Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Cannie Stark

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford, Kelli Vaughn, and Laura Ball
Montreal, QC
June 6th, 2009

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Alexandra Rutherford, PhD
Project Director, Psychology's Feminist Voices
alexr@yorku.ca

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CS: Cannie Stark, Interview participant
AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer
KV: Kelli Vaughn, Interviewer
LB: Laura Ball, Interviewer

AR: The way we start, because we need to identify the tape if it ever gets divorced from its documentation, is to have you say your full name, place, and date of birth for the record.

CS: Cannie Stark, what was your next item?

AR: Place and date of birth.

CS: Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 2nd, 1945

AR: Oh, so you just had a birthday.

CS: Yes.

AR: The way we start almost all of our interviews, is if you could tell us about the development of your feminist identity.

CS: That's a tricky issue to address. Perhaps my awareness of women in psychology and women in research stems from when I worked with the Le Dain commission, which was the Royal Commission on the use of non-medical drugs. I was a senior investigator for them, running a study on marijuana. I was asked to post advertisements about it and the recruiting was to be only males.

AR: Oh, interesting.

CS: I had a number of women who objected to the fact that they were being excluded from smoking good government dope (*laughs*). I really hadn't realized until then just the extent to which women were excluded from participating in research, because we were a messy variable, and from actually conducting, or being recognized for conducting research. This was in the '60s and there were so many exciting movements at the time, it was an age of hope and we really believed that we could change society and that is sort of how I got into feminism.

AR: Tell us a little bit more about some of the movements that you would have been involved in at the '60s, or the kind of feeling of that time.
{2:40}

CS: Oh, the feeling was marvellous. I was at McGill at the time, and to be at McGill in Montreal at the time of this 'hippie' era was just so exciting. We were involved in a number of peace movements and in politicking against American candidates. We were going down to the states and politicking for Eugene McCarthy, for instance. I wasn't involved in the Black movement, and First Nations people in Canada didn't yet have a voice. In fact, as an undergraduate I did a study, not knowing it was qualitative research that I was doing, of what I called the Forgotten Minority. I went out to the reserve and interviewed some elders who consented to be a part of my research. I've gotten completely off the track now.

AR: Did you have any involvement at that time then with the Feminist Movement or the Women's Movement in Canada? Were you aware of what was going on in that scene?

CS: Oh, absolutely. That was near and dear to my heart. But as I say, it wasn't really until I worked for the Le Dain Commission and had women objecting to not being able to good government dope that I began to question what psychological research was really all about if it was done by men on men, instead of done with women.

AR: Did you voice any of this at the time during your work with the Le Dain Commission?

CS: Yes, and was shot down, because that was the protocol I had to follow. Then I was working for the Le Dain Commission while waiting for permission to do my doctoral dissertation. There were no channels in Canada, at the time, to go through to get permission to give marijuana to humans. I had to wait until the interim report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs – I finally remembered the name – came out with their interim report in which it was recommended that procedures be put in place so people could apply for permission to conduct then research. When I was doing that, I ensured that women were allowed to participate in my research. Also, at the time there was no such thing as a research ethics board or committee at McGill, so I insisted that one be established and that meant that mine was the first research with people at McGill that was done with ethical approval.

AR: That is pioneering. It wasn't until the mid-70's in the States even, that they even thought about IRBs [Institutional Review Boards].

KV: You were talking about just leading up to your dissertation, right after you graduated you moved into your first job, you started to do gender research, stepping away from the marijuana research. How did you start to move in another direction, that was not only an inclusion of women, but almost a gender-specific research?

CS: I discovered that due to the dearth of information about women, there was a niche that had to be filled here. It was so close to my heart that I decided to go in that direction. Part of it stemmed from my research with marijuana, because the women were so different from the men in their response to the social situation, as well as to the drug.

{7:25}

KV: Were you a supporter or a participant in the move to 'differences' research, as opposed to 'similarities' research, between the genders?

CS: That's an interesting dichotomy that has evolved. I wouldn't say that I was in either camp. I wanted to know what was going on and if it was different from what had been found with men, that was fine because it was true. If it wasn't different, and there were instances in my dissertation where the women did not differ from the men, they didn't differ from the men in a whole whack of performance tests. I was never in one camp or the other. I just wanted to find out what was.

AR: Can I go back, just a little bit, to your interest in psychology and how you became attracted to the field and the evolution of that?

