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FEMINISM AND CRIMINOLOGY IN BRITAIN

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The academic manifestation[1] of feminism is a recent development.[2] Indeed feminist work within criminology in Britain probably dates from the publication of Carol Smart's book *Women, Crime and Criminology* in 1976.[3] Frances Heidensohn (1977, 390) described its publication as a turning point and claimed that the issues raised by Smart were now "very firmly on the agenda for all criminologists" (1977, 392). Others were more sceptical. Paul Rock, in his review of Smart's book (1977, 393), doubted that "analytic losses" had been inflicted on criminological theories by not considering women. However, he acknowledged the *potential* value of feminism: "a feminist sociology would indeed be potent if it could indicate how much formal constructions should be modified to incorporate the female" (1977, 393) and "if it [criminology] can be proved to be analytically inadequate then a feminist criminology would be intellectually momentous' (1977, 394). Just over ten years later it seems appropriate to explore the extent to which these challenges have been met, the impact which feminism has had on mainstream debates in criminology and the significance of feminism for criminology. Consideration of these issues, however, demands first that we refer in brief to the development of feminism and its impact on other academic disciplines.

The Meaning of Feminism

Feminist critiques and perspectives on a range of topics—women's inequality, child care, social policy and the law—abound. However, the meaning of terms like "feminism" and "feminist" is not self-evident. For some, "feminism" conjures up a picture of women's liberationists of the 1960s; for others, it is an attitude, a way of seeing, a value commitment. Some locate the origins of feminism in the statements of Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century, others in the contemporary women's movement and the legislative changes achieved in the 1970s. Popular conceptions of feminists include references to women in the Greenham Common Peace Movement or in the women's movement generally, lesbian separatists and any groups or individuals who have tried to change the position of women or ideas about women. These disparate

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[1] Feminism has also had an impact on policy and practice in the criminal justice system. We do not discuss that here, but obvious examples are rape law reform and changes in police policy on domestic violence.

[2] It is part and parcel of the re-emergence of the women's movement in the 1960s in the United States and in the 1970s in England. For a historical development of feminism, see Bouchier (1983) and Coote and Campbell (1987).

[3] There are earlier and important articles by Frances Heidensohn (1968 and 1970) but she describes (1985, 146) these as pre-feminist. There is also earlier research on women (for example, Smith (1962) and Cowie, Cowie and Slater (1968)), but these are not written from a feminist perspective.

views of the meaning of feminism are recognised within feminism. Indeed, the question of whether or not any unity can be assumed is one which perplexes many writers (Evans, 1977; Oakley, 1981; Bouchier, 1978 and 1983; Mitchell and Oakley, 1986). Olive Banks (1981) wrote about the *Faces of Feminism* and, more recently Rosalind Delmar (1986) referred to "feminisms". As women begin to speak about situations which they believe they share, they discover their differences from one another and from one another's perspective. Clearly, feminists inhabit different social, political and intellectual settings and do not necessarily share the same theoretical allegiances (Kuhn & Wolpe, 1978; Oakley, 1981, 335–338; Mitchell and Oakley, 1986).

This task of defining "feminism" is particularly difficult when it comes to identifying its essential characteristics. There is, in the literature, much discussion about whether or not feminist research is by, on, or for women (Stanley and Wise, 1983; Cain, 1986) and whether or not it necessarily involves political action. Feminists do commonly address gender relations, particularly the notion of male supremacy and the oppression of women, but this does not necessarily mean a shared understanding of the meaning of oppression (Barrett, 1980). However, despite these differences in theory, differences in practice are less significant.

At the very least, a feminist is someone who believes that women experience subordination[4] on the basis of their sex. Although this may not be the best or all-encompassing definition, we have to have a starting point and it provides that. Even those in the "I'm not a feminist but. . ." category would accept feminism in this broad sense and, as Janet Radcliffe Richards notes, there are good reasons for choosing a wide definition of feminism:

> All feminists, however firm their ideological commitments, must want as many people as possible to be willing to listen to arguments about the position of women rather than reacting with hostility whenever the subject of feminism comes up; it is in the interests of everyone who cares about justice to have as many people as possible thinking of themselves as feminists (1982, 15).

