

A WOMAN OF INTEGRITY: KATHLEEN GOUGH'S "CAREER" IN CANADA, 1967-90¹

Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley
Concordia University

In 1988, Dr. Kathleen Gough, Honorary Research Associate at the University of British Columbia, was elected to Fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada. While such recognition was overdue, given Gough's anomalous position in the Canadian scientific community, her election to the conservative, male-dominated Royal Society was nonetheless remarkable. Like many women anthropologists before her, Gough was an independent scholar who was reasonably well funded and highly regarded, but who functioned outside the academic establishment. Although she began her Canadian career as an academic at Simon Fraser University, conflicts with the administration there resulted in her dismissal in 1969, and she never again held a permanent position at any university.²

It is my misfortune never to have met Kathleen Gough. Had I pursued graduate work in anthropology at McGill, the program into which I was accepted in 1969, our paths would have crossed at scientific meetings. An unexpected pregnancy delayed my graduate studies, however, and I soon realized the difficulties of conducting field work while trying to be a wife and mother. A decade later when I entered graduate school, I chose the history and sociology of science instead of anthropology, and studied the professionalization of ornithology. In this science, as in anthropology-archaeology and astronomy, a relatively high number of women have made important scientific contributions. Most of them functioned outside the institutional framework of these disciplines, as "amateurs," honorary research associates and/or collaborators or assistants to their husbands. Trying to ascertain why these productive women scientists were so rarely included in textbooks and reference books, and why so few even had paid positions, soon turned me into a feminist historian of science.

Since Kathleen Gough spent half of her professional life in this country, I wish to cast a feminist perspective on her Canadian career. This will lead to a

better understanding of her professional experiences and raise some general questions about women's careers.

Born in 1925 in a small Yorkshire village, living in a household without modern conveniences such as electricity, Kathleen Gough passionately loved the green countryside. Her love of learning and the financial aid provided by scholarships enabled Gough, by her late teens, to make an important transition from a simple village life to the sophisticated intellectual environment at Cambridge. There she read English and anthropology and received an informal education from socialist students from Asia, Africa and the West Indies. At an impressionable age, she learned about different cultures. Life at Cambridge University was poles apart from her village home, and the revolutionary ideas of her new Indian and African friends prepared the ground for her lifelong interest in South Asia, kinship, colonialism-imperialism and the new anthropology.

As a university student, Kathleen received a number of scholarships and may have encountered no discrimination. After all, by the time she was ready to do graduate work, women could obtain Ph.Ds. at Cambridge.³ There was also the precedent of woman anthropologists, such as Lucy Mair, Audrey Richards and Monica Wilson doing important field work, alone, with other women or with their husbands. After Kathleen married fellow student Eric Miller in 1947, the two conducted graduate field research in Southwest India, for which both were granted Ph.D.s in 1950.

Then, as a newly fledged professional, Gough found herself to be the "other" whose concerns and feelings were regarded as secondary to those of a man. Her first major encounter with ingrained sexist attitudes towards married women academics occurred in 1950 at Oxford University, where she and her husband sought employment. Nearly forty years later, she recalled a classic interview with Professor E.E. Evans-Pritchard:

He warned me that if my husband obtained a university appointment I could not have one because of nepotism rules. On the other hand, if my husband failed to be appointed, so would I, as the authorities wouldn't want to humiliate him! (Gough n.d.)

This conversation had a major impact on Gough's life. The conflict that women professionals in the Western world faced since the late 19th century was still alive. In Britain and North America, the underlying attitude that a man's career takes precedence over his wife's continued to create serious problems for educated women. While at the turn of the century, and indeed up to the 1920s, professional women were forced to choose either a career or conventional family life, a change in mores led many educated women of a later generation to attempt to combine marriage with their chosen professions. To their dismay, most who sought academic careers found that because of lingering stereotypes and persistent discriminatory practices, married

women were unlikely to be appointed to appropriate positions and, if they were, these were rarely in the same department or institution as their husbands.

