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Resisting the discipline

[pp. 119-136]

Celia Kitzinger

[celia_kitzinger@yahoo.com + www.york.ac.uk/depts/soci/s_Kitz.html]

My resistance to psychology began when I was 16, and involved for the first time in a sexual relationship with another woman. Desperate for information, and far too embarrassed to ask anyone, I embarked on a literature review of psychological, psychiatric and psychoanalytic research. It was the early 1970s, and although the professional psychology journals were beginning to tell a different story, the information available to a lay reader at the time was firmly rooted in the pathological model. Lesbians were described as jealous, insecure and unhappy, the sick products of disturbed upbringing suffering from unresolved castration anxiety or oedipal conflicts, pursuing other women in a futile attempt to substitute a clitoris for a nipple as a result of their unresolved weaning problems. I remember particularly two Penguin paperbacks, these being, of course, among the most accessible to me: D.J. West's (1968) *Homosexuality* and Anthony Storr's (1964) *Sexual Deviation*. Both books include sections on treatment, prevention and cure of homosexuality, and both paint a sorry picture of lesbian life. 'No one in his [*sic*] right mind would opt for the life of a sexual deviant', says West, 'to be an object of ridicule and contempt, denied the fulfilments of ordinary family life, and cut off from the mainstream of human interests' (p.220). Anthony Storr asserts that 'to be a woman who is loved by a man and who has children by him is the first and most important aim of feminine existence' (Storr, 1964, p.73) and that consequently lesbian relationships are 'always *faute de mieux*, and those lesbians who protest that, for them, this kind of relationship is better than any possible intimacy with a man do not know what they are really missing' (pp. 79-80).

Resisting these theories was a matter of self-preservation. I stubbornly refused to believe that they applied to me, or had any relevance to my own life. Maybe *other* lesbians were like that, but my lover and I certainly weren't. As I began to meet other lesbians I simply dismissed this entire area of psychology as 'rubbish', a pseudoscientific reflection of the prejudices of society generally - prejudices which had already resulted in severe personal sanctions against me personally (including being expelled from school). Psychology did not reflect what I knew to be true about myself and my world: it denied my most [120] important relationships, and obliterated my personal experience.

For many women, both lesbian and heterosexual, submission to psychology and psychiatry has meant defeat and self-hatred: an obstinate resistance has been essential for our survival. The lesbian and feminist movements of the early 1970s constituted an important part of the organized resistance and the initial emphasis was on resistance to psychology's *results*. Lesbians disputed the results which 'proved' that we were sick and both lesbian and hetero-feminists challenged the systematically degrading and oppressive portrayal of women in the psychological and psychiatric literatures. Gay and Lesbian Liberation groups in the United States disrupted meetings of the American Psychiatric Association until, in 1973, this body decided on the basis of a majority vote (and virtually no scientific evidence) that homosexuality was no longer to be considered a pathological diagnostic entity. By the end of the decade, the scientific evidence to support this decision had been constructed in accordance

with the accepted rules of positivist-empiricism, and the overwhelming assumption was that the lesbian was really no different from the heterosexual woman: a great deal of time, energy and research money was spent proving this to be the case by psychologists who believed that in so doing they were demonstrating their own broadmindedness and contributing towards the alleviation of prejudice against gay people (cf. Kitzinger, 1987b). Bell and Weinberg (1978) showed that there were more differences *amongst* lesbians than between lesbians and heterosexual women, and Masters and Johnson (1979) demonstrated, through exhaustive laboratory research, that there were no differences in physiological response between lesbian and heterosexual women.

A scattering of articles in the core refereed psychology journals reflected this changed perspective (Davison, 1976; Freedman, 1975; Henley and Pincus, 1978; Morin, 1977), and the focus of psychological research shifted away from homosexuality to the new 'disease' of 'homophobia' (prejudice against gay people), and towards an exploration of ways in which psychology could be used positively and creatively by lesbian and gay therapists to 'assist lesbian identity integration' (Masterton, 1983), to 'help lesbians to come to terms with their sexuality' (Sang, 1978, p.268) and to 'help the members of the couple achieve a more satisfying relationship with each other and with the heterosexual world in which they live' (Decker, 1983). In the early 1970s, a new journal was founded to cater for this interest in so-called 'gay/lesbian affirmative' research (*Journal of Homosexuality*), and there is now a well-established genre of 'lesbian psychology' written by lesbian feminist professionals and addressed to the lesbian community, which details ways in which lesbian well-being can be promoted [121] through psychology (Loulan, 1984; Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective, 1987; Clunis and Green, 1988).