The essence then of feminist perspectives is that they reflect the view that women experience subordination on the basis of their sex, although they may differ on its origins and how it is institutionalised.

The Impact of Feminism on Academic Disciplines

Traditionally, men's studies have been passed off as "general knowledge". As Dale Spender puts it:

> Most of the knowledge produced in our society has been produced by men; they have usually generated their explanations and the schemata and then have checked with each other and vouched for the accuracy and adequacy of their view of the world (1981, 1).

[4] "Feminism" as a movement has been defined by Bouchier as "any form of opposition to any form of social, political or economic discrimination which women suffer because of their sex" (1983, 2).

Indeed, women have been excluded as both the producers and subjects of this knowledge. Feminism challenged this. It provided various possibilities: integrating women into existing theoretical perspectives, developing new theories and revitalising accumulated knowledge. However, feminist writers, first and foremost, placed at centre stage women's experience of the world.

We can see this in the changes in recent years within sociology, a discipline with close connections to criminology. In 1974, the British Sociological Association held a key conference on "Sexual Divisions and Society". Participants vehemently argued for more research on gender relations which they believed had been "consistently neglected by sociologists, and ridiculed and denigrated by some" (Barker and Allen, 1976, 2–3). Some of the contributions to this conference documented the inadequacy of existing research (for example, Frankenburg (1976) and Brown (1976)). But there were also papers on topics previously ignored by sociologists (like homework and housework) and on the use and development of theoretical concepts and models on which a more adequate understanding and explanation of gender relations might be built (for example, papers on the dual labour market, the political economy of domestic labour, and the deferential dialectic in relations between husbands and wives).

Since then, feminists within sociology have introduced new perspectives to research on education (Shaw, 1976; Clarricoates, 1980), health (Doyal and Pennell, 1979; Ruzek, 1986), motherhood (Oakley, 1979 and 1986; David, 1985), the State and women (McIntosh, 1978) and employment (Barker and Allen, 1976; Moroney, 1986). There is also some feminist work in the sociology of deviance (for example, Millman, 1975; Rodmell, 1981; Hutter and Williams, 1981) and in the sociology of law (O'Donovan, 1985; Smart, 1984; Cain, 1986). Feminists within sociology have in addition introduced a wider view of women and their activities, and have increased awareness of their position. In this way, they have provided important insights for understanding the importance of sexual divisions in society. But the key question is the extent to which these perspectives have influenced mainstream sociology.

While feminists have filled many gaps, there is little evidence to suggest that feminism has transformed the discipline. "Gender issues" are often seen only to relate to women, and although women and gender relations are well represented in discussions of the family, generally they are not in mainstream debates about community, power, work situations, class, politics, inequality and so on. Studies of social structure no longer actually ignore women but, as Ann Oakley writes, "there is frequently a lack of imagination about the contexts within which such studies may be seen as appropriate" (1981, 78).

Margrit Eichler (1980) has further questioned the impact and significance of feminist contributions by arguing that feminist literature in the social sciences has often itself used inappropriate conceptual tools and language, and has thus actually reinforced the sexual stereotypes which were so frequently the focus of feminist concerns. These criticisms are reiterated in the work of Roberts (1981), and Stacey and Thorne (1985) aptly refer to the "missing

revolution in sociology". They lament the fact that feminism seems not to have reconstructed basic paradigms. They argue that feminists working in sociology are merely "accommodated" and that feminist perspectives are 'ghettoised'.