CS: It was a combination of factors. The final push to it was a television program called *The Eleventh Hour*, which was a program about a psychiatrist and a psychologist. This was back in the early days of television and it was really quite radical for its time. That's when I really felt like I could relate to that occupation. I took that information to the bible class I was at and they were going around the room asking what people wanted to do, and I said I wanted to be a psychologist. I was scorned for that, that I would be interfering with God's law if I intervened with people's lives at their request. That was the end of my church going. (*laughs slightly*)

AR: Really? How old were you at that point?

CS: I was maybe 14.

AR: So then tell us a little bit about your undergraduate training and your experience of psychology at that point.

CS: My undergraduate training was at McGill and that was the most post-positivist university psychology department in that nation at the time. I was very well trained in the more andocentric models of psychology and of research. And always felt there was something wrong with them; the data weren't reflecting human experience. So on my own developed these other techniques, which I had no idea anyone else valued. It was probably 15 or 20 years before I discovered that people had labels for these things and that these were considered valid approaches, scientific approaches. I was thoroughly indoctrinated in something that I never felt was right.

AR: Do you remember any of your professors or courses that you took at that point during your undergraduate?

CS: To give you an idea of what it was like, in Honours you weren't allowed to take personality, you weren't allowed to take developmental, and you were only allowed to take social psychology in the last semester of your undergraduate. That's because they were soft, and possibly nurturing.

{12:01}

AR: Yes, and possibly feminine (*sarcasm*).

CS: Exactly. It was expected that if you were a woman you would go into clinical psychology. For that reason, I didn't want to go into clinical, I wanted to go into something 'harder' and I ended up in clinical (*laughs*). I definitely remember the people who taught me in my undergraduate career.

AR: Tell us a little bit about your graduate training experiences.

CS: That was also at McGill and it was before they had a PhD program in Clinical, so I was in the first of PhD class in Clinical. What I took there first was a Master of Science Applied. There was an attitude that anyone who was in clinical, or anything smacking of clinical like counselling, that they were second class citizens, because you couldn't prove anything in a human beings' psyches, their inner lives.

AR: I'm getting a picture of McGill, I've never attended it myself, but I know the history. I'm thinking of people like, this would have been before your time I think, but Donald Hebb.

CS: He was my mentor.

AR: Was he? Oh ok, interesting.

CS: We disagreed on practically everything, but he really was my mentor. I wasn't his student, but he was my mentor.

AR: In what ways did he mentor you?

CS: Largely though his humour, our mutual humour. I remember when I got a motorcycle and brought a motorcycle helmet into Hebb's seminar in graduate school. It was a white helmet and I had cut out a paisley in bright pink and glued it on the front and then wrote on the back of it 'Hebb's Angels' and he thought I was an idiot for riding a motorcycle, not for putting that on the helmet, because "didn't I value my brain?" I told him that's why I had the helmet. He really liked the helmet and from that point on really was very encouraging. When I taught at Dalhousie [University] he came there as an honorary professor, because he was from Nova Scotia and he had been a school principal originally and we continued our conversations then. He thought that 'he' was a perfectly good generic pronoun and I didn't, so we had great conversations over things like that. That reminds that when I taught at Dalhousie, I taught at the equivalent of Place des Arts, because it was a huge course. I had never taught before and there were spot lights on me while I was moving around, and I pranced and danced all over the place, and I had to wear a microphone. I could only see the people in the first couple of rows, but that's where I developed my love of teaching. I threw up before the lectures the first few times, but that's not as bad when I threw up on the executive director of CPA [the Canadian Psychological Association]. (*laughs*)

{16:49}

AR: Well that sounds like an interesting story, maybe that comes a little bit later. (*laughs*)

CS: My first encounter with Hebb was in Introductory Psych. There were two rooms, one was the live room and the other was the televised room. You weren't allowed to choose one or the other, but fortunately I got put into the live room. He was teaching Intro Psych and I was sitting in the front row and I began to lean over on the fellow beside me and he said 'are you all right?', and I said 'no', so he helped me put my books in my arms, he didn't carry the books for me or anything like that, but I walked across with the cameras following me and fainted right through the door with my legs sticking into the room, being televised in the other room. Hebb came limping after me, he had a very noticeable limp from a disease he had when he was a teenager, I think. He took me down somehow, I don't remember how I got down to the room I ended up in, but he was very concerned and that's how I met Hebb.

