

## A Spirit of Two Research Circles: In Memory of Carolyn Pope Edwards

Richard A. Shweder, is the Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago.

When we were both students Carolyn and I were participants in two monumental and memorable research circles (one or the other or both of which enriched the lives of many of us in this room). The first time I ever trekked into an anthropological field site I was with Carolyn. And I was the one who was huffing and puffing. Carolyn was in far better physical shape than I in the summer of 1967 when we climbed to 8000 feet and hiked into the Zinacanteco village of Apas. With us were Chep Hernandez (a key Zinacanteco informant and guide), the multi-talented John Haviland, musical instrument in hand (he had been to this village before and knew what was coming), Leslie Haviland, and my wife Candy Shweder, who also outstripped me on the hike. As you undoubtedly guessed one of those two memorable research circles surrounded Evon and Nan Vogt and was located at Harvard University and San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico.

We slogged into Apas that day in the middle of a mid-year renewal ceremony, an all-male event which was in full inebriated swing. That first field experience was quite memorable, perhaps because after a few hours of drinking someone walked up to me, had a look and said, "you are going to die." That was pretty much how I felt: I spent the rest of the afternoon in wretched condition in a nearby corn field. Carolyn, Leslie and Candy had a far better time of it. Under the guidance of the women in the Hernandez household they learned how to make tortillas and they stayed healthy.

I am sure Carolyn labored intensely on her own personal ethnographic research project that summer. Fieldwork is its own special kind of adventure. Life in and around the Harvard Chiapas Project in 1967 was a time rich in all sorts of kinds of adventures (horseback riding in the mountains for example), contact with visiting anthropologists and psychologists (George Collier, Dwayne Metzger, the psychiatrist Pete Fabrega and even the pediatrician Berry Brazelton showed up to assess the reflexive responses of Zinacanteco babies), music and dances at the

Vogt's ranch and "R and R" at the local San Cristobal bath house (which as I recall was one of Carolyn's favorite locations when she was not off doing field work, in part because as I recall she actually had a residence there).

We had originally met a few months before that trek into Apas. She, a Radcliffe College undergrad, and I, a first year Harvard graduate student (along with several other undergraduates and one other graduate student) had been invited by "Vogtie" to spend the summer on his Chiapas project. Vogtie and Nan (his wife) were famous for their sociality and love of music and dancing so the partying began early and often at their home in Weston, Massachusetts and we met occasionally in a preparatory training seminar. That was the beginning of our friendship. Around that time Caroline Pope married a young economist named Rick Edwards, who was very interested in the work of Karl Marx.

The other research circle in which Carolyn participated surrounded Beatrice and John Whiting and was located at Harvard University. The circle extended to Tisbury Great Pond on Martha's Vineyard (where the Whitings owned a vast amount land between pond and ocean; and of course, included the Child Development Research Unit (CDRU) in Kenya. In those days Bea and John returned home to Martha's Vineyard every summer (and almost every other moment they could) bringing some of Harvard and the rest of the international academic world with them.

It was there, after Carolyn had started working very closely with Bea Whiting on the comparative study of gender development that she and Rick and Candy and I really got to spend some quality time with each other, often with the Whitings. Tears came to my eyes when I first learned of Carolyn's premature death. They came to my eyes again when I received a note from Rick Edwards, which he enclosed with a recently published copy of her co-edited Oxford University Press book on parenting and family structures – a note recalling those "good times long ago", as he put it. Carolyn and Rick bought some land from John and Bea and built a house right next to them on Tisbury Great Pond (which they occupied for a few years) just around the time Candy I also settled in part time on the Vineyard. That remarkable era and place I am about to conjure came to an end in 2003

when Beatrice Whiting died. Many of you were lucky enough, as was Carolyn, as was I, to experience it.

What came to an end was a distinctive intellectual life style, which was inseparable from the atmosphere John and Bea Whiting had created and sustained for several decades at their Vineyard homestead. Carolyn and Rick were very much part of it and their presence on the pond helped to make those years in the late 1970s and early 1980s ever so meaningful.