The situation seems much the same in other academic disciplines.[5] Common themes which emerge from critical reviews are the continued dominance of men in the academic world and the dismissal of feminist modes of thought or analysis. Ruth (1981, 47), for example, argues that for women to be accepted they have to "think like men". Feminism is viewed as irrelevant, transient or trivial and feminists as biased. Feminist thought, its presuppositions, content and emphasis, is seen as an invalid enterprise. Those changes which have occurred tend to be described as token. For example, despite the attacks on psychology by major feminist writers (de Beauvoir, 1953; Millet, 1970; Greer, 1971; Firestone, 1971), Walker argues that:

> to a large extent the feminist critique has been co-opted by mainstream psychology without any widescale corresponding change in psychology's nature, theory or practice (1981, 111).

Mainstream has effectively remained "malestream".[6]

"Feminist Criminology?"

This brief review makes dismal reading. We need now to consider whether feminist perspectives have fared any better in criminology. The first task is to establish whether there is now a collective body of commentaries and concerns which can be termed "feminist criminology", for its existence cannot be taken for granted. Some writers have claimed that there is. Victoria Greenwood (1981), for example, defined "feminist criminology" as a collection of recent research, predominantly inspired and affected by influences from the women's movement, which illuminated the institutionalised sexism in the criminal justice process. More recently, Beverley Brown (1986, 355) suggested that it would be churlish to deny that "feminist criminology' existed, however difficult it may be to define it. The critique of traditional theory and practice is the "unified package" (1986, 359) by which, she suggests, "feminist criminology" can be recognised. In contrast, Carol Smart (1981) has argued that neither the existence of feminist criminologists (self-appointed), female criminologists nor studies of women and crime constitute a "feminist criminology", for while some authors have conducted research from one theoretical position, others have adopted entirely different positions. Pat Carlen (1985) has also doubted whether attempts to establish a "feminist criminology" have been successful. She gives two reasons for this: first, many feminist writers have viewed crime as essentially a male activity and, secondly, their attempts to identify a global

[5] See Dale Spender's edited collection of essays *Men's Studies Modified* (1981) for a detailed discussion.
[6] This notion is borrowed from Maureen Cain. See also Stacey (1981).

theory of crime (which would apply to both men and women) or a special theory of women's crime are theoretically unsound.

There is no doubt that the term "feminist criminology" as currently used can create confusion. A concrete example of this is Frances Heidensohn's (1985) discussion of the association between the women's movement and crime which she presents as part of the contribution of "feminist criminology". She discusses the work of Freda Adler (1975) and Rita Simon (1975) who assert this association and then the critiques of their work by Steven Box (1983) and Darrell Steffensmeier (1978). It is not at all clear from Heidensohn's text who the "feminist criminologists" are, but she must mean Adler and Simon as she concluded: "in the least helpful way to women offenders... one branch of feminist criminology has at last made female crime visible" (1985, 160). However, we would not describe their work as feminist as it does not contain certain core elements. (We outline these later.) The point here is that to identify particular writers or work as part of a "feminist criminology" can confuse rather than clarify.[7]

We take the view that *a* "feminist criminology" cannot exist. To adopt any single definition would limit its development. Feminists who are criminologists reflect the tensions and differences which exist within each of these perspectives. Some argue that women and men should be dealt with equally in the criminal justice system (for example, Moulds, 1980); others believe that there are differences between men and women which justify differential dispositions (for example, Brophy and Smart, 1985; Heidensohn, 1986). Some reject the notion of fundamental differences between men and women in their potential or capacity to commit crime (for example, Adler, 1975); others argue that women's personality is different from men's (for example, Gilligan, 1982). For Carol Smart, the task of "feminist criminology" was initially to find "alternative modes of conceptualising the social world" (1976, 180); Mary McIntosh, on the other hand, saw it as bringing to the centre of the stage "the question of gross differences between male and female crime rates' (1977, 396). More recently, Maureen Cain (1986) suggested revealing the connections between 'policing' in everyday life and policing by and within official agencies as the appropriate agenda. Thus, just as we had to talk of "feminisms", we have to talk of feminist criminologies, or, better still, feminist perspectives within criminology.

