

**CONFLICTING AGENDAS:**

**EVALUATING FEMINIST PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the central rationale of feminism, and thus of feminist perspectives in criminology, to bring about change for women subject to the criminal justice system. It argues that any attempt to influence that system, to bring about change or reform, must be considered within the broader context of policy-making and programme development and their underlying assumptions and purposes, as well as in relation to specific contextually located histories. It does so by tracing the history of a particular feminist initiative in Canada - a community-based programme in Nova Scotia which offered feminist therapy and counselling to women in conflict with the law. It traces the processes of funding and evaluation for the federal government, and the differential experiences of the project and its clients, the researchers, and the funders.

In so doing it considers the role of policy and programme development and of feminist attempts to reform and their failure to impact the lives of sentenced women; it examines the development of feminist methodology and contrasts it with mainstream correctional methodology and evaluation; it explores the development of feminist intervention and some of the problems inherent in such approaches and their appropriateness for women in the correctional system; and it examines the difficulties encountered in evaluating a feminist initiative. The views of the project and of its women clients are explored to assess the impact of the intervention, its benefits for the women, as well as its limitations.

This analysis shows how the project, while successful in avoiding many of the problems of feminist intervention, was unable to sustain itself beyond the period of federal funding, while the evaluation itself proved to be a difficult process. The discrepancies between feminist ways of working and the dominant correctional models, the assumptions underlying programme development and evaluation, and the limitations of that approach are revealed as a series of over-lapping layers which impact on feminist endeavours.

To Jim, Tom and Alexandra and my parents.

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As always, I am grateful to Tina Hattem for her continuing questioning of the 'truth'. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisors Becky Morley and Bill Silburn for their continued support and their patience.

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all knowledge, necessarily, results from the conditions of its production, is contextually located, and irrevocably bears the marks of its origins in the minds and intellectual practices of those lay and professional theorists and researchers who give it voice.

(Stanley and Wise, 1990 p.39)

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 1991, in a small community-based organization providing services for women in conflict with the law in Nova Scotia, it was decided to develop an entirely new programme which would meet client needs in a way not previously envisaged. This involved the development of feminist therapy and counselling approaches for women offenders who had experienced physical and sexual abuse. Preliminary funds were sought from local funding agencies enabling the nascent project to hire space, support staff, and books and equipment to keep the project afloat for six months. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the clients and the interest of criminal justice agencies, the organization determined to look for more ambitious and long-term funding sources. The project seemed to be timely and appropriate given the high level of interest in women's victimization and its links with offending.

After over a year of negotiations the Federal government of Canada agreed to fund the project under its Family Violence programme development strategy, a source of project funding support designed to encourage new initiatives and innovative programmes in areas thought important. For eighteen months the project was financially secure, and developed and expanded its scope and working methods. With that funding source came the obligation to submit to external evaluation so that programme development staff could assess how innovative and viable the project really was, and how appropriate it might be for development elsewhere.

As the first full year of funding came to a close, the organization began - again - its search for follow-on funds to sustain the now considerable volume of work and the expanding client lists. Some two hundred women were now 'on the books' with expectations of regular or more extended contact with the project. Expectations about the 'worth' of the project and the potential pool of clients who could benefit from its services remained high. The final six months of federal funding became a

period of greater stress as client demands continued to expand, working levels, which had always been high continued unabated, and additional energy had to be put into strategies for gaining funding support. No substantive funding was forthcoming, the Provincial government's promises and commitments made at the start of the project failed to materialize. By 1994, three years after the start of the project, and in spite of a favourable evaluative report, it had ceased to exist.

Such a morality tale may not surprise many at a time of economic uncertainty and recession, or a period in North America or Europe when deficit reduction and cuts in government funding have become the norm. Nor may the demise of the project surprise those who see evidence of a backlash against feminism in the reversal of interest by the provincial government (eg. Faludi, 1991; Chesney-Lind, 1995; Rush, 1990 in Hester, Kelly & Radford, 1996). Feminist projects are perhaps bound to upset established bureaucracies since they challenge existing decision-making in an uncomfortable way. Yet such an easy explanation for the demise of the project glosses over a number of the problems endemic to such a venture, and is too easy. It is not just feminism which is 'easily dismissed'. There are countless examples of grass-roots projects which flourish for short periods of time until funds, or the energies of their organizers, run out (eg. Cannings, 1990). The project provides an opportunity to examine some of the problems of feminist therapy and counselling in the criminal justice field, the kinds of assumptions upon which such programmes are based, as well as the problems of evaluating feminist programmes. Beyond that, it provides an opportunity to examine some of the implicit assumptions and underlying tensions inherent in treatment and reform agendas and their evaluation.

## THE PLAN OF THE THESIS

This thesis is concerned with the central rationale of feminism, and thus of feminist perspectives in criminology, to bring about change for women subject to the criminal justice system. It argues that any attempt to influence that system must be considered within the broader context of policy-making and programme development, and their underlying assumptions and purposes, as well as in relation to specific contextually located histories. It does so by tracing the history of a particular feminist initiative - the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project - as a community-based programme in Nova Scotia offering feminist therapy and counselling to women in conflict with the law. It traces the processes of funding and evaluation for the federal government of Canada, and the differential experiences of the project and its clients, the researchers and the funders. In so doing the thesis critically assesses a number of issues:

i) It considers the role of programme and policy development in corrections, showing how they are inevitably bound up with assumptions about treatment, reform and evaluation.

ii) It explores the development of feminist perspectives in criminology with their crucial reformist agenda, and discusses the apparent inability of feminism to impact the lives of women in prison or subject to sentence, and in relation to the particular history and context of Canada with the recent adoption of women-centred prison policies.

iii) It examines the development of feminist methodologies and their implications for corrections, since they challenge and reject mainstream correctional evaluation and the scientific methodology underlying it. It contrasts them with current approaches to evaluation in criminal justice, including that which dominates corrections in Canada.

iv) It examines some of the underlying assumptions and problems inherent in feminist intervention, and their appropriateness for women subject to the criminal justice system. It considers how far the project was able to provide services for its clients which avoided some of those problems. It does so in part on the basis of the voices of women taking part in counselling, something rarely examined in the existing literature.

v) It examines the difficulties encountered in evaluating a feminist initiative, the demands made of the project by the federal government, the processes of negotiation by the project and the evaluator, and the difficulties of using a feminist model of evaluation.

This analysis shows how such a project was able to receive financial support in a specific temporal context, but was unable to sustain its work beyond the period of federal funding. It reveals some of the inherent difficulties in feminist intervention and evaluation as well as the conflicting nature of agendas in programme development and policy-making. A series of overlapping layers is revealed which impact on feminist endeavours. While there may be a temporary coming-together of constituent interests in the funding and encouragement of projects, this alliance is of an uneasy kind which can be destructive. Such conflicting agendas are clearly evident when a feminist-based project is involved, in a correctional system which values policies which enable the large-scale management of 'difficult and deviant' populations.

Thus the central issue to be addressed in this thesis is whether, in spite of the very different assumptions underlying feminist intervention, it is any more able to avoid the conflicts inherent in

traditional programme development and evaluation in corrections than they are. Are all attempts to change - whether feminist or not - doomed to failure? Can nothing of the feminist enterprise be of value to women who become the subject of the correctional system? Can it impact the non-custodial system?

An outline of the content of the thesis is given below. This introductory chapter considers the role of programme and policy development in corrections, and explores the emergence of feminist perspectives in criminology with their crucial reformist agenda.

Chapter 1 considers the particular experience of Canada, where feminist discourse appears to have penetrated correctional policy and practice in a more extensive way than in other countries. This includes the growth and impact of feminism on issues relating to women and the justice system, and the adoption by the federal government of a prison and programme model for women prisoners which is based on feminist principles. It thus provides an account of the cultural and political context within which the Coverdale project was developed.

Chapter 2 considers the development of feminist research and methodology including the 'good quality knowledge' model and the activist grass-roots model, and their implications for undertaking and evaluating projects with women offenders. It critically examines current trends in programme development and evaluation within mainstream criminology and corrections - especially in Canada. It contrasts some of the differences between feminist and mainstream approaches and shows that evaluation, far from being simply an objective and practical management tool, is a political tool in programme and policy endorsement.

Chapter 3 outlines the development and characteristics of feminist intervention in terms of counselling and therapy and its roots in an individualizing culture. It considers some of the problems underlying such work with different clientele in the community, the difficulties of its application in the prison and evident in Canadian experience, and its divergence from mainstream programme development in corrections.

Chapter 4 outlines the genesis of the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy project in the climate of concern about violence against women, its search for funding, and the negotiation of the evaluation and its methodology. It outlines the feminist and pastoral counselling model of intervention used, and considers how the project worked in practice with its varied clientele, and activist, networking and educational activities.



Chapter 5 illustrates some of the outcomes of the project on the basis of qualitative interviews with women clients who had taken part in counselling sessions with the Chaplain. It demonstrates their understanding and enthusiasm for a feminist approach and their sense of control over the process of counselling. It illustrates their assessment of its impact on their lives as well as its limitations.

Chapter 6 considers the subsequent history of the project, the extent to which it was successful in providing services for its clientele using a feminist perspective, and in avoiding some of the problems of therapeutic intervention. But it questions how far the programme offered by the Chaplain was unique and differed from previous treatments offered to women offenders. It considers how far the evaluation process itself was able to utilize a feminist perspective.

Chapter 7 assesses the implications of the findings for the development and evaluation of feminist programmes in corrections. It shows how the project worked for some of its clients. It considers the location of feminist intervention within the broader context of Canadian policy development and assessment, and examines the differences between feminist ways of working and the dominant correctional models, revealing some of the difficulties inherent in the programme development model, and the limitations of evaluation. It suggests that while the project collapsed for lack of support and funding, its existence may have helped to break down some government fears and resistance to feminist initiatives and issues of gender in corrections. It concludes with an assessment of the prospects for feminist initiatives in corrections where there are no 'absolute solutions.

This introductory chapter now considers some of the issues relating to the development of programmes and policies in criminal justice, the central rationale of feminism to bring about change in women's lives and the attempts of feminist intervention in criminology to impact the lives of women in conflict with the law.

## POLICY-MAKING, PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM

The development of policies and programmes in criminal justice entails assumptions about appropriate ways of handling people, about treatment, about reforming or changing people. In the correctional field such assumptions have been examined on a number of levels, in terms of how workable or effective programmes are, in terms of the processes by which new policies and initiatives are created and developed, or more abstractly, in terms of the underlying purposes which they serve.

The first approach includes much of the substantial area of work on the evaluation of programmes which will be discussed subsequently. The second includes the kinds of approaches explored by Clarke and Cornish (1983) on the development of penal policy in the Home Office in England, and the work of Paul Rock in a number of studies of criminal justice policy initiatives in England and Canada. The third approach ranges over a wide theoretical and critical territory beyond the scope of this thesis, including, for example, the work of Richard Ericson, Stan Cohen, David Garland, Michel Foucault and Pat Carlen.

In a series of studies of the production of policy-making in criminal justice, Paul Rock has explored in meticulous detail the workings of policy makers and their transformative practices. This work has spanned Canadian and British examples, from the development of policies for victims and witnesses in Canada and Britain in the 1980's (Rock, 1986, 1990, 1993) to the introduction of the programme development model into Britain in the 1990's (1994) and the reconstruction of Holloway Prison for women in London from the late 1960's (1996). Overall, his work is concerned less with the political colour or particular content<sup>1</sup> of such reforms and initiatives, than with the complex ways in which policy makers attempt to shape them as they move out into the public sphere. He provides a careful and detailed reading of what he terms the 'opening stages' of commonplace criminal justice policy-making (1995). He argues that criminal justice policy is more 'extensive, unpredictable and fragmented' than other areas of policy-making and that policies and programmes in this area are subject to 'uncontrolled problems of timing and context' (1995 p.15-16) often more characterized by expediency than rational planning.

He suggests that new initiatives need to have status and sponsors to grow and become established. Groups which are not well organized, are poor, and lack authority may fail to attract broader support. Thus successful programme initiatives will often be associated initially with an individual and a small circle of officials whose inspiration, energies and status will help to determine the eventual success of the venture. In his study of the evolution of the Canadian Justice for Victims of Crime Initiative (Rock, 1986) he shows how a series of policies for victims of crime, both male and female, was 'advanced within the Trojan horse of a proposed federal initiative to help assaulted women' (Rock, 1995 p. 15). The political momentum for the initiative lay in the women's movement and campaigns against rape and domestic abuse. It was energized by the crucial commitment and skills

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<sup>1</sup>. He is of course deeply interested in the subjects he has chosen to examine, but they appear to form working examples of the processes which interest him, rather than being chosen only because of their subject matter.

of a moral entrepreneur and a small group of policy makers, but had to take its 'timing' from proposed legislative changes to abolish capital punishment, an issue with which, at first glance, it would appear to have little in common. In fact, as Rock demonstrates, it formed part of the broader agenda of state intervention and policy-guiding.

Rock has also explored the particular role of programme development in Canada (and subsequently Britain) as a technique for initiating change in criminal justice policy (1994). This model, which formed the basis for government interest in the Coverdale initiative, has been defined as:

A technique which generates information, knowledge and insights by setting up and evaluating experimental and demonstration projects and programmes. Its primary method is to test out innovative ideas...related to identified needs, in the real world, and then to evaluate and disseminate the results. (quoted in Rock, 1994 p. 145)

However, while Rock has much to say about the role of programme development in policy making and about the selection of programmes in his analysis of the transport of this model to Britain, he does not deal with the outcome of those initiatives or their lives at the end of central government funding.

At the more abstract level, a number of other observers in Canada have explored the role of policy initiatives and reform in the criminal justice field (eg. Ratner & McMullen, 1987; Ericson, 1987; McMahon, 1992; Hannah-Moffat, 1997). Ericson (1987) takes a somewhat cynical position in placing attempts to reform criminal justice within an instrumentalist view of the state. He argues that changes which are presented as innovative or progressive reforms are in fact only extensions of the dominant order's existing control system, merely conforming to 'the moral sensibilities' of the time (p. 21). Such reforms are 'sold' as in the public interest in responding to what he terms the conventional imperatives of the liberal managerial state: cost, effectiveness and humaneness (p. 21). Maeve McMahon (1992) on the other hand, in her analysis of the development of community alternatives to prison in Canada, argues that attempts to reform should not be seen only in terms of increasing penal power and social control by the state. Such a view has contributed, she suggests, 'to an activist impasse' and a failure to recognize any amelioration in practice or conditions (p.224).

At the level of everyday practice in criminal justice, a central role has almost always been afforded to evaluation, to assessing the extent to which policies or programmes are viable, work as intended, produce some expected changes. To some extent evaluation has followed the fortunes of rehabilitation on its roller-coaster ride since the mid-1970's, but its value for informing policy-

making has never really been questioned. This role has been reinforced in recent years by two major developments. The demand for criminal justice systems to be seen to be financially viable, and to fulfil their stated roles of public protection, has become more vocal, both on the part of a sceptical and anxious public, and in terms of government accountability.

Policy makers and practitioners in the justice system are increasingly being called upon to explain and account for their efforts. No longer are the testimonials of clients or professionals accepted as grounds for justifying public programmes; increasingly they are being displaced by growing pressures for objective, quantifiable, and public evidence about programme efforts and results. Both the high cost of justice programmes and the complexity and severity of the problems addressed are themes well noted by the media. Few citizens remain impassive about justice policies and programming, and many raise questions... Evaluation questions, in short, are central to the operations of the criminal justice system, having relevance to practitioners, policy makers, and the public. (Roberts & Hudson, 1993)

In addition, rehabilitation, with its inevitable evaluative component, has re-emerged over the past 10 years as an option for correctional systems, spurred on by the particular energies of a group of Canadian psychologists who claim that their programmes work (Gendreau & Ross, 1987; Andrews, 1990; Hudson & Roberts, 1993; Palmer, 1994).

Criminal justice policy is, in fact, rarely static. As McMahon (1992) points out, programmes and policies have changed dramatically over the past thirty years with the development of new strategies to control, monitor, assess and evaluate the lives of offenders, their work habits and personal lives, their skills and emotional relationships, their leisure time and consumption patterns. Too narrow an assessment of such changes would gloss over more complex changes in our attitudes to offenders or ourselves.

The advent of feminist programmes in criminal justice comes at an unusually unsettled time in terms of policy making. Some (eg. Christie, 1994, Rock, 1995, Garland, 1996) note the decline in traditional policy-making patterns with less reliance on ordered and rational information and expertise, and a greater resort to policies driven by 'populism, moralism and the market' (Rock, 1995, p.2). Garland has suggested (1996) that long-term certainties about how to deal with crime in society seem to have given way to divergent approaches. These include more punitive and repressive responses, which give the appearance that 'something is being done', and greater stress on crime prevention and control. This has been accompanied by more modest expectations about the state's ability to control crime and rehabilitate offenders. As Garland puts it:

Modest improvements at the margin, the better management of risks and resources, reduction of the fear of crime, reduction of criminal justice expenditure and greater support for crime's victims, have become the less than heroic policy objectives which increasingly replace the idea of winning the 'war against crime'. (1996 p.448)

The development of programmes and policies for offenders which will reduce recidivism he suggests, no longer holds a central position in official discourse about crime and punishment, at least in Britain and the USA:

The 'Nothing Works' slogan, which gained so much attention in the 1970's and early 1980's, might be regarded as a somewhat hysterical and temporary symptom of a more sober and abiding sense of the limits of criminal justice, which has since become a part of criminological common sense....(1996, p. 448).

Thus while therapeutic and rehabilitative programmes have continued to operate in the correctional system since the 1970's, they are seen as specialist services for particular sub-groups, and with more modest expectations of outcome (Garland, 1996 p.458). There has been an increasing emphasis on efficiency and management of populations (Feeley & Simon, 1992, 1994) and redefinitions of success and failure which lower expectations (Garland, 1996). As Jefferson and Shapland (1994) note in their review of developments in the UK:

today [criminal justice agencies] are to be managed, offenders are to be processed, throughput to be controlled, the system to be modelled. The language of industrial production has been adopted. (p. 279)

In the USA some commentators see contemporary developments as postmodern forms 'of social control and penal practice, with a shift from individuals to categories, from society to subdivisions, and from normalization to prevention' (Schwartz and Friedrichs, 1994). In Canada, some lowering of expectations about the outcome of intervention is evident, but among psychologists working in corrections there seems remarkable conviction of the capacity of their particular approach to rehabilitate particular offenders and of the centrality of evaluation in demonstrating that success.

Thus at the end of the twentieth century there are broad shifts taking place in criminal justice policy-making which often appear to be in competing directions. It is in this period that feminism has attempted to assert itself, and to influence both policy and practice in corrections and mainstream criminology. It is here - with the assumptions underlying much programme development research and evaluation in the social sciences as well as the increasing focus on management and efficiency - that conflict with some of the fundamental aspects of the feminist enterprise emerges. Evaluation and

the scientific methodology which underlies it, have always been core aspects of mainstream criminology. Feminism has come to challenge and reject much of that methodology. And feminist intervention programmes would also appear to be at odds with the basic tenets of current mainstream correctional treatment programmes.

## FEMINISM, WOMEN AND THE REFORM AGENDA

The feminist agenda has always been concerned with bringing about social change, with improving people's - usually but not exclusively - women's lives. This relates to all shades of feminism which have been identified, whether these are referred to as liberal, socialist, Marxist, or radical. It relates also to the methods or approaches used to bring about change. Whether this is through community activism, education, legal challenge, policy changes or through theoretical analysis and debate, improvement in the condition of women's lives has been a fundamental goal (Harding, 1987; Bryson, 1992; Rafter & Heidensohn, 1995). As Roseneil (1995, p.196) has put it in relation to the teaching of sociology for example:

If feminist sociologists agree on little else, do we not agree that feminist sociology is above all a project committed to the transformation of knowledge and thereby the transformation of gender relations?

Much recent feminist writing, however, has been concerned with the inability of some twenty years of reform attempts to bring about real social change for women in relation to such issues as wife abuse, child sexual abuse, pornography, or reproductive rights. Much of this concern relates to the limitations of working with the legal system and the state to bring about changes in relation to violence against women (eg. Smart, 1989; Los, 1990; Currie, 1990; Snider 1990, 1991, 1994; Comack, 1993; Morley, 1993; Noonan, 1993). In a discussion of the reasons for this limited impact Laureen Snider suggests that the criminal law and the criminal justice system are different from other institutions of the state in that they have:

a distinct and more restrictive role. On the theoretical and practical/political levels, their relation to social change and dominant ideologies is unique, their power to serve as tools of social transformation very limited. (Snider 1994, p.81).

For women, however, such change is even more limited given the masculinist basis of the criminal law itself. In fact, Snider suggests (1990, 1991) the law has considerable potential to make things worse for women. There are dangers of incorporation by government, of the subversion of ideals, and the individuation of movements with their transformation from social action campaigns to the

pathologizing of individuals. In addition, the institution of punitive responses to the social problems identified by feminists, and the unequal impact of reform on different class and minority groups, all point to the severe limitations of seeking change through the justice system. Dawn Currie (1990; 1992) has provided some insightful analysis of the way in which the state has incorporated the battered women's movement through rather than against feminist discourse, and with increasing criminalization and individuation of social problems. In a later paper (1994) Snider warns against over-stressing the negative consequences of engagement with the law, arguing that the potential for change varies with the type of law and institution and with the context in which change is attempted. She has also pointed out (1991 p. 12) that the historical frame of reference used for many critiques of the impact of feminism is in fact very small.

## FEMINISM AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The impact of feminism upon the discipline of criminology itself has been one way of assessing the reformative power of feminism (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988; Simpson, 1989, Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1990; Currie, 1992; Smart, 1990; Rafter and Heidensohn 1995; Klein, 1995). Criminology, of course, is not unique in the social sciences in its unwillingness to take account of feminism. Similar experiences are evident within anthropology (eg. Cole & Phillips, 1995) psychology (eg. Boehnert, 1988; Kitzinger, 1990; Ussher, 1991; Ussher & Nicolson, 1992) and social work (eg. Dominelli & McLeod, 1989). It has also reflected the disputes, divisions, growth and change, which have characterised feminism as a whole since the advent of the 'second wave'<sup>2</sup> in the 1960's.

As many observers have pointed out, criminology is, nevertheless, one of the most masculine disciplines in the social sciences, both in terms of its theoretical and methodological approaches, its focus almost exclusively on male offenders, and for most of its existence, its domination by male academics and professionals. From the late 1960's, however, attempts to confront issues concerning the position of women in the discipline began to emerge (Rafter & Heidensohn, 1995). Work by Marie-Andrée Bertrand (1967) Frances Heidensohn (1968) and Dorie Klein (1973) in Canada, England and the USA began to question the androcentric biases in criminology, the lack of interest in female offending, the sexism in the criminal law.

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<sup>2</sup>. Second-wave feminism usually refers to the contemporary women's movement beginning in the 1960's, to distinguish it from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century women's movement.

In their review of the development of feminist perspectives in criminology Rafter and Heidensohn (1995) argue that by the 1970's when feminism began to re-emerge, mainstream criminology had become stagnant, wedded to positivist methodology and to the mapping and measuring of crime:

late twentieth century mainstream criminology was the most masculine of all the social sciences, a speciality that wore six-shooters on its hips and strutted its machismo. (Rafter and Heidensohn, 1995 p.5)

Since that period, there has been an explosion of work within or around the area of criminology which can be seen as feminist, and a number of attempts have been made to assess the impact of feminist thought and activism on the discipline, as well as to set out some of the distinctive characteristics of that work.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, the limited impact seen by those working on issues of violence against women, is judged by some of those assessing feminism in criminology to be one of the few areas of substantive progress. And Heidensohn (1994) has pointed to another irony that while considerable energy has been spent by feminists on the effects of research on themselves, on difficult questions of epistemology, and the inability of their research to have an impact on the law, in the public mind and some academic circles, the feminist movement has been blamed for increases in female offending.

One of the first attempts to assess the impact of feminism on the discipline of criminology as it emerged from the late 1960's was made by Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney-Lind (1988) based largely on developments in the USA. They traced its development from the awakening in the 1960's with early critiques of traditional explanations for women's offending, the lack of interest in, and information about, women offenders, and their lack of equality with men in terms of their treatment by the courts and correctional systems, through to the 1980's. This latter period they saw as dominated by questions of generalizability and gender ratio problems (whether theories about men could be generalized to include women, and why the gender gap in offending was so great). These concerns too they noted were now being replaced by fundamental attacks on the methodology of criminology as a scientific discipline, and on the concept of gender neutrality. They also set out the major feminist approaches which characterised this work including traditional or conservative, liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist feminisms, with their very different explanatory frameworks

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<sup>3</sup>. Rafter and Heidensohn's (1995) recent review provides a much more detailed account of these development than can be given here.



and policy agendas. In assessing the impact of all this extensive work by the late 1980's they concluded that:

with the possible exception of women's victimization, criminology has not felt the full impact of feminism except in its most rudimentary liberal feminist form (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988 p.130).

Their paper was designed to make feminist ideas more accessible to mainstream criminology and demonstrate their promise for re-thinking core problems in crime and justice. They felt (in Star Trek terms) that 'the time had come for criminologists to step into the world of feminist thought and for feminist scholars to move more boldly into all areas of criminology' (p.102).

A similar conclusion that feminism had only had a marginal impact on the discipline was reached by Sally Simpson (1989) in her attempt 'to introduce feminist criminology and its intellectual parent, feminism, to the uninitiated reader' (p. 606). Also based primarily on progress in the USA, she suggests that liberal feminism - with its focus on issues of equality and its use of mainstream methodologies - has tended to dominate studies of the female offender and the traditional central concerns of criminology, while radical feminism and socialist feminism with their more critical orientations have been more characteristic of the emerging field of victimology. Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) went even further in their analysis. They argued that criminology has embraced victimology in a big way, because it found it easier to deal with issues of women as victims, rather than as offenders, and because few theoretical explanations for male violence against women existed to resist the incorporation of feminist explanations. As a new area of interest for mainstream criminology, victimology was not a territory to be protected.

An attempt to outline the impact of feminism on academic disciplines and criminology in Britain also appeared at this time. Loraine Gelsthorpe and Allison Morris (1988) noted the often contradictory and varied contribution to the field, the large scale dismissal of feminism by many other disciplines, and concluded that within mainstream criminology there had been a similar and dismal response:

the experience of feminism within criminology seems to us no different from that in other academic disciplines. There is undoubtedly an awareness of the existence of feminism - the invitation to write this paper demonstrates that - but feminism is viewed as the property of "others", "outsiders" even. (Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1988 p. 233).

Two years later, in Feminist Perspectives in Criminology Gelsthorpe and Morris (1990) project a more optimistic view and describe the development of feminism in criminology as a 'project under

construction' which is attempting to 'fracture' the closed world of criminology rather than just enter it (p.4). As Colin Sumner in his introduction puts it, feminist perspectives form a vital part of 'the project of a progressive reconstruction of criminology in the 1990's' (p.xii). Elsewhere in the book Scraton (1990) argues that criminology, whether in its traditional, critical, Marxist or realist modes has remained gender-blind. He cites Liz Kelly and Jill Radford's (1987) view that the underlying problem is that criminology as a masculinist discipline has difficulty dealing with '"activism, theorizing and research" based on women's "individual and shared experiences"' (p.20).

This was also a period when feminism was itself under criticism from within from those who pointed to the ethnocentric nature of much feminist work with its neglect of race or class issues and its North American and Western European roots (Rice, 1990; Carlen and Worrall, 1987; Simpson, 1991; Hester, Kelly & Radford, 1996). The use of the universal category 'women' and the proselytising of feminism predominantly by white and middle-class women, was seen as a form of elitism which privileged gender over all other categories, and ignored the impact of racial and cultural experiences or indeed of age or physical and learning disabilities on different women's lives.

In the same volume, however, Carol Smart (1990) goes much further in her analysis of the failure of criminology to embrace feminism. She is critical not only of traditional criminology with its positivist roots and its search for cause and effect explanations, but also of feminism. In particular she focuses on Sandra Harding's (1986, 1987) analysis of the development of feminist thought. This she characterizes as consisting of three approaches: feminist empiricism, standpoint feminism and post-modern feminism. Feminist empiricism she sees as limited, filling in the gaps in existing knowledge, adding women, focusing on discrimination and equality with men, and criticizing traditional social science but not empiricism itself. Standpoint feminism, an analysis based on uncovering the 'truth' through women's unique experience, she sees as having limited application in criminology - limited to understanding sexual assault or wife abuse, for example, but also problematic because it focuses only on the standpoint of oppressed women, and ignores issues of masculinity. Postmodern feminism on the other hand she argues, with its roots in political practice and philosophy, starts from a different place. It rejects the notion of one sisterhood, or unitary selves, or 'grand theory' and aims to deconstruct 'master narratives' rather than uncover 'truth'.

Thus for her criminology is a vortex we should no longer enter, and feminist postmodernism the only approach with the potential to avoid the limitations of earlier feminist thought. As she concludes:

for a long time, we have been asking 'what does feminism have to contribute to

criminology (or sociology)?' Feminism has been knocking at the door of established disciplines hoping to be let in on equal terms. These established disciplines have largely looked down their noses (metaphorically speaking) and found feminism wanting. Feminism has been required to become more objective, more substantive, more scientific, more anything before a grudging entry could be granted....Perhaps it is now apt to rephrase the traditional question to read 'what does criminology have to offer feminism?' (Smart, 1990 p. 82).

Not all observers take such a position (eg. Carlen, 1990a; Cain, 1990; Currie, 1992, Klein, 1995) but Smart's critique has done much to encourage further discussion about feminism and criminology. The language has changed too, from describing feminism as impacting on criminology (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988) through transgressing criminology (Cain, 1989); abandoning criminology (Smart, 1990); fracturing criminology (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1990); colliding with criminology (Currie, 1992; Rafter & Heidensohn, 1995); to reinventing or engendering criminology (Klein, 1995).

By 1995, Rafter and Heidensohn (1995) reviewing the international field over the past 25 years provide a more optimistic assessment of the impact of feminism on the discipline at least in the Western world. They point out that feminist criminological studies have 'multiplied remarkably over the past two decades, becoming more sophisticated, extending their range and depth, developing new methods and recognizing diverse standpoints.' (p.7) This has involved a movement away from an exclusive focus on women and equality issues, to include the recognition of the fundamental importance of gender as a construct, the social construction of feminism, and now masculinity, the importance and differential impact of racial, class and geographical factors on gender and the subsequent 'fracturing' of gender, as well as crucial epistemological challenges.

Moreover, they suggest that in comparison with 'new' or critical criminology, another challenger of mainstream criminology which emerged in the 1970's, the impact of feminism has been more profound. Both movements they characterize as attacking the claims to neutrality and objectivity of traditional criminology, and as being overtly political and concerned with social justice, but conclude that:

Feminists have produced a greater volume and range of work; this work has demonstrated greater staying power; and whereas so-called critical criminologists made no mark outside the academy, feminism has transformed criminal justice practices. (Rafter & Heidensohn, 1995 p.7-8)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. Schwartz & Friedrichs (1994) have also sought explanations for the failure of postmodern thought to penetrate mainstream criminology, unlike most other social sciences.

They point too, to the heightened awareness of feminist issues among politicians and the media, and the involvement of feminists within government bureaucracies eg. in Australia (Watson, 1990; Alder, 1995) which is seen as instrumental in the development of research and policy concerned with violence against women. (A similar stress on the importance of engagement with government is evident in the field of social work. Dominelli and McLeod (1989, p.132) for example, argue that it is essential for feminism to have a political presence and to expand into state bureaucracy at the local and central levels). It must be noted, however, that a rather different interpretation has been put on such developments elsewhere. Thus in Canada, for example, Currie and Kline (1991) have suggested that government policy has incorporated and changed feminist concerns in negotiation with career feminists with special credentials (see below). Not all contributors to Rafter and Heidensohn's book seem as optimistic, however. Dorie Klein (1995, p.230) provides a qualified assessment of the potential for feminist criminology to reform and change, given the recent and extraordinary development of punitive and deterrent criminal justice responses in the United States. She suggests that so far feminism there has been tamed more than it has transformed the centre.

#### THE FAILURE OF FEMINISM TO AFFECT THE LIVES OF WOMEN OFFENDERS

Nevertheless, it seems clear that Daly and Chesney-Lind's earlier assessment that most gains have been made within the area of women's victimization remains true in the 1990's. As Rafter and Heidensohn point out, while 'feminists began their criminological critique with the neglect of women as offenders, their greatest achievement has been developing new theories about and policies for women (and children) as victims.' (p.7). Alder (1995, p.31) similarly argues that women who break the law in Australia are barely visible in feminist criminology, and Hansson (1995 p. 53) suggests that in South Africa 'there has been very little work done on women and girls as 'ordinary' law breakers, with the exception of offences relating to sex work'. And Penny Green (1993 p.112) in her review of Gelsthorpe and Morris (1990) regrets that 'feminist criminology has become, to a large extent, victimology' - constituting women as victims of male violence - wife-battering, rape, incest and pornography.

Thus while the major focus of feminism has been in relation to violence against women, its impact on women offenders has been much more restricted, with the exception of women accused of violence against intimates. Considerable attention has been given after all to the 'battered women syndrome' for example, to its subsequent adoption by the courts for some women accused of killing a spouse or partner in an abusive relationship, and to the reassessment of the meaning of its adoption for women (Walker, 1989; Ursel, 1991; Comack, 1993; Noonan, 1993). This is not to suggest that

no attempts have been made to impact women offenders. Much of the initial phase of feminist work since the 1970's has focused on the descriptive project of mapping out the characteristics of women in conflict with the law, whether at the sentencing stage or in prison. A number of recent studies have begun to provide more theoretical or nuanced discussions (eg. Carlen, 1990; Howe, 1994; Sommers, 1995; Comack, 1996; Chesney-Lind 1996; Bosworth, 1996, 1997). The work of activist and pressure groups has also continued to focus on ameliorating the conditions of women in prison and pressing for policy changes (Carlen, 1990; Shaw 1993; Stewart, 1993; Heidensohn 1995; Hannah-Moffat, 1997).<sup>5</sup> In Britain in fact Heidensohn (1995) sees the renewed activities of both established and new 'single issue' pressure groups as an illustration of the impact of feminism outside the university.

Nevertheless, in contrast to the, albeit limited, impact of feminism on violence against women, there is little evidence of changed regimes, correctional agendas or sentencing practices for women offenders in most countries, little focus on the lives of women 'in the system'. The characteristics and condition of those women remain depressingly familiar, with considerable deterioration in some countries. In the United States, for example, as Chesney-Lind reports (1995) the number of women in prison has risen from some 12,000 in 1980 to more than 60,000 in 1995, affecting primarily non-white, petty offenders (see also Bloom, Lee & Owen, 1995). In the United States Klein (1995) suggests there have been few concerted or successful attempts to develop feminist programmes or regimes for women offenders, although as always, some important exceptions stand out (eg. The Family Violence Programme at Bedford Hills prison in New York State (Smolick, 1990) and see Immarigeon & Chesney-Lind, 1992). Similarly, there has been little focus on non-custodial programmes, on the concerns of women subject to such sentences, or on women after their release from prison (although see Carlen, 1990 and Eaton, 1993). A recent survey of all community-based programmes for women offenders in the United States (Austin, Bloom & Donahue, 1992) identified only 100 programmes, accommodating an average of 24 women, for an estimated population of 440,000 female offenders. And it is doubtful whether many of these programmes would be classified as feminist.

How do we explain this situation? Penny Green (1993) argues it results from the white-middle-class domination of feminist criminology, its focus on women as victims and its neglect of issues of social

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<sup>5</sup>. In Canada, for example, such pressure groups have included SIS (Strength in Sisterhood) and CAEFS (the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies), and in England RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison, NACRO (the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) and WIP (Women in Prison).

class and race or the role of the state. As suggested earlier, Sally Simpson (1989) and Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) point to the comfortable but limited acceptability of liberal feminist approaches working within the traditional parameters of criminology (sentencing disparities, differential recorded crime rates) and the existence of hitherto unheeded and unclaimed areas - male violence against women - which have enabled more radical approaches to flourish to some extent unchallenged. More recently, Kathleen Daly (1997) has suggested that the dominant concern with theory development among feminists led to the neglect of 'the real world out there'. Such explanations are helpful, but do not perhaps go far enough.

Part of the explanation for the limited impact of feminism on women offenders themselves lies in the ambivalence many feminists themselves feel about acquiescing in the correctional treatment of women, or asking the criminal justice system to become, as Snider puts it, 'an equal opportunity oppressor' (1994, p.83). Some writers such as Carol Smart (1990) as has been suggested have argued that feminism should not engage itself with offenders or with criminal justice policies on the grounds that this plays into the disciplinary system of the state, and further, that in a postmodernist world there is no longer any point in clinging to an assumption that things will work better if only we use more effort, or money, or better theory:

The point is whether we argue that all the studies that have been carried out to date have been inadequate or whether we reappraise the very idea that we will find solutions. (Smart, 1990 p.76)

Part of the problem lies again, as Snider argues above, in the very limited ability of the state disciplinary system to generate radical change (Snider, 1994). She suggests that operational barriers to change should be easier to alter than structural ones, yet criminal justice has been strengthened rather than liberalized by reform, with results that are at best neutral and at worst repressive (p.83).

There are other factors which have contributed to this reluctance to engage with women offenders, apart from concerns about the theoretical, structural or practical feasibility of doing so. The loss of public interest which accompanies the post-sentence stages of the criminal justice system is one such factor. With the exception of a few key women whose situation or sentence rouses public interest, most attention is focussed on the drama of the court process up to the sentence itself (Shaw, 1995) and that too, is where much feminist interest has stopped. Another factor is the secrecy associated with correctional regimes which protects them from, and excludes, the public eye and presents real barriers to investigation and research (Snider, 1994 p. 83; Doyle & Ericson, 1996).

It must also be said that women offenders engender less obvious concern about moral and social injustice than abused women in their homes, except where their offending can be seen as stemming from their status as victims of male aggression. Few studies have been concerned with women as perpetrators rather than victims of violence or violent crime, for example, as a number of commentators have noted (eg. Simpson, 1991; Heidensohn, 1992a; Dougherty, 1993; Morris & Wilczynski, 1993; Campbell, 1993; Shaw, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1995; Kelly, 1996; Parent & Digneffe, 1996). In part this reflects the fact that men have been, and still are, primarily responsible for most violence. But it has also stemmed from the very legitimate focus on violence against women, and the need to sensitize society to its extent and seriousness. Since violent crime by women is almost always seen in terms of murder, most of the discourse and literature on women's use of violence which has emerged over the past twenty five years has focused on women in abusive relationships who kill their abuser (eg. Smith, 1980; Browne, 1986; Walker, 1989; Wilson & Daly, 1992).

As Liz Kelly has put it:

The ambivalent relationship many feminists have to women's use of violence is also illustrated by an almost opposite response; a 'heroizing' of women who 'fight back'. Women who kill abusive husbands seldom view their actions at the time, or later, as self-conscious political resistances to patriarchal domination, and many continue to be troubled by what they did. (1996, p.41)

That this relationship is reflected in public distaste can be illustrated by the case of a halfway house in Montreal, Quebec. Originally belonging to an Order of Sisters, neighbours were content to hear the house had been sold in 1991 to house women victims of violence. Contentment changed rapidly, and very publically, to opposition, on learning that the house was to house women offenders on release from prison. The fact that some, and possibly most, of those women might also have been victims of violence at some point in their lives quite escaped the vision of the protestors.

Such neglect by feminist criminology has meant that women's violence has been framed largely as a response to an abusive situation or past abusive experiences. Yet not all acts of violence by women are direct responses to abusive relationships, and women do occasionally use violence against those with whom they have no close relationships, and in situations other than domestic ones. The crucial issue is that by denying or avoiding women's use of violence does the women themselves a great disservice, as a number of writers have stressed (Carlen et al., 1985; Worrall, 1990; Allen, 1987;

Simpson, 1991; Campbell, 1993; Shaw, 1995). As Sally Simpson (1991) puts it:

The simplistic notion that males are violent and women are not contains a grain of truth, but it misses the complexity and texture of women's lives. (p.129)

Such avoidance encourages a backlash effect where some investigators feel challenged to prove that women are just as violent as men<sup>6</sup>, it contributes to the fiction that women who are violent - unless responding to a violent partner - must be extraordinary freaks, it denies women any agency or choice in their lives, but perhaps most crucially for them, it leaves society and the justice system with little understanding of their behaviour, or guidance on how we should react to, or help them.<sup>7</sup> Recent events in Canada which are discussed below have underlined this point to devastating effect (Arbour, 1996), as did events surrounding the reconstruction of Holloway prison for women in London (Rock, 1996).

Thus the issue, as this discussion of women's violence suggests, is that feminism has generally failed to have much impact on the lives of women in conflict with the law. There is a great reluctance to become involved with the correctional system, to compromise principles. And there is the danger of having the wrong effect as Heidensohn underlines:

It is possible that even well-intentioned research can have a negative effect: by focusing on 'neglected' women offenders for example, they may become exposed to new forms of treatment. (1994, p.34)

Susan Boyd (1991) on the other hand argues that 'practical politics' cannot be thrown out:

Aboriginal peoples in both Australia and Canada know that the deconstruction of texts, or indeed universalistic theories, while important in their own right, ultimately cannot address the power relations within which they live.....To the extent that postmodernism leads us away from an engaged politics in our lives in academia and other communities, we would do well to be wary of taking it to its logical limits of nihilism and political pessimism. (Boyd, 1991 p.122)

In other fields, such as social work, there have been strong arguments in favour of feminists engaging with the state and its statutory social control systems as will be discussed subsequently

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<sup>6</sup>. See for example Loucks & Zamble (1994) and Blanchette & Motiuk (1997) comparing violence by federally sentenced women and men in Canada.

<sup>7</sup>. These issues are dealt with at greater length in Shaw, M. & Dubois, S. (1995) Understanding Violence by Women: A Review of the Literature. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.



(Dominelli & McLeod, 1989). Such a position has also been taken by some of those who work in the area of violence against women. In their review of the work of the Violence Against Women Study Group established in Britain in 1986, Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly and Jill Radford (1996) stress that the group was formed specifically to encourage continual change, research and action. The group facilitated networking between activists, universities and policy developers in the community, providing necessary connections between theory, practice and accountability.

Charges of 'realist' inclinations such as those levelled by Penny Green (1993) are rarely directed at non-criminological endeavours, and the authors recognize the dangers implicit in engagement - the appropriation of feminist concerns, the redefinition of feminist issues within non-feminist discourses especially in terms of family or individual pathology (Hester et al 1996 p.7). They also react strongly against the postmodernist challenge within feminism which they see as drawing on 'white dead men' - Freud, Lacan and Foucault - and which rejects activism and explorations of 'difference'. They suggest instead that there is scope for 'an increasing sophistication in feminist theory and practice, and exciting developments in feminist methodology, which draw on radical traditions within action and participatory research.' (p.13). Kathleen Daly (1997) has also suggested ways in which a re conceptualization of sex and gender can help to move feminist research forward.

Pat Carlen is one of the few writers to have consistently advocated the responsibility of academics to engage with the justice system (Carlen, 1983, 1988, 1990a, 1990b; Carlen & Tchaikovsky, 1996). Apart from her involvement with the pressure group Women in Prison founded in 1983, her own work has explored women's offending and its broader associations and the possibilities for alternatives to imprisonment. She has argued in a number of articles that there is a real need to engage with the justice system. Moreover, she has also discussed how this might be done, using both short-term achievable goals, and:

long-term programmes that, although idealistic, need to be adhered to and worked on, to counter the conservative compromises based on pragmatism and opportunism, which usually have to be made to achieve short-term goals. (Carlen, 1990, p.120).

More recently (1994) Carlen has emphasized the need to get away from an almost exclusive focus on women and gender - particularly in relation to studying the prison - and to consider the role of punishment and the exercise of power over both men and women in the prison.

## SUMMARY

This introductory chapter has touched on some of the themes to be considered in the thesis. It has outlined some of the levels at which the development of programmes and policies in correctional systems can be examined, including the evaluation of effectiveness, the processes of policy formulation, and in terms of the underlying purposes which policies and programmes serve within the state. It has considered the central rationale of feminism, and thus of feminist criminology, to bring about real change for women, and considered some of the limitations of feminist attempts to reform, especially for women in the correctional system.

The following chapter considers the development and impact of feminist discourse in Canada particularly in relation to women and the justice system, and the adoption by the federal government of a prison and programme model for women prisoners based on feminist principles. It thus provides an account of the context in which the Coverdale project was developed.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

The Coverdale project was developed at the beginning of the 1990's, but its roots lie in some twenty years of feminist endeavour in Canada. The importance of the context - historical, geographical, cultural, political - in which feminist endeavours take place is very clear from the papers brought together by Rafter and Heidensohn (1995). The Western and North American domination of feminism is beginning to give way to an awareness of the variability of culture, circumstances and institutional settings. This is also consonant with the greater awareness of the interrelationships of gender with race, class and age. Snider (1994) stresses that the possibility for transformative, effective social action does vary between institutions, types of law, nation-states and historically over time. It is important, therefore, to explore Canadian experience more specifically, and not to assume a uniform North American history in terms of the impact of feminism on social change, on criminology or the criminal justice system. It is important to locate the Coverdale project in these developments. This chapter, therefore, examines the development of feminism in Canada and the extent of its impact on women offenders over the past twenty years. It outlines the growing pressure for change which eventually led to the appointment of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, the implementation of its recommendations by the federal government, and the development of feminist intervention programmes for women. It examines how those feminist intentions have begun to go wrong, as policies have become modified and programmes incorporated by the correctional system.

The impact of feminism on social and justice issues in Canada has in many ways been similar to that in other countries, with a dominant focus on victims, and an early and vigorous grass-roots movement. It has also been characterized by strong legal challenge (eg. Sheehy, 1987; Snider, 1990, 1991, 1994; Currie, 1990; Los, 1990; Razack, 1991; Comack, 1993; Noonan, 1993). It could be argued in fact that the majority of, and the strongest feminist critique of criminal justice issues in Canada, comes from socio-legal analysis in an academic context (see for example the review by Faith, 1989). Yet Canada is perhaps unusual in terms of the extent to which feminist discourse has apparently penetrated policy and practice in the criminal justice field. Unlike the response in most countries there has been a recent and ongoing attempt by the state at the federal level to incorporate

feminist ideas and to develop a new woman-centred prison regime for women in Canada.<sup>1</sup> This is the outcome of a long history of pressure and critique of the failure of the correctional system to pay attention to the needs or particular conditions under which federally sentenced women serve their sentences. But this initiative has also provided a very real example of the implications and dangers of trying to implement change for those within the justice system (Hannah-Moffat, 1991, 1995, 1997; Shaw, 1992, 1993, 1996; Kendall, 1994a; Faith, 1995; Arbour, 1996).

It is possible to discern a range of factors which have facilitated this situation, only some of which are distinctly feminist. There have been major changes in public attitudes towards issues affecting women in Canada over the past 20 years, the result largely - though not entirely - of lobbying by women's organizations. These changes have been mapped elsewhere (eg. Rock, 1986; Faith, 1989; Los, 1990; Currie, 1990, 1992; Currie and Kline, 1991; Snider, 1991). They have included the development of the Shelter movement for battered women, the growth of the victims' movement, and much greater awareness of the extent of violence against women and children. Currie (1990; 1992) for example, traces the growth of the grass-roots women's movement which began establishing volunteer support services for women in the 1970's, often with government funding. Their advocacy of the need for services and of the extent of wife battering gradually influenced state agencies, law reform and lobby groups. By 1987, with the publication of a second major report on wife battering in Canada by the Canadian Advisory Council for the Status of Women (CACSW) (MacLeod, 1987) Currie argues 'the Canadian state - for a number of reasons - had publically endorsed feminist goals'.

By endorsing the recommendations of the CACSW, the Conservative party increasingly linked itself to the progressive image which the Advisory Council provides through its platform of 'women's issues'. (Currie, 1992, p.223)

Writing of the power of women's organizations in Canada in relation to the victims movement in the 1970's and 1980's, Rock (1986) noted the special power of Status of Women, as a federal government department, to review the content of government policy.

So widespread did their presence seem to be....moulding the development of policies in Ontario, the arguments that directed victimology, and the politics of domestic crisis intervention.... Women had been awarded an entrenched place in the institutional structure of Ottawa, being required to monitor new proposals and ideas for their bearing on the status of women. (p.210)

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<sup>1</sup>. In Canada women sentenced to terms of imprisonment of two years or more become the responsibility of the federal correctional service, those serving shorter sentences are the responsibility of provincial correctional services and serve their terms in a provincial prison. For most of the past 150 years only one federal penitentiary for women has existed.

In his view the Canadian government was particularly alert to the 'special needs' of women, made 'visible genuflections' (Rock, 1995 p.9) in their direction, and undertook 'fulsome consultations'.<sup>2</sup>

The shift in attitudes towards women contributed to a number of legislative changes and policy initiatives. These have included the replacement of rape in the Criminal Code with the much broader offence of sexual assault in 1983 (Los, 1990) and more recently the enactment of legislation against 'stalking' in 1993 creating the offence of criminal harassment. In 1990 there was a significant decision relating to the case of Angelique Lavallee accused of murdering her partner, in which a plea of self defence was accepted on the basis of prior battering (Comack, 1993; Noonan, 1993).

Apart from legislative changes, the Justice for Victims of Crime initiative was established by the Ministry of the Solicitor General in 1982 (Rock, 1986), and an integrated intervention strategy to tackle family violence as well as the allocation of funds for programme and policy development and research established as the Family Violence Initiative following the 1987 report by CACSW (Currie, 1992). A second phase of funding for that Initiative ran from 1990 to 1995. Considerable changes have meanwhile taken place in police training and practice and in court practices in relation to violence against women across the country.

