Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Stephanie Riger

Interviewed by Leeat Granek
San Francisco, CA
August 16th, 2007

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SR: Stephanie Riger, Interview participant
LG: Leeat Granek, Interviewer

LG – The interview is going to be divided up into three parts. I'm going to start by asking you some general questions about your feminist identity. Would you like to put this on [passes SR a microphone]? This is just in case the camera doesn't work, we have alternative modes of recording.

SR – You're smart to do that.

LG – Yeah.

LG – So the first part will be about feminist identity, the next part will be more specific questions about your career and then I'll conclude by asking general questions about feminism and psychology.

SR – That's fine.

LG – Okay. And if at any time during the interview you feel like there's something you want to add or expand, even if I don't ask you about [it], just feel free to jump in and tell me what you want me to know.

SR – Okay.

LG – Okay? So the first question is a very general question. How and when did you first develop a feminist identity?

SR – Well, in 1968 I was in my first consciousness-raising group. I think it was really the temper of the times. Women's liberation had just started. The idea of getting together with other women and talking about our lives was very exciting and it was new. And now it was the summer between when I graduated college and I started graduate school, and I would say that was the first time I heard the word "feminism", and that was the first time a lot ideas of ideas about feminism occurred to me.

LG – Where were you?

SR – I was in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the time, which was a hot bed of student activism. I had been an undergraduate there and I stayed there for graduate school. And I was there over the summer between undergrad and grad school, and a few of us got together and started talking, and that's how it all began.

LG – And your undergraduate degree was in?

SR – Psychology.

LG – Psychology. Was there any exposure to women's studies or feminist activities at, in your undergraduate?

SR – It didn't exist yet.

LG – It didn't exist? Okay.

SR – No. I think I took one of the first psychology of women classes when I was a graduate student. So, there wasn't any, there weren't any academic offerings. And there, the anti-war movement was going on at the time, and that was very exciting, and women were beginning to realize that they were treated as second-class citizens within that movement, and they began to protest, and they recognized that what was going on in that movement was a reflection of what had gone on in larger society. So that's how it all began.

LG – And were you involved in feminist activities like the protest after that? So you started in a consciousness-raising group, so what kinds of things?

SR – Oh sure, oh yeah. Oh, we did many, many things. *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, where we looked at our own cervixes, which was something of an acrobatic feat, using mirrors. We started a help line. I think it was called "Metro Help". That was very important to me because I was helping to train workers, and I was also working on that line. And one night I got a call from a young woman who was being beaten up by her boyfriend, and I could hear him pounding on the door to the bedroom – she had locked herself in the bedroom – and many years later it sounded like the O.J. Simpson tapes.

LG – Wow.

SR – It was very similar. I had no idea what to tell her, other than to call the police. I just had no idea, and it seemed to me that we ought to think about what to do for women in that situation. I didn't act on that immediately, but I think that planted a seed that later led to a lot of research I found on women and violence.

LG – I was going to ask a question about that, yeah.

SR – So we did those things, we baked bread, we had fun. There were a lot of things going on in those days. It was a very exciting time. It was a time when people believed

that they could create themselves. You know, that they could be what they wanted to be. So, it was very exciting. At the same time, there was a great deal of social pressure. Anybody who wore lipstick, anybody who wore a skirt, god forbid you should wear high heels, any of those things were not acceptable in the circles in which I was running.

LG – It sounds sort of dogmatic at the opposite extreme. The opposite way.

SR – It was, yes. It was dogmatic, on the other hand it was also breaking boundaries too.

LG – Right. Okay, and then what attracted you to continue your degree in psychology in graduate school and how do you then merge that consciousness, that feminism that was emerging with the work that you were doing?

SR – I decided to continue in graduate school because I had no idea what else to do.

LG – That never happens!

SR – That was part of it, and the other part of it was I got accepted to graduate school at the University of Michigan, and I thought "Who am I to turn down the University of Michigan?" which, at the time, was one of the best graduate schools. I had graduated in December of '67. I graduated a semester early – I was a very obsessive undergraduate, and I took lots of extra classes, so I had extra credits. I graduated early and I didn't want to leave Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor was a wonderful cocoon, it was really a great place to live. So, I got a job as a research assistant with this psychology professor.

