

**Fragile Moralities and Dangerous
Sexualities:**

**A case study of ‘deviant’ women
and semi-penal institutionalisation
on Merseyside, 1823 – 1994**

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requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for
the award of Doctor of Philosophy**

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To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that I give full permission for Professor Joe Sim to place my PhD thesis with the Liverpool John Moores University library.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alana R Barton', with a stylized, cursive script.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my beloved grandparents,
Jessie and Robert Highton, and Molly and William Barton and my
dear friend Peggy Townsend

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Abstract

This thesis is primarily concerned with the social control and disciplining of women within a semi-penal institution. As a case study it critically analyses the history of one particular institution from 1823 to 1994, chronicling its development from a nineteenth century female reformatory to a twentieth century bail and probation hostel for women. Through an analysis of this history, the thesis fulfils three aims.

First, it explicitly identifies the themes of continuity and discontinuity in the history of semi-penal institutionalisation, and thus contributes significantly to the feminist theoretical literature by establishing this oft-forgotten arena as a significant site of social control for ‘deviant’ women, placed somewhere between the formal control of the prison and the informal regulation of the domestic sphere.

Second, it deconstructs the dominant, hegemonic discourses around domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology that have been mobilised to both *define* ‘deviance’ in women and to construct semi-penal institutional regimes aimed at *reforming* deviant behaviour. This analysis also makes an important contribution to this field of study in that it confirms that the discourses utilised to characterise and discipline women in reformatories during the nineteenth century, continue to be mobilised for the same purpose in a probation hostel nearly two hundred years later. In recognising this fact, the thesis dismantles the popular notion that such institutions are unproblematic simply because they are ‘not custodial’.

Finally, the thesis analyses the way in which women cope with or resist the disciplinary regimes and discourses imposed upon them. It concludes that women utilise a range of strategies through which they can re-gain and re-assert a sense of agency and authority within a regime that, whilst claiming to ‘empower’, actually serves to induce submission in women

and to ‘infantilise’ them, reducing them to a less-than-adult status. Through an examination of these strategies of resistance and coping it becomes apparent that the distribution of power in the semi-penal institution is not fixed, but can be subtly negotiated and redistributed. This thesis therefore complements and adds to the existing body of literature around women’s resistance to custodial regimes by highlighting that these methods of survival are not only to be found in prisons but in semi-penal institutions also.

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Chapter One

Introduction

While convention requires women's prisons to *look* like minimum security institutions economic reality decrees that they cannot *be* minimum security....The result is an atmosphere that in spite of attractive facilities and peaceful surroundings is really very tense and oppressive. The inmate...is reduced to a state of childish dependency... The reduction of women to a weak and dependent and helpless status is brought about by more subtle means than by the gun or the high wall (Gibson, 1973, quoted in Carlen, 1983:21. Emphasis in original).

...this man was requiring his wife to keep a diary of her movements whilst he was serving his sentence. This diary was presented to him during visiting times and if he was not satisfied with her behaviour during his absence she was subjected to a barrage of insults, threats and other public humiliations (Morton, 1994:7).¹

The image of the 'normal' woman is based around an idealised concept of femininity, which in turn is constructed around dominant discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology. This construct has for centuries been utilised to characterise what is appropriate and acceptable female behaviour (Hutter and Williams, 1981). Any deviation from, or violation of these standards has mobilised a whole set of control strategies, the purpose of which has been to navigate and normalise the deviant female back into her ascribed role. As Smart and Smart (1978) argued, the social control of women can assume many different guises. It can be formal or informal, public or private, expressed or implied, and through various combinations of these forms, women's lives are controlled and their behaviour regulated.

The quotations above refer to two very specific and very distinct forms of social control which serve to regulate and amend women's behaviour. The first quotation refers to those practices and regimes that characterise and

¹ This quotation refers to the relationship between a male prisoner and his wife.

define the most formal method of control for women, that which takes place within custodial institutions. The second concerns a very different, but a much more prevalent, method that being the control of women through 'informal' processes, such as those that take place within their own homes and domestic spheres.

Since the nineteenth century, when it was decided that the association of male and female prisoners was undesirable, particular and specific regimes have been constructed for women, regimes that have primarily been assembled around idealised models of femininity (Zedner, 1991). Women, it was believed, could no longer be housed with male prisoners as they were a particularly 'corruptible' *and* 'corrupting' group who required 'special, closer forms of control and confinement' (Dobash et al, 1986:1).

These 'special' methods of control within prisons for women have been subject to various modifications over the last one hundred years or so but to a great extent they have remained centred around two powerful misconceptions regarding the nature of female offending. First, that the causes of women's deviance stem from inherent pathological or biological weaknesses and second, that women offenders are fundamentally maladjusted to, and dislocated from, their 'natural' feminine roles (Carlen, 1985). The notion that criminal women have out-stepped the boundaries of 'normal' femininity has provided for the proliferation of regimes based around reformation and domestication (Carlen, 1983; Dobash et al, 1986; Genders and Player, 1987; Zedner, 1991; Faith, 1993). Women who enter the masculine 'domain' of criminal activity require disciplinary procedures that will rehabilitate them to a more appropriate and hence less 'dangerous' position within the social order.

The idea of the 'deviant' woman as sick and as having transgressed her ascribed gender role are both concepts which are in many ways consistent with the image of the 'normal' woman. According to Hutter and Williams

(1981), 'normal' women are perceived as infantile, irresponsible and in need of protection and supervision.

The image of the 'normal' woman employed, time and time again, is of a person with something of a childish incapacity to govern herself and in some need of protection - a kind of original sin stemming from Eve's inability to control her desire to seek new knowledge (Hutter and Williams, 1981: 12).²

For women in prison, this concept of 'childishness' and the need for protection has led to a process of 'infantilization' (Faith, 1993). Many women prisoners have reported that the custodial regimes they experienced encouraged a dependency culture in which they were denied the rights to make decisions about their lives and which hence reduced them to a child-like status (Carlen, 1983; Rafter, 1983; Faith, 1993; Heidensohn, 1996). As Carlen stated, for women in Scotland ideas around appropriate female roles and behaviour were

....incorporated into the prison regime to produce a very fine disciplinary web which denies women both personality and full adult status (1983: 16).

However it is not only behind the prison walls that women find themselves the objects of scrutiny, surveillance and regulation. As Faith and Davis contend, the term 'deviant' is insufficient to explain and account for the whole range of 'normalised modes of social control' (1987: 171) that have emerged to regulate and control women within their homes, their communities and their everyday lives.

The second quotation at the beginning of this chapter refers to this much more informal, but extremely repressive, method of social control. The

² It is interesting to note Hutter and Williams' biblical reference in this quotation as many writers (for example Carlen, 1985) have identified that discourses based around religious morality (in other words woman as inherently 'evil' and 'corruptible') have traditionally been, and indeed frequently still are, employed to explain women's deviant behaviour.

woman discussed in the quotation is not formally incarcerated but her behaviour and movements are heavily monitored and governed through a process of manipulation, intimidation and threatened, and actual, abuse.

According to Carlen (1988) the family is a major ideological site of social control for women. Heidensohn (1996) argues that this control begins with the socialisation of daughters by mothers. Mothers, she states, may themselves be dominated and restrained by domestic responsibilities but at the same time they collude with these ideologies of 'appropriate' behaviour by attempting to socialise their daughters for the same role in the future. Several authors have likened the family and the home to a regulative institution for women. Dahl and Snare (1978) argued that women are privately and domestically imprisoned within the home and their seclusion and isolation cultivates an intensive web of control by children, husbands and neighbours. Christie (1978) stated that the home, like the prison, is part of an all-encompassing system of regulation, control and surveillance for women. Both, he claimed, are institutions where physical structures and regimes create an environment of 'high visibility' with the potential for part, or total, restriction of movement and behaviour.

Thus, as the discussion above highlights, writers have for some years theorised and contextualised the regulation and discipline of women within these two distinct sites of social control - the prison and the domestic sphere. However, there is a third arena of social control and regulation that has effectively been overlooked in much of the existing literature. For over two hundred years, a whole range of institutions have existed for women, institutions which were neither 'formal' in the sense of a prison, nor 'informal' in the sense of the home, but which at the same time utilised the regulatory methods and disciplinary techniques employed in both. The sole purpose of these institutions was to contain, supervise, control and, most importantly, to normalise 'deviant' women (both 'criminal' and 'non criminal') back to an acceptable standard of feminine behaviour. These

institutions, which straddled the boundary between 'formal' and 'informal', were described by Weiner as 'semi-penal' (1990: 130).

Semi-penal institutions were originally developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to accommodate the increasing number of 'exceptional cases' within the prison system (Weiner, 1990: 321). Exceptional cases included juveniles, drunkards, imbeciles, lunatics, vagrants and, of course, women. Consequently a plethora of non-penal, semi-incarcerative institutions, such as homes, refuges and reformatories were established to cater for such groups.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women were judged against very complex and specifically constructed ideas of womanhood, femininity, morality and respectability. Smart (1992) claims that working class women were categorised within a contradictory set of discourses, being seen as both powerful but at the same time powerless, and as corrupting and dangerous but at the same time easily corrupted and therefore in need of protection. Consequently, young women, like juveniles, were believed to be unsuitable for imprisonment primarily because of the fragility of their morality and their susceptibility to corruption and contamination from others. However, this susceptibility to external influence, the idea that women were in some way 'malleable', made them ideal candidates for reform (Zedner, 1991). If women were so impressionable with regard to negative influence, then, it was believed, they must also be equally receptive to positive influence. The female reformatory movement developed primarily around this belief that the behaviour of (some but not all) women who had 'strayed' or 'fallen' could be reformed due to their 'infantile' characters.

Thus the perceived infantile nature of women, along with their own incapacity for self governance, made them appropriate beings for reformatory supervision where the practices and discourses that were

normally at work within both the prison and the family combined to produce a particular form of regime. Discipline was instilled through religious doctrine and appropriate training, and supervision was provided by a 'matron-mother' figure whose purpose was to provide a good moral role model for the undisciplined inmates, producing a form of the 'mother-daughter' model of social control.

It will be argued throughout this thesis that the semi-penal institution, with its intensive supervisory regimes and reformist ideals, did not disappear with the demise of the reformatories, refuges and other similar nineteenth century institutions. On the contrary, many of the identifying characteristics of nineteenth century semi-penal institutions could be found in twentieth century establishments such as homes for unmarried mothers, halfway house and, most pertinent to this study, probation hostels for women.

Since the 1914 Criminal Justice Act, the courts have had the power to append additional conditions onto probation orders, most significantly that an offender be required to complete their period of probation at a designated address or within a nominated institution (Home Office, 1998). The early institutions were, like the reformatories, largely autonomous of state control and funded and run by voluntary organisations. In addition, with regard to women their regimes were organised around religious instruction and domestic training. By the end of the 1940s the majority of these institutions came under the central control of the Home Office. However, as far as women were concerned, the regimes and disciplinary techniques changed only superficially (see Chapters Four and Six). The *Home Office Notes on Homes and Hostels for Young Probationers* (1942) indicates that women were still expected to conform to idealised standards of feminine behaviour and the training schemes established in hostels, which were very close to those provided in custodial institutions (Barry, 1991), were primarily aimed at reforming women and girls into respectable wives and mothers or productive domestic servants.

One of the major issues that prompted this research was the extent to which probation hostels for women changed over the latter half of the twentieth century. Both the reformatory and the modern day probation hostel have their roots in the reformist movement of the nineteenth century and, like the reformatory, the probation hostel is neither a truly ‘custodial’ nor is it a ‘domestic’ institution. Instead it could be seen to occupy a position somewhere between these two sites of social control.

There is a distinct lack of literature pertaining to the probation hostel for women. That which does exist (see for example Buckley, 1987; Wincup, 1996) is primarily concerned with promoting the probation hostel as a more appropriate environment for women offenders than prison. Consequently the level of *theoretical* scrutiny that has been applied to studies of custodial regimes for women (Carlen, 1983, 1998; Faith, 1993; Howe, 1994; Smith, 1996; and Bosworth, 1999 to name just a few) has not been employed to analyse the experiences of women within probation hostels.

In addition, although there have been studies which *have* theoretically analysed various semi-penal institutions for women (for example Hunt et al, 1989; Mahood, 1990; Zedner, 1991), these have mainly focussed on specific nineteenth and early twentieth century establishments and have therefore not been concerned with exploring the theoretical issues and discourses that may link these institutions to each other and, more importantly, which may identify historical themes of continuity between institutions of the past and institutions of the present.

The aims of this thesis therefore are threefold. First, it is the intention to fill a theoretical gap in the feminist literature by analysing the history and consolidation of semi-penal institutionalisation for women, identifying themes of continuity and discontinuity between the nineteenth century reformatory and the twentieth century probation hostel for female offenders. In order to complete both a historical and contemporary analysis,

a particular institution on Merseyside was selected for study. Adelaide House is currently a bail and probation hostel for women. It is today funded by the Home Office and staffed by Merseyside Probation Service personnel but the institution dates back to 1823 when it was opened as the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge, created to accommodate and reform 'deviant' women. Between 1823 and 1948 it was utilised for a variety of purposes. It acted as a refuge for women on release from prison, as a reformatory for recalcitrant or 'wayward' young females, as a home for women released from the court on 'recognizances' (the forerunner to the modern concept of probation) and as an institution for those women deemed to be 'feeble minded'. Finally, in 1948 it became an approved probation hostel for women and continues to fulfil that role today. Through the analysis of original historical data, this investigation will involve an examination of the experiences of women within this institution throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It will conclude with an examination of the experiences of women in Adelaide House in the 1990s and it will be argued that what primarily links the past with the present, in terms of this form of institutionalisation, is the historical constancy of the discourses and practices mobilised to explain and deal with 'deviant' women.

This leads to the second aim which is to analyse the strategies through which women within this institution were and, it is argued, still are disciplined and controlled. Using a feminist theoretical perspective and a feminist methodology, this thesis will explore the ways in which the female inmates have been characterised and categorised according to feminising hegemonic discourses around domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The manifestations of these discourses in terms of the regimes and practices adopted within the institution will also be scrutinised.

Of course, women do not always willingly accept the discipline and methods of control imposed upon them. On the contrary, as many authors

have argued, women have historically been able to utilise a range of strategies in order to resist or manage regulatory regimes (see Zedner, 1991; Shaw, 1992; Faith, 1993; Bosworth, 1999). Although much of the literature pertaining to women's resistance has been concerned with women formally incarcerated within custodial institutions, it is the final aim of this thesis to employ these debates in order to scrutinise the methods through which women cope with, or resist, the disciplinary regimes and discourses they face within the semi-penal arena.

In order to achieve these aims the thesis will be organised as follows.

Chapter Two will consist of a critical examination of the theoretical debates around the punishment and social control of women, the objective being the generation of a feminist theoretical framework within which the experiences of women in the semi-penal institution (past and present) can be analysed. Providing for the fact that there exists a dearth of theoretical literature, feminist and critical, relating to the semi-penal institution, and in particular the women-only probation hostel, this chapter will utilise the existing literature around the formal (custodial) and informal (domestic) control of women and will examine the way in which feminising and normalising discourses are utilised to regulate and control 'deviant' females. Finally, the ways in which women (incarcerated or otherwise) are able to take responsibility for their lives, thus asserting a sense of agency or resisting the disciplinary procedures, even when confronted by powerful constraints and confining pressures, will be discussed.

The methodology utilised in this study will be discussed in Chapter Three. Although some mention is made of the traditional, positivistic methodologies used in mainstream criminological and sociological research, the chapter will not dwell on discussing these techniques. Instead the emphasis will be placed on the important epistemological and methodological issues that have been raised by feminist writers in critique

of these traditional methods and methodologies. From a discussion of these feminist critiques and the various feminist responses to the problems posed by traditional research methods, a feminist epistemology and methodology, which will be applied to both the historical and contemporary data collection, will be presented.

Chapter Four will utilise the theoretical debates presented in Chapter Two in order to contextualise both a historical and contemporary analysis of the history and development of semi-penal institutionalisation for women over two centuries. The regimes and discourses utilised within the early reformatories and refuges, as well as those employed in twentieth century institutions such as homes for unmarried mothers or the modern probation hostel, will be discussed in order to identify points of continuity and discontinuity in this history.

Utilising original historical data, Chapters Five and Six will begin the case study of the institution that is the focus of this research. Chapter Five will chart its development during the nineteenth century, examining the ideological and social conditions that underpinned its creation and development and the discourses mobilised to categorise and control its female residents. Chapter Six will continue the analysis by examining the development of the institution throughout the twentieth century, up until the 1980s. It is the intention of these chapters to utilise the feminist debates raised in Chapter Two and the feminist historical methodological approaches outlined in Chapter Three to analyse the experiences of women disciplined within this semi-penal arena.

Chapter Seven brings the case study up to the present day by providing an analysis of the data collected from the period of participant observation and the series of interviews conducted in the institution between 1992 and 1994. This chapter will draw on the themes elicited from previous chapters, utilising them to contextualise the interviews conducted with staff and

residents, and thus presenting a feminist analysis of the experiences of women within a probation hostel. It is the intention here to draw out some common themes and issues with regard to the social control of women on Merseyside over the past 180 years.

Finally Chapter Eight will conclude the thesis by revisiting and drawing together the central themes and arguments of the research. This process will then be utilised in a discussion regarding the significance of the research and the contribution it makes to both historical and contemporary debates around the punishment and disciplining of 'deviant' women.

Chapter Two

Women Behaving Badly: Locating a Theoretical Framework for Analysing the Social Control of Women in the Semi-Penal Institution

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine (DeBeauvoir, 1953:8).

