

NEW
DIRECTIONS
in
CRITICAL
CRIMINOLOGY

Edited by

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CHAPTER 1

On Critical Criminology

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INTRODUCTION

During the last three decades, criminology has undergone both rapid and significant change. In the mid 1950s the dominance of the positivist school, which conceived of crime as an event, gave way to the more critical conception of crime as process (MacLean, 1986), and it is this important intellectual shift which marks the emergence of critical criminology. Since that time, there have been periods during which critical criminologists have been both in remarkable agreement as to how a critical line of investigation should proceed, and hopelessly polarized in terms of their conceptions of what constitutes the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of a progressive criminology. The former periods of agreement were largely characteristic of the labelling tradition in the United States and the 'New Criminology' of England, both of which emerged during the social turmoil and anti-war movement of the 1960s.

The periods of disagreement began to occur when the neo-conservative backlash of the 1970s threw the progressive academy into a defensive tailspin from which it is yet to recover. This conservative backlash, manifested by Reaganism in the U.S. and Thatcherism in the U.K., had a significant impact upon the discipline of criminology. More recently dubbed as 'Right Realism', administrative criminologists have argued that crime will always be with us, and that we can never eliminate it; therefore, we should be attempting to manage and control crime in such an efficient manner as to reduce its impact and improve public safety. Within right realism there is no need to identify causes of crime, only ways to control it.

In reaction to this approach, a number of schools of thinking have been precipitated within critical criminology. The purpose of this book is to examine four of these new developments: left realism, feminism, postmodernism and peacemaking. The book is divided into four respective sections, each of which includes an introductory discussion. We need not, therefore do so again here. Rather, our objective in this short introduction is to argue that while criminology has a history of rich theoretical diversity, much of that diversity appears to be both contradictory and one-sided. For this reason, we see the current developments in critical criminology to be exciting ones. As we will argue, while each of the four emerging traditions are distinct, each draws upon the others, both theoretically in terms of borrowing concepts, and methodologically in terms of making use of each other's techniques of investigation (Currie *et al*, 1991). Thus, while it may appear as if such new currents of investigation are at odds with each other, it is our view that they are complimentary. While there are numerous other traditions also emerging

in critical criminology, which are not investigated here, we fully recognize their importance and would argue that there is a similar complementarity among these as well. In order to more fully grasp and appreciate the intellectual underpinnings of these traditions, it would be useful to briefly examine the historical limitations of earlier traditions of criminological inquiry.

ONE-SIDED CONCEPTIONS OF THE CRIME PROCESS CORRECTIONALISM AND THE FOCUS ON THE OFFENDER

Different moments in the history of academic criminology have been characterized by one-sided investigations into one of the four moments of the crime process: offender, victim, police (agencies of control) and community (Ahluwalia and MacLean, 1986). Writers in the positivist tradition have historically tended to focus exclusively on the offender. Biological positivism such as the work of Lombroso (1913), psychological positivism such as the work of Eysenck (1970) and sociological positivism such as the work of Durkheim (1938a) have in common the assumption that norms are consensual and that deviation from these norms is due to some kind of pathology, whether it be biological, psychological or social. Thus the logic of positivism suggests that intervention be aimed at correcting the offender. Such a one-sided focus on the offender then is not a dynamic approach and, therefore, can be viewed as correctionalism (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973).

THE ANOMIE TRADITION

Stemming from Durkheim (1933), the anomie tradition can also be seen as offender-oriented and correctionalist in nature. Merton (1938) provides what he calls a 'social theory of deviance'; however, he still pathologizes social processes within individuals in that, for him, anomie is the reduction of commitment in the individual to culturally defined goals and to acceptable norms of achieving those goals (Cohen, 1966). While social strain exists outside of the individual, personal adaptation to that strain is individually based. While Cloward and Ohlin (1960) attempt to modify Mertonian anomie theory, they still locate the adaptation to social realities within the individual. Despite its dominance from 1938 until the mid-1960s the anomie tradition was a one-sided criminology which focussed on the offender. Therefore, the anomie tradition has undergone a conceptual shift. While beginning as characteristic of a pathological division of labour (Durkheim, 1933), by the mid-1960s it represents a pathological state within the individual, a transformation criticized by Durkheim himself in *The Rules of Sociological Method*:

In a word, there is between psychology and sociology the same break in continuity as between biology and physio-chemical sciences. Consequently, every time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false (1938b:104).

The result of the anomie tradition and correctionalist criminology has been not only a focus on the offender or norm violator, but a pre-occupation with norm violation rates (Liska, 1987) as estimated by official crime statistics. Although Merton's (1938) sociological concern was in explaining why working class people were over-represented in the criminal statistics (Cohen, 1966), he failed to recognize the social process by which those statistics are constructed and accepted them more or less uncritically. Such is the characteristic of positivist criminology.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL AND THE FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY

While the importance of the old Chicago School both sociologically and criminologically should not be under-estimated, studies of the distribution of deviance fostered within this framework might be seen as one-sided investigations into crime and the community. This school was similar to the anomie tradition in that it made extensive use of official crime data; it also significantly differed in that it was heavily concerned with social organization and spatial relations. This ecological model underwent a gradual refinement. Shaw and McKay (1931), for example, used the court records of 55, 998 juveniles to establish the ecological patterns of delinquency. They found that high rates of official delinquency were strongly correlated spatially to areas characterized by social disorganization.

In the 1930s the notion of social disorganization in the inner-city gave way to a conception of differential organization which saw cultural conflict as a major determinant in the distribution of crime. Sellin (1938) argued that some cultural groups had more access to the legal structures within which their value systems were more likely to be incorporated into the law. If the ecological perspective developed at the University of Chicago argued that spatial relations in the inner-city produced geographical areas in which cultural conflicts were contained, in his differential association theory, Sutherland (1939) began to theorize on how the norms of some groups tend to be reproduced within this milieu of conflict.

Despite the advance represented by the Chicago School, particularly by its stress on spatial relations and social ecology, it still made consistent use of official statistics and did not seem to consider the impact of law enforcement practices on spatial distribution.

Despite Sellin's insights into the formal production of law, the Chicago School degenerated into an obsession with cultural transmission of differential values so that what once was a one-sided investigation into the social and spatial dimensions of the community became a one-sided investigation into the cultural reproduction of offenders.

THE LABELLING SCHOOL AND FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY

As the debates around the utility of official crime data as measures of crime intensified in the 1960s, so did the critique of an offender-oriented positivist criminology. At the forefront of the critique were writers in the social reaction school or the Neo-Chicagoan tradition who dismissed completely the utility of official crime statistics as measures for the frequency and distribution of crime. In contrast to positivism which conceptualized crime as a social event, writers in this tradition conceptualized crime as a social process (MacLean, 1986).

The main thrust of the social reaction school was to analyze the way in which the relation between primary and secondary deviation was mediated by social reaction to the former (Lemert, 1951). Two major directions of inquiry have emerged within this tradition (Liska, 1987). The first direction investigates deviance as a social status. In this approach, social reaction to the deviant results in the application of a label. In time, social reaction is no longer in response to the individual's behaviour but to the label which has been applied to that individual. For writers in this tradition, social reaction is to the label and not the person. The audience is sensitized to the type of behaviour expected from a person so labelled, and the frequency of deviance may be amplified, despite the fact that the individual may not have committed an act that would not otherwise be defined as deviant. Only the perception of deviance increases. In this way the focus of investigation shifts from the 'offender' to the audience (Erikson, 1964).

The second direction of inquiry for the social reaction school is the investigation of deviance as a self-concept. Within this approach self-concept is altered by social reaction to the deviant's behaviour so that the deviant's behaviour subsequently conforms to the new self-concept (Matza, 1969). Social reaction again becomes the focus of study since it is the source of secondary deviation. Some writers argue that while the labelling tradition was a significant shift in criminological thinking, it is not unlike positivism in that it sees the 'offender' as being passive in nature, with behaviour being beyond his/her control (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973); however, other writers have suggested that such criticism has misunderstood labelling perspectives (Plummer, 1979). These debates aside, the advance of this direction of inquiry resulted in

the conception of crime as processual and the use of criminal statistics as indicators of the frequency and distribution of crime was greatly undermined by this advance.