This shift from lesbian resistance ('antipsychology') to 'lesbian psychology' is paralleled, over much the same period, by a similar development within (hetero-)feminist psychology. As with lesbian resistance, the hetero-feminist resistance began with an attack on psychology's *results*, challenging their validity and seeking to 'correct' psychology's errors. Unlike much of lesbian psychology at the time, hetero-feminist psychology also resisted psychological *methods*, characterizing the 'hard' statistical and psychometric approaches as 'masculine', and seeking to replace them with the 'soft' (qualitative) 'female-identified' approaches. It is worth noting that this methodological critique was much less popular among lesbians, partly because, compared with heterosexual women, they had less investment in being 'soft' or 'feminine', and partly because quantitative methods had in fact been very little used in research on lesbianism: before 1969, about a quarter of all studies on sexual 'orientation' relied exclusively on face-to-face interviews (a paradoxical 'benefit' of the psychiatric case study), and interviews and questionnaires together accounted for about three-quarters of research in the area (Shively et al., 1984). While hetero-feminist (and humanistic) researchers claimed that qualitative methods are more likely to respect the meanings of the research participants, lesbians were only too aware that some of the most virulently anti-lesbian investigators had never sullied their work with a dehumanizing statistic or contaminated their intuitions with a controlled experiment. Some of the earliest work by lesbians challenging the results of the pathologists came, therefore, from psychometricians (e.g. Hopkins, 1969).

Subsequently, an important strand of both lesbian and hetero-feminist theorizing concluded that it was not simply the results, or the methods, of psychology that were at fault, but rather that psychology as a discipline was inherently problematic. In fact feminists outside the discipline had been arguing this point since the early 1970s, and argued it against not just established and clearly oppressive psychological theorizing, but also against the new breed of 'feminist psychologist' with her talk of 'sex roles' and 'conditioning'. Radical feminists pointed out that these approaches depoliticized women's oppression, and that 'the field of psychology has always been used to substitute personal explanations

of problems for political ones, and to disguise real material oppression as emotional disturbance' (Leon, 1970). Expression of this view is now commonplace in 'feminist psychology', although detailed analysis of the political processes at work is rare outside grass-roots feminist theorizing. Having identified psychology as incompatible with feminism [122] because of its refusal to deal with political realities, and its pretence at objectivity, feminists with a professional involvement in the discipline then sought to redefine and harness psychology for the feminist cause: henceforth it would acknowledge its own subjective and political status. As with 'gay psychology', lobbying was set in motion, new journals were founded, new discoveries debunked long-established 'findings', and mainstream psychology was forced to adapt at least to the extent of 'permitting' 'Psychology of Women' sections within its professional bodies in the US and UK (see the chapter by Sue Wilkinson and Jan Burns in this volume). The British Psychological Society is now actively encouraging Psychology of Women courses to be incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum as a 'high priority' (Scientific Affairs Board, 1988, pp. 21-8).

The overt anti-lesbianism displayed by feminist psychologists has been documented elsewhere (Fontaine, 1982; Frye, 1982; Zimmerman, 1982; Kitzinger, 1988a), and 'feminist psychology', like 'lesbian psychology', and psychology generally (Moghaddam, 1987; Levidow, 1988), is also severely limited by its commitment to a white, middle-class, North American/western vision of the world. Nonetheless, despite these acknowledged deficiencies, both 'feminist' and 'lesbian psychology' have achieved widespread acceptance within the lesbian and feminist communities of the cultures from which they originate. We are inundated with popular psychology paperbacks purporting to provide a 'feminist' and/or 'lesbian' psychological perspective on everything from slimming diets to sexual fantasies, from our relationships with our mothers, sisters and friends, to explorations of 'ego development' and 'sex role identity'. Many lesbians and hetero-feminists are now avid consumers of the new pop psychology culture. They actively employ the language of psychology - words like sex role, homophobia, conditioning, inferiority complex, empowerment and the real me are common parlance - and the 'consciousness-raising' group, vital to the early years of second wave feminism, has been replaced with various forms of therapy. In this sense there is now a widespread 'practice of psychology by feminists' which extends far beyond the professional boundaries.

