# Quotes relevant to ‘Radical women’

# Is feminism still needed?

## Yes, still needed

I think we must have been more than three or four to one. I got a lot of nice attention, I think we were a generation that just was treated far more respectfully than I regret to say my children's generation or even worse, the bit below them. My youngest is just literally 28 on Sunday, last Sunday, and I think the generation sort of below her is having a dreadful, dreadful time. Anyway, that just wasn't happening at all. And, I genuinely don't believe people would have had the arrogance to think they could get you drunk and then take advantage of you with the kind of … almost sort of cynicism that there is now and boastfulness, it's just … and then calling you a slag. It was just nothing like that. So, I mean, there was a lot of, generally in life, I've come across an enormous amount of sexism, but nothing like that.

Int: Do you think your daughter have more opportunities than you? Do you think that things have changed again for them or no?

RES: No, no, I really don't. No, I really don't. So, I mean Kate. Kate is an interior designer and made her own way. Very much. Yeah, in your career that I really don't understand. She constantly says oh well I just do cushions. But she doesn't just do cushions. She's got most extraordinary eye for colour. But I couldn't. I can't. I can't even conceive of the difficulty of the things that she does. Um. And she's amazing. She's just. And she, and her children are amazing. And. Poppy, my other daughter’s, suffers horribly from sexism, 'cause she's a professional musician. And that’s a really, I mean. Shouldn’t ask me about Oxford, you should ask her about the Royal Academy of Music. [laughs] And she's had to fight twice as hard as I ever did.

Int: What instrument does she play?

RES: Clarinet. And that's harder, 'cause you have to be a. 'cause it's a blowy thing. Girls are supposed to do the squeaky things, not the blowy things, 'cause they're not. They don't have enough, here (indicates diaphragm), and she does have enough here, but, so tough, that’s been very, very tough. So she’s a freelance, she's freelance now. But she's got her album contract. So we’re very proud of her, but you're in, so she’s been playing by herself during the lockdown. Um and had worked out all this solo clarinet music, which doesn't really exist, so she's been working on making from, so she's transcribing and rearranging and rethinking Bach and other stuff like that, to make music that's all by itself. Without any accompaniment, because you can't do accompaniments on zoom. So that’s, she's making that album in April.

Finance is pretty much the same as it was when I started 38 years ago, it's still dominated by men at the top. There are lots of women lower down, but in terms of who runs these (?), it's still men.

INT: What do they do for work?

RES: My son is a perpetual child, not of the Dickensian type, he works for computer games, has a wonderful life as a… he deals with the logistics of producing computer games, so he's in 7th heaven and jeans forever, you know. Very happy, married to a novelist. So the two of them are happy as Larry. And my daughter is a fairly senior civil servant. She read Engineering at Cambridge. Then she worked for the Ministry ofe Defence. Then she decided – she didn’t do MoD first - that's right, she did structural engineering and she found engineering on-site was so difficult with a woman. She's very small and blonde and everyone was horrible to her on building sites. So she soon got out of that and joined the Ministry of Defence. And then because she's very numerate, they had her doing things like a project on supplies for the MoD when we joined the EU, you know if we were going to join the Euro. Really boring jobs like that. So she became an accountant. She thought at least if I'm going to have a family I could do that from home, which was sensible and found that accounting was even more deadly. So she got headhunted back by the civil servants and she's managed to have quite a successful career as a civil servant. And sadly she's now track and tracing. I think to tell Dido she's got no money.

INT: It’s interesting that she had gender discrimination early in her career when we think of things as getting better.

RES: Yes, oh, it's not at all. She still suffers even at work as a senior civil servant from this. Totally incompetent blokes will still be promoted way over her head. I think it's getting better but compared with my grandmother's experience, which was even worse, she was a concert pianist who had to give it up completely and have her whole family stigmatized by the rest of the family for having been ‘on the stage’. Unbelievable. A loose woman, exactly. What made me very angry for far too long in my life has been the fact that at school I got the message that life had improved and women were as good as men and if you grasped the opportunity the world could be yours.

INT: And do you think things have improved for women in engineering and in your field?

RES: Yes. Well, I mean, none?? of women doing engineering is improving, it's not right yet. Whether it's you or someone else, I looked and I decided I was probably the around about 23rd to the 25th female Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, and it's now a program 130/140ish. So. I almost see when, when I was a student diversity was have females. Diversity is much wider.

INT: What is the gender and race diversity at that level? Presumably it's quite dominated by white men.

RES: It is, it is, it is. Again, once I became a silk, I started getting in involved in the Bar Council and I that's when I became the Vice Chair and Chair of the Equality and Diversity for the Bar Council for many years, trying to even it out as far as the diversity was concerned, not just the gender, but also the racial diversity.

INT: Were you OK doing that or did it ever feel like an extra burden, a kind of onus on you to do extra work that other people weren't doing?

RES: No, I was fine doing it because, again, I suppose it's part of my Sikh background, in our Sikh background we always believe in doing service, free service. I just wanted to make a contribution. And one of the silks, who are now passed away, again who was a mentor, as soon as I became silk she grabbed me and she said, right Kim, now it's time for you to start giving back to the profession. You know, you've become a silk, the profession has supported you, and I thought, yeah, you know, you're right Anne, I will. And that's what I did.