When Kathleen Gough's marriage to Miller broke up, she returned alone to South India, to study ritual and mythology in addition to kinship. She then spent a year at Harvard as a Visiting Research Fellow (Department of Social Relations) before taking up a teaching post at Manchester in 1954. She had started what promised to be a prestigious career. However, in 1955, she remarried, gave up her post and moved to the United States.

Options for married women academics were no better in the States than in Britain. For more than a decade, as the wife of anthropologist David Aberle and the mother of a small child, Kathleen saw her career stifled in a pattern typical of married women (Rossiter 1982; Abir-Am and Outram 1987; Ainley 1990). Aberle's career took precedence over hers as they moved from one university to another. Gough later recalled that anti-nepotism rules restricted her to limited-term teaching assignments, often at long distances from her home base (Gough n.d).⁴ Finally, in 1961, both Kathleen and David were hired by Brandeis University, where she soon discovered that political activism did not lead to tenure. So, in 1963, the Aberles moved to the University of Oregon, where David obtained a regular teaching appointment, and Kathleen, who could not find one, became an Honorary Research Associate. Their involvement in sit-ins and demonstrations against the Vietnam war, and their later refusal to grade student papers inasmuch as failed students might provide potential cannon fodder for the draft board, eventually led to their decision to leave the United States (David Aberle, personal communication; Gough 1990:1706). In 1967, the Aberles moved to Vancouver where both Kathleen and David were offered regular teaching positions, at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, respectively.

In the 1960s, there were few full-time academic positions for women anthropologists in the United States (Fisher and Golde 1968⁵). Although this was a "period of great expansion of Canadian universities," women held a low proportion of academic jobs, and in "1969-70 only 9% of the full-time university teachers in the core social sciences were women" (Vickers and Adams 1977:101).⁶ Interestingly, during this period several women social scientists who had experienced difficulties, particularly for political reasons, in finding positions in the U.S.A. were hired in Canada. Among them, in addition to Kathleen Gough, were Ruth Landes (McMaster, 1965) and Marlene Dixon (McGill, 1969) (Park and Park 1989; Dixon 1976). In view of her later experiences, it must be noted that not only was Kathleen hired as Associate Professor at Simon Fraser University, but within a year she was also granted the President's research award and promoted to full Professor! She was to

discover, however, that her excellent research record and the support of her students did not guarantee a permanent position.

Originally, Gough had hoped the atmosphere in Canada would be "more peaceful, less imperialistic" than in the United States (Gough n.d). She had looked forward to a productive career in a radical department at a new, open-minded university. But Simon Fraser was more conservative than she had expected, its administration unwilling to support student parity and other "avant garde" notions which threatened the power of conservative academics. In 1969, the administration refused to deal with recommendations for tenure and promotion which had been made by a student committee. The ensuing protest and repression has been well documented (see the Jorgensen chapter in this volume). Eleven radical members of the department were denied tenure or renewal.⁷ Members of the new tenure committee, appointed to review the files, were unfamiliar with Gough's previous path-breaking publications. She later learned that they read only her "New Proposals for Anthropologists," part of a thought-provoking, three-paper Social Responsibilities Symposium published in *Current Anthropology* in 1968. Because of its radical tone, the paper was used against Gough in her fight for tenure. Characteristically, she was proud of having been fired because of that paper (Gough n.d.)!

There had been other instances in the past when Canadian university administrators questioned the academic freedom of well-known, highly productive teachers. In 1941, the historian Frank Underhill was almost dismissed from the University of Toronto for "public activities" which did not please the administration. In 1949, Dr. George Hunter, head of the department of biochemistry at the University of Alberta was dismissed after 20 years because he "made statements concerning his own political opinions during biochemistry lessons" (George Hunter Papers, University of Alberta Archives; Horn 1989). While Underhill and Hunter were tenured professors who acted alone, Gough was not the only one involved in the strike and the resulting dismissals. She was also in the unusual position of being an untenured full professor. When the university offered to rehire her, Gough proved her integrity: she refused to accept unless her colleagues were also reinstated. The administration would not consent and she was left without academic employment.