In summary, the psychological scene now is very different from that which I confronted, and resisted, as a woman and a lesbian more than fifteen years ago. Whereas, at the beginning of the 1970s, lesbian and hetero-feminists led vigorous protests against psychology, which they condemned for its heterosexist, androcentric, and apolitical view of the world, today these same groups are actively employing the language of psychology and using or promoting psychological and psychiatric services. In place of the lesbian and feminist 'antipsychologies' of my pre-university and undergraduate days, there is now a degree of [123] acceptance for hybrid conceptual entities called 'feminist psychology' and 'lesbian psychology', both within feminism generally, and within parts of psychology as a discipline, as evidenced by the establishment of the Lesbian and Gay Division within the APA (in 1984) and the Psychology of Women Section in the BPS (in 1987). Is there then, now, any need to 'resist' psychology? Or can I take my place within the discipline as a 'lesbian-feminist psychologist'? As this book illustrates, for many feminist psychologists there remains a sense of tension between feminism and the professional practice of psychology. At any gathering of feminist psychologists, there is always urgent discussion and self-questioning about 'selling out', or using feminism to 'scale the ivory tower'. Can we maintain our feminist convictions in the face of the huge socialization pressures brought to bear on us by institutionalized psychology, or are we being subtly corrupted and sucked into the system? When invited to give papers, or convene symposia, or sit on committees, are we being used to give a false legitimacy as token feminists, or is our self-doubt and uncertainty a

reflection of our 'typically female' distrust of our own abilities and self-worth? If we accept posts within the BPS, are we invading the citadel of male privilege and making it easier for women who come after us, or are we advancing our own careers on the back of the feminist movement? Despite the intensity of such discussions - in which I, too, participate - I believe they address the wrong questions. They are phrased in terms of individual ethical dilemmas. Far more important is an exploration of the relationship between psychology and feminism in terms of its social and political features. How can we account for the shift from feminist 'antipsychology' to 'feminist psychology'? What is 'feminist psychology', and what relationship does it have with the rest of the discipline ('non-feminist psychology'), and with feminism as a political movement?

Several feminist researchers have pointed out the limited impact of feminist psychology upon the discipline as a whole: 'conservative social scientists reacted by closing the ranks of the brotherhood and bolstering their position with increased stress on hardcore approaches emulating the natural science' (Meyer, 1988). In the United States there is an ongoing debate about the coherence of psychology as a discipline, and the perceived threat of psychology's approaching demise has led some professionals to recommend an increased emphasis on teaching a logical positivist value system focusing on operational definitions, antecedent-consequent relationships, and universal and generalizable laws - the sort of psychology that omits altogether a political perspective and denies its own political location (Aitkenhead, 1988). At the same time, there is increasing professionalization of psychology, both in the United States and in Britain, in the process of which careful [124] definitions are being drawn up concerning who counts as a 'proper' psychologist, and what constitute legitimate topics for psychological research (Aitkenhead, 1988). 'While feminist work may be a current item, within many domains of inquiry', comments one feminist psychologist (Morawski, 1988), 'the actual acceptance of this work is not secured.' She describes the way in which feminist scholars are denied jobs or promotions on the grounds that their research does not fit into any of the existing disciplines: 'In such cases we are reminded that disciplines are constituted by procedural rules, by protocols for developing understanding of some phenomena and not others. The production of knowledge is thus rule-bounded, and questioning of the rules will be resisted' (Morawski, 1988).

One of the rules fundamental to the traditional construction of psychology is that it is an apolitical domain of technical expertise. In becoming psychologists, feminists have often had to submerge their political commitments under a concern for objective science. Their research may have political *implications*, but it is not in itself political.

