

**Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project
Interview with Mary Crawford**

*Interviewed by Leeat Granek
Washington, DC
August 5th, 2011*

When citing this interview, please use the following citation:

Crawford, M. (2011, August 5). Interview by L. Granek [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. Toronto, ON.

For permission to use this interview in published work, please contact:

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

©Psychology's Feminist Voices, 2012

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project
Interview with Mary Crawford
Interviewed by Leeat Granek
Washington, DC
August 5, 2011

LG: Leeat Granek, Interviewer

MC: Mary Crawford, Interview participant

LG: So just for the tape, if you could just say your name and where are you at?

MC: Mary Crawford, and I am an Emeritus Professor at the University of Connecticut.

LG: Okay, great. I am going to start by asking you some general questions about your feminist identity. And then we will move a little bit into how you merge your feminist identity with your work and then more specific questions about your work. And at the end there will be some wrap up questions.

MC: Great.

LG: So the first question is just a very general question. If you could tell me about how you have developed your feminist identity?

MC: I think my feminist identity was part of my life from a very early age. I grew up in a traditional family with a home-maker mother and father who was in the military. So my father had very definite ideas about a hierarchy and...umm, yes a hierarchy of power in the family as well as outside. And I grew up in an era when there weren't very many opportunities for girls. So gender inequality was there for me to look at from an early age. I remember going to Catholic school and at playground time the playground was divided in half. And the boys got all the playground equipment and the girls had to make due with a piece of chalk for hop-scotch. So it was pre-Title Nine and pre-feminist articulation of inequality. But I felt inequality in my growing up. I married very young and had two children. And when that marriage ended in divorce again, you know, I could see how tough it was for a single mom, for a woman trying to establish credit, or just function as an adult in the world because everything was funneled through one's husband.

So when the women's movement began, in the late 60s, I feel as though I was primed to recognize what it was all about and get involved from its early days. And that movement helped me to articulate things that I had felt for a long time just through personal experience. So I was in my first job when I really started to become active as a feminist. I was in Iowa in a small liberal arts college and [the] Iowa state government funded academics going around to small farm

communities and doing workshops and lectures and so forth. And I started doing some [workshops] on division of labor in the home, gender inequality, [and] rape as violence against women rather than sexual activity. And all of these issues that - as soon as I became aware of them, you know - I was trying in my first academic position to get them out to students and the community.

LG: And when you were growing up and you saw all of these kinds of inequalities do you recall actually having a sense of “this is unequal or unjust” and that was kind of like a motivating...because sometimes, if that’s just your norm...

MC: Hmm.

(4:17)

LG: Right, so what made you develop that consciousness even as a child?

MC: It’s funny because that *was* the norm, as was racial bigotry at the time. And I do not know how I was able to see it as injustice. I don’t know what the step was that allowed that. But I did, and I do remember seeing it as injustice - when my family and the families that I knew said they would send their boys to college but girls didn’t need college.

LG: Yeah.

MC: And that sort of thing...you know, I might have been a fourteen-year-old in ninth grade but I knew there was something wrong with that. I don’t recall ever going through a passive acceptance stage about sexism or racism for that matter. I remember thinking “This is wrong” but not knowing if anyone else felt that way or what one might start to do about it.

LG: Mm...Okay. And when you got to college and you started to get more involved; can you talk about some of the activities that you were involved in? Specifically things that you may have done, marches or...

MC: College was a bit before that because I graduated college in ‘63 and at that time the women’s movement was just really beginning to get national attention. Also, I married while I was in college and started my family. So those were years when I was not active. It was more when I got to grad school that I became more aware of the women’s movement and when I was in my first job that I tried to connect with that movement and make a difference. So I began to write for *Ms. Magazine*, for example, when I was in my first academic job in 1975.

LG: And what kinds of things were you writing about?

MC: Well, I wrote an antiwar article about an Iowa farm family whose son was killed in Vietnam, I wrote a piece called something like “Two careers, three jobs, and a three-thousand mile commute” about my partner and I and our effort to have an egalitarian family life and two jobs when we couldn’t get jobs in the same place.

LG: Yea

MC: Umm...I wrote some other things too.

LG: Yeah. Those would be wonderful examples of things to include in the archive. So if you had copies that that would be great.

MC: Yea. I am sure they are scanned. I can get copies.

LG: Okay that would be wonderful. Okay. And this is kind of a question I think you have already addressed, but I will ask you and you will see if there is anything you want to expand. Did your family life or environment in any way impact the development of your feminist identity or your work? So you talked a lot about growing up in graduate school, were there any other kinds of environmental factors that were influencing your feminist identity?

MC: I was very influenced by one of my profs, the only woman who taught me throughout grad school and that was Lindy Geis (7:50)

LG: Ow! Okay!

MC: Yeah. She taught me the core course in social [psychology] and at that time I was in experimental so that was outside my main area. But Lindy was such a pioneer and she was such an outspoken feminist. And she was trying to model ways of living that didn't put women in the same relationship to men and the patriarchal establishment as they had always been. So Lindy, at that time, was living with a guy who was a prof at another university; we were at the University of Delaware. And they had what used to be called a common law arrangement, they bought a house together. And Lindy found out to her horror when they went to separate that they were legally married because they owned property together and they had to go through a divorce. So, you know, Lindy was very out front with her female students about how you get enmeshed in the state control of relationships even though you may be trying to do a nontraditional relationship. So my first marriage ended when I was in grad school and I didn't know if I would ever marry again. But I determined that if I did I would not do it unless I thought that there was a real hope of making an egalitarian marriage along a feminist ideal.