In addition, there have been a large number of official investigations and surveys which underline the government's acknowledgement of the importance of the issues affecting women. In 1993, for example, the report of the Panel on Family Violence, funded at a cost of \$10 million by the federal Department of Health and Welfare was published (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993). This involved an 18-month investigation of violence against women in domestic situations with extensive testimony from women across Canada. In 1990 the federal Department of Justice, together with provincial and territorial justice ministers, was responsible for setting-up and funding a major investigation of gender equality in the justice system. The working group investigated five overlapping issues: women's access to the justice system; the response of the justice system to violence against women; gender bias in the courts; the response of the justice system to women in conflict with the law; substantive law bias against women, and the situation of women working in the justice system. The working group's report was published in July 1993 (Department of Justice, 1993). Apart from its detailed analysis of systemic and overt biases in the justice system, it made

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<sup>2</sup>. He has also characterised victim policies in Britain as 'genderless' compared with those in Canada or the USA (Rock, 1988).

numerous recommendations for the training and appointment of judges and others working in the system, for policies in relation to the sentencing of women and men, public legal education to improve women's access to the courts, better victim and witness services, and for the elimination of violence against women in the community. (There has been an accompanying flood of research and policy analysis. A recent book on gender bias in the law and the justice system contains a 37 page 'selected' bibliography on Canadian sources (Brockman & Chunn, 1993)). Subsequently, a nationwide survey of violence against women, funded at a cost of \$1.9 million by the Department of Health and Welfare was conducted in 1993 (Statistics Canada, 1994; Johnson, 1996). This telephone-based survey of victimization was the first of its kind in the world, and involved interviews with 12,300 women of 18 or more. It reported that one in every two women in Canada had experienced violence - in the form of physical or sexual abuse which would constitute a criminal offence - since the age of 16 years.

Apart from such developments in relation to women, there have been a large number of provincial and federal investigations into the treatment of Aboriginals by the justice system (Solicitor General, 1988; Osnaburgh/Windigo Tribal Council, 1989; Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991; Linn, 1992) as well as the development of alternative justice systems (LaPrairie, 1992; Hollow Water First Nation, 1993). The significance of these developments for the current discussion is that apart from their demonstration of the systemic and overt discrimination against Aboriginal peoples by the justice system, and their social and economic oppression by the majority white society, they have raised discussion about the treatment of minorities in general by the justice system.

Thus, there would appear to have been some acceptance in Canada on the part of the public as well as government that women are subject to violence in society, which has led to formal changes in legislation and policy. It has created a climate which legitimates change in relation to women to an extent which has not seemed possible in many other countries. It has also relied to a large extent on a portrayal of women as victims of violence and abuse. In some ways this acceptance has been too successful as Dawn Currie underlines:

Violence against women is one example of how the needs of women became incorporated into existing discourses about justice so that the logical solution to violence became the expansion rather than the transformation of patriarchal institutions which, ironically can be seen as giving rise to the problem in the first place. (Currie, 1992 p.224).

Karlene Faith (1989) makes a similar point - that liberal legal challenges do not change much on the ground - in her review of five issues in Canada which have been subject to feminist political/legal

actions (sexual assault, child custody, female offenders, pornography and First Nations women). As an abolitionist she sees deinstitutionalisation and community programmes as more appropriate for women offenders than realignments of prison, and real reform as working for the reduction of 'victimizing social conditions'. Currie and Kline (1991) have also pointed to divisions within the women's liberation movement in Canada and the less than enthusiastic endorsement given to state intervention or the progress of feminist bureaucrats in Canada, unlike the Australian view discussed above. They quote one observer as concluding that by the end of the 1970's feminism was best served outside government:

in the process of integrating the status of women issue into the policy-making process, the state had significantly modified the radical implications of women's demands for equality by incorporating them into an equal opportunity framework and by limiting the participation of representatives from the women's movement to token consultations. The contribution of feminists was limited to those who....successfully made the transition from feminist advocates to career public servants representing a feminist perspective. (Findlay, 1987 quoted in Currie & Kline, 1991 p. 22).

And elsewhere other activists concluded that:

liberal lobbyists seek the small reforms which enable the state to maintain an appearance of addressing the subordination of women (Andrew, Barnsley, Ellis & Wasserlein, 1986 quoted in Currie and Kline, 1991 p. 22).

Such a theme has also been played out in another way by activists in the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) with the debate over whether societies should provide services for women offenders (implicitly in collusion with the correctional system) or act strictly as advocates for women, individually or collectively (Stewart, 1993).

Within the academic field, as in other countries, feminism has made only a small impact. Reviewing Canadian experience in relation to battered women, Currie (1992) suggested that feminism, while now being included in the production of knowledge and official policy, remains marginal to mainstream institutions, particularly universities and government bureaucracies (p.236, 238, 241). She was also concerned with the appropriation of issues such as victimization by criminologists who do not share a feminist perspective, and pointed to the explosion of such work in the late 1980's in Canada following government endorsement and funding of policy and research on violence against women.

Two recent studies which have begun to map and assess the impact of feminist ideas on academic criminology in Canada bear out this view (Bertrand et al 1990a & b; Bertrand, 1994; Chunn & Menzies, 1995). Bertrand (1994) shows how the very limited Canadian research on women and the justice system from the mid 1960's to the 1970's was concerned primarily with work on women offenders. Nevertheless, that interest has waned by the end of the 1980's as research on women as victims, and in relation to legislative impacts has gained in popularity. While there was an increase in published work on girls and women over the period, only half of this work had any feminist or critical content, and was produced by a limited range of authors, primarily within the critical field. This suggested that feminism had not made an impact on the majority of those working in the field.

Chunn and Menzies, as part of a larger project to map the development and organizational structure of criminology in Canada, surveyed staff and students at four graduate centres of criminology. They found an increasing proportion of female students entering the field, and a small but expanding number of feminist theses and publications and suggest 'a tempered, and perhaps somewhat diffident, optimism about the possibilities for disciplinary transformation' (1995, p. 160). Both studies are primarily about the university and academic personnel. Neither considers, nor set out to do so, the impact of feminism on the justice system or correctional policies. Nor do they deal with the production of research or programme development for governments at the municipal, provincial or federal levels, areas where much work gets done.

## CHANGE AFFECTING WOMEN OFFENDERS

How has this changing climate affected women offenders? The answer is that changes have taken much longer, are largely limited to imprisonment, and are less extensive than in relation to victim or violence issues. In addition, they may now be seen as intensely problematic. The history of women's imprisonment in Canada has many parallels with other countries in terms of small numbers, neglect, subjection to regimes designed for men, and to stereotypical views of the role of women in society (Strange, 1985; Cooper, 1993; Shaw, 1991; Hannah-Moffat, 1997). But the position of Canadian women in prison has a number of unique features which stem from the political and social development of Canada, and the physical characteristics of the country. These include the enormous size of the country, the relatively small and widely-spread population, and the existence of significant language and cultural differences. In particular, the indigenous Aboriginal peoples, with their generally impoverished socioeconomic status, are disproportionately represented in the imprisoned population. In addition, the federal structure of the country led in the early nineteenth century to a split in responsibility for imprisonment between provincial and federal governments,



necessitating the development of parallel institutional systems for both men and women.

Offenders sentenced to imprisonment for any period less than two years serve their sentences in provincial prisons and under provincial jurisdiction. Those sentenced to terms of two years or more become the responsibility of the federal government and are detained in federal penitentiaries. For men these are located throughout the country and offer a relative variety of programmes and facilities as well as security levels. For women until 1995, in part because of their small numbers, there has existed only one federal prison. Unlike Britain there have been no open prisons or minimum security facilities, no facilities for mothers with babies or even specific psychiatric facilities for women.<sup>3</sup> And even those who come from the same province in which the prison is situated may still be up to 1000 miles from home.

Those sentenced to less than two years form a much larger group serving on average very short sentences. Thus in 1991, for example, 141 federally sentenced women were admitted to prison compared with almost 10,000 women admitted to provincial prisons under sentence and a further 8,500 on remand (Johnson & Rodgers, 1993). Both provincially and federally women comprise a very small proportion of the total population in prison. Thus provincially sentenced women comprise about 7% of all prison admissions. At the federal level the discrepancy is even greater. Of the total federally sentenced population of 14,000 incarcerated in 1994, only about 300 or 2.5% were women.

## PRESSURE FOR CHANGE

Because of these small numbers federally sentenced women were housed from the 1830's in male penitentiaries including the first at Kingston, Ontario. There has been a long history of investigations in Canada which failed to lead to significant change in the conditions of their imprisonment (Berzins and Hayes 1987; Shaw, 1991; Biron, 1992; Cooper, 1993; Hannah-Moffat, 1995). In 1934 a single separate facility for all federal women, the Prison for Women (P4W) was opened in Kingston, built as a maximum security institution on nineteenth century penitentiary lines. Since its opening there has been almost constant concern that women suffer more hardship than men by being removed so far from their homes and families, and that the provision of programmes and facilities does not take account of the needs of women, nor match those available for men. Even four years after its

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<sup>3</sup>. Following the completion of the 1990 Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women a minimum security facility for 11 women was opened opposite the Prison for Women. One or two provincial prisons have had very limited facilities for babies to live in for a short period.

completion a major government commission found conditions at the Prison for Women (P4W) very inferior to those in men's prisons, and recommended closure and the transfer of all women back to their home provinces under provincial authority (Cooper, 1987). Since that time numerous reports have variously recommended the replacement of the Prison for Women, its enhancement, or closure and the dispersal of federally sentenced women back to their home provinces.

Almost the only change of any significance was the development of agreements between the federal and provincial governments from the 1970's, enabling responsibility for some federally sentenced women to be transferred to provincial jurisdiction. This has enabled such women to remain in provincial prisons closer to their families. It had also enabled the majority of the Francophone women to stay in Quebec.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the 1980's approximately a third of the federal population were located in provincial prisons, but while they had closer contact with their families, they were without access to even the limited range of programmes and treatment facilities available at Kingston.

In 1971 the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)<sup>5</sup> was established. This active pressure group was directly concerned with women offenders and reflected the growing strength of the women's movement in Canadian public affairs. For CAEFS the focus of most concern, in keeping with its funding and stated rationale, has always been the federally sentenced population, not the much larger numbers of women remanded in custody or serving provincial sentences. The interests of those women are left largely to local provincial societies or other lobby and service groups. CAEFS, as well as other groups, maintained pressure on the federal government during the 1970's to recognize the specific needs of women offenders and their neglect in comparison with the much larger male population. By 1976 the federal government ministry responsible for corrections was prepared to develop a national policy for the federal female population. A national consultation committee was appointed, and two women activists were recruited by the Ministry of the Solicitor General to follow up their recommendations. For the Ministry, the Prison for Women the only women's penitentiary in Canada had, as Lorraine Berzins put it:

been a controversial thorn in its side for many years. Its closure had been called for repeatedly almost since its inception, because of its archaic design (which

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<sup>4</sup>. Around 21% of the federal population are French-speaking.

<sup>5</sup>. Although the first Elizabeth Fry Society in Canada was established in 1939, the national association was not formed until 1971 and not incorporated until 1978 by which time 13 societies existed (Stewart, 1993).

even in the 1930's was considered inappropriate for women), and because it was so far away from many of the women's homes. (Berzins & Hayes, 1987 p.167)

The task of the newly established Female Offender Programme was to decentralize the federal population, and develop programmes and community services for the women on release from prison, with provincial governments. The 1970's saw the establishment of three government committees set up specifically to make recommendations on the future of the federal female population, but none was acted upon. As Berzins and Cooper show in their subsequent critique, the Commissioner of Corrections had no interest in seeing any major changes to services for women offenders on the grounds that it was uneconomic, given their minute numbers, compared with the much larger male population<sup>6</sup> (Berzins and Cooper, 1982). Their attempts to expand the knowledge base on women offenders and examine gender differences in correctional policies led to their eventual dismissal in 1979 and the suppression of their helpful research (Berzins & Dunn, 1978; Berzins & Hayes, 1987).

In the absence of developments, pressure to change the conditions of imprisonment of federally sentenced women was also applied through the courts with the creation of a campaigning women's group Women For Justice in 1980. The group laid a complaint against the Correctional Service Canada with the Canadian Human Rights Commission for unfair discrimination against women federal prisoners. While they won their case, four years of conciliation resulted in a few changes, but no fundamental ones being implemented by Correctional Service Canada (Berzins & Hayes, 1987). Subsequently, the Women's Legal Education Action Fund (LEAF) established in 1985 continued to campaign for the rights of women offenders and others, under the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Razack, 1991). Other groups including CAEFS maintained their pressure. A number of books and articles on women offenders in Canada began to appear from the mid 1980's (eg. Adelberg, 1985; Adelberg & Currie, 1987; Faith, 1989; Mohr, 1990).

Berzins & Hayes argue, nevertheless, that the case did raise public and government awareness of the needs of women offenders at the federal and provincial level. In 1984 the federal government announced a five year funding programme known as WICL (Women in Conflict with the Law):

to stimulate and support the voluntary sector's involvement in expanding and improving services and facilities for women in conflict with the law. (Berzins & Hayes, 1987 p.175)

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<sup>6</sup>. During this period the population of federally sentenced women numbered only 300, including 100 on parole in the community.

They also suggest that this was the first time the federal government had publically integrated some of the views of the pressure groups on the needs of women offenders into official policy. Berzins and Cooper are also careful to point out that these were not feminist views, however. They note the wariness of the government to overt feminist ideas. Thus in 1986 the author of a report on research methodology for women offenders, commissioned by the Solicitor General, had been informed that the feminist bias of the report made it unacceptable and of little relevance to understanding the needs of women offenders (reported in Berzins and Hayes, 1987 p.178). Berzins and Hayes (1987) are also sceptical of the ability of change to be wrought from inside government, and suggest that in spite of their limited successes, they had little success 'in bringing other women to recognize those in conflict with the law as their sisters' (p.177). Nevertheless, in part because of their work and the continuing pressure from CAEFS and other groups, by 1988 the attitude of the federal government was sufficiently receptive to the needs of those women to reopen the whole issue of the imprisonment of federally sentenced women.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE TASK FORCE ON FEDERALLY SENTENCED WOMEN

The Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, appointed by the Solicitor General in 1989, was unusual in combining both voluntary sector and government members as well as representatives of Aboriginal and minority groups and women who had themselves been in prison. In so doing, the Solicitor General opened up the possibility of bringing in new ideas, but at the price of losing the ability to define and control issues, as Rock has pointed out (Rock, 1995 p.9).

Many of the members of the Task Force worked from a feminist perspective which took the experiences of women as the starting point for critique, and which rejected the notion that women's needs were similar to those of men, that equality of provision should be the goal, or that traditional correctional approaches based on the male population were appropriate. There was an emphasis on the extensiveness of violence in women's lives, on the powerful social and economic controls exerted over them, and on the need for a 'women-centred' approach in developing new facilities, regimes and programmes. The task force was careful, however, to use the term women-centred rather than feminist. Aboriginal women on the Task Force made a considerable impact, arguing for greater recognition of their particular racial and cultural experiences, undertaking their own research with Aboriginal women, and developing the notion of a healing lodge which would be based on Aboriginal teachings and concepts (Sugar & Fox, 1989).

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<sup>7</sup>. The government was also spurred by a number of suicides occurring at the Prison For Women.

The outcome of the Task Force was the report Creating Choices (1990) which recommended extensive changes to the imprisonment of the federal population including the construction of five new regional facilities and a Healing Lodge for Aboriginal women, and the closure of the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. A community release strategy was also to be developed. The report set out a series of five women-centred principles on which all future developments were to be based: i) empowerment, ii) the provision of meaningful choices, iii) treating women with respect and dignity, iv) providing a physically and emotionally supportive environment, and v) the sharing of responsibility for women's welfare between institutional staff, community members, and with the women themselves.

The report based much of its approach on the experiences of women in the justice system, and argued not just for new buildings, but for fundamental changes in the way the new facilities should be run and staffed, and in their programmes and policies (Shaw, 1993). The new regional facilities were to be situated in several acres of land, providing natural light, fresh air, colour, space and privacy, with cottage-style houses accommodating six to 10 women each. There were to be independent living areas, and facilities for women to live with small children and for family visits. Staffing levels were to vary according to the needs of the women, but there was to be an emphasis on high levels of staffing and support where necessary, rather than on physical security measures. A central core area would provide educational, recreational, day care and spiritual facilities, as well as flexible space for programmes. All staff were to be carefully selected for their sensitivity to the circumstances of federally sentenced women and given mandatory training in counselling, communication and negotiation skills and to help them develop a broader understanding of the backgrounds and experiences of the women, their cultural differences, and of racism and sexism. Programmes were to be holistic, ie. they were to work together to deal with the 'interrelated nature of a woman's experience' (Creating Choices p. 105) and reflect the wishes and needs of individual women. They were to be provided primarily by community groups and agencies, or local authorities outside the correctional system in the case of educational or health services, for example. It was envisaged that each facility would provide core programming which would include individual and group counselling eg. for family violence, incest survivors, living skills, stress reduction and relaxation. Health care, mental health services, addiction programmes, education, vocational training, recreational and spiritual and cultural programmes were all to be provided.

The circular Healing Lodge was to be developed, staffed and run by Aboriginal peoples, and linked to a nearby native community and an Elder Council. It would provide for Aboriginal ceremonies, teachings and workshops, as well as a similar range of programmes based on the needs and

experiences of Aboriginal women. The second part of the task force plan was the development of a range of community-based resources for women which would provide them with continuity of programmes and support on their return to the community. These were to include halfway houses, satellite and supported accommodation, residential addiction centres for women and community release centres.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations were accepted by the government and \$50 million was allocated for their implementation. But while accepting the main recommendations of Creating Choices the government rejected those on the process of implementation. It effectively, in the eyes of the voluntary sector, excluded those outside government from this process (Shaw, 1993). Thus it reclaimed its ability to define and shape the construction of the new institutions and their regimes. The voluntary sector and notably CAEFS, who had a role on an external Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, felt they were not consulted or informed about crucial decisions until they were a fait accompli. This included the selection of sites for the new institutions, and the appointment of wardens, and led to the withdrawal of support for the federal initiative by CAEFS.

Furthermore, the government failed to provide funds for the development of community services which Creating Choices had seen as a crucial aspect of the new regional facilities. Subsequent changes included decisions to change the plans for the facilities themselves, with the development of secure facilities, the erection of fences, and in at least one centre, the elimination of certain key components, such as a day-care centre, or a gymnasium. These decisions were made by the government on a variety of grounds (Hannah-Moffat, 1995) including cost, public pressure from local citizens living near the proposed sites, considerations of employment and job creation, and perhaps, in the aftermath of the withdrawal of CAEFS, location away from existing organizations who might prove too critical.

Creating Choices in turn inspired the provincial government of Nova Scotia to set up its own task force on women's imprisonment, with voluntary sector and government members. Their report Blueprint for Change (1991) adopted the same five feminist principles and argued for the virtual ending of imprisonment at the provincial level in Nova Scotia (ie. all those women serving sentences less than two years). The number of women receiving provincial sentences in Nova Scotia was small, reflecting the size of the province as a whole, around 100-130 a year, with an average prison population in the Halifax Correctional Centre of 24 women. These women were to be housed instead

in four small community residences for 5-12 women and located around the province. These residences, like the proposed federal facilities, would provide a supportive environment focusing of the women's needs and based on feminist principles. The recommendations of this report were also accepted by the provincial government. In the case of this report plans were later changed to new community residences to be built and run by private companies. Privatization, with all its accompanying commitment to profit margins, and no guarantees of community commitment or the maintenance of feminist principles, is clearly a long way from the blueprint envisaged by the members of that task force.

Ontario, one of the largest provinces in Canada, admitting some 3,500 women to prison a year, and with an average female prison population of 365 (Ministry of Correctional Services, Ontario 1992) subsequently established a Women's Issues Task Force in 1993, again involving both government and the voluntary sector. Their remit was to develop 'a long-term policy to address the special needs and experiences of women in the provincial correctional system and action plans to address the policy direction.' The initiative never appeared to receive the same impetus and encouragement from the provincial government as those in Ottawa and Nova Scotia, and a rather restrained report Women's Voices, Women's Choices eventually appeared in 1995. It is also clear from the recent Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System (1995) that a tough policy of drug offending has resulted in large increases in imprisonment for drug offences, primarily affecting the black population. Proportionately, the numbers of black women receiving provincial sentences have increased the most since the late 1980's, exceeding the rate of increases for black males.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Apart from government reports which show some impact of feminist ideas, there have been a number of government-funded intervention programmes in Canada which have been influenced by feminism (Kendall, 1993a; Scarth and McLean, 1994; Atkinson and McLean, 1994; Pollack, 1994). These include a range of feminist therapeutic programmes at the women's federal penitentiary Kingston (P4W), at one or two provincial prisons, and community-based projects.

Therapeutic programmes at P4W have been developed over the past five or more years, but particularly since the publication of Creating Choices which identified the need for such services, and were the subject of an evaluation by Kendall (1993a). They have included individual counselling with feminist psychologists, therapeutic groups, peer-based support groups and staff training groups

dealing with sexual abuse and trauma, substance abuse, self-injury and suicide, as well as cultural support groups (eg, black, aboriginal, Francophone). Some are run by community groups such as the Elizabeth Fry Society, others by psychologists, counsellors and Aboriginal Elders on contract to the Correctional Service, or on full time appointment.

The basis of these programmes - which will be explored more fully subsequently - is their focus on enabling women to understand their situation within a broader social context, and encouraging them to take control over their lives. The feminist therapy, for example, which had been provided on an individual basis by psychologists at P4W to deal with issues of trauma and abuse is, as Kendall puts it (1993b) 'essentially a philosophy of treatment, rather than a technique of treatment' (p.5). It sees people within their social, economic and political environment, and attempts to enable women to understand their situation, to give them the tools to take control over their own lives. This is in contrast to more traditional forms of therapy which tend to emphasise the professional status of the therapist, and the distance between the therapist and the client, and where power over all treatment decisions lies with the therapist.

Another programme, Peer Support was designed to train women to help others in distress, and comprised a six-week training session for potential peer counsellors, as well as training sessions for staff. The training covered issues of sexual abuse, domestic violence, anger, sexism, racism, homophobia, self-injury and suicide. Following training peer counsellors provided individual support to women in the population who were anxious, suicidal or likely to injure themselves (Heney, 1990; Pollack, 1994). Other examples of programmes based on feminist principles have included the development of a programme run by prison officers for women survivors of family violence at a women's provincial prison, (Portage Correctional Institution, in Manitoba, Mooney, 1993; Comack, 1996). This consists of a two-part programme combining educational and information sessions to raise awareness of abuse issues and the resources available inside and outside the prison, and a support group meeting twice weekly for a month. There is a stress on developing a feeling of safety and confidentiality, the use of peer support, and the development of alternative coping mechanisms. Two programmes developed at another women's provincial prison in Saskatchewan, Pine Grove Correctional Centre, include what amounts to a 'women's studies for jails' programme which focuses on well-ness and life-skills, including addiction, socialization, parenting and health, and an intensive six-week Healing Circle for Aboriginal women. Almost all women at this prison are Aboriginal, and their experience of physical and sexual abuse is even greater than among other groups.



Finally, the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project, the subject of this thesis, was a pioneer project in Nova Scotia offering counselling and therapy based on pastoral counselling and feminist principles to women offenders in prison and the community. Women were referred from the courts, by probation or parole officers, from emergency shelters and other community sources. It was intended for women with histories of abuse. Like the programmes at P4W, it used a framework of feminist principles which stressed giving women choices and enabling them to take decisions and control, reducing the power differences between the therapist and the client, the sharing of experience, allowing women to identify their own agenda of issues they wish to work on, to work at their own pace, and a commitment to absolute confidentiality and, more broadly, to social change.

### THE IMPACT OF CHANGE: WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

It will be clear from this outline that recent and current policies relating to women offenders in Canada at the federal level have adopted, at least in part, the feminist model proposed by the Task Force report Creating Choices. It also follows a 'special needs' model. This focuses on an increasing specialization of programmes and policies for women which are seen as distinct from those available for men. It rests on the assumption that women become involved in offending for reasons which are somewhat different from men, that they respond emotionally and physically to sentencing and incarceration differently from men, that their needs in terms of treatment or services are not the same, and it highlights their experience as victims (Kendall, 1994b; Hannah-Moffat, 1991, 1995, 1997).

However, it is evident that the climate has changed over the past three years, something which Dawn Currie (1992) also points to. A number of 'sentinel' events (Greenland, 1987) have occurred, as well as a gradual shift in public attitudes and the government agenda since 1994. An event at the women's federal penitentiary involving a fight between inmates and staff, and the high profile and shocking exposure of a kidnapping, sexual torture and murder case in 1995 (the Bernardo-Homulka trial) both focussed attention on the possibility that women can be violent. This was something which the Task Force had itself studiously avoided (Shaw, 1992). Both events have added to demands by local public pressure groups objecting to the siting of the new women's facilities. The subsequent isolation of the inmates involved in the fight, their strip searching by a male emergency response team, the cover-up and denial of any inappropriate responses by Correctional Service Canada resulted in a public inquiry which castigated the correctional authorities for flagrant disregard of the rights of imprisoned inmates to fair treatment (Faith, 1995; Arbour, 1996; Shaw, 1996). Nevertheless, the original events resulted in a reassessment by the Correctional Service of security provision in the

new institutions and facilities for handling 'disruptive' inmates. The capacity of 'enhanced security' accommodation was increased for all the new prisons. Existing isolation cells at P4W were augmented by the construction of 10 additional segregation cells at a cost of \$759,000 (Faith, 1995).

The first of the new women-centred prisons began operation in 1995. And following the opening of two of the new prisons, a suicide, a murder and a series of escapes, slashings and disturbances, an additional \$4 million was allocated for increased security measures including external fencing, and a decision made that women classified as maximum security level would no longer be housed in those institutions (Shaw, 1996). They were to be accommodated in men's maximum security penitentiaries. (At the provincial level Ontario announced the closure of the only women's training prison for provincially sentenced women in the province, and the housing of women offenders with men including two new 'super jails' with 'Spartan' facilities (Ontario, 1996)).

Kelly Hannah-Moffat has examined the Task Force report in the light of the history of changing policies towards women's prisons in Canada. She suggests that 'reform talk' has usually been justified on the basis of women's 'sameness' or 'difference' from the male population (1991 p.4-5). Her more recent work (1995, 1997) has begun to explore the theoretical and substantive implications for the prison of uncritically adopting the kinds of feminist ideas promoted in the Task Force. The notion of a woman-centred prison, in her view, differs little from some earlier conceptualizations of women's imprisonment, and obscures the punitive and controlling function of the prison. The central concept of empowerment in the Task Force, and the emphasis on the women as victims needing therapy and counselling, illustrate the dangers implicit in the feminist project. Others have reached similar conclusions. Kathy Kendall (1994 a & b) argues that the faults lie in the liberal reformist framework of attempts to 'feminize' the prison which Creating Choices represents, with the uncritical assumption that reform is progressive. Karlene Faith (1995) sees feminism's attempt to develop a healing environment and to challenge the ideology of the prison as fundamentally impossible, although the apparent success of the Healing Lodge does in her view represent an 'internal challenge to extant penal ideologies' (p.79).

Apart from the partial erosion of the women-centred model adopted in 1990, there appear to be other indications of an increasing attempt to realign policies and programmes for women within the 'generic' male model. Assumptions about the disruptive influence of the feminist therapy programmes established at P4W led to a call from the correctional service for their evaluation (Kendall, 1994 a & b). Moreover, systematic evaluation of programmes at the new regional facilities has been advocated for the express purpose of rejecting those which cannot be shown to reduce

recidivism (Bonta, Pang & Wallace-Capretta, 1995). While such evaluation may appear a sensible managerial strategy, it is evident that it rests on very different assumptions from those underlying both feminist programmes and feminist research and methodology.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has considered the context within which the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy project was developed, in terms of the particular development and impact of feminist ideas in Canada. While the major focus has been in terms of the needs of women as victims of abuse, and on socio-legal critique of existing policies for women, feminist discourse also appears to have penetrated correctional policy and practice in a more extensive way than in other countries. This includes the growth and impact of feminism on issues relating to women and the justice system, and the adoption by the federal government in 1990 of a prison and programme model for women prisoners which is based on feminist principles. A number of feminist intervention programmes including peer-group training and individual therapy have also been developed. Underlying both the prison model and feminist programmes has been a construction of women offenders as victims of violence and abuse.

Recent events, however, have begun to demonstrate what could be interpreted as 'backlash', but which can also be seen as a realignment of policies by the government under pressure from competing internal and external interests. A small number of events involving violence by women have resulted in major modification of the women-centred policies endorsed in 1990.

The following chapter focuses on two issues. It considers the development of feminist research and methodology and their application to evaluation in criminal justice. Secondly, it examines current trends in programme development and evaluation within mainstream criminology and particularly the programme evaluative model currently dominating federal corrections in Canada. The comparison highlights some of the major discrepancies between feminist and mainstream research and methodology.

## CHAPTER 2

### FEMINISM, METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION

The assumptions underlying the research process are intricately bound up with the practices of 'doing research'. It is, therefore, important to outline some of the major issues which have emerged in the debates over feminist methodology, and to consider how they differ from the work of main stream criminology. This chapter explores two major areas of work. First, it discusses the development of feminist methodological approaches to research and evaluation, including the 'good quality knowledge' model and the activist grass-roots model, and their implications for programmes involving women offenders. Second, it considers the current status of research and evaluation in main stream criminology, particularly as it is practised in corrections in Canada where a cognitive-psychological model is now dominant, and in community programmes and crime prevention. This analysis exposes the very different models which underlie feminist and main stream research and evaluation, the limited nature of much evaluation, and its political role as a tool in programme and policy development. It also illustrates the context within which Canadian feminist projects must work.

#### FROM FEMINIST METHODOLOGY TO EPISTEMOLOGY

Discussion about feminist research has expanded with great rapidity over the past twenty five years, moving from a search for a specific feminist methodology, based on a dichotomized and fairly rigid approach, to the rejection of the notion of a distinctive method. Instead, far more complex multifaceted approaches which stress inclusiveness and eclecticism have been promoted, and in some cases outright rejection of feminist research (Stanley and Wise, 1983; Currie and Kazi, 1987; Smart, 1989; Reinharz, 1992). In the intervening period there has been a profusion of argument and debate (see, for example, that between Hammersley (1992) Ramazanoglu (1992) and Gelsthorpe (1992)). Attempting to summarize these debates at the beginning of the 1990's Shulamit Reinharz (1992 p.4) suggests that for her feminist researchers deal with dilemmas which have no absolute solutions: 'My alternative to saying what feminist research is, is to illustrate what feminist research includes...'. Thus in her comprehensive review of feminist work, Reinharz suggests (p. 241) that feminist methodology is the sum of feminist research methods and identifies ten themes which characterize it:

- Feminism is a perspective, not a research method
- Feminists use a multiplicity of research methods
- Feminist research involves an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship
- Feminist research is guided by theory
- Feminist research may be transdisciplinary
- Feminist research aims to create social change
- Feminist research strives to represent human diversity
- Feminist research frequently includes the researcher as a person
- Feminist research frequently attempts to develop special relations with the people studied (in interactive research)
- Feminist research frequently defines a special relation with the reader

Such a list, while useful, gives little notion of the debates which have emerged over the period, nor of the implications they have had for a discipline such as criminology, and some of these issues need exploring.

As Maureen Cain (1990 ) and others have pointed out, feminist research has often been characterized by what it is not, by setting up 'something of a straw man, literally, of the traditional researcher' (p. 125). Based on the work of Nancy Hartsock (1983) Cain paraphrases the way in which feminist research has tended to characterize the dominant male tradition of social science research:

The straw man is concerned with establishing absolute truth claims; he achieves this by the monotonic application of a single allowed mode of reasoning; he aims to abstract knowledge formulations which objectify those investigated and which are indifferent to their own understandings of their experiences. He is concerned with separating rather than unifying and prefers dualistic, zero-sum forms for the separations he achieves; he is unemotional and detached, which leaves him in full control of those investigated; this hierarchic relationship is also maintained within the research teams he establishes. We achieve unity as feminists around the fact that we don't like him. (Cain, 1990, p. 125)

With the publication of Breaking Out in 1983 Liz Stanley and Sue Wise attempted to break away from what they saw as a narrow or proscribed notion of what constituted 'proper' feminist research. This they characterized as stressing that true feminist research constituted only that which was conducted on women, by women and for women; that male (quantitative) research was clearly distinguishable from female (qualitative) research; and that only feminist research, and not male research, was overtly political and concerned with changing women's lives.

In this and their subsequent work they rejected the notion that a 'neutral' or 'true' science could be achieved by just 'adding women'. They argued against the use of monolithic concepts such as 'women' and 'feminism'. They rejected reliance on abstract universal explanations or 'grand theory'

for understanding women's situation, since these could not in their view do justice to the variety of individual experiences. They argued against a rigid categorization of appropriate methods and a quantitative/qualitative dichotomy for characterising male and feminist research, or directives that feminists should only use the latter. They argued that the researcher, as well as the researched, was part of the process of research (and knowledge creation). And they stressed that feminist research should be for the subjects rather than just 'about' them (Stanley & Wise, 1983 p. 21). Overall, they were concerned with the nature of 'knowledge' in the business of research, and in their subsequent work (eg. Stanley and Wise, 1990) make clear the importance of distinguishing between method (the types of tools used in research) methodology (a perspective grounded in a theoretical framework) and epistemology (a theory of knowledge and its production).

This distinction between method, methodology and epistemology forms the central aspect of Sandra Harding's work on the nature of feminist research (1986, 1987):

Over the past two decades feminist inquirers have raised fundamental challenges to the ways social science has analysed women, men and social life. From the beginning, issues about method, methodology, and epistemology have been intertwined with discussions of how best to correct the partial and distorted accounts in the traditional analyses. (Harding, 1987 p.1)

Harding sees epistemology as the foundation for both method and methodology. She rejects the notion of a distinctive feminist method of research, seeing research method as a technique for gathering evidence by observation, listening or examining traces or records - something all traditional researchers do too. What is distinctive for her is the different way in which those methods are used by feminists (eg. listening more carefully, being more critically aware of traditional conceptualizations). There are other more defining characteristics of good feminist research for Harding which she does not see as methods but rather as 'methodological features'. These include the use of women's experiences to both illuminate the issues being studied but also to question accepted ways of gathering information; the designing of research for the women themselves, rather than others such as welfare departments or judicial systems; and 'locating the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter' (1987, p.8). This latter aspect she sees as 'a response to the recognition that the cultural beliefs and behaviours of feminist researchers shape the results of their analyses no less than do those of sexist and androcentric researchers'(1987, p.9).

The aim of a feminist methodology in her view, therefore, should be to produce 'less partial or distorted descriptions, explanations, and understandings' than those derived from traditional mainstream methods (Harding, 1987 p.12). Thus Harding locates a major source of the problems of

doing feminist research in the clash between the overtly political stance of feminism, and the apparently objective, dispassionate neutrality of traditional social science, where 'methods' are presumed to protect results and interpretations from personal biases.

## FEMINIST METHODOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY

The implications of feminist methodology for criminology have been explored rather later than in other disciplines. Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney-Lind (1988) in their attempt to encourage mainstream criminologists to understand and take account of feminism felt the need to dispel three major myths about feminism. Two of these concerned issues of methodology so central to mainstream criminology: the notion of objectivity and feminism's presumed lack of it; and the myth that feminism maintained a narrow focus by being concerned only with women. (The third myth concerned feminism's characterization as a single 'monolithic' approach, rather than one ranging from liberal to radical approaches as was discussed in the introductory chapter). Thus they were at pains to demonstrate that an ideology of objectivity serves to mask the gendered viewpoints of men and assumptions underlying the construction of knowledge, since men's experiences are taken as the norm. They also argued that feminist accounts do not ignore men or masculinity but are in fact concerned with both genders and the problematic implications of gender construction for both men and women. And they asserted that feminist research may be undertaken by men too (cf. the more recent discussion on masculinities and crime in Jefferson, 1996).

Sally Simpson (1989) in her assessment of feminism's impact on the discipline, similarly explored issues of methodology stressing the diversity of approaches, as well as potential research areas where a feminist approach would be illuminating.<sup>1</sup> She outlines the range of methods used by feminists, depending on their place in the political spectrum, from liberal feminist research which seeks to reduce inequalities or describe women's experiences ('adding women') but in no way challenges traditional scientific methods, to radical feminist methodologies. The further along the spectrum one moves, analysis of traditional methodology becomes increasingly, and fundamentally, more critical of 'the way knowledge is produced'. Thus beyond the liberal position, feminist methods are seen as 'necessarily subjectivist, transdisciplinary, nonhierarchical, and empowering' (Simpson, 1989 p.609). All these approaches she suggests have been incorporated into criminology with varying degrees of

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Her suggestions include the impact of gender differences on issues of race and crime, elite crime and deterrence.

effect. Liberal feminists, however, have carried more 'weight' within the scientific community and their work received more credence, in part because:

they speak in the same voice as a majority of the social scientists, that is, they are rational, objective, and (typically) quantitative. (Simpson, 1989, p.621)

The work of Russell and Emerson Dobash on violence against women (eg. 1983; 1992) illustrates in a very clear and specific way many of the limitations of traditional methodological approaches. Rather than set up 'straw men' they provide detailed accounts of the inability of such approaches to capture and understand the phenomenon of violence against women. Thus the 'objective' social science approach to family violence they show to be too narrow and abstract, placing too much stress on the separation of theory from method, and, therefore, unable to capture the complexity and dynamics of family violence. For them, it is essential to employ a 'context based' approach which explores the historical, institutional, cultural, situational and motivational contexts in which violence occurs (1992, p.267). Such an approach, they suggest, should begin with unstructured exploration of individuals' experiences, so that explanatory theories and concepts can be grounded 'in specific, delimited and empirical contexts' (1983, p.262).

Some writers, nevertheless, have debunked the notion of a distinctive methodology. Pat Carlen (1990) for example, sees nothing unique in one of the central features of feminist methodology, the use of women's voices. She views the notion of a distinct feminist method as 'absurd' (p.112) arguing instead that allowing 'women to speak for themselves' comes from the tradition of symbolic interactionism with its stress on the importance of people's perceptions.

One of the more extensive explorations of feminist research and criminology appears in the volume edited by Loraine Gelsthorpe and Allison Morris in 1990. Rather than trying to convince the world of criminology to join, this volume represents a much more self-reflective pause in which to consider where feminism in criminology has come from and where it might go. The search for a distinctive methodology seems over, and there is an increasing concern with the role and presence of the researcher and thus with self-awareness. In their consideration of feminist methodology, Gelsthorpe and Morris stress that for them 'there is no one definition of 'feminist' research, merely a host of methodological preferences.' (p.88) They underline, in particular, that feminists ask different questions from conventional researchers, which also require a multiplicity of methods, that much feminist research is small-scale action-research linked very directly to concrete action, and they stress the importance of self-awareness and self-criticism by the researchers. For them the 'core principles of relating research to practice' include:



engaging with the 'researched', recognizing their subjectivity in a non-hierarchical way, and using sensitive research methods which maximize opportunities to reflect more accurately the experiences of 'the researched'.....viewing one's own involvement as both problematic and valid and...recording the subjective experiences of doing research, for these experiences underpin the creation of knowledge. (1990, p.88)

In her own chapter Gelsthorpe (1990, p.80ff) summarizes the debate about feminist research by the end of the eighties as confronting four major themes:

- i) the choice of topic - usually one which might make a difference and improve the lives of women but not necessarily excluding men;
- ii) the process - a preference for, but not exclusive use of qualitative approaches, together with an acknowledgment of the subjectivity of the researcher;
- iii) the use of an interactive methodology which equalizes (or tries to) the differences in power and control between the subjects and the researcher;
- iv) and a concern with recording the subjective experience of doing research, with 'reflexivity'.

One of the more important issues Gelsthorpe raises in her list is that of the power relationship between the researcher and the researched. Much of the stress in earlier feminist methodology had been on the need for the researcher to attempt to work with subjects on an equal footing, without the assumptions of expertise and privilege associated with scientific research elsewhere. In part this approach stems from the notion of women's greater ability to empathise and work in a non-hierarchical way (Hartsock, 1983) but it can also be seen as arising from the fact that much feminist research is centred on women living in the community, rather than subject to the justice system, and with the view of all women as generally oppressed. Thus sociologist Marjorie Devault (1990) has been able to demonstrate convincingly how she has found it possible to take the standpoint of her subjects, on an equal footing, in her interviews for a study of household routines.

Yet such a position is not always possible, particularly within the field of criminology. As Smart (1984) and Currie & Kazi (1987) and Heidensohn (1994) discuss elsewhere, feminists tend to assume that the power imbalance is always in favour of the researcher. Smart's own experience of interviewing magistrates provided an instance of the opposite, and illustrated in her view the failure

to take account of social class in power relationships. And she makes it clear that, in the field of criminal justice, a researcher who is not subject to that system can never be on an equal footing with women offenders. The latter will always be in a subordinate position. Given that situation, Gelsthorpe stresses in her discussion the need to recognize and question that imbalance as much as possible.

Gelsthorpe also explores (as do Liz Kelly and Annie Hudson in the same volume) the ways in which feminism has 'transformed' research she has undertaken on the justice system. In this process she reflects on some of her own experiences as a researcher illustrating how feminist principles can be borne out in practice. Finally, she questions whether feminist research is distinct from other research. She concludes that if it is accepted, as she and others do, that men can also carry out or be the subjects of feminist research, then what is entailed is 'good' research. For her, it is more important for feminists to challenge the supremacy of conventional methods of doing research than to try to lay sole claim to good research (1990, p.105). This view is similar to that taken by Devault (1990) and based on the work of Dorothy Smith (1974) in seeing feminist methods as 'distinctive approaches to subverting the established procedures of disciplinary practice tied to the agendas of the powerful' (Devault, 1990 p.96).

In the same volume Carol Smart (1990), as indicated in the Introduction, takes issue with the notion that research can uncover some truth about which we can take action:

The problem of positivism....lies in the basic presumption that we can establish a verifiable knowledge or truth about events: in particular, that we can establish a causal explanation which will in turn provide us with objective methods for intervening in the events defined as problematic. (Smart, 1990 p.72)

Her espousal of a postmodernist approach, as well as her dissatisfaction with the bounded nature of criminology as a discipline, thus leads her to reject a search for methods by which to uncover problems which are open to 'solutions'. And elsewhere, she has underlined the dangers that such attempts entail:

the main dilemma for any feminist engagement with law is the certain knowledge that, once enacted, legislation is in the hands of individuals and agencies far removed from the values and politics of the women's movement. (Smart, 1989, p.164)

A number of people including Pat Carlen, Maureen Cain and Dawn Currie have reacted against such a position and explored the links between realist and feminist approaches as a basis for undertaking

research and action (something which for rather different reasons alarms another observer who sees British feminist criminology as having become overtly and implicitly realist (Green, 1993)). Maureen Cain (1990) for example, rejects 'impossibilism' (p.134) in favour of a more pragmatic and realist philosophy which accepts that while knowledge may be relative, it is both possible and important to try to understand the standpoints of other individuals or groups, and to develop knowledge that can be used by those individuals. She also sets out guidelines on how to do - or recognize - good research. (In part, her paper is an attempt to answer the criticisms of standpoint feminism outlined by Sandra Harding and Carol Smart, in particular, that it is essentialist, that standpoints cannot be identified because of cultural differences between women, and that knowledge derived from different standpoints is specific only to those sites (1990, p.133)).

Cain makes the important point that criminology is unique in sociology in that it 'has insisted that there are at least two sides to every knowledge: that of the authorities, that of the defendant, that of the victim, that of the police(man)...' (p.140). Such uncertainties provide, in her view, rich possibilities for the application of a standpoint feminism which works with and accepts multiple knowledges. Moreover, for criminology she recommends three particular advantages to be derived from standpoint feminism: the making of what she terms 'alliances' with groups of individuals with whom a standpoint is shared, while being aware of the implications and risks of doing so; being accountable in terms of the quality of the work done to those whose standpoint is shared; and being more 'scholarly' than is generally the case in social research.

Her guidelines for good (scholarly) research include the investigation of unthought-out or 'intransitive' relationships, ie. the things we have not thought about or anticipated, through the use of open techniques and technical inventions, theory, open-mindedness, and what she terms technical outreach. She suggests that since relationships in any research situation change constantly, such research needs to be carried out over a long time period, or include historical or biographical analysis, for example. Thus Cain argues that the approach to feminist criminology should be in terms of seeking 'good quality knowledge' through the use of such guidelines, together with a publicness or openness in the way knowledge is developed. This should include a declaration of the researcher's own standpoint and ethics, giving a clear account of the processes of reaching conclusions or developing ideas, and an awareness of the political 'value-full' nature of the knowledge created for a particular group or collectivity so that they are able to use it.

Good quality knowledge is integrally political. This is the way in which we reclaim the inevitably value-full (site-specific) character of all knowledge. We embrace the fact that we are creating knowledge for the collectivity, from their

standpoint. If this is so then the knowledge can be evaluated in terms of how well it works for those from whose standpoint it was produced. To 'work' is to explain relationships in a way that enables the occupants of the standpoint to assess their situation and to act upon those assessments in ways they find useful. (Cain, 1990, p.139)

In Canada, Dawn Currie (1992) has also attempted to move beyond the post-modernist view of critics such as Carol Smart (1990) that a search for explanations or any attempt to influence policy is pointless/dangerous. Like Pat Carlen, she is concerned to explore the relationship between feminism and a left-realist framework. For Currie it is important that feminist academics continue to recognize the actuality of people's experiences and do not give up on trying to promote social change, to 'recognize that there may not be 'truths' but that there are real, experienced effects of knowledge'(p.238). This means that academics should be prepared to 'roll up our sleeves and engage in the dirty work of research' (Currie, 1992 p.235) something she also explores elsewhere with Hamida Kazi (Currie & Kazi, 1987). She suggests that feminists, while acknowledging that academic practices exclude women and their experiences, should continue to recognize the theoretical validity of constructs such as class, race and gender, undertake action-oriented empirical research, and retain theory grounded in actual contexts and experiences. Beyond this, however, she argues for the importance of including introspection about researchers themselves in the production of knowledge about crime. Thus the left realist 'square' of offender, victim, police and community should in her view become a pentagonal figure which includes the researcher. This would acknowledge the role which 'criminology plays in the construction of knowledge about crime, criminalization or victimization.' (Currie, 1992 p.238). Elsewhere with Marlee Kline (Currie and Kline, 1991) it is suggested that postmodernism, far from being indicative of a crisis, represents a challenge to feminist research. For them the 'real crisis' is the need to examine far more carefully the ways in which that work is 'part of the institutionalization of women's demands for justice' (p.22). That task they suggest requires self-reflection.

Thus a number of reflective pieces on feminist methodology and research have begun to emerge since the early 1990's which place a greater stress on pluralism of approach. Carol Smart writing in 1992 as a way forward reiterates her view that we should avoid making sweeping 'grand theory' statements, and asserts the importance of going back to 'small-scale, historically specific analyses which are much more sensitive to differences between women...' (p.2). She also stresses that in reaction to the overarching tendency to see women as the victims of patriarchy, there is a need to recapture 'aspects of women's resistance to and participation in events which regulate women' (p.3 and see below the discussion of this point in Heidensohn, 1994).

Reflecting in 1993 on her own frustrations with the discipline of criminology and her experiences in researching violence, Betsy Stanko declares she stays in the field because 'it is the research on women's lives which keeps me here.' (Stanko, 1993 p.1). Like Gelsthorpe and Morris (1990), she rejects the notion of a single 'feminist research perspective, preferring to stress her personal preferences for relying primarily on intensive interviews and ethnography to expose women's experiences, and the commonality of women's oppression:

I believe women's experiences of the world, their knowledge base and their interpretations are fused within a gendered context. And this context is one of subordination, by and large, to men and men's needs. (Stanko, 1993 p.4)

She also marks out the huge gulf which still exists between mainstream criminology and her own (and others') extensive work on women's and men's experience of violence.

I do not know how many women have walked away from my discipline (or any discipline) in disgust and with frustration, due to the inability to fit women within a frame (any frame) recognized and recognizable as criminology (or any other discipline). Writing this....helps me face my own angst and doubts about the impact of feminist research on women and on the discipline, criminology. But I cannot deny what I know about women, men, danger, violence and crime, and this knowledge is too often far removed from what is considered creditable criminology. (Stanko, 1993, p.11)

More recently, Frances Heidensohn (1994) in a reflective but more optimistic paper on her own experience of research with women since the late 1960's has suggested that feminist research, in becoming a conscious activity (from 'being' to 'knowing' as she puts it) has altered not only researchers' 'concepts and practices' about their work, but also those of the subjects about their own situation. Those women 'know they are interesting and they are interested in themselves' (p.33). She stresses (with Carol Smart, 1992) that women's standpoints are more complex, and less easy to understand or share, than writers such as Maureen Cain have suggested. Women may resist and do resist categorization, or they may participate in the controls regulating their behaviour, they may hold multiple and conflicting views. She cites research by herself and others (Heidensohn, 1992b; Smart, 1992; Shaw, 1992; Eaton, 1993) which illustrates resistance and action by women defined as deviant.

The need to move to specific and concrete work but to continue to be open and flexible, to focus on multiple identities and connectedness rather than 'hardened group identity' are some of the issues stressed by Dorie Klein (1995) in her own thoughtful chapter in Rafter and Heidensohn (1995). Her discussion of the future focus of feminist methodology reiterates many of the familiar themes in terms of how rather than what this should entail. These include 'involving our constituent subjects'

in the design of research; using non-technical language to describe the findings; distributing the findings widely to respondents, and activists and in lay publications; developing methods of analysis which do not reduce people to unidimensional identities (offender, drug user) but focus on experiences, and conflicting and multiple experiences.

It is this aspect of the research process which Klein suggests is the most difficult, having attempted to construct and develop categories and approaches for funded applied research (a perinatal substance use project in the USA). Thus her list of 'how to' includes trying to represent marginalised people's voices adequately, avoiding pathologizing language, attempting to 'de-centre' illegal activity, and emphasising what the women themselves see as their day-to-day concerns. She also emphasises how her research team have tried to examine the commonalities and differences between the women, to expand an understanding of the categories and procedures used by official agencies, and maintain an awareness of the political context of the project and of the possibilities that benefits and services can also increase controls. Beyond this she has also tried to maintain an awareness of her own training and biases.

What is of particular interest in Klein's discussion, is that it is concretely based on her own experience with an applied and funded research project, with all the additional constraints that that implies. It is here (eg. with the process of competing for contracts and funds, and the expectations of funders) that the pressures to conform to the liberal feminist mode are greatest. As Sally Simpson (1989) suggests, feminist methods which do not challenge mainstream criminology are the most likely to be acceptable.