The group formed by feminist psychologists before they achieved a section within the BPS was called Women in Psychology. It was women-only and explicitly political. That group appears to have disbanded now that a section has been formed, under the name Psychology of Women (which is supposed to sound more 'objective, detached and impersonal') (cf. Nicolson, 1987), although the section can apparently be neither explicitly political, nor women-only (Burns, 1988). Indeed, the first open forum held by this new section raised a question about whether or not feminist psychology was necessarily political: 'Is the psychology of women political?', it was called. And this is at the root of the problem: the core of psychology's disciplinary definition includes some concept of objectivity and neutrality; it is an apolitical science. As long as 'feminist psychology' confined itself to arguing about the correctness of certain findings, or even the validity of certain methodologies, it did not necessarily violate this definition. But if 'feminist psychology' is avowedly political then it becomes a contradiction in terms. Engaged in feminist practice, we are excluded from the category of 'psychologist'; practising as 'psychologists' we are no longer acting as feminists. Let me illustrate how this definitional process has worked in my own experience.

My own experience is that I am not permitted to be

‘feminist psychologist’ because, when I write as a feminist, I am defined out of the category of ‘psychologist’. When I speak of social structure, of power and politics, when I use language and concepts rooted in my understanding of oppression, I am told that what I say does not qualify as ‘psychology’. Because those who control the definition of ‘psychology’ act as gate-keepers for the professional refereed journals, [125] I cannot be published in them. Although I am constantly asked to contribute chapters to edited books and articles for the radical press, and even to write for *The Psychologist* in a ‘journalistic’ capacity, my work is generally rejected by the editors of refereed journals - often for precisely those reasons which lead to invitations being extended from other quarters: it is ‘political’ or ‘journalistic’. In terms of employment and promotion within psychology, refereed journal articles count for much more than chapters in books, articles in the non-refereed journals, or even single-authored books (Reicher, 1988): as Ziman (quoted in Mahoney, 1979) has said, ‘the journal referee is the linchpin about which the whole business of science is pivoted’. I have also found it extremely hard to get employment: after 112 applications during the last year of my PhD research and during the subsequent year of unemployment, I was eventually offered a temporary research fellowship in an education department. When that expired, another period of unemployment and 44 applications (both in this country and abroad) were necessary before I obtained a probationary lectureship in a polytechnic.

Analysis of rejection letters from refereed journals (I have received eight to date, plus eleven anonymous referees’ reports) offers an intriguing insight into the professional definition of psychology and the processes whereby the gate-keepers reinforce this disciplinary definition. In what follows I draw on these rejection letters from journal editors and referees’ reports (the journals range from some of the prestigious core journals of social psychology, to more specialist social and educational journals), from personal letters written to me by other psychologists concerned about my apparent unemployability, and from conversation and interviews. (The rejected journal articles cover all three of the major topics on which I have worked: lesbianism, human rights, and injustice in schools.) A constant theme running throughout the rejections is the complaint that I am politically motivated. Sometimes it is explicitly feminism that is objected to: one sympathetic (male) member of a psychology department which had rejected my application for a lectureship told me that his department already had a feminist and that, as far as some members of the department were concerned, she was ‘one too many’. The advice I was given when I discussed my applications with other feminist psychologists already in secure employment and anxious to help me was pretty uniform and reflected their understanding of the difficulties involved in being both ‘political’ and a psychologist (the following quotations come from personal letters).

I would advise that you moderate, just a little, your political statements, until you have a secure position. [126]

About your application: I think I know what you are doing. You do it very well . . . There is just my question then about the tactic form. You can imagine that I am going to say something about engaging in some degree of ingratiation. At this stage, you understand, I do not mean to talk about selling out.

My instrumental advice is - if you want to get a job, compromise. I do think you face an uphill battle unless you compromise - how much only you can decide. I’m not suggesting it, just saying that you may need to do it *or* give up.

Interviewers and journal reviewers alike insist on the contrast between ‘objectivity’ (the presentation of factual evidence and empirical data), on the one hand, and ‘politics’ (ideology, polemics) on the other - in so doing, reasserting precisely that disciplinary definition of psychology as positivist-empiricist that I was trying to undermine. At one job interview, I was asked to explain my stated interest in ‘social constructionism’ to the panel. After presenting my understanding of ‘science’ and ‘objectivity’ as social constructions used to mask psychology’s legitimation of status quo ideologies, I was asked to ‘reassure the panel that you are committed to discovering objective facts’. The editorial board of one international conference accepted my paper on lesbian identities, in which I argued for a radical feminist theory of lesbianism in preference of alternative liberal humanistic theories, but made the following recommendations:

[We] would like to suggest you concentrate your paper on empirical data... We would like to ask you to treat the radical feminist theory of lesbianism in the same way as the above mentioned theories ... We would like to ask you to pay attention to the difference between theory and ideology.