LG: Mhm...Okay, Okay. And what attracted you to psychology and how did you get into the field?

MC: My undergraduate degree is in music education.

LG: Okay.

MC: And I graduated and started teaching at the bachelor's level teaching school music to children. And I found that it was not rewarding for me to always be functioning as a musician at the most basic level. You know, teaching first graders to play recorders and sing folk songs. I loved the kids but it was not right for me.

LG: Yeah.

MC: And my psych courses, the few that I have taken as a music major, have always interested me. So I dropped back in and started taking a few graduate level courses at a state university and I just fell in love with psychology. So I applied for full time graduate school with a T.A. and was admitted.

LG: Yea. Okay. And what kind of work were you doing in the beginning when you were admitted?

MC: I was interested in trying to combine music and psychology. So I looked at things like the origins of perfect pitch, absolute pitch, some people have it some don't and can it be learned, and that sort of thing. But these were very naïve and amateurish research projects. So when I went to Delaware I connected with Fred Masterson who became my dissertation adviser and I went into learning theory. Which I loved, it's an area of psychology that had a long history of research. It was trying to answer basic questions with good empirical designs and I loved learning the logic of experimental design and statistical analysis. I loved asking questions of rats and finding out ways of making them give you answers. [Laughs]

LG: Yeah!

MC: And so I was happy in that area during grad school and published in that area with my advisor and [we] continued to work together after I finished my PhD. So if I have any distinctions in psychology I am maybe the only person who ever published in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *Feminism & Psychology*, and *Ms. Magazine*. [Laughs]

LG: [Laughs]. That's probably true.

MC: Not to mention the Pavlovian journal of something or other that I had an article in. [Laughs]

LG: Well, this is great! Because the next question I want to ask you is how do you merge the feminism and psychology together? So maybe you could talk a little bit about some of that trajectory and that shift for you.

MC: Mhm. I made a big transition.

LG: Yes.

MC: When I was in my ...

LG: It sounds like it...

MC: First job in that little liberal arts college. They had a winter term of a month and I can't remember if someone mentioned it to me or I thought about it myself "Well wouldn't it be nice to teach something on the psychology of women." So, in 1975 I taught this winter term course.

And so many of my cohort had the same awakening. We went to look for material and we found out that our discipline had nothing about women; there was no research, there were no textbooks, you know, there was nothing.

LG: What year is this?

MC: This was '75. So I did find Rhoda and Florence's book. Rhoda [Unger] and Florence Denmark's *Woman: Dependent or Independent Variable?*. I mean what a title! What a title for the era! And I found Judith Bardwick and then Juanita Williams. And so I thought, the feeling that I had was, I was very indebted to the women who wrote the first textbooks. I used Janet Hyde's first book, Bernice Lott's, Irene Frieze's. Every semester I would adapt a different text. Then I would track down the references that were cited there because, of course, this was before the day when you could easily find materials; it was a very laborious sit-in-the-library-stacks kind of process.

LG: Yeah!

MC: So I taught myself the field. And I have written about this too. I wrote an article for a reader on women and gender about that transition; how I went from thinking that learning theory will keep me intellectually happy and that was enough, to thinking that my psychology had to connect more with who I was as a social being and a woman in society. And so I gradually moved over into social and spent the rest of my career working in that area.

LG: Okay. And do you remember what your first research topic was once you have made that shift? What your first study was?

MC: [Chuckles] no. I don't remember!

LG: Okay.

MC: I don't remember.

LG: Okay! That's okay! Does anything stand out for you from that time when you were making that transition in terms of the research you were working on? I mean, if anything stands out for you, you are welcome to...

MC: I moved from the small college in Iowa to West Chester University in Pennsylvania and I was going up for tenure there. And so I had publications in the behavior and brain sciences journal of...general...no, no, no, no... cognitive... I don't know, I don't even remember this is like another life, you know. But maybe it was JEP General - some high prestige journal. You know.

LG: Yeah...

MC: And then I had these publications on women and I was starting to get interested in the area of gender, language, and communication. So, some of my first publications were “What are the real and perceived differences in speech style? How do we account for these differences? Are they situational or socialized early on?” and that sort of thing. So when I went up for tenure - I remember one had to be interviewed by the university-wide tenure promotion committee. And they asked me about the learning articles and rather foolishly I said, “I am moving out of that area and into this other area.” And one person on the committee, who I was sitting in front of, he looked at it [my CV] and he said “Well those aren’t publications, those are about women!”

LG: No!

MC: And he went back to asking me about the other ones. So I got tenure, but I am sure that it wasn’t because of my feminist work.

LG: Yeah...

MC: I am sure it was because I had proof that I could do quote “hard science.”

LG: Wow.

MC: And then once I had tenure it was a natural matter to leave that behind and follow my interests, purely.

LG: Yeah. And in terms of the training and graduate work at the University of Delaware. So it sounds like you are doing a lot of experimental work there. Do you have any kind of sense of what your experience was like there and just any reflections on your training at Delaware?