## FEMINIST METHODOLOGY VIEWED FROM CORRECTIONS

How has feminist research been viewed from within the criminal justice system? In a paper commissioned by the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada ten years ago, Claudia Currie (1986) outlined an agenda for developing feminist research on women prisoners. That paper neatly summarized the primary objections to the male model of correctional research, including its primacy of objective neutrality over personal and political commitments, its use of instruments designed on and for male populations, its sexist language, its unquestioning attribution of roles and characteristics to males and females and its assumption that women's experience is the same as men's. Nevertheless, Currie's approach in the mid 1980's was very far from the nihilism (see Young, 1991) of the post-modernist attack on the project of criminology, since it was grounded in concerns with inequality of treatment and inadequate research representation, and with a desire to remain empirically and

scientifically sound. This represented a filling in of the gaps, but using an approach grounded in the voices and experiences of women. Thus for Currie the major limitations of research for female offenders included the:

lack of well-developed theory; a need to re-conceptualize research priorities in terms of importance or relevance to women's lives; the absence of a range of tests and measures created specifically for women; the pervasiveness of sex-role stereotyping; and the on-going comparison of women offenders to a male standard. (Currie, 1986, p.16).

Currie's analysis was in turn informed by the then recent work of Ross and Fabiano (1985 p. 4) which advised that policy formation and programme development for women 'should be based not on what is "in vogue" or what is available for men' but 'on an objective and realistic assessment of the characteristics, needs and circumstances of the offender'. Ross and Fabiano also placed great stress on the need for women's programmes to be subject to 'well designed evaluations' to assess their impact. Currie, likewise, stressed the importance of using sample sizes large enough for drawing conclusions confidently, and the use of representative and matched treatment and comparison groups. In the final analysis, Currie, with Ross and Fabiano, remained wedded to the modernist pursuit of causal explanations of female crime and the search for effective interventions. As Currie concluded:

The ultimate outcome will be a sound basis for further research, policy, and planning which will better equip the corrections system to fulfill its mandate vis à vis women. (Currie, 1986 p.29)<sup>2</sup>

More recent examples do not suggest that much has changed. As many writers have pointed out research on or by women does not make it feminist (Stanley & Wise, 1983; Carlen, 1990; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990). A recent survey of community programmes for female offenders in the USA (Austin, Bloom and Donahue, 1992) provides an illustration of research which, though sensitive to women's situation, is not feminist except in the loosest liberal sense. It displays many of the characteristics of mainstream concerns with programme development and evaluation. While the authors were clearly concerned to stress the inadequacy of provision for women, the 'special needs' of female offenders and the importance of 'gender-specific' programmes, there is also a central emphasis on effectiveness and formal evaluation and on 'rigour' in research techniques. They note

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It was Currie's report which was rejected by the federal government which had commissioned it on the grounds of feminist bias and as having little relevance to understanding the needs of women offenders (Berzins & Hayes, 1987).

with dismay that less than half of the programmes surveyed had attempted any type of evaluation, and those that did were limited to routine statistical monitoring for contract or grant funding purposes. None had undergone 'rigorous evaluation on the cost-effectiveness of their services' (Austin et al., 1992 p.12). They conclude not only that information on the long-term effectiveness of 'gender-specific' programmes for women is nonexistent but that it should be a major feature of future programme development:

Expansion of these programmes....should be directly tied to a series of carefully designed evaluations which would provide guidance to the field on how best to structure these programmes in the future. In particular, the presumed benefits of gender-exclusive strategies as opposed to coed option need to be rigorously tested. (Austin, Bloom & Donahue 1992 p.31).

In Canada, the work of the Vancouver Women's Research Centre provides a very different model, and one which appears to avoid a resort to traditional or liberal feminist research approaches. Like the work of Maria Mies (1983) the Centre espouses an activist grass-roots model and has maintained a stream of publications which focus not only on the implications of engaging with the state (eg. Barnsley, 1985) but also on the use of research for change. These research guides stress a feminist participatory methodology, and are designed to help women's community organizations undertake action research and evaluate their progress for the purposes of funding requirements (eg. Ellis, Reid & Barnsley, 1990; Barnsley & Ellis, 1992). This approach recommends an inclusive and self-reflective model, including both programme staff and clients in the design of the project and its evaluation. Nevertheless, such a model reflects its origins and grounding in the Centre's experience with community-based projects which are not entangled with the justice system - except in terms of the criminalization of (male) victimizers.

## TO ENGAGE OR NOT TO ENGAGE

As the discussion in the Introduction indicated, divisions within feminism are clearly evident in terms of the application of feminist initiatives and methodology to the correctional system. Penny Green has expressed frustration with the, for her, virtual transformation of feminist criminology into a realist enterprise (Green, 1993). She sees feminist criminology's central urge to cling to 'reform' as the stumbling block. Referring to work on fear of crime, rape law reform and violence against women (and its ultimate portrayal of women as victims) she rather bleakly concludes that they illustrate:



the 'new realist' political orientation of feminist criminology in action and while it reminds us what feminist analysis has brought to criminology, in terms of dragging much of women's oppression out of the private sphere into the public, it is also a lesson in its current limitations. Those limitations rest essentially in the reformist nature of feminist criminology, its uncritical analysis of the state, and its bourgeois orientation away from issues of race and class. (Green, 1993 p.113)

Rafter and Heidensohn (1995) clearly do not agree:

feminist work on crime and social control will probably continue unabated, for its primary aim has always been to improve not criminology but people's lives. (Rafter and Heidensohn, 1995 p.6)

So where does all this leave the women entering the justice system, or for whom programmes have been (or may be) developed in prison or in the community? Should they be 'abandoned' to 'macho-left' realists or realists of the Right?<sup>3</sup> Should they be abandoned to whatever correctional administrators variously see as appropriate for women (as is in part the case in Canada) or men and women (as in the United States)? In a comparison of programming in men's and women's prisons in the United States for example Morash, Haarr & Rucker (1994) found that in spite of increasing rates of incarceration of women in the 1980's fewer services were now available to women than men and even fewer which addressed the special needs of women. They also pointed to a continuation of traditional assumptions about the appropriateness of types of programmes for men and women.

Outside the correctional system itself, a central dilemma is that many innovative and community projects for women rely on public and private funding. Such funding can without doubt expect to be increasingly tied to demonstrations of efficiency and effectiveness requiring monitoring and evaluation. What are the implications for women if the programmes they prefer or feel they gain most benefit from, are not found to be related to reconviction, and do not show any accredited 'effects'? If it were accepted that women offenders be abandoned by activists or researchers, what are the implications? Mainstream criminology, at its most archetypal in much correctional research which focuses on the 'management' problems of running the system, or on large-scale programme evaluation, will continue to 'fit women in' to the overriding paradigms of the ungendered male population.

What are the implications of engaging with the justice system to effect change? These clearly mean

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A comment made by Carol Smart and reported in Carlen, 1990, p.112).

that while the individual experiences of different women will be explored, the ways in which that knowledge will be used can scarcely be controlled and may act to further penalize women. Both options are intensely problematic. Should it be accepted that each 'reform' brings its own problems, and that, as Pat Carlen has argued, a campaigning and policy agenda should include fundamental aims, general strategies, short-term achievable goals to reduce the effects of gender and racial discrimination, and long-term and idealistic ones (in her case abolition of imprisonment)?

My personal view is that if no academics were prepared to compromise their claims to theoretical rectitude (or consistency) by committing themselves as academics and as feminists to campaigns to redress the specific wrongs suffered by women lawbreakers in the criminal justice and penal systems, it would be to the further disadvantage of those very women who are already amongst the worst casualties of the gender and poverty traps. (Carlen, 1990, 112).

If it is accepted that women offenders should not be abandoned, it is important to explore how far feminist approaches can be used to enable projects to be developed with greater assurance of meeting their needs; to encourage funding agents to support their growth; to help dispel misinformation and suspicion about the underlying purpose or agenda of feminist intervention models, and their likely outcomes, and to guard against the institutionalization and incorporation of those projects.

This need to 'get on with' the business of action, research and evaluation, requires not an oppositional stance in terms of methodology which focuses only on individual subjective experiences, but a 'good quality knowledge' stance which allows for a range of information and insights to be examined (Cain, 1990; Currie & Kazi, 1987; Currie, 1992). It requires a willingness to engage in the business of exposing the concerns of women offenders, in listening to their views and experiences, knowing full-well that such a project is one which risks exposing them to further controls. It requires attempting not to reduce people to 'unidimensional identities' but exploring 'conflicting and multiple experiences' as Klein suggests (1995). It requires as Heidensohn suggests interrogating one's own work (1995, p.80). Finally, it requires close attention, as Currie and Kline suggest, to the ways in which the research process is integral to the development of knowledge and exposure of vulnerabilities. As the introductory chapter indicated, Hester, Kelly and Radford (1996) argue that there is scope for 'an increasing sophistication in feminist theory and practice, and exciting developments in feminist methodology, which draw on radical traditions within action and participatory research.' (p.13).

Before considering how far this was attempted in the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project, it is necessary to explore what is entailed in the business of evaluation when the jaws of the criminal

justice system have been entered by practitioners, offenders and researchers alike. Where then do they all stand? It is necessary to examine the practice of project evaluation in criminology as it currently stands, and to avoid setting up 'straw men' as Maureen Cain (1990) suggests has often been the case in feminist critique.

## EVALUATION IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

What are some of the major issues concerning programme development and evaluation in mainstream criminology and their implications for women offenders, and how does feminist evaluation differ from that work? These questions will be considered by examining two streams of recent work, the first found primarily in Canada, and the second in England and Wales. They are correctional evaluation (especially in relation to cognitive behavioural programmes) and the evaluation of community programmes and crime prevention projects.

While there have existed for some time differences between styles of evaluation in mainstream criminal justice research, the need to demonstrate an impact or result which can be crime reductive underscores almost all of the work in the field. In the deluge which engulfed the rehabilitation field following Martinson's initial suggestion (1974) that treatment did not work, some commentators detect a weakening of interest or resolve in evaluation and effectiveness issues. Yet the primacy of reconviction as the ultimate measure of reform or effectiveness has never been seriously challenged, although there have been attempts. The tight relationship between programme development and outcome evaluation is still firmly entrenched.

In a recent assessment of evaluation research, for example, Roberts and Hudson (1993, p.3 and introductory chapter) argue that evaluation is 'central to the operations of the criminal justice system, having relevance to practitioners, policy makers, and the public'. They argue that increasing costs of programmes and public anxiety about crime have reinforced the importance of such evaluation. Programme evaluation in their terms involves the systematic collection of information for the purposes of improving policy and programme planning. They note the wide range of types of evaluation in criminal justice identified by Rossi (1982) which goes well beyond the narrow conception of evaluation as outcome assessment. Rossi identified six types of evaluation:

- i) front-end analysis;
- ii) evaluability assessment;
- iii) process or implementation evaluations;
- iv) impact or effectiveness evaluation;

- v) programme monitoring;
- vi) meta-evaluation.

Of these six categories, the first three are concerned with the establishment of a programme and its suitability for an impact evaluation, the final two with ongoing data collection and with the comparative assessment of a number of impact evaluations. It is clear, nevertheless, that the fourth category, the assessment of programme impact or effectiveness in reducing recidivism, remains for most observers paramount.

Roberts and Hudson provide a picture of the characteristics of 'mainstream' evaluative research in criminal justice in Canada,<sup>4</sup> one which underlines the dominance of studies of the effects of programmes on recidivism, and one in which (not surprisingly) feminist accounts do not figure. An analysis of evaluative studies published in journals since the late 1950's in Canada found an increasing proliferation of such work with three-quarters of the articles appearing since the mid 1970's. Some 40% of all evaluations had involved offender rehabilitation programmes, almost all recent evaluations had used quantitative statistics, and over half relied on recidivism as their major outcome measure.

## THE DARKER AGES

A number of changes are evident in the field of evaluation, nevertheless. In a discussion of the effectiveness of intervention, Brian Sheldon (1994) dwells on the history of 'early' evaluations of social work practice in probation and criminal justice. He describes such practice up to the 1960's and 1970's, although often evaluated through careful controlled experiments, as 'loosely organized open-ended, social-history based verbal counselling' (p.222). Thus for Sheldon, while there was a belief in the efficacy of treatment at that stage, the treatment itself was seen as diffuse, a 'black box' which either 'worked' or did not do so.

The 1970's had seen a growth of studies which stressed the importance of listening to clients as a basis for evaluating effectiveness, rather than merely categorizing them (eg. Goldberg, 1970; Mayer

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They also note an important problem for Canadian researchers that there exists no systematic process for collating and circulating the results of much government-funded research in Canada, and that the problem is compounded by the lack of an 'institutional memory' because of the high rate of turn-over of government staff in funding agencies (Roberts & Hudson, 1993 p. 7).

& Timms, 1970; Shaw, 1974). However, such studies did not, in his view, throw much light on why treatment worked, nor provide much insight into the treatment process. He illustrates this point with an extract of client opinion from one of his own studies: "My husband's gambling was driving me round the bend and I thought maybe the welfare lady could help me do something about it. But all the lady wanted to do was talk..." (p. 219). Another study of social work in prison (conducted at the time of the first landing on the moon) provided similar examples including the following comment by a prisoner on his experience of intensive counselling with the prison social worker: '[He's] trying to psychoanalyse me - we frequently sit and stare at one another, then he asks me about the men in space.' (Shaw, 1974 p.70).

Some twenty years later Sheldon suggests, and partly in reaction to the loss of faith in rehabilitation, practice - what actually happens in sessions - remains largely invisible, in spite of the growth of 'client opinion' studies. The fundamental questions about whether social work intervention 'works' are he suggests rarely addressed, at least in Britain where for him concerns about efficiency and management now predominate. Yet since that period he argues, more positive intervention programmes, with a clearer association between problem and approach, and designed to be more intensive and short-term have proved more successful, evaluation become more fruitful, and client responses much more enthusiastic. Such programmes form part of the 'something works' resurgence, focused in particular, as Nellis (1995) has pointed out, on 'reasoning and rehabilitation programmes' (Ross, Fabiano & Elwes, 1988; Gendreau & Ross, 1987; Gendreau, Bonta & Hoge, 1990). Much of the impetus to reassert rehabilitation, and the reasoning and rehabilitation programmes themselves stems from the work of a group of researchers in Canada. Such programmes - especially in the form of cognitive skills training - have formed a major component of recent correctional programmes introduced for men in the Federal penitentiary system, and for men, women, and young offenders in some provincial systems, as will be discussed below.

In a recent compendium of research on the effectiveness of treatment programmes in corrections, Ted Palmer (1994) highlights the gradual, and more guarded, revision of interest in treatment programmes since the late 1970's, and particularly from the mid-1980's the emergence of a number of literature reviews and reviews using meta-analytic techniques - 'a quantitative, seemingly objective, though not entirely bias-proof technique' (p.60) - which support the view that treatment does in certain circumstances 'work'. These claim to show not only that treatment can work to reduce recidivism, but what kinds of treatment are most likely to show results, and with whom. It is this linking of effectiveness with type of treatment and type of offender (though by no means a new interest) which raises many issues for women offenders. Combined with the current emphasis on

management efficiency in many correctional systems it becomes potentially more powerful.

As suggested in the Introduction, broader critiques of recent correctional policies note that much of the current official discourse emphasises the effectiveness of programmes and the efficient use of resources, using managerial and market-driven models (Nellis, 1995; Stenson, 1993; Christie, 1994). Thus the drive to evaluate and prove that an approach 'works' continues, with the emphasis on selecting those facets which are likely to be measurable and controllable and show change. In some accounts of the efficacy of such programmes with offenders it is suggested they can only prove effective if they are among other things directly targeted, repetitive, short-term, and tightly controlled (Coulson and Nutbrown, 1992). Sheldon, taking his cue directly from Canadian exponents of such work, similarly makes a plea for short and medium-term goals using programmes which employ 'intensive, reliable, non-apologetic, offence-related counselling and group work with an active cognitive-behavioural rehearsal component.' (1994 p. 229)

Thus not only is there a renewed and stronger emphasis on the possibility that treatment can reduce re-offending, there would appear to be a strong drive to dictate the type of treatment thought suitable in correctional or community settings. The older tradition of individualizing social work counselling and therapy, which is characterized as developing 'self-regulation' in place of (or in addition) to external coercion (Stenson, 1993) threatens to be replaced with this more 'efficient' and 'achievable approach'. Yet individualized counselling and therapy form a major component of programming seen to respond to the 'special needs' of women offenders. And as Roberts and Hudson (1993) suggested above (see Introduction) client testimonials are no longer seen as justifiable grounds for programme development, and there is pressure for quantifiable results. Some of these discrepancies with feminist approaches can be seen from a closer assessment of developments in correctional treatment and evaluation in Canada.

## RESURRECTING EVALUATION AND REHABILITATION

The development of correctional programmes in Canada in the 1990's emphasises the resurrection of the rehabilitative model, of the elements of correctional programmes that 'work', and the identification of the characteristics of offenders which prove most amenable to successful treatment.<sup>5</sup>

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While there are a number of exponents in the USA, such an approach is less dominant in the current climate of punitive penal sanctioning found there.

Much of this reemphasis stems from the work of a group of academic and professional psychologists with direct experience with offender populations in Canada, working in close association with each other and the correctional system, at the federal and provincial levels.

This work began to emerge at the end of the 1970's with critical reviews by three psychologists Paul Gendreau, Robert Ross and Don Andrews, but much of it dates from the late 1980's and early 1990's, and continues to draw in more psychologists in the correctional field and produce more 'evidence' supporting its position.<sup>6</sup> Thus a book outlining their overall approach (The Psychology of Criminal Conduct Andrews & Bonta, 1993) and a guide for psychologists practising in corrections (Forensic Psychology: Policy & Practice in Corrections Leis, Motiuk & Ogoloff, 1995) have recently been published. As indicated above, programmes based on the work of the group are now gaining a foothold in Britain, one member of the group has recently been working with the Scottish penal system, Denmark is now experimenting with such programmes, a number of supportive papers have emerged in the United States<sup>7</sup>, and a recent paper by Brown (1996) indicates that prison psychologists in New Zealand have begun to test out some of the approaches. As some observers have remarked, this work:

is part of a continuing body of research produced by a network composed mainly of Canadian researchers who appear to be having a considerable impact on that country's corrections system. (Logan & Gaes, 1993 p.248).

Ironically, the group have seen themselves as reclaiming a discredited foothold within a mainstream (read sociological) criminology preoccupied in their view with issues of structural inequality and law and order. They talk of 'the outrageous promotion of sociology and the disregard for evidence so apparent in mainstream criminology' (Andrews and Bonta, 1994 p. iv) and seem very sensitive to dismissals by criminologists who:

seem to know that the causes of crime are buried deep in political economy, culture, and social structure, just as they know intervention is mere tinkering. (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990 p.45)

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See for example, articles in Forum on Corrections Research published three times a year by the Research Division of Correctional Service Canada. This journal has become almost exclusively concerned with issues of risk prediction and treatment assessment and effectiveness.

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See for example the journal of the International Association of Residential and Community Alternatives (4) 1993 and Johnson, R. (1996) Hard Time: Understanding and Reforming the Prison.

More recently, Andrews (1996 p.43) asserts that 'pockets of anti-psychology bias may have increased in recent years'. And Gendreau (1996) talks in the language of pique, of being 'derided', of 'the aforementioned cynics', of being 'ridiculed on moral and professional grounds', of needing a 'little more respect', even of 'knowledge destruction' ('a deliberate and conscious attempt to ignore or dismiss competing findings'). Against this 'antirehabilitation rhetoric of mainstream criminology' it is suggested that the 'psychology of criminal conduct' provides as they put it 'a stimulating and facilitative home for the analysis and development of rehabilitation.' (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990 p.20). Gendreau (1996) implies such treatment programmes offer a better alternative to those available when he entered the correctional field as a prison psychologist in 1961. Those consisted of 'individual counselling and occasional group work of an amorphous nature, menial work programmes, and extensive use of medication and ECT for psychiatrically disturbed inmates' (p. 145).<sup>8</sup>

Their work has a number of distinguishing characteristics:

- \* It is dedicated primarily to the demonstration of the efficacy of treatment in corrections, to the predictive capacity of the human sciences (psychology) to help minimize risk, and maximize successful outcomes, and to provide appropriate treatment based on psychological principles.
- \* It makes extensive use of, and continuously extols the importance of objective measurement. It is dismissive of all 'qualitative or phenomenological studies', regarding only quantitative work which employs objective measures of variables, evaluated by means of statistical tests of relationships, as suitable for consideration.
- \* It makes considerable use of meta-analysis to argue for the weight of evidence of 'effective' over 'ineffective' treatments in corrections.
- \* It places particular emphasis on the development of indicators of risk and need and responsivity for treatment or release decision-making, using standardized scales and classification instruments.

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Most of these measures, with the exception of ECT perhaps, are in fact still employed on a regular basis in many prisons in Canada and elsewhere.



\* It privileges behavioural and social learning approaches (interpersonal influence, skill enhancement and cognitive change) over other types of treatment programme, and emphasises tightly controlled programme delivery to specifically targeted populations.

\* It is self-reflexive in the sense that much of the work cites and supports its propositions and arguments by reference to its own publications.<sup>9</sup>

\* It has no doubts.

What has emerged in fact, is not only a focus on rehabilitation and the promoting of psychologically-based programmes, but an equally, and perhaps increasingly strong emphasis on risk assessment in corrections (eg. Motiuk, 1993; Wormith, 1995; Blanchette & Motiuk, 1995; Hanson & Bussier, 1996). Much of the later research is grounded in extensive testing with samples of offenders in federal and provincial institutions and on conditional release. (Much of the testing takes place on Ontario offenders in provincial or federal facilities or under conditional release). It offers in short, a professional, scientific and apparently optimistic series of tools for the management of large groups of offenders, who are characterized as lacking many of the necessary skills in life for a non-criminal lifestyle. Furthermore, it offers tools for minimizing risk to society on their release. Successful rehabilitation is seen to depend on the delivery of 'clinically relevant and psychologically informed principles of treatment' (Andrews et al., 1990 p. 377).

Another characteristic of this work, which currently appears to dominate correctional assessment and programming at the federal level in Canada, is that it often ignores context. Much of it is published in American journals (offering a larger, and perhaps more receptive and like-minded audience than Canadian criminology<sup>10</sup>) and often takes the imperatives of the American prison project and its increasing rates of incarceration as its rationale. Thus an article questioning the 'cruel and unusual punishment of prison life' (Bonta & Gendreau, 1990) makes no reference to the Canadian situation, citing dramatic increases in the American prison population as justification for examining the issues. Many of the articles are premised on critiques of American treatment programmes, for example, as

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<sup>9</sup>. Of course feminism does this too, but appears to be much more open in its arguments, disputes and uncertainties.

<sup>10</sup>. A heated debate took place, for example, in the Canadian Journal of Criminology between Don Andrews (1990) and Jean-Paul Brodeur & Anthony Doob (1989) over the treatment of rehabilitation issues in the Report of the Sentencing Commission (1987).

repressive or wildly excessive, which were unlikely to have been particularly characteristic of Canadian treatment programmes.

A further, and more crucial, characteristic of this work, however, is that it rarely considers the impact of gender or issues of minority representation - race or ethnic and cultural diversity. Many of the articles are written without any reference to the sex - what Klein (1995) refers to as 'the modifying adjective' - of the subjects. For example, a comparative study of native and non-native inmates (Bonta, 1989) makes no mention of the sex of the sample. Bonta & Gendreau (1990) provide an account of multiple (almost all male) treatment evaluations but nowhere discuss or problematise gender issues. The meta-analyses which form a primary driving force for their work (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau & Cullen 1990; Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990) are likewise almost totally without mention of gender, apart from a final note that the relationship between responsivity and race, gender and age should 'in the future' be examined (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990).

There are some exceptions. The extensive work of Zamble and Porporino (1988) on coping in prison is based entirely on male definitions, male language and experiences in the construction of its measures and tests (as Currie, 1986 has also pointed out). They do, nevertheless, note that 'this book is concerned with the behaviour of men in prison' but explain their preoccupation on the usual grounds that there are too few women to count (Zamble & Porporino, 1988 p.2). Bonta (1989) examines risk and need issues among native and non-native (presumably male) inmates, and some work has more recently explored the predictive utility of risk assessment measures on female offender populations (eg. Bonta, Pang & Wallace-Capretta, 1995; Blanchette & Motiuk, 1995; Blanchette, 1997a & b). Yet often, when data on females offenders is collated, along with males, the disparity of size in the samples makes any traditional comparison difficult. Recent examples provide data on the assessment of employment needs among federally sentenced offenders with samples of 2738 men and 31 women (Motiuk, 1996) or of response to substance abuse programmes among 315 men and 9 women (Weekes, Millson & Lightfoot, 1995).

More fundamentally, however, even when gender and race are considered, they are treated as categories capable of measurement in the same way as all other variables, as unproblematic in their application and use against assessment tools (such as standardized risk/need instruments) developed on the basis of the overwhelming white, male correctional population. How else could conclusions such as the following, based on a comparative study of native and non-native inmates in Ontario prisons, have been reached (Bonta, 1989 p.58)?:

These findings lead us to conclude that the courts, by and large, assessed judicial penalties on the basis of legal and criminal factors and that race was inconsequential.

or:

The examination of the more "secret" world of the prison also failed to evidence any racial biases.

The findings of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System (1994, 1996) provide ample evidence to the contrary, as do the extensive examinations of discrimination against Aboriginal peoples in Canada (eg. Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991; Linn, 1992; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993, 1996) specific accounts of the destruction of native communities (eg. Shkilnyk, 1985) and accounts of the differences between native and non-native concepts of the process of justice (eg. Ross, 1992). Thus not only is this ungendered research and race-blind, the narrowness of the definitions used remove all trace of context. The prison world will indeed remain 'secret' if only those factors thought relevant by white middle-class professionals are measured.

There is a sense, too, in which the realities of the lives of minority groups as well as the dominant population is rendered not only unproblematic by the application of assessment tools, but also denigrated. They are seen as individuals with poor cognitive skills, intellectual ability or motivation to change. Outlining the rationale for the cognitive skills training programme developed for use in the federal prison system, it is argued that the main source of criminal behaviour is 'cognitive inadequacies':

"Offenders with cognitive inadequacies...are likely to evidence major difficulties in social adjustment". They are impulsive, and tend to act before they think. When they do stop to think, they think poorly. They blame others, they fail to see their own impact on others. Their thought processes are narrow and variously described as "simplistic and illogical" and "exceptionally shallow, narrow and rigid". (Johnson, 1996 p.274 quoting Fabiano, Robinson & Porporino, 1991)

And a recent article on offenders' motivation to change argues:

Many in the offender population are not well-spoken, intelligent or highly motivated to change. In short many correctional staff are usually working with higher-risk clients whom many clinicians might consider untreatable. (Stewart & Millson, 1995 p.5)

Thus while in some of the more recent work there is now acknowledgement of the necessity of making race or gender-specific accommodation to 'needs' in terms of programming, this is only to

be on the basis of their predictive power to reduce recidivism. In a discussion of the effects of in-prison programming on subsequent recidivism of native and non-native inmates, for example, Bonta (1989) argues that since (lack of) post-release accommodation and finance appeared to be more important explanations of recidivism among non-native than native offenders, housing and financial counselling were more worthwhile for non-natives:

inadequate accommodations and financial difficulties spell difficulties for non-natives but not particularly so for Natives. (p.60)

Again, in discussing the implication of the predictive power of risk and need scales on a sample of federally sentenced female offenders Bonta, Pang and Capretta (1995) argue that prison programmes appeared to have had 'little or no association with criminal behaviour on release'. Thus they suggest that only those programmes which target 'criminogenic need' should, in future, be pursued.

For example, counselling that focuses upon healing the hurt of past victimizations may help victims feel better about themselves and improve relationships with others but may not alter the factors that initiated and maintained their criminal behaviour. A budgeting course may help a single mother on welfare make ends meet but may not affect her views on the acceptability of crime for coping in life. Offenders present many needs but not all of these needs are necessarily criminogenic. (p.291)

(One might ask what a single mother who does not see crime as acceptable must do if she is still unable to make ends meet). They also suggest that future programmes for women offenders developed at the new regional prisons should be carefully evaluated to test their effects on reconviction and rejected if they fail to prove effective (Bonta, Pang, Capretta, 1995) an approach clearly at odds with the model of Creating Choices with its stress on women's choice of programmes they need. The implication is that unless a programme can be shown to reduce recidivism it should not be made available to a prison or post-release population, and programmes are expected to target specific sets of 'criminogenic needs'. Only those 'needs' which are statistically related to recidivism are seen as criminogenic and, therefore, worth targeting. The circle is complete. (The tautologous reasoning used in much of this work has been noted by other critics too (eg. Lab & Whitehead, 1990; Logan & Gaes, 1993)).

It must also be noted that so easy a dismissal of 'programmes' for women offenders comes from a study which attempted to apply male-derived standardized measures to the small and heterogeneous

federal female population in Canada, using interview data collected for a quite different purpose.<sup>11</sup> Using a data set derived from an earlier survey of the population (Shaw et al., 1991) measures of programme use, and such 'female specific' issues as past experience of physical and sexual abuse were added in to the analysis. Yet in no way did the original interviews explore the real content or extent of 'programme' involvement, and in correctional usage such a term tends to be used for everything from leisure pursuits (such as Hobby Crafts) and occasional attendance at AA meetings, to intensive counselling. Thus, at the most, this mainstream work has, belatedly, accepted an 'add women' (and 'race') approach. Many of these problems had been pointed out by Claudia Currie (1986) some ten years earlier in the paper commissioned by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Little seems to have changed in the ten-year period.

The basic principles on which effective rehabilitation is seen to depend in this literature are those of 'risk', 'need', 'responsivity' and 'professional override'. These are outlined in two papers in particular (Andrews et al., 1990, and Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). In relation to risk it is argued that more intensive treatment should be reserved for the higher risk cases on the grounds that the greatest effects have been shown among such groups. This points to the significance of assessing risk. Risk factors are seen to include both static factors (such as age at first offence) which are associated with recidivism but which cannot be changed, and dynamic factors (such as employment level) which if modified through treatment, may help reduce recidivism. It is the latter which are classified as 'criminogenic needs'.

What these needs are would appear to include:

changing antisocial attitudes, feelings, and peer associations; promoting familial affection...; promoting identification with antirriminal role models; increasing self-control and self-management skills; replacing the lying, stealing, and aggression with other, more prosocial skills; reducing chemical dependencies; and generally shifting the density of rewards and costs for criminal and non-criminal activities in familial, academic, vocational, and other behavioural settings. (Andrews et al 1990 p. 375).

On the other hand 'less-promising targets' in their view include treatment aimed at increasing self-esteem, and 'attempts to focus on vague personal/emotional problems that have not been linked with

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In this sense the researchers acted as a Trojan Horse, providing a data set which was subsequently amended and augmented by prison disciplinary data to enable prediction studies on 'a female data set' to be carried out.

recidivism' (p. 375) (as well as broad-based social and community intervention projects).

Responsivity, as outlined in this work, concerns the matching of what are termed styles of programme to offenders' learning styles and needs. It is not always clear what 'responsivity' actually entails. Thus based on (their own) reviews of the effectiveness literature Andrews et al., (1990) argue that responsivity in relation to effective service involves:

the use of behavioural and social learning principles of interpersonal influence, skill enhancement, and cognitive change. Specifically, they include modelling, graduated practice, rehearsal, role playing, reinforcement, resource provision, and detailed verbal guidance and explanations (making suggestions, giving reasons, cognitive restructuring).....we describe the application of these practices as (a) a use of authority (a "firm but fair" approach and definitely not interpersonal domination or abuse), (b) antirriminal modelling and reinforcement (explicit modelling of alternatives to procriminal styles of thinking, feeling, and acting), and (c) concrete problem solving and systematic skill training for purposes of increasing reward levels in antirriminal settings. (Andrews et al, 1990 p. 375).

Among the types of service they see as ineffective are 'group counselling unless tightly controlled by the clinician (sic) or psychodynamic and non-directive client-centred therapies', precisely the approaches which have been encouraged in feminist counselling and therapy (as will be explored subsequently). Thus responsivity in this paper entails a cataloguing of the treatment model favoured.

Elsewhere, (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Bonta, 1995) there is more detailed discussion of two other aspects of responsivity. The first of these are factors associated with effective service provision including staff characteristics and styles. Thus it is recommended that 'service deliverers relate to offenders in interpersonally warm, flexible, and enthusiastic ways while also being supportive of antirriminal attitudinal and behavioural patterns' (Andrews et al, 1990 p.375-6). The second responsivity factor relates to the characteristics of offenders themselves and their interaction with modes of treatment and delivery style. Andrews, Bonta and Hoge (1990) discuss 'clinical hypotheses' about what these might be, including verbal ability, intelligence, motivation, anxiety levels, age, race, gender and mental disorder. They argue, nevertheless, that factors such as race, age, gender, or mental disorder are of relatively minor significance when the more general guidelines regarding effective treatment are followed:

we continue to feel that risk and need considerations are crucial and that the major aspect of responsivity is that of choosing treatment approaches found to be effective with offender samples in general. (Andrews, Bonta and Hoge, 1990, p.44)

A later paper (Bonta, 1995) returns to responsivity and again reiterates the role of staff styles and characteristics as well as offender characteristics, but only in combination with the appropriate form of programme ie. 'structured cognitive behavioural treatment' (p. 35).

Given a group of clients (such as offenders) who generally have poor social skills, have little internal motivation to change and are not concrete-oriented in their thinking, it is not surprising that a treatment programme is more effective if it sets clear behavioural goals and work assignments and provides numerous opportunities for success. (Bonta, 1995 p. 35)

The divergence from feminist methodology is evident, therefore, not only in the types of treatment felt to be effective and ineffective, but in the 'top-down' approach implicit in the notions of style and mode of treatment approach. It is claimed that this is not 'a one-way process in which experts act on sick or defective inmates' but one where 'implementation involves a two-way collaborative process in which staff both train offenders and serve as role models for clear thinking and mature coping.' (Johnson, 1996 p. 274 reporting Fabiano, Robinson & Porporino, 1991). Such an explanation does not sound convincingly 'two-way', nor given the fact that programmes are formulated on a standardized pattern. In spite of the recommendation that service deliverers be 'warm, flexible and enthusiastic', this is not an approach which allows for much input on the part of the subjects, it is not an approach which favours individual treatment programmes nor privileges the experiences of the clients. It is not an approach which aims at the reduction of power differentials between researcher or clinician and subject, but one which requires the use of firm authority and 'professional override'. And it is clearly not an approach which emphasises individual, contextualized, situational, difference.

It seems clear that mainstream psychology, as with mainstream criminology, has much difficulty accepting the tenets of feminist methodology and research. As Celia Kitzinger argues (1990 p.131) much feminist research has been dismissed by mainstream psychology as a legitimate science 'primarily because feminism is seen as political, and because psychologists have been socialized into the belief that advocacy and scholarship are incompatible.'

## OTHER CRITICS

As has been suggested, this work has not been without its critics particularly for its narrowly conceived approach to treatment, and to methodology and evaluation (eg. Doob and Brodeur, 1989; Roberts and Jackson, 1991; Lab and Whitehead, 1990; Logan & Gaes, 1993; Mair, 1995; Mair & Copas, 1996; Brown, 1996). Lab and Whitehead, for example, express their concern 'about the

extreme faith of the authors in psychological interventions' and suggest that 'psychological variables are only part of the crime/delinquency picture and that psychological interventions are only part of the treatment agenda' (Lab & Whitehead, 1990 p.412, 413). Mair (1995) argues that their elaborate elevation of the principles of effective treatment are no more than commonsense formulations.

Roberts and Jackson (1991) reacting to a paper by Bonta & Gendreau (1990) claiming that prison is not psychologically and emotionally destructive, attack the narrowly defined range of evidence required by the authors. Thus Bonta and Gendreau (in yet another study which fails to consider gender) reject all qualitative or phenomenological studies, and consider only those quantitative studies which 'employ objective measures of the variables of interest and...evaluate the relationship between them by means of statistical tests.' (p. 349) They conclude that 'From the available evidence, and on the dimensions measured there is little to support the conclusion that long-term imprisonment necessarily has detrimental effects.' (p. 359). To this Roberts and Jackson respond that 'the available evidence does not permit one to draw a conclusion that flies in the face of centuries of human experience.' (Roberts and Jackson 1991 p. 558).

Doob and Brodeur (1989) critique the premises of the rehabilitation debate and its narrow definition of success:

For sentenced offenders, however, it is unduly restrictive, we believe, to judge the efficacy of such programmes in terms of their proven effect on recidivism. Many so-called treatment programmes can and should be evaluated in terms of goals quite different from recidivism. (Doob and Brodeur, 1989 p. 189).

Nor do all those psychologists working within the correctional system necessarily identify such positive results. An evaluation of a treatment programme for child molesters - admittedly a particularly problematic area - found no relationship between success in the programme, social skills training and recidivism, and concluded rather bleakly that:

although it is politically unpopular to say so, we are, in fact, a long way from being able to argue that treatment is effective at all, let alone that it saves either money or human suffering. (Rice, Harris & Quinsey, 1993 p. 201)

Reservations have also been expressed by Ted Palmer (1994), himself a proponent of effective treatment programmes. He points out inconsistencies in results from different meta-analyses and literature reviews, that meta-analytic techniques are themselves not free from bias, and that programmes are never as 'unitary' as meta-analytic techniques seem to assume. He suggests, for example, that the strength of recidivism reduction of a programme is in part dependent on the



selection of programmes against which comparisons are made. He also concludes that we cannot expect a universal approach to work with all offenders, and appears more guarded than Canadian proponents of correctional programme effectiveness: 'several methods seem promising, but none have been widely shown to usually produce major reductions while also applying widely, that is, to typical composite populations' (Palmer, 1994 p. 63).

George Mair (1995) and Mair & Copas (1996) have pointed to other limitations of meta-analysis, including the publication bias in favour of large-scale programmes with positive results; the infancy and short-term evaluation of many of the projects and; the fact that almost all involved juveniles, not adult offenders; and its use of crude categories to classify disparate studies. Thus meta-analysis, requiring as it does abstracted assessments of programme 'appropriateness' on the basis of a variety of different programme accounts is itself not immune from value judgement. It recalls the view of Gottfredson & Gottfredson (1993 p. 452) on the presumed benefits of computerized offender information that:

it is safe to assume that such information (generally notoriously poor) is no better in computerized files than it is in the manilla envelope from which it was extracted, resulting in the unhappy conclusion that poor information now may be used with facility.

Thus much of the critique of the work of this 'school' has focussed on their disciplinary and methodological approach, and in part on the resurrection of rehabilitation 'on their terms' as a central correctional principle.<sup>12</sup> It is evident too that they feel themselves not only vulnerable to criticism from sociologists, but also ignored by proponents of punitive and deterrent penal policies, an approach to corrections which dismisses the possibility of individual reform. Gendreau (1996) in yet another article directed largely at a American audience, has argued for example:

the despairing fact is that deterrence policies, and to a lesser extent justice proscriptions (ie. flat sentencing), now dominate the American criminal justice landscape. It is estimated that 4 million offenders will be imprisoned in the United States by the year 2000 (Dilulio, 1991). The recent "three strikes and out" federal legislation, which also has been adopted enthusiastically by many states...will probably maintain the U.S. lead in incarceration rates by fivefold over comparable Western democracies...In addition, boot camps, electronic monitoring, drug testing, shock incarceration, and restitution are increasing exponentially.... (Gendreau, 1996 p.146).

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ie. using the treatment approach they advocate, and measuring effectiveness in terms of reconviction.

Yet this work is clearly much more than a revival of old dreams of rehabilitation. In the emphasis on assessment of risks and needs, on the possibilities for more accurate prediction, and the widespread use of standardized scales and measures, it forms part of a broader movement to control risky behaviour. Kelly Hannah Moffat (1997) in her analysis of Canadian developments has summarized some of the characteristics of the movement to a 'risk society', emphasising the use of actuarial statistics and risk assessment tools in corrections which has been highlighted by a number of writers (Feeley & Simon, 1992, 1994; O'Malley, 1992). This movement, she suggests with Garland (1996) has shifted the emphasis in correctional management to the proper use of resources and efficient management of risk, and away from individualized reform and treatment.

There are other issues concerning programme development and evaluation which fail to receive much attention in this work, but which have been explored in recent years elsewhere in mainstream criminology and outside the institutional setting. A number of authors working in the field of community programmes and crime prevention, for example, have questioned existing approaches to programme development and its evaluation. Here a more pessimistic view of the potential of programmes to effect change is evident, and more emphasis placed on how things are done rather than the uniqueness of a particular 'approach' or the primacy of crime reduction.

#### EVALUATING PROGRAMMES AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The issues raised in critiques of the field of community programmes and crime prevention include a number of practical and policy concerns which affect all treatment and evaluation programmes, and have some links with feminist methodology and implications for feminist intervention programmes. They include the narrowness of research methods used, the lack of a coherent theoretical basis, the failure to consider aspects of the on-going conduct or process of programmes, the focus on short-term results, and the reliance on demonstration projects and community resources.

As suggested in the Introduction, crime prevention has become a major focus of criminal justice activity in a number of countries (O'Malley, 1992; Jefferson, 1996) and given its close policy ties, has generated a proliferation of evaluative research. In Britain, the USA and to some extent Canada, crime prevention has been accompanied by an emphasis on the establishment and evaluation of short-term action projects, what is sometimes termed 'quick and dirty research'.<sup>13</sup>

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The Crime Prevention Unit, set up in 1983 within the Police Department of the Home Office in

Pawson and Tilley (1994) in their discussion of the crisis, as they see it, in evaluation in criminology cite the lack of a theoretical basis and the method-driven approach for much of its 'moribund' output. They suggest that such research has reached a 'second watershed' (p.291) following the first 'nothing works' conclusion of Robert Martinson (1974)). As they put it :

We do seem to have reached a different sort of lacuna in which inconsistent results, non-replicability, partisan disagreement and above all, lack of cumulation remain to dash hopes of evaluators seeking to establish clear, unequivocal guidelines to policy making. Nowhere is this picture revealed more clearly than in so called meta-analysis... (Pawson & Tilley, 1994 p. 292., their emphasis).

While listing explanations for the failure of many evaluations to get clear and positive results ('incompetent implementation, death by political crossfire, insufficiently articulated goals, as well as some downright bad ideas in the conception of programmes' p. 292) Pawson and Tilley also suggest, unlike many commentators, that evaluators themselves should take a share of the blame. Thus they suggest that classic quasi-experimental designs which study before and after effects for experimental and control groups, direct attention away from the mechanisms which help to make programmes 'work'. These include such things as variations in community involvement and levels of informal social control which make the difference between successful interaction with a programme, and ambivalent or contradictory results. Classic evaluation approaches, they argue, fail to take the context in which a programme takes place into account.

Programmes cannot be considered as some kind of external, impinging 'force' to which subjects 'respond'. Rather programmes 'work', if subjects choose to make them work and are placed in the right conditions to enable them to do so. This process of 'constrained choice' is at the heart of social and individual change to which all programmes aspire, and this mechanism is something which cannot be captured in evaluation which takes the form before-and-after, controlled comparison. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. In the relentless obsession to perfect control in the investigation of programme effects, it is precisely those processes which facilitate effectiveness which get written out of the explanation. (Pawson & Tilley, 1994 p. 294).

Thus they see causation as 'generative' rather than 'successionist' and programmes as having 'transformative potential' rather than having merely an 'external impact' on individuals or communities (p. 293). The answer lies in their view in the need to give much greater priority to considering the contexts in which programmes are being developed, and the mechanisms through

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Britain, was specifically established to undertake and promote such short-term crime prevention projects.

which the programme hopes to bring about change, as a process for developing a cumulative and theoretically coherent understanding of how things 'work' (an approach they term Scientific Realist Evaluation).

Part of the problem in their view, as well as that of a number of other commentators in this field, lies with the reliance on quantitative methodology (Rock, 1988; Crawford and Jones, 1995, 1996). Paul Rock (1988) for example, has argued that the prioritizing of objective or 'scientific' measures over qualitative and ethnomethodological approaches leads to the 'self-censoring' of other sources of data and limits understanding of what is 'going on'.

A whole area of knowledge is systematically suppressed by the limitations of prevailing research methods...What has been 'banned' consists in the main of evidence that is thought to be too personal, subjective and qualitative. It includes the methods and topics of reasoning that are actually employed by experts when they speak and work. (Rock, 1988 p.110-11)

Two other researchers in the crime prevention field, Crawford and Jones (1995, 1996) raise a number of other issues about this work. They highlight the limitations imposed by the requirements of policy makers in funding evaluative research projects. Policy makers prefer short-term results over long-term outcomes. There is a need to demonstrate a positive crime reduction result in relation to a (usually) specific environmental change. This requires simple, easily measurable outcomes. By contrast a focus on long-term outcomes would target the underlying factors which are conducive to crime production, such as social and economic circumstances and the strength of services and community relationships (Hope and Shaw, 1988; Graham and Bennett, 1995). The short-term evaluation approach is usually given priority because of the need for a public demonstration of something 'that works'. Combined with budgetary constraints, this helps to establish artificial time-lines for the completion of projects. In their view:

The short-termism of evaluation is evident in the 'project driven' approach which pervades much British crime prevention. This largely mirrors the way crime prevention is funded in this country. In a simplified and caricatured form this approach involves: targeting an area; intervening in that area; getting a result; and moving on. In part this stems from pressures imposed by both funding bodies and the media for immediate success stories... (Crawford and Jones, 1996 p. 28).

They also identify the particular difficulties of evaluation of projects with varying definitions of the central variable, and multiple or diffuse aims. Thus definitions of crime prevention vary from project to project and may include a wide range of educative, fear reduction, crime reduction or attitudinal factors. Projects often have a number of aims including the development of inter-agency

communication and partnership, as well as crime reduction, thus creating difficulties in the measurement of change.

Other issues raised by Crawford and Jones include the focus on outcome measures but the relative neglect of process issues - the process of policy formulation and implementation; the assumption that stated policies and approaches are what actually happens in practice: 'the disjuncture between what people advocate - what they say they do - and what they actually do' (Crawford and Jones, 1996 p. 25); the failure to consider the distinction and differences between 'demonstration' projects which tend to attract good funding, attention and commitment from interested parties, and more routine replications or applications of similar approaches; the failure to distinguish between replication and transference of project designs; and the failure to consider the implications of short-term funding, so that demonstration projects often survive only until the end of their funding. In their view the philosophy of self-reliance on private or local-government funding which has been characteristic of much project development in criminal justice in recent years, creates great strains for small-scale projects who spend too great a time searching for small grants. They are also dependant on fluctuations in the local economy. Similar issues are raised by Mair (1995) in his discussion of the problems of evaluating community programmes. He underlines the importance of sentencing objectives other than the reduction of reoffending, of examining the processes of administration of projects, and stresses evaluation's role as a political tool inevitably linked to funding and policy development. Evaluation is 'complex, problematic and riddled with uncertainties' (Eckblom in Mair 1995 p.464).

Thus a range of contextual and processual problems are raised in this area of research and policy evaluation which go well beyond the question of 'what works'. They suggest that considerable attention needs to be paid to the local nature of project development, the characteristics of the place as well as the players, and the interactions between all those involved in project development, not just the 'clinician' and the 'offender', and they stress the importance of longer-term and qualitative approaches.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has considered two major issues: i) the development of feminist methodology and evaluation and the implications of undertaking and evaluating projects with women offenders, and

ii) the current status of programme development and evaluative work in mainstream criminology based on recent developments in Canadian corrections and the community programmes and crime prevention field.

The development of feminist research and methodology indicates a growing flexibility of approach over the past twenty years. It still sees individual experience as central, attempts to recognize standpoints, privileges the subjects of research and tries to reduce power differentials between researcher and subject, questions and 'interrogates' the position of the researcher, uses a wide variety of methods, and attempts to maintain an activist, change-oriented stance which is guided by theory. Within criminology its impact has been rather more limited than elsewhere, in part reflecting the strong masculinist conventions of the mainstream discipline, and for some, the impossibilities of impacting a masculine criminal justice system. More recent discussions indicate a willingness to continue to undertake research from a feminist perspective in criminal justice, attempting to explore the multiple and conflicting experiences of women in the system, and fully aware of the dangers of such work resulting in 'incorporation' or further controls.

In direct contrast to the trends identified in feminist research and methodology, stands the work which currently dominates mainstream correctional treatment and evaluative research in Canada. This work conducted by a group of psychologists working in corrections claims rehabilitation is possible, but only given the development and evaluation of treatment programmes using a psychological framework and based on cognitive-behavioural models. Employing meta-analysis and literature reviews of treatment programmes almost entirely based on male offenders studies, it champions cognitive-behavioural treatment models and dismisses such programmes as individual counselling and therapy as inappropriate and ineffective. It claims that when issues of risk, need and responsivity are taken into account, and the appropriate treatment given to high need offenders, short-term reduction in rates of reconviction result. It sees offenders as characterized by deficits and poor cognitive skills and recommends tight control over programme delivery.

Their work has largely ignored female offenders and minorities, and while more recently recognizing the need to consider them, has resorted to traditional gender-neutral approaches of 'adding' women (and race) in. They have been criticised within mainstream criminology for the narrow compass of their theoretical and methodological approaches.

Examination of evaluative research in mainstream criminology in the fields of community programmes and crime prevention highlights a range of other issues which tend to be ignored in

programme development. These emphasise the contextualizing and transformative potential of programmes, rather than assumptions of expert and external impact on offenders or crime rates; the limitations of quantitative methodologies for examining context, programme processes and effects; the multiple aims of projects; and the limitations imposed by policy concerns which stress short-term goals and evaluation of projects rather than long-term outcomes. Work in this area also raises a number of important issues concerning demonstration projects and short-term community funding and illustrates the political nature of evaluation.

In order to explore the implications of these developments for feminist intervention, the following chapter of this thesis considers in more detail the development of, and assumptions underlying, feminist therapy and counselling programmes. How discrepant are recent approaches to intervention with offenders and feminist counselling and therapy? What do feminist accounts have to say about the conduct and content of practice, what do the clients think? What lessons can be drawn about evaluating social intervention programmes with women offenders, with their much greater emphasis on listening to the accounts of the women themselves, or allowing them to take part in the process of evaluation?