AR: By fainting (*laughs*). Can you tell us a little bit about your research in your PhD? What did you decide on and how did your research proceed at that point?

CS: That was my marijuana research and because I was working for the Le Dain Commission, I had read most of the literature and thought it was full of BS; that it bore no resemblance to the marijuana experience that I knew from anecdotes (*laughs*). I wanted to make it a more real experience in order to see, first of all, if there was a difference from what research had been conducted and to find out more meaningful answers to more meaningful questions. At the time, research on marijuana with humans was conducted in a formal, sterile lab with the researcher wearing a white lab coat, because they didn't want anything in the context to influence the results. Of course, not realizing that what they were doing was creating a context.

AR: A pretty powerful one.

CS: They would have people smoking alone, or require people to eat the marijuana, alone, or in some instances, injected the marijuana. That is just wasn't what I had heard people were doing with marijuana. So I was looking at the socio-psycho-pharmacological effects of marijuana. I had people smoking alone, smoking with strangers, and smoking in groups of friends. I had women smoking in groups of strangers or friends to compare. I set up a social situation in a rehab hospital, so it wasn't a clinical hospital. The Le Dain Commission research was conducted in the Douglas Hospital, here in Montreal, which is a mental hospital, which was also not a very wonderful environment in which to toke. What did you want to know about it again?

AR: What did you find?

CS: I set up a whole slew of tasks. The distinction wasn't being made in the literature between feel time and think time, so the results were all over the place. That's one of the things I capitalized on. And asked – at various times in the evening, and they smoked more than one time in the evening – how much time they *thought* had passed, between x and y, and how much time they *felt* had passed. There were dramatic differences between the two, from millennia to 3 minutes. I did a fun thing with the autokinetic effect. I had a standardized pinpoint of light in a totally dark room that they had to – sitting on the floor with a newspaper sized board on their lap – trace the movement of the moving light.

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And then I would use a map mileage counter to trace out how much it had moved. I did the same kinds of things with distance and with memory. The memory task was a riot, because they had to listen to a nonsensical story and then five minutes later say what happened in the story. That certainly was one of the tests that showed a strong marijuana effect.

CS: But in the autokinetic effect there were also dramatic differences when they were stoned. They came in three times to smoke. The first was when they smoked Colt's Foot, which smells like marijuana, but they were told it wasn't marijuana and some of them didn't believe that and got stoned on it. To measure how stoned they were I had a 'how high I am' graph and they would graph their highness. What I found was people when very stoned they could still differentiate between the experience of time and the clock time, except for one person who was an engineer, and he said 'what do you mean feel time?' It's the amount of time that's passed. I did the same with distance and there were dramatic effects there and people were able to make the distinction. I also walked them through the distance, so there was a kinetic aspect to it as well. The participants smoked either Colt's Foot, a high dose of marijuana, or a low dose of marijuana and the government sent me the marijuana in a baggie in the mail.

AR: And it got to you.

CS: And it got to me (*laughs*) and I had to account for every leaf, which was hard to do on a Mettler balance, weighing it out and using tweezers, like pickup sticks. I told them that some people would be in the Colt's Foot low dose-high dose and some people would be in the Colt's Foot high dose-low dose, and they all thought they were going to be in the ascending order. The people who got the high dose in the second week were really disappointed in the third week (laughs).

AR: Because it didn't get better (*laughs*).

CS: No (*laughs*). They hardly got very stoned at all when they did have the so called high dose. The psychological component of getting stoned was of interest to me. One of the reasons why they only used people who had never smoked marijuana before was because they didn't want expectation to have an effect. I said 'well, why not measure expectation?' so I used only people who had smoked before, because I didn't think it was ethical to introduce someone to an illegal drug. When they volunteered they filled out a questionnaire that I had based on Charles Tart's research in California and I was then able to examine what their expectations were and how that effected the effects in the study.

AR: Okay.

CS: Have I answered your question?

{27:43}

AR: Oh yes, great. This is changing gears a little bit, but one of the things we like to inquire about is have you had experiences where you've felt like, in academic or otherwise, but mainly

in your career as a psychologist, where your sex, your gender has been a source of discrimination against you or that there have been barriers on the basis of sex?

CS: Absolutely.

AR: Could you tell us a little bit about those?