When Pat Carlen (1983) examined the ‘moment’ and meaning of imprisonment for women in Scotland she found it necessary to move beyond the prison walls and the official discourse of ‘punishment’ in order to make sense of her data and experiences. She maintained that the real meaning of imprisonment for the women in her study was not to be found within official legal or penal rhetoric, rather it could only be located within the practices, conventions and discourses of the wider aspects of social life and social control. Consequently she contextualised her analysis within women’s accepted roles and positions in society, roles which are legitimated and justified through marriage, the family, the ‘community’, the church, the school, and through the discourses of ‘normal’ femininity and masculinity. Carlen claimed that this broader perspective was important for two main reasons. First, the women who were most likely to be imprisoned in Scotland were those who, in addition to breaching legal codes, had also transgressed the boundaries of ‘domestic’ or informal discipline. Carlen stated that the women in her study were characterised as those who had ‘failed’ to achieve the ideals of motherhood, domesticity and femininity. Second, women’s prisons, she maintained, were concerned, not only with the imposition of formal state punishment, but with the ‘normalisation’ of women back to the ascribed domestic roles from which they had strayed. Carlen asserted that women’s experiences of imprisonment perpetuated the cycle of ‘failure’ through training regimes aimed at returning them to the home and family with the necessary ‘skills’ to fulfil the social expectations

of them as women. Therefore rather than providing women with training and expertise which would enable them to live independently upon release, prison regimes served to increase their dependence on, and regulation by, the family unit. Thus, Carlen claimed, formal and informal mechanisms of discipline were interwoven within and between the prison and the 'community' in order to produce an all-encompassing and powerful net of social control for women.

The primary concern of this thesis is not with women's experiences of prison. Rather, the focal issue is the way in which women have historically been, and currently are, controlled and disciplined within the semi-penal institution.¹ It is argued in Chapter Four of this thesis that for over two centuries women have been perceived as 'suitable' candidates for institutionalisation within the non-custodial, semi-penal arena (in other words within refuges, reformatories, homes and hostels), often for reasons other than the committal of a criminal offence. Moreover, within these institutions both formal and informal mechanisms of social control are combined, the aim being to regulate, control and 'normalise' both criminal and 'deviant' women back to an acceptable standard of feminine behaviour.

Given that there is a distinct lack of theoretical literature pertaining to the area of semi-penal institutionalisation,² the sets of literature which examine the social control and regulation of women within both the formal (prison) and informal (domestic) spheres will be utilised to identify and analyse the ways in which women have been, and are, subject to various mechanisms of social control in order to construct an appropriate theoretical framework

¹ See Chapter Four for fuller definition and description of the 'semi-penal institution'.

² There are some theoretical accounts of the experiences of women in specific eighteenth and nineteenth century institutions such as reformatories, asylums or refuges (see for example Mahood, 1990; Zedner, 1991) however there exists very little literature which analyses the role these institutions played within the whole 'continuum' of social control for women. Neither does this literature take the analysis far beyond the early twentieth century and thus contemporary institutions, such as women's probation hostels have never been analysed within a similar theoretical context.

within which both the historical and contemporary data collected for this thesis can be located and contextualised.³ This will be achieved in the following ways.

First, the way in which discourses, constructed around notions of 'normality' and 'deviance', are utilised to control and regulate women will be discussed, along with the paradoxical nature of definitions of 'femininity'. Second, following Carlen's example, the various feminist debates around the social control of women will be examined and a critical discussion regarding the way in which this control can be seen as a continuum from informal to formal mechanisms and arenas will be presented. This examination of informal and formal control will focus specifically on the way in which the concept of 'normal' femininity, constructed around the discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology, is utilised to identify who requires regulation and what form that regulation should take. In addition to an examination of informal and formal controls, a discussion will be presented regarding the oft-forgotten 'third arena' of punishment and social control, that which is frequently referred to as the 'community' (incorporating 'non-custodial' institutions such as reformatories, refuges, homes and hostels). The feminist critiques of the utilisation of this sphere of social control will also be explored.

Third, this chapter will present a critical examination of the feminist debates around the utilisation of women as 'appropriate' controllers of their sisters. In addition the way in which women can act as 'self-regulating' or 'self-

³ The term 'domestic' in this sentence refers not only to that social control which takes place within the home and the family (what is normally considered a 'domestic' environment), but also to that which is imposed within other areas of informal, social life for example the neighbourhood, the leisure industry (pubs, bars etc), the church and various other social institutions. In other words, it also refers to the social control of women within their local 'communities'. However, as the term 'community' will be utilised in this chapter to refer to the 'third arena' of social control (in the context of 'punishment in the community') the term 'domestic' was considered more appropriate in order to avoid confusion on this point.

disciplining' subjects will also be addressed. Finally, the issues of agency and resistance will be critically analysed, focussing on the range of methods and techniques employed by women in order to cope with, or break free from, the disciplinary discourses and regimes that seek to control them.

Thus, the perspectives presented and analysed in this chapter will facilitate the construction of a theoretical framework, through which the historical and contemporary data can be contextualised and utilised in an attempt to analyse the experiences of women within a semi-penal institution, past and present.

Normality and deviancy: Opposing categories or two sides of the same coin?

In order to examine the social control of 'deviant' women, one must begin by examining the discourses around 'normal' women, as the construction of what is 'normal' is utilised to define what is 'deviant' (Hutter and Williams, 1981). Moreover the mechanisms of control that are mobilised to deal with 'deviant' women symbolise a concept of 'normality' that refers specifically to women, rather than individuals in general.

The concept of 'normal' femininity is a paradoxical construct. As Connell (1987) asserts, in order to understand the term 'femininity', it is first necessary to understand its usage in relation to the term 'masculinity'. Masculinity, according to Connell, is a word that is utilised to differentiate men from other men. The term 'masculine' embodies a particular set of characteristics that describe particular types of men. The term also separates and distinguishes these men from other types of men, for example those who do not enjoy physical contact sports, those who are not interested in sexual conquests, those, in other words, who are not 'masculine'. Although an element of 'masculinity' is perceived to be desirable in men, it is *not* generally expected that *all* men will have 'masculine' qualities. In contrast, however, it *is* assumed that *all* women

will, or should, possess feminine qualities and consequently the term 'femininity' is used, not to differentiate women from other women, but rather to differentiate women from men. The result of this is that women are viewed through a whole range of contradictory expectations. As Carlen and Worrall explain,

Women, then are always-already *not men*. Femininity is constructed on the site vacated by masculinity, and this absence of maleness is manifested in two opposing sets of expectations... (1987:3, emphasis in original).

These two opposing sets of expectations mean that on the one hand femininity is characterised by the ability to be self controlled and responsible, 'normal' femininity means being able to care for and be responsible for oneself as well as others. Women's domestic roles demand that they be stable, dependable and rational and in particular their traditional roles as mothers and carers (both at home or in paid employment) demands an exceptionally high level of responsibility and self-governance. However, on the other hand, concepts of normal femininity are constructed around notions of dependency, irrationality, lack of self-control and the need for protection. Women are frequently portrayed as people with an *incapacity* for self-governance and responsibility and are consequently frequently not accredited with full adult status in society (Smart and Smart, 1978; Hutter and Williams, 1981; Carlen, 1983).⁴ Worrall sums up this paradoxical situation, stating that

Being a normal woman means coping, caring, nurturing, and sacrificing self-interest to the needs of others. On the other hand, it is characterised by a lack of control and dependence (1990: 33).

⁴ See also Harris and Webb (1987) for a discussion of how historically the formal methods of both punishment and welfare for women have been bound up with the methods of punishment and welfare for children.

These accepted 'norms' of behaviour have, according to Hutter and Williams (1981) become embedded into our social belief systems and practices and, as a result, have become internalised to such an extent that they are not generally questioned as 'assumptions' but rather they are accepted as 'facts'. Within such a social framework many women (and indeed men) conform to the behaviour expected of them because it is advantageous to do so and thus the legitimacy of these gender 'facts' is perpetuated. Consequently, when women fail to adhere to gender 'facts' or overtly resist such categorisation, their actions are frequently explained within the discourses of pathology and such women are thus perceived as threatening to social 'normality' and in need of intensive regulation.

It is apparent then that the very definition of what constitutes 'normal' femininity is complex and contradictory. This contradiction is carried further when one considers the concept of 'deviance' with regard to women. Generally, it is assumed that 'normal' and 'deviant' are two opposing categories. Deviance can be defined as a lack of 'normal' behaviour and conversely 'normal' behaviour is believed to occur in situations where there is a lack of 'deviancy'. Often for men this is the case but for women the boundary between these two concepts is not so straightforward.⁵ The paradoxical nature of 'normal' femininity (women as powerful yet weak, corrupting yet corruptible, reliable yet irrational, self-governing yet lacking control) means that the difference between what is considered 'normal' and what is considered 'deviant' can be very subtle. In addition it is not a fixed boundary, what is considered 'deviant' behaviour for some women, in some circumstances, may not always be considered as deviant for others in other circumstances. Indeed some types of 'deviant' behaviour can be completely rationalised through the mobilisation of

⁵ It should also be acknowledged that, due to the nature of conventional definitions of and attitudes towards the concept of masculinity, defining what is 'deviant' and what is simply an extension of 'normal' male behaviour can also be difficult.

particular discourses (this issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter).⁶

Heidensohn (1996) states that women's deviancy is commonly associated with concepts of morality and sexuality, the breaking of social conventions rather than the breaching of legal codes and rules. Even in those cases where women stand accused of legal infractions, it is often the extent to which they adhere to, or deviate from, wider gender conventions that determines the extent to which they are deemed culpable and guilty, and are consequently punished (Carlen, 1983; Worrall, 1990).

The concept of 'normal' femininity is therefore a paradoxical construct and the boundary between 'normality' and 'deviance' for women is a blurred and complicated issue. These complex and contradictory gender assumptions have led to the construction of all encompassing forms of regulation for women, ranging from the very informal to the very formal on a 'continuum' of social control (Howe, 1994:163).

Howe, like Carlen (1983), states that discussions around the formal punishment of women within custodial institutions are inadequate and incomplete without a recognition of the ways in which women are subjected to more informal, social forms of regulation and discipline. She suggests, therefore, that feminists must expand their discussions of punishment in order to incorporate an analysis of the way in which women are subjected to a 'continuum' of discipline which ranges from formal institutionalised discipline (such as imprisonment or hospitalisation) through to the more 'informal' forms of discipline (for example that which is exercised through the family, the school, the workplace or the church).

⁶ See also Smart and Smart 1978; Hutter and Williams, 1981; Carlen, 1983; Carlen and Worrall, 1987; French, 1992; Ballinger, 1996, for discussions of the way in which women's extreme or even violent behaviour can be rationalised and understood as long as it is explained through acceptable modes of expression.

The subtle differences between what is considered 'normal' and 'deviant' have led to the development of formal disciplinary methods and regimes that are also contradictory. Deviant women have historically been dealt with within contradictory discourses of care and control. On the one hand women are expected to be irrational, emotional, vulnerable, corruptible, not fully responsible for their actions and therefore in need of some protection. On the other hand this irrationality does require some control and thus discipline is required to compliment the provision of 'care'. In addition, women are considered to be powerful and corrupting and this behaviour also requires some form of control. Generally women are expected to be self-governing and socially regulated and, for the most part, this form of personal and social policing fulfils the desire for control,⁷ however when this informal governance breaks down or is transgressed, women are deemed to be in need of heavy sanctions to correct their 'abnormal' behaviour (Carlen, 1998).

The 'control continuum' is constructed around a set of dominant discourses, which together establish the conventional concept of appropriate 'femininity'. Before these discourses and the different methods of control are discussed, it is first necessary to establish what is meant by the term 'discourse' and to discuss how the study of discourse might be useful for feminist theory and analysis.

The Impact of Discourse

Discourse is a social and socially constructed practice (Macdonell, 1986; Hall and Gieben, 1992). Dialogue, in any form, is an essential condition of discourse as all verbal and written forms of communication are themselves social and socially constructed. When verbal statements are made or when any form of documentation is written, the meaning of the words will

⁷ For further discussions on the conformity and social control of women and the issue of women as self regulating bodies, see later sections of this chapter.

depend on both the social context in which the communication was made and the subject or object about which it was made. So, although essentially discourse has its roots in the construction of language, it has wider ideological implications. Discourses, according to Macdonell, are part of the ideological realm and are constructed in relation to each other.

A discourse finds its meaning by reference to an ideological position (Macdonell, 1986:110).

It is possible, within forms of language, to identify structures and themes that can characterise the 'material' (the document, book or speech) as a whole. The unification of these structures is known as the *discourse* and from a study of such it is possible to construct an awareness of the 'knower' (the speaker / writer), the objects of the discourse and the relationship between the two (Burton and Carlen, 1979). So, whereas conventional epistemology is concerned with searching for a 'truth', a practice within social science which is essentially idealistic because it is rooted in the notion that some forms of discourse (but not others) will yield 'valid' and 'legitimate' knowledge (Macdonell, 1986), discourse analysis is more concerned with uncovering structures and themes which can facilitate an understanding of the relationship between the 'knower' and the 'objects of knowledge' (Worrall, 1990). This is particularly relevant for feminist theory and research as it recognises the existence of various hierarchies of power and the relationship between discourses and these hierarchies of power. Foucault's (1972) work on discourse theory has been extremely influential in this area. In particular, his concern with subjugated knowledges has been developed by feminist writers such as Cain (1993) in order to articulate the ways in which particular knowledges are suppressed and certain voices censured from dominant discourses. Cain argues that the issue of subordinated knowledges or suppressed voices is one that has been taken up with vigour by feminist writers and researchers who, through the

adoption of a standpoint methodology, have 'recovered' women's previously 'unheard' voices.

In all institutions some discourses are dominant and others suppressed. Macdonell (1986) uses the example of hospitals, stating that the speech and opinions of a doctor regarding the body of a patient will differ from, and will be perceived on a different level of credibility than, the speech of the patient him/herself. The same can be said for judicial and criminal justice arenas, where 'professional' speech and discourse regarding offenders and the construction of 'deviant' behaviour is frequently accepted as legitimate, whilst offenders' personal accounts or rationalisations of their behaviour can become 'muted' (Worrall, 1990; Ballinger, 1996). Worrall argues that

...it is those who have power who are authorized 'to know' and whose 'knowledge' is afforded privilege (1990:7).

In male dominated societies, gender becomes a further dimension in the construction of hierarchies with male voices being perceived as more credible and more legitimate than female voices within particular domains, for example in the realms of medicine, politics, business or law. As a result of these hierarchies, discourse can be utilised as 'a direct instrument of ideological subjection' (Macdonell, 1986: 110). Feminist writers such as Carlen (1983), Faith (1993) and Ballinger (1996) would argue that women in particular, are frequently judged, categorised, subordinated and frequently punished depending on the extent to which they conform to or deviate from the prevailing discourses. The following sections of this chapter will discuss this issue further in the context of the different forms of control that women face – formal, informal and semi-penal. The way in which feminising discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology are utilised to both determine what is appropriate or 'normal' behaviour for women and in turn to correct or 'normalise' the inappropriate behaviour of women will be examined.

The Formal Regulation of Women

Carlen (1998) states that because of the extent of the informal social controls over women they rarely (in comparison to men) come to the attention of the more formal agencies of control, particularly the criminal justice system. Consequently, when women do enter this arena they are instantly 'out of place' and this incongruity can sometimes lead to more intense and severe sanctions. In comparison to their male counterparts the numbers of females in prison is relatively low, although a large proportion are there for very minor offences and indeed many are there for the first time (Carlen, 1998). More significantly though, is the fact that, as Heidensohn argued, it is those women who do not conform to 'accepted standards of monogamous, heterosexual stability' (1996:48) who seem to be over-represented within the prison system. In other words, women's prisons generally contain 'deviant women who deviate *as women*' (Heidensohn, 1996:48, emphasis in original) rather than as those who simply deviate from the law.

The contradictory construction of femininity has led to a situation whereby the actions of women offenders can only be rationalised if the women themselves can be 'fitted into' one of three general categories; mad, bad or victim. This categorisation of women has relatively little to do with the offence committed but rather it has to do with the offender's adherence to or deviation from dominant gender role expectations (Ballinger, 1996). As Carlen (1998) argued, these stereotypes of 'appropriate' behaviour can lead to some women (for example those deemed to be sexually deviant, those who have out-stepped the confines of domestic control or those who are destitute) receiving harsh penalties from the court (such as sentences of imprisonment) for relatively minor, non-violent offences. In stark contrast to the severe penalties imposed on some women for minor infractions is the often relatively lenient treatment received by other women, often for more

serious offences.⁸ Sometimes very serious criminal and violent acts committed by women can be justified and rationalised in the courtroom as long as the image and lifestyle of the defendant strictly adheres to the accepted images of femininity and her behaviour in court is in accordance with those images. Worrall provides the example of Kathy, a young woman accused of stabbing her sister to death after an argument. During her trial for manslaughter (reduced from murder on the strength of psychiatric reports) she is described as a 'typical teenager' (1990:49) and is portrayed as a dutiful daughter from a respectable family. In addition her crime is described as 'tragic'. Her status as a 'normal' young woman who fulfils the expectations of femininity results, according to Worrall, in a sentence of probation with a recommendation for psychiatric treatment. Ironically she did not receive her psychiatric treatment, as it was not deemed necessary by her doctor. Worrall contrasts this with the case of Ivy who stole a jar of coffee from a shop, later claiming she was confused after receiving recent electro-convulsive therapy (ECT). Ivy also received a sentence of probation (for three years as opposed to two for Kathy) but, unlike Kathy, continued to receive psychiatric treatment and ECT. Kathy's crime, Worrall asserts, was so incongruous with her and her family's respectable status that justifications had to be found for her actions, as the idea that a 'normal' family could produce a fratricide, was unacceptable to conventional sensibilities. Kathy remained within the confines of 'appropriate' femininity even though her offence was one of extreme violence. In addition she was not deemed to be a threat to society because, despite the nature of her offence, she lived at home and was thus perceived to be within the controls

⁸ The term 'lenient' is of course highly debatable. Often sentences that are commonly assumed to be 'lenient' (eg. those that include psychiatric or medical intervention or other forms of 'treatment') are indeterminate and thus can be more intensive, regulatory and oppressive than a determinate custodial sentence. It should also be acknowledged here that the discussion which follows does not mean to infer that that all women who commit minor offences are treated more severely than those who commit more serious offences. The intention is to indicate the often excessive extent to which extra-legal factors contribute to the judicial decision making process with regard to women defendants. The comparison between the treatment of minor offenders and more serious offenders is simply to highlight this issue more dramatically.

of her family. Ivy on the other hand was already guilty of being a 'gender deviant' as she was divorced (and hence had no male authority to govern her) and her own sexual deviance (her 'unfaithfulness') was highlighted as contributing to the breakdown of her marriage. Kathy and Ivy, it would appear, were sentenced not on the severity of their offence but on their extent to which they were perceived to endorse, or reject, conventional ideals of 'appropriate' feminine behaviour.

