

**Citation for 2010 John C. Burnham Early Career Award: Laura Stark (Wesleyan University), “The Science of Ethics: Deception, the Resilient Self, and the APA Code of Ethics, 1966-1973”**

The 2010 Burnham Award Committee is pleased to award this year’s prize to Laura Stark, of Wesleyan University, for her original and compelling essay “The Science of Ethics: Deception, the Resilient Self, and the APA Code of Ethics, 1966-1973.”

Stark’s paper offers a fascinating recreation of the process by which the American Psychological Association (APA) arrived at ethical guidelines for human research. Expertly taking advantage of little-known archival resources, the author examines how a special committee was created, how it collected survey responses from thousands of American psychologists during the 1960s, and how it arrived at its recommendations. She convincingly argues that the committee members were influenced in their reading of the survey results by their own experience as researchers.

The main issue of contention was whether it was ethical to use “deception” during psychological experiments. Two models of human nature were at stake in this debate. Were subjects “resilient” and able to handle the fact that the psychologist had not disclosed the aims of the experiment? Or were they “fragile” and likely to be permanently harmed by being fooled by authority? Having employed deception in their own research, committee members were inclined to interpret the evidence of the surveys as supporting the “resilient” model. Thus, the committee’s make-up and their professional network played a significant role in closing the debate within the profession about the contentious issue of deception.

A case study in how professional bodies arrive at their ethics guidelines, Stark’s paper is well-written, persuasive, and capable of appealing to a non-specialist audience. It is a worthy example of scholarship in the history of the human sciences.

2010 John C. Burnham FHHS/JHBS Early Career Award Committee: Daniela Barberis (chair), Joy Rohde, Jeff Pooley