INT: And things are improving…

RES: They’re improving as far as gender is concerned. I'm not convinced that they're improving as fast as race is concerned. Even the gender thing is still not brilliant, I'm afraid, I still think that gender is going a bit slightly backwards. They can appoint all the women judges they want to, and I know that they've gone completely mad on that, but at the end of the day they're appointing very junior people as women judges, but they're not at the top. Because us lot were put off and were discriminated against effectively, and so it'll take years for those girls to get through, which is what I was telling the Judicial and Legal Services Committee in 2004. I said to them, you know, you gotta up it now, because now we're in 2021 and they’ve just finally got the message. But there's also stuff going on in relation to the allocation of work. If I give you an example, and I know people recognize this. When I became a Vice Chair and Chair of the Equality and Diversity for the Bar Council one of the things I knew, from my own practice experience was that sexual offence cases that women were mostly predominantly doing were very badly paid and they were high intensity work. You'd start a rape case on a Monday, you’d finish it on a Friday, start another one on Monday. They were always being allocated to the women, because it was a bit like, Oh well, you know, if we've got to tolerate women in the criminal courts, let's give them… if they won't stay in the family law courts, let’s give them the kids and the sex, which the boys don't want to do it. So I lobbied the government and I succeeded in getting, they acknowledged what I said about the payments rates being too low and they upped it right up to almost the top. So they had between A and E for payments, so A being the top murders, and they brought rapes from E to B, right? So they really upped it. So I achieved that, and the women carried on doing it, and then we got the big high celeb cases, didn't we, that were being privately paid, and suddenly who became all the rape experts, the men!

INT: It’s hard to think what you can do to actually enact change then, because it doesn't necessarily have the consequences that you want.

RES: Yeah, and that's why when people say, Oh well, the diversity and the gender thing has changed, I'd say, no, it hasn't actually, not as much as it should have done.

INT: And then the last thing really is obviously I'm really interested in, the projects really interested in women's experience of these kind of quite prestigious careers, which you might not define it as that but it's certainly, you know, looks like that from the outside, and I just kind of want to ask do you think things have changed for women over that time? Like have you notice things getting easier and there's like a really big change in the number of women in those spaces? Or do you think that a lot of challenges have remained quite static?

RES: I have noticed changes for sure, I think women are taken more seriously, I think there are many more women in technology, I know it's not in balance as yet, but I think the move is there. I think that there’ve been some strong female role models and voices, so I'm optimistic but clearly it's not good enough … I would class myself a feminist, and I feel very strongly about how critical women are and how yeah, they need even more voice … but I think there have been in roads, put it that way, but there's a long way to go. Sorry, that's a very blathering answer, but … sorry what I'm struggling with behind all this is that I keep coming back saying lucky but I haven't had examples myself of men standing in my way. I've had, yes, rooms full of purely men and responding to mixed effect, but I've always felt slightly empowered by that and like, well, ‘I'll show you and you know screw you, I know what I'm talking about’, and so I don't feel held back and I hope more young women, women generally, are recognising that change is possible but I will say that you know your job is done by any, any means and you know some things that we're hearing about, the constant abuse and the putting people down is just horrendous. But I haven't had that.

INT: And do you think things have changed? Have you noticed that across your career, do you think things have improved for women?

RES: (pause) Hugely, hugely is the answer, yes. And they've improved beyond, it may still seem like a struggle, but it's improved out of *all* recognition. A - I think the business case is, for the most part, well established. And secondly, just the focus, certainly for all the big organisations I've been associated with, you know, it is *absolutely* front and centre. Now, there’s still inadequate representation at lots of levels, but it's very much on the radar screen, and certainly enlisted companies, you know, you have to report on it, and you have to report on progress since the previous year, and you have to report on the gender pay gap, I mean, it *really* is transformed.

And it's easier often for men to be in that position than women. So, there are some inbuilt challenges for women, but it's way better than it was.

# Their gender has made it harder

## Yes

Massive, massive sexism.

INT: Yeah, and do you, I mean, how do you think, what was the gender balance like in journalism at that time? And was it different in like print media versus radio? How did you feel as a woman in that sphere?

RES: In all of them it was male dominated and even towards the end of my, you know, BBC career, it was male dominated unless, and our bosses were single women and the issue became less of ‘are there enough women’ because the balance improved, but, I think there was always a (long pause), I think married women had a harder time because the bosses, male or female, didn't understand the needs of unmarried, sorry, married woman with children, women with children.

INT: Yeah.

RES: The discrimination as far as females is concerned was against women with children.

And I just think I was really awkward and didn't really, you know, and this teacher who, and this is completely confidential, isn't it? Who I went on to have a really inappropriate relationship (with) (laughter) which is not, which was not good, it wasn't how, you know, that was just (a) flipping disaster. You know, (he) paid me attention. So, there's lots wrong with this story. This is why I thought it was interesting that it was confidential because I wouldn’t have declared that otherwise. But I was groomed, so I was *actually* groomed by this amazing art teacher from the age of 15. He didn't make his move until 18, so I've never come forward. So, I thought about coming, you know, whatever, you know, it's like I was willing, you know, whatever. So, we've got all of that. So, it's *really* complicated. So I was, so was I more motivated to do art because I had this teacher who, compared to all of the other teachers, saw something in me which I thought was (?) (laughter) you know, but, you know, so I was sort of nurtured and groomed at the same time. So, I had this adult, who just like took me to gallery's, who paid me attention way before the inappropriate stuff started, who opened me up to a whole new world that just *looked* so exciting, took me to the ICA for the first time. All of this stuff. So, I mean this is not, you know, I know this doesn't sound good, but that's the *truth*. That's what happened.

INT: So while you were doing the foundation course and you were in this on off relationship with this teacher, was that then public? Did people then know that you were together? Or was it always kind of private?