LG – Who was it?

SR – Melvin Manis, who did work on cognition. And I ran laboratory experiments for him, where I put out an array of photographs, 72 photographs of someone from frowning to smiling, and we'd pick a particular range, and then we'd show somebody a photo from outside that range and have them judge how happy or sad the person was. It was about context effects and communication. Very far from anything in a real sense. But it was interesting, and Mel Manis was a nice person to work for, and it kept me in Ann Arbor. And I thought, well, I can do this, so I thought I would apply to graduate school, and then I got in. And, at the time, they write you the most wonderful letter. They say, "We've gone through dozens of applications, and we want you". And I thought this was - I was very touched. And then I talked to my fellow graduate students, and I found out everybody had gotten the same letter. It was a little less touching. But that's how I got in and that's how I started. And there were a number of other wonderful women in graduate school at that time who I remained friends with.

LG – Can you tell me like who?

SR – Sure. Susan Saegert who has done a lot of work in environmental psychology. Diane Ehrensaft, who is a psychoanalyst who has written some wonderful books on parenting and so forth. She is in Oakland, so I see her during the summer. And some

other people too. Lots of people at that time were very effected by the women's movement, and we had a consciousness-raising group that was different from the first one I was in that was all mostly psychology female graduate students, and we talked a lot about psychology, and how psychology did not understand how that women don't always act the same way as men and had been based on men, and so on. There's a wonderful article that you probably know about by Naomi Weisstein.

LG – Right. I was just thinking about that, how psychology constructs the field as you were talking I was thinking about that article - 1968.

SR – It came out right at that time and that was just a bombshell for us. It just really opened our minds, and we became very uppity graduate students. So we gave all our professors, I think, a really hard time. But we had a lot of fun.

LG – Okay. And how did that then combine with the kind of research that you were doing with what was going on as you were going through graduate school?

SR – Well, I did my dissertation on the impact of being in a consciousness-raising group.

LG – Oh! Wow!

SR – [inaudible] It was an interesting study and what I found was that people who were in consciousness-raising groups had already changed their attitudes. So, the consciousness-raising group didn't have an impact on locus of control beliefs. It helped them work out an ideology that fit with their changing beliefs. So, that was my dissertation and that was directly from being in a consciousness-raising group myself.

LG – Did you have a hard time picking that topic? Did they give you a hard time about it?

SR – Not at all. No. Patricia Gurin was my graduate advisor. She was very supportive. In fact, she said to me one day "Oh doing this dissertation is going to be fun!" I thought she was out of her mind! How could research be fun? I was a really anxious graduate student. So I didn't have trouble then. There were a number of faculty. Michigan was a very supportive place. It was very liberal, the faculty were very accessible, they were friendly. After all, they were in this top school. They didn't have to compete with anybody. They were relaxed in terms of their ego, although there were some exceptions. But they were supportive.

LG – Okay. And so the, how did you then move from then to, you mentioned you were doing work on violence earlier. And that is one of the major themes that I noticed in your C.V., that a lot of work was violence against women. So what drew you to that topic, and how does, if at all, does your feminism intersect with that?

SR – I knew, I had moved to Chicago, I wanted to emphasize teaching. So I took a job at a small private liberal arts school, and I became friends with some people at

Northwestern. At that time in the early 70s, the government was putting a lot of money into research on crime and the impact of crime on communities. And some people at Northwestern were doing a study on fear of crime, but they weren't looking at women's fear of rape, and I thought that was a big omission. So one of the people at Northwestern and I wrote a grant proposal together on women's fear of rape, and we got it funded and we did a big study – a three city study – on fear of rape and how that effects women living in cities. And from there I started at looking at other forms of violence. So that's how I got into that topic.

LG – Okay. Wow. Just like that you thought, you thought up that topic?

SR – Well, fear of, women's fear of rape?

LG – Yeah.