In conclusion, the labelling tradition had an important impact on criminological inquiry, but it remained one-sided in nature. By focussing inquiry at either the community or the agents of formal social control, offenders, victims of crime, and the relation between them were largely ignored. Thus, while the labelling tradition distinguishes itself from positivism in that it provides a processual approach, it nevertheless failed to consider the dynamic inter-relations which underlie the process of crime (Henry and Milovanovic, 1991). Furthermore, it completely ignored the role of the victim in the social construction of crime (Ahluwalia and MacLean, 1986).

ONE-SIDED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE POLICE

Of the four moments in the crime process, the police have received the least attention, and with the exception of Manning (1988), it is difficult to identify a theoretical tradition based solely upon an investigation of the police. Because the police are by nature a conservative institution, gaining access for study has proved to be problematic, particularly for critical criminologists. Studies which do focus on police tend to analyze the police organizationally and from the perspective of the sociology of work.

If the critique offered by Liazos (1972) is that the labelling tradition merely gives lip service to political process, the same can hardly be said for the labelling tradition in the British literature where the process of deviancy amplification is conceptualized as being the complex interaction of agents of formal social control, public perception, and the media. In contrast to the North American literature which tends to focus more on community reaction to deviance, this tradition focuses more upon the agents of control and the media in the construction of community perceptions.

Left idealism might be viewed as a one-sided criminology which focuses upon the agents of social control. Writers in this tradition share the notion that all policing practice is racist in nature and that it is solely the police and other control agencies that are responsible for the creation of crime. The role of the criminologist is to expose the police and agencies of control for what they really are. Clearly, such a position is one-sided in nature. Although the role of the police in the social construction of crime and public attitude is thoroughly examined, little attention is paid to the victim.

One exception is Smith (1983). In his study of the Metropolitan Police in London he observes that:

... like some previous studies the survey finds that victims and offenders tend strongly to be the same people...One type of explanation for this pattern would be in terms of a kind of person and style of life that is associated with both offending and being a victim...This could be elaborated into an account of crime as an aspect of social dislocation among certain rather specific groups...However, what would be left out of an explanation of this type would be the role of the police...Police tend to concentrate their attention on a limited clientele (1983, Vol. I:324-315).

This observation marks the emergence of a criminological method of investigation which takes into consideration the dynamic inter-relationships between the offender, victim, police and community.

ONE-SIDED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE VICTIM

The assault against the positivist paradigm in the 1960s was not only an attack against the logic of this discourse but also a critique of its empirical referents, *viz.* official crime statistics. In response, the 1967 Presidential Commission on Crime and Law Enforcement in the United States was launched by President Johnson in his 'war against crime'. Positivism in a new form emerged. Rather than using official crime statistics as its empirical referent, this neo-positivism accepted the criticism directed at official crime data and began to explore the potential of using the victim as the empirical referent. Thus the victimization survey as a method of investigation emerged.

The development of victimization surveys underwent three stages (MacLean, 1989). The first generation surveys were exploratory in nature and were aimed at two things. Firstly, they were to determine the extent of unrecorded crime, and secondly, they were to determine the methodological problematics of surveying large probability samples of victims of crime. As Maguire (1984) suggests, once it was empirically proven what everyone already knew in theory — that police statistics under-report crime — these surveys became redundant. As a result, the second generation surveys were launched, and these were aimed at measuring characteristics of the victims of crime and correlating these with their observed risks of victimization. Thus, victim precipitation theory guided the second generation surveys, leading to a conception of the victim precipitating their own plight. Policies derived from this perspective are aimed at rehabilitating the victim. For the most part, then, victimization surveys informed by this neo-positivist paradigm are hopelessly one-sided and this recognition

led to a more critical victimology and the third generation crime surveys employed by left realists and discussed in the next section.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it might be argued that different moments of criminological history have been characterized by partial investigations. Correctionalism focussed on the offender at the expense of law enforcement, the community, and victims and used as its empirical basis norm violation rates as measured by official crime data. The Chicago School began with a partial investigation into the social and spatial aspects of the community and how these related to patterns of crime, but evolved more into the study of cultural (deviant) reproduction — all-the-while using official crime data as its basis. While the labelling tradition similarly studied the community in a one-sided manner, it also incorporated an investigation of law enforcement practices in the labelling process, challenging the idea that official crime data were useful as indicators of norm violation. One-sided studies into the police have been sparse, and to the extent that they exist they have tended to challenge the idea that crime is a phenomenon worthy of investigation. Rather, some writers within this tradition suggest that crime is a direct product of policing practices. While all of these approaches have been partial, each ignore the role of the victim in the social construction of crime. This is not to suggest, however, that one-sided investigations into the victim have not emerged. The first and second generation surveys, now regularly carried out at a national level by most governments in the Western World are to a large extent one-sided investigations into the victim.

Clearly, a more holistic approach requires that the entire process of crime is examined. This would include a study of the complex dynamics between the four moments of the crime process. Each of the four critical traditions examined in the following sections are attempts to break from the more traditional paradigms. Each is an attempt to transcend the one-sided or partial investigations of the past, each is an attempt to grasp the process of crime from a more meaningful vantage point than traditional criminology, and each is an attempt to transform criminology from a science of social control into a struggle for social justice. The extent to which each of these traditions can be successful will be addressed in each section and in the concluding chapter of this book.

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PART I: LEFT REALISM

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

The Origins of Left Realism

Brian D. MacLean

Left realism emerges as a distinct tradition of criminological inquiry in mid to late 1970s Britain (Currie *et al*, 1990; Lea and Young, 1984; MacLean, 1989, 1991; Schwartz and DeKeseredy, 1991; Taylor, 1988, Young, 1987). Like all discourses, left realism can only be fully understood within the context of the complex web of economic, political, intellectual and social relations from which it arises. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, once the 'New Criminology' emerged — founded upon a mixture of Marxist and American phenomenological paradigms (see MacLean, 1986) — it was immediately divisive within the younger generation of criminologists, particularly those centered around The National Deviancy Conference (Young, 1986).

On the one side of this schism, writers were trying to advance a Marxist discourse, the object of which was the criminal justice apparatus as criminogenic in itself. Here, writers advanced the notion that criminology was a state-sponsored, 'law and order' discourse in which the categories of 'crime' defined by actors in the state were: a) class biased, in that they did not include crimes committed by the powerful (Young, 1979); b) culturally biased, in that they tended to both criminalize racial minorities and focus enforcement practices on them (Hall *et al*, 1978); and c) gender biased, in that they classified all behaviours into categories emanating from a male-authored discourse on law and order (Morris, 1987; Smart, 1976). The result of this correctionalist discourse and the law enforcement practices it inspired was to reproduce relations of power by criminalizing those subordinate actors who resisted domination (see for example Scraton, 1987). In short, those people resisting 'hegemony' were at once seen by state actors as criminals, and by progressive intellectuals as being at the forefront of the struggle against legalistic oppression of the disenfranchised. In short, 'criminals', as defined by state actors and categories, were being romanticized by progressive intellectuals (see Thompson, 1978; Young, 1979). In this intellectual

sleight of hand, the focus was shifted from a more traditional one-sided examination of the 'offender' to a once again one-sided analysis of the 'state' and the powerful groups it supposedly represented; now these were cast as the 'real' criminals (Young, 1979).