Heidensohn (1996) states that women face the criminal justice system on different levels. Obviously they face the 'formal' side of the system (the law, the rules), and then they face the practice (in other words, what happens to them on a day-to-day basis within the system). However, in addition they also face an ideological level that is constructed around the values, belief systems and moral stance of the agents of control. Although men too face these different levels, it has been argued that the impact of ideology is far greater for criminal women and delinquent girls than their male counterparts.

Women who consciously try to resist being categorised in these ways and instead attempt to introduce a more realistic and rational explanation of their behaviour (one which is not constructed within the pathologising mad, bad or victim discourses) can find their accounts silenced or 'muted' (Worrall, 1990:11) by dominant 'knowledges'.⁹ Women's accounts can, and will, only be heard if they are expressed through appropriate channels, in other words if they are communicated through the 'dominant modes of expression' (Worrall, 1990:11; see also Ballinger, 1996) which are rooted in feminising discourses around domesticity, respectability, motherhood and sexuality. Consequently, women are encouraged to behave in a particular

⁹ See Chapter Seven of this thesis for an example of the way in which women were 'muted' or oppressed by 'dominant knowledges' within the probation hostel.

way when facing the agents of control. Women who behave ‘appropriately’ and in accordance with accepted notions of femininity may invoke sympathy from the agents of control and this, in turn, can assist their case in court. Even some feminist probation officers admit to advising female clients to behave in a manner (passive, remorseful, fragile and weak) acceptable and palatable to the court (Kennedy, 1992; Heidensohn, 1996).¹⁰

Likewise, Parker *et al* discuss the way in which girls and boys in the juvenile court are encouraged to behave very differently in order to ensure the best chance of a lenient sentence.

Girls, in particular, tended to remember their solicitor advised mute passivity.....boys say they were encouraged to assert themselves (1981: 111 cited in Heidensohn, 1996:42).

Worrall (1990) discusses the ways in which women find themselves ‘muted’ or rendered silent in court by ‘professional’ discourse, for example that which is utilised by solicitors, the aim of which is to establish, on the woman’s behalf, an acceptable and conventional account of the defendant as ‘normal’ and respectable, an account which she is not deemed able to construct for herself. The purpose of constructing such an account is, according to Worrall, twofold. First, the utilisation of feminising discourses is meant to explain the woman’s offending as not wholly incongruous with her natural female role thus invoking a degree of sympathy from sentencers. Nagel *et al* state that

Females whose offence pattern is more consistent with sex role expectations seem to experience less harsh outcomes than females whose offence pattern is less traditional (1980:20, cited in Heidensohn, 1996:44).

¹⁰ Also for further discussion on the extent to which demeanour and behaviour in court can influence the way in which women defendants are perceived and dealt with, see Ballinger’s (1996) account of the trials of Ruth Ellis and Marie Fahmy.

The second aim is to compel sentencers to act leniently towards the female defendant because of her role as wife, mother and male 'sex-object'.

Solicitors place great emphasis on the construction of female law-breakers as family members, in particular as wives and mothers, with responsibilities that render them deserving of both understanding and sympathy (in relation to the motivation for their offence) and of leniency (in relation to their treatment) (Worrall, 1990:86).¹¹

Once women are incarcerated they find the same discourses that censured their behaviour, re-mobilised to 'correct' or 'normalise' their behaviour. Bosworth (1999) describes the work undertaken by female inmates at Drake Hall and Winchester prisons, which consisted of industrial sewing, cleaning, gardening and minor repair work. Similarly the education and training courses offered to the women were based around a variety of 'feminine' pursuits.

It was perhaps in the incidental classes, many of which were run in the evening, that an outmoded idealization of femininity was most apparent. These classes in both establishments included flower arranging, silk painting, making soft toys, cooking and 'beauty' (Bosworth, 1999: 104).

In addition, Bosworth claims, both prisons were proud of the training provided in their hairdressing salons. It is a key concern of formal penal institutions to promote an ideology that encourages women to gravitate towards their traditional domestic functions and their 'natural' feminine roles (Carlen, 1983; Genders and Player, 1987; Bosworth, 1999).

However, women are not solely regulated and controlled through formal processes such as those employed within the criminal justice system. On the

¹¹ Many women offenders, however, do not benefit from this ideal of women as domesticated, respectable wives and mothers. This is apparent by the fact that the female prison population has increased dramatically in recent years (Player, 2000).

contrary, women have historically found themselves subjected to a whole range of 'informal' disciplinary forces and mechanisms that, through the deployment of dominant, feminising discourses, have attempted to manage and normalise their behaviour. These informal methods of control will be discussed below.

The Informal Regulation of Women

Sexuality (and the related concept of 'respectability') is one of the most significant areas of feminist debate and crucial to any understanding of the social control of women in society (Edwards, 1981; MacKinnon, 1982). Indeed as MacKinnon indicates, the discourses around sexuality and their related controls pervade and impact upon the lives of all women, or to put it another way

..sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism (1982: 515).

Edwards (1981) claims that although this issue is so significant for women, and despite the fact that the regulation and control of female sexuality is a characteristic of virtually every social and economic formation, traditional sociological studies regarding the oppression or the social control of women have tended to neglect the subject of sexuality in favour of structural accounts which place the emphasis on the relationship of women to the means of production or the division of labour by sex. However, over the past two decades or so, largely through the influence of post-structuralist accounts of sexuality and social control, the issue has been more widely recognised and has become a focal issue within feminist theory and debate. McNay (1992) asserts that although the work of Foucault was notoriously 'gender-blind' the weaving of his theories into feminist accounts has at least provided a means through which the sexualised body can be situated at the crux of explanations of women's subordination, something which Marxist accounts fail to do. Feminist theories of sexuality therefore, are not solely concerned with how sexual desires and sexual

relationships are shaped and constructed by societal expectations, but rather they are concerned with the way in which, and the extent to which, sexuality relates to women's oppression and control (Richardson, 1993).

According to Burford and Shulman (1992), the sexuality of women has historically been perceived as a threat to male authority. They state that female sexuality was believed to be a form of power over males and it therefore had to be controlled (see also Humphrey, 1978; Okley, 1978; Richardson, 1993). During the nineteenth century explicit expressions of sexuality or sexual desire were associated with lower class women or prostitutes. Civilised, normal, respectable women, it was believed, did not suffer from such aberrations of femininity (Arthurs and Grimshaw, 1999). Of course, similar desires were not considered abhorrent with regards to nineteenth century men and indeed in contemporary society there still exists explicit double standards of morality for boys and girls, men and women. Sexual promiscuity in males is condoned and indeed encouraged as an indication of 'normal' masculinity. Promiscuity in females however is condemned and considered at best, unfeminine and immoral, and at worse, pathological behaviour (Smart and Smart, 1978; Harris and Webb, 1987; French, 1992). Consequently the social control of female sexuality operates on a range of different levels (Hanmer and Saunders, 1983; Harris and Webb, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Radford, 1987; Hester, 1992).

One method of controlling these 'dangerous' sexualities has been through the mobilisation of moral discourses which have served to label and categorise women as 'immoral', thus rendering them with an 'outcast' status. The stark distinction between 'good' women (sexually passive) and 'bad' women (sexually active, aggressive or 'abnormal') provides women with the knowledge that in order for them to avoid stigmatisation and in order that they maintain an intact 'reputation' within society, they must adhere to the dominant ideals of femininity.

These ideals prescribe that female sexuality should be aimed specifically and solely at procreation and sexuality which is not aimed at this goal is deemed to be 'uncontrolled'. In many cultures, the achievement of childbirth is the most significant way in which a woman legitimates her sexuality and thus 'redeems the fallen state of the male-female relationship' (Hirschon, 1978:68). Motherhood then is one of the primary methods of controlling female sexuality.

The construct of motherhood is linked closely to the construct of 'normal' behaviour and child-rearing is regarded as natural for women, as long as it is conducted within an 'appropriate' context. This 'natural' form of behaviour, and the 'appropriate contexts' in which it is expected to take place, establishes a yardstick through which unnatural or abnormal female behaviour can be measured (Richardson, 1993a). Married women who remain childless are perceived as selfish, whilst lesbian women or single women who have children are perceived as abnormal. So, although many women can and do draw strength and a sense of identity from their roles as mothers (this will be discussed more fully below and again in Chapter Seven), this aspect of 'natural' and 'normal' femininity is heavily utilised in the regulation of women's behaviour.

Once women have children they are expected to remain at home and care for them, and these ideals of women as domesticated beings have led to controls over many aspects of women's lives (Hutter and Williams (1981). Up until the end of the nineteenth century, the 'ideal' of middle class femininity was a weak, passive woman, usually sickly and always in need of care. During the early twentieth century the new ideal became the housewife who was still assumed to be passive, but was now bestowed with much greater responsibilities. As Ehrenreich and English (1979) comment, the twentieth century woman

....would be bound to the home just as securely as the invalid had

been - not because she was too weak to do anything else, but because she had so much to do there (1979:128).

This new ideal became the model, not just for middle class women but for *all* women of *all* classes. By the early twentieth century the virtues of the 'home' were espoused by political and religious commentators who identified it as a place of sanctity from external (public) dangers such as alcohol or prostitution, and women's role, as saviours of this domestic sanctuary from external corruption, was established. The construction of discourses around domestication produced rigid boundaries for women between the 'public' and 'private' worlds, leaving them 'appropriately' assigned to the private domestic domain (Imray and Middleton, 1983). Dahl and Snare (1978) assert that women's seclusion in the 'private' world facilitated their surveillance and ensured their close control by husbands, families and neighbours. Women's domestic role has left their lives 'open' to scrutiny and surveillance whilst at the same time has rendered them relatively invisible and powerless in their private and 'closed' world, a world which, it is generally believed, should be immune to intervention as far as possible. Domestication can therefore restrict and regulate female behaviour through invisibility as well as through scrutiny.

The discourses around domesticity and respectability have led to further, related controls over women's lives in the 'public' world. First, women may be restricted from participating in various leisure activities due to a lack of free-time or financial independence. But even those women who are financially independent and have free-time to engage in activities outside their domestic sphere, may still find their behaviour regulated through the construction of dominant ideals around 'decency' and 'respectability'. Although, ironically, women are often portrayed and represented as 'leisure objects', their own leisure activities are one of the most heavily regulated and scrutinised aspects of their lives (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987).

Traditionally many 'leisure' arenas (such as pubs or night clubs) have been male dominated and women's participation in them has been limited. Women's drinking for example has historically been an area necessary of strict controls (Zedner, 1991). According to Green *et al* (1987), the penalties for women who overstep the accepted limits of 'decency' within these leisure arenas can be severe and range from verbal abuse to the threat of, or actual, male violence.

Thus dominant discourses constructed around ideals of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology can be utilised to control and regulate the behaviour of women within the informal spheres of the 'home', local neighbourhoods and women's social life in general.

So we can see the way in which dominant discourses around appropriate femininity are utilised to explain, discipline and regulate criminal or 'deviant' women by the formal criminal justice agents as well as through more informal mechanisms. However this thesis is specifically concerned with the punishment, control and discipline of women within the 'third arena' of social control, an arena which consists of semi-penal institutions such as nineteenth century reformatories and refuges, twentieth century half-way houses and homes and contemporary women's probation hostels. An in-depth account of the semi-penal institution, which includes a full definition of the term semi-penal as it applies to this thesis, is presented in Chapter Four, along with a gendered history of such institutions from the early nineteenth century to present day. An examination of the regimes employed by these institutions and a critical analysis of the discourses within which the female residents of such institutions were constructed and controlled is also presented in that chapter. It is therefore unnecessary to provide any further detail on these issues here. What does require some further discussion here, however, is the position that these institutions are seen to occupy on the 'control continuum' and the discourses which

ensured that women in particular were seen to be particularly appropriate for this arena of social control. The way in which the idea of punishment within the 'community' (rather than within the prison) has been accepted as a 'benign' and relatively unproblematic form of social control also needs to be addressed along with the feminist responses to these 'ungendered' assumptions. These issues will be critically examined in the following section of this chapter.

The Punishment of Women in the 'Community'

The term 'community' is one of the most promiscuous words in contemporary political usage (Worrall, 1997:46).

The third arena of social control, which sits between the formal prison and the informal domestic sphere, is sometimes described as the 'community'. The 'community' has at various points in history been perceived as an appropriate place for the punishment and control of recalcitrant individuals and thus this idea is not a new one. Our contemporary understanding of punishment within the 'community' (the modern probation system is the best example and most relevant to this thesis), combines elements of supervision with the conditional suspension of punishment and emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century in a climate of changing social attitudes and ideology and the development of new theories about the causes of crime (Bochel, 1976; Garland, 1985).

Probation is now a frequently used sentence of the court¹² and, although the work undertaken by the service has in recent years been influenced by the harsh, punishment orientated ideology of the 1990s, probation was traditionally considered a welfare-based approach in which the offender

¹² Of all offenders sentenced for indictable offences in 1999, 11 per cent received a probation order (Home Office, 2000; table 7.1)

was offered (moral as well as practical) advice and support, the aim of which was his/her rehabilitation and reintegration into social life.

Historically probation was seen as a very appropriate sentence for women offenders (Leeson, 1914). Police Court Missionaries (the forerunners to probation officers) and magistrates were keen to recommend probation, with its emphasis on care as well as control, as a suitable disposal for impressionable young women (see Chapter Four for a more in-depth examination of these issues).

Thus, as with juveniles, the idea of punishing and reforming women outside of the prison walls, in other words in the 'community', was perceived to be a more benign, less corruptive and thus more palatable system of control and as such was utilised more frequently with these 'fragile' offenders. However, this notion of the 'community' as a positive environment has been severely criticised in recent years. As Lacey and Zedner (1995) point out the appeal of the 'community' is paradoxical. On the one hand we live in a society that commonly believes (and this is often backed up by political rhetoric) that growing crime rates and increasing deviant behaviour amongst the young, is due primarily to the breakdown in 'community' values. On the other hand the concept of 'community' is increasingly held up as the most appropriate arena for curing social disorder, dealing with offenders and preventing crime.

So the 'community' is increasingly seen as a means of both *causing* and *curing* social disorder. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the 'community's' perceived responsibility for causing social problems, it has now become its responsibility to deal with these problems. Lacey and Zedner go on to state that politicians and academics on both the right and left of the political spectrum have (either directly or indirectly) encouraged this movement. The idea of 'community' appeals to those on the political right (and this is evident from legislation and policy changes during the

1980s) not least because of its apparent solution to the fiscal crisis in criminal justice and care services (Frazer and Lacey, 1993). On the other hand the idea of 'community' has also engaged those on the political left because first, it is closely related to a collective, rather than individualistic, approach to the causes of crime and the 'dynamics of penality' (Frazer and Lacey, 1993:304) and second it raises debates around whether groups which were formerly disempowered (for example offenders within the prison system) might not be more empowered through 'community'-based disposals.

However, many academics have taken issue with those commentators (from both the political left and right) who espouse the notion of 'community' as if it were an accepted and unproblematic concept. These writers have argued that 'community' has been idealised and under-developed as a political and social concept and, as Cohen (1983) and Worrall (1997) have commented, the meaning of 'community' remains vague and inadequately explained. There is also an overwhelming tendency to discuss 'community' as the opposite of 'custody' and this is problematic because this dichotomy sets up a false opposition, suggesting that because custody is a regulative and restrictive environment, the 'community' must be a positive and beneficial arena within which individuals can be contained and controlled. Little or no consideration is given to how the 'community' might also be intrusive, coercive and regulatory. As Cohen (1985) postulated, the very fact that 'community' punishments are perceived to be 'benign' and less severe than custodial penalties, could lead to the imposition of further, more severe sanctions.

It is by making the system appear less harsh, that people are encouraged to use it more often. Far from each benevolent intermediate option slowing down the career of delinquency, it facilitates, promotes and accelerates it by making each consecutive decision easier to take (Cohen, 1985:95).

This tendency to draw a stark distinction between ‘custody’ and ‘community’ has posed problems for feminist writers. Liberal theory has polarised the discourses around the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ (the ‘formal’ and the ‘informal’, ‘custody’ and ‘community’) when, as Frazer and Lacey (1993) have stated, for women in particular, it is very difficult to identify where the boundaries are drawn. For some women the experience of ‘community’ can be as restrictive and controlled as an experience of custody.¹³

This lack of a gendered approach to ‘community’ is one of the major criticisms from feminist writers. Most liberal, Marxist and post-structuralist authors show little or no recognition that ‘community’ might mean very different things for men and women. Frazer and Lacey assert that the notion of ‘community’ really only exists at the level of rhetoric and it is a rhetoric which appeals to commonly held ideas about the type of ideal society we would like to live in, one where ‘communities’ exist and support the values of solidarity and reciprocity. This, they maintain, is a romantic notion and even the closest ‘communal’ unit, the family, frequently fails to live up to these idealised standards. Indeed for women, the family unit or ‘community’ frequently embodies the principal features of women’s oppression through

...the reproduction and reinforcement of coercive heterosexist culture, the sexual division of labour, the objectification of women as property, sexual harassment of women by men (Frazer and Lacey, 1993: 139).