MC: Pretty much I had a good experience because my mentor Fred Masterson was a fair-minded man and egalitarian person. And I had two little kids! You know, the other grad students did not. But I had these two little kids they were 5 and 6 when I started grad school.

LG: Wow!

MC: And so I am sure I was a major nuisance to Fred because up in the lab there was the corner with the crayons and the drawing paper and the soccer ball and all this stuff because I had to bring my kids to the lab. I had no money for baby sitters or... you know, I was a single mom! So Fred put up with all this and he treated me like a smart person and it was the first time I began to feel like a smart person like I could do this like I belong there, and Fred was a good mentor to me. And then there was Lindy Geis. There were other aspects that were, you know, sexism was rampant. People in the department; one person said he didn’t work with women.

(18:15)

LG: Pft! As a rule?!

MC: As a rule! You know, he wouldn't take female grad students because he thought they wouldn't carry on his legacy. You know, they would get married. And of course, I was bad evidence right there! Having already been married and having kids. So I remember there were difficulties, there was sexism. But I felt nurtured by Fred as a mentor and we were friends and as I said even after I finished my PhD we published several more things together kind of extending and then wrapping up our research. And people would say to me "You are publishing with your dissertation advisor?! I don't even speak to mine" but you know but we had a good relationship and that I think insulated me somewhat.

LG: Okay. We have started to talk about this a little bit: the trajectory of your career the themes and topics of your research practice, any policy work you may have done. So what would you say are kind of the overarching themes of your research career in the last 30 years?

MC: Mhm. Okay. Well I got interested in the whole area of communication because this was an era when people like Robin Lakoff, who is a linguist, was writing about [the idea that] there is a women's language which is tentative, hesitant, less functional than men's language and that this is part of the reason of why women experience of being devalued and discriminated against. There were people like Deborah Tannen writing both her scholarly and her very popular works, again claiming that there were these deeply socialized gender differences in the way people speak and communicate and that there was no good or bad way to communicate. But that women's style and men's style were inevitably producing conflict. And I thought that these formulations, particularly Tannen's formulation, left out a lot of the issues of power in relationships.

LG: Mhm. Mhm.

MC: And as I had learned well from reading in the psychology of women and gender that gender is an axis of power and you can't really look at sex differences without considering gender as a locus of power in itself. So, I tried to develop a line of research that would take into account power and the multiple meanings of discourse when doing research on gender, language, and communication. So I have gone into discursive psychology, quantitative methods that allow us to look at the context of a given speech utterance. Some of the early formulations, like Lakoff, they tended to assume that a particular speech feature always means the same meaning. So if you used a tie question, for example if a woman said "It's a really nice day. Isn't it?" the "Isn't it?" the tie question, always meant she wasn't sure of her opinion.

LG: Yeah.

MC: And that sort of thing.

LG: That's a good example of that.

MC: It's so naive.

LG: Yeah.

MC: You know, because a tie question can be [used] strategically for many sorts of purposes. So I was thinking about this for a long time and publishing my articles in this sort of area. And I was also on the editorial board of *Feminism & Psychology* for a long time and got to know Sue Wilkinson [and] Celia Kitzinger who were good colleagues. And Sue was editing a book series at Sage and so I wrote the book *Talking Difference*, and that came out in '95 and actually it is still in print. And people still use it in the classroom. And I think it is the piece of work in my career that I am most satisfied with because it did introduce a different way of thinking about gender and language and it gave a context for people to work in and develop from. And I think a lot of the people who later went on, especially the British researchers, to do more in discourse and language were influenced by the book. So that was a very satisfying project for me. I also put together, with colleagues, other works related to gender and communication but in more applied and specific settings. So I did a book on gender in education, issues like classroom climate, women's participation in the classroom, what factors influenced it. And I did both empirical journal articles and edited volume with colleagues on that topic. My first book was *Gender and Thought* which put together essays by people like Rhoda Unger, Jeanne Marecek, Michelle Fine, on issues of epistemology and research methods in psychology. So, I always had a very broad research agenda and I think is in part because I was always employed primarily in teaching institutions until I moved to the University of Connecticut. I never had access to the grant track so I did not develop a single, extremely focused grant-funded line of research. Rather I just picked up on what interested me at the moment.

LG: Mhm. Yeah.

MC: And I worked with people as it was possible, people from other places. I always had a great feminist network, I was really lucky. So I would work with different people on different projects and so my work is more diverse than a lot of people's work for that reason. And why was I always at teaching institutions? Because my partner is an academic and in our striving for an egalitarian relationship neither one of us ever took a job that would disadvantage the other. So we worked that out.

LG: Mmm..sounds wonderful.

MC: Well...it is wonderful.

LG: Yeah. And you have written a lot of textbooks also on feminist psychology and psychology of women. Can you tell me a little bit about, you know, what led to that and what your experiences were in putting together these teaching textbooks?

MC: Yeah! I am glad you asked.

LG: Yea. Of course!

MC: Because I love being a textbook writer.

LG: Yeah?

MC: I just love it! And you know when I was little I always wanted to be a writer when I grew up. And sometimes reviewers said of my journal articles “That reads like a detective novel”.