RES: Oh, that's a good point. When did we? (pause). It's never been super public. I mean when I was at the Slade he’d like turn up and we’d go out together, so people did like, you know, know that we were sort of on off together … (long pause). But we, you know, I don't know that we ever had a *proper* relationship. I mean, I thought of it like that, because it was the most important relationship, you know, it ended up going on for about five years on and off, you know, but it was, you know (pause) he'd be diabolical, I'd break it off because he just behaved so badly, in various ways, and be really unfaithful and all sorts of horrible things. And I’d break it off and then sort of, we’d bump into each other, or he'd come and find me again and *persuade* me that it was all going to be different this time. And then the same thing would happen all over again (laughter), so it just kept happening. So yeah.

But on the whole women were treated very badly when I was a student. We weren’t allowed locks on our doors at Girton, and I got assaulted by a complete madman stranger I didn't know. He just walked into the college and I was unfortunate, but that's another story.

I’m just remembering that at Oxford, when I was doing languages, it was much, much more sexist than when I later went and did architecture. One of my tutors chased me round the table to try to snog me whilst criticizing what I'd just written. And, generally, there was definitely a supercilious type of male teacher who just loved that relationship with women, where they bully you and make you feel small.

INT: I suppose where you kind of got up to in your career was the 90s, how long did you stay in that particular chamber? Did you did you move somewhere else or did you stay there?

RES: No, I moved again. I moved twice since. So the 90s… I stayed there until the Millennium. Again, I did not like what was happening in that set of chambers, but I was well established by then. I didn't like what was happening as far as the treatment of women was concerned. There was a lot of sexual harassment going on. There was all sorts of people who were basically… I made my views quite clear to the head of chambers and the head of chambers basically ignored me. And he called a chambers meeting and was not there on purpose and I decided I was not going to be part of a set of chambers. So I walked out, with another woman, who was my junior, and then we moved into another set.

INT: Yeah, and I suppose the period when you were growing up and you were going into your career like there was all that feminism in the 70s and into the 80s, like how did you feel about that? Were you involved in that? Like did you notice it producing changes in the work place?

RES: I think I just *worked through it*. I think I just *got on with it*. Things like (?), sexism, people making passes at you were part of life and you put up with it, you *certainly* didn't complain about it. I think I was probably quite a tough woman. I wasn't, you know, I think any man who wants to go out with me would see that I really (pause) I would be expected to be regarded as an intellectual equal and etc, etc.

And I, you know, I began to think well, what does it take to - and no women at the Slade were promoted to professor. *All* the people that were promoted to professor were men, and there were women that should have been. And the first woman to be promoted to professor at the Slade was (?), who has gone on since to become world famous, and she's now a dame. But she was well into her 60s, okay, *and,* she had been in, and this is confidential, so you know, I know you’ll - she’d actually been put up for it a few years before and been knocked back because she had, she was a mother of five, she hadn't done enough international travel, right? So, there were like barriers, *structural barriers,* and it was just shocking, because there was *no* question, if you looked at the men that were being made professor and what she’d accomplished and what they’d accomplished, how?! *What a joke*. And they hadn't done the bloody international - *that’s bullshit*. And when she did get professor, you know, whatever, even if you were somebody that (she) had crossed paths with, you know, it was *just,* the roar in the room when she was introduced for her inaugural lecture, the stamping of feet that went on like an indecent length of time, I mean you *never* heard anything like it, it was just, bloody hell. It was already like, I'm not sure what year it was, but it was probably *at least* 2005/6, isn't that shocking?

Just one other sexism story. All the way through my career, I've faced sexism in my work. And in the area of law I do, it's *extremely* sexist. I definitely don't get briefs (pause) that men would get, because it's a very male area.

INT: Why’d you think you notice it so much more?

RES: I think it's because of people articulating more the subtle things that happen that you don't notice. I mean, I ran my own firm for 35 years or something, and I found in meetings that I'd say something and there'd be no reaction and then a bloke would say it a couple of minutes later and everybody would say, oh, how true, and it galled me at the time, but it never occurred to me - it's really strange - but it never occurred to me it was because I was a woman, I thought, well I didn't say it clearly enough or they don't respect me or something like that. So lots of opportunities to put yourself down when you're a woman. Yes, lots of opportunities handed to you on a plate, and I realized that I took those opportunities at times.

## Complicated

So, I do think the private school education, that sort of-, and being in an all-girls school, and at that time, and being Asian I think, and female, all those things, being a woman at that time, being in an all-girls environment, I think gave all of us, I think all of us who went to that school, my friends still would say, an inner confidence that we’re brilliant.

Yeah, I guess I feel like, you know, that was *that* world and I just kind of (pause) went with it whilst, you know, making sure that I myself was never doing anything I didn't want to do or felt uncomfortable with. Not that I was ever really put in an uncomfortable situation in *all* these years that I worked with men in these very male environments. I mean, yeah, just kind of-, no.

But then there was an election that happened that year or something happened, something was going on, where suddenly my accent, because I had this sort of West London accent, marked me out as posh and people made assumptions that because of my accent that I might be Tory or something. I was actually quite apolitical at that (time), I hadn't really organised. And also, the other thing was there was quite, this is quite interesting, there was like people forming a woman’s group, like a feminist sort of women's group on foundation. Now, because I'd grown up in an all-girls family and I'd been to an all-girls school where there was the sky was the limit, like there were no limitations set. I've never encountered, until that point, I had actually never encountered sexism. I just hadn't encountered it. So, whilst I didn't, I wasn't unsupportive of it, I didn't really, it wasn't that I wasn't a feminist, I think I was sort of born a feminist, I just hadn't had the life experience at that stage, that comes later.

INT: Did they have that attitude to all your siblings, both the boy and girls, like they were equal?

RES: Yeah, yeah, totally equal. I never saw any kind of sexism until I went to Oxford and suddenly because I was doing Classics I suddenly saw all these posh public school boys and I realised how the world worked. But I hadn’t seen that side of things before.