Overall then, the issue of ‘community’ is a controversial and contentious one and its existence as a benign and benevolent arena has been extensively challenged. However, even these challenges are themselves problematic in

¹³ The second quotation at the beginning of Chapter One highlights this point significantly.

that their definition of 'community' is incomplete. In other words, although feminist writers have rightly argued that the 'community' can be a restrictive and oppressive environment for women, they have tended to focus their critique within established boundaries, identifying the 'community' as the opposite of 'custody'. So, discussions of 'community' in the feminist literature rarely move beyond an examination of the home, the neighbourhood and related institutions such as the school, church, or pub. What is missing from this analysis is an acknowledgement that the boundary between 'community' and 'custody' is not always as definite as it might appear. Indeed, as this thesis will highlight, for countless women over the past two hundred years, being reformed or punished in the 'community' did not refer to a form of supervision within the home or neighbourhood, but rather it meant being incarcerated in an institution of some form. Cohen's (1985) argument gets closer to a broader definition of 'community' in that he acknowledges the blurring of boundaries between the formerly polarised arenas of the prison and the 'community'. However he goes no further than this and thus does not recognise that institutions such as reformatories, homes, halfway houses and hostels may be regarded as the ultimate consequence of the 'blurring' between penal and non-penal environments. Thus this thesis challenges the accepted definitions of 'community' by analysing the way in which a whole range of semi-penal institutions have historically functioned to 'play down' the punishment and disciplining of women by disguising these processes within the discourses of care, protection, empowerment and indeed 'community'.

This chapter has so far examined the formal, informal and semi-penal regulation of women, presenting a critical discussion of the way in which gender based discourses have been historically utilised to discipline and control 'deviant' women. However, it should not be assumed that just because women are regulated according to 'patriarchal' assumptions they are regulated solely by men. On the contrary women have historically

played a significant role in the social control of other women and, indeed, of themselves. The ways in which women have participated in their own, and their sisters' regulation is an extremely important issue for this thesis and thus the following section of this chapter will critically examine these debates.

Sisters doing it for themselves: Women controlling women

There are two major aspects to this issue of women's role in controlling women. First, women can be the agents of control for other women, contributing to and participating in their regulation, discipline and punishment. On the other hand women can act as self-governing or self-regulating bodies, policing their own behaviour to the extent that this perpetuates and promotes the 'feminine' ideals of conformity to other women and to future generations. These two sets of debates will be discussed in turn below.

Women as controllers of other women

Historically, women have been expected to, and have often been willing to, participate in the regulation of their sisters. Women's role in the control of other women can be found in many areas of social life. First, it is apparent in the home where women have traditionally been responsible for the socialisation of their children, encouraging them to accept their gender roles (Oakley, 1980; Heidensohn, 1996). Second, women are frequently employed in welfare-based institutions (such as nursing homes or hospitals) where their 'natural' caring abilities and desires can be put to good use in the care, protection *and* control of their female patients. Finally, women's presence in the formal judicial system and penal institutions has been necessary to provide a form of 'feminine' discipline appropriate for 'deviant' females and, historically at least, to provide an acceptable and realistic role model to which 'deviant' women could aspire (see Rafter, 1983; Lindfield, 1992).

From the early years of the nineteenth century, women were heavily involved in philanthropic projects or social work practices which were aimed at both relieving and reforming the lives of the poor (see Ehrenreich and English, 1979; Lewis, 1992). Although these activities were frequently rooted in religious zeal and a desire to 'do good' the reality was that they often served to increase surveillance over working class women's lives.¹⁴ For the many middle class women involved in such projects, their work could be viewed as a method of resistance to the constraints placed upon their own lives with regard to employment or activities outside of the home. However for the most part, female workers were useful in these philanthropic roles as the social control of (predominantly working class) women could be better legitimated if facilitated by other (predominantly middle class or 'respectable' working class) women. These 'respectable' women not only provided material and moral relief and support for their 'failing' clients but in addition they provided an important role model to which the women under their care and surveillance were encouraged to live up to (Simey, 1951; Lewis, 1992).

In the early reformatory movement women were often employed as matrons and, in addition to the day to day running of the institutions, were charged with the setting of a good example to the wayward residents. These female managers, however, were themselves managed by male dominated committees or organisations and informed and instructed by male 'experts' (see Chapters Five and Seven for a further discussion of this issue in both an historical and contemporary context). Worrall (1990) states that it is still the case today. Although dominant discourses, which serve to regulate the behaviour of women, are legitimised by male professionals, the

¹⁴ It should be acknowledged here that, although regulation and reform was high on the agenda of many philanthropic groups, from a feminist perspective one cannot, and should not, simply dismiss the often pioneering efforts of many charitable workers such as Eleanor Rathbone and Josephine Butler.

power is delegated to (mainly female) semi-professionals.¹⁵ According to Heidensohn (1996) these women can provide mediation between the male professionals and the female clients by interpreting and translating the 'knowledge' of the male experts into 'common sense' ideas that can then be assumed by the 'deficient' woman. Worrall argues that female judicial officials often work as the 'facilitators' and distributors of expert knowledges and discourses.

Alongside women prison officers, women nurses and women social workers (including women probation officers), [women magistrates] stand between the demands of the patriarchal state and the mass of women on whom those demands are made, translating 'expert knowledge' into 'common sense' for the consumption of the always and already failing women (1990: 66).

Worrall maintains that female control agents such as magistrates are themselves constructed within various discourses that both associate them and distance them from the women defendants who stand before them.¹⁶ The fact that women magistrates are in fact *women* means they can provide a 'special and authoritative understanding' (Worrall, 1990:66) of 'deviant' females in court, but the fact that women magistrates are *magistrates* instantly removes them from the world of female defendants and this then allows them the objectivity to pass sentence.

It is imperative, Worrall argues, that women magistrates remain ideologically isolated from female defendants because any over-identification with these women, and their oppression, might lead female magistrates to challenge the dominance of their male colleagues. Women who enter the judicial arena must accept and adhere to the practices set by their male counterparts because although around fifty per cent of

¹⁵ Worrall uses the example of the fields of nursing and social work which have a high proportion of women in semi-professional roles.

¹⁶ See also Evers' (1981) account of the way in which female geriatric nurses maintain a sense of social distance from their patients in order to adequately perform their controlling tasks.

magistrates are female, as Worrall states, 'real' magistrates (like 'real' criminals) are believed to be men and thus their objective, dispassionate and sexist values must be taken as the 'real' standard of judgement. These sets of 'common-sense' values can be particularly alienating to female defendants because

...*common* sense does not allow for different material circumstances (Worrall, 1990: 70, emphasis in original).

Overall once women magistrates become involved in the male dominated judicial arena, they are compelled to distance themselves from their own experiences as women and thus reject any understanding of gender inequalities within society. This situation is intensified, Worrall claims, because female magistrates are frequently silenced and prevented from expressing their own opinions.

Whereas magistrates are expected to separate their professional activities from their experiences as women, female prison officers or female probation officers, it could be argued, are encouraged to utilise their femininity in their professional roles. Faith (1993) comments that women prison officers often attempt to provide a 'mother-figure' for the women and girls in their charge. Similar to the early reformatory matrons, female prison officers are defined as women who, on behalf of a patriarchal judicial system, can provide suitable role models for acceptable behaviour aimed at keeping deviant females in their place (Kramarae and Treichler, 1985, cited in Faith, 1993:161). Female guards, it has historically been (and indeed still is) assumed are better equipped than men to inform and train women in the domestic and maternal duties expected of them by society. Their very presence in institutions is more effective in the 'normalisation' process than any amount of male instruction.

Likewise, female probation officers (and indeed male probation officers) are required to develop some form of relationship with their clients in order for supervision (their controlling function) to be effective. During the early years of the probation system women officers were expected to supervise women offenders. Between the mid 1930s and the mid 1960s the idea that women could provide the best role model for other women was embodied in legislation that actually prevented men from supervising women and girls (Parsloe, 1972). Parsloe explains how female officers were expected to provide a form of 'motherly' supervision over both male and female clients. For their female clients this would provide the much needed role-model of 'appropriate' behaviour and for their male clients the 'motherly' approach would provide support with no sexual threat or challenge.

Thus we can see the ways in which women have been, and still are, utilised in the control and regulation of other women. However, what should not be overlooked is the extent to which women conform to conventional, patriarchal discourses and in doing so act as self-regulating subjects. The following section of the chapter will take up these debates.

Women as self-regulatory bodies

The issue of self-discipline relates closely to Foucault's analysis (although he did not address either the issue of gender or the issue of non-formal control directly in his work) and consequently many feminist writers have elaborated on Foucault's theories, either subtly or explicitly, when examining the social control of women (see for example Okley, 1978; Weedon, 1987; Diamond and Quimby, 1988; Worrall, 1990; Sawicki, 1991; McNay, 1992; Faith, 1994; Howe, 1994; Naffine, 1997; Worrall, 1997).

Okley's (1978) analysis of a girls' boarding school incorporates a Foucauldian perspective. She states that it is expected that the behaviour of girls, who from infancy are reared to be passive and submissive, will be

rooted in internalised notions of self-control and self-negation. Okley's study highlights many instances of the promotion of self-regulation. She asserts that girls in public schools, unlike boys in similar institutions, were not afforded the right to make decisions for themselves. Boys, she claims, were allocated many rights, including some fairly dictatorial powers such as the right to inflict corporal punishment on other boys, the right to establish rules and the utilisation of junior boys as servants (fags). As a result

[Boys] thus acquire near-adult authority before they leave school (Okley, 1978: 124).

Okley concludes that as a consequence of not having the opportunity to make personal decisions for themselves, the girls in her study had to learn to exercise a great deal of self-discipline. This self-discipline was often tested by the very triviality of many of the rules and regulations imposed within the institution, for example those that restricted movement (not being allowed to leave the premises without permission) or communication (only being allowed to talk to other students at specific time). She asserts that the idea was for this self-discipline to extend beyond the simple compliance with school rules into the broader realms of sexual behaviour.

Bartky (1988) elaborates on these debates. Basing her work largely on Foucault's theory of 'docile bodies' she examines the mechanisms through which disciplined bodies are subjected to a fragmentation and a partitioning of the body's time, space and movement.¹⁷ However, whereas Foucault based his (ungendered) account of docile bodies within the more formal social control institutions such as the school or the prison, Bartky expands on this concept and claims that the production of 'docile' female bodies occurs, not within a single institution, but rather on a continuum from informal to formal mechanisms. In addition, Bartky argues, these

¹⁷ See also Okley's (1978) account of the regulation of the lives of girls in boarding school for an example of this.

mechanisms of discipline have become embedded into social culture through the proliferation of 'benign' structures such as dietary, exercise and make-up regimes, medical discourses, fashion magazines and popularised media images, to such an extent that they have been absorbed by women themselves. Consequently, she states, women have become self-regulating bodies who are frequently content and/or compelled to conform to these notions of personal self-discipline. Furthermore, she states, women are not just self-regulating but self-policing too in the sense that they can punish themselves if they fail to adhere or live up to the standards which are set for them and which they set for themselves.

The lack of formal public sanctions does not mean that a woman who is unable or unwilling to submit herself to the appropriate body discipline will face no sanctions at all. On the contrary, she faces a very severe sanction indeed in a world dominated by men: the refusal of male patronage.....women punish themselves too for the failure to conform. The growing literature on women's body size is filled with wrenching confessions of shame from the overweight....The depth of these women's shame is a measure of the extent to which all women have internalised patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability (Bartky, 1988: 76).

Or, as Howe explains,

In Bartky's narrative, [women] are always already imprisoned within an internalising, self-disciplining gaze (1994:198).

Grimshaw (1999) agrees, stating that that women are not just self-regulating with regard to their behaviour, but also with regard to their lifestyle, looks and body shape. Women, she states have become pre-occupied with rigid dietary regimes and exercise routines in order that they can be seen to have an 'appropriate' lifestyle and, more importantly, an 'appropriate' body shape. She states that what is commonly accepted in society as 'free choice' (for example, losing weight, exercising, making up) is in reality a process of normalisation.

..despite the frequent popular presentation of body change and shaping as a matter of mere individual choice and will...the body that women want is a highly normalized one (Grimshaw, 1999: 93).

Women, she argues, are trapped within a process of self-surveillance, perpetuated by the powerful visual images of an idealised female body. This fetishization of the idealised female shape, and the desire of many women to conform to it, can lead to extreme behaviours and responses from women, for example eating disorders (Bordo, 1988; Hopwood, 1995), breast implants (Bordo, 1993) or other forms of surgical intervention (Davis, 1997) which, in turn, can lead to poor health, disfigurement and sometimes death.

So one must ask why women are so compelled or so willing to undertake such extreme measures and indeed, less dramatically, why women want to, and do, conform to such idealised images. This question is a complex and in many ways a contentious one. Care needs to be taken to avoid labelling women as totally 'docile' and passive, or indeed ignorant of the discourses which pervade and regulate their lives. In addition, it should not be forgotten that often women *do not* conform to self-regulatory regimes, indeed they frequently resist them. However, before the issue of resistance can be tackled, the question of willingness to conform and self-policing should be addressed.

Okley (1978) argued that boarding school girls actively participated in their own regulation because they were consciously aware that those who conformed received less attention from authority than those who did not, so in this case, conformity and self-regulation were utilised as a means of avoiding or resisting further, more intense, external intervention and supervision. Ardener (1978) however, takes a different view from Okley, stating that women's conformity is not a means of resistance, instead it is simply a sign of self-policing for the purposes of achieving a (socially acceptable) goal. She states that women often have a vested interest in their

own regulation as it might serve to convey status. For example, the only real status that a working class woman in the nineteenth century could realistically achieve was that of a *respectable* working class woman and thus the route to this status was through self-regulation, control and conformity to acceptable standards of decency and femininity. In contemporary society, the 'goal' might be to reach the status of wife and mother, either as a symbol of personal achievement or as a route out of poverty or other material problems (Marshment, 1993), thus women may readily submit to self-regulatory regimes in order to attract (and keep) a partner.

Bordo (1993) on the other hand, states that women often conform, particularly with regard to body image, not because they want to get married and have children, but because they believe this to be a route to independence and liberation. She highlights this with examples of female celebrities who are generally perceived and portrayed as being strong, liberated and decontrolled (for example Cher or Madonna). However, Bordo claims that in reality, although these women are financially independent and assertive, they have still adhered to, and indeed perpetuate, conventional images of femininity and have normalised themselves either through training regimes or through cosmetic surgery.

...in Foucauldian terminology, Cher has gradually 'normalised' herself. Her normalised image (the only 'reality' which counts) now acts as a standard against which other women will measure, judge, discipline and 'correct' themselves' (Bordo, 1993: 197).

Grimshaw (1999) supports Bordo's argument stating that the 'fetishization' of the body has led women to accept that control of the body is indicative of control over one's life, and hence this makes rigid beauty regimes and exercise regimes more acceptable and desirable (see also Brook, 1999). In addition, physical appearance has often been held as indicative of the state of a woman's mental health and women (particularly within institutions)

have frequently been compelled to 'look good' as this can be perceived as an expression of their mental stability (see Chapters Four, Six and Seven for a further discussion of this issue). Of course this debate could be taken somewhat further and it could be argued that many women conform to acceptable notions of beauty, dress and appearance as this can *contribute* to their mental well-being and mental health in that 'looking good' is a source of pleasure, and possibly power, for women (Frost, 1999). Many women may be self-regulating and accept conventional images of femininity, partly because a patriarchal ideology has achieved a general hegemony within society and thus these images become 'taken for granted', but also because women acknowledge that conforming to such images may have particular (short term) advantages and benefits for them such as an increase in confidence and self esteem, the feeling of acceptance and the avoidance of stigmatisation and the 'outcast' status associated with alternative looks/lifestyles (Marshment, 1993).

So we can see how feminists have generated an understanding of why women conform to standards of femininity and, more importantly, why they internalise these discourses to such a degree that they become self-regulating bodies. Grimshaw (1993) comments that in a great deal of Foucault's writing the (male) 'self' is created by discourse. What many feminists within this tradition have done is attempt to analyse how women's experiences can also be constructed within discourses and power relationships. So they have shifted the emphasis from the male self to the female self, however the emphasis is still on the self as the *effect* of discourses. This is problematic for some feminist scholars as it leaves little room for a consideration of the ways in which women might reject such discourses and indeed the methods of resistance they might employ to assert their identity and thus, to some degree, free themselves from these forms of regulation. Foucault stated that power is 'capillary' in that it does not necessarily originate from one particular source and nor is it necessarily in the possession of one specific group or individual. So, as discussed

above, subjects are not just regulated by 'others' with power, but can be participatory in their own regulation. But as Grimshaw (1993) and Howe (1994) ask, if women are so self-regulating and their subordination so self-imposed, how is it that some women manage to break out of these constraints? If regulation, control and the 'norms' of femininity are not always *imposed* upon women from external sources, how can, and do, they resist them? Much of the early feminist-Foucauldian literature around 'women of discourse', normalisation and self-regulation failed to deal adequately with these questions and the issues of resistance and agency were insufficiently discussed.¹⁸

Foucault stated that power and resistance co-existed, or 'where there is power there is resistance' (1980:95), and many feminist writers have consequently utilised this concept in their work. However, as Deveaux states, although Foucault's work in this area is useful as it provides feminists with the opportunity to move beyond simplistic explanations of gender relations (with women as objects of subordination and victimisation within a 'top-down', male dominated power relationship) towards a more complete understanding of the existence of 'multiple power relations' (Deveaux, 1994: 231) in which the possibility of resistance over domination is highlighted, it nonetheless still fails to provide a sufficient concept of agency.

[Foucault's] lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women (McNay, 1991, quoted in Deveaux, 1994: 232).

One of the major problems with Foucault's theory for feminism, is the fact that Foucault's concept of power is generalised from his analysis of the

¹⁸ For extensive discussion of the utilisation of Foucauldian theory and the development of resistance as a concept in feminist theory, see Weedon, 1987; Faith, 1994; Cooper, 1995.

power relationships and practices within institutions. This is insufficient because, as McNay argues,

...the discipline of the feminine body is hard to locate in so far as it is 'uninstitutionally bound' (1992: 33).

In other words, women are not only subjected to formal external disciplinary regimes, as are all individuals, but are subjected to informal mechanisms of control as well as 'internalised' forms of regulation. Therefore, going back to Grimshaw and Howe's question, resistance to external constraints is a more straightforward concept to consider and explain than resistance to those discourses that have become internalised. Daly and Maher (1998) acknowledge this problem and raise the difficulties in trying to construct a feminist framework which connects both the issues around 'women of discourse' and those pertaining to the lives of 'real women'; women whose bodies and lives cannot be simply described as the *effects of discourse* but rather women whose identity is constructed through their socio-economic and cultural experiences, women who have agency over their own lives, women who resist.