## CHAPTER 3

### FEMINISM AND THE NEW AGE - FEMINIST INTERVENTION

Since feminism has always been concerned with reform, with change, and with praxis, it is inevitable that feminist intervention approaches have been moving for some time in the opposite direction from the managerial concerns with efficiency and effectiveness now popular in corrections or social work. This chapter explores these developments. Feminist intervention has been concerned, as has been suggested, with redefining social problems relating to women by reducing the control which 'experts' exercise over such definitions, with placing issues previously ignored - such as violence against women - on the agenda, with developing community networks and campaigns to support and change policies and practice for women, with providing crisis support services, and with redefining women's emotional needs through feminist therapy and counselling<sup>1</sup> (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989).

Whatever the overall impact of feminism on public policies, it is clear that feminist forms of intervention have made inroads from grassroots initiatives in the public sphere, as well as into private practice (Boehnert, 1988; Lerner, 1988; Dominelli and McLeod, 1989; Walker, 1990; Ussher, 1991; McLeod, 1994; Hester, Kelly & Radford, 1996). Feminist counselling and therapy, Eileen McLeod suggests, have developed at a rapid pace in North America and elsewhere:

By now feminist therapy and counselling has grown to the point where there are centres of practice and networks of practitioners across the United States..in other countries - for example Australia and New Zealand...and around Britain...Thousands of women have engaged in its activities as practitioners, beneficiaries and on a self-help basis. (McLeod, 1994 p.1)

Such developments have not been uniform. In North America there has always been a greater propensity than elsewhere to see and respond to social problems in therapeutic terms as Dobash and Dobash (1992) have underlined in relation to violence against women. In Britain, Dominelli and McLeod (1989) in their account of the development of feminist social work, highlight the crucial role of feminist campaigns and networks in changing attitudes to social work practice, but they also go so far as to credit feminism with having 'discovered' the importance of women's emotional needs, and with essentially creating 'a new school of therapy'. They argue that there is:

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<sup>1</sup> The interchangeable use of these terms is discussed in a subsequent section.



a general demand for women's emotional fulfilment which will not go away without being met. Evidence is starting to come through on an extensive scale in feminist writing on organizing through community action, group work, and family and individual work that women's emotional experience is a repository of....profound injury as a consequence of patriarchal power....Such evidence is by now so powerful and consistent that it should rank as a 'discovery' of feminist social work on problem definition..(p. 44).

Approaches to dealing with women's emotional health they see as having emerged, therefore, in the form of support services for battered women in shelters as well as from centres established by feminist therapists and activists. They have been furthered by the work of feminist psychologists who in Dominelli & McLeod's terms have 'relocated the origins of women's emotional suffering'. Ussher (1991) for example, traces the development of a specifically women-centred approach to counselling and therapy as an acknowledgement of the real suffering experienced by women, and of the need to counter the dominant medical discourses on women's mental health which locate problems within individual women in terms of biological or pathological deficits.

## FEMINIST THERAPY AND COUNSELLING

Jane Ussher (1991) writing as a clinical psychologist traces the theoretical roots of feminist therapy to the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960's and 1970's. That movement rejected orthodox medical and biological explanations of madness and distress with their stress on positivist, scientific approaches, locating explanations in individual pathology, and pointed instead to the social construction of 'madness' as deviation from some assumed normality. The anti-psychiatry movement failed, however, to consider gender, or to problematize the overwhelming preponderance of women diagnosed as mentally ill or psychologically distressed. In common with the anti-psychiatry movement, therefore, feminist critique of orthodox medicine rejects the scientific and positivist approaches of orthodoxy, and rejects the attribution of power and expertise to professional doctors and therapists. It also stresses the importance of examining the social construction of notions of illness or distress, but it examines why women are seen as 'mad' or distressed. Traditional therapeutic approaches are seen to divert attention from the social oppression of women.

Dominelli and McLeod (1989) similarly, see the development of feminist intervention as arising in part from radical critiques of traditional practice which saw social work as social control, but also failed to consider the position of women as primary recipients of much state intervention. Social work was seen as a form of social control which encouraged women to 'cope' with the social,

economic and emotional stresses in their lives, but failed to challenge dominant assumptions about their role as wives and mothers in society.

Most accounts of feminist therapy and counselling present an ideal picture of how it differs from non-feminist approaches, and what is supposed to happen, reflecting, perhaps, both the political focus of feminism, and the urgency of new ideas in formation. It is evident, nevertheless, that such intervention represents neither a single approach nor a static one (Watson & Williams, 1992). As with feminist critiques of methodology in the social sciences, there have been many debates and differences of opinion since the 1970's which have resulted in shifts in emphasis over the intervening years. Indeed one early critic rejected the notion of 'feminist therapy' altogether as an 'inherent contradiction', seeing all therapy as an attempt to pathologize women (see discussion of Mary Daly (1979) in Ussher, 1991).

Nor is all feminist therapy or counselling provided on an individual basis. It encompasses group sessions, self-help groups and workshops. In response to more recent criticism of the neglect of minority women, centres which cater specifically for ethnic minorities are now emerging (Kareem & Littlewood, 1992; Langan & Day, 1992; McLeod, 1994). With so central an emphasis on women and their experience, almost all those involved in feminist therapy or counselling have been women, as practitioners or clients. Again, however, and reflecting broader developments in feminism, the possibilities of applying the principles of feminist therapy to men, or of men undertaking therapy using feminist principles are beginning to be aired (eg. Dominelli & McLeod, 1989; Collins, 1992).

Eileen McLeod describes such work in the following way:

Feminist therapy and counselling is one of the elements in contemporary feminist action concerned with women's emotional wellbeing. The cornerstone of its development has been to locate the origins of widespread emotional suffering amongst women, in the gendered nature of social relations. As a mode of intervention, it has created forms of interaction in therapy, counselling, groupwork and resource centres aimed at more genuinely meeting women's emotional needs. (1994, p. 1).

Those practising feminist therapy and counselling, whether in community organizations, private practice, or statutory health or social services come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including social casework, clinical psychology and psychoanalysis. Consequently many feminist accounts have used the terms counselling and therapy interchangeably (Walker, 1990; McLeod, 1994; Boehnert, 1988). Walker, for example, argues that the need to take account of women's understanding and

experiences is relevant to both counselling and psychotherapy even though there are differences between them. McLeod (1994) notes the difficulties arising from the use of different terminology in the United States and Britain, for example, where some of what passes for 'counselling' in Britain may be termed 'therapy' in the US, where practitioners have entered the field of feminist therapy with both social work and psychoanalytic backgrounds, and where in practice feminist centres offering both approaches are emerging. She similarly opts for interchangeable use of the terms in her study of a feminist community clinic. Mearns and Dryden (1990 in McLeod 1994) note that some workers use the word 'therapy' for 'deep-seated' issues, and 'counselling' for more transient problems, but suggest that so neat a distinction is in practice difficult to apply.

Given the diversity of backgrounds from which feminist therapists come, a diversity of approaches is evident. As most writers have stressed, feminist intervention is not just another 'school' of therapy but rather a way of working. Thus Boehnert (1988) suggests that feminist intervention is 'an approach to therapy that allows for a different way of seeing, understanding, and making connections rather than a technique in and of itself.'(p. 280) Ussher (1991) sees feminist therapy as a 'perspective, rather than a technique'.

Those who practice under the umbrella of feminist therapy may use different techniques or theoretical paradigms... (Ussher, 1991 p. 201)

Such paradigms she sees as reflecting both the theoretical basis of different feminist positions eg. radical, liberal or socialist feminism, as well as different therapeutic approaches depending on the background and formal training of the therapist.<sup>2</sup> Among clinical psychologists these may include psychotherapy, behavioural therapy, cognitive therapy, and humanistic therapy. McLeod (1994) identifies two main types of approach as characteristic of those working in the social work field: psychotherapeutic, and humanistic or 'person centred' counselling and therapy. The first, practised by those with psychoanalytic backgrounds she sees as clearly rooted in Freudian theory, locating women's emotional development in their early upbringing, particularly their relationship with their mothers as infants, and the unconscious inhibitions which restrict the development of their emotional 'well being' (see also Kaschak, 1992). Ussher (1991) notes that while psychoanalytic theory was initially the most heavily criticized of all therapeutic discourses on women, it has more recently been

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Moorhouse (1992) notes a recent study which identifies over 400 relatively distinct types of therapy, ranging from traditional psychoanalytic, through client-centred therapies to behavioural therapies, including individual, group and family approaches, and directive and non-directive styles. See also Ussher, 1991 for a discussion of the development of twentieth century therapies.

incorporated and reinterpreted by some feminists (see also Rowley & Grosz, 1990).

The second major approach identified by McLeod derives from Carl Rogers' 'client-centred therapy' which sees women (or men) as having the necessary resources in themselves to meet their emotional needs, but 'their expression is inhibited by the hostile nature of current interpersonal and social relations' (Rogers, 1961 p.20). Ussher (1991) in her discussion of humanistic therapy notes the emphasis on 'self-actualization' and on the conditions necessary for successful therapy. These include a caring relationship, empathy and warmth, and unconditional acceptance of the client, aspects which form a major component of the feminist therapeutic approach. It is clear too that some aspects of feminist therapy are derived from behavioural and cognitive therapies with their stress on learning new skills, and changing perceptions and belief systems. In practice, therefore, feminist therapy encompasses an eclectic amalgam of existing orthodox therapies, and individual therapists may use elements taken from a number of different approaches. A number of writers such as Kaschak (1992) in fact argue strongly against the notion of a single theoretical or epistemological 'starting point'. She sees such an approach as reductionist or linear and favours 'a complex and integrated model of change'(p. 28-9).

## HOW IT WORKS

What makes feminist therapy more than just an amalgam of existing theories, however, is its emphasis on seeing women within a broader social context than just individuals with emotional problems. Whatever the theoretical background of the therapist, the focus of feminist therapy and counselling starts with the experiences of women (Levine, 1982). An experiential approach is seen as of central importance in enabling the counsellor and client to understand and map a woman's particular 'lived experience' within a patriarchal society. It is seen to form the basis for understanding and analysis of a woman's situation, for the development of self-awareness in raising her consciousness of oppression, and for the development of action plans. This differs dramatically from traditional social work or therapeutic practice which reinforces the position of women in society and stress the development of coping skills and strategies.

The central characteristic of feminist therapy is to relocate what has previously been seen as personal, emotional failure into the realms of experience common to other women and to explore the degree to which this is socially determined. (Dominelli & McLeod 1989 p. 78)

Central to such work is the critique of power and its unequal distribution in society, and the notion

of 'empowerment' - that women become aware of the social, economic, political, power constraints over their lives as women. Women's emotional distress is seen as rooted in their lack of power in comparison with men, rather than in biological or medical deficiencies.

The madness for which women are treated is seen as a response to powerlessness, whether it is manifested in eating disorders, depression, self-harm or anxiety. (Ussher, 1991 p.202)

A second major characteristic of feminist therapy is the stress on the equalization of power differentials between therapist and client. If lack of power over their lives is so central to understanding women's emotional distress, then the counselling relationship should not replicate that power imbalance. Thus the therapist is no longer an 'expert' who diagnoses and prescribes, but someone who listens and guides, and validates the experiences of the client (Levine, 1982). It is the client who is encouraged to become the expert, as someone with strengths which can be utilized to overcome the constraints on her life, rather than as someone with weaknesses (Watson & Williams, 1992). Thus the client may be encouraged to work on issues they, rather than the therapist, chooses. The therapist may also work towards the equalization of power by attempting to demystify the process of therapy, and by sharing her own experiences with the client. There is a stress on developing a warm, supportive and caring relationship which values the individual. Feminist counselling and therapy clearly owes a strong debt to humanistic therapeutic approaches.

As suggested above, the techniques used in feminist therapy or counselling will vary with the theoretical approach of the therapist, but may stress empowering women through assertiveness training, the development of social skills, or encouraging the expression of anger. Anger is seen as an emotion which women are not taught or expected to express, and whose use is often defined as pathological (Lerner, 1985). Such approaches aim to encourage women to 'trust themselves, become more assertive, and be able to acknowledge and express anger' (Walker quoted in McLeod 1994 p. 21). (More recently, however, Ussher (1991) notes that too great a focus on assertiveness or social skills training has been criticized for emphasising deficits in women rather than strengths).

The particular focus of explanation used may also vary depending on the clientele identified by a therapist. These may include women sexually abused in childhood, physically abused as children or by partners in adult relationships, and women suffering from a variety of emotional problems including depression, anxiety, phobias, eating problems, substance abuse, as well as those suffering from physical or more severe mental symptoms. Thus therapists working with childhood victims of

sexual abuse, while placing their current symptoms within the framework of their powerlessness and exploitation by their abusers, may focus on the trauma arising from such abuse (Bass & Davies, 1988). Those working with mothers in statutory social work practice may focus on the ways in which those women can begin to take some control over their lives by challenging the accepted definitions of their roles and responsibilities (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989).

The responsibilities of the therapist or counsellor are also implicated in feminist therapy, and go well beyond individual counselling sessions, and the emphasis on creating a warm and caring environment and reducing power differentials. There is a stress on the responsibility of the therapist to work to reduce her own prejudices and to campaign more widely for social justice for women (Watson & Williams, 1992). Thus Rawlings and Carter (quoted in Ussher 1991 p. 233) argue that 'engaging in social action is an essential professional responsibility of therapists'. Counsellors and therapists may provide mutual support on a non-hierarchical 'equity' model, and campaign for change in social and economic conditions affecting the lives of their clientele. Many of these principles are laid down in guidelines for feminist therapists such as those initially developed by the Feminist Therapy Collective in the USA in 1978. Similar guidelines were adopted by the American and Canadian Psychological Associations in 1979 and 1980 (Watson & Williams, 1992).

## DOES IT WORK?

While the practice of feminist therapy and counselling has spread, most published accounts of its characteristics, aims or impact have been written by practitioners on the basis of their work with clients (eg. Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1985; Bass & Davies, 1988; Walker, 1990; Kaschak, 1992; Miller, 1994). As McLeod points out, while case-histories or 'composite characters' will be used to illustrate the kinds of problems presented by clients and the ways in which the feminist therapist has tried to work with them, there have been few attempts to examine how the clients themselves have experienced feminist therapy, or to explore the disadvantages of such work. The only example noted by Dominelli & McLeod (1989) was an evaluation of a feminist therapy and counselling clinic in Birmingham in the mid 1980's, in which former clients gave very positive accounts of the impact of the therapy on their lives.

This lack of more nuanced accounts of the outcome of feminist therapy was one of the motivations for McLeod's (1994) study of a feminist community clinic in England. Based on interviews with 19 women clients six months or more after leaving the clinic, as well as detailed discussions with the counsellors, she was able to explore both the benefits and difficulties encountered, the theoretical

basis of the counsellors' work, and some of the limitations of feminist therapy. In particular, she was concerned to explore the extent to which the centre was able to maintain the egalitarian principles of feminist therapy in its working practices and outcomes.

The women who attended that centre, gave clear and emphatic accounts of the benefits they had experienced from the sessions, sometimes after years of other treatment, or with longstanding problems. They felt they had been actively involved in the therapy process, rather than passive subjects, that counsellors had been very committed and worked with them as equals rather than hierarchically. Feminist therapy in this account had demonstrably improved the self-awareness and emotional well-being of the women clients. It resulted in a greater sense of assertiveness and control in their lives which was still evident six months or more after the completion of sessions.

This change in women's emotional state represents a massive achievement, set against the scale of their previous distress and the input of previous relationships and treatment. Years in what would have been defined as close relationships and well established state-funded treatment had not eased, but for the most part compounded the acute and chronic distress which women had suffered. Yet engagement in feminist therapy had lifted this. (McLeod, 1994 p.127)

for nearly all the women in the sample, the experience of feminist therapy emerged as being of immense and continuing benefit. Debbie's comment epitomized this: 'counselling did a wonderful thing for my life...I feel a general feeling of wellbeing.' (p. 131)

Such work is not, however, as McLeod stresses, without its limitations. In particular, the centre tended to attract mainly middle class women, and failed either to take on, or to take account of the different experiences of women who were marginalised because of their social class or colour, their age or their sexual preference. They were selective in choosing to work with women who seemed 'suitable' for psychotherapy, and who did not present problems such as homelessness or economic distress. McLeod also argues that the therapists tended to avoid certain issues, such as dominating or oppressive behaviour by some women clients.<sup>3</sup> Thus it was clear that in spite of attempts at reducing the power differential between clients and therapists, the latter still placed greater emphasis on their own skills. In this sense she reaches the same conclusions as other observers (eg. Ussher 1991; Kendall, 1994) and there are clear parallels with the critique of feminist methodology discussed in the previous chapter.

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She also suggests that individual counselling and therapy may divert attention from the need for other people to change their behaviour and obscure the need for alternative approaches to deal with distress (1994 p.137).

McLeod reserves her most serious criticism, however, for the deflection of attention from the need for long-term social change. While the women had certainly benefited emotionally from the therapy sessions, the counsellors had not encouraged them to work for social change beyond their own individual needs. Their commitment to a psychotherapeutic approach which looked for the roots of emotional distress in early childhood relationships, resulted in McLeod's view, in downplaying the significance of current pressures or relationships, and the impact of social inequalities in shaping their experiences. The therapy had become an end in itself : 'the proliferation of feminist therapy centres was endorsed as the solution to problems of women's emotional well-being' (McLeod, 1994 p.139).

This conundrum, as McLeod terms it, that the provision of therapy becomes an end in itself, while the solutions are seen as individual change rather than societal change, has been noted by other observers. In their discussion of the dangers of the impact of the therapeutic society on the issues of violence against women, for example, Russell and Emerson Dobash (1992) while acknowledging that 'certain of these approaches can benefit some individuals' argue that 'therapeutic relationships are the antithesis of the visions of activists seeking social change' (p. 213). A much more damning assessment of feminist therapy is reached by Ussher (1991) however, in her search for a satisfactory analysis of women's madness. She goes much further in her critique of both the theoretical basis and the practice of feminist therapy than McLeod, claiming that it is responsible for many of the grandiose and unsubstantiated claims that characterized the anti-psychiatry and societal reaction movements' critiques of orthodox therapies. She makes the sweeping assertion that 'the theories and solutions proposed by the anti-psychiatrists, the sociologists and the feminists are unsubstantial and unsubstantiated' (Ussher, 1991 p.206).<sup>4</sup>

Some of her criticism is familiar to feminism as a whole, particularly to radical feminism. Thus she rejects what she sees as naive assumptions about the sources of women's madness in patriarchy which are 'unidirectional, idealistic and utopian' (p.214). Reconstruction of the sources of madness in her view, does nothing to relieve the symptoms, it only:

empowers a new breed of experts to enter the market place of the mad, to pronounce and pontificate, to profit from despair, profiting from madness through peddling the latest cure: the latest therapy. This is not empowering. It further disempowers and objectifies the 'mad'.' (p. 220).

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Ussher (1991, p. 223) suggests that rhetoric and hyperbole are perhaps essential aspects of reformist endeavours.



Such unidimensional explanations in her view also treat all women and men as the same, ignoring racial and social class differences in the privileging of gender alone, and assuming for example, that all women would be better off outside heterosexual relationships. She is critical too of the assumption that mental illness is necessarily only subjective, and physical illness only objective, and of the wholesale rejection of scientific approaches and the medical model of explanation, arguing instead for the importance of maintaining a rigorous and systematic approach to inquiry and accepting that some medical solutions may be helpful.

In relation to feminist therapy specifically, she challenges what she sees as an attempt to promote a panacea for all personal and political ills, suggesting that in reality it is little different from traditional 'sexist' therapeutic approaches. Promoting misogyny as the root of women's madness, advocating that women become empowered to resist it, but ignoring immediate material and personal needs and individual differences between women, she argues, are not a realistic solution to the difficulties those women are experiencing. In the end women themselves are 'blamed' for not removing themselves from such situations. She also charges feminist therapy with being elitist in catering largely to a middle-class clientele, and using language and assumptions which may alienate others. She is equally damning about the possibilities and value of promoting an equal power relationship between therapist and client.

The notion of an 'equal' relationship in feminist therapy is also problematic, for how egalitarian and equal can any therapy be? One person is paid, is secure, has knowledge and training. The other is distressed, often frightened, and needing help. This can never be an equal relationship, and to pretend that it is may actually be dangerous and disempowering as it pays lip service to egalitarian practice, without fundamentally changing anything. (Ussher, 1991 p. 235).

In reality, feminist therapists do present themselves as experts with special skills, and some women may want to consult an expert, someone they believe really has the ability to know what to do. The notion of demystifying therapy she sees as tantamount to de-skilling, risking the offering, in the end, of only friendship. Nor does she see it as either practical or advisable for therapists to try to become town-hall campaigners for social and political change.

Thus Ussher questions how far feminist therapy is in the end unique, citing the work of Jerome Frank (1961) who identified what he saw as the 'universal features of therapy' or healing. In a similar discussion of the nature of the therapeutic process Littlewood (1992) argues that all therapies, including Western psychotherapeutic or humanistic approaches, of which feminist therapy forms a more recent variant, are culturally-bound. He cites Franks's 'universal features' as including:

- a socially recognized healer who has a superior status to the patient
  - who is trained in a particular technique
  - a shared model of explanation
  - a new perspective offered to the patient
  - mobilization of the patient's sense of hope
  - provision of experience of success in therapy
  - facilitation of 'emotional arousal'
- (Frank (1961) in Littlewood, 1991 p. 52).

As Ussher makes clear, feminist therapy clearly shares these features apart from others, although it claims to reduce the superior status of the healer.

McLeod's cautious endorsement of the benefits of feminist therapy and counselling for the women themselves, but more general criticism of the individualizing implications of feminist therapy in practice, contrasts with Ussher's damning critique. Such differences reflect in part their different positions. McLeod as a social policy analyst and working from a socialist feminist position has considered the role of feminist therapy and counselling for assisting women in the community with self-identified 'emotional problems'. Ussher as a clinical psychologist is concerned with the ability of orthodox medicine and twentieth century therapies, and their critics, the anti-psychiatry and societal reaction movements, as well as feminist critique and therapy, to actually explain and provide realistic solutions for women in acute mental distress.

In the end, Ussher herself is also guilty of the use of the extreme rhetoric and sweeping statements of those she accuses. Much of her critique of feminist therapy, for example, is aimed at radical feminism and therapy, and often at the earlier proponents writing in the 1970's when idealism and rhetoric were of necessity in greater evidence than carefully assessed accounts of practice. In the end she endorses a more eclectic approach to medical, therapeutic and theoretical paradigms, and argues that women themselves should be allowed to choose. Most of her invective is based on her reading of proponents of feminist therapy, and not on accounts of what those women who have experienced it have had to say. McLeod's account, based on a different clientele, written at a later date and from a perspective of women's grass-roots campaigning against violence, is based on a careful reading of what the women and their therapists said. In the end it is rather more positive, suggesting that outside the realm of madness and severe mental illness, there is room for approaches which look at women's position in familial and personal relations.

Feminist therapy and counselling can be seen, however, as part of a broader movement towards a more personal and individual-based approach to social problems, which highlights some of the

problems implicit in the feminist approach. Personal, domestic and private issues have become, particularly through the women's movement, public and political matters (see for example, Levine, 1982; Fraser, 1989; Cohen, 1996).

## NEEDS-TALK AND SELF-ESTEEM

It would appear that feminist counselling and therapy, however well articulated in theory, has moved away from the initial consciousness-raising notions of feminism. This aimed at raising awareness of women's oppression through discussion and group exploration, thereby reducing their sense of isolation and increasing awareness of the commonality of experience (Sheridan, 1990; Kitzinger, 1990; Armstrong, 1978). Counselling and therapy, in stressing the emotional needs of individual women, even within the structured context of gendered relationships, open the way for individual, rather than societal, solutions. They have moved from what Young (1994) terms 'dialogical' talk to therapeutic confessional talk. Some feminists still maintain, as did Mary Daly, that individual therapy is incompatible with the political goals of feminism, that it necessarily reduces issues to the personal (Kitzinger, 1993; Kitzinger & Perkins, 1993).

The growth of interest in women's emotional needs derives in part as has been seen from feminist concern with women's differences, and with the extent to which women's experiences differ from those of men (Gilligan, 1982). But it has also combined with contemporary interest in the self, with the quest for emotional happiness and fulfilment, and with that much sought after chimera<sup>5</sup>, self-esteem (Steinem, 1992).

A number of writers have focussed on the emergence of self-esteem as a primary technology for the development of 'appropriate' behaviour - a means of governing society. As Barbara Cruikshank (1993) has put it 'we make ourselves governable by taking the social goal of self-esteem'...'so that the police, the guards and doctors do not have to' (p.330). She traces the work of the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility (1990) which investigated the assumed causal links between self-esteem and six social problems: 'chronic welfare dependence', alcoholism and drug abuse, crime and violence, academic failure, teenage pregnancy and child abuse. The Task Force was, however, unable to identify any 'significant' associations between self-esteem

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In the sense of 'A mere wild fancy: an unfounded conception...' not a monster with lion's head, goat's body and serpent's tail. Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

and its expected social consequences' (p.332). What was in fact stressed by the Task Force was the absence of the thing. As Cruikshank puts it:

From the discovery of the absence of the thing, social scientists have created a tangible vision of a 'state of esteem'. (p.332)

Social scientists, she argues, have produced a set of social and causal relations where there were none before.

Such concerns do not trouble Gloria Steinem (1992) who in her personalized account of her search for self-esteem Revolution From Within goes so far as to argue that feminism rather than seeing 'the personal as political' should now reverse the adage to 'the political is personal'. In an apparent reversal of years of political activism and collective expression of women's repression, she blames the failure of the feminist movement and her own political career on her failure to look 'inwards' and consider her own personal needs and lack of self-esteem. Yet as Cruikshank makes clear, feminism has always espoused self-esteem, and divisions between 'personal' and 'political' are in her view irrelevant. They do not grasp the fact that self-esteem is yet another in 'a long line of technologies of citizenship'. (p.340)

Nikolas Rose (1990) whose work inspired Cruikshank's, has exposed the extent to which personal and private matters have become the object of expert knowledge and power. He argues that psychological knowledge of the individual enables government to 'measure' and 'work on' subjectivity:

in rendering subjectivity calculable it makes persons amenable to having things done to them - and doing things to themselves - in the name of their subjective capacities. (Rose, 1990 p.8)

Exploring the impact of these developments through individual therapies he traces the rapidly expanding range of therapeutic techniques 'through which individuals may seek a resolution of their inner distress' (p. 213). Unlike some commentators he sees the emergence of psychotherapy and self-healing not as a response to the loss of personal identity within the modern state, but as a way in which social ills can be addressed. The 'fabrication of the autonomous self' provides a point at which therapies can be used to regulate and self-regulate the individual who is 'free to choose' (p. 217).

Achieving freedom becomes a matter not of slogans nor of political revolution, but of slow, painstaking, and detailed work on our own subjective and personal realities, guided by an expert knowledge of the psyche. (Rose, 1990 p.253)

Ussher (1991) in her discussion of the rise of psychological therapies in the twentieth century, has also underlined the growth in the range of problems which can be 'solved' by such techniques. No longer restricted to the more extreme forms of psychiatric illness, they offer help, for example, with depression, anxiety, and phobias.

Rose argues that the notion of the free self-controlled individual plays a major role in behavioural therapy, which sees behavioural problems as arising from maladapted learning patterns to be modified through relearning, rather than from deep-seated traumas. Relearning involves small, systematic steps and self-regulation to manage the environment, with achievable goals followed by rewards. Thus he sees behavioural modification approaches as aligned with 'liberating theologies of self-assertion' (p.237). (The links to cognitive skills training programmes discussed in the previous chapter are evident in his account, and suggest that the relationship between behavioural modification and some aspects of feminist therapy is not as distant as it may seem).

Closely associated with notions of self-esteem and self-control and indeed one of the assumed mechanisms for achieving control and esteem, is that of empowerment, a concept and discourse intricately associated with feminism as has been seen.<sup>6</sup> In Cruikshank's view (1993) while techniques designed to increase self-esteem and self-control, to empower, may be liberating, they are also techniques for the subjection of individuals. Within the feminist lexicon, as has been seen, the notion of empowerment is employed to describe both a personal and collective process for taking control over one's own life. As Hannah-Moffat (1995) stresses it has largely arisen from, and been used in relation to women as victims of violence and not offenders:

For feminists, empowerment (ideologically, politically, and economically) has been traditionally embraced as a way of transforming the lives of women by limiting gender oppression. The language of empowerment emerging out of social movements had provided a base for many reform efforts. Empowerment strategies have been used by many activists to reorganize relations of power and effect organizational and policy changes. (p.155)

But as a number of writers have observed (Morley, 1993, Cruikshank, 1993; Young, 1994; Hannah-Moffat, 1995) it has also been appropriated and its meaning distorted. Thus Morley (1993) accounts how 'empowerment' in the context of state action on 'domestic violence' in Britain has been used to

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As Rock (1994) discusses, empowerment is an ambiguous and emotive term. It was much used by applicants to the Home Office Programme Development initiative, who saw it as 'the answer to the problems of the powerless, alienated and troubled' (p. 166).

describe the provision of panic alarms or video cameras to women at risk of abuse. And Kelly Hannah-Moffat (1995) in her discussion of the development of women-centred prisons in Canada, shows how the notion of empowerment embedded in the official Task Force recommendations has been transformed and appropriated by administrators as a form of 'feminized control-talk'.

As Iris Young (1994 p. 48) puts it 'Empowerment is like democracy: everyone is for it, but rarely do people mean the same thing by it.' In a discussion of the use of 'empowerment' in counselling and therapy, Young suggests there are two primary meanings: empowerment as a means of developing 'individual autonomy, self-control and confidence', and empowerment as developing 'a sense of collective influence over the social conditions of one's life' (p.48). It is the use of empowerment in the first sense in much counselling and therapy which concerns Young.

It envisions the development of personal skills and resources through which a person can learn to "be on her own," "get on her feet," and be able to cope with the situations and responsibilities she encounters. This meaning of empowerment tends to be short of a politicized understanding of the social structures that condition an individual's situation and the cultivation of effective action in relation to those structures. (Young, 1994 p.49)<sup>7</sup>

Two sets of processes appear to be operating here, therefore. On the one hand, there is the increasing tendency, identified by Rose and others, for therapy and counselling to be seen as a 'solution' to many individual and social problems, and with an emphasis on the individual as requiring change; on the other, there is the process by which radical claims for social change become transformed and incorporated by the state, and claims for social and political rights reduced to individual inadequacies. Pressures on feminist groups and networks, in terms of struggles to maintain funding or take on paid staff, can lead to the transformation of activist aims and the professionalization of counselling (Fraser, 1989; Dominelli & McLeod, 1989; Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

In a discussion of the role of what she terms 'needs-talk' in welfare-state societies Nancy Fraser outlines the ways in which issues which were formerly private matters move into the public and political zone:

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Cf. the traditional focus of statutory social work in Britain identified by Dominelli & McLeod (1989) as developing 'coping skills' rather than challenging women's familial role.

some matters break out of zones of discursive privacy and out of specialized or enclaved publics so as to become foci of generalized contestation. When this happens, previously taken for granted interpretations of these matters are called into question...(Fraser, 1989 p. 298).

In this process she identifies three distinct movements. The first involves the struggle to establish (or deny) 'the political status of a given need'; the second, a struggle to define and interpret such needs and how they might be satisfied, and the third and final stage of struggle to secure (or resist) such provision to satisfy them (p. 294). The public recognition of needs - when they have become politicized - then tends to lead to state provision, with social movements demanding 'satisfaction' of the needs identified. It is at this stage, she argues, that another set of discourses, those of the 'expert', takes over.

the rhetoric of expert needs discourses tends to be administrative. These discourses consist in a series of rewriting operations, that is, procedures for translating politicized needs into administrative needs....As a result, the need is decontextualized and recontextualized... (Fraser, 1989 p.306).

This process in which experts 'decontextualize' and redefine needs results, she suggests, in a 'repositioning' of those people. 'They become individual "cases" rather than members of social groups or participants in political movements.'(p. 306) Moreover, when such expert discourses become institutionalized within the state apparatus she suggests they become 'normalizing, aimed at "reforming" or more often stigmatizing "deviancy".'

This sometimes becomes explicit when services incorporate a therapeutic dimension designed to close the gap between clients' recalcitrant self-interpretations and the interpretations embedded in administrative policy....a deep self to be unravelled therapeutically. (Fraser, 1989 p.307)

As with many other observers Nancy Fraser illustrates these processes on the basis of the politics of needs in relation to wife-battering. She shows, for example, how when funding becomes provided for women's shelters, as a requirement of the funders, problems begin to be framed in 'quasi-psychiatric' rather than political terms. Battered women become clients, 'victims with deep, complicated selves' rather than potential feminist activists demanding social and economic independence (p. 309). There is a narrower focus on the problems of individual women and their 'low self-esteem'. Iris Young (1994) in her account of the development of treatment programmes for pregnant young drug-addicts in the United States, similarly shows how treatment claimed to be empowering is in fact used to adjust the women to the dominant gender, race and class structures, while depoliticizing and individualizing their situation.

As has been stressed in the previous chapters feminist perspectives have had least impact on, and paid relatively little attention to women in the correctional setting, and this observation applies equally to both the development of feminist counselling and therapy and the examination of its limitations. As Hannah-Moffat (1995) observes:

To date feminists have tended to embrace feminist-based therapies for women without clearly acknowledging and articulating the limits of this approach in prisons. (p.147).

What are the problems imposed by such a setting? How does intervention aimed at 'meeting women's emotional needs' become translated into 'correctional programmes'? Those problems include not only those which work at the structural and ideological level (as suggested earlier by Snider, 1994) in terms of the limitations imposed by the correctional setting in the case of the prison, or the correctional framework in the case of community sanctions, but the 'deeper' problems stemming from the personalizing of 'treatment' and 'change' (Rose, 1990; Cohen, 1996) and which are particularly embedded in the feminist approach to hurt and healing (Fraser, 1989; Cruikshank, 1993; Hannah-Moffat, 1995). The location of such a personalizing treatment within a correctional framework is a potentially liberating and empowering move, but also a potentially dangerous one as the following discussion outlines. The development of feminist therapeutic approaches within the prison exacerbates or brings with it a number of dangers additional to those threatening its use outside.

## FEMINIST THERAPY AND COUNSELLING IN THE CORRECTIONAL SETTING

Hannah-Moffat (1995), as discussed in Chapter 1, identifies the concept of the 'woman-centred' prison as a major problematic in reinforcing the notion that such a place will be 'benevolent, caring, therapeutic, and supportive' (p.146). In so doing, she suggests, men's prisons are set up as oppositionally different, non-caring and non-supportive, but more important, the oppressive, involuntary and disciplinary character of the carceral institution, whatever its stated characteristics, is obscured or denied. Nor is the notion of a 'woman-centred' prison either radical or original, but rather a modern variant of an institution based on the perceived needs of women, run by female staff, 'and integrating feminist, maternal and therapeutic discourses' (1995, p.143). And as she observes, implicit in the notion that it is possible to build a woman-centred prison is the notion that treatment 'works', that reform is possible.



She is critical of the universalizing characteristics in the Task Force Report Creating Choices with its explicit assumption that women in prison are disempowered like all women. This denies the impact of loss of freedom and of the carceral experience on women as prisoners and leads in her view to many flawed assumptions, such as the notion that women must, of necessity, be better cared for by female, rather than male, staff. It has also meant that the interests of a range of minority groups have been overlooked, in spite of the emphasis by the Task Force on the needs of the Aboriginal minority. Thus by setting up the notion of women prisoners as 'like' all women, by seeing men's and women's regimes as opposed, the realities of being a 'prisoner' and the wider place of punishment and the prison in society are downplayed or forgotten.

Hannah-Moffat is one of the few people who has begun to examine the implications of notions of empowerment and self-esteem - the two concepts which underpin much of the therapeutic discourse of the Task Force - within the correctional setting (1995, 1997; see also Kendall, 1993, 1994; Snider, 1994; Shaw 1992). She suggests that the initial use of empowerment in the Task Force report encompassed both the structural inequalities of women in society as a whole, as well as the particular disempowerment of women prisoners, although there was an emphasis on the latter. It was seen as societal, as well as inherent in the women themselves. In the operationalization and implementation of the Task Force report and the creation of the 'woman-centred' prison - a process conducted by Correctional Service Canada and largely excluding external community and feminist involvement - there has been a further selective emphasis on certain feminist ideas but not others. Thus empowerment comes to be seen as a way of adjusting women to the requirements of gender or racial norms. Since the primary responsibility of the correctional service is to protect the public, therapy becomes 'aligned with control and security'. Thus women defined as dangerous or violent, for example, come to be seen as needing more structure and intensive therapeutic programming.

But Hannah-Moffat is concerned to demonstrate not just the limitations of the operationalization of concepts such as empowerment and self esteem within the prison, and their appropriation by the prison administration, but the more fundamental problem of their links with the 'wider technology of self-governance' discussed above. For the correctional service responsible for developing the new women-centred prisons in Canada, empowerment is, Hannah-Moffat argues, clearly about 'responsibilizing' women offenders and making them accountable for their actions - regardless of the structural or situational limitations imposed by the prison on their lives inside, or their lives outside. It is not about empowering them in Young's (1994) terms 'to develop a sense of collective influence over the social conditions' of their lives.

"The objective of Corrections Canada is to empower women to accept responsibility and make good choices for themselves" (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990, p.91). Empowerment in this context has a different meaning from empowerment in a wider feminist discourse (which seeks to redistribute power and link women's oppression to wider structural inequalities). (Hannah-Moffat, 1995 p.156).

Empowerment becomes an individualistic process in which individual women are expected to avail themselves of prison programmes in order to prove their responsibility and suitability for promotion through the security system, for privileges and for parole. As Hannah-Moffat shows, therefore, empowerment is closely linked with notions of self-esteem and self-control so useful for 'self-governance'.

Self-esteem also played a prominent role in the therapeutic discourse of the Task Force. It is not without significance that a review of 'innovative' programmes in women prisons in the United States, conducted for the Task Force, identified self-esteem as one of the most important areas of programme development (Creating Choices, 1990; Axon, 1989).

Women in prison want programmes to enhance self-esteem and empowerment. In the review of exemplary programmes commissioned by the Task Force, a study of prisoners in Minnesota was summarized which reported that self/confidence/self-esteem training and development was one of the most highly rated needs. Similarly, in consultations done for the Task Force, a great deal of importance was placed on the provision of programmes designed to build self-esteem. (Creating Choices, p.130)

As has been pointed out elsewhere, however, programmes on self-esteem were not something women federal prisoners themselves identified as a need when their views were sought in interviews undertaken for the Task Force (Shaw, 1992)<sup>8</sup>. These are needs as defined by others. It is evident that what was being put forward in the Task Force and in the Minnesota report cited in Axon, are the views of staff or programme providers, or proponents of a feminist appropriation of the prison. And as Hattem (1990) has suggested the Task Force also appeared to deny that women were capable of making choices:

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It is also of interest that Axon's original report in its discussion of therapy programmes did not single out self-esteem alone, but listed 'the most highly ranked areas' needed by female inmates as 'self confidence/self-esteem, parenting skills, marriage and family relations, victimization, crisis intervention, medical issues unique to women....minority concerns/cultural differences and general information about drugs and alcohol. (Axon, 1989 p.52)

The inequities and reduced life choices encountered by women generally in our society, and experienced more acutely by many federally sentenced women, have left those women little self-esteem and little belief in their power to direct their lives. As a result, they feel disempowered, unable to help create or make choices, unable to help create a more rewarding, productive future, even if realistic choices are presented to them (Creating Choices, 1990 p.128).

When interviews were conducted with all women serving federal sentences in prison for the purposes of informing the Task Force, it was evident that there were differences between their views and those contained in the Task Force report, but also among the women prisoners themselves. Thus, for example, while some women prisoners were clearly against the employment of male staff in women's prisons, on the grounds of their past experience of abuse by men, others were indifferent or not opposed. While some women welcomed the possibility of being housed in a co-correctional prison, others were vehemently against the idea. And while the Task Force stressed the centrality of almost all women's experience of physical and sexual abuse and consequent trauma, their low self-esteem, and the urgency of providing programmes to deal with these needs, the most pressing concerns the women expressed were for work training and jobs (Shaw, 1992). Certainly many women requested programmes which would help them deal with substance abuse, and with their experience of abuse, but not self-esteem.

Kathleen Kendall has looked more specifically at the development of feminist therapy programmes at the women's federal prison as outlined in Chapter 1. Contracted to evaluate those programmes which had been established at the Prison for Women (P4W) in the period following the Task Force report her work initially focused on examining and evaluating practice (1993a; 1993b; 1993c). Subsequently she has explored some of the underlying principles implicit in both the women-centred prison and feminist therapy itself (1994). Like Hannah-Moffat, she has pointed to the reduction of 'the political to the personal' in the conceptualization of the women-centred prison.

Implicit throughout the Task Force Report and the implementation plans, is a psychological mode of understanding which concentrates on individual causes and cures. (Kendall 1994, p.5)

She has also explored some of the implications of this model, including the victimization perspective which she suggests rests upon a 'false universalism' in perceiving all women in prison to be victims. She sees the Task Force and the resulting implementation plan as 'shrouded in liberal feminist scholarship and language...' in which women are portrayed as victims of abuse requiring therapy to overcome past trauma.

This perspective denies women any agency, and directs them to continually regress inward and backward into past experience, rather than to move forward and look outward to more political understandings and actions. (1994, p.5)

As Kendall shows in her evaluation of the feminist therapy programmes at the Prison for Women conducted in 1992-3 the 13 therapists providing services at the prison stated that they worked from a feminist philosophy of therapy which stressed the importance of healing from trauma.<sup>9</sup> The extent of violence - both physical and sexual - experienced by the women in their lives was seen by the therapists as central to their approach and practice. The women themselves expressed strong feelings of emotional pain, anger, grief and frustration which they saw as arising from their lack of control in the prison.

It was clear, moreover, that the prisoners who took part in therapy felt they had benefited from the sessions and were 'overwhelmingly' supportive of the therapists at the prison. The majority of women in the prison (67%) were attending individual counselling sessions, waiting lists were long, and most felt more individual therapy should be made available. Nevertheless, Kendall suggests that such benefit derived as much 'from the practical assistance provided and the supportive human relationships' as from the particular therapeutic techniques used by the therapists (1994, p.6).

That individual prisoners benefited from their interaction with therapists at P4W cannot be denied. What was it about therapy at P4W that women found most beneficial? The prisoners identified the personal characteristics and approach of individual therapists to be very helpful. The therapists were very committed to the women with whom they worked, they put in many extra hours beyond the "call of duty". The prisoners stated that therapists provided them with a great deal of respect, and often showed support by advocating for them on various issues. The women felt that the therapists provided them with the elements they defined as therapeutic: a space to be themselves, assistance to be in control of their own lives and the experience of being valued by others. (Kendall, 1994 p.8)

It was also clear that equalization of power between therapist and prisoner is in this setting illusory. As McLeod and Ussher have also stressed, the therapeutic relationship can never be equal, but in prison that inequality is reinforced. Kendall is also critical of the ability of the therapists to meet the needs of the minority women in the prison, who included Black and Asian women as well as Aboriginal, and the French-speaking population.

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Kendall took a broad definition of therapy in that study, partly to accommodate the views of women prisoners on what they found 'therapeutic'. Thus she included not only feminist therapy conducted by clinical psychologists but also more general programmes on substance abuse, peer counselling, education (see Kendall, 1993a).

In the end, therefore, in spite of the enthusiasm of the women, Kendall reaches a similar conclusion to Hannah-Moffat. At the level of operationalizing empowerment through feminist therapy there are major difficulties. The prison is essentially unbalanced and coercive. Attempting to 'empower' women or to reduce power differentials in such a context is impossible. Therapy within the prison is a contradiction in terms, and the very qualities which women found therapeutic and healing (having space to be themselves, controlling their own lives, being valued by others) were precisely those denied by the prison regime. And there are many examples, as Kendall points out, of the misuse of therapy under the guise of treatment in prisons (Dobash, Dobash & Gutteridge, 1986; Sim, 1990; Faith, 1993.)

Thus Hannah-Moffat and Kendall's work suggests that when attempts are made to develop the concept of empowerment within the prison four things happen:

- i) empowerment becomes operationalized as a means of working to overcome deficiencies within the individual;
- ii) the broader social and structural notions of empowerment are ignored;
- iii) empowerment is in fact impossible, the control and power of the carceral system counteract any attempts by individual women to take control over their lives;
- iv) empowerment becomes re-written as a process of 'responsibilizing' individuals - a process of self-governance.

Other differences are also apparent. Contained within the Task Force, as Kendall has underlined, is the implicit assumption that since most women have been abused, most women need feminist therapy. Yet it cannot be assumed that feminist counselling or therapy benefits all women or is appropriate for their needs just because they are women, that it is what all women offenders will want. Unlike those in the community, women prisoners cannot be seen as self-referring themselves. In the correctional context there is little opportunity for offenders or therapists to 'select' whom they work with. There is no sense of client selection which might ensure a satisfactory therapeutic

relationship as occurs in some private practice.<sup>10</sup> Nor is there much possibility for the prisoners to seek alternative approaches or therapists.

In the prison, the focus of such an approach on an individual's experience, even when set in the context of her social and economic situation, must reinforce the tendency to privilege individual change over societal change. As discussed above, even in the community there is a tendency for feminist intervention to focus on individual change and to locate 'the problem' in the woman's own attitudes (McLeod, 1994). In the correctional setting there are even greater pressures to focus on individual change than in the community. These include the routine practices of institutional and bureaucratic case-management. Individual therapy 'fits', perhaps too neatly, into a correctional emphasis on individual treatment plans or case management strategies which require demonstration of personal change and acknowledgement of personal culpability before decisions about crucial issues such as placement, security level, privileges, family access, parole or release can be made. This would also appear to apply to parole conditions. A recent survey of federally sentenced women under community supervision, for example (CSC November 1995) suggested that the most common type of programme taken by women on parole was psychological counselling. Sixty percent of those for whom information was available had taken part in community counselling, almost all of it psychological counselling, and for the majority (81% of that group) it was a condition of their release on parole. Counselling and therapy would now appear to be among the most important defining requirements of parole decision-making for these women.

Additional pressures stem from the underlying assumptions about individual deficit entrenched in corrections, and the transgression of 'normal' standards of behaviour based on idealized notions of appropriate behaviour (including the white middle-class family). Thus Chunn and Menzies (1994 p.396-7) suggest that in the eyes of the correctional system, offenders who:

contravene the dictates of familial ideology routinely find themselves subject to intensified regimens of regulation and treatment.....[They] have not assumed their proper roles as wives/mothers, husbands/fathers in a nuclear family unit.

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Moorhouse (1992) notes the common finding that therapists tend to select patients who are young, attractive, verbal, intelligent and successful. One British study, for example, found that psychotherapists used the following criteria to select their clients: an absence of psychotic or obsessional characteristics, a continuous history of psychological disturbance of less than two years duration, current employment in a professional or managerial job [no less!], and high verbal skills, intelligence and motivation. (Shapiro et al., 1989 reported in Moorhouse p.89).

They are physically unattractive, verbally inarticulate and socially inept misfits living on the marginal edge.

Offenders can clearly be seen as needing treatment; and women offenders, given the implied greater transgression of their gender roles, to need treatment more than men. They have broken the norms of family life, sexuality, morality and productivity (p.411). What is of particular significance in relation to the development of feminist therapy in the prison, moreover, is that psychiatric discourse is deeply embedded in the correctional system. Chunn and Menzies argue in relation to forensic psychiatric practice that 'the unexamined assumptions about normality underlying the medico-legal discourse and practices of clinicians are rarely, if ever, explicitly stated. Forensic authority is instead deeply rooted in the power of therapeutic discourse and the hegemonic features of scientific knowledge systems.' (1994, p.397)

To this must be added the assumptions about the greater emotionality of women offenders, and the 'difficulties' of dealing with women prisoners, which are rooted in mainstream understanding of the prison (Pollock, 1984; Kersten, 1990; Baines and Alder, 1996). As Pollock suggests much of this view stems from stereotypical views of men and women. Institutional staff clearly assess women and girls as being more emotional and difficult to work with than men or boys. Baines and Adler (1996) found that staff working with female young offenders tended to label their needs as 'emotional' rather than 'practical' and described the behaviour of male young offenders as 'open and straightforward' (p.481). They suggest it is difficult to assess how far such gendered assumptions reflect actual differences in behaviour and differences in the experiences of the young men and women.

William Watson (1994) goes somewhat further in his analysis of the impact of feminism on therapeutic discourse. Based on discussions with forensic psychiatrists and psychologists working in the mental health and correctional fields in Ontario, he concludes that 'Where services are primarily psychiatric, a medical model of women's pathology continues to form the basis of institutional responses. The new feminist psychology of women seems to have virtually no impact' (p. 27). In the correctional setting, however, specifically at the Prison for Women, he recognizes that a distinct feminist clinical psychology has emerged and become influential in the development of services there.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, he sees this as severely compromised by the correctional setting. In

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This was in contrast to the provision of services for women in mental hospitals which he sees as provided by psychiatrists who firmly retain an ungendered view of mental health problems, and use

his view feminist therapists at that prison, while demonstrating some success in using a feminist analysis, have not been able to avoid a retreat into clinical psychology's classification of syndromes when working with what are seen to be the more 'difficult' women. They fall back on 'expertise' and categories such as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome rather than the women's own voices.

He suggests that the usual explanations for the failure of psychiatry to acknowledge feminist analysis, such as the rigidity of the profession and the destructive capacities of the prison, are misleading in being based on 'external' analyses of mental health and correctional practice. Rather he sees major limitations inherent in the existing feminist psychology of women which fails to confront the problem of severely psychotic women, those with learning disabilities, or most 'psychologically disabled' women, who 'have no voice'.

A deeper tension exists than that between correctional and feminist therapeutic orientations and practices; a tension at the heart of the therapeutic project successfully developed by feminist therapy and applied to a very disadvantaged group of women. Put simply, some individuals who experience abuse and neglect within their family relationships, within their broader social milieu, and within a variety of institutional settings...may have a variety of unpredictable and aggressive responses...(Watson, 1994 p. 31)

There is in his view a basic paradox, therefore, a 'need to provide for the personal transformation of very abused and exploited individuals which is a process of both empowerment and disempowerment' (p. 33).