In 1971, she moved to the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia, where the only available teaching post in anthropology was that of limited-term visiting professor. Once again anti-nepotism rules were invoked, perhaps to mask the fact that it was her reputation as an agitator, leftist sympathizer and a charismatic teacher with the ability to mobilize students against arbitrary administrations that worked against her (Judy Whitehead, personal communication). Although she had job offers from other parts

of Canada, the United States and Europe, the only affiliation she obtained in Vancouver was that of Honorary Research Associate at the University of British Columbia.

Gough wrote later that she had become thoroughly disenchanted with the rigidity and bureaucracy of academic institutions by the mid-1970s. She did not like "the strait-jackets of their curricula" and found the "grading systems too confining and time consuming . . . to teach freely or devote energy to research" (Gough n.d.). But the loss of teaching opportunities, at age 50, hit her hard, and for a while she forgot the undesirable aspects of academic life, such as the unending meetings and administrative chores that sap one's energy and reduce time for research. She felt isolated from the community of students and scholars, and the lack of a paid job made her feel practically worthless (David Aberle, personal communication). Her Yorkshire background had instilled in her pride in a job well done and in recognition in tangible forms, such as a good pay cheque, as well as in the more elusive peer esteem and praise.

As a highly trained professional teacher Gough found it difficult to accept the lack of an academic future. Eventually she reconciled herself to a life of field work and writing and lectured sporadically "on demand" rather than on a regular basis like her colleagues who followed career paths usual among male academics.

In many ways, hers was a privileged position. Through David's faculty appointment and family inheritance, by the early 1970s the Aberles had financial security and Kathleen was freed from the restrictions imposed upon academics by university administrations. So, with the moral and intellectual support of her husband and friends, and with a number of grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation, Shastri Institute and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Kathleen Gough could turn her clear, analytical mind, her enthusiasm and her energies to research in India, Kampuchea and Vietnam. The recognition of her peers sustained her and she was delighted with her honours, such as the Iravati Karve Memorial lectureship in New Delhi in 1978 and her election to the Royal Society of Canada in 1988 (*ibid.*). Her positive response certainly indicates the importance of institutional recognition for improved self-esteem.

Kathleen Gough's career has parallels with those of other Canadian women in science. Before the institutionalization of Canadian science in the late 19th century, which coincided with the opening up of higher education for women, most scientific contributions were by "amateurs," people now referred to as independent scholars.⁸ Anthropology itself was a by-product of the exploring and colonizing activities of France and Britain. The extent of early involvement by women in Canadian anthropology is not yet known. We do know, however, that in the mid-1820s, Harriet Sheppard, the wife of a colonial ad-

ministrator and a founder of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society (Canada's first learned society), presented and published papers on archaeology (Ainley 1990). In the early 20th century Alice Ravenhill, Margaret Bemister, Mabel Burkholder and other independent scholars published works on Indian myths and customs. Later, funded either by American sources or by the National Museum of Canada, several American folklorists and ethnographers (Frances Densmore, Frederica de Laguna, Eleanor Leacock) carried out research in various parts of the country (Geneviève Eustache, personal communication).