A book proposal on subjectivity did the rounds of publishers, and was rejected by all of them: one wrote saying, ‘I fear that the bulk of psychologists are not ready to accept your message yet’, and another sent back an anonymous review by a psychologist:

The proposed book is highly polemical, and for that reason is likely to raise the hackles of conventional psychologists... Most psychologists would not like to be told that they are trapped in a ‘traditional positivistic paradigm’: apart from the clichéd jargon, most psychologists think of positivism as a discredited doctrine of the Vienna Circle, abandoned by psychologists in the 1940s or early 1950s... the style could perhaps be moderated.

Other rejection letters were more explicit in their criticism of my avowedly political perspective:

My main objection to the article is the style of argument. What we are offered is a single perspective with no attempt to represent other views as having any validity... Regretfully then I classify this article as an attempt to persuade the reader to adopt a point of view by presenting only one side of [127] an argument... Quotations are of individual opinions... rather than hard data. (anonymous reviewer)

I thought that the minimal requisite of a fair presentation of any case, however ignominious it may be, was balanced presentation of the case, leaving the reader or jury to make up their own minds... I feel that a lot of the replies to your research must suffer from a lack of objectivity, and will surely come from people who have an axe to grind. I presume that as someone involved in serious research, you will take full account of this parameter before drawing your conclusions. I’m sorry that I cannot accept your paper in its present form . . . If, however, you can produce a more balanced paper, giving the other side of cases mentioned, then I should be most pleased to consider it for publication since, as I said at the outset, the subject is definitely interesting. (editor’s letter of rejection)

Central to these rejections, then, is the sense that my work is not ‘balanced’ or ‘objective’, that it is an attempt to ‘persuade’ the reader of a particular point of view (something no ‘serious researcher’ would dream of doing!), and that it is politically biased - ‘polemical’ or ‘ideological’. And it is not just *what* I say, it’s the way that I say it. Suggestions about my writing style are frequent: that it should be ‘moderated’ or ‘toned down’ - that it should be less ‘journalistic’ or ‘emotion-laden’, that I should

‘avoid the jargon of the radical sociology of the 1960s’. ‘The text is replete with value-laden words’ commented one anonymous reviewer; ‘a more scientific presentation is needed’, wrote another. In many cases the critics suggest that I do what I do very well, but that they don’t want that sort of thing in their journal (or department). This is often because what I am doing is not seen as ‘psychology’. The editor of one of the most prestigious European-based social psychological journals returned a submission with the comment that ‘we try to minimize as much as possible papers which are essentially descriptive . . .’ Clearly worried lest I should take offence at this attitude to descriptive research he continued:

I hope you will not derive from this comment a depreciation for descriptive research, that would certainly be a misunderstanding. On the contrary, I believe that for a number of purposes descriptive research is much more relevant and important than more homothetic oriented research (and probably also more difficult to do). I only explain now our Journal policy and I’m sure that there are several more sociologically oriented Journals which would be a very good outlet for your present study. (editor)

The advice to go for a more ‘sociologically-oriented’ journal suggests that my work is seen as not quite ‘psychology’. This is made explicit in a letter from the editor of an international journal of applied social psychology who made the comment: ‘the emphasis is not sufficiently social psychological to justify publication in the journal’. Both of his [128] anonymous reviewers had made the same point, one saying that ‘there is very little reference to social psychology’, the other complaining that the paper is ‘generally too light on social psychological substance’.

The editor of another widely cited social psychological journal also based in Europe queried the same point about another paper: is my work really ‘psychological’?

Essentially you provide a ‘cartography’ of issues, views, opinions, beliefs, etc., about human rights. This in itself is fascinating. However, I am not convinced about the psychological or social psychological relevance of it... Interesting social philosophy and ideology, no doubt, but what does it mean psychologically?

Again, my work was seen as ‘not psychology’ - perhaps social philosophy or ideology, or sociology, but not psychology. (This research was finally published, in an abbreviated form, in a small-circulation journal (cf. Stainton Rogers and Kitzinger, 1986), and a full copy of the research project is lodged with the Council of Europe who founded the research (Stainton Rogers and Kitzinger, 1985).