LG: [Laughs]

MC: “Could you make it a little bit more objective?” And I thought “That just means I have to write it better to get my values in there.” But I was interested in writing a textbook for a long time because I was teaching the course every semester and wanted to develop my own integrative viewpoint on it. I used a lot of other people’s textbooks with good results and I have learned from them. But I wanted to do my own. And I think it was in ‘87 I was on a visiting professorship at Hamilton College and I organized a conference and invited Rhoda Unger as a speaker and she and I started talking about doing it together, which made it seem more doable.

LG: Yeah.

MC: And we did. I think it was ‘88, our first edition was published and that book went into four editions. I like writing a textbook because I like communicating the importance of my discipline and the feminist perspective within it. And I like to think that it is really important to reach the next generation of psychologists before they harden into the discipline and accept its mainstream values uncritically.

LG: Right.

MC: So, my textbooks have been used for undergraduate and graduate courses. And I also think that it is really, really important help and be a part of producing educated consumers of psychology; people who when they pick up a newspaper and read the latest headline that says “Research shows: Boys better at math than girls” or “Research shows: masochism linked to domestic abuse” that they will be able to look at this research, critically think about it, evaluate its method, know some of the other research in the area. So maybe that’s idealistic but that’s why I wrote textbooks. And then the more selfish or personal reason was that being in teaching institutions primarily, and having a self-funded and self-directed research life, I needed a way to keep up with the field.

LG: Mhm.

MC: I needed a way to make myself read all that stuff that was coming out every year. And doing a textbook is fantastic because you have to read everything.

LG: Yeah.

MC: My new one just came out in March of this year.

LG: Yeah!

MC: It has over 300 new references.

LG: Waw.

MC: And I don't cite anything unless I read it.

LG: Yeah.

MC: So I now know what is going on for 2011 anyway! [Chuckles]

LG: That's amazing. Yeah.

MC: So writing textbooks has been a great source of joy for me. And I get letters from students, you know. Sometimes they say wonderful things like "It isn't nearly as boring as a lot of my textbooks".

LG: [Laughs]

MC: And I go "Great." Or you know people would say "This course changed my life" that has happened. So that's great!

LG: Yeah. I think I told you that I have used this textbook.

MC: Ow. Great!

LG: And the course does change their life, they say that often.

MC: Great.

LG: Yeah.

MC: Did you use the one with Rhoda or the newer one?

LG: The no, because I haven't taught it recently. So, the one with Rhoda, yeah, the feminist perspective.

MC: Yeah! That was a good book and Rhoda certainly did her share. And it's dated now though it's been a number of years

LG: It's 2000 I think?

MC: Since we have updated it. Yeah.

LG: Okay and I have noticed too that you have written lately about sex trafficking a lot in your recent publications. So can you tell me how you got into global research on this topic? And what [your] kind of trajectory into that research is?

MC: Mhm. At the University of Connecticut I have had a lot more privileged existence than I ever had before; a much lighter teaching load, much more research support, a very collegial and pro-feminist department. So it has been a great time and while in UConn I was encouraged and supported into applying for a Fulbright (31:04). Now I loved Nepal from my early days, in 1977 I went to Nepal by myself and trekked up to Everest base camp. And it was an adventure and it had nothing to do with psychology.

LG: Yeah.

MC: But I fell in love with Nepal and the cultures of Nepal and the people. What I thought was a once-in-a-life time adventure became “I have to go back, I have to go back.” So I kept going back whenever I could manage it and I was always trying to find a way to connect my psychological self with my Nepal self. But it wasn’t easy because psychology was very underdeveloped in Nepal. I did make connections with people at the university there and so on. And then in 2001, Virginia Leary, who had a Fulbright in Nepal, she had a teaching Fulbright, she organized an East-West health conference and we presented there. So it began to happen but it was very slow in being able to connect myself as a social psychologist with myself as the adventurous climber-hiker outdoor person. During this time, in 2001 and afterwards, I became aware of the problem of sex trafficking in Nepal. So I applied for and got a Fulbright senior scholar grant and I went to live in Kathmandu for a year.

LG:Wow!

MC: And I worked with an agency there called ABC Nepal which is a nonprofit – NNGO - that runs a shelter for trafficking survivors. It does women’s rights education, rural credit co-ops, they do work training for women who are in need, rural women, trafficking survivors, rape victims, abandoned women. And so I went to the office every day and went to their field offices and worked with them. My project goal was to try to help them develop interventions and evaluate them which [was] definitely social psych congruent.

LG: Yeah.

MC: You know. We didn’t get [an] awfully fine project, there was a coup, a riot, shut off the internet, there were riots and strikes and traffic jams all the time. You know, it was a difficult working environment. But I did get a full year’s exposure to the issue of sex trafficking; how it was and is conceptualized by Nepali people, how they are influenced by caste and class and western influence, and thinking about this problem, and some ideas about how we might improve interventions. So I put that together in the book which came out in 2010, and in several research articles. So because it was so frustrating trying to do sex trafficking while I was there I also got interested in the issue of how Nepalian women were coming with modernization and western influence so I also published some work on that with my Nepali research team.

LG: And is that work continuing now?

MC: Yes, but slowly because I have no funding, so I go to Nepal every couple of years as I can. We have a few more things in the pipeline but likely will not initiate any more projects in that area. I do though have a foster daughter now in Nepal that I am bringing up, my partner and I are bringing her up, and so I go to see her.