Before the 1960s, there was no woman anthropologist of international renown, such as Lucy Mair in England or Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead in the United States, who lived and had institutional affiliations in Canada. In fact the only women social scientists with good careers were the economist Mabel Timlin and the sociologist Aileen Ross at the University of Saskatchewan and McGill University, respectively.⁹

Canadian universities developed graduate programs for the training of professional anthropologists only after World War II (Inglis 1982). The details of the professional experiences of Canadian women anthropologists have yet to be published. From available evidence it appears that in the 1950s a few women found low-level, part-time or limited-term positions (June Helm McNeish, 1949-59, at Carleton University and Sylvia Stapleton, 1958, at St. Mary's University). Men, often their husbands, found more prestigious permanent positions.¹⁰ During the 1960s, a few more full-time academic positions for women opened up: Jean Briggs at Memorial University, Ruth Gruhn and Regna Darnell at the University of Alberta, Eleanor Smollett at the University of Regina, Helga Jacobson at the University of British Columbia, Frances Henry and Fumiko Ikawa-Smith at McGill and Frances Burton, Maxine Kleindienst, Becky Sigmon and Roz Vanderburgh at the University of Toronto. There were no women anthropologists at the National Museum, though a few, including Katherine Capes (1959-60) and Sheila Joan Mini and Frances L. Stewart (in the 1970s), carried out contract research funded by the federal government (Eustache, personal communication). From my preliminary research it is clear that being a woman anthropologist married to a colleague was detrimental to the wife's career (Ainley, unpublished research data; Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, personal communication).

Born in the mid-1920s, Gough belonged to the third generation of Canadian women academics who obtained training during and after World War II (see Ainley 1990). In another study, I have examined the career paths of more than a dozen scientific couples in Canada during the 1920-70 period. In every case the husband was successful but not one of the wives had a comparable career incorporating the timing and advancement normally available to males. Some never had careers, while others, the so-called "late-bloomers," devel-

oped careers of their own only after their children were in school or as divorcees and widows. Not surprisingly, they never caught up with their male contemporaries in terms of positions, advancement, salary and recognition (Ainley 1991). Gough's career in Canada differed from these because she had done considerable field work previously and had published a body of important, frequently-cited work before coming to this country. Nevertheless, like other married women academics, especially those on the left, she experienced the lethal combination of gender and political discrimination.

Academic freedom means that professors are free to challenge scientific or scholarly authority, and that they should not be subject to academic punishment when they challenge civil authority. . . . [T]hey must be free to challenge the authority of administrators and governing boards, to assert their own rights in relation to those legally set over them. (Horn 1989)

Kathleen Gough was certainly denied academic freedom. She was only able to find it outside the rigid structure of the modern academic establishment.

From the mid-1970s to her death in 1990, Gough pursued her research, and wrote and published on a number of crucial issues on Asian anthropology without a teaching post. While the students lost a challenging teacher, her written work and her occasional lectures to faculty and graduate students, feminist groups and a number of different organizations ensured that she continued to stimulate a variety of audiences and to influence anthropologists and anthropology.

Kathleen Gough's "career" in Canada challenges our conventional notions about the centrality of the academy to knowledge and to the disciplines. Gough's work was of major theoretical importance: it helped change anthropology. Her research and writing were of the highest professional calibre. She also had grants, citations, election to prestigious fellowships and international renown—all measures of the formal recognition of scholarly achievement.¹¹ A British-trained anthropologist friend told me that Gough's work was so well known in Britain that she was considered "the goddess of Canadian anthropology" (Homa Hoodfar, personal communication).

Despite Kathleen Gough's international stature, both sexism and political conservatism combined to make sure this radical woman anthropologist married to a man in her field never held a full-time tenured position. Although women had a better chance to be hired by the 1960s and 1970s, dissenting, radical women were not well tolerated by conservative university administrators. Like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict before her, Kathleen Gough was able to function outside the academic establishment. Like them, she used alternative strategies to work out her visions of kinship and peasant societies. But these were exceptional people by any reckoning; they succeeded despite the odds. The majority of women—and the majority of men—need institutional support. In this context, the SSHRC's new policy of denying research

time stipends to independent scholars prevents highly trained people (mostly women) who have neither permanent positions nor private means from producing scholarship outside of academe.