However, we can identify certain core elements which we believe each would share. Feminist perspectives are, in essence, anti-positivist and critical of stereotypical images of women, and the question of women[8] is central. They share also an interest in using methodologies which are sympathetic to these concerns (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984). We believe the work which we discuss in the next sections meets these criteria.

[7] A simple demonstration of this is provided by the various responses of our immediate colleagues to the question "what does feminist criminology mean to you?" These ranged from consideration of "women's issues in the criminal justice system" and "making women visible in criminology" to "work by and for women" and a "a critical understanding of women, crime and the state". These are all very different enterprises, and, in isolation, do not constitute a "feminist criminology".

[8] We need to stress here that it is the question of *gender* which should be central, but most feminist work to date has primarily considered women.

Early feminist writings focused on criminologists' "amnesia" of women.[9] To correct this, some writers appropriated existing criminological theories and "inserted" women. They assumed that women were hidden within the trajectory of theories developed to explain the criminality of men (Shacklady Smith, 1978; McRobbie, 1980). Other writers focused on the representation or, more accurately, the misrepresentation, of female offenders in conventional literature (Smart, 1976; Campbell, 1981). They developed a critique of "accumulated wisdom" about female offenders and attempted to determine why knowledge about them was shaped in the way it was, just as, on a more general level, feminists attempted to answer questions about the ways in which knowledge about women was sustained and mediated. These critiques demonstrated that theories of criminality developed from and validated on men had limited relevance for explaining women's crime. It was recognised that they were really only theories about men's crime. "Accumulated wisdom" was ambiguous, often flawed and, in many cases, simply untenable.

Much of the early feminist research consisted of exposés of discriminatory practices. Conventional criminology had assumed that women were dealt with more leniently than men in the criminal justice system (Mannheim, 1965; Walker, 1965). A whole generation of feminist researchers questioned this. They sought out and exposed the sexism which existed within the criminal justice system (Pearson, 1976; Carey, 1979; Casburn, 1979; Worrall, 1981; Eaton, 1983, 1985 and 1986; Carlen, 1983; Edwards, 1984) and, collectively, they demonstrated that the issue of women's treatment was complex. They highlighted the disparity between the rhetoric of leniency and the reality of practice. In addition, feminist researchers made visible women's victimisation, particularly in the area of sexual assault and domestic violence. Their work challenged many of the assumptions about and preconceptions of women who are victimised (Smart, 1976; Hanmer, 1978).

Each of these critical enterprises was important. Gender blindness is not a trivial oversight; it carries social and political significance. Moreover, theories which do not address gender are not merely incomplete; they are misleading.[10] But each of these enterprises has its limitations. First, the neglect of women in criminological theories cannot be viewed as systematic neglect, since the whole history of criminology's development is erratic. Women are not the only "blind spot": crimes of the powerful were also until recently ignored. Secondly, some writers seem to assume that "emptied of sexism" criminological theories would remain valid. This is patently not so (Greenwood, 1981, 73). Thirdly, feminist criticism assumes "sexism" in only those theories explicitly relating to women. This is an untenable assumption. Theories applied to men are also riddled with stereotypical images of men, masculinity, men's needs and desires and so on. The implicit assumption that men and boys have been dealt

[9] We need to acknowledge here the debt which British researchers owe to their North American counterparts. Much of the impetus for research here derives from their work in the 1970s. (See, for example, Klein and Kress, 1976; Klein, 1973; Datesman and Scarpitti, 1980; Chesney Lind, 1973 and 1978).

[10] Maureen Cain (1986, 258) describes such theories as "masculinist".

with "fairly" and in non-sexist terms is clearly wrong (Cousins, 1980). At the very least, such assumptions ignore differences in the treatment of men. They also ignore the fact that such factors as race, home circumstances, type of offence, demeanour and family commitments all clearly mediate the treatment of both female *and* male defendants. In fact, gender, in certain contexts, may not be as important as race or class (Greenwood, 1981). "Being a women" is obviously not a clear, single conceptual category; prospects, situations and experiences differ. It is surprising that many feminists writing on criminological topics ignore this.