If you made the journey to the Whiting “establishment” (their little simple dwelling on the pond) back then as Carolyn and some of you did as students or young faculty, you bumped your way on a dirt road across hundreds of acres of Whiting land. Then suddenly you emerged into an astonishing hidden community, full of lively debate, innovative (and sometimes radical) ideas and Yankee simplicity. There were no phone lines or electric power lines on the Whiting homestead in those days. Visitors lived in a boat house or farmhouse, or perhaps in a simple shack on the Whiting land along the Pond. All over the place, tucked away in the woods, there were little sheds that were used as writing studios. Harvard faculty and students often occupied these Spartan dwellings, for a weekend, or a week, or a month or even the whole summer. The various, and by then, customary routines of the day were meant to exercise the body, the mind and a very special kind of rural spirit. Days were a mix of agricultural activities (gardening, foraging, building a windmill), intellectual activities (occupying those writing studios to finish that next essay or book or complete one’s doctoral thesis), household activities (cooking the next collective meal) and recreational or sports activities (sunfish races on Tisbury Great Pond, swimming at the beach; later a Sunday croquet game was established).

But the real fun and highlight of any day began at 5:00PM when everyone in residence on the Whiting campus would arrive for drinks on the deck at The Establishment, which hung over the pond. “What are you working on?” Bea and John would ask. “So, what is your theory?” “How are you going to measure that?” And then the arguments and debates would begin.

Carolyn is now well-known for her comparative work on early childhood education, including schooling in Reggio Emilia, Italy. But her work that captivated me first was Kenya based, using secondary data. I have in mind Carolyn's analysis of the moral foundation of social norms and the relevance of social communication to children's moral development. She analyzed naturally occurring social transgressions among Luo children in the South Nyanza District of Kenya. It was a corpus of 105 transgression events originally observed in connection with a study conducted by Carol Ember. The recorded events, which included verbatim transcripts of verbal accusations, commands, excuses and justifications between child caretakers (ages seven to sixteen) and their young charges consisted of a variety of violations. Some of those transgressions, such as aggression towards peers and animals, were of the type that American developmental psychologists generally classified as moral (based on a rather ethnocentric and restricted conception of the moral domain that equated the moral domain with the objective principles of harm and justice ; while other of those transgressions, such as displays of deference, terms of address and appropriate greetings, correct use of titles and status terms, norms for avoidance and joking between relatives, were of the type that American developmental psychologists generally classified as non-moral, subjective or consensus-based and thus as merely conventional. Carolyn showed that both types of norms (the so-called moral norms and the so-called non-moral conventional norms) were viewed as equally important and unconditional by Luo caretakers and communicated as such when transgressions occurred. As Carolyn argued "justice, harm and welfare rules" on the one hand [the type of rules viewed as moral rules by American developmental psychologists] and conventional rules on the other, are not necessarily learned in different kinds of social encounters." At least for the Luo she suggested, relationships of status, power, age and kinship, and the proper forms of address, greeting, avoidance, and deferential displays are understood as part of the natural moral order of things. They are not perceived as mere social norms or conventions outside the moral order of things.

It was not possible to watch Carolyn in action in those late afternoon sessions on Tisbury Great Pond, arguing with John Whiting when he was in his full provocative

mode, without being impressed by her combination of calm, tenacity and persuasively organized intelligence. There was play and pleasure in the way she figured out how to debate with John Whiting, when with a bourbon in one hand, and the other hand pounding the table he might declare “well, that’s bullshit” with a broad smile on his face. She too knew how to forcefully disagree with a smile on her face (and hold her own), the more so when John was at his most provocative, asking questions such as “What makes you think literacy is such a good thing?;” or “ Wouldn’t the world be a better place if oral traditions were alive and well and everyone had to communicate face to face?; or “Which is more traumatic: being circumcised in adolescence as part of a ritual initiation into adulthood or going to school?”. She was especially impressive when the question took the form “How early in life do sex role differences emerge around the world, and why?” She often had Bea Whiting on her side.

Longingly I feel the presence of her absence at this meeting. I miss her. I am sure you do too. And I recognize too that her death is a poignant reminder of the passing of a wonderful era.