Subjectivity, Resistance and Agency

Henning (1999) states that because of the historical link between femininity and vulnerability, the concept of femininity has traditionally been linked with passivity whereas masculinity has been associated with agency. She states that during the last century, and for the early part of this century, because men were believed to hold the power (in both their private and public lives) women were not seriously considered as social agents, even during those times when they constituted a real political threat (for example during the suffragette movement). However for as long as there have been power relationships, a whole range of resistance strategies (including political, legal, academic and personal strategies) have existed for women. Women can and do resist the formal and informal restraints imposed upon

them and the expectations of them in everyday life, through a variety of methods which range from explicit confrontations with authority (Mandaraka-Sheppard, 1986), to the rejection of convention and the adoption of alternative lifestyles and appearances (see Kidd, 1999), to the *embracing* of conventional aspects of femininity (for example motherhood or 'appropriate' physical appearance) which women then utilise to their 'own ends' as a source of power and self-esteem (Marshment, 1993; Faith, 1994; Frost, 1999; Bosworth, 1999).

Before a discussion of these strategies of resistance can take place, however, it is necessary to highlight that the concept of resistance can be a contentious one for feminists. According to Brown (1995) and Cooper (1995) the notion of resistance can be misused by scholars and researchers. Cooper is concerned with what actually constitutes resistance whilst Brown asserts that an over-emphasis on women's ability to resist can potentially legitimate oppression by allowing middle class writers to 'feel good' about marginalised and relatively powerless groups thus providing little motivation to challenge established regimes or practices. However, as Bosworth (1999) argues, feminists can and should utilise debates around resistance to challenge the perception that women (offenders in particular) are simply continual victims with little or no control over their own lives. She goes on to state that an emphasis on resistance does not have to mean that women's actual oppression is ignored, indeed as Carlen (1994) has argued, it is impossible to discuss women in prison for example without recognising that the majority are, and have been, 'victims' of a whole range of socio-economic, racial and gender based oppressions. However, taking resistance seriously does allow women's ability to articulate their differences and thus develop strategies through which they can negotiate power relationships, to be brought to the fore of feminist debate.

According to Bosworth, an examination of resistance demands an 'appreciation of difference' (1999: 128) and an acknowledgement that

women are not a unified group with unified experiences. Rather, as Bryson (1999) asserts, women can be divided, as well as united, through their experiences of being women. Carlen (1998) argued that women experience *informal* forms of social controls that differ according to their class and ethnicity. Those who enter the formal arenas of social control (eg. the prison) or the semi-penal arenas (eg. the reformatory or the probation hostel) do so therefore with a conceptual framework which has been forged by their class, race and gender experiences. It is thus unsurprising that these women are then compelled to negotiate and evaluate their confinement in relation to their lived experiences. As Bosworth states, such women utilise their race-class-gender identities to navigate the 'pains of imprisonment' (1999: 127) through either a rejection of, or an endorsement of, dominant regimes. Of course the ability to resist in this way is not restricted to imprisonment, or indeed to any form of institutionalisation. Women (as discussed above) may adopt conventional feminine images in their everyday lives (through marriage, beauty regimes, diets, exercise and so on) as a means of breaking out of poverty, improving self esteem or simply to avoid being marginalised even further. However, given that this thesis is specifically concerned with institutionalised women the discussion that follows will draw primarily from the literature around institutional resistance. As the overwhelming majority of literature in this area is concerned with those women who are institutionalised within formal custodial institutions, it is this literature that will be primarily utilised in the following sections. However, it is the intention to use this literature in order to construct a theoretical framework that can then be utilised to examine the specific experiences and methods of resistance of women within semi-penal institutions. The next section of the chapter will critically discuss the feminist debates around women who resist through explicit confrontation.

Confrontation as Resistance

Historically, women in prison have not been involved in collective protest to the extent that incarcerated men have (Madaraka-Sheppard, 1986). However, as Shaw (1992) argues, this does not mean that women should be considered as conformers or perpetual victims who simply submit to the forces of oppression, not least because many incidents of resistance may have gone unrecorded through the history of women's imprisonment as institutionalised women did not often have a voice with which to articulate their protests (see Dobash *et al*, 1986; Lindfield, 1992; Howe, 1994). Any historical records are likely to have been written by men and women in authority and thus may omit true accounts of institutional resistance, or disregard their significance (see Chapter Three for a further discussion of women's invisibility in historical records as a methodological issue). Instead, Shaw states, we should acknowledge women's desire and ability to take control over their own lives, even when they are enforceably confined. Indeed, resistance in some form (whether subtle or explicit) has always been a more common response to female confinement than compliance (Faith, 1993; Mandaraka-Sheppard, 1986). Zedner (1991), in her discussion of female imprisonment during the nineteenth century, claims that women were generally considered to be *more* disruptive and *less* likely to yield to prison discipline than their male counterparts. Women were believed to be powerful and corrupting and therefore more likely to resist their confinement through 'riotous behaviour' (Zedner, 1991:184). Indeed, even in contemporary prisons, women are often felt to pose a greater threat to authority than men. Staff who have worked in both male and female prisons report that women are 'more emotional' (Faith, 1993: 165) and therefore are more difficult to manage when in prison.

Although these comments are rooted in dominant discourses around femininity (women as unstable, irrational and governed by their emotions) there may be some element of truth in these statements. It may be the case that women are more likely to reveal their feelings regarding particular

issues on a more frequent (but *individual*) basis than men, instead of reacting occasionally but collectively, and it is this concept of ‘individuality’ that is crucial to an understanding of women’s resistance within prison.

Most women in prison belong to the lower socio-economic sections of society and a disproportionate number are black (Carlen, 1998). As stated above, women negotiate imprisonment within the framework of their individual socio-economic and cultural experiences (in addition to their experiences of religion, sexuality and ethnicity). Bosworth’s (1999) study highlighted that women in prison constantly utilised aspects of their cultural identity to declare their individuality and their independence from penal regimes. For example women would often refuse to eat ordinary prison meals, insisting instead on Halal or Kosher meat, vegetarian dishes, or no food at all during religious days of fasting. In addition, they rarely advocated or engaged in the passive feminine behaviour that was encouraged within the prison, often complaining about the excessively feminised education and training regimes. Black women frequently complained that, despite the high proportion of minority ethnic groups within the prison system, regimes did not recognise their specific needs and demands. Even the ‘feminised’ forms of training available such as hairdressing, did not cater for Afro-Caribbean hair and thus effectively excluded black women’s participation whilst still expecting their co-operation.

For the women in Bosworth’s study, non-compliance usually took the form of minor verbal challenges to the staff and confrontation rarely went beyond these forms of behaviour. However, that is not to suggest that women are never involved in major, collective forms of resistance. Ferrari-Bravo and Arcidiancono (1989) discuss the case of a juvenile detention centre in Italy in which an attempt was made to integrate girls into, what had previously been, an all boys’ institution. A collective revolt took place in the institution shortly after it opened involving eight girls and thirty boys.

After the incident a sixteen year old girl was identified as the ‘ringleader’ and was subsequently described by the authors as

.....a very marked personality, with characteristics of extreme reactivity and aggressiveness.. (Ferrari-Bravo and Arcidiancono, 1989:151).

They go on to discuss how the actions of this girl became legendary within the institution, being perceived as a figure for which there was no male equivalent in the prison. Her explicit resistance was so incongruous with her female status that her behaviour was perceived as much more threatening than that of her male companions.

The perception of women who resist disciplinary regimes is rooted in the contradictory ideas of femininity. On the one hand women are expected to be irrational and emotional and consequently, as stated above, incarcerated women have historically been perceived as *more* likely to resist and protest (albeit in individual ways). On the other hand, and at the same time, ‘normal’ women are expected to be passive and compliant and these ideals are encouraged and reinforced through institutional regimes. Therefore when women resist these regimes their actions are perceived as dangerous and warranting further controls. So because of the danger that these women potentially pose, they are often punished for ‘indiscipline’ more regularly than male prisoners (Faith, 1993).

As Faith (1993) argues, women in prison are more likely to be perceived as being unruly and undisciplined because they are more likely to be *accused* of prison indiscipline than men. Minor infractions which would be overlooked in men’s prisons are often punishable in women’s because, first, women’s aggression conflicts with common-sense assumptions about femininity and second, men’s aggression is so ‘in character’ with the ideals of masculinity that it goes virtually unnoticed. Consequently, Faith claims, women can find themselves disciplined for trivial ‘offences’ such as using

bad language, possessing minor contraband (such as lemonade) and for sitting in other prisoners' cells (see Chapters Five and Six for a further discussion of this issue within an historical context).

Perhaps because of the extent to which women are surveilled in prison and disciplined for very minor rule infringements, women's resistance does not always take the form of explicit challenges to authority. On the contrary, women's resistance can be subtle and can consist of an *endorsement* rather than a *rejection* of the discourses and practices that aim to control them. This issue is addressed below.

Endorsement as Resistance

Resistance may...be a choreographed demonstration of cooperation (Faith, 1994:39).

The construction of the female identity is crucial to an understanding of women's resistance to control. Often both institutional and 'common sense' notions of female identity conflict with women's own personal ideas of identity and, as Bosworth (1999) argues, the very concept of 'identity' is not in fact static, but rather it is a notion which is subject to constant negotiation. As a result the construction of femininity plays a crucial but paradoxical role in women's resistance. Women may choose to utilise the methods of control imposed upon them to articulate their resistance and to reduce the 'pains' of their imprisonment.

Femininity plays a crucial, albeit paradoxical, role in [women's] resistance: while it represents the goal and form of their imprisonment, it is also the means by which they achieve their own ends (Bosworth, 1999: 7).

Bosworth takes up Marshment's (1993) discussion of the way in which women often accept and subscribe to conventional images of femininity, stating that women often do not reject the feminine roles encouraged by

institutional regimes and social convention, but rather they knowingly adopt and adhere to them in order to develop a sense of agency and identity.

Penal regimes for women have historically been underpinned by conventional assumptions of 'normal' femininity (Carlen, 1983; Dobash et al, 1986; Zedner, 1991; Faith, 1993; Heidensohn, 1996; Bosworth, 1999). However, the women in Bosworth's study often did not challenge the goals encouraged by the prison. They did not necessarily perceive the ideals of femininity to be a negative aspect of their lives, instead they interpreted the ideals of femininity as positive attributes and in doing so they re-negotiated and redefined the meaning of femininity through their experiences of race, class and sexuality and utilised this as a source of resistance rather than a source of disempowerment. As Baudrillard points out

...the best answer to an adversary manoeuvre is not to retreat, but to go along with it, turning it to one's own advantage...(1987:65).

So although one primary objective of prison regimes is to produce an acceptable 'feminine identity', one homogenous, uniform identity does not emerge. Rather,

...women are able to construct competing feminine identities, through which they resist some of the disempowering effects of imprisonment (Bosworth, 1999: 107).

Bosworth describes how women would use the bodily aspects of femininity to win various disputes. For example, the women in one prison entered into a dispute with prison management over the replacement of ordinary toilet paper with the medicated, non-absorbent kind and at first used techniques such as direct action (stealing paper from staff toilets and demonstrations) as a means of protest. These means failed and so they employed a strategy which, at first, appears to endorse aspects of feminine weakness, but was actually utilised as a form of unity and strength. The women informed the

governor that this new paper was not suitable for women who were menstruating or women with medical conditions like thrush and consequently the original paper was returned.

The women also employed a similar strategy to complain about the over-starchy food provided in prison. They mobilised the discourses pertaining to feminine attractiveness, complaining that for women a lack of vitamins, minerals and iron led to poor hair, nails and skin. This, of course, was not simply a cynical manipulation of these discourses aimed at winning the dispute. On the contrary, as Marshment (1993) argues, women frequently use discourses of femininity in everyday life, not just to get their own way, but to genuinely improve their physical appearance thus enhancing their levels of confidence and general mental well being. It is likely therefore that the women in prison were sincere in their desire for a better diet as this would improve their physical appearance which in turn could be used as a source of strength and provide an area over which the women could have some control.

One of the most significant aspects of 'idealised femininity' endorsed by the women in Bosworth's study was the traditional ideal of motherhood. Although some women in prison may not generally be perceived as conventionally 'good' mothers (drug users, alcoholics, habitual offenders, women in lesbian relationships inside or outside of prison and women accused of violence, abuse or neglect for example) Bosworth highlights how many of the women she interviewed treasured their role as mothers and indeed they used this role in a positive way. First, the status of being a mother was utilised to bring meaning to the lives of the women in that they could strive towards the goal of reuniting their families after their release. Second, being perceived as a caring and 'good' mother would improve the women's self-esteem and sense of agency and identity.

...many of the women appeared to define their sense of self and

their needs, as well as their experience of imprisonment, in relation to their identity as mothers (Bosworth, 1999: 106).

So it can be seen that women are able to endorse potentially oppressive, dominant discourses and utilise the common sense assumptions made about them to their own advantage. However, as Bosworth warns, this strategy is only possible for some women at some times and care should be taken so as not to 'glamorise' the position of incarcerated mothers or accept that, because of their abilities to resist, the situation for them in prison is unproblematic. For some women in Bosworth's study the ability to draw strength from their maternal identity was severely restricted, not least for geographical reasons. Institutionalised women are, after all, physically separated from their families and the pain of this separation, and the practical difficulties it can cause, can often over-ride any positive sense of self a woman may draw from her role as mother. Chapter Seven will elaborate further on this issue of physical separation in the context of women in probation hostels. The situation for these women can sometimes be more difficult than for those in prison because, although in a hostel women are not physically prevented from leaving the institution during the daytime, due to the exceptionally small numbers of such institutions women often find themselves hundreds of miles away from home and thus visits may be less frequent than they would expect if in custody.¹⁹

In addition to the problem of potentially over-glamorising or under-estimating the problems of women in prison, the identification of the endorsement of dominant discourses (such as those around motherhood for example) as a means of resistance is itself a contentious issue. As Cooper (1995) asks, what is it about such behaviour that identifies it as resistance? Who acknowledges these acts as a means of resistance? Is the woman herself conscious of her resistance and does the dominant institution have

¹⁹ In 1999 there were only five probation / bail hostels (providing a total of 103 bed spaces) for women in England compared with 53 hostels for men (NAPO, 1999)

to recognise it as resistance for an act to be such? Incarcerated women endorsing idealised images of motherhood could be seen as simple acquiescence to, and more significantly as a 'success' for, the feminising regimes of the prison system. It will be argued in Chapter Seven that although on occasions the endorsement of dominant discourses by institutionalised women can actually promote the very regime they seek to resist, such behaviour can still be regarded as resistance as it allocates women with a measure of resilience to, and a means of withstanding, the often crushing forces of control they are subjected to.

So to conclude, we have seen how women have historically been subjected to a whole range of regulating, pathologising discourses based around idealised notions of femininity, domesticity, respectability, motherhood and sexuality. In addition, these discourses have been, and still are, utilised in the regulation and control of women, both formally and informally. However, it has also been shown that women do not always willingly accept these regulatory discourses nor do they always submit to the forces of social control. Rather they are able to utilise a range of strategies that allow them the opportunities to resist the oppressive regimes enforced upon them. Some women may reject the feminising discourses and thus assert their identity through non-conformity, whilst others may endorse the dominant discourses and utilise the common assumptions and expectations made about them to their own advantage.

Much of the literature utilised in this chapter has focused on either the informal (domestic) social control of women or on the formal control of women in prison. However, as stated previously, this thesis is primarily concerned with the social control of women within the semi-penal arena, specifically those 'community' institutions such as reformatories, refuges, homes and probation hostels. It will be argued in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven that both the informal and formal methods of control discussed above are united within the semi-penal institution to form a unique system

of regulation for women. Therefore what this chapter has established is a theoretical framework regarding the continuum of control methods used to deal with 'deviant' women and the various strategies used by women to resist or reject that control. This framework of analysis can now be applied to an examination of women within a particular semi-penal institution over the past two hundred years. However before these analyses can be recounted it is first necessary to outline the methods used for this research along with a critical discussion of the methodological and epistemological issues that such a piece of research presents for the feminist researcher. This will follow in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three
Hearing women's voices: Developing an Appropriate Methodological
Approach for Researching the Experiences of Women within the
Semi-Penal Institution

Describing the methods by which a piece of research has been carried out can be a tedious task which, for the general reader, engenders as much interest and entertainment as a car repair manual for the average motorist (Genders and Player, 1995:18).

The quotation above is the opening sentence from the methods chapter of Genders and Player's (1995) study of Grendon Prison and, at first, it appears to be an inappropriate way in which to justify the discussion of the research methods and methodology that follows. However the authors go on to state that this 'car manual' tradition is broken when researchers are involved in qualitative, participant methodologies, as was the case in their study. For participant studies, an in-depth examination of the methods utilised can be important and stimulating given that the context in which the fieldwork is conducted frequently has a significant impact upon the nature of the data collected and the way in which it is analysed and presented. Further, Genders and Player argue that the level of personal involvement which participant methodologies demand and the extent to which the researcher's personal resources and social skills can determine the outcome of the study, justify the elevation of a methodological discussion to the forefront of the research.

It is the intention in this chapter to discuss the methodology utilised in this thesis. This study involved a long period of fieldwork which included participant observation, as well as in-depth interviews and extensive documentary analysis, in what was often a very oppressive and pressured institutional environment. The result was a piece of research that exacted a high level of personal commitment and involvement. Moreover, the ever-changing dynamics of the institution (high rate of turnover of residents,

power struggles between residents, between staff and between residents and staff), the desire to capture a snapshot of the institution and its inhabitants at a particular 'moment' in its history and the extensive period of time spent within the institution itself (over three years in total) meant that the methodological approach and the methods utilised became one of the most important aspects of the research. It is for this reason, in agreement with Genders and Player (1995), that the methodology section is worthy of a high profile within this thesis.

The feminist critique of mainstream research.

Sydie (1987) states that the positivistic tradition that has dominated sociological and criminological investigation for the majority of this century is based upon the idea that society consists of structures and processes similar to those that appear in the 'natural' world. Consequently it has commonly been believed that those social structures and processes can, and should, be scrutinised and understood through methods similar to those employed in the study of the natural sciences. This has resulted in sociological inquiry being dominated by research which is held to be neutral, value free and based on scientific objectivity (Roberts, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993; Abbott and Wallace, 1990; Naffine, 1997).