The problem with such a position, however seductive it might be, is obvious. It tends to deny victims of street crime their experiences and suffering. If state-sponsored criminology and the definitions of crime it engenders misrepresent the social reality of crime for the general population, then its opposite — i.e. a criminology which sees state-defined criminal offenders as victims of broader social processes — also misrepresents the social reality of crime. On the one side we have state actors criminalizing the poor and less powerful resisters of social injustice, and on the other side we have the poor victims of social injustice victimizing their counterparts in a predatory way and being seen by 'progressives' as proto-revolutionaries.

On the other side of this schism was a group of writers who recognized that the neo-conservative backlash, as evidenced by the success of Margaret Thatcher at the polls in 1979, was the result of the 'Tories' capitalizing on public concerns about crime (MacLean, 1991; Taylor, 1981). The economic, political and social crises characteristic of the accumulation crisis of late capitalism in Britain were successfully translated in the public consciousness into a crisis of law and order by the Thatcher regime. The result was a series of draconian measures aimed at getting tough on criminals, and restoring discipline in the militant trade unions, rebellious youth, feminist activists and so forth. For writers on this side of the schism, the question became not so much an interest in documenting the specific economic and political processes which lead to such 'law and order campaigns' as it was the practical question of how to resist such policies and foster support from a public already favourably disposed to the Tory agenda for a more progressive agenda.

In his well-known article "Left Idealism, Reformism and Beyond," Jock Young (1979) characterizes the former writers focusing on the state as 'Left Idealists'. Perhaps this neologism was a poor choice, because it has been misinterpreted by many writers who choose to take a defensive stance. In its popular meaning, 'idealism' here conjures up images of 'utopianism'. The concept 'left idealism' has come to be used in the literature to refer to the notion of people trying to advance an 'ideal' society, one based upon socialist principles which is impossible to attain. However, a careful reading of Young suggests that this is not at all the meaning he had in mind when coining the term. Rather, he is referring to a 'philosophical' idealism — that is, an inquiry

which uses as the starting point of its inquiry 'concepts' or abstractions instead of concrete material facticities and the material social relations from which they emerge. For Young, left idealism is characterized by:

voluntarism, a coercive conception of order and functionalism. That is, a voluntaristic conception of human nature coupled with a notion that social order is in essence maintained by a series of coercive institutions structured together in a functionalist fashion (1979:13).

The appeal of such a conception is that it directs attention away from mundane street crime towards infractions of the more powerful segments of society. Concomitant with this seductive appeal, however, is the very serious error of ignoring or minimalizing crime predatory street crime, as it occurs among the working class (Currie, 1991). Furthermore, the criminal victimization of the disenfranchised tends to be ignored by over-zealous 'progressives' whose aim is to expose the 'big lie' of state actors and the constituencies they favour.

By way of contrast, left realism starts from the observation that crime *really is a problem* for the working class and other disenfranchised groups (Lea and Young, 1984). The victims of most crime are found in the least powerful segments of society such as women, working class people and racial minorities. Rather than being directed from above, most of this crime is perpetrated upon these victims by persons from within their own social ranks. In addition, it is the weaker segments of society who disproportionately experience the impact of corporate crime, organizational crime, crimes of the powerful, state crime and commercial crime. Given that the bulk of crime is found within the weaker segments of society, it is little wonder that Steven Box (1983) attempted to construct a theory of crime in which the *powerful* rather than the *powerless* are seen to be criminogenic.

For left realists, then, the objective is to construct a 'working class criminology' (Young, 1975) in which the kinds of policies aimed at crime control are not repressive. In this way, left realists stand in stark opposition to the 'get tough' approaches advocated by current neo-conservative regimes. Left realists also stand in contrast to a progressive criminology which attempts to downplay the impact of *crimes from below* while emphasizing the importance of *crimes from the top*. For this they have been highly criticized by criminologists from both the right and the left; nevertheless, despite these attacks — many of which are based upon an incomplete understanding of left realism — left realists have been extremely prolific researchers and writers.

The method of investigation for left realists is the local crime survey. Unlike first and second generation victimization surveys (see

chapter one), however, the local crime survey represents a third generation survey, one which attempts to measure all moments of the crime process (MacLean, 1991). The first such survey was The Islington Crime Survey (ICS) conducted in inner-city London (Jones *et al.*, 1986). Since then, British left realists have undertaken a spate of local crime surveys which have been funded by local city councils dominated by Labour Party majorities. Their purpose is to provide local people with a political voice that can help to transcend the oppressive nature of policies derived from a correctionalist, state-sponsored criminology.

While left realism is hardly a panacea for crime, its commitment to constructing an alternative source of information that challenges the state-monopoly on knowledge of crime and policing is an exciting development. Information from local crime surveys has already illustrated, for example, that young people, working class people, racial minorities and women are the most likely to be victims of property and personal crime (Jones *et al.*, 1986). In contrast, traditional criminology has often viewed these groups as offenders (with the exception of women who, historically, have largely been ignored by criminologists altogether [Morris, 1987]). By injecting this information into the political debate, left realists have been partially successful in fostering more progressive crime control policies while sensitizing the public to the necessity for more progressive and less authoritarian policies.

Despite its successes, left realism is not without its critics. Some feminists are skeptical of realism's voiced commitment to women's concerns. Some members of racial minority community groups question the validity of the non-racist position left realists claim to advance. Many progressive academic criminologists have voiced their concerns about the potential for left realism to be both populist and devolve into another form of state-sponsored criminology.

In the first article in this section, Jock Young addresses a number of these criticisms. He argues that much of the criticism of left realism is based upon a limited and faulty reading of realist literature. For him, realism *does not* take definitions of crime for granted, it *is not* a simple reflection of public perceptions of crime, realism *is* interested in corporate crime, it *is not* only relevant to Britain, realism *does* contribute to criminological debate in a novel way, and it *is not* part and parcel of right realism.

Dawn Currie examines the potential of realism to address women's concerns about social justice as articulated by feminists. By way of support she notes that, unlike traditional criminology, left realism investigates violence against women using categories based on

women's experiences. From this perspective realism has adopted a set of categories which refer to forms of violence which are not, in a legalistic sense, criminal. Her reluctance to fully endorse left realism, however, is based upon her observation that criminology as a social practice is still a form of patriarchal social organization. For her, the test for realism will be its demonstrated ability to transcend male domination in the criminological workplace.

In a similar vein, Walter DeKeseredy assesses both the strengths and weaknesses of left realist research on violence against women. While he supports the previous work done in this area by left realists, particularly their documentation of violence against women by intimates, he also points out that there are a number of concerns that left realism must take seriously if it is to be informed by feminist analysis.

Finally, Ray Michalowski cautions left realists that drawing upon the community for information may not always be fruitful. He warns that in many areas, particularly the Southern United States, populism is right wing. No matter how we frame questions on crime surveys, right wing populism will still emerge in some locales. Does this then mean that right wing policies will be the necessary outcome of such research? Clearly, to date realists have enjoyed the support of left wing councils in England, but such support is not likely forthcoming from city councils in North America.

The jury may still be out when it comes to left realism; however, in the meanwhile it is clear that left realism has had a tremendous impact upon criminological inquiry. The extent to which a model of investigation developed in England is applicable to other social specificities is yet to be determined. The spate of work on this question in England, Canada, The United States and Australia will undoubtedly provide us with some guidelines for the future.

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CHAPTER 3

Asking Questions of Left Realism

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Although having roots in the debates of the mid-1970s, left realist criminology has only really emerged in the post-1985 period. In that short time it has created considerable debate; the realist bibliography, with which we have been trying to keep pace at the Centre for Criminology, now stretches to eighteen pages and is in its seventh update. Realism has developed rapidly in this period, both theoretically and methodologically. Yet many of the criticisms encountered are based on a limited and distorted reading of this work. Two recent contributions exemplify this: Tony Platt's paper at the Conference on Realist Criminology in Vancouver and Stephen Mugford's and Pat O'Malley's critique of realist approaches to the control of heroin in the forthcoming edition of the *International Journal of Drug Policy*. I would like to take this opportunity to answer some of the most common criticisms levelled at realism.