Research has also suggested that sexist beliefs, where they exist, are mediated by administrative and organisational factors. Loraine Gelsthorpe (1986) has argued that simply to dismiss the criminal justice system and allied agencies as sexist obscures our understanding of the processing of offenders. What we need to know more precisely is how sexism works in practice. Thus in making sense of work in a police juvenile bureau, Gelsthorpe found that the need for officers to be seen to be "busy" and to be doing "real police work" had to be considered alongside any notion of sexism.

Feminists' claims about sexism also need to be examined at a theoretical level. Here too, considerable problems arise in attempts to follow through arguments that it is possible to identify, without equivocation, the "culprits" responsible for the treatment of women and for theoretical conceptions of them. In radical feminists' analyses, men are labelled as the key instigators of sexism, whereas socialist feminists promote the notion that the capitalist mode of production is instrumental in the exploitation of women. But neither men nor the capitalist mode of production can be singled out as chief conspirators in a plot against women. However ideas about women have been shaped, there is no one unified motivational force underlying that shaping (Kingdom, 1981; Cousins, 1980; Gelsthorpe, 1988).

More recent accounts of sexism have moved away from these reductionist explanations and have focused rather on ideological constructions of gender and on the concept of patriarchy (Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Barrett, 1980). But these new accounts have been generated, in the main, by women working outside mainstream criminology and, generally speaking, criminologists have been slow to assimilate them.

After the Critique

These critiques of existing accounts of women's crime and exposés of discriminatory practices were necessary enterprises but are not enough, *per se,* to shift the fundamental parameters and masculinity of criminology. A critique alone cannot constitute a theoretical approach. Indeed, Beverley Brown has argued that this critique has been responsible for "feminist criminology's" "failings and dead ends" (1986, 360). Earlier, Carol Smart (1982) had predicted that "feminist criminology" would "disappear into a theoretical cul-de-sac" or would be "resocialised into mainstream criminology unless feminists begin to re-assess the validity and purpose of their work so far". This takes us in

two directions: consideration of more recent theoretical developments and examination of feminism's impact on mainstream criminology.

In 1976, Carol Smart discussed the possibility of formulating a "feminist criminology". By 1981, she viewed the task as redundant. There were, she wrote:

> more important goals to achieve than the one of constructing a sub-discipline to rank alongside other criminologies (1981, 86).[11]

Frances Heidensohn (1985) agrees with this. She concluded her text on *Women and Crime* by stating that the best way of understanding women and crime was not through "feminist criminology" but through:

> using insights into the role, position and social control of women which can be derived from other studies of women's oppression (1985, 197).

Thus one theme which has emerged in recent writings is a rejection of consideration of only those women who break the law. Instead discussion has centred on those who break the law, those who conform and the *relationship* between the two (see, for example, the edited collections of Smart and Smart, 1978 and Hutter and Williams, 1981). Bridget Hutter and Gillian Williams justify this in the following way:

> Examination of the explicit controls exercised over women who are seen as deviant because they act in ways beyond the bounds of "normal society" helps us to clarify (the) concept of "normal behaviour". Furthermore, it allows us to see more clearly the extent and nature of the covert controls employed to persuade all women to fit their behaviour into this normal pattern (1981: 9).

Heidensohn (1985, 197) views this approach as "ultimately the best way to understand women and crime".

This shift in emphasis is welcome, but it is important to be rather more specific. By focusing on general networks of control we may learn *who* fractures the boundaries of "acceptable behaviour and normal, natural trouble" (Gelsthorpe, 1985) and *how* they fracture them,[12] but we will not necessarily learn *why* women offend and we may thereby leave unchallenged models of crime causation which stress individual pathology. The difficulty is accommodating individual motivation within a broad context of structural constraints. In a different sphere, Carol Smart (1984) provides an illustration of how this can be done.[13] She points to the interactions between social institutions and every day life experiences which deepen our understanding of the pressures to

[11] Carol Smart's writings reflect this. They indicate a move away from criminology into issues within the sociology of law, family law, sexuality and reproduction and the construction of women's roles and identities as mediated through different social disciplines.