CS: I took my Master's MSc Applied at McGill with a particular supervisor and completed my thesis and was in his office with him and he said "I'm not going to continue you for your PhD." And I said "why?" And he said "because you're a woman." I asked him what that had to do with anything, and he said a PhD would be wasted on a woman. That I could practice with my Master's, but that I was going to get married and I was going to have children and so a PhD would be wasted on me and the reason he knew this, was because his wife had a been a pediatrician before she married him and had children and she dropped her pediatric practice. And so on an N of 1 he generalized to all female graduate students. He said he wouldn't oppose me finding another supervisor, but that he wouldn't continue me. So I found another supervisor.

AR: What was your reaction at the time? Do you remember being on the receiving end of that?

CS: I was floored, because my mother had always told me I could do whatever I wanted to do and that there were no barriers as long as I tried hard enough. As long as I was a good girl, I would be able to achieve. That was really the first time I had noticed discrimination, that I had felt it.

AR: Have there been other times?

CS: Yes, that was an era in which it was considered not only acceptable, but almost required that male faculty members would hit on female graduate students, so there was a lot of that.

AR: We've heard that from a lot of people we've spoken with, especially at conferences.

CS: Yes, especially conferences. There was the daily harassment, but conferences bumped it up another level.

AR: People away from their home turf.

CS: Yes, and the excuse of alcohol. Back then there were no sexual harassment officers in universities and there were no sexual harassment prevention laws or policies.

KV: I want to take it in a little bit of a different direction, but kind of how you were talking about Hebb. During this time when you are working on your PhD and early with your career, were you working with any female mentors at this time? Do you feel like you had any female mentors during this period?

{32:06}

CS: There were three women in the psychology department, one of whom was there on sufferance and only part-time. She taught a graduate class in Clinical. The second woman was there full-time and later became a president of CPA and she taught one graduate class. The person in charge of Honours students was a woman, because that would be a woman's role. She was actually in physiological psych and didn't do much research, because she was busy nurturing the Honours students.

AR: So there wasn't a lot of availability in terms of female mentors.

CS: Or role models. I found out later that the women were supportive of me, but it was only later.

AR: What about in your graduate cohort, were there other women? What was the ratio like?

CS: They were mostly in Clinical and there was a strict division between clinical and 'real' psychology. There were a few women in the 'real' psychology, but they also looked down on anyone in clinical.

KV: Can you talk to us a little bit on the clinical side of your work a little more? In '77 is when you went to Scott Laboratory at Wellesley Hospital. Can you give us a little more of an idea of what your time there was like, what the work you were doing was like, and the cohort that you were with?

CS: It was an interesting time, in quotes. Like the Chinese curse.

AR: Right, may you lead an interesting life. (*laughs*)

CS: It was like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. I was very disillusioned with psychology and psychologists and psychology departments in academia. I wanted to dissociate myself from it. I sort of switched careers, this was after Dalhousie. At Dalhousie, by the way, my first job with my PhD was as a secretary. My second job was as a karate instructor, and then I got demoted from those two positions to assistant professor (*laughs*). I was one third of the women in the department and the only feminist. I was really disgusted by what I observed of academia. I moved to Toronto without a job and created a job for myself at the Wellesley Hospital and eventually became the director of the Scott Laboratory. It was a limbic mechanisms research group. I thought it was kind of difficult being a female professor in a male academic environment. But I hadn't counted on what a female PhD in a male MD environment would entail.

AR: I think they call that double discrimination, or double jeopardy.

CS: Yes, exactly. So it was seven years of tolerating and objecting. One of the things that I objected to was the research that the then-director of unit wanted me to do, because I considered it unethical.

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He insisted that I do it, so what I did was when he was out of town one week, I applied for a National Health Research Scholar Award and I applied for funds to conduct the research that they were giving me this National Research Scholar Award for. When he came back, he tried again to get me to do what was unethical. I said "no I can't do that, because I have to do this other research, you are no longer paying my salary, the Government of Canada is." I probably wouldn't want to do research with a male neurosurgeon again. It was quite lonely there, but that's when I got really involved with CPA. My allies were in CPA, it was the women in CPA who really helped me with my career. Sometimes personally, and sometimes as a group. As a group, for instance, they voted me into the chair of what was then IGWAP [Interest Group on Women and Psychology], which came SWAP [Section on Women and Psychology], for two years in a row. All of the research and academic work that I did at the hospital related to women was done under the table. Then there was the problem too of "Where are you going to publish?," "What type of venue is going to publish this type of research?" Frequently what women had done was to found new journals, so I became a science editor of the *International Journal for Women's Studies.* That provided me with a good outlet for publication.