REALISM TAKES CONVENTIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CRIME FOR GRANTED

On the contrary, realism merely states that to understand *present* crime rates, we must look to the square of crime: the interaction of formal forces of social control, informal definitions held by the public, the number of putative offenders and the number of possible victims (Young, 1987). In terms of what *should* be criminalized in society, realism argues for the minimum use of coercive sanctions necessary to maintain a civilized society. To this extent, it argues for decriminalization (*e.g.* cannabis) and the widespread reduction of criminal sanction (*e.g.* minor property offenses). At the same time as reducing the net of social control, it stresses the need for the extension of this net in various areas, particularly child abuse, domestic violence, industrial pollution and corporate crime.

REALISM MERELY REFLECTS PUBLIC CONCEPTIONS OF CRIME

Realism argues against both the tendency of experts to tell the public what are its real problems and the 'subjectivist' approach, which believes that crime priorities can be simply deduced by reading off the computer printouts of public opinion surveys (Crawford *et al*, 1990). It maintains that, particularly in the inner city, direct public experience of many crimes generates both rational priorities as to the problem faced and realistic fears. It sets its face against the conventional wisdom that women and the elderly are prone to irrational fears and that the fear of crime is more of a problem

than crime itself. This being said, the influence of a sensationalist mass media creates public irrationality in the areas in which the public have little direct experience. For example, in terms of crime, 'crack' has been projected as a considerable problem in Europe despite the fact that there is a low level of cocaine use. This is even more evident in the areas of crime control, where public conceptions of measures such as "Neighbourhood Watch" and "Stop and Search" are beset by unrealistic assessments of their effectiveness (Painter *et al.*, 1989).

The role of criminologists is to debate with the public over crime priorities: it is neither to reflect nor bestow public problems. The role of realism is to situate the problem of crime within its social context (Walklate, 1990).

REALISM IS UNINTERESTED IN CORPORATE CRIME

The original polemic of realism was to argue that the left was prone to stress the impact of corporate and white collar crime, whilst neglecting or underestimating the impact of street crime. The aim was to redress the balance: the working class and the more vulnerable sectors of the public suffer disproportionately from *both* types of crime (Lea and Young, 1984). As a matter of fact, realist research has turned its attention to corporate and white collar crime (Pearce and Tombs, 1990). And, as Frank Pearce recently pointed out, the left, although frequently talking about corporate crime, has rarely engaged in a systematic analysis of the problem.

REALISM IS ESSENTIALLY A BRITISH PHENOMENON

The problematic which left realist criminology faced was: the breakdown of both conventional social democratic and neo-classicist theories of crime; the emergence of the New Right, both in general politics and in right realist criminology; the prevalence in radical criminology of a left idealism which underestimated the problem of crime and engaged in an 'impossibilist' critique of crime control practice; and the widespread influence of feminist ideas which sensitized criminology, both to problems of victimization and inadequate levels of community safety. All these factors were experienced in every advanced Western society. Consequently, realist approaches to crime have been widespread. The work of Elliott Currie in the United States, John Lowman and Brian MacLean in Canada, and Dave Brown and Russell Hogg in Australia will serve as good examples.

What is more specifically British is the closer interface between left realist criminology and political policy. Largely this reflects the existence of social democratic local governments in the majority of British cities, with a close interest in the control of crime. Concomitant

with this is the concern about the service delivery of public bureaucracies, including the police, in crime control and other areas. To an extent, this reflects different possibilities of political practice between Europe and North America. Colleagues in Barcelona and Bologna, for example, have a more similar political scenario than do those in Vancouver and Detroit.

REALISM HAS NOTHING NEW TO SAY

Realism argues that previous criminological theories have been *partial*. That is they only focus on one part of the square of crime: the *State* (e.g. labelling theory, neo-classicism), the *Public* (e.g. control theory), the *Victim* (e.g. situational crime prevention). One of its major aims is a synthesis of past positions which incorporates an analysis of crime on all levels and which has a practice which recommends intervention on all levels, (e.g. policing, public involvement, target hardening, rehabilitation). It pinpoints the abandonment of social causality as a major deficiency of contemporary criminological theory and that it is necessary to revive a crime control practice which prioritizes tackling the causes of crime as well as retaining interventions on the level of crime prevention and deterrence. This being said, it is critical of the extremely simplistic notions of causality implicit in traditional social democratic theory, the lamentable standards of evaluation used in monitoring interventions, and the difficult, yet surmountable, problems of effectively mobilizing public bureaucracies in terms of successful intervention. It represents an acknowledgment of the failures of modernism in the social democratic interventions of the post-war period, and a resolution to pursue the cause of modernism rather than relapse into post-modernist defeatism (cf Carol Smart, 1990).

RIGHT REALISM AND LEFT REALISM ARE INDISTINGUISHABLE

Left Realism is the opposite of Right Realism. Whereas realists of the right prioritize order over justice, left realists prioritize social justice as the way of achieving a fair and orderly society. Whereas right realists descend to genetic and individualistic theories to blame the 'underclass', left realists point to the social injustice which marginalizes considerable sections of our population and engenders crime. If the two realisms have anything in common, it is the rejection of utopianism: there are no magical solutions: all interventions in the control of crime have a social cost which must be weighed against their effectiveness. The achievement of a 10% reduction in the crime or recidivism rate is to be welcomed as an achievable gain rather than being rejected for not having rid the world of crime or having totally

abolished prisons. Right Realism is a New Right philosophy: Left Realism stems from current debates in democratic socialism. Thus it argues that only socialist intervention will fundamentally reduce the causes of crime rooted as they are in social inequality, that only the universalistic provision of crime prevention will guard the poor against crime, that only a genuinely democratic control of the police force will ensure that community safety is achieved.

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CHAPTER 4

Realist Criminology, Women, and Social Transformation in Canada

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The relationship between feminism and the Canadian criminological community has been an ambivalent one. In part, this reflects the fact that from a feminist perspective 'justice' is defined in a way which includes a broad range of processes contributing to both the material and psychological well-being of women. This means that feminists have been more likely to see their interests in terms of campaigns for law reform and its application than as lying with a discipline which, until more recently, appeared to deal primarily with infractions of law, an activity in which women are not major players. A lot of this has changed, however, making left realist criminology a potentially more attractive project. This essay overviews current feminist controversies surrounding left realism for the purpose of identifying what I consider to be the central issues. While outlining what have been seen as both the contributions and limitations of left realism, however, I conclude that a left realist approach may possibly move feminist justice studies beyond its current impasse. Because this latter assessment can only be understood within the context of feminist debates, and assuming that many readers may be unfamiliar with these developments, I shall begin with a brief overview of the current dilemmas in feminist analyses of justice for women.

Disappointments with liberal reformism of the 70s and 80s have been the stimuli for much recent rethinking of "justice for women". As the "Decade for Women" (1975-85) closed in Canada, the Neilson Task Force observed, for example, that in spite of the existence of several programs for equal pay and employment opportunity, the wage gap for Canadian men and women remains virtually unchanged since 1978. Added to this, the experiences of women with the new Charter — a crowning achievement of feminist struggles — have not been unequivocally positive. In 1985, a District Court Judge reasoned that statutory rape in the Criminal Code was of no force and effect because the prohibition applied only to men, while in 1987 a lower Court Judge invoked equality provisions of the Charter to strike down the prohibition against incest on the grounds that it creates a crime for men and not for women (Mandel, 1989). Together with the murder of 14 women on December 6th, 1989, it has become painfully clear that even the fundamental right of security of the person remains a still unrealized goal for Canadian women, and feminists are beginning to suggest that the prospects of justice for women in a patriarchal society remain bleak.