SR – Well, we were also influenced by Susan Brownmiller's book *Against Our Will*, where she talks about fear of rape as an issue in the social control of women. And there was no research on that that I knew of. There was research on rapists, mostly rapists who live in prisons, and there was research on the fear of crime. But there wasn't research on the impact of fear of rape, and I think that when you're talking about women living in cities, fear of rape has a tremendous impact on how they live their lives, on where they go, and whether they go out at night, all those kinds of questions. So we did that study and that sort of went on for a long time. It was a very big survey, and then we, and then I sort of got involved in more and more research on violence against women.

LG – Okay. And, as you look back on your program of research, can you think of some other themes that came up for you, other than violence against women?

SR – Well, a couple things I've written, I wrote because I reacted to what sort of was going on. For example, I have a paper on women in management. I wrote that paper because at the time there was so much discussion on how women should dress for success, and they should learn to be team players, and all kinds of things like that, and I thought that was just a bunch of bull. And it was after reading one Sunday supplement in the newspaper on how women are not going to succeed because they don't have the right clothes, or they don't play golf, or whatever, whatever it is they needed. I thought that that was ridiculous, and I sort of channeled my anger into writing a paper saying women don't succeed because there's discrimination against women in careers, in professional life, and in my professional life too, and that's what we ought to be paying attention to, and here are some ways that it works itself out. That women are not perceived – women doing a certain behaviour – are not perceived in the same way as men doing that behaviour. There was a lot of social psychology research at the time, but it hadn't really been pulled together at that time. So I wanted to pull it together. And I did. In that paper. And that's where that came from.

LG – What in your view makes a psychologist a feminist? A feminist psychologist?

SR – I think it's raising questions about status and power, and whether groups of people are discriminated against. So its women, ethnic groups, racial group, other kinds of groups too, sexual orientation, et cetera. I don't make distinctions among all of those. But I think it's basically raising certain questions. Are people treated a certain way because of their group identity or because of who they are and what they do, and so on. And then there's also an action component. It's not enough just to sort of think good thoughts, but you have to do something with that.

LG – I was just going to ask you that question! You had a prolific career in publishing books and articles. What, two questions, what publication are you most proud of, and which do you think has had the most impact? And are, you know, they could be the same or different.

SR – I think the one I'm most proud of is the one on epistemology, because that was really hard to do. Wading through postmodern verbiage was a real difficult thing. And I wrote that paper because I was on sabbatical in 1990 at Stanford University, and I was located at the Center for Research on Women and Gender there. At the time it was called the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, IRWG, a very unfortunate acronym. I think they changed the name after that. Everybody around me – this was an interdisciplinary centre – everybody around me was heavily steeped in postmodernism, and I did not know what they were talking about. I mean, we were on two different wavelengths, and I thought, well, I have to figure this out, what are they, what are they talking about? So I started reading, and talking to people, and reading, and I thought, in some ways, like the women and management paper, there were sort of bits of knowledge around and no one had really pulled it together. But I wrote that paper so I could learn what this was about, what postmodernism was about. And it was not easy.

LG – No. It's a, it's a very perplexing body of literature.

SR – Yes. It's also very unsettling because it challenges some of the basic epistemological assumptions of psychology. There's a real world out there, we can measure it, or we can come very close to measuring it accurately, and the world looks the same to you and I, et cetera. And postmodernism says you're kidding yourself, don't be ridiculous! So it was really challenging at a very fundamental level. And I worked through it in that paper. So I'm very proud of that paper. I, I don't know if it's had an impact. We could look at the publication record.

LG – Oh, it's certainly had an impact. Yeah, certainly. We read it in several classes, and I give it to my students to read.

SR – Oh! Good!

LG – So, it's definitely had a very profound impact.