It would seem, therefore, that in the prison setting the process of expert definition of problems outlined by Fraser and others, in this case the needs of women offenders as defined by feminists, has taken place. But clinical psychologists, as Watson shows, have not been able to reinvent psychology in such a restricted setting, and with women who have such severe experiences of disempowerment and abuse in their lives. The work of feminist psychologists who have spent a number of years at the Prison for Women has indeed been instrumental in the development of these programmes (eg. McLean, 1995; Darke, 1987). Their work makes enormous strides in trying to inform the psychological assessment of women offenders from a feminist perspective. Yet one recent paper (McLean, 1995) shows how much that work remains within the methodological and theoretical paradigms of forensic and male psychology. Moreover, the feminist therapy they have provided

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a standardised diagnostic matrix to explain behaviour.



forms only a small part of the overall treatment and programme provision within the correctional setting.

More recent developments relating to federally sentenced women suggest that the gains of the feminist therapists at the Prison for Women may have been partially eroded. Kendall noted that one of the concerns of prison staff, and indeed one of the reasons for her appointment to evaluate therapeutic programmes, was a fear that feminist therapy undermined the basis of the prison regime by destabilising prisoners.<sup>12</sup> It was seen as opening up a 'Pandora's Box' of personal problems which increased the chances of self-injury, suicide and volatile behaviour (Kendall, 1994). Similar comments arose in internal reports on the violent incident of April 1994 at P4W and which resulted in the appointment of an external Commission of Inquiry (Arbour Report, 1996). Furthermore, two recent reports commissioned by Correctional Service Canada suggest that there is a re-framing of issues of violent or disruptive behaviour. Women defined as having emotional problems which often lead to severe self-destructive and destructive behaviour are now being categorized, not as victims of abuse, but as suffering from Borderline Personality Disorder (Rivera, 1995; Whitehall, 1995). As Watson argues, borderline personality disorder is a standardized psychiatric diagnosis most often applied to women, but not one informed by feminist psychology.

Unlike Eileen McLeod's self-referrals to the community clinic, women prisoners do not voluntarily enter into prison, nor necessarily into therapy or counselling. The consequences for such women, with their implications for placement and privilege within the prison as well as parole and release, are rather greater than a partner who might be affronted by newfound empowerment. In the final analysis, therefore, there are major differences between implementing feminist therapy and counselling in the prison and outside. These include:

1. The carceral setting: prisoners are controlled and have much less power than non-prisoners - public safety considerations and the wider purpose of the prison in society predominate.

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<sup>12</sup>

Kendall was contracted to evaluate therapeutic services at Prison For Women in part to assist in the development of new programmes in the new regional prisons, in part on the recommendations of a number of prior reports and a 1990 Board of Inquiry investigating an attempted suicide at the prison.

2. The demands of the bureaucratic setting: programmes are delivered by experts and prisoners processed as individual cases which must be fitted into the correctional agenda of sentence completion.
3. Therapeutic programmes become not a question of choice but a tool for controlling and 'responsibilizing' women.
3. The clientele includes a high proportion of women with severe histories of abuse; substance abuse; eating disorders; prior psychiatric treatment; emotional problems.
4. These are often exacerbated by or initiated by the experience of being in prison.
5. Such problems feed into the existing presumption of pathology, the medicalization or psychiatrization of problems in a correctional setting, a process particularly applied to women, and the assumed greater emotionality of women.
6. Feminist prioritizing of women's emotional problems plays into this discourse.

One final issue deserves some attention here. The development of personalizing self-controls, and feminist counselling and therapy in particular, have been shadowed by a huge growth in media and popular interest in women's emotional condition, and this forms part of a broader endorsement of personal self-control.

#### HELP YOURSELF - THE SELF-HELP SYNDROME

One of the most curious side products of both the therapeutic society and feminist therapy and counselling is the use of and popularization of emotional self-help cookbooks, often based on 'popular' psychology. Such books, with their stress on self-motivated change have been seen by some as replacing the role formerly played by the church, the family or work relations in providing emotional support to the individual, and by others (eg. Rose as suggested above) as a technique for fostering self-governance and regulation. They often form part of the material used in feminist counselling and therapy. In a combative attack on both the 'recovery movement' and the popular literature of self-help, Kaminer (1993) argues that the 'recovery movement' has always played to women, and it has borrowed from feminism an emphasis on self-esteem and self-assertion, along

with the use of support groups to build a grass-roots movement.' (p.xxii) She sees both feminism and the recovery movement as sharing a focal point in domestic violence and child abuse.

Critiques of self-help literature, have pointed to its limitations. Such literature promises that individuals can become responsible for their own growth, that the answer to their problems lies within themselves without the need to change social or economic structures affecting their lives. Yet such claims are not always credible nor appropriate, and 'play into' the self-regulating underpinnings of social work as has been discussed above (and see also Kitzinger, 1990; Cruikshank, 1993; Kaminer, 1993; Stenson, 1993; Tavris, 1993). Such approaches become even less credible when the client population is especially marginalized as in the case of women offenders. There is a strong streak of infantilising in some of this literature, particularly that based on psychotherapeutic principles. Work on self-esteem, for example, often includes seeking your inner child, regaining a happy childhood, visiting the 'little girl inside you' (Bass & Davies, 1988; Steinem, 1992). Tavris (1992) argues that much of the literature directed at incest and childhood sexual abuse encourages the attribution of almost any personal and emotional concerns to childhood abuse, and promises recovery through deep individual work (cf. Nancy Fraser's account of victims of violence being seen as 'individuals with deep complicated selves').

Much of the popular self-help literature, and much of the published feminist therapy literature also assumes good levels of literacy, a certain degree of stability in terms of housing and employment, and certainly the freedom to move around and make life changes. Rose (1990) has provided a cutting critique of some of this literature. In a discussion of Eichenbaum and Orbach's What Do Women Want? (1982) he argues that it incites the reader 'to identify with narratives of needs and dependencies in relationships' and:

proceeds through a series of small vignettes, tales of relationships gone wrong, presented in the cloying language of romantic novels. ...It is a vocabulary which faces two ways: at once authoritative, justified by reference to the results of scientific investigation, and popular, recognizable by each of us as the common terms of description of personal relations. (p.251-2)

And what is the constituency for which the book is written? On the basis of the stories and vignettes Rose suggests they are 'young, urban, reasonably well off, disenchanted with all higher purposes, making their lives meaningful through food, wine and cinema - and 'relationships'.

Other books self-consciously provide suggestions which in the context of the lives of most women offenders are equally unreal. Clarissa Pinkola Estes in her book Women Who Run With The Wolves (1992) written in what she refers to as the cantodora tradition of storytelling, provides a list of 'General Wolf Rules For Life' as a guide to becoming 'instinctive with nature'. These are:

1. Eat
2. Rest
3. Rove in between
4. Render loyalty
5. Love the children
6. Cavil in moonlight
7. Tune your ears
8. Attend to the bones
9. Make love
10. Howl often

and, she recommends, 'For those who are struggling, it may help to begin with number ten.' (p. 460)

A major limitation with some of this material, therefore, is that it is community based, often written by therapists who work in a private setting and does not deal with the implications of poverty or race let alone correctional settings. In some cases the language used assumes a high level of literacy and may also be inappropriate, written for a middle-class audience or patients who can afford private therapy. It often assumes clients have access to counselling on a long-term basis, and stresses that it may require a number of years for effective work to be completed. Dusty Miller, a feminist clinical psychologist stresses the need in Women Who Hurt Themselves (1994) for alternative outlets for anger including its physical expression (shouting, screaming, playing sports) as well as relaxation and comforting activities (taking a warm bath, going shopping, talking with friends) which assumes considerable freedom and access to other support systems and resources. Such material rarely concerns itself with racism or minority status or with the effects of poverty. As McLeod (1994) has argued, feminist therapy itself seems limited in its capacity to reach women subject to greater social inequalities.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has explored a number of issues concerned with the development and characteristics of feminist counselling and therapy. It is seen as an overall philosophy of treatment rather than a particular technique, and may embrace many different types of therapeutic and feminist approaches. Its overarching characteristic is its focus on women and the analysis of the inequalities of power

relationships in society. It strives to 'empower' women by fostering the development of a warm caring relationship, by reducing the power of the expert and encouraging women themselves to take control of the therapeutic process and use their own resources, rather than see themselves as deficient. It has much to recommend it, and may at first glance avoid many of the pitfalls of traditional social work counselling or individual therapies which do not consider gender, assume professional expertise and a transfer of knowledge from professional to client, and which tend to reinforce dominant assumptions about women's role in society and pathologize distress.

It has been seen, however, that in keeping with earlier critiques of therapy and counselling, feminist approaches have often placed a heavy emphasis on critique and counterclaims, but have not always been able to show clear and substantiated gains for women. Underlying such approaches is an individualizing tendency which works continually to reassert the responsibility or the failure of the individual to overcome deficiencies. Some have argued that such approaches form another variant of the self-actualizing and self-governing processes of social control.

The transfer and adaptation of feminist counselling and therapy to the correctional setting presents additional problems. The correctional setting and a captive clientele, emphasise the weaknesses inherent in the individualizing therapeutic approach and place any discussion of power equalization in the cold light of reality. Custody is unequal power relationships. The institutional setting reinforces the notion of empowerment as a process by which the individual must regain personal responsibility, locating the source of distress and trouble in herself. It feeds into more general assumptions about gender differences in emotionality, in psychiatric explanations of women's behaviours and provides a 'new' technology for control over women's transgressions.

In addition, as has been suggested in Chapter 2, built into the notion of correctional programmes are assumptions about the measurement of success or failure. By intention and design feminist intervention does not lend itself to the kinds of measured evaluation favoured in corrections. It uses a variety of approaches, it privileges the choice of the client in the therapy process and downplays that of the therapist, it is often open-ended. Listening to women's experiences involves much more than gauging 'client opinion' to help evaluate change or 'success'. And it seems in total opposition to the tightly designed, targeted, repetitive cognitive-behavioural models now widely advocated in corrections.

The following chapter of the thesis now outlines the genesis of the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project and the methodology of the study. That programme involved the provision of

feminist therapy and counselling to women offenders primarily in the community, rather than the prison, and undertaken by a community chaplain rather than a clinical psychologist. It provides, therefore, an opportunity to examine the possibilities for the delivery of feminist therapy and counselling under rather different conditions, and on the basis of the women's own accounts, as well as to examine the problems of evaluating feminist programmes.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE COVERDALE COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY PROJECT

#### THE SITE OF THE STUDY

The Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project was developed, as Chapter 1 makes clear, in the context of a flurry of changing policies towards women offenders in Canada. These were rooted in a view of women as victims of violence in society, and women's offending as arising, at least in part, from their experience as victims of abuse. The prevention of offending, therefore, as well as other changes in their lives, required the resolution of those abuse issues using a feminist approach which would enable them to take control over their lives.

Within Nova Scotia there had been ample evidence of violence against women. This included the widely publicised trial and life of Jane Hurshman who killed her abusive husband in 1981 and her subsequent death under suspicious circumstances in 1992 (Vallée, 1989, 1993; CBC 1993); the murders of fourteen women in the province by husbands or partners between 1989 and 1992, as well as a spate of violence against teenage prostitutes in the Halifax-Dartmouth area in the same period.

By the early 1990's the Halifax-Dartmouth region had an established network of community organizations providing aid primarily to women, and informed to a large extent by a feminist perspective. Many of these organizations had been established in the early 1980's or grew out of others set up at that time, reflecting the general mobilization of women's interest groups in Canada. The network included shelters and housing projects, rape and sexual assault support services, addiction counselling and recovery centres, work and job-training services, family and single parent support services, prostitute support groups, Aboriginal and Black support groups.<sup>1</sup> They had links to academics and students in the local universities. Only two organizations, Coverdale Courtwork Services and the local Elizabeth Fry Society, were specifically concerned with women in conflict with the law.

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<sup>1</sup> The extensiveness of the network is evident in The Handy Dandy Directory of Resource Centres and Resource Contacts in Metro (K. Anderson and N. Battaglia, The Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group, 1993).

The network included voluntary organizations existing on fund-raising and short-term grants from local, provincial or federal governments, as well as some more stable government-funded services. It made ample use of volunteers and trainees. While extensive the network was, nevertheless, financially precarious, subject to cuts in government funding and increasing costs. Given their vulnerability, as well as their common interests, there was considerable interaction between the organizations. They sat on each other's boards, made representation to authorities in support of member organizations in trouble, but more importantly, they referred their clients - women living to a large extent in poverty or experiencing violence - to each other for services and support.

Coverdale Courtwork Services had grown out of a foundation established in the 1920's by Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches in the Maritime provinces. The Foundation has established the Home for Young Women at Coverdale, New Brunswick in 1926, to serve as a minimum security prison. In the early 1970's the Foundation decided to redirect its 'mission to perform charitable work' 'for the female offender or women at risk of coming into conflict with the law' to community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for women, rather than incarceration. The home was sold, and funds invested to provide an income to support workers in two cities, Halifax, Nova Scotia and St John, New Brunswick.

In Halifax, Coverdale's main focus was on providing an assistance programme to women appearing before the provincial courts on criminal charges. This included practical information, emotional support, and referrals to legal, social or other services. In addition, Coverdale workers provide counselling and support services to women in the community and on institutional visits to the local Correctional Centre. Apart from direct service, the organization attempted to broaden understanding of the needs of women offenders by providing speakers and information kits to schools and other groups in the community.

Some of the organizations in the Halifax-Dartmouth network provided individual or group counselling for women with histories of abuse, but not specifically for women offenders, and Coverdale's own counselling services were not seen as sufficiently intensive for those women most in need. Thus in 1991 the Rev. Mary Haylock, a United Church Minister, was invited to serve as Chaplain to Coverdale and to develop a programme of more intensive counselling. The project was to be part of a 'continuum of care' offered by Coverdale as a whole, ranging from courtwork services, through community support and counselling to the Chaplaincy project.



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY PROJECT

Following extensive experience as a mother, in nursing, as a community volunteer, and in youth work and community counselling, Mary Haylock had graduated from the Atlantic School of Theology and been ordained in 1988. The Chaplain's initial experience of working in the Halifax Correctional Centre, as part of a fieldwork placement with Coverdale Courtwork Services in 1986, suggested that there was a need for some form of pastoral counselling with women offenders at the Centre and on release into the community. In particular, it was argued that the women had little 'supportive care', that their lives were often characterized by repression in many forms including poverty, abuse in childhood or from current partners, disempowerment within the correctional system, and a lack of self-determination. Release from prison usually entailed a return to the same circumstances they faced at the time of their arrest, and minimal support. There was in the Chaplain's view 'a piece missing' in their lives, given the very limited amount of advocacy or programme support available to them in prison or the community.

The original conception for the project involved the provision of individual pastoral counselling within a feminist framework to women offenders at the Halifax Correctional Centre or referred by the courts, probation service or other community organizations. In addition, the Chaplain was to run workshops on anger management for staff and volunteers working in community organizations, and provide staff training sessions for probation officers. Work on the project began in March 1991, and funding for a six-month pilot project was obtained from a federal government department Employment Canada in July 1991. Despite active efforts to obtain follow-on funding at the end of the pilot period, none was obtained. Coverdale felt the work too important to abandon, and a moral obligation to the women using the service, given the absence of similar programmes in the area to which they could be referred. Work continued with the salary of the Chaplain paid by the Coverdale foundation (but not without serious difficulties) until more extensive funding was finally obtained in November 1992.

From the beginning of 1992, considerable time was spent by Coverdale personnel preparing funding proposals, and meeting with or contacting possible funding sources. Funding was sought for a three year period initially. A letter-writing campaign was organized to demonstrate the breadth of support for the project in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Some forty organizations and individuals who had used, or were aware of the need for the project and of its potential, wrote in its support to provincial and federal government departments. They included clients who had received counselling, doctors, lawyers, probation officers, correctional staff, judges, community organizations, politicians and civil

servants. Not least among them were provincial civil servants in the corrections field who vigorously recommended the project to the federal government, but who were subsequently to downplay its importance and to deny the project funding.

The proposal for the Community Chaplaincy Project completed in July 1992 outlined an expanded and ambitious concept. It proposed the inclusion of not only individual counselling to women, but also counselling and training for staff working in the correctional centre and organizations associated with the project, and 'informed spiritual support for everyone involved in the criminal justice system in this area'. It proposed public education activities to extend awareness of the needs of the client population. It proposed the setting up of a project advisory committee. And in keeping with its feminist framework, it outlined a programme of participatory research and self-evaluation.

Relying extensively on the report of the federal Task Force Creating Choices as well as the just completed Nova Scotia report on women offenders Blueprint for Change (see Chapter 1) the project identified 'unresolved abuse issues as contributors to women's involvement in criminal activities' as well as 'lack of coping skills and appropriate role models in their lives' (Project Proposal, July 1992). The provision of services to staff - a part of the proposal subsequently excluded from the funded project - reflected Coverdale's experience of working with other care-givers in the correctional field including prison staff, probation and parole officers, and transition house workers:

We observe that the personal, emotional and spiritual demands of their work are intense. We perceive a need for support and nurture of such people to enable them to care and be cared for in their role and function in the delivery of services within the justice and corrections community. (Project Proposal, July 1992).

In relation to research activities and project evaluation the project proposal argued that an 'alternative paradigm approach' was required. This drew heavily on the work of the Women's Research Centre and their guidelines for community action research and evaluation, as well as the feminist action research model proposed by Maria Mies.<sup>2</sup> Thus research and evaluation were 'to be an intricate part of the project' 'directed by the women themselves' 'as we believe they know best what they need' (Coverdale Project Proposal July 1992). This would require a 'participatory research' approach combining investigation, education and action. The women in the project were to become the subjects of their own research and action, and the researchers to become active

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See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the Vancouver-based Women's Research Centre (Ellis, Reid & Barnsley, 1990; Barnsley and Ellis, 1987), and Mies, 1983.

participants rather than 'contemplative uninvolved spectators'.

The view from above (that of the researchers) will be replaced by the view from below (that of the women) in order to eliminate the unequal distribution of power often present in a situation between "researcher" and "research objects" (Project Proposal, July 1992).

Evaluation of the project was similarly to use a process of 'participant focused evaluation' which 'recognizes the knowledge and expertise of those who direct and do the work and those who are the users of the work.' They would collectively examine their goals and how far they were being met, 'identify the factors that influence the group's effectiveness...to determine improvements, if any, that should or could be made', and work to educate the wider community. Such committed goals did not impress the federal funders of the project.

## NEGOTIATING FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT

Partly on the recommendation of a local Member of Parliament who was an active supporter of women's issues, application was made to the federal department of the Solicitor General for funds for programme development under its Family Violence Initiative (see Introduction and Chapter 1). The federal government for its part was willing to sponsor projects which fell within its mandate to develop responses to family violence, and which sounded promising. Thus there was a coincidence of interest in violence against women at this point. The project proved to be of interest to a number of groups within the federal arena, including the department responsible for Chaplaincy services within Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and the Department of Justice. Its main allies, however, were women responsible for research and project development within the Secretariate of the Solicitor General who saw the need for programmes for women offenders, and an opportunity to test out the possibilities for feminist intervention. Without their support and promotion, the project would probably not have received funding.

After extensive negotiation agreement was finally reached on funding in the Autumn of 1992. Coverdale was forced to make considerable concessions:

i) Funding was to be provided by the federal government on a one-time basis for a period of 18 months, not three years. While the majority of the funds were provided through the Family Violence Initiative from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the federal Department of Justice, Coverdale itself was to provide some funds, and services in kind were also to be provided by the Nova Scotia

Department of Justice. Together these sources were to provide total funds of \$130,437 for the 18 month period.<sup>3</sup>

ii) This funding was to pay the salaries of the Chaplain and the project assistant, travel costs, costs incurred by clients in attending sessions (transport and child care), resource materials, office space and equipment for the provision of individual and group counselling. However, the provision of counselling support to community organizations, staff training and counselling in correctional institutions, and the participatory research and evaluation proposed by Coverdale were all excluded. The funders thought the range of activities too broad and likely to dilute the focus of the project and stretch the resources of the Community Chaplain herself.

iii) Instead, and in part at the request of the Chaplaincy services in CSC, the project was asked to 'develop networks with other community agencies, churches and volunteers to ensure access to a broad range of resources for the women, and to support the work of the chaplain'. (Letter from project officer, Solicitor General September 1992). They saw the project as an opportunity to mobilize church members and volunteers in support of offenders.

iv) In place of self-evaluation, the project was to be subject to an independent external evaluation. Since it was a requirement at the federal level that project development initiatives be evaluated, separate funding was to be provided by the Ministry of the Solicitor General for this purpose.

Under the terms of the federal grant, therefore,<sup>4</sup> the project was funded 'to develop a feminist approach to pastoral counselling to women who are in conflict with the law, and who had been victims of family violence. The chaplain would be available to both federally and provincially sentenced women' (Letter from project officer Solicitor General, September 1992).

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It is of interest that this was considerably less than the 3 year and £300,000 limits placed on applications for programme development funds from the Home Office in 1992 (see Rock, 1994).

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As outlined in the letter setting out the terms of the Contribution Agreement, August 1992.

## THE PROJECT EVALUATION

For the Secretariate of the Solicitor General, the overall purpose of the evaluation was to aid in the development of policies and programmes for women in conflict with the law. It was designed as a 'process or formative evaluation' (see Chapter 2) which would attempt to document the activities of the project, as well as to assess its impact on the women going through it and on those community agencies involved. The underlying premises of the intervention 'model' were to be examined, and information was to be fed back to the project and funders periodically 'so that any necessary adjustments to project operations could be made' (Request for Proposal, April 1993). Following a competition in which proposals were sought from a variety of researchers, the evaluation of the Community Chaplaincy Project was funded for a period of 10 months - from July 1993, nine months after the start of the project - to April 1994, one month before federal funding ended.

Thus while not expected to develop 'objective' measures of reconviction, the evaluation was nevertheless required to provide some assessment of the 'impact' of the project on the clientele, and to do so in an independent and distanced way. The evaluation was clearly perceived by the project as being imposed on them for the purposes and interests of 'others'. It was to be conducted by an outsider, subject to the process of competitive contract invitation, appraisal and selection, and without seeking their views. The choice of evaluator rested with the federal government. Thus, the feminist ideals of participatory research and self-evaluation were already breached before the evaluation began.

Prior to contact with the project, the evaluation planned to use a feminist approach to compliment the feminist framework of the project, using Maureen Cain's notion of seeking 'good knowledge' and of 'making alliances' (see Chapter 2). It was anticipated that the participants, both project staff and clients, should take part in helping frame the process of evaluation, that the researcher should question the imbalance of power between herself and clients in the project and declare her own viewpoint, and that the overall purpose of the project was to be of benefit to the women themselves. A broad range of strategies, of which the experiences of the women would form a central part, was planned to become familiar with the organization of the project, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention model, the extent to which the pastoral and feminist principles of the project were borne out in practice, and examine its impact on clients and organizations using the project. All of these activities were to be dependent upon discussion and agreement with the Chaplain and her staff and the women taking part in counselling. These strategies included:

- i) analysis of texts and documentation outlining the project's rationale, the approach and strategies being used in counselling sessions, and what were termed 'outreach' activities by the Chaplain;
- ii) in depth interviews and conversations with the Chaplain and her assistant and other Coverdale staff;
- iii) participation in routine activities with the Chaplain, including visits to the Halifax Correctional Centre and attendance at Project Advisory Committee meetings;
- v) the compilation of basic file information about project clients to provide a profile of client characteristics and offence histories, sources of referral, waiting times, screening procedures, length of stay in the project and the characteristics of counselling sessions.
- vi) observation and participation in group discussions and in-depth interviews with a sample of clients going through the project; possible use of diaries, and interviews with family members.

While most of these activities did take place, the development of the evaluation followed a much less participatory style than envisaged. Given the imposition of an independent evaluation and the choice of an evaluator from outside the province (let alone the project) it was necessary to undertake a lengthy series of negotiations to establish the parameters of the evaluation and gain access to documentation and clientele, as well as win the 'trust' of the project. This was undertaken over the course of a series of visits to Halifax. In addition, two locally-based women were recruited as research coordinators to undertake follow-on interviews with clients, attend occasional meetings and provide continuity for the evaluation.

The project found it difficult to accept an independent evaluation, and was wary of the motives of the evaluator who they saw as employed to work for the federal government. In a sense the project reacted, certainly initially, with 'acute distrust' and 'felt that they were being interrogated' (Mies, 1983 p. 123). In addition, confidentiality was seen by the project as one of its central principles. It was felt, for example, that direct access to case-records identifying both the women and the content of their discussions and disclosures to the Chaplain would breach that confidence. This was not seen

merely as a question of ensuring anonymity, but of breaching a promise given to all clients. The only routine information made available, therefore, were intake forms completed at the time of the initial interview, and case summaries prepared by the Chaplain on a third of all clients, in both cases excluding any identifying information. Thus the project was protective of documentation and clients, acting as gatekeeper and effectively restricting access to both, and in a sense resisted attempts to develop a more participatory approach by limiting the time available for meetings and discussion. The implications of these issues for feminist evaluation will be returned to subsequently.

In the course of the evaluation it was possible to undertake an analysis of texts and documentation; interviews with project and Coverdale staff, and participation in routine project activities; visits, observation and interviews with 30 people in network organizations, emergency and sheltered housing, the courts, the Correctional Centre, and probation and parole offices all of whom referred clients to the project, or to whom project clients were referred. Basic file data and case summaries were also collated for some of the 214 clients entering the project prior to and during the main project period. Finally, allowing some of the women's own voices to be heard, 40 in-depth interviews with women going through the project were completed, 25 in the community, and 15 at the Halifax Correctional Centre. (Additional information on the methodology of the evaluation is included in Appendix I).

By the beginning of the evaluation in July 1993 the project had been fully operational for nine months. Staff were in place, working methods established, and the advisory committee actively engaged in the development of publicity and descriptive material about its activities. At the request of the Federal government the Chaplain forwarded monthly reports on project progress, and had undertaken to write a 'draft prototype' of the project model.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of written accounts, including the Project Proposal of July 1992, the draft Prototype of a Community Chaplaincy Project (August 1993) monthly reports to the Federal government and project publicity material, and discussions over the course of the evaluation with the Chaplain, project and Coverdale staff, it was possible to construct the following account of the theoretical basis of the project and how it worked.

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A prototype usually refers to an original model upon which copies can be based. In this case it was essentially a shorter version of the original project proposal.

## THE COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY MODEL

'Empowering women to help themselves'

The project motto, 'empowering women to help themselves' encapsulated the feminist purpose of the project and indicated that this was no ordinary chaplaincy work. The project was seen as having two main components, a foundation in chaplaincy and a feminist framework, both of which shaped the type of counselling and the manner in which it was offered. As defined in the project proposal:

Chaplaincy is a specialized ministry offered in the context of hospitals, institutions....A chaplain is one who offers care, support and counselling which embraces all aspects of a person's life and living, while celebrating and validating each individual's unique human worth. (Project Proposal, July 1992).

A community chaplain is not tied to a specific site and thus has greater freedom and flexibility to work with clients in the community or in prison than a prison chaplain.<sup>6</sup> The counselling role of a chaplain, often referred to as 'pastoral counselling' was seen by the project as particularly appropriate for women who were experiencing considerable stress in their lives. It offered spiritual healing 'through prayer and the healing of the separation of body, mind and spirit resulting from trauma/abuse and other situations of oppression', as well as counselling based on what the Chaplain referred to as a 'personal operating philosophy' of empowerment.

Spirituality in the context of the project was seen as a broad concept, encompassing all relationships, not just a woman's relationship to God, but to all other people and herself. It assumed that women entering into counselling needed to discover ways of 'valuing themselves as unique human beings', and that their spiritual needs could be 'naturally built into pastoral counselling'. It was also regarded as essential that a woman's cultural background and personal experiences be respected in any spiritual matters.

Pastoral counselling was thus seen by the project as holistic in that it dealt with the whole range of practical, personal and spiritual aspects of life. It stressed 'unconditional acceptance' of the woman

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A number of community chaplains currently work in association with federally sentenced offenders in Canada, following the model established by Pierre Allard in New Brunswick (see for example the video Friends on Main Street, August 1991). The work of Coverdale's Community Chaplain differed in a number of important respects, however, in that she worked within a feminist framework and offered more specialized forms of counselling and therapy.



herself, and absolute confidentiality. The delivery of pastoral counselling to offenders - part of a 'kinder' 'gentler' way of governing - as Hannah-Moffat (1997) describes it - has long-established roots. As she shows in her discussion of Christian pastoralism in women's prisons it combined maternal and pastoral strategies to govern women offenders.<sup>7</sup> What made the Chaplaincy project unusual, however, was its grounding in feminist theology and liberation theology<sup>8</sup>, as well as the expanding secular field of feminist counselling and therapy. Those theological movements have challenged traditional Western theology for supporting power structures, including the church, which oppress the poor, racial and cultural groups, and women, and for stressing the values of individualism and independence rather than interdependence and community.

An important factor....is a critical understanding of the role played by the doctrines and practices of religious traditions in reinforcing belief systems, attitudes and messages which sustain the structures that victimize and disempower women. (Project Proposal, July 1992).

While the Chaplain was an ordained United Church Minister, no particular denomination was stressed, nor were spiritual issues necessarily raised. The only occasions when clerical dress was worn were for performing ceremonies for clients at their request, such as baptism or burial. And following the writing of feminist theologians Rosemary Radford Ruether (1985 a & b) and Plaskow and Christ (1979, 1989) the approach to ceremonies and spirituality stressed, among other things, the involvement of women themselves in designing services and celebrations which were not within the parameters of the traditional church. Similarly, there was a preference for working in settings which were familiar and comfortable to the women, or which they had themselves arranged and decorated.

Thus there appeared to be considerable compatibilities between the feminist theology of the Chaplain and secular feminism. Her approach to pastoral counselling, like feminism, stressed support, understanding and acceptance, and rejected the traditional views of women's place and role in society. The aim of pastoral counselling within this framework was to enable women to understand their situation within society, to provide them with opportunities to identify their own needs, and

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This linking of maternal and pastoral strategies was first exemplified by Elizabeth Fry as Hannah-Moffat shows (1997).

8

See, for example, the work of Ruether (1985a & b) and Plaskow and Christ (1979 & 1989). For a discussion of liberation theology see Braugh, undated.

most crucially, to develop their own solutions. In keeping with a feminist framework, therefore, there was an emphasis on reducing the distance between the Chaplain and her client, on the sharing of experiences, on empowering her to develop her own solutions, rather than telling her what to do, on stressing that 'a woman is her own best therapist':

The core of the ministry is to encourage these individuals to regain and maintain a semblance of personal power to then begin taking responsibility for their actions and lives. (Project Proposal, July 1992).

The project drew heavily on secular feminist literature and working materials on therapy and counselling.<sup>9</sup> The work of the feminist psychotherapist Ellyn Kaschak (1993) for example, provided an important resource with her stress on a 'complex integrated approach' (p.29) avoiding a dualistic or reductionist division of mind and body. The project also adopted the Ethical Guidelines developed by feminist therapists in the USA.<sup>10</sup> These included:

- i) the recognition of cultural and social differences between therapists and clients, whether in terms of class, race, sexual orientation or gender, and the responsibility of the therapist to confront her own biases;
- ii) the reduction of power differentials between client and therapist, including the use of self-disclosure, mutually negotiated contracts, and educating clients about their rights as consumers;
- iii) the recognition of potential overlap between a therapist's responsibilities, and the importance of respecting client confidentiality and personal boundaries in public and private;
- iv) maintaining therapist accountability by working only within her realm of competence; working to continually evaluate, maintain and improve professional competence, feminist psychology and knowledge, and her own emotional well-being;
- v) maintaining a commitment to social change through intervention on behalf of clients, and through public education and advocacy among other activities.

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<sup>9</sup> Eg. the work of Ellen Bass & Laura Davies (1988) Sandra Butler (1978) Harriet Goldner Lerner (1985, 1989, & 1993) and Ellyn Kaschak (1993). In August 1993 the Chaplain attended a Workshop Self in Context: Feminist Therapy in Practice given by Sandra Butler and Ellyn Kaschak.

<sup>10</sup> Feminist Therapy Ethical Code, Feminist Therapy Institute 1987, in Appendix 1, Prototype of a Community Chaplaincy Project (August 1993).

## PROJECT STAFF AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

From the beginning of the main project in November 1992 the project staff had consisted of the Community Chaplain and the Project Assistant. The latter played a crucial role in relation to clients and the scheduling of the Chaplain's activities. Apart from routine administrative work, preparation of minutes of meetings and monthly reports and file maintenance, this included making bookings, reminding or rescheduling clients in the event of crisis sessions, dealing with calls or visits from clients who wanted reassurance or information, and spending time with those clients coming out of sessions who needed support in 'winding-down'.

Additional project support was provided from time to time by volunteers and students in training. A member of Coverdale's courtwork service working on a student placement undertook individual sessions with clients, and made home visits to women needing particular support. Women who had themselves been clients of the project worked at the office or as outreach workers for current clients, helping with household and family routines or literacy, for example. An AA Sponsor undertook group meetings with some of the Chaplaincy clients. All those associated with the project, therefore, had extensive experience of working with women in conflict with the law, or had themselves experienced the justice system or undertaken counselling and all had access to resource materials and books available to clients.

The project Advisory Committee had been set up early in 1993 to provide community knowledge and support to the project and personal support to the Community Chaplain, to act as a forum for the discussion of project problems, and to provide accountability for funds and development of the project. The Committee also saw its role as educational, in being able to speak about the project and the needs of the women to a broader public. At the time of the evaluation there were 17 members on the committee, including some former project clients, although only 8-10 members would usually attend meetings. They represented community organizations providing services to women, the correctional system (a probation and a parole officer and the Administrator of the Female Unit at the Correctional Centre) the Atlantic School of Theology, a doctor, and community representatives. The Chaplain, the project assistant and the Executive Director of Coverdale formed the remaining members.<sup>11</sup> The committee was scheduled to meet monthly, 'or as necessary'. The tasks undertaken

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Membership of the Advisory Committee changed from time to time. The first member representing a Black community organization in the area joined the Committee in 1993.

by the Committee included the development of the Prototype for a Community Chaplain Project, an ethics and protocol guide for the project and the Advisory Committee, and a project publicity brochure, but increasing as the project progressed a greater amount of time was spent on fund-raising issues.

## WORKING METHODS

### Social Work, Counselling and Therapy

While the project had been established to provide counselling and therapy, by the Chaplain's own account much of the work involved more basic support and social work. This included helping with housing, clothing, day-care arrangements or child custody cases, and contacting and accessing other agencies. It might also involve crisis intervention on behalf of a client who was homeless, suicidal, or in need of detoxification, for example, as well as pre- and post-release planning for women in the Correctional Centre. In the Chaplain's terms this helped 'to stabilize a woman's life' before work on personal issues - and what she saw as her primary role as a counsellor and therapist - could begin.

For the Chaplain social work was to be distinguished from both counselling and therapy in terms of the extent to which the latter dealt with more personal issues, and their use of a variety of working techniques.<sup>12</sup> The overall approach to counselling and therapy in the project was referred to by the Chaplain as 'reflective listening' using the PLISSIT model. This entailed moving from:

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| P  | <u>permission</u> giving - it is OK to talk about this... allowing women to talk about difficult issues;       |
| LI | the offering of <u>limited information</u> that she (the therapist) or other women have shared such a problem; |
| SS | offering <u>specific suggestions</u> about ways of dealing with the problem; to                                |
| IT | <u>intensive therapy</u> .   |

The first two levels of work were seen by the Chaplain as counselling, the latter two as therapy. In practice, as was discussed in Chapter 3 it was not easy to draw a line between counselling and therapy. Much depended in the Chaplain's view on the amount of work undertaken by a woman herself, the pace at which she wished to work, and on the intensity of personal disclosure.

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<sup>12</sup>

Cf. Wilson (1973) who distinguishes between pastoral care, pastoral counselling and psychotherapy as requiring increasing levels of competence and training.

Counselling might be used for a variety of purposes such as work on parenting skills, goal planning, 'values clarification' and communication and spirituality. Both counselling and therapy were used in dealing with the personal and family 'roots' of problems including sexual or physical abuse and the trauma associated with them, issues of self-esteem and identity, grief and loss, the management of anger or emotion, and sexual identity.

A variety of techniques, materials and tools was used by the Chaplain. They included meditation to aid relaxation, the development of strategies to attain personal power, and in some cases techniques such as 'ego state therapy' used in the treatment of multiple-personality disorder (MPD).<sup>13</sup> The latter was undertaken jointly with a psychiatrist who specialized in working with women who have experienced extensive trauma. Relaxation techniques and guided imagery such as a 'flower' exercise and a 'spirit guide' were used to enable a woman to find a 'safe place' where she could 'just be herself', 'to recharge her batteries', enabling her to feel safe from the fears or anxieties often associated with trauma, and to 'regain a sense of control and freedom'.

Materials and tools were similarly drawn from an eclectic variety of sources, but most of them reflecting feminist and self-help approaches and using the language of the recovery movement. They were always subject to prior use by the Chaplain herself. They included a wide range of books which women were encouraged to read focusing, for example, on understanding anger or changing patterns of relationships<sup>14</sup>; journal writing, allowing women to put down very sensitive events and ideas they might be unable to talk about; 'am-pm check-ins' to trace patterns of moods or events; and a range of exercises focusing on self-esteem or assertiveness, or on recognizing, analysing and controlling anger, 'do-it-yourself' stress tests, a 'cost-promise box' to help determine the personal risk of disclosure of a problem, and goal-setting guidelines and sheets. Some of this material including the 'am-pm check-in' did not require fluent literacy. For women who were illiterate or uncomfortable with writing, other devices such as family photographs were used to explore patterns of family history or relationships, and comics or drawings to help women construct and examine relationships or events.

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<sup>13</sup>

See Van der Kolk & Van der Hart (1991) for a discussion of MPD and Borch-Jacobsen (1997) for a critique.

<sup>14</sup>

In particular, the work of Harriet Goldhor Lerner (1985, 1989, & 1993) Louden (no date) Bass & Davies (1988) and Schaef (1990).

The Chaplain saw her work as differing from that of the feminist therapists working at the Prison for Women, not only because it was based in the community, but because she offered a range of assistance including social work, counselling and therapy, rather than primarily intensive therapy, and dealt with a range of issues of which experience of abuse formed only one part. Nor was she a trained psychologist or psychotherapist. Thus she regarded her approach as holistic in terms of both the type of assistance offered, and the range of issues addressed.

Overall the style of the Chaplain's work would appear to incorporate aspects of both the humanistic and psychoanalytic approaches to feminist therapy and counselling discussed by Ussher (1991) and McLeod (1994). But she also made considerable use - in keeping with others - of behavioural modification techniques in the case of relaxation and meditation techniques for example, and some use of psychoanalytic approaches (eg. ego state therapy). Following Kaschak (1993) the Chaplain did not use standard diagnostic categories for assessment, although it was clear that she accepted certain categories such as MPD and post traumatic stress syndrome as valid, and worked with a number of clients who were simultaneously undergoing chemical treatment with a psychiatrist or doctor.

#### THE SETTING AND PATTERN OF WORK

A number of project principles had been established at the start. Sessions were offered free of charge, and travel and baby-sitting costs for attending sessions were met by the project where necessary, in recognition of the financial difficulties which women in the justice system often face in attending treatment programmes. Secondly, the programme was not time-limited. There was no fixed period for completion of counselling, and women were to be free to return for further counselling or support if needed. This applied to those whose attendance was a condition of probation or parole as well as others. Thirdly, normal waiting lists were to be kept to a minimum, and women in crisis were to be seen immediately. This recognized that many women seeking addiction programmes or out-patient therapy or counselling face long waiting lists and may have to wait several months for a first appointment. For women involved in the justice system such waiting times impose impossible conditions which can often lead to new offences or increasing addiction, and in the experience of the project had in some cases resulted in death. Thus women felt to be in urgent need were seen within a day, and regular clients re-scheduled where necessary. During the period of the evaluation Coverdale's offices were located in the centre of Halifax, well served by

public transport, and not far from the ferry terminal for Dartmouth.<sup>15</sup> They were in a modern, mixed-use commercial building, bright and well kept. The atmosphere was warm, welcoming and informal. The Chaplain's office was a bright friendly room, more like a sitting room than an office, complete with a sofa and coffee table, soft toys, drawings, photographs, plants and a packed bookcase full of books and articles to be borrowed. The Chaplain herself was equally warm, welcoming and informal, likely to be found in a tee-shirt and shorts on a hot day.

The Chaplain saw individual clients in her office four days a week, and spent one day a week at the Halifax Correctional Centre. Apart from pre-arranged sessions women were encouraged to telephone in the event of a crisis, or a need to talk, and they might drop in for a chat from time to time, and this took up considerable periods of time each day, as did case consultations with other organizations involved with clients or their families (such as the Children's Aid Society, probation officer, family support services). At the first session with the Chaplain an initial intake interview was completed for all women entering the project, covering the basic history and circumstances of a client's life. This provided the client with an opportunity to identify issues which they felt they wanted to deal with, as well as enabling a treatment plan to be developed and negotiated between the client and the Chaplain. All women were given a list of emergency phone numbers giving 24 hour access to support services in the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

The initial interview was followed by weekly sessions for a period of about one month. Sessions in the community normally lasted one hour, but could be longer if the client was under particular stress. Subsequent sessions would be at bi-weekly intervals, and eventually on a maintenance basis once a month. This pattern varied in the event of a crisis (eg. a partner with a history of battering, due for release from prison; illness or accidents; a suicide attempt) or other stressful events (eg. a court appearance or custody hearing). It also varied when the Chaplain referred women to other services such as addiction programmes or a recovery house to help to stabilize their lives before sessions with her were eventually resumed. Some were referred to group sessions being run by other community organizations. These included WORTH (Women's Recovery Through Healing) a group programme run by a transition house, and dealing with abuse in intimate relationships; a life skills group run by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia; a survivors group run by Service for Sexual Assault Victims; a resume-writing and job-search group run by Women's Outreach Employment; and

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15

Coverdale Courtwork Services and the Community Chaplaincy Project moved to new premises in May 1994 not far from their previous location, occupying the upper floors of a large and attractive old house.

drug recovery programmes. Apart from crises referrals and group work, clients were referred on a routine basis to a range of organizations. The most commonly used included court work and legal aid services, substance abuse programmes, services concerning parenting & children, emergency shelters and second stage housing, sexual assault victim support, social services, employment and job training, and food banks. (A more complete list of the services to which women were referred by the Chaplain is included in Appendix III and illustrates the range of help and advice which women going through the project were felt to need).

The pattern of work at the Halifax Correctional Centre differed in a number of respects from that in the community. The Centre accommodated up to 24 women awaiting trial or sentence, serving their sentence, or awaiting appeals or transfer. The Chaplain's objective was to provide community support and counselling, as well as to facilitate release planning. (In the view of the Chaplain the first 24 hours after release are crucial. If arrangements for transport, housing and support were not in place, women had a much greater chance of resuming drinking or drug use).<sup>16</sup> Work at the Centre included both individual and group sessions. All new arrivals were invited by the Administrator of the Female Unit to meet with the Chaplain. In addition, all women serving sentences of at least six months and eligible for parole were referred to the project by the parole officer, either prior to the parole decision or as a condition of their parole. The only exceptions had been women felt to be mentally unstable and unable to undertake counselling in the community without 'back-up', and a sex offender referred for specialist counselling. At times during the project, as many as 18 of the women at the Centre put down to see her on her day's visit. Some 10-15 women were usually seen on an individual basis if no group sessions are planned. The length of individual sessions was considerably shorter than in the community (15-30 minutes) and the setting more constraining with interviewing space restricted to a small resource room with a window through which custodial staff could be seen.

At the initial interview, the Chaplain outlined her role as a counsellor and therapist who was 'not connected with the system'. It was stressed that anything they said 'stayed with her', that she did not share information about them with staff; that they would be able to read and sign anything written

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16

Apart from the Community Chaplain, a number of other community organizations visited the Correctional Centre on a regular basis. The Elizabeth Fry Society, for example, primarily undertook advocacy work but also ran an assertiveness workshop and social events such as Bingo. The Salvation Army ran a life-skills course, and Women's Employment Outreach workshops on work issues.



by the Chaplain which referred to them, and that the approach was intended to enable them to take more control over their emotions and lives and develop 'strategies for living in safety'. As with women in the community they were given a journal - a way of moving emotions out onto paper - which they could show to the Chaplain if they so chose.

Over the course of the project, three groups on anger management (comprising six sessions each) were conducted at the Correctional Centre. The sessions took place once a week for one hour, and usually include 6 to 8 women. All women at the Centre were invited to an initial meeting with the Chaplain to hear about the programme. Sessions were held, as chosen by the women, in the kitchen/dining room at the Centre, rather than the Chapel or meeting room, and around a big table, emphasising their informality. The Chaplain saw her role in the sessions as a facilitator. From her experience of running the sessions, she felt that undertaking anger management in a custodial setting was radically different from such work in the community. While a pre-structured format was useful, it required a more pragmatic situational approach which was flexible and could respond to the day-to-day concerns of the women. In part this was a way of adapting to the severe stresses imposed by imprisonment, but it also situated the work in the experiences of the women. Thus the primary issues raised by the women concerned problems of living in the Centre, and ways of responding to them. As the women began to trust each other, they became more willing to talk about their own life histories, and to recognize similarities in experiences.

A variety of approaches was used in helping the women develop an understanding of what anger is and what it arises from, the circumstances in which individuals use it, what triggers it, when it is appropriate, and what alternative strategies were available. Apart from 'brainstorming' and group discussion, individual disclosure and support for group members, the women wrote journals, completed anger analysis sheets and other material, were given project reading material, and took part in role-plays. There was an emphasis on getting the women themselves to develop some of these approaches (eg. in devising role-play situations which were derived from their own experiences). They were invited to evaluate the sessions and what they had got out of them, thus contributing to the development of future groups. Group sessions on spirituality were planned for the project but not initiated. At the request of the Administrator a session planned for early 1994 was replaced by a further session on anger management. Staff at the prison felt they 'could not get enough' of the

Community Chaplain, and that her presence on a regular basis had helped to improve the atmosphere there. It was clear that the prison saw the workshops as a useful management tool.<sup>17</sup>

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Apart from services to individual women, the project saw educational activities as a way of furthering understanding of both their work and of violence and abuse towards women. The Chaplain published articles in local newspapers, gave presentations on radio and TV and to educational staff, university students, church groups, health officials and politicians.<sup>18</sup> A 'Breakfast at Coverdale' series was initiated during the evaluation to serve the functions of fund-raising, networking and education. It brought together voluntary organizations, civil servants, probation and parole officers, social workers, lawyers and judges, clergy, Coverdale clients and members of the public.

In addition, however, activity specifically excluded by the funders of the project, was continued, although in a private capacity. This involved providing a counselling service to agencies and their staff. Since the turnover of staff in front-line work is often high, and the stresses involved in working with women in crisis situations considerable, and the project regarded this work as essential. It was also a way of developing knowledge of the project and the Chaplain's style of working among the network of staff in such organizations. Thus the Chaplain undertook consultation, training and workshops on anger management, stress, parenting, grief and loss, as well as individual counselling with some staff. Four workshops on anger management were run for school guidance counsellors, social workers and school psychologists, at transition houses, the Parent Resource Centre, and for community outreach workers. The Chaplain saw such work as providing her with an alternative outlet to the isolating and stressful nature of one-to-one counselling with clients. The implications of the added workload on the project are discussed subsequently.

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<sup>17</sup>

A number of events at the Correctional Centre at the end of 1993 led to lock-downs and an increase in tension among the women which the Administrator felt might be eased by an anger management workshop.

<sup>18</sup>

For example, the Chaplain took part in a panel discussion on the issues of violence against women raised by the CBC film 'Life with Billy' following its public screening at the Atlantic Film Festival in 1993.

## ASSESSING IMPACT - WHO USED THE PROJECT?

Who were the users of the project? Did they conform to the clientele targeted - women in conflict with the law with multiple problems in their lives, including histories of abuse? On the basis of discussions with referring organizations as well as intake forms completed for incoming clients and case summaries, it was possible to develop a broad picture of the clientele, who had referred them and why, and the extent and type of contact they had had with the Chaplain. Because the project saw the clients as its first priority, however, written information was often incomplete and basic monitoring information on clients was not systematically maintained (see Appendix I).

Over the course of the three years of the project some 214 women were seen by the Chaplain. Ninety one women prior to the start of the main project in November 1992, and 123 subsequently. Thirty two women first referred during the pilot phase continued counselling sessions, bringing the total number seen during the eighteen months of the main project to 155.<sup>19</sup> Clients ranged in age from juveniles and young offenders under 18 (9%) to women over 70 years, the majority of them women in their twenties and thirties (see Table 1 Appendix II). During the first year of the main project the number of clients seen each week was punishingly high. With an active case-load fluctuating between 60 and 85, the Chaplain saw as many as 6 or 7 women for counselling sessions in a day. Thus on average there were around 22 individual sessions in the community, and a further 10-14 at the Correctional Centre each week.<sup>20</sup> By January 1994 the Chaplain had reluctantly limited individual sessions to four a day because of the dangers of burn-out. Waiting times for new clients who were not in crisis (mainly referrals from probation or parole officers) grew to 5-6 weeks over the course of the main project, as the numbers of referrals increased, clients continued sessions, and the daily pace of sessions was reduced.

Around a quarter of all clients had been referred by Coverdale Courtwork Services, 21% by probation and parole officers, 23% from community sources (eg. shelters and emergency housing, lawyers, the Children's Aid Society, Family Service of Support, Service For Sexual Assault Victims) and 31% were self-referrals at the Halifax Correctional Centre (HCC) (Table 2 Appendix II). There

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<sup>19</sup>

Because of incomplete file information on cases completed prior to the main project, they are excluded from parts of the subsequent discussion.

<sup>20</sup>

This was apart from crisis calls and outreach activities. The Chaplain also saw a number of private clients, most of them referred during the hiatus in funding prior to the main project.

was often some over-lap between referrals sources (eg. they had been identified by Coverdale court workers at the time of a court appearance, by their probation officer or by a shelter worker as being in need of intensive counselling).

### Reasons for referral to the project

No precise list of referral criteria existed and information available for the evaluation could not provide a complete picture of the reasons for referral to the project. Intake forms were brief, in addition, because of the pressure of work, some were incomplete, and in a few cases where initial contact was precipitated by a crisis non-existent. Those forms which were completed indicate a variety of reasons for referral such as 'counselling and support', 'relationship abuse', 'sexual trauma', 'anger management', 'unresolved grief, court appearance and assault', 'needs someone to talk to', 'counselling, child sexual abuse and current abuse, bound over for fraud'. For the project staff, however, initial reasons for referral did not always provide an accurate indication of a woman's situation. They were often made on the basis of fairly limited information, but a 'hunch' that there is much more to a woman's situation than she was 'prepared to reveal'.