LG: Okay and you talk a little bit about, you mentioned the book that you were very proud of. Are there any other publications, you have a lot of books and research articles that you have written, is there one that you are particularly proud of? You feel as had the most impact?

MC: Jeanne Marecek and I together did a paper that was about feminist transformation in psychology and I think that's been influential. It certainly helped me to think through issues of "What is feminist psychology? Should it assimilate to the discipline? Should it remain distinctive?" So that one is one that I think has helped me develop and I hope has been helpful to other people. Most recently, with a grad student, I did a paper reviewing research on the sexual double standard and rather than do a meta-analysis we have reviewed all the quantitative and qualitative research and found very interesting results that were intertwined with research methodology. So, that one gets cited a lot. I don't know, but each one is a child that I am very proud of.

LG: Okay and you have also been given several awards and honors. Is there one that is more meaningful to you or is there one that you are particularly proud of receiving?

MC: it was great to get the AWP Distinguished Publication Award for the work with Ellen Kimmel (37:16) because Ellen and I are old friends. And we have shared many a night in tents up in some mountainside and many an adventure. And to work together as feminist psychologists too, that was great fun, and the book put together examples of innovative research methods for feminist psychologists. So there is this thread through my work of being aware of how the method creates the questions you can ask and the answers you can get. And so I am a methodological pluralist. I certainly don't reject quantitative methods by any means. I think we have wonderful, sophisticated, quantitative methods. I am also very interested in discursive methods, qualitative methods in general, and most of all what fascinates me is the intersection and the dialogue between and among different kinds of methods. So multi-method approaches. And in my research articles I generally try to combine at least two methods. So if I am using (38:34)

primarily a questionnaire or survey I will also use open-ended interviews on a subsample and I will compare them. So if I use discourse analysis then I will compare it to the empirical research that uses quantitative methods. So this methodological pluralism and intersection I think is something that comes through all my work.

LG:Mhm. Okay. What is your teaching philosophy? Do you have a teaching philosophy?

MC: A teaching philosophy...I started out being very influenced by the seventies movement to share power in the classroom. So I have always incorporated things in the classroom that allowed students to not only listen to me but to talk to me, and have me listen to them, and to talk to each other. So I try to structure my classroom to allow for those three kinds of dialogue to take place. And I built that in from the start so that it is a model of power sharing in the classroom and a more egalitarian model. That said, I think a teacher has legitimate power, expert power in the classroom and I am not comfortable with approaches that would abolish grading or allow students to decide what their grade should be and so forth.

LG: Yeah.

MC: So it is a tricky balance and it shifts from one group to the next, from one institution to the next. Probably as I have gotten older and had a different presence in the classroom. You know when you look just like your students power sharing has different implications than when you look like a different generation from them.

LG: Right.

MC: So I have always tried to be flexible and to share power. And I guess that's about all I would list as a philosophy the rest is just going there every day and having a good time, trying to make them have a good time and get excited about learning.

LG: Yeah. And have you been supervising students as well?

MC: Yea.

LG: Okay and so can you talk a little bit about the best and worst parts about mentorship and supervision?

MC: Ow - for me it's all best.

LG: Okay!

MC: You know, I didn't have PhD students until the last 13 years of my career. And it's been so wonderful. I am very happy to think that the future of feminist psychology is in the hands of these terrific smart young women who are just are picking up and going places where I couldn't possibly go. My most recent PhD student, she just finished off two weeks ago she just defended; she did a three-phase longitudinal study with a sample of hundreds of women on pregnancy as stigma in the work place. So she (42:22) assessed women when they were pregnant but had not come out at work yet as pregnant, after they came out as pregnant in the workplace, and after the birth of their child on whether they were going to return to work. And it is an incredibly sophisticated study with structural equation modeling and path analysis. And I am thinking "You go girl!" I could not have done that study, I could only give guidance on it.

LG: Yeah.

MC: But yeah, I love supervising PhD students and all of my students still keep in touch. Some of them we still have things in the fire that we are still writing up for publication. That's been a real high point for me to be able to have the latter part of my career to pass on feminist psychology to the next generation of psychologists.

LG: And you mentioned a few mentors you have had yourself, have you had any other mentors since then? You have mentioned Fred and um...

MC: And Lindy Geis.

LG: And Lindy Geis, yeah. Anyone else you can think of?

MC: No I think I had good collegueships with people. When I lived in Pennsylvania, a group around women's studies and psychology in Pennsylvania; Louise Kidder, Jeanne Marecek, Michelle Fine who was in Philly at that time, and the people who I have written with and done research with over the years.

LG: Okay. Can you talk a little bit about that group? And what you did together?

MC: Well there was the textbook with Rhoda.

LG: Okay. Even just informally, if you just...did you meet monthly or weekly in terms of the colleagues that you were mentioning?

MC: When I was in West Chester University where I spent 20 years of my career, I was part of a group that met weekly and it was interdisciplinary. There was an archeologist, a historian, a literary critic, a social work person, and myself. And it was a research support group and I don't think any of us could have made it without that. And we met every week and we set goals for each other. You know, you talk about what you are doing this week and you say "I have got to get to the library and read those three..." and the other people in the group would say "when you come back here next week you are going to tell us about what is in those three articles that you have been procrastinating now."