[12] This is not just a contemporary concern. Historical re-constructions of illegality are significant too (Sumner, 1980).

[13] See also Willis (1977) and Sharp, Green and Lewis (1975).

conform or deviate. Criminologists have not yet fully taken on the significance of this. Exploration of social control issues is essential to an increased understanding of *how* knowledge is sustained and mediated and *how* structural constraints affect our everyday lives. But the danger in this kind of approach is that generalisations are made about the success or failure of particular control mechanisms and we may inpute to individuals motives which are not theirs. Individual experiences are lost in the account.

Considering Feminism's Impact

We turn now to consider the impact of feminism on mainstream criminology. As Frances Heidensohn (1987, 21) succinctly put it:

> Has anyone . . . been listening? Have they taken it seriously? Have they changed their minds, their research studies or their institutional practices?

We noted earlier that it was not uncommon even in the 1970s for criminological textbooks, including critical reviews, to contain nothing at all on women. There are still examples of this in the 1980s. Frances Heidensohn (1987, 23) provides two: Stan Cohen's (1985) *Visions of Social Control* and David Downes and Paul Rock's (1982) *Understanding Deviance*. Heidensohn describes *Visions of Social Control* as "fundamentally flawed" as it takes no account of the gender dimensions of social control and is critical of Downes and Rock's failure to consider gender in their assessment of the validity of various deviancy theories.

Some criminologists have attempted to take account of the criticism raised by feminists, but these attempts seem to us no more than token gestures. Stuart Hall and Phil Scraton (1981), for example, in a review article of current debates in critical criminology, refer to the emergence of a "feminist criminology" but thereafter ignore any significance that this might have for the issues raised. For instance, reference is made to the economic marginalisation of black youth (1981, 484), but not to the economic position of women generally or of black girls in particular. Similarly, they refer to the "poor taking advantage of the poor" (1981, 485); they take no cognisance of men taking advantage of women. The point is not that "women" should be discussed for the mere sake of it, but that their inclusion would have enriched theoretically the points being explored by Hall and Scraton. Another example is Jock Young's review of "models of criminology" in the same text, in which he systematically compares theories "on the central questions which any theory of order and criminality must tackle" (1981, 305). Young dutifully refers to he/she and him/her throughout. But the relevance or significance of gender for the theories reviewed is never explored. To borrow from Paul Rock (1977), the use of such language *is* a mere literary convention. It had no impact on Young's subject matter.

A variant of this is what Frances Heidensohn (1987, 23) calls the "lean-to" approach. The contrast between the first (1971) and second (1981) editions of

Steven Box's *Deviance, Reality and Society* provides a demonstration of this. There is nothing at all on women in the first. In the second, about a page on self-report studies by girls is included in the chapter on the social distribution of criminal behaviour, two "caveats"—each no more than one and a half pages—are added to two further chapters and a small note on female inmates is added to another chapter. This is better than nothing. But women are presented as after-thoughts, not as integral to the arguments being developed in the chapters. Thus women appear as "by the way" and peripheral. For all intents and purposes, they are not really there.[14]

This is apparent in teaching and research too. Although most universities now include at least a few lectures on women and crime and some include whole courses, these highlight precisely the *failure* not the success of feminists to permeate the discipline (cf. Brown, 1986). The lectures are insertions, addenda and, therefore, marginal. There has undoubtedly been a tremendous increase in the amount of research on women and crime. Frances Heidensohn (1987, 16) describes this as a significant development in itself. But this research has primarily been the domain of women (often research students, at that) and small-scale.[15]

"Gender" has not become a critical issue on the criminological agenda.[16] Perusal of recent volumes of the British Journal of Criminology demonstrates this. These volumes contain titles which refer to "adult offenders", "abnormal offenders", "lifers", "black minority criminals", "children", "prisoners" and so on. On closer examination, these papers deal only with men. There are other articles which are clearly based on research which had mixed samples, but the significance of gender is rarely fully explored.