INT: History […]. Earlier you said you experienced sexism at Oxford, was that from the other students or do you feel there was sexism in the way you were taught, were you taught by male professors from other colleges, or was in all in house…?

RES: No, I was mainly taught by women. No, it wasn’t sexism, really. It was the total sense of entitlement, which these classics… I mean Boris Johnson was in ???? of the classics boys who came up, you know, you felt you were top because they were classics and that was the top and they could do anything.

RES: (long pause) Yeah, I suppose really, I was just in my own little bubble. And there was a quite a lot of, quite a lot of you know mixing between colleges. So, although the number of law students at Kings was not very big (long pause) yeah, I mean, I think it probably was quite sexist, but I just didn't really notice it terribly. I accepted it in a kind of paternalistic way, which was quite funny and you know, this thing I told you that they put us above the Porters Lodge but they made a bit of a mistake because they put a man in the middle, so there was one man (laughter)

INT: How was that … experience? It being so lopsided in terms of gender?

RES: Well (pause) listen, I found it less disconcerting than you might think, because I was really very shy so I wasn't leading an exciting social life, and of course we weren't under any of the social media pressures, so. Because it was a women's college and I had friends there, it didn't really bother me that there might be only two or three women in a lecture group or a seminar. It was-, yes, about the time when I graduated as an undergraduate, 1968, we were just beginning to hear of this peculiar thing called the women's movement. And actually, it was just becoming possible for women to be members of the Stock Exchange, and indeed for women to join the Oxford University Dramatic Society, you know, there was sensation, not that I did any of these things, but the world was changing very interestingly.

RES: So, I rather went in for doing national things instead, and I think all through I have had the advantage, partly of gender balance, and of course regional diversity, because Liverpool and then Bristol, as you know, is the (?) just West (laughter), and anyway it's not the Golden triangle. And people did tend to want somebody with that sort of thing, so that’s really helped actually (unclear).

INT: And how did you feel about the gender imbalance in architecture, did it bother you or were you comfortable with it?

RES: I was really comfortable with it. There was no feeling in Cambridge Architecture School that there was anything funny about us being there. Not at all. I've never felt that being a woman… I haven't until recently felt that being a woman was in any sort of disadvantage. Recently I began to analyse… to read more about it and to realize some disadvantages, some of the things that subtly happened to women that I wasn't quite aware of, we can talk about that. But on the whole it's been great because I've been distinctive and our practice, you know, we went to interviews people were rather keen to employ a sparky young woman, you know, and all that sort of thing. Some people, of course, didn't employ us because I was a woman, but others definitely did because I was, and I got invited to be on all sorts of lovely IRBA award group and all sorts of things like that because I could be a role model.

INT: The higher you were going in these spaces was there any gender tensions in that way? Do you think? Did you experience difficulties in that way?

RES: Uhm, it's funny … yeah, at the time I don't think I was aware of it and it's weird, but I mean I look back and definitely, you know, I was speaking to a roomful of policy makers who were all men and I remember, yeah, just slightly thinking ‘Oh this interesting, so I'm the only woman here’, but not feeling daunted by it all, and to their credit, no, I didn't feel that they weren't listening or taking it seriously, but whether that was that somehow (because) I flew under the wing of David Putnam for quite a long time and for about six years in the early noughties, so that helped me build my credibility and establish something of a reputation so that I didn't get perhaps the flack that a lone woman would have would have done. But no, I didn't have that.

INT: And then the last thing really is obviously I'm really interested in, the projects really interested in women's experience of these kind of quite prestigious careers, which you might not define it as that but it's certainly, you know, looks like that from the outside, and I just kind of want to ask do you think things have changed for women over that time? Like have you notice things getting easier and there's like a really big change in the number of women in those spaces? Or do you think that a lot of challenges have remained quite static?

RES: I have noticed changes for sure, I think women are taken more seriously, I think there are many more women in technology, I know it's not in balance as yet, but I think the move is there. I think that there’ve been some strong female role models and voices, so I'm optimistic but clearly it's not good enough … I would class myself a feminist, and I feel very strongly about how critical women are and how yeah, they need even more voice … but I think there have been in roads, put it that way, but there's a long way to go. Sorry, that's a very blathering answer, but … sorry what I'm struggling with behind all this is that I keep coming back saying lucky but I haven't had examples myself of men standing in my way. I've had, yes, rooms full of purely men and responding to mixed effect, but I've always felt slightly empowered by that and like, well, ‘I'll show you and you know screw you, I know what I'm talking about’, and so I don't feel held back and I hope more young women, women generally, are recognising that change is possible but I will say that you know your job is done by any, any means and you know some things that we're hearing about, the constant abuse and the putting people down is just horrendous. But I haven't had that.

## No, it has not or not salient

INT: And was it gender imbalance at Durham? Was there many more men on the course than there were women?

RES: I don't remember that particularly.

INT: And how was the gender balance in the department, were you one of the few female DPhil students or was it quite evenly split?

RES: Yes, there were fewer females, but I didn't feel that, at all. I didn't feel any sexism at all there. I mean there was quite a lot of, it was very competitive. It got quite nasty. I remember - I wasn't directly involved – but my supervisor and one of the other people there were both trying to do the same thing or similar things, and my supervisor, 'cause he thought the other person would steal his work, took his stuff home to the fridge so the other one couldn’t get at it. And there were terrific rivalries. But it was nice, I liked the other postdocs and, um, it's was very international, so that was the first time Americans, Israeli, all the ??…. come and had terrific careers later.

INT: And what was that? What did you do after you finish your PhD?