Given these developments, it is not surprising that feminist scholars are

becoming increasingly disenchanted with liberal democratic notions of “the rule of law”. There has been a significant shift away from the instrumentalist position that the state and its apparatuses — specifically law, criminal justice and police — are inherently neutral or can be used in ways often assumed by feminist campaigns. Influenced by the works of two Americans — psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) and legal scholar Catharine McKinnon (1989) — a number of Canadian writers are beginning to express the concern that current forms of justice reflect a masculine discursive practice which necessarily supports male supremacy. Greschner (1986) posits an alternative system of ideals upon which law and its administration should be based. Specifically, it enshrines the principles of “care, connection, and community”: a morality claimed as the special province of women. However, while few progressive thinkers would dispute the desirability of a more humane approach to justice, this position clearly rests on speculation and wishful thinking, which is why I have dubbed it elsewhere “feminist legal utopianism”. Reflecting an essentialism reminiscent of the “maternal feminism” of the earlier women’s movement, this approach has been especially criticized by socialist feminists. For socialists, the limitations of feminist reformism reflect the fundamental contradiction of equality in ‘democratic’ societies stratified by class, race and gender. As discussed by Fine (1986), individuals can be equalized in law only by abstracting away the differences which distinguish them in real life. It has been for feminists to analytically connect law and the state to socially constructed differences between men and women. Analyzed in terms of unequal “relations of reproduction”, these differences manifest themselves in relations between individual men and women, but also those between the private and public realms (between family and the work-place; between the state and the family, the economy, etc.). These relations are viewed as underpinning the “dual oppression” of women *viz* Patriarchy and Capital. From this perspective, the gains for women (such as employment equity or reforms of family law) have been discounted as victories for capital which increasingly requires the waged labour of women, while the apparent demise of “private patriarchy” is characterized as merely concealing the extent to which it is being replaced by the “public patriarchy” of the welfare state (see Brown, 1981; Ursel, 1986). Thus feminist reform efforts became re-evaluated within the Gramscian notion of hegemony as a totalitarian process of political, economic and ideological control through which the dominated willingly accept and actively participate in their subordination. Although Gramsci himself argues that hegemony is never complete and is always being resisted and re-imposed, writers

are beginning to complain that social structural theory leads to political paralysis (see Snider, 1988; Currie, 1990). This paralysis is perhaps most alarming for those concerned about violence against women. Here feminism is really caught between the proverbial “rock and a hard spot”. On the one hand, researchers have documented the reality of male violence in women’s lives, while writers (like myself) caution against campaigns which merely reproduce women’s need for patriarchal protection. From this perspective Edwards (1987:27) is, in my opinion, quite right in claiming that much of the social structural approaches favoured by many ‘critical’ criminologists — including socialist feminists — can be read as warning against any strategies which assume that ‘the system’ will ever do anything against men as a group and for women as a group. It is ironic, therefore, that while purporting to develop alternative explanations for the failures of liberal reformism, radical idealist and Marxist materialist perspectives both lead us to ‘theory without a politics’.

For this reason, I do not find it paradoxical that socialist feminism, which is founded upon the principle of commitment to class, race and other dimensions of women’s subordination, is now subject to critique and rejection, along with essentialist approaches, by minority women. Elsewhere, I have pointed out that academic feminism reflects the real and not merely conceptual separation of women along these lines. Thus our practice must embody more than ‘intellectual hygiene’ *viz* the elimination of racist categories and paradigms: we must make a real and not simply a rhetorical place for women of colour, for example, in the process of defining what feminism is and what it might be all about. Failure to act upon our theoretical commitment and the continued imposition of a white, middle class heterosexist paradigm as ‘proper’ feminist theory and practice will continue to encourage the shift toward feminist relativism and identity politics. The notion of politics “informed by theory” — a slogan central to academic socialism — is being replaced by the belief that one’s identity is taken and defined as a political point of departure, as a motivation for action, and as a delineation of one’s politics (Alcoff, 1988). Bell Hooks (1989), in particular, argues that “for many exploited and oppressed people the struggle to create an identity, to name one’s reality is an act of resistance.” From this perspective which reflects the growing influence of postmodernism in especially American feminism, attention is diverted away from the so-called structural and material analyses of exploitation and domination. While the implications of the postmodern rejection of the grand theorizing of especially Marxism is only just beginning to be explored within the Canadian context, Brenda

Cossmann and Ratna Kapur (1991) have outlined problems which emerged when they attempted to use the experiential research favoured by this approach in their study of the legal regulation of women in rural India. For myself, postmodernism may have the effect of advancing a 'politics without theory', a somewhat dubious 'advance'.

Given that feminists remain divided along both analytical and political lines, as we face the 1990s it may well appear that we have reached an impasse. It is from this position that I find the implications of left realism an interesting possibility. As outlined by Young (1979, 1986) and later MacLean (1991), left realism represents a critique of the idealism of much of the Marxist criminology of the 1960s and 70s which moves beyond mere intellectual criticism through a commitment to the practical question of social transformation. In this way its goals parallel many of those held by feminists like myself who, in the not so distant past, fancied ourselves socialist feminists. I propose that realist criminology deserves our cautious scrutiny.

Theoretically, left realism views crime and criminalization as a process involving the interaction between victim, offender, police and the community. Within this process, the impact of crime is assessed from the perspectives of the victim rather than those of the police, criminal justice administrators, or criminologists for the expressed purpose of reclaiming the discourse on crime and crime prevention. In order to accomplish this, realist criminology requires the development of new measures of the frequency and distribution of crime and its impact which is why realist discourses emphasize methodological rather than strictly theoretical questions. However, this is not for the purpose of creating new 'Truths' about crime. Rather, at the theoretical, methodological and political level it challenges those processes through which the 'Truth of Crime' has been traditionally maintained: it deconstructs the categories from which traditional criminologists proceed to theorize about crime. Realist criminology understands crime as a political process, historically located within a patriarchal society divided along the lines of race, class and gender. In short, the features which I find most promising include its rejection of academic idealism; its advocacy of politics informed by a thoroughgoing analysis of race, class and gender; and its insistence that investigations of the empirical realm begin from the perspective of respondents rather than researchers. Beginning from a feminist perspective which assumes that women's lives are controlled by the threat or reality of men's violence (Ahluwalia, 1990), realist approaches can be credited with broadening the categories of

criminological investigation and practice to include non-criminalized but threatening behaviour by men towards women. Thus the methodology of realist criminology is not inconsistent with that advocated by feminism and designed for the explicit purpose of 'beginning from the experiences of women.' In this way, I see realist criminology as a challenge to reified conceptualizations of crime, although as outlined above and explored later below, it will take more than intellectual effort to end the victimization of women or to deconstruct criminology. This ability to 'give women a voice' is a practical way of putting the needs of women into both the research and the political agendas; to repeat, this is the result of taking the perspective of women rather than that of the male researcher. By also allowing for variations between women in their experiences and responses to violence both theoretically and methodologically — for example, along the lines of class, race and sexual identity — realist criminology has the potential to further discover divisions especially relevant to a policy perspective — for example, along the lines of age, place of residence, etc. In this way, policy based upon data gathered through realist methods recognizes that women are structurally located differently from men. Jones *et al* (1986), for example, have pointed out that while traditional criminology focused upon men's criminalized behaviour which occurs largely in the public realm, women's victimization occurs within the 'safety' of their own homes and as a consequence of the 'normal' operation of gender relations. However, although realist criminology begins from women's perspectives, it rejects victim precipitation theory, including theories of learned helplessness or cycles of violence forwarded by feminist writers.