Those case summaries completed by the Chaplain usually indicated a much more extensive list of issues 'named' by the woman herself during sessions. For example, one woman had been referred because she was suicidal. In her case summary the Chaplain had listed illiteracy, life skills and parenting training, slashing and suicidal tendencies, disturbed family systems, a criminal record and a gambling addiction as issues to be addressed.

Women at the Correctional Centre usually asked to see the Chaplain for practical help in relation to their sentence (eg. parole or post release plans) as well as a broad range of personal issues. For example, one woman was recorded as wanting help with her 'inability to appropriately express...anger; custody of her children; difficulty getting along with other inmates; and post release plans for finance, housing, parenting and personal counselling/therapy'. Another had problems of 'addiction; history of trauma; unresolved grief' and wanted help getting a temporary absence (day parole) to enable her to obtain work.

Overall, it appeared that 90% of all women seen during the main project were involved in the justice system. This included all those referred at HCC or by probation and parole officers, and all but 10 of those referred by Coverdale. Of the 33 referred by other community sources, 28 were currently, or had previously been in conflict with the law. Clients on probation were usually court mandated

to receive counselling as recommended by their probation officer. In a few cases they had been ordered directly by the court to attend counselling sessions with the Chaplain.

Not all women referred from community sources were in conflict with the law, but they were likely to be at risk. Adsum House, for example, an emergency shelter for homeless women often housed women with substance abuse problems as well as those working as prostitutes.<sup>21</sup> Staff at Adsum House saw the project as the only place to refer any clients in severe personal crisis for counselling. Staff at Bryony House, a transition house for women in abusive relationships, referred women with 'very painful' experiences of abuse who they felt would benefit from long-term counselling, and particularly those who were also in conflict with the law. They felt the Chaplain was at the top of their list for referrals because she worked in a 'non-judgmental way'. Similarly, Alice Housing, a second-stage housing project which uses a housing model of recovery, without time limits or pressures on women to take programmes or move out, referred women to the project for abuse counselling because the Chaplain worked from a similar feminist framework.

Discussions with probation officers using the project indicated they felt the project filled a gap in services for women clients especially for dealing with issues of abuse. Most other services were 'single issue' programmes and did not cover so wide a range of issues, nor use what one person referred to as 'a large sack' of therapy techniques. They stressed the importance of the approach in giving the women control over the process:

It is how she does things. She has not got one way of working with a woman - she leaves a lot of control in their hands. This is not counselling in terms of having advice given and being told what their problem is.

Some probation officers referred women they felt had a desire to talk, and were ready to work and to change their lives through long-term counselling. Among the women currently on one caseload, over half (12) came from family backgrounds which involved some form of mental, physical or sexual abuse and who were seen as ill-equipped to deal with their daily lives. If they were not already seeing a counsellor of some kind, it was suggested they work with the Chaplain. Another probation officer said he only referred women with an overwhelming number of problems to the Chaplain, those with 'five or six strikes against them'.

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<sup>21</sup>

Staff at Adsum House and Alice Housing (second stage housing) suggested that around 25% of residents would be in conflict with the law; Women's Employment Outreach estimated 15% and Bryony House a 'very small percentage'.

At the court level, there appeared to be two main reasons for referral, crisis intervention and as a community sentence. One lawyer who had had considerable contact with the Chaplain saw the project primarily as a resource for helping women in crisis, eg. those who were suicidal, or undergoing severe crises at the time of their trial or sentence, and as being able to link them with other resources within the community. The project had also been used as an alternative form of sentencing. In a number of cases women who might otherwise have received a prison sentence had been given probation or intermittent prison sentences, with a condition of undertaking counselling with the Chaplain for periods ranging from one to three years. These had included women accused of serious offences as well as those with long histories of offending.

What does seem clear on the basis of the information available, is that there were always substantial reasons for referral, even when not clearly articulated by referring agencies, and that the women seen were well within the mandate of the project in terms of their histories of offending and abuse, addiction, and other circumstances, and often in acute personal distress. These were clearly women in the 'experience of crises' as Maria Mies puts it (1983 p. 125).<sup>22</sup>

#### The extent and type of contact

How extensive was the counselling itself? Did the women continue to have sessions over a long time period, and what was the content of those sessions, given the project's aim of providing more intensive counselling and therapy than was normally offered? As might be expected there was a wide range of contact. The number of counselling sessions with the Chaplain ranged from 1 to, in one case, 81 sessions, with an average of 8.<sup>23</sup> This was higher for clients referred by Coverdale (an average of 14), and between 5 and 6 for all other clients. Overall, 50% of all clients had between 1-4 sessions with the Chaplain, 27% 5-10, and 23% 11 or more (Table 3 Appendix II).

Contact with the Chaplain tended to be shortest among women at HCC, a third (17) of them having had only one session. Given the very different circumstances of women in prison from those in the

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<sup>22</sup>

Mies argued that feminist research should target women at the point of crisis in their lives, the disruption of 'normalcy' so that the process of 'conscientization' could more easily take place. This she saw as preferable to 'superficial' accounts of women's experiences of housework or career choices (Mies, 1983 p.125-6).

<sup>23</sup>

This was apart from phone calls, casual visits and contact in association with other services.

community, no firm conclusions can be drawn about the receptiveness of clients to the service offered by the Chaplain. Most women at HCC were serving short provincial sentences.<sup>24</sup> In addition, they came from all parts of Nova Scotia and only about a third from the Halifax-Dartmouth area where they could have continued sessions on their release. Those case summaries available for women at HCC indicated they were variously transferred to other prisons, released to half-way houses, hospital or addiction programmes, paroled, or released into the community.

It was evident too that not all women in the community chose, or were able, to continue contact. Some had attended one or two times but failed to return although their suitability for the project was very evident. Those case summaries available variously indicated explanations: 'overdosed', 'living in a safe place', 'moved to USA', 'no show', 'new charges', 'street kid, no fixed address', 'in marriage guidance', 'cancels appointments'.

What of the intensiveness of the therapy undertaken? Estimates made by the Chaplain about the type of work undertaken with individual clients suggested that with just over half the clients (56%) it had comprised mainly support, social work and counselling. With a third of the women (35%) some intensive therapy had taken place. (See Table 4 Appendix II). Since there was no set programme or length of treatment it was difficult to summarize the outcome of cases. There were no 'formal' points of termination. A number of clients had 're-activated' their sessions with the Chaplain over the course of the project when they felt they were ready to enter into counselling again. In the Chaplain's view, the on-going chaos in many women's lives meant that absolute termination of treatment was uncommon. For these reasons, the project referred to active and inactive cases, rather than open and closed ones, and made no formal attempt to gauge 'success' or trace subsequent histories.

It could be argued that overall, the extent of contact with the Chaplain was not high compared with private counselling or therapy. Such comparisons are scarcely relevant, however, given the situation of the majority of the women using the project. Unlike private clients they did not have private resources for treatment and were not, as a group, likely to have stable lives or support systems

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The average length of sentence of women admitted to the Correctional Centre in the course of a year was 104 days, and actual time served 48 days (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 1993).

enabling them to enter into long-term regular treatment without interruption.<sup>25</sup> In addition, not all women wanted to enter into long-term counselling.

## SUMMARY

The Community Chaplaincy Project was developed as part of a continuum of services to be provided by Coverdale for women in conflict with the law, and more broadly, as part of the existing network of services for women in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. It was rooted in concerns about violence against women and the need to enable women offenders to resolve issues arising from such abuse and 'take control' over their lives. It was funded by the federal government for a period of 18 months 'to develop a feminist approach to pastoral counselling', but in negotiating funding the project had to accept a number of changes and reductions. These included the replacement of participatory research and self-evaluation by an independent external evaluation, which had a number of consequences for the evaluation.

The Chaplaincy model was not a narrowly focused treatment programme, but one which conformed to a holistic or 'more complex integrated approach' (Kaschak, 1993). The intervention was based on a number of broad premises about the position of women in society and their needs, combining feminist and liberation theology and secular feminism. Essentially, it used 'a philosophy of treatment rather than a technique of treatment' (see Chapter 3) and incorporated humanistic and psychotherapeutic approaches. The Chaplain used a variety of tools and materials and provided a range of support, social work, counselling and more intensive therapy. While individual treatment plans were negotiated, there was no fixed programme or time-limit on the length of intervention, and sessions might be interrupted and resumed. The intervention was not necessarily a linear process.

The project clientele came from a variety of sources, some were court mandated, some attended as a requirement of probation or parole, others by their own choice. They included women in prison and in the community. Around 50% of all clients had had 5 or more sessions with the Chaplain, and

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As Burns and Meredith point out (1993) there tends to be a basic assumption in treatment evaluation that length of treatment is associated with the quality of the outcome, but that such an assumption is not necessarily warranted. Studies of outpatient mental health programmes, whose clients bear some relationship with women offenders in terms of the precariousness of their lives, suggest that the average length of attendance is 5-6 sessions (Toseland, 1987). This is in marked contrast to the 2,354 sessions of psychoanalysis over 11 years 'required' for a client with MPD, and reported in Borch-Jacobson (1997).



while most sessions had involved a combination of support, social work and counselling, in a third of the cases more intensive therapy had been undertaken. A number of the clients were also attending other programmes such as drug counselling or receiving psychiatric treatment, making it difficult to isolate the effects of a particular strategy. This also illustrated part of the project's function as a 'collective resource', part of a chain of services needed to help women in the justice system build stable lives, and the importance of such an inter-dependent network.

Thus the project appeared to have lived up to its intentions in targeting its clientele; it was able to see clients in distress quickly; it was able to undertake intensive therapy with a third of the clients although much of the time was spent on counselling and supportive social work; organizations using the project appeared to understand its purpose and approach, and did not appear to be wary of its feminist content; it maintained its activist, educational and networking activities alongside individual counselling. But the Chaplain herself undertook a punishing schedule of work, and took on too much; waiting lists, something the project had aimed to avoid, grew as the project progressed.

Such an account of the development and implementation of the project can provide very little insight into the way it was experienced by those taking part. What were the experiences of the women going through the project? How far was the Chaplain able to live up to the feminist aims of the intervention model in enabling them to 'take control' of their lives? How far did the women themselves see such an approach as helpful or relevant to their lives? The following chapter of the thesis explores their views.

## CHAPTER 5

### ASSESSING IMPACT: EXPERIENCING FEMINIST COUNSELLING

The experiences of the women were fundamental to the project. For the Chaplain they formed the starting point for developing an understanding of their circumstances and the context in which to develop a treatment plan. For the evaluation they provided a way of exploring the concerns of the women, the diversity of their experiences, their expectations of the counselling and therapy offered and how it worked in practice, their responses to it and its limitations. Their voices provided a way of assessing the extent to which the feminist aims of the project were borne out in practice, and how far the project was able to impact the lives of a group of women living with acute or long-term difficulties.

Access to the women going through the project was, however, restricted. The Chaplain was concerned that some clients were in too 'fragile' a state to be able to take part in anything other than counselling sessions. Secondly, since the evaluation did not have access to names, and had to respect clients' confidentiality, it was dependent upon the project to suggest who might be approached, and to obtain the women's agreement that they be asked to take part. In addition, some women's lives were unpredictable to a degree that made appointments, whether for sessions with the Chaplain or the research team, irrelevant. Others, having completed their sentence as well as counselling, wanted to 'get on with their lives', or felt unable to take time from jobs or family commitments.

Over the course of the evaluation, nevertheless, twenty-five women in the community agreed to take part in in-depth interviews with the research team. All of them had undertaken counselling sessions with the Chaplain, and were willing to take part in the evaluative process if it would help other women in the future. While they would appear to represent the range of women going through the project in terms of their ages and circumstances, they were generally those who had entered into long-term counselling, and were continuing or had 'completed' sessions. For more than half of them (14) this was their first involvement with the law, and only five of them had an extensive history of offending. Their contact with the Chaplain had ranged from less than six months to more than two years. Seven women had had fewer than 10 sessions and seven women 20 or more, in one case as many as 79. They had come to the project from a variety of sources, including five referred by their probation or parole officer (and thus the sessions were a condition of their sentence) eight had been referred by Coverdale court workers at the time of their initial court appearance, and six by staff in

sheltered housing.

Their lives reflected in some cases a series of crises and long-term difficulties, in others a sudden eruption of problems. They often seemed to have experienced far more than their share of difficulties and stress including, for example, children with severe illnesses, or who had been sexually molested, partners, husbands, fathers who were assaultive or alcoholic, chronic illnesses and operations, compulsive gambling, long-term alcohol or drug use, or histories of depression and hospital commitment, episodes of suicidal attempts. Their involvement with the law had often been accompanied by substance abuse and had variously involved them in minor shoplifting or theft, or sudden and uncharacteristic outbreaks of violence against a partner or close acquaintance. Yet they were also women, as the Chaplain was able to show, who had achieved things in their lives, they had been organizers within their community, had held down good jobs for a number of years, were raising their children and caring for family members, had skills and crafts which were valued by others.

Arrangements were made with each women to meet in the Coverdale offices or sometimes outside in a café. The interviews took the form of conversations, guided by a series of questions, rather than a fixed questionnaire. With the women's agreement most conversations were tape recorded. A further 15 women took part in interviews at the Correctional Centre.<sup>1</sup>

## COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

### First impressions - feeling comfortable

Before meeting the Chaplain it was clear that most of the women had little or no knowledge of the project, of feminist therapy, or what kind of help they might receive. Maria was told more than most. In her late twenties, serving a sentence for drunk driving, she had been drinking since she was 13, and described herself as regularly losing her temper when she was drunk, on one occasion smashing her boyfriend's windows. Her probation officer had 'put me in with a bunch of drunk men drivers....a kind of four-week programme and nobody wanted to be there...I said I really want to get some help, some real help, and he said have you heard of Mary?' He had told her that 'she shot straight from the hip...I couldn't bullshit her, it was all areas, it wasn't just alcohol or coping skills'.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I for an account of the interviewing processes.

The initial meeting with the Chaplain established for many of the women a sense of trust, confidence and ease, and marked out for them the differences in her approach from their expectations of counselling or therapy, or their own previous experience of counsellors. Their most common response was of feeling 'comfortable' with her. Shelley's first impression was 'she just blew me away first time I met her...fantastic like to talk to...I felt comfortable with her right away'. In particular, the setting itself, and her style of dress and approach helped to establish what the project set out to do on the basis of its feminist framework, which was to reduce the distance between counsellor and client.

'I expected an old building [with] grey-green corridor, tiles and a basement...not put together in an inviting way. I felt comfortable, looked around, picked up a Teddy Bear. I liked the interview...giving the story of my life some structure. I liked that, it left me feeling good....she looked at me and said "look at you, you're an amazing woman!".'[Jen]

'At first [I felt] nervous and scared and after I felt pretty comfortable. I was surprised to see she was such a casual person, no suits. I don't dress up in suits.'[Ruth]

In other cases it took a little longer before women were able to develop a relationship of trust and ease, as Linda recalled of her first meeting. A young mother, pregnant by her abusive partner who had been imprisoned for breaking restraining orders, and herself serving a sentence for theft she had been reluctant to talk:

'I'm really defensive and I just sit like this....I don't like to talk to people about stuff....I felt stupid at the time anyway...I don't think I told her an awful lot. I kind of felt self-conscious talking and I never really talked to anybody about anything before like. I kind of just sat there and let her ask me questions basically.'[Linda]

Women referred by probation or parole officers had sometimes been more reluctant than others to take part in counselling sessions, or did not feel they needed to attend. As Carole makes clear, her attitude towards the sessions changed considerably on meeting the Chaplain:

'At the time I felt OK, comply with my probation [order] and just come. You're half expecting when they're in this field that they are all prim and proper business suit-type people, that's not me. That made things a whole lot different because you felt that...you could talk to her because she dressed like a normal person, rather than one of these stiff-necks.' [Carole]

For Beryl too counselling had been a condition of her parole:

'I started with the outlook, well I have to go because I have no choice....then I got to the point I started going because I wanted to...'[Beryl]

### Responding to women in crisis

As previously outlined, an important aspect of the project was responding quickly to women in crisis. For many of the women interviewed it was the first time they had really been able to talk to someone about their own situation. These were usually women who had dealt with past abuse or current abusive relationships for years, or had long-term addictions, but had never sought help before. Often, this was their first offence and it was the catalyst which forced them - or enabled them - to seek help. The offence itself was often associated with some crisis point in their relationship, an unfaithful partner, threats of violence or demands for money. In turn the charges and court appearances had precipitated breakdowns or emotional crises. Angela, remanded in custody for murdering her partner, described herself as being overwhelmed and confused, and as having been out of control for some time. Talking to the Chaplain she felt had 'centred me'.

This had also been the case for Avril in terms of her initial offence, and she reached a second crisis point with her court appearance. A young woman in her early twenties initially charged with attempted murder of her partner who had been threatening her for money, she had waited a year for her trial date. 'I just shut down for a whole year. You wouldn't have known anything was wrong with me'. From the first day of her trial, however, she had 'terrible nightmares', she gained weight and developed a long series of illnesses, lost her job and her apartment and went on welfare. 'It was the end of my life, I felt my skin was going to burst.'

The emotional release provided by the Chaplain was evident. Sandra described herself as 'counting the hours 'til I got to see her' and 'needing someone to cry with'. Lyn's account was similar:

'[I felt] relief and hope because it was just so wonderful to have someone I could finally talk to...I cried all the time, it was very scary, it was very comforting...It was such a relief to get it out in the open...I felt that everyone could see it [her abuse] on my shoulder.'[Lyn]

Some women had been referred to the project in emergency situations because they were suicidal, or in danger of overdosing. Rita, for example, after years of marriage had killed her alcoholic and emotionally abusive husband in a confrontation over another woman. She remembered her first contact with the Chaplain as a series of visits in which 'not a lot was said, more crying than anything else' but which had kept her from suicide. Sharon, also sentenced for a violent offence, had attempted suicide. She makes clear that the response from the Chaplain had been rapid, she had received

comfort and support, and had felt that she was being listened to:

'She was great the first day. I was really depressed and really just didn't care anymore. She spent a few hours with me. She's the first person that's actually got into detail and not beat about the bush, not asking a bunch of questions but not waiting for me to give answers. By the time I left there I felt great. She was the only person who could come over to see me, it was that quick, she came right over.' [Sharon]

It was also clear that the women could expect a quick response from the Chaplain to crises arising at other times during counselling as Avril illustrates:

'I have phoned her a couple of times [such as] when I found out that my mother died. I was in crisis, a hysterical state. She just listened - let me say whatever I was saying - anger, rage, sadness, rant and rave...all the emotions.' [Avril]

#### Being a Chaplain - 'she lives what she does'

Since the intervention model was based on chaplaincy as well as feminist counselling, it was important to examine the reactions of the women to this aspect of the project, and how it fitted with the principles of feminist intervention. As was indicated in Chapter 4, the formal aspects of ministry (such as clerical dress) were not stressed by the Chaplain. This was evident in the fact that not all the women were initially aware of her status (although most had been told):

'I didn't even know she was a chaplain until last month when she wrote someone's name on the back of her card and I turned it over. She doesn't push religion on me. I was brought up by Catholic nuns for three years. I go to church once a month.' [Tracey]

Most of the women, however, had been told by referring agencies that she was both a counsellor and a chaplain, and this set up a number of expectations about what she would be like and how they would be treated or would have to behave. As Cathy and Sandra underline, they expected to be reprimanded rather than accepted:

'I expected a Minister. I expected someone totally different....A little old woman in a dress preaching to you about all the wrong things that you had done. I was surprised. It was funny, I came all dressed up - I didn't know what to expect. We've laughed quite a bit about the first meeting.' [Cathy]

'Initially I thought "I'll have to watch what I say and I won't feel comfortable". But [being a chaplain] doesn't come into the picture at all. She doesn't force that on us. It's not the first thing she tells you about herself.' [Sandra]

Knowing she was a chaplain made some women hesitant about seeking counselling with her. Beryl, for example, had been reluctant to see her at the Correctional Centre on the assumption that she would work in the manner of a traditional minister or chaplain as she perceived it.

'I knew that she was sort of like a reverend ...or a minister, that's one of the reasons why I really didn't go to see her on my own when I was out there [the Correctional Centre]. I really didn't want to talk to someone like that. There were a couple of other people out there that were on the same lines. I really didn't want to go into that.' [Beryl]

There was no feeling that the Chaplain 'preached' to the women or 'pushed religion' or formal churchgoing, as Gillian underlines, although they had talked about spirituality:

'[The fact that she is a Chaplain] doesn't bother me now, but at first I wasn't too sure. We talk about spirituality but not God as I was brought up. To me God was punishing if you do wrong. God is not pushed or anything like that. She doesn't say "now go to church and God will take care of your problems - just pray" because you've got to do the work.' [Gillian]

In keeping with the Chaplain's feminist approach the women felt that they had a choice as to whether spiritual matters were discussed or not:

'It's there if you ask for it. She blessed my cross [and] I asked her to bless my house when I moved into it. She doesn't impose it on you at all. I have difficulty with God being a male. I don't like religious fanaticism...all that control.' [Lesley]

Cathy, however, while she had overcome her initial reservations still thought this the main drawback of the project and one which made her wary.

'I've never been religious...[it's] always at the back of my mind...that woman's a Minister...'

### What happened during sessions

The women's accounts of their sessions help to show the way they worked with the Chaplain, and her use of techniques and tools to suit the individual. Lesley gave an account of the contract she had initially made with the Chaplain. At that stage a borderline anorexic 'we made a contract that I would only weigh myself once a week and to tell her when I threw up...we contract to tell each other what we want from each other....two-way....you get a sense of control and involvement'.

With most of the women journals and 'am-pm check-in charts' completed between appointments

were read and discussed and compared with previous charts or entries. The Chaplain might ask a woman to write about a particular event which had occurred and her reactions to it. Carole, like many of the women, had found this a revealing way of examining her own reactions:

'Well I do an AM-PM check-in, that was one of the first things we started with, all your feelings, the morning whether you feel good, better, so-so. I found myself... always making comments along with it...I sit back, read back and...when I found...this was wrong...you could almost see yourself...I found that was a good way to look at things.' [Carole]

Angela was surprised to be asked to write about herself, 'all the good things', which she had never thought about before. Those women who felt uncomfortable with writing, confirmed that the Chaplain had sought alternative ways of working with them.

'She'll give me a book to read, and then I'll try to take that book and relate it back to maybe what happened in my life. [I] talk to her about what I've been doing in the last few weeks since I've seen her. I have a journal I wrote. I don't like to write, my English is terrible and I don't like writing. I draw cartoons [instead]. I like the material she gives me. [Beryl]

Another woman found it difficult to use meditation exercises, but her comments underline the supportive nature of the sessions where the women are encouraged, but not forced, to try new approaches:

'[I am] doing exercises to help you relax - just getting into meditation kind of thing. I was having a really hard time with it [I've] not been able to do it yet. She just listens to me sometimes and tries to make me see that things that happen were not all my fault - she tries to empower me as a woman, to make me feel that I can do this. She encourages me to try things, and to get me to see it's not a failure, it's just trying.' [Gillian]

In other cases meditation techniques had been of great help as in the case of a woman with a history of severe childhood sexual abuse who had been frightened of the dark:

'I can actually go to sleep at night with the light off. She taught me to visualize, the exercise starts off by smelling roses, and [you] end up going to your safe place.' [Ruth]

The Chaplain did not always work exclusively with the women, on a few occasions she also met with partners. Thus, Sharon described a visit by the Chaplain: 'she's come into my home and sat down and talked to both of us' and felt there had been considerable improvements in her relationship with her boyfriend.



### A different kind of approach - establishing a sharing and empowering relationship

Establishing a sense of ease and trust was an important aspect of the development of the counselling relationship, but it relied on more than just comfortable surroundings and manner. In keeping with project principles the women confirmed that the Chaplain did respond to the needs they identified, but that she also cared for them, and that she shared her own experiences with them, again helping to put them on a more equal footing. The Chaplain's willingness to share her own experiences as a woman, and her example, were important motivators, as was evident from Gillian's comment:

'To me she's a woman that...has gone through a lot and she's come through. Even to me that's encouragement. She understands a woman's position.' [Gillian]

This is also illustrated by the response of Tracey who had had initial reservations about entering into counselling, but later felt 'excitement and relief' when she came for a session:

'...because I know she's going to give me advice; because most of the time we get something done. She's a very easy person to care for. There are no restrictions, she tells you about her family and her personally. All the walls are down for both people.' [Tracey]

Such differences in approach were clearly evident when women with previous experience of counselling or therapy made comparisons. A number of the women had previous experience with a variety of drug counsellors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, marriage counsellors and others. The most obvious differences were the absence of what they termed 'professional' trappings, and the working methods used by the Chaplain. The Chaplain did not use set checklists of questions, there were 'no little questionnaires'; she did not sit behind a desk and maintain a professional distance, or watch the clock; she responded to everything they said rather than just taking notes or remaining silent - 'I was used to seeing a psychiatrist writing things in their little pad.' They saw the Chaplain as nonjudgmental and caring in a way they were not used to, as Angela and Lyn emphasised:

'Mary is so nonjudgmental - she makes you feel a good person to talk to regardless [of what you've done]. She is always available [and] it's a free service. She allows you to explore. She's so supportive. I go to a psychiatrist but Mary is better because it's holistic, she touches on life, gives you a hug. The psychiatrist is very professional...cooler...a woman and nice, but a different style. She asks questions down a list: "Are you psychotic?", "Do you hear voices?".' [Angela]

'I didn't expect her to be so caring if I can use that word. Like I've been to

psychologists before, and Mary's got a whole different approach, she's your friend, as well as your counsellor. I can pick up the phone and get in contact with her right away if I want to. That's what I like, that closeness, that I've never found with any other type of counsellor. It just seems that they had this amount of time, and that they had to do this amount with you during that certain time. And they controlled the sessions, and I control them now.'[Lyn]

Further, as Lyn identifies, the Chaplain enabled the women to feel they had control over the sessions themselves. In terms of her working methods she allowed them to talk about what they wanted to talk about, rather than respond as one previous counsellor had with "we really can't discuss that right now". The most significant differences for the women were that the Chaplain enabled them to make their own choices and decisions - she was interested in their opinions, she did not tell them what to do. The empowering of women was evident to the women themselves, as the following comments make clear:

'I look forward to it because I know how I'm going to feel when I leave...I've always thought [therapists] were going to give me all the answers - and instead she's taught me how to find all the answers.'[Sandra]

'None of the others worked in this way. They wanted to solve my problems by telling me their opinion. Mary leaves it to you, lets you solve things, asks your opinion. She cares about what you feel and think. She makes you feel good when you leave, that's why I come. There are 475 therapists [here] and I've seen 200 of them. None had compassion for me. They said I went through a lot, but that's it.'[Tracey]

Allowing women to make their own decisions meant that the Chaplain was also willing to accept the women's choices and actions rather than condemning them. They also recognized they were not being 'fitted in' to a set programme, as Maria underlines:

'If I screw up I tell her and I'm not going to get beat or thrown out the door or judged for it and that's very important for me, because that's why I stopped going to drug counsellors. Mary's totally different....A lot of these drug counsellors are programme counsellors and they expect you to work their programme like they did theirs.'[Maria]

In terms of the content of discussions, the women were very firm in stressing that the Chaplain guided rather than controlled sessions. As Sandra described it 'we progress at my rate'. They were not pushed into talking about topics they did not want to deal with and had the freedom to 'set the agenda':

'She never pushes me into dealing with anything. She makes sure I'm ready for something before I deal with it, we talk around it a long time before we talk

about it...I've never been pushed into dealing with anything.' [Cathy]

'[You are] never forced [to discuss an issue] Oh no! That's not Mary's style at all. She can prod you, but she will never push. She can suggest things "Maybe we can do this". She can put the subject on the table and I can say "Yes" or "No". Sometimes I do say "No".' [Lyn]

And actions were seen as joint decisions:

'We decided together that I was going to seek marriage counselling, so she set up a marriage counsellor... [Sandra]

The comfort, support and trust the women felt in their relationship with the Chaplain were important in enabling them to talk about their experiences of personal abuse. As suggested earlier, this was the first time a number of the women had been able to do so, particularly women who had been sexually abused as children:

'No, no, no, no - this was a taboo thing, [I] never talked about this. I could never talk to the child counsellors. The abuser had told me that if I told anybody it would break up all the families and it would be all my fault.' [Lyn]

'Mary's the only one I could admit to...that I was molested by my father. I can tell her my feelings about certain people, certain things that I just never bothered mentioning. I just felt uncomfortable with the other people....' [Ruth]

The fact that the Chaplain was a woman was also of central importance to their willingness to discuss abuse:

'No, [I wouldn't have discussed the abuse with another counsellor] of course she's a woman and that was really important. I'd never discuss any of this with a guy.' [Chris]

'She empathises with women, she knows women's issues inside out. I feel like I can talk to her about anything, which I never thought I could, especially males. I've had a bad experience with male counsellors and psychologists. I always had a male doctor, two psychiatrists, two male counsellors [for drug dependency].' [Gillian]

Yet not all the women felt the style and content of the sessions was sufficient. Cathy, for example, who had spent a considerable period of time in prison in another province felt she had formed a closer relationship with a voluntary counsellor there than with the Chaplain.

'K...and me were closer in age, we called each other on the phone every day, we were like good friends, plus she had a good background that could help me out as well...she come to jail to see me every day...she makes sure my kids had my mail...she got me a good lawyer...' [Cathy]

Only Sylvie had wanted more traditional counselling. In her late fifties, she had lived through an abusive marriage and was now on probation for a first offence. She had found previous attempts to talk to a marriage guidance counsellor fruitless: 'she was a lot younger than I was, I thought what life experience have you had?' She felt immense relief in being able to talk with the Chaplain: 'I had been going through this for a few years and felt that everyone thought I was crazy'. Nevertheless, she still felt she wanted more 'clinical' information and more apparent evidence of 'professionalism' such as the use of psychological tests:

'I don't think it goes far enough...I thought I needed some psychological work...you have to pay for this..I wanted to know more clinical details about what was happening to me.' [Sylvie]

### Confidentiality and professional boundaries

For a number of the women, even when they had not sought help from the Chaplain as a Chaplain, that status was seen as an advantage in the counselling relationship. It conveyed a sense of acceptance, caring and understanding, but also of trust and a guarantee of confidentiality. Confidentiality was both an aspect of the pastoral counselling role and of the feminist intervention principle of maintaining professional boundaries between roles. It was evident that the women interviewed felt they could trust the Chaplain totally. Discussions in counselling sessions were seen as completely confidential as Martha indicated:

'The fact that she's also a Minister - I didn't even talk to my doctor about this because he's our family doctor and I'm worrying is he going to mention something? It made me feel more comfortable...because as a Chaplain...she'd be more forgiving and nonjudgmental, and be aware of obvious problems...plus the confidentiality of it, so in all aspects I felt comfortable with it.' [Martha]

Since many women had social workers or lawyers with whom both they and the Chaplain were dealing, and probation or parole officers who had recommended counselling as a condition of their sentence, this sense of trust was an important factor. In cases where the Chaplain had to talk or write to someone about them, the women stressed she would always show them what she had written first. Only Beverly, who during the course of her sentence had spent long periods in and out of hospital for depression, said she did not see what was written but she still trusted the Chaplain: 'She's not going to release anything that hurts me.' For the rest, Carole's comment summarized the general view:

'I know what I'm going to say to her is between her and me. Children's Aid

wanted a letter stating exactly what we have been doing, her impressions. She made a copy of the letter for me, so I know exactly what she said, and I have seen the letter before she sends it, and if I had complaints or feelings on the letter she would have taken that into consideration and readjust the letter for me. I think it is fair because I mean it is me they are talking about.'[Carole]

Nor was there any indication among those women on probation or parole that they felt unable to talk freely with the Chaplain. Shelley used the Chaplain to help 'broker' her disputes with her parole officer and the recovery house in which she was living. Marlene, saw the Chaplain as her main support in working to regain custody of her children. Angela, in sheltered housing and awaiting trial for a serious first offence, saw the Chaplain as one of the few people 'on her side' in negotiating with the Children's Aid Society for access to her children.

### Empowerment and change

In spite of the variation in length of contact with the Chaplain, most of the women were able to identify very real changes in their own attitudes and behaviour as a result of their involvement in the project, and in some cases the additional counselling and support they had received from other sources. This included the way they related to and dealt with other people, the way they thought about themselves, and in what they had been able to accomplish. It also included how other people reacted to them. For some women, being able to leave the house, to shop and take the bus were big changes, others had started courses, and one entered university. A few had begun to work on a voluntary basis for Coverdale or other organizations. All of them felt better about themselves and their situation, as Sandra, who had at last been able to deal with her physically and sexually abusive marriage as well as her guilt concerning her offence, recounts. She had made a number of concrete changes to her life which included 'moving into the city on my own; going for a divorce; going from working for somebody to working for myself; saying "No" and meaning "No":

'I've definitely got over a lot of guilt. I've evolved back into the person I was before, and plus a person wiser and older. I'm not crying with you, I'm a lot more comfortable with all kinds of situations. My family and friends used to walk on eggshells. They don't keep anything from me now, they realize I can handle it now.'[Sandra]

The emotional strength which Sandra now felt is also underlined in the following account given by Ruth. She had lived in numerous group homes as a child, and had a long history of childhood abuse as well as in a previous partnership. Prior to her counselling sessions she had been unable to walk down a road at night, or sleep without a light, and felt unable to handle her children. Her account

also illustrates the importance of the practical support offered by the Chaplain in meeting needs identified by the clients:

'My nightmares have started to go away. I'm starting to feel more comfortable at home when I'm alone. I can sleep at night. I've noticed I'm happier more. I don't crack under the first bit of pressure any more. I can basically handle a lot more than what I used to. I know I can take time to myself, and [my husband's there to pick up the slack]. I'm starting to work on toilet training my son which I wouldn't have been able to do without her helping me. She got advice for me.' [Ruth]

Angela, still awaiting her trial, described herself as '80% healthier than I was' able to handle emotions, say what she didn't like in negotiating with child care counsellors, and was busily reading numerous books about alcoholism, meditation, poems and dependency. What the women confirmed was their own ability, with encouragement and support from the Chaplain, to make changes, and their new power to make decisions, to fight for their rights, or change patterns of relationships. This in turn affected the way other people reacted to them.

'I've learnt to read. I'm able to talk [to people], make phone calls, fight for what my rights are. I've never been able to stand up to my step mother before and I can now, she's actually nicer to me.' [Sharon]

One young woman, who had been sexually abused by a family member as a child and had never previously sought help or talked about her abuse, gave a clear account of the control and power she now felt she had over her life:

'I was about 70lbs heavier. I have control, that's it, that's the secret of saving my life, I have control. I was always very envious of other people that seemed to go out and do [things]. I would start and never finish them. But now I'm trying to finish things. I've started taking my courses again, going back to school, and I'm losing weight and I'm keeping it off. I've lost 60 lbs in nine months, and I'm a parent, and I think I'm a pretty good parent, and I'm practically a single parent because my husband has two jobs. I've proved to myself that I can do it. That to me is a big accomplishment and I'm forcing myself to take time for me, and that's always been very difficult. I think my husband loves me more, we've gone through a lot together, and I love him more. I was never very sure I'd made the right decision. Now I know this is the man for me, this is the way I want my life to be. That's a pretty nice feeling.' [Lyn]

The project had also encouraged some of the women to take part in community action as a concrete way of empowering themselves and others. Lesley, at the Chaplain's suggestion, had started a 'buddy' system with women released from a local psychiatric hospital. Martha had been encouraged to run a craft session for Coverdale clients, Shelley and Gillian both took part in Coverdale 'Breakfasts' and

helped in the office, while Chris had gone back to the Correctional Centre to run sessions on drug abuse.

### A safety net

The open-ended nature of the project, enabling women to come back for maintenance sessions when needed, they saw as an important factor. Even those women who felt they had made enormous changes in their lives valued the option of returning for sessions when they felt they needed support, because the process of change was not always straightforward and the healing process difficult to predict:

'I think I'd always like to have her as a safety net...I imagine there will come a time...but it's so indefinite... I can't say 'in a year I'm going to be healed'. You really don't know how you are going to deal with it, you may have a really good four or five months, and you can really get through a lot, and you can have something happen in your life...and maybe you just can't get through...'[Lyn]

Avril, who had met the Chaplain at the time of her trial feeling 'her skin was going to burst', clearly felt big changes after some 60 sessions in two and a half years, but still needed the reassurance of being able to return:

'I've changed an awful lot. I want to go back to work, I'm going to aerobics, dance class, I meet new people, I've changed 180 degrees, no 360 degrees. I've got my health problems under control, I'm no longer an emotional wreck...I take credit for most changes. I've worked hard at it, but if...I couldn't see Mary again, I couldn't deal with that. I still need to see her...a sounding board...from an objective point of view.' [Avril]

Only Chris, who had had a very clear idea of what she had wanted from the sessions as well as a high level of motivation, was able to say that counselling sessions had ended. In her thirties, she had been heavily addicted to drugs for some 15 years, and served several prison sentences. Now attending university she was clearly one of the clients in the project who had made most 'progress'.

'I was angry at my past...but didn't know how to deal with it...Mary...specifically dealt with anger management, that was her profession. [I wanted] direction, a trust, someone to confide in, someone to tell me it was OK, and I got all those....I had accomplished what I set out to accomplish. There was 'no written in stone'. We went through all my stuff. She gave me direction and it came to an end.' [Chris]

### The limitations

There were some women for whom progress was slower. They had cancelled sessions because they could not face them at times or were ill. Avril thought she must have cancelled two out of every five appointments because of her many health problems, being unable to sleep, and 'feeling terrible'. Sharon sometimes cancelled 'if I get a little upset, I don't turn out.' Lesley had had more than 50 counselling sessions over a two-year period. She had clearly made some progress but felt that the Chaplain found her frustrating at times, and was frustrated herself. She described herself as continually in crisis - including an 'unexplained' illness and disability, unemployment, lack of money, and a family court case, apart from her own offence for shoplifting. Her own childhood had been very abusive and she suffered flashbacks. Progress over the two-year period had been patchy. There had been times in the first year when she could not face sessions and had cancelled them, and other times when she was unable to get out of bed for days. Six months ago 'we didn't know where to go...we [were] not getting anywhere'. Her doctor had suggested she seek psychiatric help in addition to seeing the Chaplain and joint sessions with a psychiatrist specializing in multiple personality disorder were about to begin. She had refused to undertake the sessions without the Chaplain who she felt would help her feel 'safe'. She thought another two years of treatment with the psychiatrist would be needed, and was worried that she was now 'dependent' upon the Chaplain.

Marlene, with a childhood spent in foster homes and fighting to get back her own children from Care, was suspicious and guarded about social workers who she felt 'owned her'. She had attended some 15 counselling sessions with the Chaplain over a nine-month period following a prison sentence for shoplifting. While she trusted the Chaplain because she was not associated with Children's Aid, she admitted she had a 'lot going on in my life...[I] just don't come if I don't feel like talking to her.' Her main motivation for coming was to get back her children, since Children's Aid workers had 'wanted her' to attend sessions. She felt 'jail changed me not Mary', yet said she was now writing a book about her childhood and admitted that she would not have taken part in the research interview, but for her sessions with the Chaplain, because of her distrust of people.

Some women were careful not to expect too much. They took 'each day as it comes', aware of the difficulties of 'staying clean', having watched friends going back to prison after years of recovery. Beverly, now in her 50's had spent 20 years in and out of hospitals for depression, after being denied access to her many children, a childhood of alcohol, physical abuse and poverty. She had had more than 70 sessions with the Chaplain over a two-year period. In her own terms she had made some progress. She had learned to read and was now able to take the bus on her own, and recognized that



she was no longer suicidal after a pattern of frequent attempts, but felt that she had not yet 'faced up' to her drinking problems which the Chaplain was encouraging her to do:

'We keep talking about the drinking. I haven't touched it since last time...after taking a drink...trying to commit suicide - that's going away. She got me help. I don't think I'm going to do that any more....I can't do nothing, I can't work, I just feel useless, I'll try the cure.'[Beverly]

Martha too, serving her third sentence for shoplifting, identified with the need to 'probe further' after some 20 counselling sessions: 'I definitely need deeper counselling to get to the root of my problem here.'

Some women lived in a constant state of crisis requiring considerable recourse to the network of support systems. Tracey had recurrent illnesses associated with a long drug history, found it difficult to pay for her medication or other household needs, had problems with her children, and her abusive partner in and out of prison for breaching restraining orders. She felt that her own childhood abuse needed to be faced, but that after 16 sessions of intensive therapy with the Chaplain (as well as a prior contact with 'numerous' psychiatrists and psychologists) this had not yet been accomplished. She concluded:

'I'll be in therapy 'till she kicks me out. I don't know, another year? She'll probably recommend someone else. We will get to the fact of my molestation when I was younger.'[Tracey]

It was also evident that some of the women had become very dependant on the Chaplain. Thus Karen having had 10 sessions over a nine-month period, feared their loss:

'I like the reassurance and confidence I get, and I know that once I let that go everything's going to go again, and I won't have no one to talk to.' [Karen]

### A network of support

A number of the women were clear about the difficulties they faced and the importance of a range of support. Angela was seeing a range of counsellors and psychiatrists who she felt had also contributed to her advancing 'five years of therapy in five months'. Shelley, in her late 30's has a long history of drug addiction which had led to a crisis point in her life including attempted suicide, slashing and violence, and a prison sentence. Prison she felt had 'saved my life' allowing her to 'dry-out, eat, sleep and think'. She was now on parole. After initial interviews with the Chaplain she had taken 'time out' for two months to deal with personal and emotional problems and come off drugs.

Women addicts, she felt, relapsed more easily than men, and pointed out the difficulties of accessing programmes such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA) because of the requirement of being 'clean' for a number of months. She stressed that she relied on a range of supports: groups for recovering alcoholics, NA, the recovery house in which she was currently living, and the Chaplain, all of whom helped her 'in different ways'.

Similarly, Maria with her long-term addiction to cocaine and alcohol described herself as 'pretty sick' after four sessions with the Chaplain and stressed that for her having a broader network of support was more important than counselling alone:

'I'll be here for a while....[I] still have to deal with things...27 years of bullshit isn't going to be over in two months....I can't pin it on any one thing because I've got such a good network going, like sponsors and AA and Mary. Coming here once a month wouldn't keep me sober.'[Maria]

## INTERVIEWS AT THE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Fifteen women took part in interviews at the Halifax Correctional Centre.<sup>2</sup> Eleven of them had met with the Chaplain on an individual or a group basis. Their contact with her was much less extensive than those women interviewed in the community, usually between one and ten sessions, although all of them said they would like to continue sessions up to the time of their release. Only one woman had met with the Chaplain over a whole year. In addition, four women who had recently been admitted and wanted to see the Chaplain asked to be take part in interviews, and talked about their expectations of her work as well as their own concerns.

As a group the women in the Correctional Centre tended to be younger than clients in the community, and to have had more involvement with the law. Four of the women were Black, two of MicMac heritage, and the rest white.<sup>3</sup> While the women were informed by prison staff about the Chaplain's visits on their arrival, almost all the women said they had gone to see her on the

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<sup>2</sup>

See Appendix I. Interviews for the evaluation were voluntary. As a result of an incident at the Correctional Centre during interviewing around ten women were too preoccupied to take part.

<sup>3</sup>

In 1992-3 7% of those sentenced to provincial custody in Nova Scotia were of Native origin and 13% Black (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 1994). Few Native women live in the Halifax area, but there has been a sizeable Black community there since the 18th century, living for much of that time in conditions of extensive poverty and marginalization (Clairmont & Magill, 1987).

recommendation of other inmates, that it had been their choice, and they had not been pressured to do so. Judy had wanted someone who would be a 'sounding board' with whom she could discuss her 'personal issues':

'[I heard from] other inmates. I was told she did excellent work and therapy, and wasn't judgmental.'[Judy]

#### Support and counselling in a restricted setting

Having easy access to the Chaplain on a regular basis which was not controlled by staff, appeared to be important to the women as Ellen identified:

'[You] need referrals to see most [people]. Mary is here and I don't have to get a Doctor's referral to see her.'[Ellen]

Nevertheless, compared with sessions in the community, anxieties about confidentiality are much greater inside the institution. This affects the willingness of women to talk openly in individual or group sessions. This was evident to the evaluation team too. One woman sat on the edge of her chair and whispered throughout the research interview, others would watch through the glass window in the door and stop talking if a staff member was near. Veronique, a young woman in her early 20's and in prison for a first offence, described herself as having 'a lot on my mind', but indicated she was more selective and guarded about what she discussed with the Chaplain than might be the case outside:

'I only talk about being in here and the things I think she can do something about. You know there's a lot we can't talk about. I hate it here. She helps me stay.'[Veronique]

There was still evidence, however, of a considerable amount of trust and more willingness to talk to the Chaplain as someone not associated with the Correctional System than to other counsellors or prison staff. This trust was often based on a testing out of the Chaplain's promises of confidentiality as Veronique and Judy indicated:

'I trust her. I don't think she would tell anyone else or [the staff] because [they] haven't talked to me yet about it.'[Veronique]

'....in a place like this you never know what's going back, but with Mary you know everything is confidential. That's the nicest thing I like about it.'[Judy]

As with interviews in the community, the women stressed they did not feel pushed into discussing

issues, they felt comfortable with the Chaplain and able to talk about what they wanted to deal with. They also stressed that they were not judged, that they were really listened to, and that this enabled them to 'open up'. As a woman they found the Chaplain easier to talk to, and recognized that she worked in a different way from other staff or counsellors in listening and responding to them more directly. In her mid twenties, Terri had been in prison before after a period of prostitution, theft, drugs and her search for 'the complete party life':

'I've never confided in anyone, counsellors or psychiatrists, but I'm very comfortable with her. I can talk to her about anything....She doesn't strike you as totally 'professional'...she doesn't go by a list. She's very understanding, she doesn't push and pressure. You say what you want...I feel very comfortable with her. She doesn't judge or look down on you.' [Terri]

The status of Chaplain did not seem to be an issue for most of those interviewed. One woman said it had 'frightened' her at first, but that it had 'turned out to be a plus' and enabled her to feel more trust. Veronique had thought 'she was going to give me bunch of grief for being in here, but she didn't'. Like the women in the community they too stressed that religion was not 'pushed' on them.

As indicated earlier most women were serving fairly short sentences which limited the opportunity for extended contact, and the time available for sessions was also shorter. Some women felt they did not have enough time. Appeals or transfers, release plans, finding new accommodation, reuniting with children, and finding work took up considerable time and energy over the course of a short sentence. In addition, the problems generated by living in the prison were superimposed on any personal issues. This included relations with staff, concerns about the administration of their sentence, and relations with other women. Thus prison-related problems, coupled with the limited amount of time for sessions suggest that there was less opportunity to undertake extensive counselling or intensive therapy in the Correctional Centre than in the community. Those interviewed had approached the Chaplain initially to deal with a range of issues including an alcoholic mother, their own drinking problems, health problems, 'personal problems', 'family problems', stress, anger management, parenting, or help with their parole. The Chaplain's willingness to help with both practical or more personal issues was important as Pat's comment illustrates:

'I thought she might just be a shrink that wanted to get into my head but she's not about that at all. She was really helpful...with parole and mood changes, anger.' [Pat]

Women applying for parole had received both written and verbal support from the Chaplain, and as with the community interviews they had had an opportunity to see what she had written about them,

and to discuss any changes:

'She said she would help me with my parole...[write] a letter of reference and go to the hearing with me. When she writes my letter I'll be there with her and she won't put in anything I don't want. We both see it. I have power to change anything.' [Pat]

It was clear, therefore, that most of the women recognized the distinctive nature of the Chaplain's work in offering support and advice on the kinds of practical matters identified above, as well as more 'personal issues'. They valued her role, as one described her, as a 'pain softener'.

'She helps me understand a lot of stuff and I don't think any other girls in here could. [The] staff are here to do their job, Mary's here as a person who cares and wants to help me. I feel more comfortable talking to Mary because she's more open and understands.' [Sheila]

'She helps direct a person as much as she can but expects for them to do the footwork in helping to change their life style.' [Judy]

They also recognized how the Chaplain's work differed from other community support offered in the prison:

'E. Fry works differently...it's good. Rhonda comes out and talks to the girls and sees if they have a court appearance. Mary comes out here and talks to us about issues...problems we have, which is excellent.' [Sheila]

Only one of the women, Agnes, was dissatisfied with her contact. She had not got the help she had requested in a dispute with another staff member - felt by the Chaplain - to be outside her jurisdiction.

'She never helped me resolve my problem even though I asked her twice.....I can't work with Mary at all, and I feel we are being lied to in here.' [Agnes]

Only eight of the women who took part in the interviews at the Centre were returning to the Halifax area on their release. Five of them said they would like to continue sessions there, the others did not say. Much depended on release plans and the order they would be able to impose on their lives when they left. The rest of the women were 'from away', and regretted that they could not continue seeing the Chaplain.

## Anger management in the prison

Apart from anger arising from personal lives, prison can itself be a source of anger. Staff responses to breaches of prison rules may include lock-downs, searches and interrogations. Disputes arising between the women themselves, or changes in routines imposed by the institution can all heighten the tension of daily living. While they were clearly useful to prison staff as a management tool as suggested in Chapter 4, the anger management groups appeared to provide an atmosphere in which the women could explore their own reactions and relationships within the prison, as well as deal more generally with anger. These sessions were seen by the Chaplain and the women as important in helping them deal with the stresses of living within the prison. The women confirmed that, in keeping with project principles, they had some control over how the sessions were run, that it was 'their group':

'She's helped me out a lot. She really helps a lot of people in here which helps them live with each other.'[Veronique]

'It seems all right...I might improve myself. We get in a circle and talk. She runs it but we get the say in it. It's our group.'[Deirdre]

For Deirdre, group sessions were preferable to individual ones: 'I didn't want to see her individually, that's the way I am.' Others, such as Sheila, felt they could not talk about problems in a group setting and were more comfortable with individual sessions: 'I feel that I don't want to discuss my private life in front of a group.' Such comments reflect the value the women placed on having a choice of a programme in which to deal with personal issues.