From the 1970s a growing movement against this form of mainstream research, fuelled in part by the work of radical and feminist writers,¹ began to criticise the traditional methods for what was considered to be an over-emphasis on quantification, a detachment from the research subject and an ahistorical standpoint. Moreover, explicit claims of neutrality were challenged on the grounds that the majority of sociological research examined the world from a male perspective that actually led, not to

¹ It should be acknowledged that these were not the only, nor the earliest critics of this form of mainstream research. Labelling theorists and researchers from the field of Anthropology had previously instigated shifts towards more qualitative, standpoint methodologies. Radical and feminist writers are cited here as it is the critiques of these groups that are central to the argument presented in this chapter.

objective results, but to biased and skewed conclusions. Feminists drew attention to the ways in which the knowledge that sociologists were producing was problematic, women and women's interests were largely ignored and furthermore when sociologists did consider women, the knowledge they produced was partial and only served the interests of men, accepting, legitimating and justifying the social inequalities between the sexes (see Harding, 1986, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1993). As stated previously, social scientists have traditionally maintained that research should be neutral and objective, conducted in the same manner as natural science research. This, it was believed, would affirm its status as a 'real science'. The struggle for scientific respectability, and the actual methods utilised to achieve this, have been highlighted as problematic and extensively challenged by feminists as only providing us with a partial understanding of the world. Moreover, it has been claimed that such research neglects certain important areas of social inquiry, such as subjects' personal feelings and subjective, emotional experiences.

Traditionally women have been at best marginalised, and at worst ignored, within social science research, both as researchers and as subjects of inquiry. Stanley and Wise state that the tendency within social science to 'omit and distort the experiences of women' (1993:27) is the most powerful criticism of mainstream research. They claimed that the overwhelming majority of studies simply reflected a male bias which defined society in terms of male values. This meant that the results of such research were a distorted representation of the social world, providing a gender-skewed perspective.

The invisibility of women within this field has long been acknowledged and Ann Oakley (1974) provided three possible explanations for this. First, she stated that the problem must be traced back to the very origins of sociology, and the fact that the early work within the discipline served to represent the sexist attitudes and interests of its 'founding fathers'. Second,

Oakley highlighted the point that the vast majority of sociologists and criminologists have been, and still are, male, hence it should be no surprise that their views, attitudes and interests will have influenced, and been reflected by, the academy. Finally, she stated that the most significant reason for the inherent sexism within sociology is the ideological construction of gender. Oakley claimed the fact that society is explained and understood in sexually stereotyped ways legitimates the focus of attention *onto* some aspects of social life (those which are of interest to men) and thus justifies the direction of attention *away* from other aspects of social life (those which are of interest to women). Thus women's experiences have remained hidden and disguised by sociological research.

Feminists have also criticised the fact that, even when women were not being ignored, their experiences were misrepresented in blatantly sexist ways. Liz Stanley (1974; cited in Stanley and Wise, 1993: 28) conducted a content analysis of three major British sociological journals and concluded that the overwhelming majority of studies in these journals were specifically concerned with the experiences of men and boys. Only a small minority of work was published on women and girls and that which did exist was inadequate, not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality, given that it was largely based around a positivistic model of female behaviour.

In addition to the marginalisation of women and their misrepresentation in mainstream sociological research, a second criticism is that, traditionally, not only have such studies ignored women, but they have also ignored the whole issue of gender as a major social division and significant variable. Naffine (1997) complained that the conclusions which sociologists drew from their 'gender-skewed' studies were generalised to all individuals. In other words, although research was only highlighting and explaining men's experiences and activities, conclusions were assumed to be 'universal' and were used to elucidate women's experiences as if they were the same as men's. Millman and Kanter (1975) stated that what sociologists were

failing to acknowledge was that men and women occupied different social spheres and thus experienced different social realities. Therefore conclusions that generalised in such a way were inadequate and irrelevant.

Furthermore, it was argued, the social science tradition of ignoring women, or pushing them to the periphery of the inquiry, maintained the concept of female subordination and legitimated the sexist myth of male superiority and female inferiority. Society's generally accepted, sexist ideas about gender divisions (women as emotional and irrational, men as reasonable and impartial) are grounded in positivistic theories and assumptions which have been, it is claimed, continually reproduced by sociological and criminological research (see Sydie, 1987; Abbott and Wallace, 1990; May, 1993). Mainstream social science research is upheld as being impartial and detached and, according to the feminist critique, the research conducted within this positivistic tradition has supported the idea that men were impartial and detached. In this way, one idea perpetuates the other. If men were considered to be impartial and dispassionate then they would also be considered the most appropriate people to conduct research which should also be impartial and dispassionate and this, in turn, legitimated the male dominance of the discipline and justified women's exclusion from the subject.

This male dominance has led to a situation whereby women have been left 'muted' by sociological research. As Worrall (1990) has argued, the word 'muted' does not infer that women have nothing to say or that they remain silent about their experiences. On the contrary as Ardener (1978 cited in Worrall, 1990: 10) maintains, 'muted' groups often have a great deal to say and they may say it often. What matters is whether they are allowed to speak when they want to and whether they are able to articulate their experiences and thoughts within accepted and acceptable frames of reference. As Worrall comments,

Members of muted groups, if they wish to communicate, must do so in terms of the dominant modes of expression (1990:11).

In other words, women's exclusion from social science research has left them largely without a platform for public expression and, moreover, when they do speak, their voices are *interpreted* by others who claim to possess knowledge about them. The fact that these 'others' have traditionally been men is problematic and has prompted feminists to attempt to develop alternative epistemologies in response. These will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Another problem identified by feminists is the fact that traditional, male dominated research tended to concentrate on those issues and topics that men defined as significant and valuable, for example social class, politics and (men's paid) work. The emphasis was therefore placed on those issues relating to the male dominated 'public' world whilst the more private spheres of social life (such as those relating to the home and family, the place where women traditionally spent considerable amounts of time) and the informal power relations between the genders, were ignored (Oakley, 1974; Millman and Kanter, 1975; Harding, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993). Even that research which did examine the informal world of the family relegated women to the peripheral role of 'wife', 'mother' or 'housewife'. Women were generally discussed only in relation to men and were not, as Naffine (1997) has stated, considered significant players in their own right.

The criticisms outlined above have all focused on the limitations of male dominated, mainstream research. The final criticism concerns the inability of mainstream sociologists to recognise their own limitations, in particular their tendency to ignore the gender bias inherent in their work. In other words, male dominated studies have presented conclusions based on studies of males only, but have neglected to acknowledge that this gender

specificity can only tell us something about one gender. Naffine (1997) states that in traditional sociological and criminological research men were the focus of the attention because they were criminals, *not* because they were men. She goes on to assert that although men have been the focus of the inquiry, the issue of *maleness* has been ignored and consequently men were studied as if they were un-gendered beings. This meant that such research actively ignored the most significant feature of the inquiry, the masculinity and maleness of the subjects.² As Naffine succinctly puts it,

Criminology was simply the study of the criminal man, but the criminal man could be studied without reference to his gender (1997: 20).

What can be inferred from this is that *masculinity* and *maleness* have not been considered crucial aspects of the identity of men in the way that *femininity* and *femaleness* have been seen to be crucial aspects of the identity of women.³

In conclusion to this critique then, it would appear that there is considerable agreement amongst feminist scholars with regard to the inadequacies and limitations of traditional, positivistic, sociological research. However, although the feminist response to such research has been greatly debated in recent years (see Roberts, 1981; Jaggar, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993; Harding, 1987; Cook and Fonow, 1990; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1990; Abbott and Wallace, 1990; Cain, 1990) there still exists no real consensus on what should constitute appropriate feminist research methods. The following sections of this chapter will take up these

² In recent years several sociologists have attempted to rectify this problem by prioritising the issue of masculinity in their research and writing. See for example Newburn and Stanko (eds) (1994), Sim (1994), Newburn and Mair (eds) (1996), Collier (1998).

³ For a discussion of the way in which 'femininity' is considered to be a crucial aspect of the identity of women see Chapter Two. For the way in which these concepts of 'appropriate feminine behaviour' impacted upon the women in this study (in both an historical and contemporary context) see Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

debates and aim to identify what, if anything, constitutes a 'feminist method' or a 'feminist methodology'.

Proposing a feminist response

As Maynard (1990) points out, the early feminist responses to mainstream sociological research, consisted primarily of an 'additive' approach which was based upon appending women into the existing knowledge base of sociology. Feminists focused their attention on pointing to the issues that sociology had neglected (the experiences of women), and aimed to 'add' women to the existing areas of sociological inquiry. According to Abbott and Wallace (1990) this process of 'filling in the gaps' within existing sociological theory and research, led to three general responses from feminist scholars, namely integration, separatism and reconceptualisation.

The integrationist approach was primarily concerned with the sexist bias inherent in traditional sociological research. The focus was therefore on amending existing practices by including women and, literally, 'filling in' the gender gaps. However, although this approach, to some extent, addressed women's invisibility within mainstream research, it did little to challenge the issue of women's marginalisation. The adoption of this approach meant that women continued to be left on the periphery of the discipline and became simply additions to the main syllabus. Also, as Abbott and Wallace point out, the adoption of an integrationist perspective did not sufficiently tackle the inherent gender bias within sociology and nor did it challenge the 'scientific' basis of the discipline. In response to the failings of the integrationist approach, separatism argued for a new sociological discipline that would be developed both *by* women and *for* women. It was believed that women should not be 'fitted into' the existing base of mainstream sociology. and nor should efforts be made to attempt to alter the biases inherent in the discipline. Rather, it was proposed that a separate knowledge base be developed by, about and for women. Although this appeared to be a more radical and sophisticated response to the

problems inherent in mainstream sociological inquiry, it was flawed essentially in the same way as the integrationist approach in that, by pushing women into a 'separate' and different category for study, it perpetuated their further marginalisation and justified their continued invisibility within mainstream research. Also, as Abbott and Wallace point out, feminists would be mistaken in thinking that conventional sociological research had nothing at all of value to offer women and also, by focusing solely on women and ignoring men, this new 'feminist sociology' would miss out on the opportunity to examine some issues crucial to the female experience, such as oppression, exploitation and subordination.

The third and most credible approach that Abbott and Wallace identify is reconceptualisation. This approach is similar to the separatist position in that it acknowledges the need for research by, about and for women. There is also the recognition that because women and men have different realities and experiences it is desirable that a feminist sociology be constructed to examine social reality from a female perspective. However this approach diverges from the separatist school of thought in that it rejects the 'female only' stance of separatism, arguing that women need to conduct research on males as well as on females. In addition, women need to be fully included within mainstream research, and both feminist and mainstream sociologists need to acknowledge that both disciplines have important and valuable findings to offer each other. This approach seems credible in theory but is somewhat idealistic in that, as Abbott and Wallace point out, mainstream sociology is remarkably resistant to change or indeed to the idea that there is even a need for change.

The reconceptualisation perspective has, however, had a significant impact upon feminist approaches to research. As Stanley and Wise (1990) point out, one of the major issues of concern for feminists within sociology is the development of a 'feminist knowledge'. However, as stated previously, the way in which this knowledge would be acquired (in other words, the

methods used to collect data) is still a matter of some contention. The issues around how feminists should conduct research, in particular the specific methods and techniques they should employ, has long been debated and the question of whether a specific 'feminist method' exists remains in dispute. According to Harding (1987), the reason why this question has posed such difficulty is because the issues of method, methodology and epistemology have been used interchangeably within feminist discussions and critiques of mainstream sociological research. These three issues require some detachment for the purposes of discussion as although they are in many ways inter-related they are not inseparable. For example a researcher might approach a study from a feminist methodological perspective but might reject the notion that there are particular feminist methods or techniques that she should use.⁴ Alternatively, methods often attributed to feminist research (for example semi-structured or unstructured interviews) might be adopted by a researcher who openly rejects or denies a feminist epistemological perspective.⁵ It is for this reason that these issues will be examined separately below and the reasons why a particular epistemological and methodological perspective and specific research methods were adopted for this study will be discussed.

Identifying a feminist epistemology

Epistemology is a theory of knowledge. As Stanley and Wise (1990) state, epistemology raises, and attempts to answer, questions regarding the production of knowledge, for example what can be 'known' and who can be 'knowers'? It is concerned, as Worrall (1990) has pointed out, with how

⁴ For example Kelly (1990) rejected the idea that there was a specific feminist method (although she states she had previously supported this notion) claiming that feminists should use any method that they feel is most suitable for the purposes of their particular research.

⁵ See the chapter by Pat Carlen in Young and Matthews (eds) (1992) in which she discusses the fact that although many authors have written about women and the criminal justice system and have contributed to breaking down the sexist myths around women's lawbreaking, not all of these authors would describe themselves as 'feminist' or believe their work is informed by a feminist perspective. Indeed Carlen herself rejects the term 'feminist criminology' when describing her own work, stating that the label is an essentialist one.

we search for, and discover 'truth' and whether it is in fact possible for humans to ever gain a complete knowledge of themselves. Harding (1987) argued that conventional epistemologies excluded women from the production of knowledge. Sociological 'knowledge', it has been claimed, has long been a male construct and men (in particular men belonging to the dominant class and race) have written history from a masculine viewpoint (see Smith, 1988).

In response, feminists have proffered alternative epistemologies, or theories of knowledge, which position women as 'knowers', which legitimate 'subjective truth' (as opposed to 'objective fact') as knowledge and which justify women's experiences and observations as standards against which beliefs can be measured in order to be legitimated as knowledge. Two discrete feminist epistemologies, feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint, have been identified (Harding, 1986, 1987; Naffine, 1997). Feminist empiricism has been highlighted as the major feminist response to the problems and biases of traditional epistemologies. Feminist standpoint epistemology, on the other hand, has been identified as a more radical approach, producing 'knowledge' which is more complete and less distorted. These two approaches, and their limitations, will be discussed in more detail below.

Feminist Empiricism

Much of the early feminist research was undertaken according to the methodology and beliefs of traditional empiricist criminology. Traditional empiricism shares with positivism the belief that 'facts' exist within the social world and that such facts, which exist independently of individual interpretation, can be collected by researchers as long as they have the necessary tools. However, unlike positivism, empiricism is not theory driven, rather, as May explains, empiricism claims that

..the facts speak for themselves and require no explanation through

theoretical propositions (1993: 6).

The feminist concern with traditional research was that women were being neglected in scientific studies and should therefore receive the same treatment as men. Consequently, as Naffine (1997) has commented, the early feminist response was to make the existing male studies 'fit' women. In other words, feminists took up the empiricist tradition and attempted to utilise it to redress the gender imbalance within sociology. Harding (1991) described feminist empiricism as a tradition that, whilst criticising and questioning the supposed 'objectivity' of scientific research, subsequently proposed that such objectivity and neutrality could, and should, be achieved. Feminist empiricism therefore adheres to 'the existing rules and principles of the sciences' (Harding, 1991: 111) and the aim is thus to develop a criminological but 'scientific' understanding of women.

May (1993) commented that because the feminist empiricist critique of mainstream sociological research was based around the *practice* rather than the *foundations* of science (in other words, the methods rather than the theoretical perspective), it could itself be criticised for not sufficiently challenging the *male norms* of scientific research. In defence, Naffine (1997) strongly acknowledges the important impact and influence that feminist empiricism has had on research, not least because these studies have constituted a great improvement over traditional, masculine empirical work. She states that many of the feminist empirical studies, particularly those concerned with the position of women within the criminal justice system have made a valuable contribution to our understandings of the relationship between women, crime and criminal justice agents.⁶ Feminist empiricism, she claims, is more reflective than traditional empiricism and

⁶ See Gelsthorpe L and Morris A (1990) for a collection of feminist empirical work and for what Naffine (1997: 31) describes as a celebration of their achievements.

the research is based around an acknowledgement of the significance of the researcher-subject relationship.

However she admits that the feminist empiricist approach can be problematic in that it can lead to similar generalisation problems as traditional empirical research and consequently research findings remain inherently partial and skewed. What many feminist writers have done is taken those skewed and distorted mainstream studies and then attempted to manipulate them further in order to account for women. Naffine goes further and criticises feminist empiricism on the grounds that it fails to challenge the 'common sense' assumption that men's experiences represent the benchmark against which other experiences and realities should be measured. Feminist empiricism, she asserts, criticised criminology for not treating women as *equal* to men, thus implying that men are the norm against which women should be compared.

The inherent problems with feminist empiricism led scholars away from the idea of simply 'fitting women in' to existing frameworks and prompted the move towards a more radical approach which placed women at the centre of the inquiry and which posed more of a challenge to the dominant views of 'knowledge' construction. This alternative approach, in which research is based around the standpoint of the subject rather than the 'expert', is discussed below.

Feminist Standpoint

The idea of a standpoint approach to sociological research is neither new nor exclusive to feminism. As early as the 1920s the concept of approaching research from an alternative viewpoint (that of the offender) became credible.⁷ The standpoint approach disputed the Kantian theory

⁷ The Chicago School, for example, began to approach research from the point of view of the offender. See also Whyte (1955).

that information is received, processed and understood by all individuals in the same way, regardless of their background or experience and that the identity of the researcher has no impact on the outcome of the research process. Standpoint epistemology acknowledged that *who* was doing the research was as important to the outcome as *what* they did and *how* they did it. Although regarded as a progressive step within sociology, some feminists (see Naffine, 1997) became critical of this radical shift by male criminologists from the view of the 'expert' to the viewpoint of the offender, claiming that it was simply a shift from one male viewpoint to another. Women were still regarded as peripheral to mainstream research and consequently a women-centred approach to the production of knowledge, one within which women's voices could be articulated and heard, was required.

Standpoint feminism is essentially concerned with the identity of the inquirer and the way in which her background and experiences are necessarily central to the production of 'knowledge' regarding the social world. As May (1993) states, women's exclusion and marginalisation by men from both research studies and the public world in general is taken by standpoint feminists and turned into a sociological advantage. Cook and Fonow (1990) claim that feminists can occupy privileged positions as researchers as they are able to conduct their studies from both the oppressed position of women and from the advantageous position of scholars and academics.