Paradoxically, perhaps, these same characteristics raise problems from a feminist perspective, although I think that many criticisms are, quite frankly, unfounded. For example, the view that realist criminology is *ahistorical* or *atheoretical* misunderstands both the nature and the method of the realist project, and I shall leave it to others to further this point. Likewise, the notion that research which begins anywhere except from the academic's perspective is 'populist' rings familiar to feminists who are by now quite comfortable with this type of fear-mongering. However, there are three problems which have been raised which do deserve our attention. Given the limitations of the current format, I can do little more than give them mention here. The first criticism concerns the methodological focus on quantification. While obviously necessary, if we are to move beyond totally personalized accounts of the world — as I think we should — a number of writers express the concern that realist victimization

surveys will merely replicate the problematic practices of traditional survey research. The problems identified arise from the quantification and standardization required for comparative analyses and are associated with what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call logico-deductive practice. Secondly, the focus on immediate gains measured as reductions in crime or more accountable policing has been seen as contributing to agendas which merely help to reproduce current patriarchal institutions (see Currie, 1990). Finally and along the same lines, there is the concern that this focus on immediate measurable action will encourage us to abandon the dearly held and long-term feminist goal of total social transformation.

In the final analysis, what does all this mean? In my opinion, the stated goals of the realist agenda coupled with its commitment to systematic empirical investigation of the implications of race, class and gender means that realist criminology deserves careful and serious consideration by feminists. In closing, however, I would like to sketch out a number of issues which have been raised by Canadian scholars concerned with the issue of violence against women which need to be included in this consideration. As Jones *et al* (1986) noted, the rational fear of crime modifies women's lives to a much greater extent than men's. As example, many of my female students have shared with me their solutions to the constant anxiety about their safety. Within the context of their practices the university's response to Montréal — proposals to improve lighting on campus, for example — make sense. However, to my mind, such strategies conflate the fear of crime with crime itself so that addressing the former is seen as solving the latter. What do we do about the notion that the fear of crime is becoming worse than crime itself? Secondly, I would like to know which 'community' to which the realists refer when they give primacy to the community in defining both the problem and its solutions. The notion of community may be more problematic for feminists than for academic criminologists who ironically often appear to romanticize the patriarchal community in the same way that the Right romanticizes 'the traditional family'. Related to this, I personally do not want the academic community — feminist or not — to decide on the nature of the 'just society': this is a political and not an academic question so that 'radical' criminology should be about the former and not the latter. Thus I want to know how we can avoid patriarchal relations between criminology and women. In my mind, it is not a question of method: it reflects the structure and practices of the Canadian criminological community in general. Finally, and perhaps most centrally, can realism take us beyond interpersonal violence in our discussions of the

victimization of women? Women in both Canada and the United States are killed annually as a direct result of contraceptive and other unsafe 'feminine' products. At the same time, putting debates about the measure of 'harm' aside, feminists are becoming more vocal about pornography, prostitution, and other patriarchal practices which 'embarrass' the left. What remains to be seen, therefore, in my opinion is whether or not realist criminology can transform *itself* as part of its own agenda for 'radical' social change.

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CHAPTER 5

Confronting Woman Abuse: A Brief Overview of The Left Realist Approach

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Most of the descriptions and critiques of British left realism have focused on its attempts to explain predatory street crime and its proposals for short-term, socialist policies to reduce working class victimization. Rather than add to the debates on these concerns, the purpose of this short essay is to make explicit an issue that has been generally avoided in previous commentaries on left realism — woman abuse.

For some feminist critics, left realist research, such as the Islington Crime Survey (ICS, Jones *et al.*, 1986), is consistent with the empiricist, conservative agenda of the University of New Hampshire's Family Research Laboratory. This accusation is based on the realists' use of both "distanced, objectives" (Kelly and Radford, 1987) and ahistorical research methods, and their failure to pay significant attention to the influence of familial and societal patriarchy. While these and other criticisms (see DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1991) are valid, it is important to recognize that the research strategies employed by affiliates of the New Hampshire School and left realists should not be confounded because they originate in different theoretical and political viewpoints. A careful examination of their respective positions reveals several key distinctions.

Firstly, the New Hampshire school tends to view violence in intimate, social contexts as a gender-neutral problem. Both men and women are seen as being equally violent. An example of this position is Straus' (1989) recent attempt to challenge findings which show that female violence, even with the intent to injure, is primarily self-defensive. Left realists do not dismiss the fact that some women abuse men; however, they assert, and their research illustrates, that females are the principal victims of domestic assault.

Secondly, most affiliates of the Family Research Laboratory situate violence against women only in the context of settling conflicts in intimate relationships; however, woman abuse is multidimensional in nature and occurs in a variety of social contexts, such as sexual harassment on the street; a problem given significant attention by left realists who contend that female victimization is not a pathology limited to marital, dating, or cohabiting relationships.

Another, and probably the most important, difference between conventional woman abuse researchers and left realists, is that the former call only for remedies within the present social order, while the latter propose both

middle range policy alternatives and the long-term goal of a transition to a socialist, feminist society. Thus, mainstream researchers are basically content with the *status quo* while the realists want to transcend it.

In summary, there are a few similarities between the conventional and the realist perspectives on woman abuse. They both employ survey technology; however, left realists are informed theoretically and politically by a socialist feminist ideology which needs to be made more explicit. The implementation of the following recommendations for future research could help achieve this goal.

The first suggestion calls for an end to "male-constructed" (Bograd, 1988) research designs. Much of the realist empirical work and policy development is still carried out by men. Thus, some may argue, these people are simply trying to exploit women's pain for their own career advancement. This is hardly the case; nevertheless, for realist discourse to be truly socialist feminist in nature, it must include female academics and activists both at the conceptual and completion stages of research.

A rigorous analysis of how patriarchal power within both working- and middle-class relationships reproduces and legitimates female victimization would also greatly improve the realist perspective. Perhaps North American quantitative studies on this problem can serve as partial models for the development of future new realist projects (Smith, 1989; Yllo, 1983, 1984).

In addition to the meeting the above concerns, left realism should address crimes of the powerful committed against women. Although John Lea and Jock Young argue that working class people are victimized from all directions in capitalist societies, they (and other realists) focus mainly on intra-class, predatory street crime. This is a major oversight because many women are injured or killed in the workplace and are victims of unnecessary surgery. Some are harmed by dangerous pharmaceutical products, physical and sexual child abuse, and economic crimes committed by corporations. The neglect of these problems can unwittingly resemble research agendas characteristic of conventional victimologists.

While a revised empirical agenda is necessary, left realism should incorporate policy initiatives that move beyond the limited realm of criminal justice reform. A "much more vigorous and thorough police response to domestic disputes" (Kinsey *et al.*, 1986:205) alone will not significantly reduce the number of women who are beaten and raped in the home and on the street. Furthermore, some critics contend that

greater police intervention only serves to detract attention from the wider political, economic, and social processes that foster violence against women.

Although, the principal goal of realists is to fill the vacuum in left wing thinking about street crime, it may not be fair to criticize them for excluding policies that curb economic and social inequality. Nevertheless, strategies designed to alleviate these problems are required because ignoring the wider political economic forces that influence men to abuse women perpetuates the dominant tendency to "...compartmentalize social problems along bureaucratic lines" (Currie, 1985:18).

The police and other dimensions of the criminal justice system cannot be held solely responsible for confronting woman abuse when both state and corporate decisions on economic and social issues can significantly affect violent male behaviour. Hence, some of the policies advocated by U.S. realists, such as Elliott Currie (1985), James Messerschmidt (1986), and Ray Michalowski (1983), should be included in the British agenda. Examples of these initiatives are increased wages for women, paid work leaves, state-sponsored day care, full employment, workplace democracy, tax surcharges on industries attempting to shut down plants, and quality employment.

The British realists should also consider Michalowski's (1983) community-based strategies to curb elite deviance. For example, citizen patrols representative of all members of a community, could gather information and study complaints pertaining to business crimes. These local groups could use their data to pressure businesses to stop exploiting the general public. This information may also initiate legal action against ruling class offenders.

In conclusion, British left realism makes a salient contribution to the sociological study of woman abuse in the street and in the home. Nevertheless, in order to make realist victimology more distinct from its mainstream counterpart, it should develop an agenda that incorporates some of the issues raised above.