At the time when I received this latter rejection letter, I was working on an analysis of psychological rhetoric (cf. Kitzinger, 1987b, chapter 1) and decided to test my own theoretical analysis by putting it into practice. I resubmitted this same paper on human rights to the BPS annual conference (which, ironically enough, had rejected my previous submission on ‘rhetoric in psychology’). But the resubmitted version was disguised in the rhetorical garb of positivist-empiricism. (Actually, this started as a joke - could I produce a convincing parody of social psychological writing? - and was elevated to the status of a test case when a colleague suggested submitting the paper.)

‘How do people construe their rights?’

the title demands: questions make good titles, because it suggests that science is about to provide an answer (Kitzinger, 1987b, pp. 22-3; Stainton Rogers and Kitzinger, 1988). I follow the question mark with a colon (grammatically incorrect, but accepted and reproduced in the conference programme), and the subheading, ‘a study of alternative schematisations’. This last word is an example of

'terminological oversophistication' (or 'big words', Kemeny, 1959), and the use of the colon ('titular colonicity') has been described as 'the primary correlate of scholarship' (Dillon, 1981): 72 percent of published research titles contain a colon (Dillon, 1981). My summary begins with a sentence containing two passive verbs (contributing to the aura of objectivity) (cf. Kitzinger, 1987b, p. 24) and I list five references in the first two sentences (cf. Gilbert, 1977, on the use of references as persuasion). By suggesting that the reported research builds on what has gone before. I contribute to the 'up the mountain' account of scientific progress (Rorty, 1980; Kitzinger, [129] 1987b, pp. 7-10), and the use of visual imagery ('illuminate', 'focus', 'clarification') contributes to the 'discovery account' in scientific rhetoric (Woolgar, 1983, p. 246). The last sentence of the first paragraph ends with the (outrageously rhetorical!) claim that contemporary social and political debate over human rights issues 'is conducted in strident and highly-charged ideological terms to which rational and objective scientific inquiry could bring much-needed clarification' (the mythologizing of expertise: Kitzinger, 1987b, pp. 10-14). A paragraph on methodology and an outline of the results follow in much the same vein, and the paper ends with a sample of 'utility accounting' - the presentation of psychology as useful, nay indispensable, for human well-being (Kitzinger, 1987b, pp. 20-22): 'it is suggested that social psychological research into alternative schematisations offers an important input for those working on rights issues and other domains of human welfare where a plurality of models are operative.'

The paper was accepted.

Unfortunately, I was never able to discover *why* this parody of a scientific paper had been allowed to enter the hallowed halls of a BPS conference. I had already been told (on the occasion of my previous rejection) by the Chair of the Standing Conference Committee that no correspondence would be entered into regarding submissions. So perhaps it wasn't because of the rhetoric - perhaps they were able to see through to the truly interesting ideas camouflaged beneath it? At the conference my co-researcher (Rex Stainton Rogers) presented the paper without the scientific rhetoric, and journalists (Tysoe, 1988) translated back into sensible and politically relevant language the ideas that I could have presented that way in the first place, had the system allowed.

No one familiar with recent work on the rhetoric of science (Nelson et al., 1987; Simons, 1989; Kitzinger, in press) will be surprised by this outcome. Older studies within the framework of the sociology of science have also examined editorial decisions, and illustrate certain systematic biases towards preferred results or methodologies, and towards certain authors at the expense of others. One researcher, for example, sent the same manuscript to 75 reviewers from the *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, a well-respected periodical. The papers had identical introductions, methods and references, but the results and discussions were different: half were favourable to behaviour modification, and the other had the graphs and tables reversed so as to make them unfavourable to behaviour modification. When reviewers read manuscripts in which the data supported their own perspective they rated its methodology as 'adequate' or 'excellent' and recommended publication: when it didn't, they rated it 'inadequate' and [130] recommended rejection (Mahoney, 1979). In another study twelve articles from highly prestigious journals, by authors at top rank institutions (Harvard, Oxford, etc.) were resubmitted in superficial disguise to the same journals that had just published them with the author affiliation changed to a low prestige institution. Three of the twelve were recognized; eight of the remaining nine were vehemently rejected as being severely substandard (Peters and Ceci, 1982, reported in Standing and McKelvie, 1986). Researchers able to cite their own published and 'in press' papers in submitted articles also stand a better chance of publication (Mahoney, 1979), illustrating Merton's (1968) famous Matthew effect ('unto everyone that hath, shall be given and he shall have abundance: but from he that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath'). Finally, a disproportionately high percentage of editorial appointments are held

by men (Over, 1981). Overall, authors' satisfaction with the fairness of their treatment at the hands of journal editors is often low (Bradley, 1981) but hard to express - it can sound like 'sour grapes'. Publicly flaunting one's failures is also not good for career prospects - as was pointed out to me by (otherwise sympathetic) colleagues in the course of my writing this chapter.