RES: So after I finish my PhD… well then I’d have my first baby and that then started making… and my career’s really been tremendously sort of smooth trajectory, but having children was the real block. I don't think I’ve ever found sexism. Maternity made a huge block and difficulty and so on.

INT: And quite a female trajectory, probably, because of the children aspect.

RES: I mean as I say don’t think I have really felt sexism

INT: And do you think that you've always been treated equally? Have you felt like an equal since you were younger, or is there have been moments where you haven't felt like you were treated…

RES: I think I have, and, um. But I think it's about mindset, you know. It's about whether or not you think you are equal.

**Josephine Barnes** (the first female President of the British Medical Association) who, when asked whether she ever worried about going into a male dominated field in the 1940s and 50s replied ‘I don't think I thought about that’ and that she was not especially inspired by other women scientists: ‘we just got on with it’.

# Ambivalent politics of elite women

## Pushing for change

INT: Yeah, they definitely do, they’re intersecting and compounding each other, yeah, definitely.

RES: Yeah, just to be made-, just to make you look like you're putting a diverse-, whatever that diversity is, female, du-du-du, and then some white man gets it like, what was the point of that? Where is the meaning there? So, I think there are lots of games going on, where people want to be seen to be, but they haven't really stopped and really thought, what do we really want in this job? Or they just got focused on the hard skills, instead of saying, we have an organisation that is publicly funded that has an obligation to be representative of the people, and therefore, what do we want? Do we want it to be 20% diverse and what type of diversity? Neuro, ethnic, disabled? What do we want as our mix of people? And actually have that as a blueprint in their mind and then recruit. And by having that blueprint also you're factoring in what skills and what lived experience, and you're working on a matrix, so yes, we need skills, but we want lived experience and we want to be reflective, and almost creating like a diagram to say where do these cross and therefore, which jobs might suit which parts of the sector, of parts of the demographic that we're looking for, and then recruit according to that. And once you've recruited them, think about then, how do you grow them within those jobs? So, you might recruit, you know, a finance director from, you know, the finance world because they’re a trained accountant, but actually, how do you then take that trained accountant who might have a real interest in theatre, and grow them beyond becoming the finance director into, you know, the world. Don't just leave them as the finance person.

INT: But institutions often just say they want things that they don't really want, because they don’t really want to change, like, they don’t really want to change. And I do think that is why that thing of getting stuck at like, well, if the shortlist of people for the job is diverse then we don't really have to change anything, but we don’t-.

RES: And I think they don't-, they think they want change and when they may-, even Ben, you know, our CEO who's lovely, but I honestly, I had a meeting this morning. So, we've got an opening night-, the opening night film for the London Film Festival is The Harder They Fall. And the filmmaker has purposely made an all black Western, and he has-, I haven't seen the film yet, but Trisha said to me it's very witty, and he talks about race without talking about race, so it's not didactic, it’s very witty, lots about race. And most of the cast are coming and the producers, so we have a whole black cast of people. I have fought tooth and nail to make the audience diverse, I’ve said we-, I’m holding a public allocation of tickets, normally they go to patrons, members, whatever, and I said the audience here cannot be an all-white paid membership looking at the at the black people on stage. So, I fought to get an allocation, and made sure that we have outreach going out, that we have a diverse audience. But the party is 900 people, and this morning we were saying we have to make sure that the party is not full of white stakeholders, full stop. And then, our lovely CEO said, “oh yeah it's true, you know, we talk about numbers and then we all go down in our little niches and we just forget about it don't we”, and I felt like smacking him. But Ben, I said to you, who owns the diversity championship in the organisation? He said he's the lead champion, senior lead for diversity. I am the sponsor for our Race Equality Network, he is the senior leader, and I questioned at the time, I said, do you think that should not live in one of the exec directors, do you have capacity? “No, no, I’m going do it, I’m going to (unclear) to see”, and *you're* saying that?

I mean when I went to XX to teach, when I'd been a student there were hardly any women there at all teaching, and I was one of the arsey (ones). One of the reasons I’d had the difficult times, I got quite political, called it out, you know, gave them lists of, you know, women who were as if not more qualified than some of the men that were teaching there, that was really never going to win friends and influence people, right? You know, I was, you know. Yeah, okay, you're getting the picture (laughter). So then … when I went back to teach there, Bernard was really good, actually, Bernard was a real supporter of women and a lot of women were in post, but, because it takes time to get what, so it was still very much a male cartel. Actually, when Bernard stepped down and my predecessor John Aiken took over, you know, it was really him and his gang of friends that were kind of running graduate, and I don't really think he meant it to be, but it was a male cartel until I took over. It really was.

And I set up an EDI committee, not until 2017, but we still set it up before any other department did, still quite early, you know, and there may be in other, in other institutions they did sooner, and that sounds ridiculously late to have done it *now* with hindsight, that seems absurd. But the faculty only set one up the same term that we did, like we did it at the same time, and then other departments, I think, have done it more recently. And so, we were really, really concerned, and doing everything we could and jumping through hoops and reaching out and you know, trying to, still not succeeding, and so that's a bit of a shit turn.

INT: And how did you feel about the gender imbalance in architecture, did it bother you or were you comfortable with it?

RES: I was really comfortable with it. There was no feeling in Cambridge Architecture School that there was anything funny about us being there. Not at all. I've never felt that being a woman… I haven't until recently felt that being a woman was in any sort of disadvantage. Recently I began to analyse… to read more about it and to realize some disadvantages, some of the things that subtly happened to women that I wasn't quite aware of, we can talk about that. But on the whole it's been great because I've been distinctive and our practice, you know, we went to interviews people were rather keen to employ a sparky young woman, you know, and all that sort of thing. Some people, of course, didn't employ us because I was a woman, but others definitely did because I was, and I got invited to be on all sorts of lovely IRBA award group and all sorts of things like that because I could be a role model.

