors but we didn't have the prestige and, you know, but we all had a range of accomplishments. And then the minorities who were in their 30s had -- it was unbelievable. It was a reflection of who was at academia. You know? And I came home and I didn't talk to Sy. I was so mad at him because they never raised, at any of the questions, you know --

S. Feshbach: See it wasn't me, it was disgraceful.

**Takanishi: Yes, that's right.**

N. Feshbach: No, no, because he had been chair. Because every time he was on a committee, he always -- at the end of the three or four years always was the chair of things. They never, until I opened my mouth, ever asked how many women faculty, how many women students. They never asked the question how many student minorities. What was the research that they were doing? Did that reflect -- so the burden on the few women and -- the minorities had a little bit more freedom because they were there because they had taken on the system. And I said to Sy, how can -- couldn't you raise these questions? And you said you had raised them regarding the minorities, but never were there any women on the panel. This was the -- I guess there was one -- until that year there was one woman on the panel. That was the gal from Berkeley that the students used to call the Dragon Lady -- the educational psych --

**Takanishi: Oh, Nadine?**

S. Feshbach: Yes.

N. Feshbach: Yes. The students hated her.

S. Feshbach: -- training proposal. I might say on the NIMH research -- I don't recall any --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi: There were very few.**

N. Feshbach: Yes, so this --

S. Feshbach: When I was on. Now I'm sure it's changed.

**Takanishi: Yes.**

N. Feshbach: Yes, yes, yes. Oh no, no, no, no, it's changed and they do it. But then the burden of having to raise -- always raise these questions, you know. And I said Sy, you know, where was the -- on the party you guys were -- when you were doing it for, you know, the minorities. But there was an enormous amount of burden. But the point is it's amazing because you -- once you begin to raise the questions, could you please make a table, you know, because the kind -- so I mean -- so these early women -- and I'm sure it was even true, even though you were just a couple years later. You know first of all it was very burdensome, but then had an enormous impact because, boy, if you were going to ask these questions and you were going to hire someone and you better hire -- take in some women students, we'd better -- you know there was never any clinical program, anything that dealt with

women's issues. So that's -- you know and I had a much more major effect on the council's training than I did -- because the research was mainly on an ad hoc basis. And -- but it was interesting.

S. Feshbach: I want to say --

N. Feshbach: And tough. It was hard on us.

S. Feshbach: I want to say one anecdotal experience that highlights the importance of having a diverse representation in research granting committee. This is a research committee and a group of very hardheaded psychologists.

**Takanishi: They usually are.**

S. Feshbach: Very methodologically attuned and sophisticated. And anyway, turned down grants of course. We're getting one proposal, an interesting proposal, very poorly designed and --

N. Feshbach: From Harvard, no doubt.

S. Feshbach: No, it was from Yale.

N. Feshbach: Oh, oh.

S. Feshbach: And I thought, you know, it was going to be -- for sure. It got exceptional support for the -- you know why? Because this proposal -- what was the proposal about, it was a proposal about the life crises that 40-year-old men experience and the decisions that they have to make as to the nature of their values in their career and their, you know, marital choices in this developmental period and so on. And it touched on the situations that most members -- they were all in their late 40s, and it just -- I was just struck by the fact that -- you know diverse -- the kind of representation you have on the committee is germane to their approval. Maybe not as boldly as occurred in that case, but --

**Takanishi: Now I --**

S. Feshbach: -- don't you think it's important?

**Takanishi: Sure.**

N. Feshbach: I think the reason that psychology was so taught in being open to policy and practice and application -- you know even studying --

**Takanishi: Well it still is, you know.**

N. Feshbach: Yes, but it was because --

**Takanishi: Very.**

N. Feshbach: -- these men were so narrow. And they had no generosity. They had no generosity to share. And the point is you were bleeding heart psychologists, you know, and it took -- you know, Ruby, it took a lot of emotional ethic to take these bullies on. And you know what I'm talking about. So then I'd come home and be mad at --

**Takanishi: Poor Sy.**

N. Feshbach: Poor Sy.

**Takanishi:** That wasn't fair. I think I will say that things have changed, but not changed as much as one would want.

N. Feshbach: Right. The only thing that's changed for the worse is --

**Takanishi:** Well we won't get that. We're talking about SSD, so we won't -- well I think we're pretty much done --

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi:** -- with the research contribution area.

N. Feshbach: Okay, alright.

**Takanishi:** And we may have a few more minutes to talk about institutional contributions. And the first question, I think is -- I think we shouldn't even deal with it because it's something that really is on a CV. But the second question has to do with particular research sites. And I think they mean, you know, institutes, foundations, and, you know, units, like Fernald would be one, I think.

N. Feshbach: Like when I was chair for research committee. I'm so tired, though.

**Takanishi:** Yes, no I think we should stop.

N. Feshbach: Yes.

**Takanishi:** Two hours is enough.

N. Feshbach: Yes.

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