Several critics have made suggestions for improvements in the submission and refereeing process. (Standing and McKelvie, 1986), and a few journal editors have written about the trials and tribulations of their job, and openly discussed their reviewing procedures (Manstead, 1985) - but I think it would be wrong to scapegoat individual editors, or referees, as the villains of the piece, or to expect that clearer guidelines would solve the problem. The 'problem' is institutional psychology as a discipline. Its rejection of feminist research as 'political', 'polemical' or 'journalistic' is surely not a mistake, but central to its maintenance of disciplinary boundaries.

Sue Wilkinson (1988) concludes that feminists should study the conditions which govern the acceptance or rejection of feminist psychology 'in a self-conscious attempt to increase the impact of their work on the mainstream'. So perhaps I should now sit down and cynically translate all my rejected papers into PsychSpeak, submit them to the journals and improve the look of my CV. There is that temptation. Or perhaps, on the grounds that my work would then no longer be 'feminist' (as I understand that term), I should give up on the idea of publishing in the mainstream journals altogether: 'It is the demand feminist thinkers place upon themselves to adhere to disciplinary practices - to speak in certain orderly, intelligible and legitimate ways . . . that necessitates their reinscribing in their speech the very patterns of patriarchal relations they wish to undermine (Shotter and Logan, 1988). [131]

All the disciplines define their boundaries and censure those who stray beyond them - and politics is decidedly out of bounds for the psychologist. Other researchers have illustrated this same point, documenting the way in which questions about links between professional organizations (such as the BPS) and South Africa are successfully relegated to the classification of 'politics' and hence considered an illegitimate area of concern (Aitkenhead, 1988), or describing the fate of researchers who become politically involved in their research (Reicher, 1988). Feminist research is not perceived by the mainstream to be legitimate science primarily because feminism is seen as political, and because psychologists have been socialized into the belief that advocacy and scholarship are incompatible. When feminist research is characterized as purely political, this 'provides the mainstream researcher with grounds for dismissing it as illegitimate; politics has nothing to do with science' (Wilkinson, 1988). To be intelligible as psychologists, feminists are forced to adhere to disciplinary practices which undermine feminist politics.

I am left with some uncomfortable questions - questions which I do not hear being discussed among feminist psychologists today.

While the last decade has seen an explosion of 'feminist psychology' and 'lesbian psychology', its impact on the mainstream of those societies which have founded it (primarily the US and UK) has been negligible. Over the same period, the percentage of people in Britain believing homosexuality to be wrong has risen steadily (*British Social Attitudes Survey*, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1988) and Clause 28 - restricting the civil liberties of lesbians and gay men - has been passed. We are witnessing the return to 'Victorian values' (or the rise of the 'moral majority') with all that implies for women and for lesbians. And yet although I meet academics from other disciplines - sociologists, historians and anthropologists - on the marches and vigils I have never yet met a psychologist colleague at a feminist campaign meeting or on a picket line. Nor do feminist psychologists publish (as other feminist academics do) in the feminist press - journals like *Trouble and Strife*, *Lesbian Ethics* or *Radical and Revolutionary Feminist Newsletter*. What, then, is the relationship between the academic 'feminist psychologist' and those parts of the Women's Liberation Movement that get their hands dirty doing real political work?