It was the women in CPA who not only voted me into the position of coordinator of SWAP, but when I then was asked to run for the applied division, there were just two divisions in the CPA then, the experimental and the applied, and I was invited to stand for election and serve. So it was chair elect for two years, chair for two years and past chair for two years, so that was a six year commitment. That gave me a lot of visibility and I worked on the board when I was chair of the division for those two years. Then it was the women in CPA who elected me to the Board of Directors, that I had served on for two years ex officio as chair as the Applied Division. I served on the board for six years or so around that time and then got involved in the Social Science Federation of Canada and brought many of things that I had achieved for women while on the board in the early '80s to the Social Sciences. I was first of all there as a CPA member and then I was elected vice-president of Women's Issues and I think I served there four years or so.

KV: Can you tell us a little bit about the personal side of support in CPA during those early years, especially with the work situation you were in at the time. Can you tell us one or two stories about the individuals there and how they may have assisted you during that period?

CS: That started back when I was teaching at Dalhousie, where the Chair had come into my office and said "Is there anything you aren't teaching that you would like to teach?" and I said "Yes, Psychology of Women" and he said "It's done." Which was wonderful, but he meant that I would teach that on top of everything else. At that time, Sandra Pyke was the coordinator of IGWAP and wrote to her just to say "This is what is happening out here" and she provided me with validation. I had support from women from afar. They weren't there with me, except for the students. That would be one example where I could get validation and moral support.... There was emotional, intellectual, and practical support that I was given by women in CPA.

{44:33}

KV: Do you think that was true of the overall group of women who were in CPA at the time, do you think that was something that was going on throughout, or do you feel like that was individual for you and your situation?

CS: ...There was a personal connection. I'm not quite sure how to address this…there were women in CPA, at the time, who were not members of SWAP. There were lots of women who were men in skirts. Even among some of the women in SWAP, at the time, there was a carryover of bitterness of the way they had been treated by Queen Bees, as Paula Caplan would call them. So you couldn't count on everyone, or on every woman in CPA for this type of support. This might not seem like it's related, but when I decided to implement the recommendations from the Task Force in the '70s to put on an institute, a pre-convention institute for women in psychology, I got informed that I had to tell the board about this. So I told the board and the executive director at that time, not the one I threw up on, said "ok, we'll let you do this, but you must realize when nobody comes to it, the loses you will experience are your problem, not CPA's." At that time there had never been a pre-convention institute or workshop that made money. We were the first ones to make money (*laughs*).

AR: Can you tell us a little bit about that idea, of having the SWAP pre-institute?

CS: Well, we needed a place, a venue, to share our research with validation. We needed a venue in which we could support each other emotionally and intellectually as well. That had been one of the recommendations that came out of the task force in the '70s that was published in January 1977 in the *Canadian Psychological Review*. I think there were 77 recommendations that came out of that and I was going to get as many of them implemented as possible. For instance, I got Psychology of Women recognized as a valid area of psychology and as a valid area of scholarship. There were a whole slew of policy statements that I got CPA to adopt in '81 and '82. That was a very exciting time. For one thing, there was a certain awareness and a certain consciousness that it was no longer acceptable to treat women the way they had been treated in Canadian psychology, and so they realized that they had to say yes. The board meeting at which I was to bring the most inflammatory policy statements was held in the country, somewhere in Ontario, or on a mountain, somewhere, and I was picked up at the Ottawa airport along with another member of the board to be transported to this place. Both she and I had made the mistake of eating at the airport and we're standing around at a reception that night in the cabin and all of a sudden I was very sick (*laughs*). That was really my first interaction with the executive director (*laughs*) and then she got sick as well. The board meeting was the next day and I couldn't get up in the morning; I couldn't be that far away from the bathroom. I didn't actually know where the meeting was being held, I knew it wasn't being held in the cabins that we were staying in, but it was being held off in the woods somewhere and I really needed to get these recommendations endorsed by the board. I also knew that other woman who was sick couldn't necessarily be counted on for support and she was really sick, so I felt that I had to get to the board meeting. And I staggered in, after getting lost in the woods. I think they were afraid that if they didn't endorse these policies that I'd throw up on them (*laughs*).

{51:38}

AR: Whatever works (*laughs*).

CS: Yes (*laughs*).

AR: Do you remember what was the most inflammatory? Was there one you were particularly nervous about?