Notes

1. My thanks to David Aberle, David Ainley, Sally Cole, Geneviève Eustache, Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, Homa Hoodfar, Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, Ellen Jacobs, Richard Lee, Eleanor Smollett, Elvi Whitaker and Judy Whitehead for providing data and insight for this paper. Research was funded by a SSHRC Women and Work Strategic Grant (1989-91).
2. Apparently, in 1984 the University of British Columbia did offer her a professorship, but she was no longer interested in an academic position (see Gough 1990:1706).
3. In 1948 Cambridge admitted women to "full membership" at the University (McWilliams-Tullberg 1975).
4. During this period, she wrote several chapters for *Matrilineal Kinship* (1961) which she co-edited with David M. Schneider.
5. Although the statistics presented in this paper are only broken down to pre-war and post-war trends, and not to annual statistics, it seems that in the early 1960s, approximately 18 percent of all new anthropology teachers were women. Most were employed in smaller institutions and/or undergraduate departments.
6. The Aberles were among the many American anthropologists taking advantage of the expansion of Canadian universities (Inglis 1982).
7. The CAUT Bulletin, between 1969 and 1971, contained frequent references to this ongoing controversy.
8. See essays in Ainley 1990.
9. In 1951 Timlin was the first Canadian woman social scientist to be elected to the Royal Society of Canada. There is considerable archival material on Timlin at the University of Saskatchewan archives. On Ross see Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (1990).
10. June Helm McNeish remained in a marginal position at Carleton University. Her husband was in a good permanent position as archaeologist with the National Museum of Canada. Another good example is Mary Jane Pi-Sunyer, lecturer in Anthropology at the University of New Brunswick in 1960 where her husband, Oriol, obtained a post as assistant professor of Anthropology in 1959. Ainley, unpublished research data.
11. According to Lutz (1990), most women anthropologists are cited less frequently than their male colleagues. Even a cursory look at the Social Science Citation Index reveals, however, that Gough's work was widely and often cited.

References Cited

- Abir-Am, P., and D. Outram
 1987 *Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives. Women in Science, 1789-1979*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Ainley, Marianne G.
 1990 *Last in the Field? Canadian Women Natural Scientists, 1815-1975. In Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science*, edited by M.G. Ainley, pp. 22-65. Montreal: Véhicule Press.
- 1991 *Women and the "Matthew Effect": A Century of Cumulative Disadvantages for Canadian Women in Science*. Paper presented at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association Conference, Kingston, Ontario.

Ainley, Marianne G., ed.

- 1990 *Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science*. Montreal: Véhicule Press.

Dixon, Marlene

- 1976 *Things Which Are Done in Secret*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Fisher, Ann, and Peggy Golde

- 1968 The Position of Women in Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 70: 337-343.

Gough, K.

- 1990 "Anthropology and Imperialism" Revisited. *Economic and Political Weekly* 25(31):1705-1708.

n.d. Unpublished autobiographical notes.

Hoecker-Drysdale, Susan

- 1990 Women Sociologists in Canada: The Careers of Helen MacGill Hughes, Aileen Dansken Ross and Jean Robertson Burnet. *In Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science*, edited by M.G. Ainley, pp. 152-176. Montreal: Véhicule Press.

Horn, Michiel

- 1989 Academic Freedom and the Dismissal of George Hunter. *Dalhousie Review* 69 (3):414-438.

Inglis, Gordon

- 1982 In Bed with the Elephant: Anthropology in Anglophone Canada. *Ethnos* 47(1-11):32-102.

Lutz, Catherine

- 1990 The Erasure of Women's Writing in Sociocultural Anthropology. *American Ethnologist* 17(4):611-627.

McWilliams-Tullberg, Rita

- 1975 *Women at Cambridge*. London: Gollancz.

Park, George, and Alice Park

- 1989 Ruth Schlossberg Landes. *In Women Anthropologists: Selected Biographies*, edited by Ute Gacs et al., pp. 208-214. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Rossiter, M.

- 1982 *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Vickers, Jill McCalla, and June Adams

- 1977 *But Can You Type? Canadian Universities and the Status of Women*. London: Clark, Irwin.