There is, arguably, an exception to this in what can broadly be called "victimology". Feminist thinking on violence against women has matured over the last ten years. In the 1970s feminists highlighted women as victims, particularly victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. However, each topic tended then to be treated in a discrete fashion. The emphasis in feminist research now has shifted. Male violence is more often treated as a "unitary phenomenon" along with other forms of male power (Edwards, 1987, 15). Examples of this are the work of Jalna Hanmer and Sheila Saunders (1984) and Ruth Hall (1985). Thus male violence is seen as socially constructed, socially produced and, to some extent, socially legitimated.

Roger Matthews and Jock Young (1986, 2) claim that it was feminist research on victims which brought home to them "the limits of the romantic

[14] See also McRobbie and Garber's (1976) critique.

[15] In recent years, the Home Office has funded one project on the effects of age-mixing in women's prisons (Genders and Player, 1986 and 1987) and is currently funding a project on mothers and babies in prison. The ESRC has funded one project on the transition of girls from school to work and a fellowship which enabled a female academic to carry out interviews with female prisoners and offenders (Carlen, 1987).

[16] We asked our immediate colleagues what impact they thought feminism had had on their work. Some acknowledged that it had none; they felt that it had no relevance for research on men or that they worked in areas in which there were "no gender issues". Others acknowledged a critical awareness. But the main theme which came across was that feminism was the property of a particular group or kind of woman. It was viewed as an exclusive, separatist activity.

conception of crime and the criminal".[17] And Trevor Jones, Brian Maclean and Jock Young (1986, 3) attribute "feminist victimology" with creating "enormous theoretical problems for the radical paradigm in criminology". Hence in the latter volume they examine gender differences in perceptions of risk, fears for personal safety, avoidance behaviours and victimisation and show not only that women are more fearful than men, but that they have good reasons for this. Yet there is a startling omission: they ignore the significance of gender relations as a central factor in understanding most crimes against women and make no reference to a key concept for a feminist understanding of these crimes: male power. It is never made explicit that women's fear of crime is women's fear of men. Their recommendations for change, for example, primarily focus on improving policing. As Betsy Stanko (1987, 123) succinctly puts it: "women's fear of criminal violence is reported . . . but . . . not their experience of violence".

In sum, then, the experience of feminism within criminology seems to us no different from that in other academic disciplines. There is undoubtedly an awareness of the existence of feminism—the invitation to write this paper demonstrates that—but feminism is viewed as the property of "others", "outsiders" even.[18]

The Significance of Feminism for Criminology

We agree with Frances Heidensohn (1987, 27) that "criminology is poorer in all its forms" because it has "not yet fully accepted and integrated" the importance of gender, let alone the interaction of gender with such factors as race and class.

Theories are weak if they do not apply to half of the potential criminal population; women, after all, experience the same deprivations, family structures and so on that men do. Theories of crime should be able to take account of both men's and women's behaviour and to highlight those factors which operate differently on men and women. Whether or not a particular theory helps us to understand women's crime better is of fundamental, not marginal, importance for criminology.

But the significance of feminism goes beyond this. For us, feminism is a mode of analysis; a perspective rather than a theory. This leads us to consider methodology. Sue Clegg (1985) has argued that there is no one coherent, unified set of methodological practices and principles which runs through feminist studies and we agree. However, there are methodological preferences within feminism and some writers have identified core elements in feminist approaches to research (Acker *et al.*, 1983; Kelly, 1978).

[17] Young (1986, 27) later in the same volume suggests that feminist criminologists have forced radicals to re-examine their positions on punishment.