## SUMMARY

Overall, the interviews with the women in the community and the Correctional Centre indicated that the Chaplain was able to maintain the pastoral and feminist aims of the project. They also illustrated the way in which a feminist approach worked in practice, and how it was experienced by those women. They saw the Chaplain as someone they could trust, who was prepared to listen to them in a nonjudgmental way and without resorting to standardized categories, who provided advocacy and practical help as well as counselling on more personal issues, and who allowed them to control the pace and topics they dealt with. In the correctional setting the Chaplain's role as an independent counsellor who worked within a feminist framework enabled her to work and to be perceived by the women in a fundamentally different way from staff in the correctional service. But the interviews also illustrate their difficulties in trying to change long-term patterns of depression, drinking or drug

use, or of coping with complex domestic situations often in conditions of poverty or ill health. And for some women they illustrate the continual reliance on advocacy and negotiation with other experts, and an awareness that 'progress' is not linear nor guaranteed.

It must be recognized, nevertheless, that those who took part in interviews in the community included many first offenders (14/25) and four were non-offenders although seen as 'close' to offending. Only five had extensive criminal histories. It is perhaps easier to work with women undergoing the crisis and anxiety associated with the public condemnation of a first offence. What was not clear was the capacity of the project to work on an extensive basis with women with a lifetime of offending or substance abuse, although some of the women interviewed had that experience.

It was also the case that those interviewed had higher than average contact with the Chaplain, an average of 21 sessions, compared with eight for the project clientele as a whole. In this respect they are not representative of all those entering the project, but selected because they were still attending or would have something to say, and were felt by the project to be 'far enough' along to be able to talk to others. Yet even those interviewed who had had minimal contact still expressed the kind of enthusiasm, and recognized the 'difference' in approach from previous counsellors, noted with more long-term clients.

The subsequent history of the project is considered in the next chapter of the thesis, and the extent to which it was able to avoid some of the problems of therapeutic intervention. The chapter then examines the problems experienced in evaluating the project.

## CHAPTER 6

### ASSESSING A FEMINIST INTERVENTION

The central question which this thesis attempts to address is the extent to which an intervention utilizing a feminist perspective is able to avoid the conflicts which are characteristic of innovation in corrections. Is there 'any point' in attempting to apply a feminist perspective in a criminal justice setting where the power of the correctional system threatens to cancel it out, or worse still to subvert it for the purposes of further controlling women offenders? This chapter considers the extent to which the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project, as a community-based intervention, was successful in establishing itself as a useful resource for women in conflict with the law, and secondly, the extent to which it was able to avoid some of the problems of feminist therapeutic intervention identified by a number of critics. The final section of the chapter considers how far the evaluation itself was able to utilize a feminist perspective in assessing the development and outcome of the project.

#### THE DEMISE OF THE PROJECT

At the level of programme implementation it can be concluded that the project was successful in establishing a rationale for its existence, an appropriate clientele, and general acceptance within the existing framework of services for women offenders in the Halifax area. A number of factors contributed to its successful development. These included its location within a well-established organization already working with the potential client group as well as its location within a wider and established network of feminist women's organizations. The community base of the project also gave the Chaplain a status 'apart from' but 'linked with' the formal justice system and enabled those in the community to take some initiative in their lives. The pastoral counselling and feminist framework of the project presented women with an empowering setting with greater control over the agenda than they had previously experienced. The range of services offered and issues dealt with by the project, coupled with a pragmatic and eclectic approach which adapted to each woman rather than being superimposed on all, and their versatility (what one probation officer called a 'big bag of tricks') were important factors. The utilization of other support services alongside individual work and the open-endedness of the project allowing women to continue, resume contact, return for refresher sessions as need arose were also important aspects. And without doubt, the personality, skills and energy of the Chaplain and the project staff were of crucial importance. For some women



the project fulfilled the criteria for empowerment suggested by Young (1994) more closely than would be possible for a prison-based programme.

Yet in spite of the project's growing confidence in its working methods, its acceptance by the correctional system<sup>1</sup> and the women's network, the clients' overall enthusiasm for the approach and its apparent success in empowering them, it ceased to function. Some of the common problems plaguing grass-roots projects were already evident in the project by its third year of operation. Waiting lists had become a feature as more women were referred, and others continued to return. The Chaplain and project staff, being responsive to crises and client needs, gave greater priority to seeing clients than to the more routine management of files or monitoring activities. This in turn had an impact on staff themselves with heavy workloads signalling dangers of 'burnout' and a limited life span for the project, as well as affecting evaluation of the project and the attitudes of potential funders.

#### The risks of overextending human resources

One probation officer was concerned about the long-term viability of the project. She cited the example of a project for women which had been set up in the region ten years previously, but collapsed after a few years through staff exhaustion and lack of funds, and questioned the project's ability to sustain its work beyond a few years. Some of the women too were conscious of the dangers of overextending as Avril noted:

'I find that lately she seems to be overworked. I don't want her to get burnt out. She's getting all these referrals from women who want to see her. Her client list is longer and longer. I worry about that, that she'll get burnt out, or that she'll have to cut back. Sometimes she's tired...I feel badly for talking about my problems...If this kind of programme is going to be set up in other parts of Canada, you're really going to have to think about that - not to give one counsellor too many clients...'[Avril]

It is a characteristic of many community initiatives that staff are vulnerable to the dangers of 'burn out'. The energies required to develop and sustain a new project are extraordinary, and cannot always be maintained in the long-term. This would seem to be particularly the case with feminist interventions where practitioners are often 'brimming over with energy, generous with their time and

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<sup>1</sup>

While the Chaplain was extensively involved in counselling at the Correctional Centre, and used by the institution to help deal with crises and 'debriefing', she was still seen by some of the staff as 'a volunteer' and excluded from case conferences.

their affection, ready to devote themselves to the 'cause' without limit. Their persistence, determination and courage are qualities which cannot be faulted.<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, the stresses associated with individual counselling place a heavy strain on counsellors. Many women in conflict with the law, as this project suggests, need a considerable amount of continuing support which can absorb enormous amounts of energy and time. Their lives are often characterized by frequent crises associated with demands from other organizations also controlling their lives.

In spite of the project's use of a network of services to give women support with crises and practical problems, it was not able to protect itself from overextending its resources. The open-endedness of the intervention model, which was itself one of its important features, led to overload as new clients were referred, and old clients continued or returned. Similarly, the valuable goals of short waiting lists and immediate response to crisis mean that clients were often 'packed in' in order to provide crisis intervention. In addition, the continuation of project workshops and counselling services to other community service organizations, while clearly of benefit to those services and to the Chaplain in providing a respite from the isolation of individual counselling, added considerably to the workload of a small and nascent project. While the project began to reduce the workload by controlling appointments and better time-management in its third year, it was demonstrating its vulnerability, but this was exacerbated by the funding crisis.

### The power of funders

Without question, the main impediment to the continuation of the project was funding. This was clearly demonstrated as federal funding came to an end in May 1994. The project had hoped, in the light of previous support within the province, that the provincial government would take over project funding when the federal funding ended. Given that the majority of project clientele were a provincial responsibility this was not an unreasonable expectation. No assurances were forthcoming from the province by the beginning of 1994, however. Project staff and the Advisory Committee began putting increasing energies into searching for funds on a frequent basis, placing work with the clients themselves at risk. Another publicity campaign was orchestrated with local media sessions, handouts, and a letter-writing campaign by network supporters and Coverdale. Notes of discussions

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<sup>2</sup>

Corbeil, Paquet-Deehy, Lazure & Legault, (1983) p. 169. (Original in French).

with the project staff record some of the activities and various meetings with the local MP's and civil servants:

- 'good meeting - but said no money', letters sent to Department of Justice (January 1994);
- 'lot of talk about the project, local and regional correctional staff very interested' (February 1994);
- funding packages sent out and local TV interview, received encouragement from MP and correctional staff (March 1994);
- met with provincial department (April 1994);
- 'good meeting with Department of Justice - 'no' was not said' (May 1994);
- Minister of Community Services now retracted his 'no' -reviewed the case and giving one-time grant of \$15,000 (May 1994);
- Department of Justice said absolutely no money (May 1994);
- new letter writing campaign (June 1994);
- met with Department of Justice, more positive, negotiating (June 1994);
- received lots of letters of support (June 1994).

In March 1994 the Chaplain's services were withdrawn from the Correctional Centre in the hope of 'forcing the hand' of the provincial government by demonstrating the need for services. This also enabled the project to focus more energy on raising funds for its continuation. The support of the evaluator was sought to provide an account of the feasibility and outcome of the project, and this was used for fund-raising meetings and discussions. With no guarantees of substantive funding by the end of May, and in spite of considerable efforts on the part of the project, the Advisory Committee and Coverdale itself, the project had to reduce its services to the clientele in the community by restricting counselling sessions to a group of clients in severe crisis and those who were court-ordered to attend. Referrals from Coverdale courtworkers were ceased, and sessions with other probation and parole clients cancelled.

The worsening economic climate in the province influenced the willingness of the provincial government to support what it now saw as 'yet another' project concerned with women as victims of violence. Finally, in June 1994, under public pressure in parliament to agree to provide follow-on funding for the project, the provincial Minister of Justice specifically said 'No', adding that the government already gave \$800,000 to fund 17 programmes for 'victims services' in the province and

that 'we've done without this programme before, we can do without it again'.<sup>3</sup> The enthusiastic endorsement received from the provincial government at the time of their application to the federal government seemed forgotten by the Minister of Justice:

'The long and the short of it is we have the typical Big Brother, Big Sister at the federal level starting a programme and walking away.' (The Chronicle-Herald 22.6.94)

By the summer of 1994, three years after it had started, the project had ceased to exist. And while a small grant of money was provided by the federal government, it was for the separate purpose of developing staff training manuals on 'anger management' and 'trauma and recovery' to be used in the emerging women's federal prisons. It was not for the continuation of the project.<sup>4</sup> A note from the Chaplain in November 1994 remarked that she and her assistant were 'struggling month to month to survive' still applying to charitable foundations, seeking 'fee for service' clients from the probation service, taking on a few private fee-paying clients. The implications of these issues and the project's collapse will be considered in the final chapter. How successful was the project in meeting its objectives and avoiding some of the problems associated with feminist intervention?

## ASSESSING THE INTERVENTION

As discussions with the women going through the Chaplaincy Project indicated, it would appear that the project was able to meet many of its own aims and to adhere to its feminist guidelines for intervention. The Chaplain had managed to reduce - but not erase - power differentials between her clients and herself by her informality of manner, dress and setting, by her humanistic focus on them, her willingness to listen and to work at their pace, by allowing them to 'set the agenda', by her own self-disclosure, and by the negotiation of contracts which the women saw as mutually agreed not imposed. She was also skilled at gaining and keeping their confidence, and keeping clear boundaries. As part of her broader functions - workshops, lectures, presentations - she continued to work for social change for women. It was also clear, that for most of those women interviewed, the project

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See 'Female Offender Project in Trouble'. The Chronicle-Herald, Halifax 22nd June 1994. As the Chaplain pointed out, only one of those services offered help with trauma survival.

4

The 'one-time' grant of \$15,000 was provided by the provincial Department of Community Services 'to keep the project alive until July' and additional short-term federal funds of \$10,000 provided by the Chaplaincy of Correctional Service Canada and \$30,000 for preparation of manuals. But 75% of the funding needs of the project were not met.

had enabled them to feel empowered to make changes in their lives, and to feel 'better' about themselves.

The measure of the project's achievement from the point of view of the women interviewed can be seen when contrasted with an earlier account of the experience of therapy within a correctional context. In Paul Rock's (1996) account of the reconstruction of Holloway prison he notes the growth of group and individual therapy in the prison in the 1960's, a period when psychotherapy 'began to come into its own for a while' (p. 84). Women throughout the prison took part in 'psychotherapy, drug therapy, behaviour therapy, group therapy' and a former inmate gives a telling account of how it was experienced by the subjects:

'We were told we were having group therapy. We were told it would all be in confidence, and we were told we could speak about anything that was troubling us and the officers, who would be present, and the assistant governor, their presence would be conditional on not saying anything outside the room. The officers were terrible gossips. They told everybody about their personal lives, their own and yours. Nobody believed it. Nobody trusted. We used to just sort of sit there and go through the motions. We also had in a psychiatrist from Harley Street.....who had weekly therapy groups and, again, that was much more formal. Of course, some women went for the cigarettes. Some women went to unburden. One or two women were severely damaged by that, and a woman, 30 years down the road that I know now, is still on occasional one-to-one counselling. Therapy, therapy, therapy and she is still fixed in the patient role. Never getting out, never, never, never, and still trying to suss out what went on in her childhood.' (Quoted in Rock, 1996 p. 85)

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF FEMINIST INTERVENTION

Yet a number of questions remain about whether the project was able to avoid some of the pitfalls identified in feminist intervention. Eileen McLeod (1994) as Chapter 4 outlined, provides one of the few assessments of feminist intervention which considers the views of the clients themselves. Those clients, self-referrals to a local community clinic offering feminist therapy and counselling, were able to identify similar aspects of the project which they valued: the total focus upon them as individuals; the freedom to express their feelings to someone who wanted to listen and without being denigrated, something they had rarely found in previous counselling relationships; the experience of being cared for; being encouraged to reassess negative views of themselves; and their ability to be 'active agents' rather than passive recipients of counselling. In addition, as with the Chaplaincy Project, the lack of time-limits to the length of counselling and the fact that it was a free service were also important, as was the friendly ambiance of the Centre, and the strong commitment and hard work of the counsellors.

While recognizing that the women had gained much of value from their counselling and found it a liberating experience which improved their emotional well-being and self-awareness, McLeod is nevertheless critical of a number of aspects of the clinic's work in attempting to maintain its egalitarian principles. In particular, she is critical of the overemphasis on psychoanalytic techniques and insights which focused attention on the early childhood experiences and relationships of the women rather than on current relationships or situations. In so doing McLeod suggests the counsellors counteracted their apparent reduction of power differentials by placing greater emphasis upon their own skills. McLeod also points to the reductionist focus of the counsellors on individual change to the exclusion of broader social change, and the failure to deal with the role of other people in the women's lives thus exonerating others from any responsibility for the situations existing. In addition, the structuring of the project discouraged poorer, minority and marginalised women and could not respond to them appropriately if they did gain access; and it failed to 'challenge' what she terms dominating behaviour on the part of the women themselves. Jane Ussher (1991) is also critical of feminist therapy, as she understands it, for offering a unidimensional explanation of women's distress in terms of patriarchy, for ignoring differences between women's experiences which are mediated by class or race, for ignoring the material and personal needs of clients, and as elitist in its language and approach, appealing largely to articulate and middle-class women. How far did the Chaplaincy Project suffer from or avoid such tendencies?

There would appear to have been a more eclectic and humanistic, and less obviously psychoanalytic emphasis in the Chaplain's approach than that identified by McLeod. While childhood experiences were discussed, in part this was through the use of family systems theory, and current relationships appeared to have been given as much emphasis. In fact, the current circumstances of many of the women meant that often far more attention was given to the present than to past events or memories. Much of the interaction was around practical and day-to-day problems, both in the Correctional Centre and the community. There was considerable educational work providing clients with information about services, their rights, or patterns of trauma or alcohol use. Nor did there appear to be a single 'explanation' offered to the women which might have 'reduced' all issues to the experience of abuse nor to 'male oppression'.

Secondly, there was still an evident focus on individual change, the message was, as Gillian had identified (see Chapter 5) that 'you've got to do the work'. The emphasis was on encouraging the women to be more assertive in their daily lives and to re-evaluate their own reactions and patterns of behaviour, but this was not in the 'accommodating' terms identified by McLeod (eg. p.117) where women might still be encouraged to avoid conflict with their partners. Some women were

encouraged to leave partners, others to renegotiate routines and daily responsibilities with them. The women interviewed talked of 'standing up for themselves' and negotiating space and routines. Considerable attention was also given to practical and personal material needs, and to the use of the community support network. Some of the women were themselves encouraged to take part in wider social action. There was often a considerable sense of awareness among those interviewed of the needs of other women and their circumstances. For the project staff, as well as its parent organization Coverdale, working for social change was still a driving force.

As individual counselling, the project did not set out (any more than McLeod's feminist therapy centre) to work with partners, or confront the actions of others - their mothers, in-laws, children - directly. Nevertheless, the Chaplain undertook considerable 'brokering' with other agencies in the women's lives, on practical issues as well as behavioural ones, and was very clear in condemning the abusive and denigrating behaviour which many of the women had experienced while providing them with 'tools' to confront it.

Since the Chaplaincy Project was specifically designed to reach women who have been marginalised, the exclusion of those in poverty was not an issue. In no sense could it be charged with being elitist either in client selection or language and approach. Nor was age, sexual preference or disability a barrier. All were well represented. Clients ranged considerably in age, and older women seemed well adjusted to the project, while sexuality and sexual preferences were specifically discussed with those women who raised them, and not issues avoided by the Chaplain. Nor was the project limited to those with high verbal skills or levels of education. The Chaplain seemed to be able to work in a variety of ways using material which was appropriate to each woman. Only in terms of race was the absence of Black or Aboriginal clients in the community more difficult to interpret. MicMac and Black women at the Correctional Centre did not appear to have any reservations about working with the Chaplain, but none of these women continued sessions with the Chaplain on their release into the community. The MicMac communities in Nova Scotia are not located near Halifax which may explain their absence from community sessions. From discussions with the Chaplain as well as with other community organizations there was a view that the Black community provided its own supports and made little use of the existing, largely white, network of women's organizations. Certainly, the Black community of North Preston is a tight-knit one, but other explanations, such as the

attractiveness for the Black community of working with white community groups, must also be considered.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in relation to women's dominating behaviour, it would have been difficult for the project to avoid coming to terms with it, given that for a number of the women violence and anger were intricately associated with their lives, their drinking or drug use and their offending. Acknowledging women's anger as legitimate formed a major aspect of the Chaplain's work, both in terms of anger management workshops at the Correctional Centre and with individual women in the community.

## EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

Ussher (1991) is also critical of the feminist notion of equalizing power differentials between client and therapist which she suggests risks 'deskilling' the therapist's role, and ignores the fact that it is expert advice which is sought by those in distress. Others such as Young (1994) and Fraser (1989) are concerned with the pull of expertise to locate problems deep within the individual, to focus on individual empowerment rather than a more participatory form of collective action, or to categorize and label 'problem behaviour'. These are concerns about the use of feminist intervention to control involuntary populations or those subject to social controls, rather than McLeod's self-referrals.

The women in the project did, clearly, want to consult an 'expert' and valued the special skills of the Chaplain. Some indeed, wanted greater appearance of 'professionalism', as in the case of Sylvie who wanted to know the 'clinical details of what was happening to me'. Yet there are differences between an 'expert' relationship which dictates, and an encouraging and cooperative approach which 'nudges' women to think about issues differently, or to make decisions. The women made this evident, and Ussher is wrong to condemn so roundly. What the women got from their relationship with the project was more than friendship.

The Chaplain herself clearly saw the women as developing or retrieving personal power as she recorded in a monthly report to the Federal government:

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Racism has a long history in Halifax and is still evident in recent school riots and in court challenges of racial bias against the only provincial Black judge in Nova Scotia (Globe & Mail 11.3.97).



'For the first time she is able to catch a glimpse of some of the personal strengths, repressed for so long, strengths that have been diminished or undervalued by herself, others and society.'<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the project did resist the categorization of clients common to most social work, health or correctional authorities. Clients were not labelled as 'inadequate', 'borderline' or 'damaged personalities', although there was occasional evidence of a retreat into clinical psychological 'syndromes' as Watson (1994) identified. The project's avoidance of standard assessment procedures and classification instruments or use of 'checklists, coupled with the holistic approach was in keeping with the refusal to accept what Kaschak (1993 p.28) refers to as a dualistic or reductionist division of mind and body.

Nevertheless, as Kelly Hannah-Moffat (1997) argues, the relationship still involved a use of power, but one which was benevolent rather than coercive. Most of the women remained in very subordinate positions in relation to other aspects of their lives. Probation and parole officers, Children's Aid Society officers, lawyers, psychiatrists and doctors, drug or alcohol counsellors, housing and welfare officials continued to act from positions of authority. The Chaplain saw her role in part as negotiating and advocating on behalf of her clients in dealing with the effects of the categorizations of others, sometimes 'speaking for' them (see discussion in Stenson, 1993 p. 57) a role which is not egalitarian. Without access to case notes or correspondence, or transcripts of actual counselling sessions, it is not possible to assess the content of such exchanges, how far they were based on judgements of 'presentation of self' or 'compliance with directives' for example (Knowles, 1996 p.123). While letters and reports to other organizations were discussed with the women, the Chaplain was still, it must be presumed, making assessments about their progress and behaviour and their suitability, for example, for 'getting back' their children.

The pull of the expert was also evident for the Chaplain. The project brochures and publicity material, for example, stressed the expertise offered by the Chaplain, from survival of sexual trauma and criminal violence in relationships, issues of grief and loss, and low self-esteem to anger management. While developing expertise was a 'requirement' of the feminist intervention guidelines adopted by the project, the Chaplain's account of the PLISSIT model of intervention, the association of therapy with 'deep personal work', and her own desire to increase her professional competence through training in psychology and psychotherapy, all suggested the development of the 'expert

discourses' identified by Fraser (1989). Both the Chaplain and the women talked about 'slow, painstaking and detailed work', and the need to 'stabilize' their lives before the 'real work' could begin on 'core issues and strategies for change or processing grief'.

Perhaps the apparent 'chaos' in many of the women's lives helped to diffuse the pull to 'deep personal work'. Most of what the Chaplain was able to do at the Correctional Centre, and a considerable amount of her work in the community, amounted to support and counselling. Beyond that, however, there were women who did seek and respond to more intensive help, and clearly saw this as a 'need'. Those women in crisis were clearly 'seeking resolution of their inner distress' from the Chaplain (Rose, 1990). There was considerable crying and emotion in the sessions, although in terms of opening Pandora's Box, the project seemed (although not always) to have been able to contain suicidal or overdosing behaviour.<sup>7</sup> The feminist framework of the project provided a way of understanding their situation which none of the women interviewed found difficult to accept or objected to. It appeared to provide them with a new yet commonsense understanding of the expectations placed on women by society and of some alternatives.<sup>8</sup> The project did not privilege traditional formulations of the family or 'family values' nor (for the most part) notions of the 'good mother' for example (Knowles, 1996). In this sense the project seemed to avoid the extremes of confessional control talk identified by Young (1994 p.47) which seeks to locate current behaviours in the individual's own deep history.

The project also clearly endorsed self-help and recovery literature. As might be expected some of the women had taken on the language of self-help and the recovery movement, some of feminist theology, and talked of broader social structures, empowerment, boundaries, god as male and punishing. They had taken on what Knowles (1996 p.194) refers to as 'professional language' to make sense of their lives. And some of the women clearly represented what Stenson (1993 p.53, 56) terms the 'good social work subject':

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This contrasts with the fears generated by staff at P4W that feminist therapy sessions were destructive in opening up problems and increasing the risk of slashing and suicide (see Chapter 3 & Kendall, 1994).

8

Littlewood (1992) draws parallels between feminist therapy and intercultural therapy in which counsellors and clients work together with shared assumptions about racism and the power constraints imposed by living in another culture. He sees such groups as able to resist oppression and repression, rather than being pathologized as inadapative to the dominant cultural milieu.

the reflective, growth oriented and rational subject, who is able to employ abstract models of logic, proffered by social work knowledges....to making connections.... between life problems and seeing self-destructive patterns of conduct. (p.53)

These were women who were demonstrating self-regulating abilities as Cruikshank (1993) outlines. Other women spoke in more traditional terms of their own horizons - of being drug-free, stopping drinking, getting back their children, not attempting suicide, getting a job, getting back to 'courses', being better at bringing up their children, getting on with their relatives, of 'coping'.

## RESISTENCE OR ENTRENCHED PROBLEMS

The more limited expectations of some of the women in the project about their own prospects raises the question of the ability of individual counselling and therapy to impact the lives of the most marginalised women and those most entrenched in the justice system. This forms an underlying theme in a number of critiques of 'talking therapies', social work or feminist intervention. Stenson (1994) for example sees social workers as using a variety of modes of conversational discourse to encourage clients to change. The social worker becomes an expert at indecision or indirection using an 'egalitarian friendship model' and conversational styles which include disciplinary and educative, encouraging and self-regulatory modes.<sup>9</sup> For the majority of social work clients interviews remain at a disciplinary level, however. He questions the extent to which educative, self-regulatory modes can be successfully used with the majority of statutory social work clients who are poor, and have limited literacy skills or formal education.

The Chaplain's notes on 'inactive cases' hint at some 'hostile clients' who were not prepared to 'work' on personal issues or resisted her attempts to involve them in a counselling relationship. They indicate that while the agenda during sessions could be chosen by the women, there had to be some initial agreement on the scope of that agenda. Together with discussions with some of the women interviewed they hint at the struggle the Chaplain herself had in working with reluctant clients:

- Alcoholic, phoned in drunk and abusive. I called her on this behaviour and haven't heard from her since.

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He sees social workers as experts in indecision (1993 p.53) suggesting that the boundaries of social work remain indeterminate and un-clarified unlike other professions (law, medicine) and with unclear definitions and expectations.

- Couldn't come to terms with the issues/agree on a counselling relationship.
- Seen five times. Does not want to come into counselling - 'blocked?'.  
 - Unprepared to relate present relationships to past.
- Not committed to counselling process - often no show/cancel.
- Hesitant to name issues. Agreed to further appointments but ??
- Resisted conversation - not heard from since 1st session.

Yet no hard line could be drawn between cooperative clients and reluctant ones. Both those with extensive or limited experience of the justice system and those with multiple and rather less severe problems were represented among longer-term clients and those with brief contact. And some women, as Chapter 5 made clear, exercised their power by not turning up, or by cancelling sessions at varying stages of their contact with the project.

Some writers concerned with the failure of feminist intervention to encourage collectivist action and awareness recognize that much depends on the situation of the women themselves. As Young herself acknowledges (1994 p.51) it is easier to work with some groups of women in a participatory, collective activist way than those with more complex problems. Thus among single mothers in a depressed neighbourhood it may be easier to encourage collective action, she suggests, than with women with long-term substance dependency problems. Those in the Chaplaincy project certainly represented a group with more complex life situations, and illustrate the limitations of expecting an eclectic group of women at different stages of their lives, with varying responsibilities and backgrounds and combinations of issues, to work collectively. Nevertheless, the project had included many of the elements Young suggests should be incorporated to make services more empowering in a participatory way. This was not a self-contained programme as has been made clear. It did encourage women to take part in group sessions run by network organizations or the Chaplain herself at the Correctional Centre; clients were encouraged to evaluate the intervention, both at the conclusion of anger management workshops and through the evaluation interviews; work - voluntary or paid - was encouraged for those who were able to do so, and there was extensive use of the wider community network.

## A UNIQUE APPROACH ?

How far the feminist counselling and therapy offered by the Chaplain was a unique approach either as intervention or within the context of the correctional system, must also be questioned as both Ussher (1991) and Hannah-Moffat (1997) do. Most of the women, as with McLeod's clients, had never had this kind of opportunity to talk about themselves in this way nor such attention focused on them before. It is possible that they might have responded well to other kinds of therapy or intervention too.<sup>10</sup> The Chaplaincy project certainly exhibited the 'universal features' of therapy identified by Frank (1961 see Chapter 3) as necessary for change to take place: a socially recognized healer with a superior status to the client, trained in a particular (collection) of techniques, a shared model of explanation, a new (feminist) perspective being offered, provision of experience of success in therapy, the mobilization of the client's sense of hope and the facilitation of emotional arousal. The mix of humanitarian, psychoanalytic, behavioural and self-help approaches, the stress on equalizing power differentials, and allowing women to choose their own agenda, the maternal and pastoral strategies all have parallels elsewhere. The feminist framework could not protect the project from the kinds of disadvantages inherent in those approaches.

Kendall (1994) argues that the benefits derived from feminist therapy by women at P4W stemmed as much from the practical assistance and supportive human relationships of the therapists, their commitment, respect and advocacy,<sup>11</sup> as from the particular techniques of therapy used, ie. within the confines of the therapy sessions 'space to be themselves, assistance to be in control of their own lives and the experience of being valued by others', things they cannot do or get in prison. In the end, as was discussed in Chapter 3, she reluctantly rejects the notion of feminist therapy in the prison in preference for more straightforward support and practical social work, because of the ease with which therapy can be used to individualize and pathologize women's situations, and its incorporation by the correctional system.

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Cf. Mies (1982) in documenting the life stories of women in a shelter in Germany, or the responses of clients of Intensive Probation programmes in England reported by Mair (1995, p.469) who 'appeared to enjoy and appreciate the attention that was given to them by project workers. For the first time they felt that someone was taking a real interest in them and what they did.'

<sup>11</sup>

Features which are indeed central aspects of a feminist approach.

In contrast to work in P4W, the Coverdale project was functioning less as a part of the correctional system, and more like statutory social work. There were many similarities, in terms of the clientele and their life circumstances and daily problems, with the child care and social work clients identified by Dominelli and McLeod (1989) Stenson (1993) or Knowles (1996) for example. Yet while the project saw the intervention as ultimately enabling the women to 'begin taking responsibility for their actions and lives' it seemed more able to avoid turning that responsibility into the 'responsibilizing choices' required in the prison setting and identified by Kelly Hannah-Moffat (1995, 1997). In part this was because it was not so dependent on a time-limited or correctional warrant-expiry framework. Those mandated to attend sessions were already on parole or probation and while their choices of living arrangements, working opportunities or relations with partners or children may still be restricted by broader social and economic pressures, they had rather more flexibility in their daily lives than those in prison. Even when working in the prison, the community basis of the project and the Chaplain's strict attention to confidentiality helped maintain the sense of separateness from the correctional system, although the short sentences and daily pressures again limited the 'depth' of counselling work.

The uniqueness of the project can also be questioned on the basis of the historical roots of much work with women offenders. The use of therapy and counselling for women offenders has an extensive history, as was discussed in Chapter 3. Individual and group therapy were used extensively in Britain from the 1930's to the 1970's, as well as elsewhere, as the key form of treatment for women offenders, and formed the basis of new prison regimes at Corton Vale in Scotland and Holloway prison in London for example (Dobash, Dobash & Gutteridge 1986; Rock, 1996).<sup>12</sup> As Dobash et al., outline, plans for Corton Vale were to include group therapy for 'deep-seated emotional problems' and group counselling for 'less serious ones' (1986, p.133).<sup>13</sup>

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Grace Pailthorpe, a doctor whose 1933 study of women and girls in correctional institutions had a 'profound effect' on official policies in Britain, thought extended 'psychoanalysis... the only radical cure for all psychological maladjustments'. Some 93% of the adult women examined she diagnosed as suffering 'from some form of psychopathology' (Dobash et al., 1986 p.120-1).

<sup>13</sup>

While accounts by women inmates of group therapy sessions at Holloway Prison in the 1960's and Corton Vale in 1980's suggest little was accomplished, one form of therapy was seen as useful. This was drama therapy at Corton Vale, singled out by many of the women as helpful because it excluded prison staff and provided 'the only place where you can let your feelings out.' (Dobash et al., 1986 p.137).

The project remains reflective too of the pastoral and maternal roles of traditional prison reformers outlined by Hannah-Moffat (1997 p.44) in her analysis of the governance of women prisoners. As she demonstrates, many women reformers have used the strategies of maternal and pastoral power to guide and reform the wayward prisoner, although they have not always presented themselves as 'experts' but as volunteers and 'mothers'. Benevolent philanthropists from Elizabeth Fry onwards often combined religious instruction with training in motherhood, presenting themselves as images of ideal mothers and thus women. They used 'Christian mothering' as Hannah-Moffat terms it, to achieve social reform. Religious orders of sisters were also able to combine images of motherhood - the true vocation of women - with spiritual and moral guidance. Subsequent versions of maternal strategies have placed less emphasis on spirituality and moral guidance, and rather more on domestic training, education in child-rearing practices and other appropriate roles for women, as well as offering sympathy, caring and nurturing (Hannah-Moffat, 1997).

Even when much of the training in women's prisons tended to be taken over by experts with special skills, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, Chaplains have remained an unquestioned part of the prison. Paul Rock has shown how notions of emotional and physical 'healing' have been applied to prison regimes for women more recently in Britain. Thus one of the principal architects of the 'new' Holloway prison for women at the end of the 1960's had envisaged the new prison to be 'a place of healing, not only for the body but also for the mind and attitudes and education and practice in relationships' (Rock, 1996 p.93). Hannah-Moffat also shows how the emerging Elizabeth Fry Societies in Canada from the 1950's continued to draw on religious support and advocate multi-denominational Chaplaincy services for women's prisons (1997, p.133). As the history of the Coverdale Foundation itself illustrates, the use of the pastoral power of the church in relation to women and girls in the justice system has remained in evidence. Some observers recalled Coverdale workers in the early 1980's going to the Correctional Centre to pray with the women, while the prison Chaplain and the Salvation Army still undertake that role.

In these respects, therefore, the Chaplaincy project recalls the pastoral and maternal strategies of reform particularly characteristic of nineteenth century women's prisons, as well as the more 'expert' therapeutic strategies of the twentieth century. But it worked in a way which was considerably less invasive or presumptive, avoiding the limitations of much feminist intervention, and unlike Stenson's (1993) social workers, apparently more able to work in an educational and encouraging mode than a disciplinary one. What could not be controlled, however, is how those in positions of authority received and used the information brokered by the Chaplain or presented by the women clients. For many of them their lives were still 'overcontrolled' by others.

## ASSESSING THE EVALUATION

A second major purpose of this thesis is to explore the potential for undertaking a feminist evaluation within a programme development model of corrections. How far is it possible to utilize a feminist approach and methodologies in assessing a project based on feminist principles? Evaluating the project proved to be a difficult process, as was suggested in Chapter 4. At least part of the difficulty stemmed from the different standpoints of those involved in the process. These reveal that evaluation is not a simple static process, but one involving multiple individuals and interests, as well as shifts in alliances over time.

The project had intended to undertake its own evaluation using a form of 'participatory research' which combined investigation, education and action. This derived from grassroots' evaluative research models, and was much influenced by the work of Maria Mies (1983) and the Vancouver Women's Research Centre (eg. Barnsley & Ellis, 1987). Thus women clients were to undertake ongoing research on themselves, providing 'the view from below', and eliminating the usual unequal power relationship between researcher and researched. The evaluation was to combine the knowledge and experience of both the project staff and the clients.

The evaluator, aware of the feminist nature of the project had planned to undertake an evaluation which would utilize a participatory feminist 'good research model'. This would combine experiential, qualitative and quantitative material, be sensitive to the views and experiences of the project participants, able to feed back and offer support to the project. It assumed that the views of both the clients and the project staff were essential in formulating evaluation plans. But the focus on a feminist evaluation meant that it was not entirely aligned with the evaluative model set out by the funders.<sup>14</sup>

The funders of the project and the evaluation (the Federal government) wanted an independent external evaluation. Those immediately responsible for identifying the project and for obtaining funding were women who were sensitive to the lack of programmes for women in the justice system. Working in the primarily male environment of corrections they were acutely aware of the importance of developing programmes which were sensitive to women's needs as women, rather than applying

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Neither the commissioner of the evaluation nor the evaluator were sufficiently aware of these differences in approach at the start of the research.



or adapting men's programmes. They were able to persuade a range of departments and individuals to support the project by identifying interests which would be served. The Chaplaincy service of CSC, for example, saw the project as an opportunity to draw in more volunteers to work with women offenders. Moreover, the project could be seen to 'fit' then-current policy interests in fund allocation. With its focus on women's histories of abuse it fulfilled the criteria for funding projects under the Family Violence Initiative.

The evaluation - a requirement of funding - was to provide an assessment of the viability of the model of community chaplaincy with women offenders and examine its underlying premises, as well as assess its impact on the clients. For those initiating the project and its evaluation, the evaluative model was expected to be rather different from most programme evaluations. It was to be one which would not prejudge or structure the responses of the women interviewed and was 'open to letting them define what was important'. But the overall purpose was to assist more broadly in the development of programmes and policies which were 'more responsive to the realities and needs of women in conflict with the law' by outlining a model which might be 'transported' elsewhere across the country.<sup>15</sup>

As has been suggested, the project's feminist ideals for the evaluation had been breached before the research began, with the appointment of an evaluator 'from away'.<sup>16</sup> The project while welcoming, nevertheless saw the evaluation as imposed in the interests of others - the federal government - and 'felt that they were being interrogated' (Mies, 1983). The evaluator was 'from away' in several senses: living in another, very different, province (Quebec), from another country (Britain), representing the white middle-class researcher chosen by Federal government, and neither a known grass-roots activist nor a survivor of abuse or disadvantage.

The sense that the evaluation was judging the project was manifest in a number of ways, but was exacerbated by the fact that the evaluator had to make periodic visits, rather than being based in the area. This made it difficult to become a familiar part of the project, to both understand their concerns and to be understood in turn. This had a number of consequences for the evaluation. The Chaplain,

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As Rock (1994 p.147) suggests, evaluation in the programme development model was not expected to be unduly objective or follow the 'tight procedures and the disciplines of orthodox research'.

16

An evocative and un-contestable term, 'from away' is used to refer to those in Newfoundland who are not born there, but is also used in Nova Scotia to designate outsiders.

dealing with very sensitive and personal issues and a relatively small clientele, placed high priority on maintaining strict confidentiality. Access to lists of project clients or basic monitoring data, to client files and case-notes, to clients themselves, was closely guarded by the project. The Chaplain argued that to do otherwise would breach the promise of complete confidentiality offered to the women. Direct access to clients was also protected on the grounds that they might be in too 'fragile' a state to take part in interviews. Access to the Chaplain herself was also restricted because of the emphasis placed by the project on the primacy of service to the clients. Overall, it proved difficult to allocate sufficient time to discuss the project or the evaluation process. The Chaplain herself remarked at one point that she felt she had never been so closely 'watched'. The evaluator's need to ask questions, to try to understand the processes and the scope of the work must have been trying and unsettling.

To help to overcome the problems of distance, two local women had been appointed as research coordinators to maintain contact with developments, attend occasional meetings and undertake research interviews with clients on an ongoing basis. Even though they were well qualified and suited to the task and one of the women had indeed been recommended by the project, there was still a sense of unease with their presence at meetings for example. At another point, in discussion with Coverdale staff about patterns of court appearances by women, the evaluator asked whether data routinely compiled by Coverdale might be used for the evaluation. This would provide a background against which to demonstrate the need for and contribution of the Chaplaincy project. What had appeared to be initial agreement was followed some days later by withdrawal of consent to allow the research team access to the data, on the grounds that this was private information collected by Coverdale staff for their use. A fear of appropriation seemed evident, a fear that the data would be used for the benefit of 'others' and not in the interests of the project or the organization.

The priority given to service also meant that routine information collection on project clients tended to be neglected, and information was often missing or incomplete. The evaluation had to rely on the project administrator to provide all information on clients, remove identifying information from intake forms, develop a coding system, and provide additional information on their status. The agreement that the Chaplain would prepare brief case summaries on clients for the evaluation placed an additional burden on her time which proved unmanageable. Case summaries were only completed for a third of the project clients. In the end the evaluation process became an additional burden on the project rather than being able to undertake many activities itself.

Thus the combination of concerns about the integrity of the project in respecting confidentiality, the primacy of service to clients, a view that the evaluation was externally imposed for the purpose of others, and the location of the evaluator outside the province, all made it very difficult to 'make alliances' as Cain has put it (1990) to engage in a participatory evaluation process. Nor would all clients have been in a position to take part in such a process. It was, in retrospect, asking a great deal of a small community organization, in the process of trying to establish a new programme, to submit to an external evaluation of its implementation, achievements and underlying philosophy. As the Chaplain made clear towards the end of the evaluation, her real fear was that the project itself would be appropriated by the federal government. It had been her ideas, her energies with Coverdale, which had developed the programme, she felt both ownership and responsibility for it.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF DIFFERING RESEARCH STANDPOINTS

Some of the implications of the differing standpoints on research were played out in the reports anticipated. The project saw the evaluation as 'serving to guarantee the continuance of this work and ministry' (Chaplain's Report, November 1993). As funding began to run out, they wanted validation from the evaluation to help raise follow-on funds, and a brief report which stressed the value of the intervention. The evaluator too was concerned about the funding crisis and saw this as an important way to help support the project.

Within the federal government, those immediately concerned with funding the project were aware of the funding crisis and offered to help, but were primarily concerned with the policy implications of the project model. They disapproved of the Chaplain's continued provision of services to other organizations which had been explicitly excluded from the project. They were concerned about the impact on other activities. They disapproved of Coverdale's decision to 'unilaterally' withdraw services from the Correctional Centre, services the federal government was paying for. They wanted more precise explanations and definitions of the methods and approaches used than the project was itself able to articulate. Concern was expressed that the supportive account provided by the evaluator early in 1994 for fund-raising purposes had not been discussed with them, and appeared 'too favourable'. They expected a 'formal' account, easily summable, and sufficiently 'distanced' from the project to provide an objective summation of its advantages and limitations, as well as an estimate of the ease with which the model could be transferred elsewhere.

But since there were a number of departments with an interest in the project, they each looked for rather different information. Evidence of the mobilization of numbers of church groups as

volunteers, for example, would have been a favourable outcome for the Chaplaincy Service of CSC, while others wanted a critique of the intervention, or an estimate of its potential for replication. A brief and succinct report bringing out the strengths and limitations of the model would be ideal.

The research team wanted to give a voice to the clients, to do justice to the experiences they had recounted, and to provide a faithful account of the intervention. They also sought and perceived a need to provide as much feedback to the project as might help its future development. It was important to write in a way which was accessible. As funding ran out, the plight of the project assumed much greater importance and raised the problems inherent in the distanced programme development model. A 'distanced and objective' report would have confirmed the suspicions of the project about government 'outsider' research as invasive but essentially uninvolved. It was difficult to prepare an account of the viability of a model which was unravelling and fighting for its life from lack of financial and political support.

The increasing involvement of the evaluator in the project, and the growing acceptance by the project of the evaluation team, increased the distance from the standpoint of the federal government. The final reports by the evaluator were seen by the Federal government as 'too partial', not sufficiently distanced, and too long. They contained too many references to the Chaplain, and referred to the project as 'hers'. A note on an early draft suggests that by constantly citing the name of the Chaplain 'the evaluation seems to be too familiar and partial to Mary.' Another suggested the Chaplain be referred to as 'the service provider'. Elsewhere it is noted that 'the draft appears to have adopted a non-academic, looser conversational tone, it is suggested that a plain language style would be more appropriate.' There was too much focus on the views of the women clients, and not enough critique of issues of accountability. Had the evaluation itself conformed to a more 'traditional' objective model, it would no doubt have been easier to 'sell' within the government departments concerned.

## DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH

In spite of the attempts by the evaluator to use a feminist research approach, the efforts of the funders of the project and the evaluation to set up a woman-centred programme and a 'different' feminist-style of evaluation, the distance created by the standpoints meant no-one was satisfied. The standpoints of the three parties also shifted as the evaluation (and the project) progressed. There were too many elements of the distanced objective research model remaining in the federal government's evaluative approach: the requirement to assess the impact of one specific intervention rather than the 'continuum of care' offered by the organization; the expectation of identifying a well-

articulated model; fear of seeming too partial, of being too personal, of naming, personalizing or humanizing. The evaluator had gone over to the other side. As Maria Mies (1983 p.120) noted:

Even while studying women's questions [women researchers] were advised to suppress their emotions, their subjective feelings of involvement and identification with other women in order to produce 'objective' data.

Nor would the project stick to its contractual agreements, but as a truly feminist and activist initiative, put the client's interests above all else. It privileged the confidentiality of individual clients over accountability to the wider community or its funders. It was difficult for a new project imbued with feminist ideals and grass-roots energies to undertake tasks in a way which conformed to the expectations of the funders, or to devote sufficient time to the routine tasks of recording, measuring, or noting. The Chaplain in her own way both participated in and resisted requests to provide information or to 'stand still', rather in the way Carol Smart (1992) suggests women resist and participate in events which regulate them. An early report by the project remarked that 'future possibilities are limitless' and at another point the Chaplain reflected that she wanted things to change and evolve all the time with new developments. Had the project continued, it is likely the model would have continually evolved and changed to fit perceived client needs. The project was able, in more ways than they perhaps intended, to 'subvert the established procedures of disciplinary practice tied to the agendas of the powerful' (Devault, 1990 p.96).

Doing feminist research proved to be a complex process which neither accounts of the activist grass-roots model, nor the 'good research' models properly capture. The researchers had attempted to understand the differing standpoints of the clients of the project, of the project staff and the wider community, they had attempted not to impose but to develop a participatory way of working, to 'listen carefully' and be 'critically aware' as Harding (1987) has suggested, and saw their own presence as problematic and consequential for the project. In not all of this were they successful.

It is probable that had the project been able to undertake its own evaluation, the results would have frustrated the funders even more. Self-evaluation by the project would have produced a different kind of assessment. Personal experience is an essential ingredient for a feminist account but is not sufficient. A feminist account needs to be able to contemplate, to see the overall implications or effects of 'action', which may be more difficult to do entirely from within. And activists themselves are likely to have less energy and time to give to reflection than even sympathetic outsiders and funders think necessary. Researchers too need to be able to 'step outside' themselves and assume others' perspectives as Klein (1995) suggests. But doing 'good feminist research' may involve

'breaking the rules' of those who commission evaluations, not providing a neat and acceptable product which conforms to expectations. What is missing in most discussions of feminist research is the context within which transactions between researcher and researched take place. Research, like projects themselves, requires funding, and the power of funding to shape projects and define assessments and outcomes is ever present.

## SUMMARY

The Community Chaplaincy Project was successful in establishing itself as a useful community-based resource for women in the justice system. Its feminist perspective appeared to be accepted by a range of service users as well as its clientele. But while the project was successfully developed, it collapsed on the expiration of the one-time funding provided by the federal government, having already become vulnerable to the effects of overwork and potential burn out. Provincial promises of funding failed for the most part to materialize, in spite of intensive publicity and lobbying.

The intervention model appeared to avoid many of the pitfalls of earlier assessments of feminist therapy such as predominantly individualizing tendencies, avoiding women's violence or using a unidimensional analysis. It demonstrated that it was able to work with those most marginalised in society, without overuse of power or transforming counselling and therapy into 'responsibilizing' choices. But the intervention was still presented and sought as 'expert' counselling and therapy, and some clients clearly demonstrated they were self-actualizing, 'good social work subjects'. The resistance of some clients suggested that not all were prepared to enter into the requirements of the counselling relationship, that it was not entirely a self-directed choice.

Far from being a unique approach, however, feminist pastoral counselling appeared to represent a reformulation of past technologies for controlling women offenders, particularly maternal and pastoral strategies used in women's prisons since the nineteenth century, but it appeared to be considerably less invasive than past approaches.

Evaluating the project proved to be difficult. The project, the evaluator and the funders, each worked from different standpoints in terms of the purpose, scope and outcome of the evaluation. The project saw the evaluation as imposed from outside, and fearing appropriation of the project as well as breach of client confidentiality, resisted attempts by the evaluator to gain direct access to documentation or clients. The evaluator, as an outsider, found it difficult to undertake a feminist model of 'good research' and participatory evaluation, but became increasingly allied with the project

in their search for funds. The funders, including women who were sympathetic to the project's intentions, represented a variety of different interests and expectations within federal government departments, but primarily wanted an objective and critical account of the model of intervention. Overall, the evaluation process demonstrated the difficulties of undertaking feminist research with a feminist project, as well as the variety of interests and expectations involved in supporting such initiatives, and it demonstrated the power of funding to kill initiative.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONFLICTING AGENDAS

What lessons can be drawn from this history of the development, balancing and collapse of a feminist idea? The Chaplaincy Project was 'viable' in political, organizational, structural, operational and even financial terms, at least for a while. To have been endorsed initially by the federal government when it was an avowedly feminist initiative represented a considerable achievement on the part of the project and the immediate funders, as the discussion in Chapter 1 suggests.<sup>1</sup>

Did the project collapse because of a 'backlash' against feminism or for more complex reasons? This thesis is about more than a failure to understand standpoints at the level of the project and its evaluation. It traces the history of a specific project within its local and federal contexts, to explore the wider acceptability of a feminist way of working in the complex world of criminal justice policy-making in Canada. As Laureen Snider has suggested (1991) the historical framework for assessing the impact of feminism on the state is usually very small, and it is important to explore the possibilities for change on the basis of specific contexts and institutions, as well as countries.

This chapter, therefore, considers the location of feminist intervention within the broader context of Canadian policy development in corrections. It examines the contrasting epistemological bases of feminist ways of working and the dominant correctional models, and the implications this has for the development of programmes for women. Finally, it concludes by considering how far we can expect feminism to help women in the justice system without undue subversion of its intentions, at a time when attitudes towards criminal justice issues seem less stable and predictable than has been the case for much of the twentieth century.

### PASSIONATE COMMITMENT

The Chaplaincy Project was developed during a period of public and government recognition of the extent of violence against women in Canadian society, and a willingness to develop policies and

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<sup>1</sup> The 'F word' as it was referred to was carefully avoided in government documentation at the time of the Task Force Creating Choices and its implementation.



programmes which might help to reduce its incidence or deal with its effects. It was also influenced by both federal and provincial government recognition of the need to develop distinctive regimes and programmes for women in conflict with the law, and of the high levels of violence in the lives of such women as the reports of the federal task force Creating Choices (1990) and the Nova Scotia task force Blueprint For Change (1992) made clear. It was developed at a time when an openly feminist analysis of those women's position in society seemed at last to be more publically acceptable than had been the case before. Within Nova Scotia the links between the provincial government and the voluntary sector in relation to issues of women, violence and correctional responses were strong. Coverdale had itself been a member of the task force which had produced Blueprint For Change with its commitment to develop women-centred regimes and programmes for provincially sentenced women.

Apart from its temporal context, a number of other factors contributed to the successful development of the project, as the discussion in Chapter 6 outlines.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the character of the place itself, Halifax-Dartmouth in Nova Scotia, was important. As a relatively contained area, with an existing network of women's organizations working with low income women, and for the most part from a feminist basis, it seemed to have a tradition of action and awareness in relation to social issues. The project was also developed within a long-established organization, Coverdale Courtwork Services, well known for providing services for women in conflict with the law. This ensured good links with the local judicial and correctional systems and the community support network, and the project formed part of the 'continuum' of care offered by the organization.