LG: Yeah.

MC: And so we really helped each other. And the other big support group was Division 35.

(45:10)

LG: Mmm...

MC: I got active in Division 35; I chaired a task force or two, I was on various committees, and did work for the division like when the journal *PWQ* was ready to look for a new publisher I was part of the publication committee that found the new publisher for the journal. And that gave me a terrific network just a terrific network, I used to love going to AWP and Division 35 meetings.

LG: Okay, I am going to ask you more specific questions about Division 35 and your involvement in a moment. But you have brought up a few things that I wanted to ask you about. You talked about the hostile environment - so I just wanted to ask you about any kind of discrimination that you have faced; gender discrimination, being a feminist, what was that like for you? If you have some examples to share?

MC: I think one of the biggest challenges for me was integrating the personal and the professional because my partner is a psychologist, Roger Chaffin (46:24), he is a cognitive psychologist. And we finished grad school together and we were both on the job market and at that time it was extremely rare for anybody to consider hiring two people.

LG: Hmm!

MC: They did not feel that they needed to or wanted to be bothered with that.

LG: [Chuckles] okay.

MC: You know, and it was felt that if you have two people in a department well what if they got divorced or you know. There was no accommodation for couples. And we have written a marriage contract the two of us in our effort to recreate...we have big ideas...we were going to recreate marriage, right? Starting with us! Right? And so we took a job at a small college in Iowa where we shared one post, we shared one salary.

LG: Waw!

MC: It was insanity! And of course we both worked full-time plus. So they got a great deal!

LG: [Giggles]

MC: But for four years, the first four years after grad school we did that because no one would take us seriously as an academic couple. He was offered a very good job at a Research I university and he went to them and he said "You know, I would love to take this job, my wife is finishing grad school too, could we accommodate?" And he didn't even ask for a tenure-track job or a full-time job, he just said "Could my wife have access to the subject pool, and an office, and maybe a course to teach?" And they said, "No, we are hiring you" and you know basically it was "Man up, if you are not willing to leave your wife behind we don't want you" and he turned down that job.

(48:40)

LG: Wow!

MC: And it put us on a different track, you know. So a very big theme in my life has been working with this attempt to create a truly egalitarian marriage, and to stay together and to each honor the other's professional commitment. And to do that in the division of labor at home, to do

that in child-raising, and to do it in our professional decision-making. So I have had, I think, an arrangement that is extremely unusual...

LG: Yeah.

MC: Even now.

LG: Yeah.

MC: In that I have a partner who truly respects my professional involvement and is willing to make the sacrifices for it. So that cushioned a lot of sexism. Was there institutional sexism? Yeah, absolutely.

LG: Can you just talk a little bit about what that looked like?

MC: Women being started out at lower salaries. I am not going to name names, but a department head that said to me "Well, let's hire the woman for this job because we can get her for a lot cheaper." The male candidate was right out of grad school too, he was just convinced that she would settle for less. Discrimination in tenure and promotion. I had to start a group [law]suit with the women at West Chester University when I went out for full professor that year. There were 15 men and 5 women who went up for promotion to full, which just about reflected the associate professor pool, so the promotion of people applying was proportionate. That year, a third of the men and not one of the women got promoted. And so I went to the other women and called them together and said "I could see, you know, if only one of us got it, but none and a third! Don't you think..." and they were very afraid and reluctant. Two of them were near the end of their careers and they didn't want to make waves. But we finally got it all together.

LG: Mhm.

MC: And our union, we paid union dues and they were supposed to be on the side of the faculty member, offered us no support at all. No support at all. So we took a state Equal Opportunities discrimination suit forward and it was quite an experience because the university immediately tried to start dividing us. They took me aside and said "How about we promote you?"

LG: Oh! My...

MC: And I said "You know what, it's too late for that. This is not about me, this is about women who are two years from retirement and they are still at associate professor" and two or three of the women were very lucky in that we had men in our department with very similar portfolios who had gotten promoted. The guy in my department gave me his portfolio. Of course all of this was private, you didn't

(52:37)

have access to other people's portfolios, you didn't know if you truly were inadequate or if there was a double standard. So the guy in my department gave me access to his portfolio and it was so interesting. He got promoted at exactly the same time. Our records were so comparable, except I had a few more publications than he did. But we had done the same kinds of service, the same kinds of teaching, published in similar journals. I mean it was incredible! And so with his portfolio they knew I was particularly dangerous as a test case so they took me aside, you know. But we persevered and in the end they settled and they asked us what we wanted. And we said we wanted a replacement for the time that we had spent having to pursue this; all those hundreds of hours trekking to Harrisburg and appearing in court and preparing all these materials and meeting and stuff. So they gave us a kind of reduced teaching load sabbatical kind of thing. And I think we didn't take a cash settlement and we all were promoted to full.

LG: Okay. That's fantastic!

MC: But you know, it was just...had we not done it collectively nothing ever would have happened.

LG: Yeah, it's powerful.

MC: And I think at the end they respected us for it not being about money but being about the justice and how you spend your time as an academic. So it was good then because the older women got to retire at full professor level with their pensions tied to that.

LG: Do you remember who the other 4 women were in this class action suit?

MC: They were in the Department of Speech Communication...

LG: And who were they, their names?