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CHAPTER 6

"Niggers, Welfare Scum and Homeless Assholes:" The Problems of Idealism, Consciousness and Context in Left Realism

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In recent years a significant debate has developed around the left realist proposition that critical criminologists must learn to "take crime seriously" (Matthews, 1987). Taking crime seriously, in this context, means developing a criminological practice devoted to the unromanticized analysis and practicable amelioration of the *real crimes* that victimize the working class (Lea and Young, 1984; MacLean, 1991; Taylor, 1980). Real crime, in turn, is characterized as some form of injury committed *directly* by one or more *specific* individuals against the body or property of the victim. This includes both ordinary 'street crimes' such as murder, rape, robbery, theft, and burglary, and certain forms of injury beyond the current reach of the law such as 'non-criminalized but threatening behavior of men towards women' (Currie, 1990:4).

In many ways the debate between left realists and other (non-realist?) critical criminologists is reminiscent of the conflict that occurred in the United States between early radical criminologists (1968-1975) and those they termed 'mainstream,' 'liberal' or 'correctional' criminologists. As early radical criminologists set about re-inventing Marxist analysis within U.S. criminology after several decades of suppression of left scholarship, they were prone to some theoretical, ideological, and polemical errors that initially retarded the development of a more mature critical criminology. Left realism, likewise, seems tempted at times to similar errors.

STRAW TARGETS AND A PLACE IN THE SUN

Early radical criminologists (myself included) had a tendency to refer to unnamed 'liberal' or 'correctional' criminologists as foils in order to validate their arguments favoring a historical-materialist criminology. These references to 'liberal' criminologists were often made without any detailed analysis of the nature, origins, and possible utility of the offending models.

More recently, a number of left realists (Currie, 1990; Lea and Young, 1984; Matthews, 1987; Taylor, 1988; Young, 1979) have chastised critical criminology for being 'idealist' and for 'romanticizing' the criminal. Like early radical criminologists, contemporary left realists often provide little information concerning just who these idealists and romanticizers are, what body of works they are criticizing, and what are the theoretical and paradigmatic implications of the approaches being rejected.

Left realist criticisms of the 'cultural school' and its concern with 'moral panics' and other symbolic aspects of crime and the crime problem exemplify this tendency (Taylor, 1988; Young, 1987:12). Representatives of the cultural approach (e.g. Stan Cohen, Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige) are often not mentioned by name, although they are present in the subtext, and the theoretical implications of their work are seldom explored beyond the fact that they are 'idealists.' Instead, these approaches are *dismissed* as wrongheaded.

By demonizing so-called 'idealist' criminologists rather than engaging the implications of their work, left realists fall err to demonstrating what they are by *naming* what they are not. Left realists are at great pains to make it clear that they are *not* the idealists, they are *not* romanticizers of the criminal, and they are *not* those concerned primarily with corporate crime. Unfortunately, this naming of non-attributes does little to distinguish left realists from most other *contemporary* critical criminologists.

First, most critical criminologists today are not 'idealists,' if we take 'idealism' to mean social analysis that focuses on ideational (*i.e.* cultural and ideological) components of social life. To the contrary, contemporary critical criminology is far more characterized by over-determining structural models of social life that all but eliminate subjects and subjectivity from their analysis than it is by idealism.

Second, it has been quite some time since radical criminologists portrayed law-breakers as 'romantic' victims or proto-revolutionaries. Even during the early years of radical criminology in the United States this image of the criminal represented only one part of the emergent critical paradigm, a part that was associated with the 'tear down the walls' movement centered around a group of high profile 'victim-revolutionaries' such as George Jackson, Angela Davis, Eldridge Cleaver, and Huey Newton (Platt, 1988). By the late 1970s the dominant mode of thought within radical criminology viewed street crime as a serious, structurally-induced threat to social order, rather than acts of romantic self-liberation by victims or proto-revolutionaries.

Third, much contemporary critical criminology, particularly that grounded in feminism, *is* concerned with street crime and other forms of interpersonal victimization. While some critical criminologists study corporate and organizational deviance, this work is only part of a wider project of critical analysis in criminology, not its defining characteristic.

Left realism would benefit from the inclusion of serious critiques of the modes of analysis left realists believe should be superceded. By serious critiques I mean a careful deconstruction of the putative less-

desirable models that would simultaneously incorporate what is useful from them while transcending them to a fuller level of analysis. Left realism should attempt to move *through* the models it hopes to replace, rather than trying to go around them.

RESEARCH DOMAINS AND IDEALISM

As I see it, one of the most significant defining characteristics of left realism is its choice of 'research domain.' Blum-West and Carter make the case that studies of crime and deviance can be grouped according to whether they fall into the *behavioral* or the *definitional* research domain. Those working in the behavioral domain are primarily concerned with deviant and/or criminal actions — why people do them and what should be done to or for offenders and victims. The definitional domain is concerned with exploring and understanding how it is that actions come to be understood as criminal or deviant in the first place.

Left realism is grounded in the behavioral research domain, that is, it is primarily concerned with the production and control of day-to-day criminal *behaviors*. The behaviors of greatest concern to left realists are those that result in injuries that have an immediate physical reality and a 'commonsensical' quality (Taylor, 1988). For many left realists, inquiries in *why* people would find street crime more frightening than the phenomenologically vague consequences of corporate deviance, or studies of how powerful corporate or governmental actors avoid having their injury-producing acts defined as deviant or criminal are, at best, relatively tangential to the real problems of crime, and at worst, attacks on the ability of working class people to define their own problems (MacLean, 1990:18).

Attempts to sever the behavioral aspects of human life from the definitional ones, that is, from the fundamental human activity of assigning meaning to experiences, are misguided. To deny the importance of street crime and domestic violence and the fear these crimes generate is to ignore some fairly obvious characteristics of modern, urban social life, as left realists note. But neither does it make any sense to conclude that, because certain forms and sources of injury play a small or lesser part in the construction of people's day-to-day fears, research into these injuries and the way they are or are not constructed as social threats is an 'idealist' and elitist insult to the sense-making capabilities of the working class. In this case privileging the behavioral domain over the definitional one is equivalent to saying what people don't know (and don't fear) can't hurt them.

Recent autopsies of 100 youths in Los Angeles who died as the result of violence or accidents revealed that 80 percent had "notable abnormalities of lung tissue" and over a quarter of them had "severe lesions" in their lungs (Mann, 1990:257). These lung abnormalities, which represent *very real* threats to life and health, are a consequence of the high levels of industrial and automotive pollutants in Los Angeles. Low-income L.A. residents (disproportionately black, Latino, and Asian) are particularly subject to these problems because the housing market places them in the most polluted residential areas, and their general health is already damaged by the conditions of low-income life. Despite this, average working-class residents of East L.A. today are probably more fearful that they or their children might be the victims of a drive-by shooting or some other street crime than they are of corporate pollution. Does this mean that critical criminologists are being 'idealists' and 'elitists' if they work to uncover the institutional and organizational interests that produce life-threatening pollution, or when they attempt to help low-income residents understand the threats corporate polluters pose to their well-being?

During the last five years I have been studying crime and crime control in Cuba, and it has become clear to me that the working class *can* understand complex causal chains, and that given information and education they *can* be concerned about more than immediate experiential threats. To surrender the definitional research domain in search of a 'realist' criminology that responds *only* to the already established commonsensical understandings of crime among the working class is to leave them and us easy prey to a variety of corporate, political, and institutional injuries, as Barak (1990) effectively argues. I think it is important that left realism avoid the temptations to radicalize the split between behavioral and definitional research domains and to demonize those who study how 'commonsensical' understandings of crime come to be constructed. The failure to do so would produce a reverse image of the negative tendency in early radical criminology to demonize nearly all work in the behavioral domain.

THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Closely related to the above is the problem of consciousness. This is the problem of deciphering how people produce and apply meaning to their experiential world, and understanding how informational sources such as law, media, and state-based education contribute to the construction and validation of ideological frames that influence popular consciousness. Left realist thought is a bit murky on this point. Young (1990:1), for instance, argues that the public develops 'realistic'

fears of those crimes with which they have direct experience, but are also capable of 'irrationality' when they are subject to 'sensationalist mass media.' The public can also hold 'unrealistic' expectations of the benefits to be derived from various crime control strategies (Painter, 1989). In short, at some times the public is understood as being correctly conscious of the threats of crime and the effectiveness of solutions, and at others times they are falsely conscious.

In those situations where they find the public guilty of irrational fears or unrealistic expectations, left realists are presumably calling upon some knowledge-base that enables them to recognize when public attitudes are 'irrational' or 'unrealistic.' How are we to adjudicate between the distinctions made by left realists regarding the accuracy of public consciousness and similar judgments made by so-called 'idealists?' What is currently absent from left realism is a coherent theory of *ideology* that can address the subject-object question as it relates to the way people construct *their* reality of crime. Unfortunately, left realism's objections to 'idealism' may keep it from utilizing the insights of cultural and post-modernist schools of thought that specifically address this project.

THE PROBLEM OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

Left realists emphasize the need to 'contextualize' crime. This contextualization is frequently represented in terms of Young's (1988) 'square of crime.' This square of crime is constructed out of the interactions between the institutions of formal social control, public definitions of crime, possible victims, and putative offenders. Structuring criminological analysis in a way that approaches the crime problem as a socially constructed, negotiated reality is a valuable contribution to criminological thought. It takes us beyond the idea that crime can be understood by studying only one aspect of the process.

There is, however, something lacking from current left realist efforts at contextualization. That absence is *history*, specifically the political-economic and cultural history that gives the 'square of crime' its concrete shape at any historical moment. Can we, for instance, understand the meaning and construction of state power as represented in 'formal mechanisms of social control,' without detailed concrete historical analyses of that power, including historical efforts to construct legitimating popular ideologies? Can we fully understand popular definitions of crime and preferred strategies of control among various publics by analyzing responses to a 'local crime survey' at a particular point in time?

A good friend of mine in Charlotte, North Carolina is a self-employed carpenter. The white, working-class Southern men with whom he works, and who occasionally work for him, have a fairly concise understanding of the crime problem. In their argot, the United States has a lot of crime because it has a lot of 'niggers, welfare scum, and homeless assholes.' Their favored solutions are widespread private ownership of firearms, long prison terms, frequent executions, elimination of welfare benefits except for those few (white) people 'who really deserve them,' and workhouses for the homeless. I can plug these attitudes into the 'square of crime' and arrive at a description of the highly punitive sentiments toward crime control characteristic of the U.S. south (Michalowski and Pearson, 1989). But without understanding that most of these men are at best one generation removed from the cultural traditions of the rural south, and without undertaking a careful analysis of southern history and the ways southerners, particularly rural southerners, live in a defeated, internal colony, I cannot make any real sense of what phenomenologically appears to be a set of gratuitously brutal and racist attitudes. In other words, the square of crime itself must be contextualized within history.

While left realists reject the criticism that they are *ahistorical* (Currie, 1990:4), the role of historical forces in constructing the contemporary square of crime seems to have received relatively short shrift in left realist writings. There is a reason for this. The study of the past has tended — particularly in Western social science — to represent people as the *products* more than as the *producers* of history. I suspect that because left realism is committed to replacing over-determining structuralist models with theories that privilege conscious subjects, its practitioners have a tendency to avoid historical analysis rather than struggling to redefine how it should be done.

MARKETS, COMMUNITY, AND FREEDOM

Left realism has not yet developed coherent theories of either markets or communities, nor has it explored the link between these two social elements and the illusive human goal of freedom. Left realists such as MacLean (1990), Taylor (1982), and Young, (1988, 1990) argue that reducing inequality and expanding social justice are central to the left realist strategy for ameliorating the crime problem. The contradictions inherent in pursuing social and economic justice without fundamental structural change in societies *predicated* on competitive forms of labor and commodity markets, however, have yet to be explored in any depth by left realists.

Left realism must also confront the contradictions posed by its advocacy of 'community crime control strategies' (Matthews, 1987:389). The historical advancement of competitive markets in the developed West poses two barriers to community crime control. First, since the end of the 19th century the atomizing pressures of competition and market-generated geographic mobility have steadily eroded the stable, community-based social relations necessary for informal community control of deviance (Cohen, 1979; Sklar, 1988). Restoring these social relations at a time when communities are both segmented internally and divided against one another by competition for jobs, decent housing, good schools, and all of the other unequal benefits of contemporary capitalist societies, poses a formidable challenge for left realist policy planners. Yet, unless *real* communities can be re-created, effective community crime control will remain little more than an impossible dream.

Second, highly competitive market societies can only function if individuals enjoy broad freedoms of action and choice. Real communities, if they are to be effective mechanisms of crime control, on the other hand, tend to constrain freedom and choice. The close knit communities of pre-industrial North America or Britain were less plagued with crime than today's cities. They also allowed for less individual freedom. A more modern example of this point is Cuba, which has created a relatively effective community crime control system through block-level organizations known as Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs). The CDRs are effective, however, precisely because neighbors keep tabs on neighbors, as well as on outsiders who might enter the community. A number of lifestyle options and freedoms currently understood as 'rights' by many left realists would be constrained in communities that are sufficiently coherent to exercise effective community-based crime control. It is critically important for left realists to give serious theoretical attention to the relationship between markets, communities, and freedom in their search for long-term strategies to advance social justice and community crime control within frameworks of advanced capitalism and liberal definitions of human rights.

THE PROMISE OF LEFT REALISM

Left realism promises a new criminological practice committed to reducing the destructive impact of street crime and domestic violence on the lives of ordinary people. People suffer greatly from crime every day. Serious efforts to reduce this suffering are worthwhile. In order, however, for left realism to produce a new criminology rather than becoming a public policy addendum to existing critical criminology, left

realists will need to re-evaluate the model's relationship to 'idealism' and cultural analysis, and to delve more deeply into the questions of how can we construct viable, democratic political-economic systems — not just crime control systems — that empower all people.

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PART II: FEMINISM

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

Feminism, Criminology and Complex Variations

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Though more than a century old, feminism has influenced criminology significantly only in the last two and a half decades. In the late 1960s, feminist ideas began to be expressed in classrooms and in papers and articles in such North American and European institutions as the University of California School of Criminology in Berkeley, and the National Deviancy Conferences in Great Britain. Also, in the early 1970s, several members of Bay Area Women Against Rape, the first anti-rape group in the world, were criminology students expressing feminist ideas in action. Employing their expertise in fighting violence against women, these and other students and community women alerted the community about rape cases and debunked pernicious myths about victims. They influenced police training programs, reformed hospital emergency room treatment for victims, and introduced a victim-advocacy program with prosecutors and courts. Along with other students and a few faculty members, they also supported affirmative action programs for women and minorities, as well as movements against police brutality, correctional injustice and the Vietnam War.

But a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Feminism has undergone many changes, some of which are due to its multifaceted character. Feminists can be found among trade unionists, professionals and businesspeople, and within racial movements, religious denominations and political parties. Their objectives range from striving for equal pay for equal jobs and setting-up shelters for abused women, to fighting stereotypes in language and the media. Despite agreement on issues, their groups may not be convinced that specific measures such as a woman's right to abortion, affirmative action at work or representation in government are of equal importance. Variations in women's interests and attitudes toward these interests, make a heterogeneous feminist movement inevitable.

Still, whatever their differences, most feminists find common ground in opposing the power relationships that re-produce female subordination. This opposition has been particularly evident in feminist challenges to the harassment, extortion and violence inflicted in public and private life by individual men, groups of men, or male-dominated institutions.

These challenges have introduced significant innovations in legal discourse. For example, in certain instances, feminists have helped universal-