SR – One of the things that I'm really big on is clear writing. In fact, I teach a writing class. So, I really wanted to write that paper without postmodern jargon, and that was a

challenge too. I think the papers that I am most proud of are the essays that challenge the sort of accepted thinking. That paper would be one. There's another one I wrote on what's wrong with empowerment. I do a lot of work in Community Psychology, which is Division 27, and everybody was saying empowerment is, you know, the key thing. And I said, "Wait a minute!" So I think that paper has had an impact, a minor impact, in that field. People at least have to attend to it, and then they go on and say yay or no. So that makes -

LG – Okay. That's a great answer! You've received two distinguished publication awards. So one for this, I think, for the epistemological debate, and the other for the women and management paper, which you were talking about. Can you tell me a little about the development of this research, and why you wrote these articles? So I guess you did answer those questions already. Can you tell me how they were received?

SR – Well, I got awards for them both, so -

LG – Before the awards though, when you were presenting this at conferences, or was it something that was well received?

SR – Yeah. Well, it was well received by feminists. One thing I did, and I don't even remember which paper, it might have been the epistemology one, was in writing that paper I wanted to make sure that women got credit for the work they had done. So I used first names as well as last names in the citations.

LG – Yes. I noticed that.

SR – And I was really ready to fight because I didn't think the *American Psychologist* would let me do that. To my great disappointment, it was totally [fine]. I was ready to stand on my high horse with that one, but I didn't have to. They just said okay. So that was that.

LG – Small victories.

SR – Yeah.

LG – Okay, so I will not ask you the explicit ontology-epistemology question, unless you change your mind and want to.

SR – Let's do it later.

LG – Let's do it later. You've also done work on pedagogy, so I didn't know you were teaching writing classes. But one of the things you did talk about, or that I saw on your C.V. was the chilly climate for women in the classroom. Can you tell me a little bit about what drew you to this research and how that had developed?

SR – Sure. I started teaching psychology of women a long time ago. I have a couple little papers on sort of "how to" projects in psychology of women, so I've always been interested in teaching. And I've been interested in how students treat teachers as well as how teachers treat students, and a number of people that I taught with in women's studies – not so much in psychology, but in other disciplines – have a lot of grief from their students. Especially when I moved to a big urban university, and the students were older, and more street-wise, and less respectful in some ways.

LG – So what do you mean grief? When you say grief, what do you mean?

SR – They would challenge the authority of the teacher.

LG – Okay. Not the intellectual authority, but just be disruptive.

SR – No, the intellectual authority of the teacher.

LG – Okay. Okay.

SR – And I wondered if female faculty got support from their peers in situations like that. And then I also saw when I became, one of the reasons I was hired at the university I'm now at, was because at the time at the time they had maybe one other female faculty member. So they brought me in. And people would be very nice, decent human beings, and inadvertently say things that were discriminatory that they had no idea that they were saying. So, I became interested in whether females got respect from their peers, and whether that respect translated into behaviours like being on the same committees, having the same salary, getting the same resources, and so on. So I got interested in that. And I did that paper. And we, I have been on numerous committees looking at the status of women in the university where I've been teaching. And we used that scale that was in that paper, and I've gotten requests from all over the country to use that scale. So, it seems to be useful.

LG – Yeah. Very useful, yes. One of the conferences you organized was on the collaboration between activism and research on domestic violence and sexual assault. So this is going back to the question earlier. Can you talk a little about the intersection between social activism, feminist activism, and academic research? What should the role of a psychologist be in promoting activism? What are the tensions? What are the opportunities in this intersection? So you can answer any or all of them, of those questions.

SR – Okay. Where should I start? I've always been a, I mean, to me, being a feminist has an action component. I was brought to my university, partly in the Psychology Department and partly as the Director of Women's Studies. And it seemed to me that if, especially in women's studies, there was a lot of knowledge that could be useful to people outside the university. So I organized a couple of conferences that drew in activists. And I'm located in Chicago. Chicago has a very strong, big, solid, feminist activist community. So, there were lots of people -

LG – [inaudible] {0:23:45}.

SR – Yes. There were lots of people who [were] interested in participating in that and being a part of that. So we had a joint planning session for the conference and people came and it worked out very well. And then we did another one that was strictly on violence against women, because the anti-violence community in Chicago is very big also. We even have somebody in the Mayor's office who works on violence against women. So it's great. It's a very, very sophisticated, politically savvy group of activists in Chicago. And I really think that if the knowledge we have is useful it ought to be out there. We ought to, as somebody, who was it, George Albee [0:24:30] who said give it away [it was George Miller]. I think we ought to do that.