MC: Gosh that was so long ago.

LG: Yea. That's okay if you don't remember.

MC: I don't remember their names. They have long since retired and I have lost touch with them.

LG: Yeah. Okay, okay. And you have mentioned Division 35. So I wanted to ask you a little bit about your involvement with Division 35, SWAP, Association for Women in Psychology or any other feminist organizations. If you could tell me a little bit about...you know you have started to mention the task force and the committee so just give some reflections on 35 and AWP?

MC: I think one of the first things I did was a task force on feminist visions with Louise Kidder (55:20) and some other people. And it was a small thing we put together - a bibliography of feminist visions for societal change. Then as I said I was on the publication committee for the journal. Um...I did another task force on...can't remember...I think I did the journal thing twice...

LG: Can you talk a little bit about those journals, *Feminism & Psychology*, *PWQ*, I noticed on your CV that

(55:56)

you are on the editorial board of a lot of these different...

MC: Mhm.

LG: What is that experience like for you? Why do you want to be involved?

MC: Well I think that our journals are one of the most important developments in feminist psychology.

LG: Okay.

MC: If you look at the history of psychology new fields develop in part by starting new journals. So the old journals remain or eventually they change their names or whatever. But, the new journals provide a form for people to move from margins to center. And I have published in all three of those journals and I am so grateful that they exist. I think I had more active connection with *Feminism & Psychology* than the other two, the other two I was consulting editor and did a lot of reviewing and that sort of thing. But for *F&P* I was the U.S. editor for a long time. So I used to go to the U.K. once a year for the board meeting and help set the policy and help make decisions along with Sue Wilkinson, Celia Kitzinger and all the other people who were involved in the journal. I was book review editor for *PWQ* for a long while, that was fun. Again you extend your own network by reaching out to reviewers and getting to know people who are willing to participate in the work of the journal. And all together the journal involvement has been very satisfying and I am, you know, so happy to see all those journals thriving and doing well with the great editors they have had.

LG: Yeah. Okay, and just the last kind of question about career, you have had a lot of experience with administration, I noticed when I was looking at your CV, including directing the woman studies program. So can you tell me a little bit about this experience? What are the best and worst parts? Anything else you want to say about directing the women's studies program?

MC: At one point in the 80s, when people were becoming aware of the need for affirmative action and to get more women in administration, people were asking me "Do you want to apply for an associate deanship?" and that kind of thing. And I took that very seriously and thought about it and I do like organizing people around a common goal. So I thought "Well maybe this would work". And I did the Her's Leadership Seminar at Bryn Mawr (58:55) which is a six-week residential learning course for women who are going to higher education administration. So you learn the budgeting and fiscal end and the personal end and the academic end so that you could move into dean and provost and even presidential positions. But at the end of that sex

week immersion I kind of concluded that I could never give up my scholarship for it. It might have been something I could do, but there were things I could do better and loved even more.

LG: Yeah.

MC: But then there was the opportunity to go into women's studies administration as a way of helping develop women's studies and in a way of job mobility for me too. So I directed the graduate program at (1:00:04) the University of South Carolina for a couple of years and that was exciting. We developed a graduate certificate and hugely increased the enrollment in that from all areas of the university, and I also have a tenure commitment from the psych department there. And then when Connecticut hired me and my partner, we moved to Connecticut for four years, I directed the women's studies program there. It's a tough job women's studies administration.

LG: Mhm. Yeah...

MC: Because so often, and Connecticut was no exception, women's studies occupies such an ambiguous position. Being interdisciplinary it is often not a department, maybe it's a program maybe it's a...but it has often a deviant reporting pathway to the higher administration. You know, I was directing the program in Connecticut, first we reported directly to the Provost then we reported to the dean then we reported to a new administrative officer for multicultural affairs. You know, try to run a program when that is happening. But we did some excellent hires while I ran the program; we hired Anne D'Alleva, an art historian, feminist art historian, we hired Nancy Naples, a feminist sociologist, in dual tracks in their discipline and women's studies. We hugely developed the graduate certificate program in women's studies so now people in many, many areas and departments - from nursing to anthropology - they do their graduate certificate while there are working on their PhD.

LG: Amazing.

MC: And we had a number of great initiatives too. We tripled the number of majors in that time, undergraduate women's studies majors. And it's a good program, UConn. But it's very difficult to have your tenure home in one place, your administrative job in another, and literally be running back and forth in the snow.

LG: Oh God.

MC: [Laughs] So I left that post after four years and I confess happily retreated to be in the psych department full time. But my courses are women's studies courses, I advise people who are minoring in women's studies within the psych department, so I kept connections with women's studies, close connections.

LG: Okay we are going to have to speak up a little, sorry about that. [Noisy vacuuming]. Okay these are just a few last questions and concluding questions. How do you navigate personal and professional demands in your life?

MC: Well as I said earlier, for me it's very, very integrated because my partner and I both take very seriously the commitment to support each other's work. And sometimes we even work together which has been terrific when it's happened, but we are careful not to do that too much. You know, you have to have some boundaries there.

LG: [Giggles].

(1:03:36)

MC: Roger is a cognitive psychologist for a long time, many years, he worked on semantic memory. And then because of our mutual interest in music he got involved in a project trying to understand how expert musicians learn music for public performance. And when you think about it, it is probably one of the most demanding things that human memory is called upon to do.