INT: Were you involved at all in any of the feminist stuff that happened around that kind of early 1970s period or?

RES: No, no, only in the normal, just joining in phase, but I wasn't at all militant about it. I did put my bra in a dustbin rather than burn it. That was in my San Francisco period. I was very pro feminism, but I didn't do much about it. Except stop people calling us girls when we were women and things like that. I just think all my career I've been rather bored with talking about being a woman in architecture. I regard it as a bit of a sideshow, really. Not very important. I think I regard it more important now than I ever did actually. But while I was doing it, I just did it. I did find, however, that I had some backward attitudes, because in those days when you rang up a manufacturer to ask for some technical information, you usually have a woman answering the phone who would usually put you through to the man who had the technical information and then once or twice I got embarrassed by the woman who answered the phone saying, well, ask me, I'm the technical person and then I, you know, because things were changing everywhere. I was guilty of that myself. And I find now and again this is the subtle things it's really strange, close, close friends – I’m married to an architect – when we're together my female friends want to ask something technical about architecture and they always tell us Burkin. I notice it so much more now. It just drives me mad.

RES: But sorry, when you were going to say about influence, I don't think individually I have had any massive influence at all. Or, I mean, I'm not (unclear) massive any influence, but I think that there was a wave of women writers in their 30s, who were writing well, and were writing about serious issues, and were at heart feminist and that (pause), the writing world was very male. And I think there was a point at which women kind of were breaking that mould. I mean, I've written articles about, you know, the classic things like how much review spaces are given to women on literary pages, how much women figure on prize lists, and so on. I mean, there was a … like half a dozen men's names. You know, when someone, you know, when people are asked “who are … the important writers’” they would go, oh, you know, McKeown, Ishiguro, there would be be a list, and then, you know, they would struggle and then eventually they would remember Hillary Mantel, you know, that was it. There's been, gradually, a push towards a more equal space for women that I think, and there are more women in publishing now, definitely more women editors, and all that's good. And so I mean, as part of a general, you know movement, I think yeah, I have played a part in that.

INT: Do you think in the 2000s, do you think that you felt like you had influence in the literary world then or not really?

RES: Influence? I feel like I’ve had a name. But what would I have influenced? I think influence implies there's a power structure that you're part of or you can affect. And I think writers tend to stand a bit outside all of that, you know. We’re not there to influence people, we’re there to sort of get people to interrogate themselves or to entertain them. We are sort of part of the entertainment industry.

INT: Do you feel like there are moments or spheres in which you do feel influential? Or does that not read as an experience that makes sense to you?

RES: I don't think I'm influential. If I am at the moment it's not as a novelist because I haven't published in 10 years. It's more as a member of Extinction Rebellion and someone who co-founded Writers Rebel. But I still wouldn't call that having much influence, I assure you. So, no, that's not how I see myself.

INT: I suppose where you kind of got up to in your career was the 90s, how long did you stay in that particular chamber? Did you did you move somewhere else or did you stay there?

RES: No, I moved again. I moved twice since. So the 90s… I stayed there until the Millennium. Again, I did not like what was happening in that set of chambers, but I was well established by then. I didn't like what was happening as far as the treatment of women was concerned. There was a lot of sexual harassment going on. There was all sorts of people who were basically… I made my views quite clear to the head of chambers and the head of chambers basically ignored me. And he called a chambers meeting and was not there on purpose and I decided I was not going to be part of a set of chambers. So I walked out, with another woman, who was my junior, and then we moved into another set.

RES: And now you've got Brexit and anti-Brexit so, and you know, the government is doing well, the government is not - we were very divided as a society and I've always maintained I'm independent and people can say as much as they like, I'm totally politically independent. Political with a small P means knowing the *right* words to say at the *right* time, and I think, I sit on these boards and if you say “I'm modest”, I think what I do now, and a lot of it's as a result of being a politician as I understand how far the public will go, I know that you know, if we suddenly agreed to lab meat or embryos being used beyond a certain stage in scientific research, the public would *not* like that. *I know*, like the panorama yesterday, the British public do not like seeing animals being shot up. It happens. We as part of our training have to go and see it at the abattoirs, but it's not something that we use pictures of. So, I think I've got a good political instinct of how you can take the public with you, because we've got to move with new science, and move with the times, otherwise we wouldn't adapt. I mean if we hadn't done that we wouldn't be where we are with vaccines for COVID. I mean we do amazing things with embryos now, and we allow the DNA of three parents to go into an egg, into an embryo, to enable, you know, people who wouldn't otherwise have children. And if there weren't people like us, slightly pushing, making sure that the government, and ministers, and politicians understand what it can do and then somehow dealing with the anti’s, very right-wing religious lobby groups, that ethically there is a way forward and bringing the right people on, *I think that's political with a small P*.

## Ambivalence about equality

INT: But you kind of always believed in gender equality? Do you think that's something that you have had?

RES: Well I don’t know. Equality, but I think that actually women, especially as I said if they have children, it's not identical, so it's not, it's really different paths should be carved out and I don't think men and women are the same and should be treated the same. I mean I think they should be treated pretty much the same if they’re not having children different, but if they’re having children they need to be treated differently, but given equal ability to flourish and development to fulfil their potential. So I’m not sure, I mean I've never written about this or talked about it much, but that's what I think. I mean my daughter and my son's partner, according to daughter in law, both think more that boys and girls are the same and it’s all ???? and I don't think that. I mean in fact the evidence is overwhelming, they’re not the same. Baby monkey girls will play with dolls and baby monkey boys will play with ????. And from birth, well from foetuses male and female, foetuses behave differently. Females develop more rapidly, and speech develops quicker. I mean just there's so much that's different, and so I mean, I think it's a mixture of genes and environment, but biology shows me that we’re not the same. I know that’s a very controversial subject. So I don't think they should be treated the same but I think they should be treated in a way that allows them to fulfil their full potential. Which is different.