LG – Now do you say that as a feminist or as a psychologist?

SR – Both.

LG – Okay. I guess I'm asking because I'm wondering about what the role of a psychologist should be in promoting activism or giving it, giving it away? Because for the feminist piece it's very clear where that orientation comes from. The psychologist is a little less clear.

SR – I think it's difficult to answer because psychology spans for such a wide range of things. There's some people whose work is directly applicable to the outside world, and there's other people whose work is basic science and may or may not be useful 100 years from now, or 50 years from now, or even 25 years from now. But it's difficult to say how we should apply it immediately.

LG – Okay. And is there, can you think of any specific activist project that came out of those conferences?

SR – Well, we continued to have relationships with the activists. And then, later on that fed into research that I have done, that my students have done, and that other people at UIC [University of Illinois at Chicago] have done on violence against women. We made a lot of contacts, and we've done research together since then.

LG – That's so great. Your C.V. mentions that you sit on several editorial boards for academic journals. Can you tell me about what those experiences were like for you? Which journal did you most enjoy working on, and why?

SR – I won't mention the names of any journals.

LG – Okay.

SR – I hate doing that.

LG – Okay. That's no problem.

SR – I do that as an obligation to the field. One reason I hate doing that is that people write so badly, I mean it's really [dense prose] {0:26:31} to figure out what people are saying. And the other reason is that statistics have become so complicated that they lead the content in a lot of cases, instead of the content leading the statistics. So, people take this tiny minute little issue, and they reduce it to its smallest possible dimension, and then they sort of whap it with this sledgehammer, and it's just not very interesting at the end. But that's not always true. Every now and then you find something that's terrific and interesting and good and that's a pleasure to read.

LG – Okay. What about involvement in feminist organizations in psychology? Involvement in Division 35? Could you tell me a little about the Task Force on Women and Poverty and how you got involved in that? And what your relationship is with Division 35 in general?

SR – I've been more active in Division 27. It always seemed to me that there were lots and lots of active feminists in 35 and there weren't as many active feminists active in other divisions.

LG – I'm sorry. I don't know what Division 27 is?

SR – It's Community Psychology.

LG – Oh. Community. Okay. Okay.

SR – So, I had been active there because I wanted there to be a feminist voice there. But I've done a few things in this Division, and a Task Force on Poverty. A lot of the work on violence against women that I do, the research that I do involves poor women. So it seemed to me to be natural to be part of that Task Force. And now I'm Chairing an Awards Committee. I've done different things when I've had the time to do that. But I've been more involved in that other Division. I've been on the Board of the other Division and so on, because I wanted to raise a feminist voice in other places.

LG – Okay. Do you have a teaching philosophy?

SR – Interaction with students is the most important thing. I have to lecture in the fall, I hate to lecture. I really don't like to do it. I think that the interaction between students and teacher and among students is where people develop their thinking skills. So I try to create classes where as much of that can happen as possible. And I've been very lucky with my students. It's been great to work with them.

LG – What's the best part of being a supervisor or a mentor?

SR – Watching people develop. People come in, if you're talking about graduate students, they're scared, they're nervous, they're insecure. And five years later they

leave and they're ready to do it. And watching that transformation take place is very gratifying.

LG – Okay, and the most challenging aspect?

SR – The most challenging aspect? People have a lot of expectations of female faculty. They want to be nurtured. I'm not a warm, fuzzy person. I don't think I'm hostile or excessively critical, but I expect people to do a job and do it well. And I don't say good job when I'm not real [sincere]{0:30:15-18} about it and sometimes that's difficult. I think people bring to female faculty a lot of their, if you'll excuse the expression, "mother issues". I've noticed that as I got older that happened more. I'm sure they bring "father issues" to male faculty. But sometimes they try to work out those issues, and that gets in the way of doing work together.

LG – Yeah. You'd be amazed at how often that answer comes up in almost all of the women I've interviewed.