CS: I was nervous about all of them. Especially since it was the first board meeting that I was bringing these to. I came to know members of the board very well after that and they were very anxious to appear well intentioned. I had a lot of fun on the board.

KV: You were saying that you had never told us the differences between male and female uses of marijuana.

CS: They were very, very interesting differences and they were particularly prominent in the social situations. I was videotaping them with their knowledge and consent for the half hour that they would smoke together and then just enjoy the high, before going into the performance tasks. I didn't video tape the second smoking session of the evening. The male friends got very stoned, were very comfortable. The male strangers were incredibly uncomfortable right from the start and it never improved. They would look everywhere. They'd look up at the ceiling. They'd look at the posters on the walls. They'd look at the floor. Anywhere but at each other and I was counting the number of seconds that there was mutual gaze and so on, all these non-verbal interactions, as well as the content. The most relaxed the men got, the male strangers, was when they were discussing their occupations. That led into one person, who really was a street person, which was different than a street person is now, someone who had dropped out, brought up the topic of his travels. The real focus of their conversation was comparing bathrooms around the world. The women, however, took a whole different approach to this. They were just as uncomfortable to start with. It's nerve racking to smoke an illegal substance, even if it's legally, with people who you don't know. That could really effect the effects of the drug on you. Right off, as a group, they addressed this problem. They brought it up into the open, they looked at each other, and they even reached out and touched each other, which the men would never do. They talked about very heavy issues, especially when they were stoned, profound and personal topics. You could see them reaching out to each other emotionally with their eyes, with their body posture, with touching each other, as someone was revealing something very personal and heavy. That, to me, really sold me on the importance of continuing to work with women in research.

KV: It's kind of funny listening to you describe this, it almost sounds a little bit like how you were describing the early CPA, a lot of the early SWAP interaction, and I find that really interesting.

CS: Yes.

{55:52}

KV: I'm curious, because a lot of people we talk to on these early histories are talking about the mid-'70s, around the time that you would be graduating. You were sort of doing this really

interesting work in the mid-'70s, and coming into this just a little past something starting, but really getting rolling as you are walking into it. You were involved heavily in SWAP and CPA up until the present day, but especially being involved in the committees all the way through the 80s and part of the 90s in the National organizations, how do you see some of that has developed over the years, kind of this communal nature between these women in the profession of psychology?

AR: I had the same question. You've been involved in CPA and SWAP for over 30 years now, what have you seen as the developments, changes? How has it different now, the same? What's your perspective on it?

CS: I think a lot is now taken for granted. A lot of what was very difficult to achieve, is taken for granted. And for some women that means there is no need for a SWAP. Maybe that is true for them. But there is definitely is still a need, I see a need, especially among women graduate students, to have this kind of forum for their ideas and this safe place. Which doesn't mean that they never get criticized by their peers, but I think it is still serving a function. I think it could very easily slide back. That's one of the reasons I'm worried about, or it's related to why I'm worried about, women leaving academia for healthier work environments. It means, even though there is a majority of the student population, both undergraduate and graduate who are women, the decisions about their lives in academia are being made by men still and the research that is being done currently is shaping the future of the disciple. If the people conducting that research are still conducting it from an andocentric perspective, it would be easy to see at least enclaves of it no longer being acceptable to do research with women.

KV: We do see even now, especially within psychology, people saying that we don't need separate Psychology of Women courses anymore. Some of the debates that you really would have expected to hear when you were in grad school, we are hearing now in grad school. What can we do? How do we look to the future? What would you tell a grad student of yours right now, in terms of what they need to be doing to preserve it? That these things are still of need. There is still a purpose and a place for this study of women, or this look at women as subjects in a different light within psychology. How do you convey that to your graduate students?

CS: That's something that I do with my grad students and my Honours students through our conversations and through example rather than "this is the way you must structure your career." Very often when I do give advice it's along the lines of "don't do what I do." Or, "don't do what I did." To help them come to a realization or a clarification of what feminism and an academic life, or a life in practice outside of the university really can look like. Their definition, their vision, will not be what I had in the '60s and '70s and it shouldn't be. I think that there are sort of cycles that we go through. I remember Esther Greenglass, when I was in Toronto and this was a headline that appeared in the Weekender of the *Toronto Star*, I don't know if there still is *Toronto Star*: "Feminism is Dead."