INT: A lot of women I have interviewed agree with you, but they don't necessarily have the kind of biological framework through which they, you know, articulate it because they don't have your career. But I don't think it's that controversial amongst the women that I've interviewed. I think a lot of women would agree with you.

RES: I do think that, yes. But a lot don’t. As I said, I mean I know my daughter and… I mean I don’t know I haven't talked to my son's partner, I mean they’re not married but they’re equivalent of married, but they now have a little girl and a little boy that are quite different ???? might change their minds about that, they do?? change their minds about that. . .

INT: And what was the culture of that position… what was it like being in a position of authority in that space? Were that people quite comfortable with that, or were there any difficulties…

RES: Yes, yes, no, it wasn't, I mean. It's been like it's been all my life really, as long as you work hard, and as long as actually you are collective in the way in which you approach responsibility, people will respect you. You know, I'm not. When I was actually thinking about talking to you, I thought to myself, are you a feminist? I'm absolutely not. Uh. I'm optimistic and both, optimistic and opportunistic. I’m not ??? worries about where it's going or where it's not or, you know, what anybody thinks or what they don't think.

INT: And just to go back to that question. So I suppose you were an editor at the time that this kind of the second wave feminism movement. I mean, so you just you weren't part of that or you weren't kind of interested in that ideology of feminism?

RES: No, no. Because I believe everybody is equal until they prove one way or the other. And that's what actually annoys me about the Meghan Markles… Because, you know, yes, I'm sure some of those things are said, but I could imagine me saying, well, do you think he's got ginger hair, you know, or? To me, some of those things, some of these things can be said in conversation, unwittingly, and so on. And, you know, being politically correct goes so far down a negative channel for me that, I don't care who it is, they can be black, white, yellow, whatever. As long as actually I think they're making a contribution to society, or alternatively need society’s help, so what? You know.

INT: And do you think that you've always been treated equally? Have you felt like an equal since you were younger, or is there have been moments where you haven't felt like you were treated…

RES: I think I have, and, um. But I think it's about mindset, you know. It's about whether or not you think you are equal. Or whether you think you're put upon in one sense and subservient, or whether or not you think. And again, this is what I've got about Meghan Markle, actually is that I think she thought she was going to be treated as a princess. Well, princesses work, too! But you know what I mean? I think it's all about what's in your mind, and I think it's all about taking life by the scruff of the neck. Everybody will have opportunities in one form or another, and particularly actually if they're optimistic. Um, because opportunities don't come where you expect them, they come when you’re not ready for them. They come when you think you're going down an avenue and that avenue suddenly actually has a fork. And, yeah, of course, you have to take risks, but have to.

## Activism?

Independent women were how we were brought up in the 80s, but actually looking back now, we weren't very aware, it was not actually that the sexual revolution was still happening.

But then there was an election that happened that year or something happened, something was going on, where suddenly my accent, because I had this sort of West London, St. Pauls girl’s accent, marked me out as posh and people made assumptions that because of my accent that I might be Tory or something. I was actually quite apolitical at that (time), I hadn't really organised. And also, the other thing was there was quite, this is quite interesting, there was like people forming a woman’s group, like a feminist sort of women's group on foundation. Now, because I'd grown up in an all-girls family and I'd been to an all-girls school where there was the sky was the limit, like there were no limitations set. I've never encountered, until that point, I had actually never encountered sexism. I just hadn't encountered it. So, whilst I didn't, I wasn't unsupportive of it, I didn't really, it wasn't that I wasn't a feminist, I think I was sort of born a feminist, I just hadn't had the life experience at that stage, that comes later.

INT: It is. It is bad. It is difficult. And did you perceive yourself as a feminist at that time? Like did you have that kind of you know label on yourself or not really?

RES: Uhm, I actually spent a shameful amount of my life trying to stay under the radar and fit in I would say, but I've always, always thought women should have the same opportunities as men, so I've never understood that. I've never under, I still don't understand, I mean at a really visceral level I don't understand how half the population should be treated differently. I don't mean differently because obviously you treat people differently, but the difference of opportunity and (pause) yeah, decent treatment, I don't understand it. I really, I can't get my head around it, and particularly in terms of power and … (long pause) honestly bemuses me. And so, although I might not have said, I mean, insofar as I've ever (pause) I've never thought of myself as not being a feminist, but I probably wouldn't have said to people ‘*I'm a feminist’,* in fact even nowI think it's actually a bit of an odd term because what I'm after is equality of opportunity and taking into account, you know, different personality traits that might be more gendered or physical

INT: Yeah, and did you … I suppose that would have been kind of the late 70s. Did you have an awareness of the kind of social movements that had been happening at that time, like feminism or anything like that? Like, was that in the air? Or not really?

RES: Not really. I mean certainly the anti-apartheid was very present in my mind and I was definitely going to personally save Nelson Mandela and free him and all of that. That that was probably my guiding thing. But no, feminism not, and not that sense that women really had to fight that much harder at it, which I find strange because … I guess I was sort of slightly protected or … I saw things through my mother's eyes that's like ‘no anything is possible’ and so on, so no, not really.

INT: Yeah, it's really interesting though the anti-apartheid thing because a few women I've interviewed around your age have said the same thing, that really seems to have been much bigger in the kind of social consciousness than I would have necessarily realised in terms of, you know, even teenagers, just really around a lot by that point.