Naffine explored the relationship between the inquirer and the subject of the inquiry and the impact of that relationship on the knowledge produced, concluding that

...where you stand in relation to the world matters very much to what you know and how well you know it (1997: 39).

In other words, women's experiences would never be fully understood whilst the producers of knowledge were male as such attempts at explanation would be interpretative and partial, based around a male construction of women's reality. Consequently, standpoint feminism attempted to overcome this by placing women at the centre of the research project and consequently aiming to reduce the disparity between the *knowers* and the *known*.

Hampton's (1993) study *Prisons and Women*, was concerned with women's experiences in a New South Wales prison. She provided a group of ex-prisoners with the opportunity to discuss their experiences, claiming that first hand accounts (in other words, women's own stories) produced more valid and reliable 'knowledge' than second hand or 'hearsay' information (that which is 'interpreted' by 'experts' removed from the reality under scrutiny). Hampton wanted to remain entirely in the background of her research, leaving the women to speak for themselves and thus challenging the assumption that prisoners (and women) are inarticulate beings who require scholarly intervention in order to explain and legitimate their opinions and experiences within acceptable discourses and frameworks of analysis.

Herself an ex-prisoner, Hampton believed that this made her better able to understand the world she was researching and better able to approach her work from the perspective of her subjects. This approach, according to Naffine (1997) differs considerably from Carlen's (1985) study *Criminal Women*. Although Carlen took a similar stance to Hampton in that she presented her research from the standpoint of the subjects of her inquiry (four female offenders) she was faced, according to Naffine, with epistemological issues that Hampton was not. Hampton's background as an ex-prisoner compared with Carlen's background as an 'expert' criminologist meant that the former could legitimately claim to speak *with* the women in her study, whereas the latter could only ever speak *for* them.

Similar criticisms could be made of other, standpoint based studies (see for example Campbell, 1984). Indeed, as Naffine argues, this is one of the most serious problems with feminist standpoint epistemologies. She complains that feminist standpoint studies often fail to sufficiently answer, or even pose, the question ‘on whose behalf are women speaking?’ (1997: 52). In feminist standpoint studies, is the researcher only speaking on her own behalf or is she, and indeed can she, speak on behalf of other, and all women?

It would appear then that feminist standpoint epistemology is underpinned by a presumption that all women are alike and thus generalisations can be made about them. This creates a paradoxical situation for feminist research. Standpoint epistemology emerged in response to the generalisation tendency of mainstream research and the notion of male dominated studies ignoring the individuality of women. Yet, as Spelman (1988) states, standpoint feminists have created a similar problem in that they tend to ignore the individual difference between women. Further, whereas mainstream sociological research positioned men and male experiences as the ‘benchmark’ or ‘norm’ against which other experiences were measured, feminists can be accused of placing white, heterosexual women as the benchmark against which all women are compared and the ‘differences’ (of, for example, those black, lesbian, or Muslim women who do not conform to the standard) measured. As Bryson (1999) has argued, standpoint feminists have failed to realise that women can be divided, as well as united, by their experiences of ‘being women’.

Cain (1990) has also criticised the very premise upon which feminist standpoint epistemologies are based, that being that because of their oppression and subordination by men, women essentially become better ‘knowers’ of reality. Cain claimed that the assumption of some standpoint feminists (she cites Hartsock, 1983, as a primary example for her critique) was that because of their subordinated role in society (their sexual

exploitation, their roles as wives and mothers, and their responsibilities for domestic chores) women do not think 'hierarchically' and are thus 'naturally' possessed with a superior perception of the nature of social relations. Feminists such as Cain, and Harding (1986), have expressed concern about the essentialist nature of such claims. Cain suggests that such assumptions about women can actually justify their further subordination in that, by proposing that the oppressed have a better view of reality, one might be implying that such oppression is desirable or else women will lose their privileged view of the world.

A final criticism is that, as Harding (1987) articulates, feminist standpoint epistemology falls into a similar trap as feminist empiricism in that it produces a 'successor science' (see also Cain, 1990; Stanley and Wise, 1990). In other words both epistemologies accept without challenge the basic premises of 'scientific endeavour', the existence of one, true 'reality' and the utility of scientific methods by which such a reality can be achieved.

Thus neither feminist empiricism nor the feminist standpoint are 'relativist' epistemologies: both specify feminist knowledge as *better* or *truer* because derived from 'outsiders' who can see the relations of domination and suppression for what they truly and objectively are. This is what makes them successor *sciences* (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 27. Emphasis in original).

After reviewing the criticisms of the two major feminist approaches, the researcher can be left feeling that methodology is an epistemological minefield. It was the intention with this research, therefore, to seek a methodological approach which could uncover and elucidate women's experiences of semi-penal institutionalisation but at the same time avoid the difficulties and problems inherent in both the feminist empiricist and feminist standpoint approaches. The way in which goal was achieved is addressed in the next section of this chapter.

Deconstructing Discourse

In *Offending Women*, Anne Worrall identified the methodological problems inherent in both feminist empiricist and standpoint methodologies and thus sought a methodological approach which '[avoided] the pitfalls of conventional epistemology' (1990: 5). She resolved her difficulties by rejecting the idea of the existence of a universal 'truth' stating that

Truth may be a matter of perspective....It may reside in neither subject nor object but in their interaction (1990: 6).

In other words, 'truth' or knowledge is not fixed but instead is relative and subject to change depending on context and conditions. Therefore, rather than attempting to discover 'truth' (which is the basis of conventional epistemologies), Worrall attempted instead to deconstruct 'the relationship between those who claim to know the 'truth' and those about whom they claim to know it' (1990:5). Consequently, what she required was an approach that went further than an analysis of what is 'known' and which instead could uncover what informs or influences the 'claims to know' (1990: 5). Worrall hypothesised that in order to deconstruct 'claims to know' one must first recognise the relationship between knowledge and power and the way that this, in turn, determines whose knowledge is accepted as legitimate and credible. Citing Foucault (1972) as an influence she argues that power should not be considered the privilege of any particular individual or group in society but rather it should be recognised as the general social acceptance of one constant, ideal text (or discourse)⁸ that supports the majority of social relations and interactions. This ideal text, or dominant discourse, can be utilised to rationalise particular individuals' actions or behaviours and further, can explain apparent contradictions between such actions and the formal responses they provoke. So to use Worrall's examples, dominant pathologising and feminising discourses can explain why a woman who breaks a window is

⁸ See Chapter Two for a fuller discussion of what is meant by 'discourse'.

hospitalised (she is 'mentally ill') whilst a woman who kills her sister is sentenced to a probation order (she is 'a normal teenager' in 'tragic' circumstances) (1990: 8). In addition dominant discourses can exclude or 'mute' particular individuals as legitimate 'knowers' or speakers. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, members of 'muted' groups must, according to Worrall, communicate through acceptable, dominant forms of expression or else they will not be heard and their 'knowledge' will remain uncovered.

Worrall's emphasis on the construction and deconstruction of discourse therefore enabled her to analyse the taken-for-granted 'coherence' or 'rationality' of particular knowledges and expose the structures that underpin the 'claims to know'. She interviewed a small number of participants (including eleven female law-breakers, twelve magistrates, twenty nine probation officers, eight solicitors and seven psychiatrists) for her research and thus made no attempt to generalise her findings in the conventional understanding of the term. She does not therefore assume that just because several participants made particular claims about, for example, criminal women that a wider group of similar individuals would make similar claims. Instead she states that what those claims demonstrate is a theoretical construct which illustrates the way in which dominant texts or discourses influence attitudes, understandings and practices through which the behaviour or actions of such women are rationalised and explained. Worrall describes her research as a 'case study', by which she proposes it represents an in-depth analysis of material (interviews, reports and so on) which, on examination, reveal the power of discourse. Case studies are important to feminist research because only through the use of such procedures can many of our theoretical assertions be validated. As Berenice Carroll puts it,

Theory must remain at best hypothetical, at worst unreal and barren [unless we have detailed] case studies and surveys dealing with the experiences of selected groups of women in diverse

cultures and time periods (Carroll, 1976, quoted in Reinhartz (1992: 164), edit in original).

For this research it was necessary to adopt a similar, although not identical, approach to Worrall and rather than simply attempt to reveal 'the truth' (which due to both the interpretative nature of the historical analysis, and the potential difficulties with both empirical and standpoint epistemologies when conducting the contemporary fieldwork, was considered neither desirable nor possible), it was the aim instead, through the use of a case study approach, to deconstruct the underlying discourses through which women within the semi-penal institution have been understood and explained. Further, it was the intention to identify and analyse those structures and ideologies that informed the construction of 'knowledge' about those 'deviant' women. Thus, taking Worrall's lead, it was important to adopt a methodological approach which

..rejects notions of generalization through probability in favour of generalization through theoretical production (Worrall, 1990: 12).

As Worrall herself states, what validates this methodological approach is a firm grounding in a coherent theoretical framework, a framework which, for this study, is set out in Chapter Two. Adopting a similar methodological approach to that outlined by Worrall does avoid many of the epistemological problems discussed previously in this chapter, however that does not mean that it poses no problems of its own. By focusing specifically on the analysis of discourse, care needs to be taken not to fall into the trap of identifying women simply as the 'constructs' or 'products' of discourse. As Carol Smart (1995) states, the move towards an analysis of discourse *is*, of course, an important one because only through such an analysis can we

[shift] attention away from the idea of pre-given entities (for example, the criminal, the prostitute or the homosexual) towards an understanding of how such subjects come into being at certain

historical moments. This entails a significant shift in perception away from the idea that people exist in an a priori state.....towards thinking about subjects who are being continually constituted and *who also constitute themselves* through language / discourse (Smart, 1995: 8. Emphasis added).

However, as Comack (1999) recognises, a sole emphasis on discourse may only provide us with a partial understanding of women's lives. She argues that, in order to compensate for this potential shortcoming, what is necessary is a recognition and acknowledgement of women's own experience, as they themselves understand it, rather than a total focus on deconstructing the 'claims to know' such women. Women's own accounts can then be utilised in support of, or as a challenge to, the theoretical foundations of the research. Comack states that accounts of experience can be used in a way that avoids falling into the trap of 'generalisation'. In other words it is acceptable to examine women's *common* experiences without assuming that they have the *same* experiences. She argues that the researcher should therefore allow women to contextualise their own lives and experiences within race, class, gender or other, societal relations, or if that is not possible (as in the analysis of historical documentation when women cannot speak for themselves) the researcher should attempt this contextualisation herself. Comack's comments raise the issue of agency. As Smart stated, women can constitute *themselves* through discourses and in addition, can employ resources to resist being constituted in such a way. Thus it was necessary to focus part of this study on the way in which women resist or assert their agency as this theoretical perspective further justifies, and in turn is justified by, the methodological approach taken (see Chapter Two for a further discussion of the issues of agency and resistance).

Selecting appropriate methods

Now that a suitable epistemological framework has been identified, it is necessary to move on to a discussion of the specific methods and

methodological approach that were utilised in this research in order to realise the aims of the chosen feminist epistemology.

Research methods are the specific procedures or techniques used for the collection of data, and traditionally these techniques have been divided into two groups, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative techniques have been extensively utilised in mainstream (positivistic) sociological research as these 'hard', statistically based methods were considered most useful in the drive towards objectivity, detachment and scientific credibility. Because of this many feminists advocated the abandonment of such techniques in feminist research and the adoption instead of more qualitative, subjective methods (such as in-depth, semi- or unstructured interviews and ethnographic techniques). Feminist research methods, it was claimed, should be qualitative and non-positivistic, as only in this way could the experiences of women be realistically explored and avoid being distorted and hidden by the traditional abstract categories used for data collection and analysis.

Oakley (1981) for example argues that the formal, survey type questionnaire and interview procedures are unsuitable methods for feminist research because they result in the objectification of women and the over-generalisation of their experiences. She proposes instead the utilisation of semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection. Oakley does, however, acknowledge the potential for exploitation in any interview process that can result from the differential relationship between interviewer and interviewee but claims that, if conducted appropriately, the semi-structured approach could avoid this.⁹

⁹ It should be acknowledged that in recent years Oakley has advocated a re-evaluation of qualitative methods for use by feminists. See Oakley, 1998

In contrast, Harding (1987) has argued that an emphasis on in-depth qualitative study would lead to research that was individualistic and too subjective. She states that such 'micro' approaches are wholly inadequate because they do not consider women's common oppression nor the impact of social structures that she considers to be of crucial importance to women's experience.

In addition some feminist academics have stated that hard quantitative data *can* be considered 'feminist' and can be extremely useful to feminist studies. Pugh (1990), for example, conducted a study on the usage of a Manchester based advice and counselling service for homeless young people. She approached the research from a feminist methodological perspective, stating that this gave her a greater insight into and awareness of the issues of power relationships and social inequalities. However her research did not involve a qualitative approach but rather was based on the collection and analysis of 'hard' quantitative data and she concluded that in a localised context, such data could be meaningful and relevant. She stated that statistics could be used to serve a wider research aim than other more qualitative methods.

My feminist appraisal of my statistics work leads me to conclude that, with due attention to the research process of producing them, there is a place for statistics in feminist as well as other research (Pugh, 1990: 111).

However, Pugh does admit that statistical data are frequently misused in the sense that they can be taken out of context and generalised in such a way that they become meaningless. She states that, for this reason, statistical information requires a certain amount of 'chaperoning' (1990: 109).

Harstock (1987), a Marxist feminist, also stressed the importance of retaining some traditional methods of research, such as the collection of

statistical data, in order that feminists can develop analyses of women's common oppression similarly to the way Marx developed an analysis of class. Kelly (1990) agrees. She states that when she first began to conduct research on sexual violence she adhered to the belief that there was a feminist method that was aimed essentially at gathering qualitative information which was more appropriate to the study of women's experiences. However she went on to reject this idea, suggesting that feminists could and should use the methods they feel are most suitable at the time, either qualitative or quantitative and that no research technique should be 'out of bounds' to feminist researchers. She stated that qualitative methods are appropriate when used to explore women's feelings and individual experience but quantitative methods like questionnaires can be extremely useful when examining larger scale issues of injustice, inequality and collective experience, for example the existence of discrimination within particular institutions or the extent of sexual violence against women.

So the existence of specific 'feminist methods' has been the subject of much debate (Game, 1991). Many criticisms have been directed at Stanley and Wise's (1983) book *Breaking Out* for its claims that traditional methods of data gathering are inappropriate for feminist research and for its promotion of specific 'feminist methods' which involve a more in-depth qualitative approach (see Harding, 1987). In response, Stanley and Wise (1993) claim that they have never supported the view that a distinct feminist method exists. They claim that what they actually proposed in *Breaking Out* was that an important part of feminist research should be the validation and representation of women's individual experiences. In addition they see the researcher's own experiences as an important part of the research process. They suggest that researchers should be reflective and express their own experiences and feelings in their research and they therefore argue that certain methods, such as ethnography and consciousness raising, are thus appropriate for feminist research, but this

does not necessarily mean the total exclusion of other, more traditional, methods when appropriate.

They go on to make the point that the traditional divide between qualitative and quantitative methods has led to a simplification of the real issues and this has resulted in a fairly crude categorisation of what constitutes a 'feminist method'. Consequently they reject the unsophisticated notion of 'quantitative / hard / male / sexist' methods versus 'qualitative / soft / female / feminist' methods (1993: 10). Harding (1987) had previously offered a different form of categorisation of research methods which she believed was more useful as it avoided the rudimentary hard / soft divide. She identified three groups of data collection techniques into which all methods can be located, namely listening to or interrogating informants, observing behaviour and examining historical traces and records (1987: 2).

The methods selected for this thesis follow Harding's categorisation and indeed include methods from all three categories: in-depth interviews, participant observation and the analysis of historical documentation. It was the intention to reject the idea that any research method is inherently feminist or anti-feminist as this excludes feminist researchers from utilising techniques which may be suitable and useful and can result in a limitation and restriction of their potential for gathering evidence. What was most important for this study was not *which* methods were used but rather *how* they were used.

It is argued that the 'masculinisation' and 'maleness' of traditional sociological research and knowledge does not result from the specific techniques that are used to collect data, but rather it is the outcome of the approach taken to the data collection. In other words, what matters is the way in which surveys are compiled, the way in which questions are framed, the way in which interviewees are perceived and treated, the level of involvement of the researcher, the way in which categories for analysis are

developed and so on. As Kelly (1990) and Abbott and Wallace (1990) point out, it is the way in which the researcher carries out her research and the theoretical perspective that she adopts in the interpretation of her findings that matter. In other words, it is the *methodology* rather than the *methods* that determine whether research is 'feminist' or not.

Locating a methodological framework

One could argue that no research method is explicitly feminist or anti-feminist: it is the ways in which research is carried out and the theoretical framework within which the results are interpreted that determine if research is feminist or not (Abbott and Wallace, 1990: 207).

Methodology is a broad theoretical approach that informs how research should proceed and how analysis should be conducted. In other words, as Kaplan (1964, cited in Cook and Fonow, 1990: 70) asserted, methodology is the study of methods. As discussed above, many feminists have long believed that it is the methodology and not the methods that identify research as feminist.

Harding (1987) states that the perspective and behaviour of the researcher directly influences the outcome of research but, she asserts, contrary to conventional thinking this subjectivity is a positive element in that it produces more meaningful data through reducing the 'objectivism' of the research subjects. Mies (1993) identified a methodological framework for feminist research consisting of three major points of reference.¹⁰ First, she stated that the concept of neutral or 'value-free' research should be rejected in favour of a 'conscious partiality' approach. Value free research, it is claimed, is achieved by a total detachment and an indifferent attitude

¹⁰ Mies actually outlines several more points than are discussed here (see Mies, 1993: 68) however it was felt that these three were the most important for the purposes of this thesis.

towards the subjects of the inquiry. Conscious partiality, on the other hand, advocates a much more subjective approach that is achieved through a *partial* identification with both the research subject and the research objectives. Mies' second point followed on from this and recommended that the traditional hierarchical relationship between the researcher and those being researched be dismantled and replaced with a 'view from below' approach. In other words, research should be reciprocal and should not be used as an instrument of power or as a means through which power relationships are legitimated. Instead, she argued, research must be concerned with representing the interests of marginalised or oppressed groups, particularly women. Third, feminist research must be active and political, playing an essential role in women's struggle for emancipation by constantly challenging (rather than accepting as conventional research does) the status quo. It was the intention of this research to embrace the feminist methodological approach proposed by Mies and the way in which this was achieved, and the challenges and difficulties that this approach sometimes posed, will be discussed below.