LG: Yea.

MC: If you have to stand up walk on stage and play Rachmaninoff's third piano concerto from memory, in real time, perfectly as with respect to the notes and the timing. But not just that, you have to give a unique artistic performance, think what that takes/demands.

LG: Yeah.

MC: And they all perform from memory, all concert artists perform from memory. So we got involved in this project and it actually intersected with my interest in gender and communication because he was working with a female expert musician and they had a hard time sometimes communicating with each other. And I got in, three of us wrote a book together which is another piece that I am very satisfied with because to have the freedom and the luxury to say "I am going to do something totally different than I ever did before" at this point in my career, the last decade of my employment in psychology, and to have it become so exciting. Roger continued along that line of research, I read his papers we talk about that line of research but I am not super active in it. So managing the personal and the professional by now has become natural. It didn't start that way, we had years of the polite word is "negotiation".

LG: [laughs]

MC: The not so polite word was "We fought about it"! And we confronted each other, you know, and we duked it out. We figured out how can you honor your partner and your partner's work and do a fair share at home and be there for each other. And we are still together so it's been a long time now.

LG: Yea. Okay. What advice could you give to feminists entering psychology now?

MC: Hmm...of course feminist psychology is a lot more accepted than it was when I was started out. That's wonderful, you will never as a young person starting out – it's unlikely that you will ever have to face the kinds of obstacles that we had to face with no journals, no community, rampant sexism. But of course there is still a lot of subtle sexism and I think it's important to develop a proper healthy sense of entitlement to check your salary against the other folks, to make sure that you are getting everything you need to prepare for a tenure evaluation, to respect the importance of your work and convey that to other people, and of course to work on your campus for the gender equity issues that are still unresolved. What kind of parental leave do they give? Do they apply it to people who are adopting? To male partners? To lesbian and gay couples? To be out there looking for the issues that still need work in your setting and to give your commitment to doing that. But then I think the personal, not to take a back seat in your relationship, to try to develop an ideal of a relationship that is truly egalitarian and figure out what that means. And it doesn't mean 70-30 or 60-40 which is what many, many women still settle for we know from the research literature. So it means holding out for the real thing.

LG: Okay. And what do you think is the future of feminist psychology? You have started mentioning it a little bit. But if there are any other thoughts that you have about what remains to be accomplished or what you would like to see happening in the field.

MC: Mhm. Mhm. Sometimes I get perturbed by the fact that there is a lot of gender research that doesn't seem to be grounded in the critical thinking about the assumptions of psychology and society that characterize feminism. So to the extent that gender research has become assimilated...

LG: Yeah.

MC: I think it is a cautionary thing for us to look at. And then, should we keep the feminist edge?

LG: Mhm.

MC: But you know I have been involved in training people who are going to go out and teach and do research in gender in the next generation of psychology and I couldn't be more optimistic about them. The people that I know that are coming up out of grad school now, they are terrific, they will carry it forward. We now have the institutional framework, our Division 35, our AWP, our journals, and our feminist networks in all areas, that will be there for them so that they can connect to them and have an easier job carrying it forward.

LG: Okay. These are all the questions I want to ask. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about your career, or feminism, psychology that you want to share any reflections or thoughts?

MC: No, except that...

LG: Yeah.

MC: I haven't looked at all the profiles on the website but I have looked at many of them. Mostly people that I know well, or have written with, or old friends and colleagues. But I didn't find anyone who talked about their relationship with a partner and whether it had a negative or positive effect. And it seemed to me like people were closing the door on that aspect of it. And I know people who have had very supportive partners. Rhoda Unger (01:11:08), for example, she always jokes when she introduces Burt (01:11:12) she says "This is Burt my first husband" - they have been together forever. And Burt has always been a good, as far as I know, I don't know Burt and Rhoda's secrets, but I know that she has said that Burt supports her as a feminist psychologist and is proud of her work. Janet Hyde is married... I don't know if her profile is up but if you hadn't interviewed her...

LG: Yep.

(01:11:42)

MC: You should.

LG: Yep.

MC: I haven't looked at hers. So did she say anything about her marriage to John De Romero (01:11:49) and the fact that they write a terrific textbook together in sexuality?

LG: Yeah...

MC: There are lesbian couples in the field. Has that been easier or harder? So it just struck me, since for me it is so salient that my career development was so interlocked with my partner's career development and neither one of us would ever take a step that would leave the other behind or push the other too far ahead, for that matter.

LG: Yeah.

MC: So I kind of think this must be true for other people, and I think that it is a chapter that isn't being written yet.

LG: Yeah. So why do you think that's the case? Why do you think people are reluctant to talk about that?

MC: Well you could guess that maybe it's not as positive as they would like it to be. That maybe people have the more 70-30 kind of arrangement and know that, and don't kind of want to think about it. Maybe there have been marriage breakups or relationship breakups over career issues.

LG: Mhm.

MC: There must be people out there who are trying to make it work and feel that they are trying and that it is working.

LG: Yeah.

MC: You know, there must be!

LG: Yea and there are, there are.

MC: [laughing]

LG: Well thank you so much. This was a really, really great interview.

MC: Thanks, thanks!

(01:13:31)

©Psychology's Feminist Voices, 2012