[18] It could be argued that feminists have identified certain areas as their own and have excluded men, but there are defensible reasons for this. In debates on pornography, for example, women may need to feel "safe" and this, at least in the short term, may mean excluding men for both emotional and practical reasons.

Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1983) have usefully identified four main themes linking feminism and research in the social sciences: women should be made visible; research should be on, by and for women; non-sexist methodologies should be employed; and feminist research should have practical import and political impact. The research should, therefore, be useful to the women's movement.[19] In short, the "core elements"are "feminist consciousness" and "the personal is political". For some researchers, this has meant a preference for small-scale qualitative work which seeks to understand individuals' situations (Edwards, 1984) and which encourages subjects to participate in the research process (Roberts, 1981; Dobash and Gutteridge, 1986; Carlen, 1985 and 1987).

It might be easy enough to accept these dictates for research on women, but feminist perspectives have implications for research in criminology more generally. This leads us to re-examine the "on, by and for women" dictate more closely and, consequently, to question the exclusion of men from the feminist enterprise, both as research subjects and researchers. First, then, can men—for example, judges, police officers, prisoners or rapists—be the subjects of feminist research? Maureen Cain (1986) believes that they can if the requirement in feminist research that those investigated remain active subjects in the research process is altered slightly. Her revised version demands only that the subjectivity of those investigated should be taken into account. She explores this distinction through the hypothetical example of a feminist doing research on the Association of Police Officers.

A concrete example of a feminist approach to research on men is provided by the recent experience of one of us in carrying out research in men's prisons. The prime focus of that research was "to consider the concept of humane containment in a context of security and control. The research proposal made no mention of gender issues.[20] Despite this, the issue of gender had important consequences for the nature and structure of the research, particularly on the style of interviewing and on the content of discussions. There are four points to be made. Firstly, the two female researchers involved did not view those they spoke with as research "objects" or as "mere informants". Although their conversations with the prisoners involved an unequal balance of power—their clothes, tape recorders and freedom to walk round the prison gave them authority, much as they tried to resist it—their vulnerability as women enabled them to some extent to share the men's vulnerability as prisoners. Secondly, they did not restrict conversations to the research questions. Indeed, at times they dismissed the pre-designed questions and invited prisoners to redefine them so that between them they came up with the questions which were important to the prisoners. Thirdly, they tried to include in their discussions with the men, whether prisoners or prison officers, some reference to the impact of their life in prison on their wives, partners and children. Fourthly, they attempted to meet the women visiting men in prison and partners of

[19] This is an area in which many researchers fail, but there are studies, particularly on women as victims, which are linked with political action (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984).

[20] However, the Project Director did consciously set out to employ at least one woman for the field-work and, in fact, both field-workers were women.

prison officers and to learn from them directly something of their prison experiences. Thus the researchers tried to gain some insights into the meaning of imprisonment for the women who served out the men's sentences or worked out their men's shifts at home, for these affected men's experience of imprisonment. The point is that as feminist women the researchers felt it inappropriate to deny women's experiences. Gender awareness meant that they had to analyse men in relation to women as well as to other men. The general consensus of the research group was that feminism had in these ways added an important dimension to the project.

The question of whether or not men can engage in feminist research is more complex. Can men incorporate a feminist perspective, or do women have a monopoly of knowledge or understanding of feminist issues (Morgan, 1981)? It is possible to argue that women should be given the time and space to develop feminist perspectives in their own way, using their own language and not the categories and concepts provided for them by men and in traditional methodologies. At the same time, there is a strong argument for encouraging men to consider and make use of feminist perspectives. Men may not share women's oppression, but through research they may move to some comprehension of it. There is a distinction between feminism (and the emotional and political commitment which this entails) and feminist perspectives. Men may not be able to be truly involved in the former, but can share the latter.

In response to Paul Rock's challenges in the 1970s, it seems to us that feminism has much to offer women *and* men within criminological areas.*

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