SR – Really?

LG – Yes. They say that.

SR – Interesting.

LG – It is so interesting. It is so interesting. Did you have any mentors?

SR – Well, Pat Gurin, was very good to me, was very supportive. Richard Mann was also very supportive at Michigan. But at those times, we were very uppity and wanted to do things ourselves, and we mentored each other to that extent. I had an anti-mentor. When I started graduate school we had a picnic. I went to this picnic just before school started. And one of the professors there said, "Oh you female graduate students, you're all going to get married and drop out". And every time I thought about dropping out, and graduate school was hard, every time I thought of dropping out I thought I can't do this because he's going to say, "I told you so" and they won't let other women into this graduate program. So I actually have to thank that man because who knows if I would've stuck through it, all the hard times, without, you know, feeling the need to show him. So I think of him as my anti-mentor.

LG – That's great! We all need an anti-mentor.

SR – Yes. Don't you know it.

LG – Which accomplishments are you most proud of and why?

SR – I think helping to make research on violence against women a legitimate area, topic area. I started doing this work in, I think '77, and people said to me "Don't work on that topic. You'll never get to be president of APA [American Psychological Association]!"

And I thought "okay, I have no interest in being president of APA, I'm going to work on this topic." But it was frowned on, it was a taboo topic at that time, and it's now very accepted as a legitimate research area. And I think people doing research in this field, myself and lots and lots of other people who did what I think of as respectable research helped make that transition. So I'm proud of that. The epistemology paper we've already talked about, I'm proud of getting through all that postmodern jargon I had to read, et cetera. I'm proud of all of it, actually.

LG – What would you like to see happening in the field of psychology in terms of the research that you do?

SR – That I do?

LG – Yeah.

SR – Well, that's very simple. I'd like more grant funds to be there.

LG – Specifically to the violence against women research?

SR – Yeah. Well, what's happened over the last four to five years is that is going to terrorism, anti-terrorism research, and it's not going to anti-violence research. Or activism, although there has been good funding support for violence against women activities. But in terms of research it would be great if there was more resources available for that. Is that okay?

LG – Yes, yes. Okay. What kinds of barriers, obstacles, discrimination have you experienced because of your feminism or because of being a woman? So, that example you just gave is a perfect example with the anti-mentor. Any other experiences like that as you were going through graduate school? Your career?

SR – Well, the time I went to graduate school, we were, we had banded together, and no one gave us any grief. The faculty were sort of "What are these people doing?" But they let us do it, you know. I don't think we were discriminated against. If I've been discriminated against since then it's not to my face. So, it may be more subtle, and it may be more difficult to be aware of it. But I haven't noticed being discriminated against. I think I was there at just the right time. I think that times changed. For example, they wanted female faculty, so one of the reasons I got hired was because I was female. I think that actually helped me at that time.

LG – And you said you were the second faculty member to be a female…

SR – In that department, yes.

LG – … And what was that like for you? To be in a faculty with just one other woman?

SR – Well, it helped that she was there and was very noted, she was a very significant researcher. This was Shari Diamond {0:35:46}. And people were welcoming and encouraging, so it was okay. And after that, lots and lots of female faculty got hired, and as you know psychology has a lot of females in it these days. So it wasn't as compelling an issue.

LG – Okay. How have you balanced the demands of your personal life with your professional life?

SR – I think being an academic is a great job to have if you also want to have a family, which I do. I have two sons and a husband. And you have a lot of time flexibility. I didn't have to be any place from 9-5, I could be where I had to be. And I could be somewhat flexible with my schedule. And I had summers where I could be at home and so on. So that helped a lot. And the other thing that helped was buying help. Meaning day care, cleaning people, all that kind of stuff. Farming all that out and being able to afford to farm that out was how I survived. I don't cook {0:37:11}, so, my children have not had too many home cooked meals, but they have survived. They're okay.

LG – Okay. What advice could you give to feminist women working in psychology now?

SR – Let me say a bit more about the last question. And that is I didn't have my first child until I was 36, until I already had tenure. So, the most difficult time, I think, for people in their careers is when they want to have a family, and they want to get tenure at the same time. And I didn't do that. I got tenured first. And then I had the kids. And that helped a lot too and made it much easier.