RES: It was absolutely everything, sort of anti-racism and rock against racism … which is you know when you look at where we are now, it's extraordinary that we haven't come further.

INT: Were you involved in any kind of second-wave feminism around that time or? Was your work your activism?

RES: I think it wa’… I mean, I don't know that we actually talked about it in those t’. I don't remember talking about it in those terms. I mean, I think we were all. We were all kind of desperately trying to manage to keep our heads above water… in a place where. So some of the things that we now understand about… what in my line of work is called epistemic injustice, those kind of… Well, exactly, so I don't think we understood that. I don't think we understood that it was. That we were inaudible. I think we just thought we weren't powerful enough. Does that distinction makes sense? Um. And we, we. So there was a huge sense of solidarity. But also their sense of being powerless

INT: It really seems like you did have to navigate quite a lot of male environments during that period. Were you involved in any kind of feminism or did you have any thoughts on feminism during the 70s? Or was it just kind of parallel to what…?

RES: I didn't really, it really came up through work in the 80s. It was through the 80s that I got very involved and intellectually in feminism, though not in any action.

INT: And did you have any-, so, thoughts on kind of the feminist or women's movement that had been happening during the kind of 70s and 80s? Like were you-, did you call yourself a feminist? Were you involved in activism or not necessarily?

RES: I wasn't particularly involved in activism, and certainly not political activism. As for calling ones self feminist, in the 70s and 80s it wasn't actually very clear what that might mean, and it did seem to me to need a bit of definition if the point is that men and women are both human beings with different kinds of interests and abilities, that’s fine. Some 70s in particular activism was very aggressive, in a way that I thought wasn't helpful. But in terms of taking it for granted, your own students, that of course they would treat each other as fellow human beings, and reminding them at intervals that the way this was put in this text in body is a set of assumptions about women that’s not actually now acceptable. And indeed, occasionally reminding one’s colleagues (laughter) that some assumptions are not to be made. But I do remember on some occasion, somebody was taking this line that of course “well I'm writing a book, publishing a book, that’s like having a child isn't it!” Being able to say that I thought I was the only person in that room who had produced babies, that I could assure them it wasn't (laughter). I don’t actually find that aggression works.

INT: Is that how you kind of navigated being in those spaces where there is often more men, like I suppose you've used-, you said unthreatening earlier, kind of not being aggressive, is that the strategy-, was that a kind of conscious strategy do you think? Or is that just your personality?

RES: It's partly personality and it is partly-, partly on principle of how you treat human … beings. But also, simply as a way of making a meeting work or not work. It does work much better to be unthreatening and concise, I find. But you might not think so (laughter). But I do prefer that if I can manage it, but yes, partly principle and partly tactics from experience.

INT: Were you involved at all in any of the feminist stuff that happened around that kind of early 1970s period or?

RES: No, no, only in the normal, just joining in phase, but I wasn't at all militant about it. I did put my bra in a dustbin rather than burn it. That was in my San Francisco period. I was very pro feminism, but I didn't do much about it. Except stop people calling us girls when we were women and things like that. I just think all my career I've been rather bored with talking about being a woman in architecture. I regard it as a bit of a sideshow, really.

INT: And were you involved in any of the kind of feminist activism that was happening at the time or?

RES: Uhm, in my head, yes, but if I'm honest in practice, not really, no. I mean (pause), do you know the magazine Spare Rib? Okay, I used to get Spare Rib and I wrote my first story, that was published in a magazine that was *bigger* than the university stuff, was Spare Rib, my first story was published in Spare Rib. And so, in terms of reading feminist stuff and wanting to write feminist stuff, yes. But I wasn't out on marches at that stage.

INT: And how do you think publishing is as an industry for women compared to like the experiences you had at the BBC. Do you think it's a better industry?

RES: Well, it's for the women. I mean publishing is for women. That said, you know, the top people in publishing are all still men, by and large. So if you look at how it breaks down, there are a lot of young women fresh out of university who love books and who will work for hardly any money in order to be around books and authors and the thrill of those literary parties. So I don't think much has changed in all the years I've been acquainted with that industry.

INT: It's a shame, but it's not changing. How do you think that could change? What do you think could happen to make that shift at the top.

RES: I think they would have to pay the young girls better because what happens is they get married and have babies and then it's not worth it for them. I mean, that's again, that's sort of generalizing because I've seen people rise up through the ranks very fast and do amazing things. I've seen them start, you know, at reception on the reception desk and end up running their own publishing company. Because that's how long I've been around, you know. But how could it change? Well, how do you change men? How do you stop men being men? How to stop the patriarchy being the patriarchy? I wish I knew the answer. I've tried to raise my sons not to be sexist. You know, I've tried to raise them to be good feminists.

INT: My mum's just a little bit older than you and she says the same thing about my brother, that one of the most important things she did was to try and raise him as a feminist and she feels like that's one of the biggest impacts that she made, the one lasting impact.

RES: Well, I mean, I see my older son who's with his girlfriend now and he's so respectful of her. She's a real force in her career and they're very much equals, they’re very much a team. And, you know, if I can take some of the credit for that then I will. I'll ask him if I'm allowed to. It was good for them to see a mother who was working.

INT: Yeah, and I suppose the period when you were growing up and you were going into your career like there was all that feminism in the 70s and into the 80s, like how did you feel about that? Were you involved in that? Like did you notice it producing changes in the work place?

RES: I think I just *worked through it*. I think I just *got on with it*. Things like (?), sexism, people making passes at you were part of life and you put up with it, you *certainly* didn't complain about it. I think I was probably quite a tough woman. I wasn't, you know, I think any man who wants to go out with me would see that I really (pause) I would be expected to be regarded as an intellectual equal and etc, etc.