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Which, interestingly enough, was on the cover of *Time Magazine* a few years ago. They used a very interesting array of women on the cover, including that really thin woman, Calista

Flockheart. I think they said "Is Feminism Dead?" Whereas the *Star* said "Feminism is Dead" and that was because Esther Greenglass said so (*laughs*), so that fuelled me up for a bit. She was describing how exhausting it was to continually be fighting these battles and that she was tired. But it wasn't dead, even in Toronto (*laughs*).

AR: I wanted to ask now, we're kind of moving between levels here, but we got in terms of your personal narrative through the Dalhousie years a bit. I was wondering what occasioned the transition to the University of Regina and what your experiences have been like there.

CS: ... Some people said "You must be crazy to go to the University of Regina," people only fly over Regina (*laughs*). I've been brought up in Montreal and worked in Halifax and Toronto, so I was quite city-oriented. So people said, "There's nothing there for you Cannie. There weren't even any trees." There was something just so freeing about being on the prairie, on the open prairie, outside of the town where you realize that the horizon is 360 degrees and it's a dome over you, it's not a flat thing. It's just astounding and it would fill my chest with emotion, just being out there. That, of course, was before I had a winter there (*laughs*) where it's often 40 below. Although, I did arrive for my interview in the middle of a March blizzard. As part of my interview schedule I insisted that I interview veterinarians in town, because I couldn't move anywhere where I couldn't have good care for my cat. I found a wonderful vet.

KV: Now, I'm intrigued. You have a cat. How did you end up doing research on police canines?

CS: I had written an article on stress, I forget which one it was. The police college for Saskatchewan was on the U of R campus and a police officer kept noticing me in the halls and finally asked someone who I was and what I did and they told him. He made an appointment to see me and asked if I had written any articles that he would understand. I had one and it was full of humour and so on. He returned it and thanked me very much.

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A number of months later, I got a phone call from him. And he said "oh, I'm sure you wouldn't want to, you are much too busy for this, but if you ever have a chance to would you like to work a few shifts with me to see what police stress is like." I was in the middle of the research on women working in academic settings, I was snowed under with work, but I thought "I can't let this opportunity go, this door doesn't open, from their side." I made a point of going to his jurisdiction and working a shift with him. One shift turned into six shifts and I was just fascinated with what they go through. Then I said, "I wonder what the police literature is like one this?" Of course, just like the research on women and the research on marijuana, it was, first of all, done mostly in the States, and at that point entirely in the States. So many things weren't being taken into consideration in the context of this research and it certainly couldn't reflect the Canadian experience of policing. Miami is very different from Regina.

I figured that this research had to be done up right, and taking a feminist perspective, it should be done from a perspective of those who are doing the job. In order to learn what their perspective might be like, I should do the dreaded participant observation. I applied for funding to do it, so I could do it up right, and ended up being partnered to the police officer, working their shifts,

working their shift changes, in six different Canadian police jurisdictions. During that time I was invited to work a shift with a police canine officer and his partner the dog. When I worked that first shift, I realized that there was something incredible going on here and I had to learn more about it and work more shifts with police canine. I went to police canine seminars, what we would call conventions, and began to photograph them as well. I would give back to them, for what they had given me, in the form of photographs of their partners in action at police trials and things like that. I wrote articles in a police canine journal and they used a lot of my photographs as front covers.

It was just incredibly exciting and very eye opening. Just as eye opening as the call to call to call shifts were the shifts where nothing happened. And it'd be three in the morning you sort of wished something would happen, so you could stay awake. I worked the day shifts. I worked the way they worked to the tune of 4,000 hours. What I then did, because I knew no psychologist would believe me - I had a mixed-methods design, first of all participant observation and then a quantitative aspect to it. A survey to find out if anything I knew I had experienced, and had been told by them, could be shown quantitatively. I set this up in a participatory way as well, so that I drafted the survey instrument and had them come in, or I would go to them, and I would have them in focus groups go over the content. First of all to see where I was using psychological jargon, instead of police jargon and whether I had missed anything, because with only 4,000 hours on the street and I couldn't have experienced everything they had experienced, so they could add to it. And [I asked] "Is there anything just ridiculous that I should take out?" Police officers are noted for not enjoying paperwork and they kept adding and adding questions. I said "Are you sure that's okay? People are going to fill this out?" and they said "Yes, put that question in and these questions in." What that did was to provide them with a sense of ownership of the instrument as well. They invested energy in this and so they encouraged other police officers to fill out the questionnaires as well.