LG – Yeah. And that seems to be what's happening now as well in the field. That people are a lot of women are waiting until they have tenure to start their families.

SR – Some of my students are having babies while they're in graduate school.

LG – None of them? Some of them? Or none?

SR – Some graduate students. And I just think having a baby and doing graduate school is hard enough, but then having a little child and trying to get tenure is really tough. A couple are succeeding. {0:38:24}.

LG – I've actually noticed that trend as well. And I think there's some fear because I think there are some women who in the previous generation who did that and weren't able to do everything because they waited too long. So, I think its shifting because of the fear. Not being able to [have children] {0:38:42}.

SR – It's hard to know the right thing to do. I mean, [having] kids is never convenient, but it's great.

LG – Okay. Advice. Advice to give to a feminist woman working in the field. Any advice?

SR – You have to be knowledgeable about traditional skills in psychology in order to get credibility. But you don't want to deviate too far from what you want to do. If there's something you feel passionate about, go for it. Who knows 10 years from now whether your field is going to become the hot topic, in the way that rape and sexual assault and violence became much hotter topics 10 years after I started mine. So if there's something you really want to do, or a topic you're interested in, go for it. But be able to defend the way you go for it to traditional people who are going to challenge you. It doesn't necessarily mean using traditional research methods, but it means having your arguments ready for why what you're doing is a good way to do things.

LG – What do you think remains to be accomplished or changed in the field?

SR – In the field of psychology?

LG – Yes. That's a big question.

SR – It's a really big question. Psychology has veered back to its biological roots. I mean that's all of the, sort of, hot topic now. Even social psychology involves biology. And people have forgotten about context, or are much less cognizant about context, and I think that's a grave mistake. And I think it's possible to include biology, which I think is fascinating, but you have to include context also, or you're missing half the picture. And psychology goes back and forth, and it goes back and forth as the larger societies political leanings shift back and forth. So we're in a very conservative time now, and that's when people focus within the person. And that's what they're doing now. And I'm hoping that sometime soon the political leanings will shift back to a more liberal climate, and we will look not just within the person but the person in context. So that's what I hope psychology does.

LG – Okay. What in-roads have feminists made in psychology?

SR – Oh, I think feminist have made enormous in-roads in psychology. I haven't looked in intro textbooks lately, but I'm assuming there's some mention of psychology of women in those textbooks. Anyone who does research now has to pay attention at least nominally to gender. They may not do it in a very sophisticated way. They may not do it beyond analyzing male versus female but at least they know they have to pay attention to gender. So I think that's good. There've been, psychology as a guild, there have been female presidents of APA. There is one now. There have been feminists. I mean, that's an enormous change from 20 or 30 years ago. So things have changed. But changing a discipline, an academic discipline, it's like steering the Queen Mary. Things change very slowly and gradually over time. And I think the issue is how deep those changes are. And we'll see.

LG – And, what road blocks do you see for feminists, specifically, in the discipline? If any? That was a very grammatically awkward question!

SR – I think the focus within the person is a road block because feminist research really looks at women in context. And if that's not trendy, or acceptable, or a hot topic, then that doesn't get as much attention as it ought to. So that's one road block. People are concerned about the large number of women in psychology, and they think that the status of psychology is going to go down because there's so many females and not enough males. So that may be a road block to young women coming up.

LG – Yes.

SR – There you go.

LG – Okay. I think that's all I would like to ask. Is there anything else that I haven't mentioned or that I haven't asked that you feel is important for me to know about yourself, your career, psychology, feminism, your research? Anything that I may have mentioned or anything that I haven't mentioned that's important to you?

SR – I can't think of anything now, but I'm sure three hours from now I will! I can't think of anything now.

LG – Okay. Well, if there is something that comes up later, you can just e-mail me or let me know.

SR – Sure. Yeah, I will.

LG – Thank you so much.

SR – Oh, this was fun!

LG – This was a wonderful interview. Thank you.