The community base enabled the Chaplain to operate largely 'apart from' the justice system, even when visiting women in the correctional centre, and allowed other services in the community to be accessed by clients, and day-to-day problems to be dealt with. The range of services offered was wide and included support, social work, advocacy, counselling and intensive therapy, dealing with a wide range of issues and using a wide variety of techniques. The intervention model was holistic not just in the sense of dealing with the range of issues presented by a client, but in terms of a range of approaches from which women could draw. The open-ended ness of the project enabled clients to return and they were not fitted into a predetermined treatment programme. Finally, the personality, skills and immense care and energy of the Community Chaplain herself and the project staff were characteristic of the best committed feminism and activism. The project was clearly passionately

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As Mair (1995 p. 472) notes 'project success is a matter of degree not an all-or-nothing judgement.'

devoted to its own agenda of helping women offenders with abusive histories through its development of feminist pastoral counselling and therapy.

The history of the project as a policy initiative, however, showed that it was unable to sustain its momentum beyond the period of its official federal support. The provincial government's agenda initially endorsed the Chaplaincy Project as worthy when the bulk of funding was provided by the federal government, and when support for programmes concerned with violence against women was politically high. The federal government's agenda endorsed the project as an innovative attempt to develop a feminist programme specifically for women offenders which recognized the ongoing realities of poverty and abuse faced by such women, but with the intention of deriving a model which might be used elsewhere, rather than garnering ongoing support for the project.

As for the evaluation, it proved difficult to be useful to both the project and the funders, and to take account of or work from all standpoints. There were pressures to conform to a liberal feminist mode as Klein (1995) and Simpson (1989) have underlined, and resistance from the project itself to entering into a form of feminist participatory evaluation. I am conscious of the fact that this account itself probably misconstrues the intentions and actions of some of the parties, notably those of the federal government funders and their various interests. It did not interrogate their meetings or discussions or minutes, nor their past experiences of trying to develop good research and projects concerned with women. To do so would probably reveal the extent to which those women promoting the project and its evaluation within the federal government were themselves affected, marginalised or sidelined by the experience, themselves evaluated by their attempts to look at something which was not mainstream in either its perspective or its assessment. Nor was it possible to assess the extent to which departments such as the Chaplaincy carried weight within the Correctional Service. Working at the heart of the correctional policy process is no easier than working outside.

## THE LOCATION OF PROJECTS WITHIN THE WIDER SYSTEM OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

The experience of evaluating a specific feminist project enables a web of connected issues to be explored. In examining the relationship between feminist intervention and feminist research, the broader context of policy formation and programme development in the justice system cannot be ignored (Rock, 1994, 1995; Watson, 1990). This is particularly important in the Canadian context where the programme development model has been used for many years as a way of demonstrating or encouraging innovation, and where most research and evaluation at the federal level is contracted

out to academics and contract researchers or analysts, rather than conducted internally.

Developing programmes for women offenders requires access to those women, a degree of acceptance of a legitimate or potentially legitimate mode of treatment, access to financial support. The project itself, as was made clear in Chapter 4, had to make considerable concessions to the federal government in terms of its coverage and evaluation in order to gain that support for its initial development. It had to reduce its time scale for funding, narrow its range of intervention by eliminating training and education services to other service providers, and submit to external evaluation rather than a feminist grass-roots model of self-evaluation.

To receive further endorsement (more money, more support from the justice system) conventions about how to act need to be followed, evaluation and assessment need to demonstrate claims to legitimacy and accountability, to relevance and impact. The Chaplaincy project failed to convince government at the local, provincial or federal level that it should receive long-term funding. As Paul Rock argues, to succeed new initiatives need sponsors, to be well organized, and their promoters to have authority and money, but the climate for acceptance is not always favourable (Rock, 1995 p.4).

It is inevitable that new ideas will often have to enter an environment which is not formally prepared for them, an environment that consists of activities approved, funded, and targeted at other things altogether. It is also inevitable that the officials who would promote those ideas just as commonly seem to be stuck in the wrong place or in the not-quite-right place for the task in hand.

In particular, 'bottom-up' policy-making, involving the development of ideas based on grass-roots initiatives, requires policy proposals to be seen to be:

reasonable, consistent, solid, and coherent, transformed, indeed, into something rather more coherent and solid that those who draft them might privately concede them to be (Rock, 1995 p.5).

The Chaplaincy Project clearly did not have sufficient support to survive beyond its initial phase. Those promoting it were perhaps not in the right place, or did not have sufficient 'authority' to push for its continuation. The project was not seen to be sufficiently consistent and solid to warrant 'replication'. Perhaps the image of an overtly feminist chaplain, who talked of god as a woman, frightened the more established Chaplaincy supporters within the correctional service. The evaluation was not couched in the right language to convey reasonableness and objectivity. In any case the federal programme-development model encourages initiative, once only, and leaves others to pick up subsequent funding. The provincial government, two years after the publication of its task

force on provincial women prisoners felt less commitment to providing funding for what it now claimed was just another victimization programme.

From the point of view of those on the ground, therefore, good ideas need to 'fit' into current government sensibilities if they are to obtain endorsement and funding. But there is more to this process than just a fit between current funding programmes and policy commitments (in the case of the Chaplaincy Project the Family Violence Initiative and programmes for women in conflict with the law) and which is of particular significance for feminist endeavours. As Sandra Harding (1986) has pointed out, scientific research and policy formation in the social sciences are inextricably intertwined. Describing a situation in the United States which has many parallels with Canada or Britain, Dorie Klein (1995, p.227) suggests:

ties between academic researchers and government funding agencies are very close. This embrace affects research in everything from the selection of fundable topics to the framing of plausible hypotheses to the scientific definitions of crime.

In Canada such ties seem less close than may be the case elsewhere, but it is clear that the government frames topics and research questions and sets agendas (Berzins and Cooper, 1982). As Mair (1995 p. 464) has underlined, evaluation as a process of testing and demonstrating applicability and impact, and a 'key to unlock funding' is essentially a political process:

Evaluation is, by its very nature, 'political' in a way that research is not; it is complex, problematic, and riddled with uncertainties.

Thus developing projects and programmes is not just a question of finding issues which fit an agenda, but also of framing them and measuring them in ways which are acceptable.

## FEMINIST MODES OF WORK AND THE CONTEMPORARY CORRECTIONAL VIEW

Within the wider frameworks of correctional management and programme development in Canada, and mainstream criminology more generally, projects are more likely to be seen to be acceptable if they are assessed in relation to the existing dominant perspectives. The push or need to manage large numbers of (male) offenders means projects which have universal or at least wide scale applicability will be of greater acceptability than others. As with the field of community crime prevention, those projects which can demonstrate an 'impact', which offer short-term results, or which can be used to respond to public concerns about crime will carry more weight than others (Crawford & Jones.

1995). Governments, Nils Christie reminds us, expect results and feedback, there is no time to think...(Christie, 1997 p. 19).

In essence - both the approach to treatment intervention and the purpose and methods of evaluation of the contemporary correctional treatment model to be found in Canada are based on a similar foundation of an objective scientific methodology and psychology. They incorporate what has been described elsewhere as the scientific-practitioner model (Nicolson, 1992; Ussher, 1992) which values control over the intervention, sees the intervener as expert with extensive knowledge and expertise, values objective measurement and evaluation, and the targeting of areas on the basis of achieved objective facts. Such an approach has been built up on the basis of studies of men (in the case of corrections overwhelmingly male offenders) primarily by men (psychologists in corrections and academic life). As Nicolson (1992) argues, the scientific-practitioner model has, among other things, consistently ignored the differential impacts of intervention by gender (such as men being treated primarily by men) and the implications this has for women (for example, men treating women versus women treating women).<sup>3</sup>

As has been demonstrated in the course of this thesis the feminist model of intervention used in the Chaplaincy project differed markedly from those currently being so vigorously promoted in Canada and elsewhere (see Diagram 1). The project involved a form of intervention which was developed by women using a feminist perspective, for a specific group of women in crisis, and delivered by women. It assumed that crime results from multiple inequalities in women's lives including experience of abuse and the trauma associated with violent relationships, and needs to be contextualized within the broader position of women economically, politically, culturally and socially. The intervention was reflexive and responsive to the clients, and focused on the experiences and needs expressed by those women as individuals. It attempted to establish a relationship which reduced the inequalities between the counsellor and client, and gave clients considerable power over the choice and pace of issues dealt with, and tried to empower them to take action rather than telling them what to do. It was open-ended, and stressed the importance of connectedness, of multiple

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The links between scientific method and practice is particularly strong in psychology which stresses systematic inquiry, hypothesis testing and thorough evaluation of interventions (Ussher, 1992). The clinical psychologist as a scientific-practitioner 'boasts' of 'unmatchable skills' having received intensive training, supervision and accreditation...in all the therapeutic techniques (quoted in Ussher, 1992 p. 46). As Ussher herself notes 'the powers of positivism to provide such confidence in one's professional skills are unrivalled' (p.46).

supports and a network of services. Its primary aim was to help clients in negotiating their lives on a number of fronts, interpersonal, economic, family, substance use, by dealing with issues they saw as problematic in their lives. It recognized that change might be a long-term process.

As the discussion in Chapter 2 made clear, such an approach - both in its underlying philosophy (feminist construction of women's position in society) its content (individual counselling and therapy dealing with personal and emotional problems) and the manner of its delivery (non-directive and client centred therapy) - is specifically targeted as ineffective by proponents of the contemporary correctional treatment model.<sup>4</sup> The latter model is ungendered, as well as downplaying the importance of racial or minority issues. It champions programmes developed by men, usually for men and male young offenders, but which are also seen as applicable for women and girls, and delivered (often) by men<sup>5</sup>. The intervention (currently) preferred is based in cognitive psychology and involves forms of training in cognitive skills, using structured cognitive-behavioural techniques. It is claimed to be 'more efficient and achievable' than alternative approaches. The basic assumption is that crime results from individual deficits and inadequacies in thinking patterns (such as egocentricity, lack of empathy, awareness, sensitivity, a tendency to act impulsively and blame others for your actions (Ross & Fabiano, 1985)). Such programmes are described as training rather than therapy, with an emphasis on a short-term fixed number of sessions. They specifically require expertise and the use of 'firm but fair' authority and tight control over programme delivery. Their primary aim is to reduce recidivism.

There are some parallels with the feminist model, nevertheless. The attention given to the 'delivery' of programmes and the exhortation that clinicians should be 'warm, flexible and enthusiastic' to motivate their subjects, has some affinity with the importance given to the relationship between the client and therapist in feminist intervention. Secondly, the use of some behavioural and cognitive techniques in feminist therapy and counselling demonstrates the underlying psychological dimension

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As Andrews et al (1990 p. 375) confidently declare 'attempts to focus on vague personal/emotional problems that have not been linked with recidivism' are 'less promising targets' for intervention.

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For example, the role-playing and interpersonal problem-solving programme for 'hard-core adolescent female offenders' at Grandview, a maximum security institution in Ontario (Ross & McKay, 1979) and cognitive skills programmes run at the Vanier Centre For Women in Ontario in the 1990's were directed by male psychologists.

on which such intervention is based (Rose, 1990).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, overall the two models represent very different ways of working, based on very different theoretical paradigms about why people come into conflict with the law. The correctional model involves 'taken-for-granted' notions of criminality, as Carlen (1985) and Howe (1994) have outlined, which do not allow for a broader understanding of the lives of either men or women. The feminist model is concerned with seeing individual women in the broader context of their lives, rather than as criminal women.

The correctional evaluation model stresses the evaluation of a single project, one intervention and the effects of that specific approach (and through meta analysis the synthesis of the 'effects' of a number of specific interventions). It places great emphasis on quantitative methodologies. It specifically eliminates consideration of a range of support, of simultaneous programmes, supports and treatments, or notions such as a 'continuum of care'. Tight control over the intervention model is accompanied by extensive prior actuarial assessment of offender 'risk and needs' and a targeting of offenders with high risk and high specific needs. Thus, needs are not 'self-identified'. The 'methodologically impressive studies' (Ross & Fabiano, 1985) favoured by the proponents of this model are those which enable reconviction to be measured in relation to predicted risk of reconviction. Proponents of the model also argue that if an intervention cannot be shown to affect expected reconviction rates it is not 'worth' providing (Bonta, Pang, Wallace-Capretta, 1995).

As the discussion in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 has shown, a feminist evaluative model rejects the notion of an uninvolved 'objective' observer as expert. The model used for the Chaplaincy Project recognized that knowledge is 'integrally political' (Cain, 1990 p.139) and that the evaluator should give a clear account of the processes of developing ideas and reaching conclusions. It should be 'value-full' knowledge which 'works' for those for whom it is produced, in allowing them to assess their situation in a way they find useful. It focuses on the experiences of clients and practitioners, but does not exclude all quantitative accounts. Like the feminist grass-roots model it stresses an understanding which comes from the experiences of those involved in a project and from shared or similar standpoints, although it recognizes that 'experience' itself is not always self-evident and straightforward (Stenson, 1993; Howe, 1994; Knowles, 1996). It attempts to involve all parties in the process of evaluation. It focuses on small-scale and specific analyses which get away from the 'grand theory' or the broad generalizations about categories such as 'women' or 'women offenders',

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It is of interest that Dobash et al. (1995 p. 359) welcome the use of cognitive and behavioural approaches for male batterers in Scotland. Modelled on American programmes, the two intensive group programmes are described as 'innovative' and as showing some impact on behaviour.

but also placing those analyses within a wider framework of the institutions which affect those small groups of individuals (Smart, 1992; Heidensohn 1994; Klein, 1995). There is a stress on acknowledging the role of the researcher both as having an impact on the research process and in questioning their own subjectivity (Gelsthorpe 1990; Currie 1992; Heidensohn, 1995).

Rather than representing 'anti-rehabilitation rhetoric', therefore, as Gendreau (1996) misleadingly interprets mainstream criminological critique of the correctional treatment model, a feminist approach recognizes the importance of striving to assist those in the justice system and the difficulties (and dangers) of doing so, as well as understanding a more complex relationship between programmes and their evaluation and the role of the researcher. Such an approach is more concerned with the assumptions underlying the correctional treatment model and its evaluation than with its methods as such.

Thus the dominant models of correctional programme development and evaluation illustrate the close links between scientific research and policy formation. It is clear that this model continues to be promoted for the evaluation of correctional programmes for women in spite of the greater awareness of their differences from the majority male population. The past 20 years have seen continuing lament that programmes for female offenders have rarely involved 'well-controlled' studies which are adequately evaluated in terms of their potential to reduce recidivism. A number of writers have lamented the anecdotal evidence of success, the small number and size of the projects and their clientele, and stressed the continuing search for objective data for policy planning (eg. Ross and Fabiano, 1985; Currie, 1986; Austin, Bloom & Donahoe, 1992; McLean, 1995).

Yet while reviews often note the heterogeneous nature of female populations, or the failure of existing classification assessments to 'fit' women (or Aboriginals) they see this as a challenge to develop better classification systems and more 'rigorous testing', rather than pointing to theoretical or epistemological problems in the application of such measures. Recent reports emanating from Correctional Service Canada or corrections research seem determined to impose the correctional intervention and evaluative model on women as well as men (Bonta, Pang & Wallace-Capretta, 1995; Weekes, Millsom & Lightfoot, 1995; Blanchette, 1997) whether in relation to institutional or community programmes. This would appear to represent an attempt to realign policies and programmes for women within a 'generic' male or gender-neutral model, in spite of the apparent ongoing commitment by other parts of the correctional service since the implementation of Creating Choices to develop women-specific policies for the federally sentenced population (Correctional Service Canada, 1996).



A second factor shaping the direction of contemporary corrections in Canada, however, as discussion in the Introduction and Chapter 2 indicated, is the increasing stress on public safety, efficiency and management (and more recently on cost effectiveness<sup>7</sup>). In Canada at the federal level this has taken the form of an intensified focus on risk reduction or its management, as well as the evaluation of reconviction effects as a basis for allocating resources (Hannah-Moffat, 1997). Client testimonials, Roberts and Hudson (1993) suggest, are no longer seen as a justifiable basis for programme development. Public concerns about the risks posed by offenders are reflected in the changing policies towards women prisoners (as well as men and young offenders) from the mid 1990's on the part of both the federal and some provincial governments. As Chapter 1 made clear, there has been a marked change in policies towards women prisoners at the federal level which focuses on their potential for violence, rather than their status primarily as victims. Such changes responded both to internal events (Arbour, 1996; Shaw, 1996) as well as increasingly articulated public concerns about the risks posed by the siting of the new women's facilities. This, therefore, is the context within which feminist models of intervention and evaluation have attempted to assert themselves, and in a climate which seems likely to persist in the future, with an increasing emphasis on risk and the scientific evaluation and assessment of programmes.

## DEGREES OF SUCCESS

What is also ignored by the contemporary correctional model, however, is the existence of other purposes for programmes, and the need to assess aspects other than reconviction (Doob & Brodeur, 1989). As the discussion in Chapter 2 underlined, the narrowness of this approach fails to take account of both the purposes of programmes as well as the processes of project formation rather than just service delivery. As Mair (1995) has argued in relation to community initiatives, many programmes have multiple aims (just as sentencing does). Reducing the chances of reoffending involves complex sets of events and changes; recidivism reduces a complex situation to an apparently simple one. Programmes may be successful in many ways (improving housing, providing job skills, improving health, reducing reliance on alcohol, as well as in terms of their cost-effectiveness or popularity with sentencers) but they may not reduce rates of reconviction in the short term. This does not mean they are not successful programmes, or can have no longer-term effects. And there are many programmes which do not see recidivism as their main criterion of success

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See, for example, Chapter 10 of the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons 'Correctional Service Canada - Rehabilitation programmes for offenders' (1996) which calls for fiscal accountability.

(Jones and Harris, 1991) nor expect only short-term results (Crawford & Jones, 1996).

The problems of evaluating programmes are also more complex in the community where there is less control over the clientele, than in the 'laboratory' of the institution.<sup>8</sup> Mair and Copas (1996) point to the difficulties of comparing different programmes even when they are thought to use similar approaches, or the difficulties of 'controlling' the clientele entering programmes. In the more nuanced discussions of community programme evaluation provided by Mair (1995) Crawford and Jones (1996) and Pawson & Tilley (1994) or by Dobash et al. in relation to programmes for male batterers (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 1995) there is still, however, an expectation of drawing conclusions which are quantitatively definitive. Even in a sympathetic assessment of a 'feminist' programme for women at risk of imprisonment in the United States, Jones and Harris (1991) are still concerned with the 'integrity of the programme' if it is to be formally evaluated.

Women who come into conflict with the law, as those associated with the Chaplaincy Project illustrate, include very marginalised groups of women for whom considerable changes will be needed if they are to live in better economic, physical and relational circumstances. Such changes take time and a variety of ongoing supports or services, not necessarily a single intervention. Progress is not always linear nor guaranteed. The longer-term benefits of a programme may in the end be greater than short-term evidence that they have kept women or men out of court for a year or two. Pawson and Tilley's (1994) notion of programmes having 'transformative potential' rather than an external impact, as discussed in Chapter 2, seems to be closer to the feminist model examined in this thesis, as well as their stress on the context in which programmes are developed and sustained.

The pull of scientific evaluation is seductive, nevertheless. It promises neat and efficient solutions to complex problems. But how feasible is it to expect to be able to evaluate programmes for women, even if it were not problematic?<sup>9</sup> A number of factors affect such feasibility:

- i) the small and scattered nature of the population;

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The distance between feminist research with its concern with change, and research on women's prisons thirty years ago is evident from Rose Giallombardo's comment: 'The prison, a social setting, provides the researcher with an ideal social laboratory in which to test existing sociological theories.' (1966 p.2).

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Large-scale programme evaluation may be more 'feasible' in California where the population in women's prisons has risen to over 9000 by 1995 (Bloom, Lee & Owen, 1995).

- ii) the heterogenous characteristics of the population of women in conflict with the law;
- iii) the particular characteristics of programmes for women;
- iv) the short-lived history of programmes;
- v) the characteristics of community or voluntary grass-roots initiatives.

The population of women in the justice system, at least in Canada, is small and geographically scattered. While there are gender imbalances in other areas of social intervention, in few cases is it as skewed as in the justice system. Thus a probation officer's caseload of 120 clients might include, as was the case in the Halifax area at the time of the Chaplaincy Project, only 12 women, or some 24 women out of a population of 160 remanded or sentenced in the Halifax Correctional Centre. Similar patterns will be found in larger provinces such as Ontario, where only 17% of probation caseloads will be female (Shaw, 1994b), and in Britain (Carlen, 1990).

Secondly, in part because of their small numbers, women are a more heterogenous population than males, as Ross & Fabiano themselves pointed out in 1985. The clientele of the Chaplaincy project was no exception, ranging from young women working the street to pay for drugs, self-employed and 'established' women convicted for drinking and driving, to elderly women convicted for the first time after killing a partner. This makes it more difficult to develop 'uniform' strategies which can be evaluated over a long period of time. It makes it difficult to provide services to 'uniform' groups of women or compare projects in a controlled way. There will be a loss of clients because they drop out of programmes, transfer, move away or return to their home regions. While such events are characteristic of many programmes in corrections, they are likely to be greater with women clients and with small initial numbers, more problematic for evaluation.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, the characteristics of intervention programmes themselves, such as counselling and therapy, whether run on a group or individual basis are less amenable to the standardized assessment techniques favoured by psychologists in corrections. It is difficult to show quick and unequivocal results. This in itself may account for the unwillingness of the current correctional model to favour such programmes (ie., it is not so much a question of whether cognitive approaches work better than

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For example, an elaborate evaluation of a community education programme for women offenders in Illinois designed for 20 participants began with 15, only 12 completed the initial test battery and only 5 completed the programme (Fortune & Balbach, 1985).

other approaches, but that it is easier to demonstrate some change because of the choice of 'measures').<sup>11</sup> Yet this issue is recognized outside the correctional field and feminism. Much family therapy work, for example, recognizes the complexity of peoples' lives and does not expect to measure change (Vetere, 1992). Moreover, Moorhouse (1992) notes that psychotherapy as a 'humanistic' practice is arguably non-quantifiable and difficult to evaluate. Her approach to assessing inter cultural therapy includes focusing on the population studied, the types of distress presented, the characteristics of the therapist, the type of therapy employed and the aims of the therapy. She also points out - as with feminist therapy - that increasingly many therapists use a variety of approaches, making it difficult to 'evaluate' a single approach. She too stresses the need for awareness of the different forms of expression across cultures, and the importance of exploring the clients' own understandings and experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Fourthly, programmes developed for women tend to be short-lived, in part because of funding patterns. Programmes developed by community agencies for women always seem to have been underfunded, and found it difficult to obtain funding (Berzins & Cooper, 1982; Ross & Fabiano, 1985; Austin et al, 1992; Kendall, 1993; Carlen and Tchaikovsky, 1996). In part the scattered nature of the clientele makes it more difficult to get funding for women's than for men's programmes. Nevertheless, the problem of securing continuation funding following project development is not limited to women's programmes, but one which is common particularly to community or institutional programmes run by voluntary organizations. In a review of programmes for prisoners' families in Canada and the USA Cannings (1990) found that a number of 'exemplary' programmes in Canada had closed down following project development largely because local funding was not forthcoming. Kathy Kendall (1993) in her evaluation of feminist programmes at the Prison for Women provides an account of the personal and financial hardships experienced by individuals and community groups in providing services on a short-term contract basis. And Crawford and Jones (1996) target the philosophy of self-reliance on private or local funding, following central government support, as a major limitation of project development in the crime prevention field in Britain (see Chapter 2).

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The only 'feminist' intervention programmes cited by proponents of the correctional model tend to be those using a similar programme and evaluative framework eg. the psycho-didactic programmes developed by Sultan and associates (1988).

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In spite of her sensitivity to exploring cultural difference and experiences her approach is, nevertheless, an empirical one which hopes by the use of multivariate analysis to isolate the factors influencing poor and good prognosis.

Lastly, the characteristics of programmes initiated by community or voluntary organizations often involve a measure of charismatic energy and drive, and a commitment unlikely to be found on a long-term basis nor easy to 'clone'. Such commitment indeed, has been a defining characteristic of much feminist grass-roots intervention (Rowland & Klein, 1990). Jones and Harris (1991) note the enthusiasm and 'genuine belief' of the project workers in a 'feminist' project in North Carolina but suggest that they failed - as most community-based projects do - to address the philosophical and empirical issues until too late. As with the Chaplaincy Project, clients came first, and day-to-day monitoring or paperwork took second-place. The Chaplaincy Project seemed to conform to the notion of radical feminism in which theory was embodied in practice, rather than being written down, and with daily action energizing practice (Rowland & Klein, 1990).

Yet the most creative programmes - feminist or otherwise - are often those which are unorthodox as Mair (1995 p.472) points out.

If one desires to encourage experimental initiatives, then ambiguity and vagueness are helpful, though...there may be a price to pay in terms of trying to evaluate such initiatives.

In his study of intensive probation projects the most innovative project was that developed by a voluntary organization which departed from the Home Office guidelines. Innovative programmes often bring with them working practices which are unaccountable as Crawford and Jones (1995) have noted. This was certainly the case with the Chaplaincy Project which restricted access to project clients and client information. Controlling the type of treatment or the way in which a programme is run is much more difficult with small community initiatives. A final characteristic of such projects is that they rarely write down or publish their findings, they have little visibility and rarely reach the orthodox journals or CD Roms (and which would no doubt reject them if they tried for their lack of orthodoxy).

Gondolf (1993) referring to community programmes for male batterers, has suggested that continual attempts to 'prove the unprovable' should perhaps give way to a focus on establishing standards of practice in programmes and services. Perhaps what is called for is more dialogue between researchers, activists, their clients and individuals in government as Hester, Kelly and Radford (1996) have suggested. Such a dialogue would have been helpful in the case of the Chaplaincy Project. The conflicting agendas of the parties to the project only became fully apparent as it drew to a close.

## DEVELOPING [FEMINIST] PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN OR WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FEMINISM FOR OFFENDING WOMEN?

So what are the implications of this dissonance between the current correctional model and feminist approaches to intervention and evaluation? How far can feminism assist in shaping programmes for women in the justice system? How different should they be? Should we even try?

Developing programmes for women and men which take account of gendered differences does not require us to understand women as naturally or essentially different from men as a number of writers have pointed out (Rafter, 1993; Grosz, 1990; Daly, 1997). As was suggested in Chapter 3, discussions of the difference between men and women in the justice system often stress the greater emotionality of women, their higher levels of depression or point to an assumed greater instability. Yet it is not only within criminology or feminism that the importance of considering women's needs separately from those of men has been argued, or gendered differences in responses to intervention found. Examining the responses of men and women to family counselling and therapy, for example, Vetere (1992) found men favoured sessions where they received 'structured advice' and goal setting, and where the therapist played an active role. Women preferred sessions which gave them an opportunity to talk about their emotional reactions in an open-ended way. Women were also more likely than men to be the ones who sought help, to acknowledge difficulties, to attend sessions.

Accounts which imply 'essential' differences between men and women fail to examine the broader structure of men's and women's lives. Men through custom, are not so enmeshed in family concerns, worried about toilet training, concerned with clothing needs, dealing with children on an hourly as well as a daily basis. There are fewer expectations on men to ensure their children live up to certain standards, for them to take an interest in health care or school or play. They are less often the targets of regulation by medical staff, child care agencies or social workers (Knowles, 1996). It is women who are more likely to contact helping agencies or to be willing to talk about emotional problems (Vetere, 1992). It is women who are more closely watched and regulated.

To claim that the Chaplaincy Project met the needs of its clients is not to imply that feminist counselling and therapy is the only kind of programme appropriate for women in distress. It is not to argue that all or most women in the correctional system need intensive therapy and counselling, or that men do not. Nor is the focus on feminist counselling and therapy intended to suggest that other kinds of approach cannot be guided by a feminist perspective. There may after all be programmes based on cognitive and behavioural techniques which do not denigrate, which allow

women some choice, which women find helpful and about which they are enthusiastic. As has been argued in this thesis, there are clearly dangers associated with seeing feminist counselling and therapy as the primary or only way to assist women in distress, or that those women always need 'deep selves to be unravelled therapeutically' (Fraser, 1989 p.307). In the wrong hands, the Chaplaincy Project could have formed yet another stigmatizing and pathologizing form of control, blaming the individual women, encouraging conformist wives and mothers. A feminist framework does not guard against misuse.

In North America public recognition of women's separate needs within the correctional system seems to be leading to their 'satisfaction' through state provision and expert discourse as Fraser has predicted (Fraser, 1989). A recent national workshop on female offenders in the United States shows that 'relational-recovery', addiction, trauma and women's psychological development form the main focus of women's programmes being 'showcased' there (Seventh National Workshop, 1997). The recovery movement and the 'unique' needs of women seem to be making considerable inroads into the correctional system, but rewritten in terms of individual failings requiring expert guidance. It is this danger within feminist intervention which remains particularly problematic in relation to the correctional system.

This thesis has discussed the dangers of feminist engagement with the state, and the capacity of feminism to bring about change for women in the justice system. These are the women whose lives have been least affected by the development of feminist perspectives in criminology as was argued in the introductory chapter. Part of the explanation for this neglect as Snider (1994) Heidensohn (1994) and Howe (1994) have suggested, is the particular difficulty of effecting change through the justice system, and the possibility that developing feminist programmes for women risks exposing them to new forms of 'treatment'. As Carlen and Tchaikovsky (1996 p.202) have put it in attempting to come to terms with such engagement:

The overall argument is that campaigners who become paralysed by fears that all reforms must inevitably be incorporated into the state repressive apparatuses tend also to operate with dichotomous conceptions of theorizing and politics that are neither epistemologically sound nor politically useful.

They have also suggested (1996, p.205) that most policy discussion concerning women prisoners takes the form of management questions or 'administrative penology'. It does not confront more fundamental issues such as abolition or women-centred politics 'committed to assessing all penal innovations according to their potential to redress criminal harms without increasing class, racist and

gender injustices' (p.205-6). Feminist intervention as a form of practice does not deal with abolition, but it does have some capacity to undertake the latter task, to redress criminal harms without increasing injustices - but this is not guaranteed. Kelly Hannah-Moffat (1997) has shown how the attempt to develop women-centred prisons for federally sentenced women in Canada has resulted in the reinterpretation of feminist empowerment strategies as 'responsibilizing choices'. If the project of developing women-centred programmes within the prison shows the dangers of incorporation, what of programmes in the community? The Chaplaincy Project working as a resource for women at all stages of involvement in the justice system (in prison, on parole, on probation, on remand) suggests that it was possible for a community-based feminist initiative to be of value to women without undue reinterpretation or 'responsibilizing' and without stigmatizing or denigrating them. As Chapters 5 and 6 indicated, for all its underlying self-regulating roots, the project did respond to the emotional and practical needs of many of the women and to their acute distress at their situation.

We cannot reject working with the state and not attempting to change programmes and conditions or offer support to those affected, but we need constantly to acknowledge the limitations of any 'new' innovative approach. It will be part of a long history of control over the behaviours of the poor. As was shown in Chapter 6, the Chaplaincy Project in its feminist style and language was a late twentieth century formulation of the maternal and pastoral discourses used in relation to women prisoners since the nineteenth century.

In part the argument developed in this thesis has in fact relied on the kind of dichotomous conceptions which Carlen and Tchaikovsky object to, pitting the contemporary correctional model of programmes and their evaluation in Canada against a feminist model of intervention and evaluation. But that reflects the very didactic nature of the correctional model being put forward. It does seem to represent the 'straw man' which Cain (1990) felt was somewhat unfairly pitted against feminism. On the other hand, it has been argued that a feminist approach is more open to self-questioning and doubt. It is also a way of understanding. As Elizabeth Grosz has suggested (1990 p.234) feminism cannot escape the broader framework within which discussion and assessment takes place, and which stimulates critique and argument.

A committed feminist programme such as the Chaplaincy Project will not have a 'better' chance of succeeding within a correctional framework than other approaches, because it is critical, less willing to compromise, to fit the mould or conform to expectations. It is less likely to develop fixed and long-term strategies than more traditional projects. It will not conform to stereotypes about what 'all' women offenders need. It will involve charisma and commitment. We cannot expect to see a series



of clear-cut programmes which are perfectly controlled, easy to evaluate, replicable and provide cumulative findings. What we can expect (or hope to establish) is a changing array of innovative projects which adapt to changing sensibilities about what seems to be 'missing' in women's lives or what they feel they need, and how such needs should be met. As Mair (1995) suggests, all programmes have a 'shelf-life', they reflect the priorities and understanding of their time. Carol Smart's (1990) complaint that all criminal justice interventions are inadequate and we will never find a 'solution' is in fact closer to the mark than most. All that a feminist perspective can hope to do is to work to enable a fuller understanding of the lives and experiences of women within the justice system (and of the components of that system itself). It can help to guard against the exploitation of that understanding to further repress or denigrate them. It can hope to work to reduce the control and further penalizing of those women by housing authorities, child welfare agencies, social services, or medical services. There are no 'absolute solutions' as Reinharz (1990) has underlined.

Feminist research and evaluation, as the experience of this study makes clear, are not as easily undertaken within a correctional context as might be assumed. The wider context of policy-making impinges on those activities as does the dominant scientific framework underlying that context. They are nevertheless important ways of exploring the assumptions underlying gender differences, of exposing racial and class biases in interventions and their application within the correctional system. But they are not so comfortably useful to the policy-planner searching for simple, rational, comfortable innovations. They are less obsessed with reduction in reconviction as 'proof' of the viability and impact of projects. A major task for feminist research will be to argue for alternative ways of understanding programmes and their value to their clients, to argue against the presumptive ascription of labels which reduce individuals to cases, to engage in greater dialogue with those funding both new initiatives and ongoing projects, and to make much more visible the kinds of innovative projects which grass-roots activists initiate.

## IN CONCLUSION

So much questioning and consideration of the complexity of feminist endeavour within corrections is a healthy process. Those working from a feminist perspective - and many of those concerned with the impacts of the correctional system on women (and men) - would prefer to escape the restrictions of a subject base and work to continually question, to open up the problems, and to guard against the loss of individuals.

The questions raised in this thesis have concerned a series of overlapping layers in the consideration of the contribution of feminism to criminology and women in conflict with the law. They range from whether feminism can help to bring about change without being subverted by the imperatives of the justice system, to the wider structures of policy development which shape the expectations of programmes and how they are to be conducted and maintained. The latter include the role of evaluation as a political tool in policy and programme endorsement. They have been examined on the basis of a study of a particular community project in a specific context, and they illustrate the validity of Liz Stanley and Audrey Wise's contention with which this thesis begins, that 'all knowledge, necessarily, results from the conditions of its production' that it is 'contextually located' and 'bears the marks of its origins in the minds and intellectual practices of those lay and professional theorists and researchers who give it voice'(1990, p.39).

The Canadian experience of an attempt by the state to incorporate feminist ideas into the correctional system is an important one. So too is the change in attitudes towards those same women in more recent years made evident following the Arbour Report (1996). That the endeavour set out in Creating Choices to build new prisons for women on feminist principles has not worked as intended should surprise no one. There are 'profound continuities' (Cohen, 1996) in the way criminal justice systems work. Yet the Chaplaincy Project has illustrated how feminists outside and inside government have been able to influence attitudes towards women in the justice system. For the government to become involved in supporting feminism in a community project was not inevitably or invariably a bad thing. With the support of those responsible for the federal funding, it is possible that the Chaplaincy Project broke down some of the unthinking resistance to feminism within government. There may now be greater willingness to support projects working from a feminist perspective in the future, if the alarm associated with crime and the management of risk do not overtake all initiative and innovation.

In the 1930's Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck undertook a long-term study of women going through the Alderson reformatory in the United States. Their '500 delinquent women' had been sentenced predominantly for 'unlawful sexuality' and immorality, and unlike those women sent to penitentiaries were thought to be capable of reformation. Summing up the population the Gluecks concluded (p.299; 303):

The women are themselves on the whole a sorry lot. Burdened with feeble-mindedness, psychopathic personality, and marked emotional instability...

This swarm of defective, diseased, antisocial misfits, then, comprises the human material which a reformatory and a parole system are required by society to transform into wholesome, decent, law-abiding citizens!

No such judgmental stereotyping marked the Chaplaincy Project's approach to its clientele. The women who took part in feminist counselling and therapy with the Chaplain were aware of this, and at times excited and energized in a way which only they could really appreciate and express. To have felt, even, for a short period, that they had control of the agenda was important. It was important to listen to their individual voices and to understand the ways in which the project responded to them.

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Beverly now in her 50's has a lifetime of emotions and regrets to deal with on a daily basis: she talks of coming from an alcoholic and abusive home, being turned out of her home by her husband for another woman and losing custody of her nine children, being gang raped when she was in her thirties, living in a second and violent marriage with a husband with whom she drank heavily. Refusing to go to hospital after being cut during a fight between them, he died from an infection. She is now serving a sentence for killing him. She had not attempted suicide for a long time since working with the project. Not given to much talking, she had this to say of the Chaplain:

She makes you feel better. She's fine, she's kind and she's truthful - the best thing they ever had for women.

Maria is in her twenties and serving a sentence for drunk driving. She has always worked, and owned her own shop for a time, but has been using alcohol and cocaine since she was 13 and been through a number of substance abuse programmes. She described herself as guarded and cautious about the Chaplain's religious affiliation, suspicious of previous counsellors, aware that it would take a lot to overcome her addictions. She had this to say about the Chaplain:

She's totally different from any counsellor I've had before. I don't feel stupid or intimidated....she's got an ear...I've never had bad advice and I've never felt what she thinks she's pushed on me. I feel like I can make my decision...I don't get offended by her answers and I don't feel like I should do what [she] wants me to do either. The only thing that upsets me I wouldn't have been able to see [her] if I hadn't of broken the law - that to me is totally ridiculous - she's the best counsellor I've ever been to.

## DIAGRAM 1

### FEMINIST INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION V. CONTEMPORARY CORRECTIONAL MODELS

#### FEMINIST INTERVENTION

Developed by women for women.

Reflexive, responsive; focus on individual experiences and needs; equalization of relationship; connectedness with others, need for multiple supports or contacts; avoidance of further penalization in terms of class and race as well as gender.

LENGTH  
open ended

#### EVALUATION

To serve needs of clients, project; reflexive, experiences of clients & project have high priority; impact assessed in terms of clients/user responses; avoidance of unidimensional categorization; exploration of multiple and conflicting views.

#### TRADITIONAL CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTION

Developed by men on men; used for men, women.

Control over the intervention; notion of clinician as 'expert' scientific practitioner; select intervention which reduces reoffending; stress on repetition of approach.. and on integrity of project;

LENGTH  
controlled, short-term

#### EVALUATION

Strong emphasis on evaluation to provide objective assessment of intervention and impact; control over evaluation; measure effects of single intervention; impact assessed using battery of scales and measures to show change in expected reconviction rates.

## APPENDIX I      INTERVIEWS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This appendix provides additional information on the methods used in the study. As the evaluator I visited the project four times over the course of the 10 months of the evaluation for two weeks or ten days at a time, as well as maintaining regular contact by phone and correspondence with the project and Coverdale staff and with the research coordinators. Considerable time was spent at the start of the evaluation process meeting with project and Coverdale staff, and with network organizations, to begin to develop an understanding of the project and its context. Initial discussions about how the evaluation might be conducted, the kinds of information which would be useful, and how this might be gathered, were held with the project and Coverdale staff, as well as with some of the clients. These discussions, as well as participant observation at the Correctional Centre, attendance at meetings and informal gatherings with project and network staff and clients continued throughout the period of the evaluation.

### Background information

It was agreed with the project that basic file information should be examined for the evaluation to provide a picture of the characteristics of the women referred and their backgrounds. Copies of all intake forms completed on incoming clients were provided for the evaluation, but without any identifying information other than a code number. These provide brief background information on age, family relationships, work history, and reasons for and sources of referral of clients. Information was compiled on all cases for which files were opened since the start of the project in March 1991 until March 1994. Intake forms were available for 89% (139) of the women seen during the main project period (when federal funding began in November 1992) and 68% (40) of cases seen during the pilot period. Overall, therefore, intake forms were available for 84% of all clients. Any additional information not available on intake forms (such as geographical location or current status of cases) had to be provided by the project assistant and again given identifying codes. This was a time-consuming task and not always accurate, often relying on memory in the absence of written accounts.

Since the Chaplain was unable to make client files and case notes available for reasons of confidentiality, it was agreed that she would prepare a one-page case summary outlining 'presenting problems' and indicating the current status or outcome of cases. This proved to be a labourious task which, because of the crisis-driven nature of the project, was not completed for all clients. Summaries were eventually completed for 60 out of the 155 women seen during the main project (39%), and 44 (75%) out of the 59 seen prior to the main study (or overall for 49% of all project clients).

### Interviews

Making contact with women to arrange interviews was not a straightforward task since the evaluation team did not have access to client names. It was agreed that the project assistant would attempt to contact women due for counselling sessions each week, to ask them if they would be willing to take part in an evaluation interview. It was felt that this would be as random a method as any. However, the Chaplain argued that some women were in too fragile a state to talk about their counselling experience, and these women were not approached. In addition, no young offenders were interviewed, there were few in the project and none were current clients. Their contact had generally been short and the Chaplain felt that given their general reluctance to come for counselling, they would be unlikely to want to take part in the research interviews. Attempts were made to meet with a number of past clients in the community. While this was successful in some cases, there was reluctance on the part of other women to revisit their prison or court experiences associated with counselling. They wanted in their own terms 'to get on with their lives'.

Each client approached was given assurances that their views would be treated in the strictest confidence and anything written would not identify them. A form with this undertaking and signed by the researcher concerned was given to all those who took part. It was also agreed with the women interviewed and with the project staff that the results of the evaluative process, including interviews, could be made public and be used for further publication. They hoped it might benefit other women by encouraging the provision of similar programmes elsewhere.

The interviews with the women going through the project were as informal as possible, to enable both the woman and the researcher to feel reasonably at ease with each other. The majority of the interviews with women in the community apart from the initial interviews, were tape recorded with their permission. They usually took place in a room at the Coverdale offices. The initial interviews conducted by myself prior to the recruitment of the research coordinators were very wide ranging, and helped to develop the interview guide which was subsequently used. The guide was developed in discussion with clients, the project staff and the research team. After its initial development the research team met to discuss how interviews had proceeded, modifications were made to the guide, and following auditing of taped interviews, agreement reached on ways of conducting the interviews in as open and balanced way as possible. Thus the guide provided a framework for discussing the women's experience of the project and was not intended to be followed in a rigid manner. It explored how the clients had come to learn about the project, their initial impressions, their previous experiences of counselling or intervention and their expectations, what happened during the sessions, whether or not they had experienced any changes in their lives, other supports in their lives, and their long term plans. It also invited them to talk about their lives and the events which led to their current situation. The interviews took the form of conversations in which the women talked about what was important to them and the researcher also offered information and responded. They lasted from 3/4 hour to up to two hours. Sometimes subsequent discussions took place when clients wanted to meet again, or during visits to the Coverdale offices or outside events.

Of those community client interviews used in the writing-up of the study, five were conducted by myself, twelve by Monica Symes and eight by Vikki Sweeney the research coordinators. Both research coordinators were very well suited to their role, sympathetic, quiet, yet open to others, and good listeners, and both had previous work and personal experience as well as academic training which gave them considerable resources and understanding. An attempt was made to 'match' the clients participating with the researchers in terms of age, Vikki Sweeney met with older women, Monica Symes with the younger ones. Apart from recording the interviews, and making notes on the interview guide, it was agreed that the research coordinators would write short accounts of how each interview had proceeded, as well as a brief 'pen-portrait' of the client to help provide a richer picture. This was also a considerable aid to me in the analysis and writing-up of the interviews. All this material was sent to me in Montreal in batches, and discussed by telephone between visits to Halifax. A third of the taped interviews were transcribed, but because of the sound quality this proved to be a difficult process for the transcriber. In any case it was important to listen to all tapes a number of times to gain a sense of each client and her interaction with the researcher.

Initial visits were made to the Correctional Centre by me prior to the appointment of the research coordinators. This enabled me to participate in group sessions, to have discussions with the women and staff members, and to observe a counselling session with the Chaplain. Vikki Sweeney subsequently undertook all the completed interviews with the women at the Centre. These interviews could not be tape recorded. The project staff felt that women at the Centre would have been unlikely to agree to tape recording even if it had been allowed, because of their general mistrust of staff and concerns over confidentiality. Instead, brief notes were taken, and written-up in expanded form after the interview, together with the interview guide.

### Egalitarian roles and subjectivity

How egalitarian was the research team itself? It will be evident that while we worked on the basis of equality, sharing ideas and information and decisions, in several respects my role as project evaluator was the more powerful. Since neither of the research coordinators was present at the start of the evaluation process, being appointed three months later, they had little opportunity to take part in initial decisions about the shape of the evaluation. Many decisions had been made in consultation with the project staff and clients by that time. Nor were they able to listen to my interviews, since they had not been taped. In addition, I was the only member of the team in direct contact with the federal government, in control of the budget, and responsible for the final reports. I undertook all analysis of project information and wrote the interim and final draft reports, although both research coordinators saw them before completion and were asked for their comments and suggestions. Perhaps because of my more extensive research experience (but by no means life experiences) both research coordinators, while immensely involved and excited by the project, were a little reluctant to critique or play a more equal role. In these respects, perhaps because of my own research history and ways of working, the difficulties of working from a distance, and the formal processes of federal contracts, I gave less attention to working to achieve greater equality within the research team than I would have liked. Moreover, in spite of my acceptance of the importance in feminist research of maintaining an awareness of one's own training and biases, of the need to 'interrogate one's own work' I paid less attention to this facet of the research process than others. The issue of the subjectivity of the researcher, my own role and influence in the research process, only became more fully apparent to me after writing this thesis, and with the realization that it was not until the final chapter that I had used the word 'I'! Doing good research is a continual learning process.

## APPENDIX II TABLES

TABLE 1 AGES OF CLIENTS REFERRED DURING MAIN PROJECT

REFERRAL SOURCE					
AGE GROUP	Coverdale	HCC	Probation & Parole	Other	TOTAL %
Under 18 yrs	4	-	7	3	14 9%
18 - 25	8	21	4	5	38 25%
26 - 35	9	21	12	11	53 34%
36 - 45	8	3	6	8	25 16%
46+	7	2	3	5	17 11%
No inform.	2	5	-	1	8 5%
TOTAL	38	52	32	33	155 100%

TABLE 2 SOURCES OF REFERRALS TO PROJECT MARCH 1991 - MARCH 1994

	Prior to Main Project Only	Within Main Project Period	TOTAL	%
Coverdale	15	38	53	25%
HCC	14	52	66	31%
Probation/Parole	13	32	45	21%
Other	17	33	50	23%
TOTAL	59	155*	214	100%

(\*Includes 32 cases referred prior to the start of the main project and which continued during that period).



TABLE 3  
NUMBER OF SESSIONS WITH COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN BY REFERRAL SOURCE

	Coverdale	HCC#	Probation & Parole	Other	TOTAL	%
1 only	4	17	7	5	33	21%
2 - 4	10	13	9	13	45	29%
5 - 10	10	13	10	8	41	27%
11 - 20	5	7	4	5	21	14%
21+	8	2	2	2	14	9%
TOTAL	37*	52	32	33	154	100%

Mean No.            14.29                      5.71                      6.56                      6.70                      8.20

(\*One case excluded, phone contact only; #including anger management workshop sessions).

TABLE 4  
COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN'S ASSESSMENT OF TYPE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN  
WITH CLIENTS DURING MAIN PROJECT November 1993 - March 1994.

	Coverdale	HCC	Probation & Parole	Other	TOTAL	%
Counselling/ social work	20	33	16	18	87	56%
Counselling/ social work/intens. therapy	5	3	10	8	26	17%
Intensive therapy only	11	-	4	4	19	12%
Counselling/ social work/ ints.therapy/ anger manag.	-	7	1	-	8	5%
Counselling/ social work/ anger manag.	2	8	1	-	11	7%
No inform.	-	-	-	3	3	2%
TOTAL	38	51*	32	33	154*	100%

(\*One case excluded - transferred to psychiatric care).

## **APPENDIX III**

### **ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES TO WHICH CLIENTS WERE REFERRED BY THE COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN**

(\* indicates those services more frequently referred to)

\*Coverdale Courtwork Services (advocacy with courts and social services, legal aid, peace bonds, private prosecutions eg. laying Common Assault charges).

\*Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Private lawyers

Police

Nova Scotia Public Legal Education Society

\*Drug Dependency programmes eg.

MATRIX (for women)

Choices (for youth)

Miles States and Coalition

\*Detox Units (in Dartmouth, Kentville, Lunenburg, Sydney)

12 Step Programmes (NA, AA, AlAnon, ACCA)

Exodus House (recovery)

Physicians

Psychiatrists

Psychiatric assessment at Abbey Lane Memorial and Nova Scotia Hospital

Nutritional counselling

Pain Clinic (Camp Hill Hospital)

\*Children's Aid Society

\*Parent Resource Centres at Spryfield, Veith House, Dartmouth

\*Single Parent Association

Atlantic Child Guidance (counselling)

\*Service to Sexual Assault Victims

Nova Scotia Victim Services

\*Elizabeth Fry Society (Parenting Programme; Self Esteem Programme)

\*Women's Employment Outreach

Dartmouth Work Activity (upgrading, work training & life-skills)

Options (Halifax upgrading, work training & life skills)

Metro Continuing Education

Mount St Vincent University

GEO programmes (High School equivalence)

Community Colleges

Vocational Rehabilitation (Metro Drug Dependency)

Literacy Network

Options

\*Social Services

Family Service of Support

Military Family Support Centre

Mic Mac Friendship Centre

There is a Place for You (Self-help Support Association)  
Halifax Welfare Rights Association  
Nova Scotia Human Rights Association

Nova Scotia Dept. of Consumer Affairs (Landlord Tenancy Board; Collection Agencies problems)

\*Adsum House (homeless women 16 and over)

\*Bryony House (and other transition houses)

\*Alice Housing (second stage housing)

Phoenix House (homeless youth)

Sullivan House (group home)

Rotary House (for youth with no place to stay, but want to stay in school)

Other clergy

\*Food banks

Salvation Army

St Vincent de Paul Society

Christmas Daddies

Bacon House (used clothing, furniture, dishes etc.)

Hand to Hand

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