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It was a tremendous learning experience and I learned a lot about myself. For instance, I had never shot a gun before and when being taught how to shoot the armourer was very impressed and said "I don't want to be around you if you are mad." He said that women are easier to teach than men, because men know it all, whereas the women follow the instructions that he gives them. I was very accurate in the armoury with those black circle human beings at a distance. And then I was out with the SWAT team and they use different targets, they were flesh coloured and they were distinctive, they were real human beings, and then I lifted up the gun, aimed and I could not get my trigger finger to work. I was sending the messages from my brain to pull that trigger and I couldn't do it, I just froze. One of the SWAT leaders then taught me how to circumvent that. I was aiming and looking at the person and I couldn't bring myself to do that, I couldn't bring myself to shoot a person. He said to do instinctive shooting. You shoot from the hip, literally. You take the gun out and shoot where you already know the target is. Then I had no problem. It was interesting....

KV: You have a really great way of telling a story, and it reminds me of what you were saying earlier. You sound like you changed through that experience, from where we started at the

beginning of the interview of you being this young woman who was found these types of things interesting and looking to this community at CPA and SWAP for the support to coming out on the other end. You almost modified yourself along with feminism. I wonder how you end up, how that changed you as a feminist psychologist and even the way you approach that area. How do you think that changed you as a feminist, as a psychologist, as an academic?

CS: How which changed me?

KV: Going through the police training and the trauma in itself, but also the empowerment that you must have had during that event.

CS: It was a tremendous experience, and certainly as I said, it was an eye opener and transformative. Doing any kind of research can often be transformative for the researcher as well as the participant, but I hadn't realized the extent to which I would be transformed and empowered. They would put me through tests all the time, but fortunately there is a good network among police officers, so I wouldn't get the same test twice. They would say to me things like "you're not one of those feminists, are you?" And I would be perfectly straight with them, that I am and weren't they? Isn't everybody? (*laughs*). The police humour was something I could relate to very well, especially going through police experiences. In many senses the research with the police was feminist research. It wasn't research about women police officers, but it was a feminist methodology that I used and approached the research really from a feminist perspective.

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AR: I wanted to ask a little bit about method and how you figured this all out. Students today don't get any exposure – as you mentioned in the conversation session earlier – to qualitative methods, let alone to feminist methods, in psychology anyway. So how did you figure it out? In terms of, that there were a range of different methods and that you could use them and that some of them are participatory or participant oriented. How did you figure that out?

CS: It wasn't from any formal training. In fact, at McGill not only were we not allowed to take Developmental Psych or Personality or Social Psych, we weren't allowed to take methodology courses in other disciplines. We weren't allowed to take sociology methodology or anthropology methodology and I actually managed to sneak in a sociology class that wasn't a methodology class, but you had to do a research project and you were expected to do interviews. That was my only experience though. I had no colleagues who knew anything about or who believed in qualitative research methods and had never even been told that there was such a thing as qualitative research. It was kind of like I was inventing it for myself in isolation and then I discovered there is a world out there, there are people have attached labels to these approaches. That means that other people might find them valid. If it has a label it's real. It was very much without a role model. I'm so glad that I did it because it filled that void that I mentioned earlier that I felt about the way psychologists were supposed to do research. That brought that all the way back around.

KV: I've just got one more for you, because I know we promised we would get you out of here in an hour and a half. We're running a little bit over, but not too much. You had a list of questions from us that I know you looked at fairly thoroughly. Is there anything we haven't asked you during this interview today that you would like to say or have thoughts about in regards to feminist psychology's future or past?

CS: Probably (*laughs*). And I probably won't realize it till I'm home. That's one of the reasons why I'm glad that I'll get the transcript to edit, because it's hard to remember things. And then all of a sudden something will come in and interfere with the other thing you were saying, as happened many times this afternoon. If I can get this happy and excited again when I'm away from the three of you, then I will probably remember things that I should have brought up.

LB: I have just one quick question, what advice do you have to a young feminist psychologist?

CS: It would be that your battles will probably be different from mine and they'll look different and feel different, but that you have the strength to continue despite these barriers and battles. And to enjoy. Too often we have a tendency to take ourselves too seriously and that's one of the things I learned while policing, you could die at any time. If you overwork and are not good to yourself you are no good to anyone else either. That's not limited to feminists, but I would be most likely to give that advice especially to feminist psychologists.

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