The effect of the recent outpouring of 'feminist psychology' is also problematic despite, or perhaps because of, its huge popularity. Quite apart from the clearly legitimate criticisms of this work for its white, heterosexual, genteel, middle-class and western bias, many radical feminists characterize it as an attempt, on the part of privileged liberal feminists, to undermine the radical foundations of the movement, by relocating the political in the psychopathology of the personal, and by [132] individualizing or depoliticizing the issues involved (Cardea, 1985; Penelope, 1984; Mann, 1987). This is the same criticism that was made by feminists in the early 1970s (Sarachild, 1974; Serre, 1973), and this critique achieves a new urgency at a time when, with the rise of the 'new right', many erstwhile activists seem tempted to swap their exhausted political ambitions for therapeutic ideals. There is increasingly an encroachment, into the political language of radical feminism, of terms derived from or based in psychology, and the spread of psychobabble throughout the lesbian and feminist communities restricts the possibilities for political dialogue. Feminism today is becoming *not* a political but a *psychological* movement concerned with struggling against 'sex roles', overcoming women's inferiority complexes or 'fear of success', counteracting our 'conditioning', and combating 'sexist attitudes' or 'homophobia'. Instead of subverting or supplanting psychology, as feminists initially intended, many have accepted its language as their own, and it has often been professional feminist psychologists who first offered these personalized concepts to the feminist communities (cf. the critiques by Jackson, 1985; Strega and Jo, 1987; Kitinger, 1987a): in consequence, feminism has been translated from a political movement into a 'lifestyle' or 'state of mind'. Psychology is, if not an agent of, at least a willing participant in the depoliticization of feminism.

The hybrid 'feminist psychology' can be made conceptually coherent *either* through the politicization of psychology, *or* through the depoliticization of feminism. Many radicals have charged that the latter notion is prevalent. I have heard of and participated in a great deal of discussion among 'feminist psychologists' about how feminist psychology should respond to criticism from the *psychological* establishment. I have heard very little discussion about how we might respond to radical *political* criticism from the grass-roots of our movement(s). And I wonder: are 'feminist psychologists' reading feminist political journals with the same attention they devote to professional psychology journals - and if not, why not? Do they attend feminist conferences, workshops and summer schools as they do psychology conferences and meetings? Are they prepared to engage with political arguments from feminists as seriously as they do with psychological arguments from professional colleagues? Or is the process of socialization into the position of 'psychologist', combined with the harsh realities of (un)employment and promotion prospects, such that 'feminist psychology' will always be much more 'psychology' than 'feminism'?

As I have already illustrated, feminism has had a severely limited impact on psychology as a discipline: if we have resisted psychology, it has resisted us back. Nonetheless, some have pointed to the [133] establishment of the Psychology of Women Section as a partial concession to feminism. An alternative perspective is to see the section as a way of bringing into the BPS a splinter group of latent antipsychologists whose popularity (as Women in Psychology) was potentially threatening to the discipline. This suggestion smacks of the conspiratorial, but the Scientific Affairs Board of the BPS, in its recent document on *The Future of the Psychological Sciences*, announces its concern about 'diversity' within psychology, and recommends that the Society try to 'minimize its negative effects on the discipline' (13, 13, 3). 'We believe that the discipline should resist splintering of psychological knowledge into groups which identify themselves as separate from the mainstream of psychology and seek to deny their psychological origin' (SAB, 1988, 13, 13, 2). To give such splinter groups representation within the BPS is a risky strategy: will 'feminist psychologists' be absorbed into the mainstream as a result of this development, or will we insist on our political origins?

For me, being both a feminist and a psychologist means to be responsible to other feminists for my psychology, and, equally, to be responsible to other psychologists for my feminism. To remain identified with each group, I need to be able to offer something positive to each. To feminism I offer my analysis of the dangers of psychobabble invading the women's movement, my criticisms of so-called 'gay affirmative' psychology, and my 'insider' knowledge of a patriarchal discipline (Kitzinger, 1983, 1987a, 1987b, 1988b, 1988d, 1988e). To psychology I offer my analyses of the role of rhetoric within the social sciences, a radical social constructionist perspective as an alternative to positivist-empiricist approaches, and my 'insider' knowledge of lesbianism and feminism (Kitzinger, 1986, 1987b, 1988a, 1988c, 1989; in press; Kitzinger and Stainton Rogers, 1985).

Although rejecting the label 'feminist psychologist' as a contradiction in terms, I am passionate in my commitment both to feminism and to psychology. The intellectual excitement and the practical impact of my research and teaching are lodged in the space created by this contradiction - and the challenge of contradiction seems infinitely more creative than the comfort of compromise!

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