Researching the experiences of women in a semi-penal institution

Three distinct methods were utilised for this study, namely participant observation, semi-structured interviews and historical documentary analysis. In order to do justice to the extensive period of fieldwork for this study, each of these methods of data collection will be discussed in turn and the way in which a feminist perspective was applied to each will be examined. The research project consisted of two equally important parts, these being a historical and a contemporary analysis of the experiences of women within a particular institution on Merseyside and the discourses and ideologies that impacted upon those experiences. The institution under scrutiny was Adelaide House. This institution is currently an all-female probation and bail hostel, situated in a low-income residential area of Liverpool. Between early 1992 and late 1994, when the fieldwork took place, the institution had an official maximum capacity of 22 residents, who

were housed in both 'catered' and 'self catering' rooms within the main building, and a further capacity for four residents in two 'satellite' accommodations, or cluster houses, in the immediate neighbourhood. The women at the hostel were either on bail awaiting trial or sentenced to a period of probation with a condition of residence and their length of stay varied from a couple of days to, in once case, almost eighteen months. The research was conducted in a three major stages, first a period of participant observation, second a period of conducting semi-structured interviews and finally an analysis of original historical material found in the attic of the main building. These 'stages' were not as distinct as the sentence above would indicate. The period of participant observation for example did not end when the period of interviewing began. Rather, due to the constant changes in residency at the hostel (with women constantly leaving and arriving) it was necessary to continue the observation period throughout the interview period in order to build up relationships with the newly arrived residents and maintain a relationship with existing residents and staff. Also the historical data were discovered before the interviews began and so analysis of this material was undertaken whilst the interviews, and participant observation, were being conducted. However, for the purposes of clarity, this discussion will follow the stages identified above.

Building bridges: The participant observation period

Participant observation has long been accepted by feminists as an important method of data collection and one which does not originate from the positivistic research tradition. May (1993) stated that participant observation requires some personal involvement or engagement from the researcher, and through this involvement it promotes a more empathic understanding of the particular area of social life under study. Freeman's (1975) study of the women's movement in the 1960s depended heavily on her, not only interviewing key individuals, but also actively participating in the movement by attending meetings and becoming socially acquainted with the other women involved. Her approach was multi-methodological,

unobjective and required the researcher's personal involvement with the research subjects. She believed that not only would this allow her to gain a real insight into the dynamics and reality of the movement she was studying but also it would lay the foundations for more meaningful interviews.

Likewise, Westwood (1984) utilised participant observation as an appropriate method in her study of women factory workers. She rejected the idea that she should approach the research from a detached perspective because this would not allow her real access into the world of the women she was studying. In addition, although she was interested in the opinions and experiences of her subjects, she wanted to get beyond individual meaning and explore how such experiences were reproduced in everyday working life and how, as such, they served to uphold and legitimate oppressive practices and ideologies which further impacted upon the women concerned. This, she believed, would be best exposed through forming friendships with her subjects and becoming involved in, rather than simply passively observing, their day-to-day lives.

Although this level of personal involvement was suitable for Westwood's study, and, from a feminist perspective is certainly academically credible, it was not wholly appropriate for my own research. Although participant observation was utilised in this research, the methodological approach taken was slightly different. The ideals of detachment and distance *were* rejected in favour of an increased level of personal involvement. However given the nature of the environment under scrutiny, and given the unavoidable 'distance' that existed between myself and the research subjects, the formation of 'friendships', as they are commonly understood, was unrealistic. In addition, it was acknowledged that as two very different groups of individuals were under study (staff and residents) it would be virtually impossible to become a 'friend' to both groups equally and even if this were possible it would be undesirable as over-identification with one group could have potentially alienated the other. In addition certain

limitations were placed on my interaction with the residents of the hostel by the hostel management committee, such as when I was allowed to visit the hostel, where I was allowed to talk to the residents and what we were allowed to talk about (I was not, for example, allowed to share any information which might reveal my home address or discuss anything which was felt might compromise the staff of the hostel).¹¹ As Weis (1985, cited in Harvey, 1990: 169) argued, participant observation should be concerned with gaining and then maintaining the trust of the research subjects in order to promote a free and generous exchange of information.

So instead of building up a form of 'friendship' (which would have been extremely difficult with two groups whose ideals and interests were inherently very different from each other), the aim of the period of participant observation in this study was to follow the example of Weis (1985) and Mies (1993) and accept a concept of *partial* identification with the research subjects with the aim of developing a healthy mutual *respect*, rather than a more personal *friendship*.

A 'conscious partiality' approach seemed particularly appropriate here as it avoided the 'generalising' consequences of a more rigid standpoint position, as discussed previously. As Mies espoused, conscious partiality differs from a totally 'subjective' approach as it is based on an acknowledgement of '*limited* identification' with the research subject and hence engenders a realistic acceptance of the dialectical distance that can, and in this case did, exist between both parties (1993: 68). Indeed, as Comack (1999) states, a degree of partiality is in many ways inevitable in academic research. She describes her own experience of researching women in prison (published as *Women in Trouble*, 1996) explaining that the information she gained was always going to be *partial* due to the fact that the women being interviewed were, of course, gatekeepers of their

¹¹ These restrictions will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

own knowledge and therefore the information Comack received depended on what the women themselves wanted, or were able, to disclose. In addition, partiality is an essential consequence of the time limitations on research. As Comack points out, we can never claim to fully know or understand people we spend our whole lives with and therefore it is unlikely that we could expect to gain a 'complete picture' of people we know only for a few weeks or months. Finally, in agreement with Naffine's (1997) critique of the epistemological problems posed by some standpoint feminist works (for example Carlen's *Criminal Women*), Comack states that a *recognition* of the inevitability of partiality and of the inherent distance between the academic researcher and research participants (especially in studies such as those on female offenders) is vital. So, the researcher must acknowledge that, although there will be some common ground through which she can *relate* to the research participants (common experiences of children, relationships and so on) the differences between the two are frequently more obvious than the similarities. As she points out, the most significant difference between the researcher and the subjects of research in many criminological studies is the researcher's own liberty.

Taking on board these points, it was not my intention, as an academic, to claim to be able to fully take the standpoint of, or even develop a friendship with, either the residents or staff who participated in this research and thus an acknowledgement of my 'limited identification' was essential. Indeed it is a lasting irony that, in order to uncover something *more* than a *partial* history of women's experiences, it was necessary to take, and indeed impossible to avoid taking, a *partial* methodological stance.

Despite this partial stance, the period of participant observation still allowed me to become involved, to a great extent, in the general everyday lives of both the staff and residents within the institution and this in turn promoted a greater appreciation of the world from the perspective of both groups thus engendering a more 'total' or 'complete' understanding of both

the formal and informal aspects of hostel life. In addition, as Freeman (1975) found, this initial period of observation was useful in that it set the foundation for a more informed interview schedule which in turn, it is argued, yielded more valid and meaningful information.

The participant observation stage involved a total period of 24 months, from February 1992 to February 1994 (although, as stated above this overlapped the interview period which lasted from March 1993 to March 1994). This initial stage involved visiting the hostel on average three times per week for periods ranging from three to eight hours per visit. Each day varied with regard to the timing of the visit, and the visits would be alternated in order to observe the hostel during morning, afternoon and evening hours. In order to comply with requests from the staff and management committee, and to fit in with the hours of curfew for residents, a visit never began earlier than 9.00am and never ended later than 10.00pm (apart from special events at the hostel, for example Christmas parties, birthday celebrations, or other organised activities).

The particular time of day, and the particular day on which visits took place would determine my activities that day. On Thursday mornings for example a full staff meeting took place and, as I was not permitted to attend, the majority of this time would be spent solely with the residents in the recreation room. On particular afternoons when the doctor, drug workers, psychiatrist or hairdresser visited, most of my time would be spent with the staff as the majority of the residents would be otherwise occupied. My visits were usually restricted to the recreation room (a room with sofas, chairs, a public phone and a pool table); the TV lounge; the 'quiet room' (used as a private meeting room for visits from probation officers, solicitors, families and children and also for individual 'key-worker' sessions with hostel staff); the main staff office and the kitchen/dining area. Other staff rooms were out of bounds as were the private rooms of the residents.

It was the original wish of the Warden that I be given access to residents' personal files, however this access was withdrawn after two days when the hostel management committee decided that this was undesirable. Given that the pre-convictions of the women and their previous contact with the criminal justice system was not a crucial part of the research, and given that these issues could be approached, if necessary, through more informal means (for example during the participant observation and interview stages of the research), this restriction posed no real problem for the study. Indeed, on the contrary, it actually provided an easy resolution to the ethical dilemma within which I found myself, never having felt comfortable with the idea of having access to such personal information without the consent of the residents. If the research was to remain true to the feminist approach adopted it was decided that it was only right that the women themselves should have complete control over what information they felt should be disclosed and what should remain unknown.

With regard to building up a relationship with the research participants, based on the idea of 'conscious partiality', it was quickly acknowledged that the nature of such a relationship was going to vary according to the two groups involved: the staff and the residents. Although more time was spent with the latter group, it was found to be considerably easier to build a relationship with the former, not least because this group remained fairly stable over the two year period but also because, of the two groups, these were the least 'powerless' and thus, it could be argued, had less reason to be suspicious of my motives. Further, in spite of all sincere efforts to 'fit it' with both groups, I was initially accorded an 'outsider' status by the residents which did diminish over the observation period but never disappeared entirely. For example, although all new residents who arrived at the hostel were informed of the research and assured of my independence from the probation service, and indeed any other criminal justice agency, for the duration of the fieldwork period, some residents were continually unsure or mistrustful of my status and would frequently

ask me to unlock doors, to issue them with loans on their daily allowances, to allocate their dosages of methadone and so on. On one occasion, whilst all the staff were in a meeting, a plumber arrived to do some repairs and, on asking the residents who was formally in charge, was told by one of the women that I was. It was at first anticipated that the way in which some residents associated me with the 'formal' aspects of the hostel would be problematic and impact upon the validity of the research. As Neuman (1997) states, one check for validity in ethnographic studies is the extent to which the environment under study remains undisturbed and unaffected by the presence of the researcher. Of course the very nature of *participant* observation means the researcher will have some impact upon the environment (at least to the extent that any individual who interacted with the players within that environment would). However, it is argued that validity is maintained if particular events or conversations would have occurred anyway had the researcher not been present. It is difficult retrospectively to measure the extent to which some of the women's initial misinterpretation of my association with the formal management of the hostel influenced their actions or behaviour. However, given the candid, honest and graphic nature of much of the information which the women willingly and informally discussed with each other in my presence, and indeed with me personally on many occasions, it can only be assumed that the effect of the 'outsider' status attributed to me early on in the research was not detrimental to the overall study. It could be argued that the potentially damaging effect of the initial distance between the residents and myself was minimised through my own recognition of this 'distance'. By adopting and acknowledging a stance of 'partial identification' it was impossible to become complacent about my status.

Also, in addition to spending time within the hostel, the observation period also included my participation in other external activities, for example abseiling, archery and bowling competitions, all of which assisted considerably in 'breaking down' barriers and balancing the power

relationships. In addition I was invited to several parties within the hostel and on a few occasions accompanied women to court for trial (at their request and in a supportive capacity only). Sadly, I was also invited to attend the funeral of one resident who had died of Hepatitis and a memorial service for another who had committed suicide.

This initial stage of the research was the most difficult, and included both the most and least enjoyable times spent at the hostel. The experience was very intensive, sometimes wonderfully entertaining, occasionally boring, often sad and depressing and *always* extremely stressful. The atmosphere within the institution could change from calm to threatening within seconds and events such as a woman going to court and receiving a custodial sentence would significantly and negatively impact upon the other women. Disputes and fights between residents, resident-staff disputes and intra-staff conflicts and power struggles were not uncommon. On one occasion a serious assault took place on a member of staff who consequently left the hostel and on another a resident set fire to the TV lounge.

As Bosworth (1999) comments in the methodology chapter from her research on women's prisons (under the uncannily accurate sub-heading *The Tyranny of Intimacy*), this personal involvement in the research process is both physically and mentally exhausting. She states that one of the most demanding aspects of this sort of research is being able to build up some sort of relationship with the women participating in the research but, at the same time, being able to 'leave enough of the experiences of women *behind* so that it was still possible...to get a good night's sleep' (Bosworth, 1999: 73, emphasis in original). Even though I had decided early on in the research that it would be most appropriate (and indeed possible only) to develop a *partial* identification with the women in the hostel, this was no real protection against the toil of emotional involvement, pressures and demands that getting to know these women and their lives often caused. A *partial* identification approach does not leave the researcher with only

partial distress when a woman she has known for nearly a year, and who has confided in her on several occasions, ends her own life because of problems she felt unable to resolve. In total three of the sixteen women who participated in this research later died. Billie committed suicide, Janine died of Hepatitis and Carla died of a drugs overdose a few months after leaving the hostel.¹² The emotional burden of such events can leave you feeling, as Bosworth puts it, 'overwhelmed and inadequate for the task' (1999: 74). However, as she herself acknowledges, this is an almost inevitable consequence of the

...interactive, reflexive...and above all, *feminist* (and therefore, partisan, liberationist, critical) approach.....(1999:75, emphasis in original).¹³

In contrast to the shifting relationship dynamics between the hostel residents and myself, the relationship that developed with the staff was much more stable. The fact that I had previously worked for the probation service no doubt facilitated that acceptance. It was clear that experiential similarities between the researcher and the subjects of the research could positively impact upon, and indeed expedite the development of a relationship that is essential for good research. As Parr (1998) stated, when interviewing mature women students about their experiences of returning to college, her background experiences, firstly as a mature student and then a college lecturer, were useful in helping to create an interactive situation with the subjects and she was thus better able to 'locate' herself within the research process. Such was the case with this research. My previous experience working for the probation service gave me a point of contact with the hostel staff upon which a trusting relationship could be built. However, as Parr also acknowledges, similarities in background and experience between the researcher and the research subjects can be a 'double edged sword' in that presuppositions based on the researcher's

¹² For the purposes of anonymity, all of the women in this study have been allocated false names.

¹³ See also Liebling (1999)

own experiences can occur. This potential problem meant that I had to constantly be aware of the danger of making generalised assumptions based on my own, previous experience within the probation service and thus it was imperative, as Mies (1993) recommended, that I maintain some dialectic distance from the staff of the hostel, and indeed from the probation service itself. The emotional impact of my involvement with the hostel staff was not as intense as that which I experienced through my involvement with the residents mainly because the relationship was quite different.

Although, as discussed above, I found many levels on which I could relate to the hostel staff (and generally building up this relationship was easier than building up a rapport with the residents), conversations and discussions with the staff focused mainly around the research, their job or their day to day experiences in the hostel. These discussions rarely dwelled on personal issues, unlike those conversations with the residents, which would frequently touch upon very personal and often, very traumatic, life experiences and episodes.

It was perhaps as much of a struggle, albeit for different reasons, to remain as 'consciously partial' with the staff group as with the residents. It was vitally important to constantly remind myself about the dangers of over-identification with this group as this could have potentially damaged my relationship with the residents. Again, it is difficult retrospectively to assess my success in this matter but returning to Neuman's (1997) comments around validity, it is assumed that, given the comprehensive and powerful nature of the data obtained from the interviews with the residents, it was not seriously detrimental to the research.

The period of participant observation was crucial to the research as it afforded the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the dynamics of the institution, both formal and informal, and to gain an awareness of the

relationships, conflicts and struggles amongst and between staff and residents. Most importantly, it allowed me the opportunity to develop as credible and trusting a relationship as possible with all participants and additionally, gave them the opportunity to ask questions about, discuss and criticise the research thus increasing their role within it. In addition, the diary kept of this period of observation (which was written up from memory immediately after leaving the hostel on each visit) was, in some instances, more useful to the final analysis than many of the interviews. This diary was analysed by thematic content in a similar way to the historical documentation (this process will be discussed later in this chapter). Finally, this period of observation facilitated the construction of, and influenced the direction taken by the interview schedules for both staff and residents and this method of data collection will now be discussed.

Hearing women: the interview process

Although participant observation is a useful technique for feminist research it generally does not 'stand alone' as a research method. As stated previously, this study, like a great deal of feminist research, was multi-methodological and the ethnographic study was complimented with a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with both the staff and the residents of the hostel. Once again, a feminist methodological perspective informed the way in which the interviews were conducted.

As Ribbens (1989) has stated, interviewing is an extremely complex social encounter. She argued that the tendency within sociological research, to rigidly categorise interviews into 'structured / unstructured' or 'in-depth / questionnaire' types is not constructive and simply diverts attention away from more important considerations such as how researchers should conduct their individual projects and what sort of relationships they should expect to develop with the research subject. Consequently, the way in which feminists should approach the interview situation has been extensively debated.

On the basis of her own research experience, Oakley (1981) claimed that the 'text book' rules on how research should be conducted were inappropriate with regard to interviewing women. She rejected the objectification of research subjects through interview procedures that, she claimed, were often exploitative and hierarchical. However she did acknowledge that the interview, if conducted in a particular way, could be an extremely productive source of information. She therefore proposed that a primary concern for feminist researchers should be to redress the unequal power relationship that can exist between interviewer and interviewee, suggesting that interviewers treat their subjects not simply as 'data donors' but as equal participants in the research process. She comments that it is essential for feminist research that the hierarchical relationship between interviewer and interviewee is broken down because a hierarchical situation cannot produce valid data. Data gathering through hierarchical interviews is, she claims, invalid because

...the unequal power relationship between the knower and the known conflicts with the *moral obligation* at the heart of feminism to treat other women as you would yourself wish to be treated, and in this sense is seen to be at odds with feminism's emancipatory ideal (Oakley, 1998: 711. Emphasis in original).

Researchers, she states, should expect to invest something of their own personal feelings into the interview as this promotes a validation of the subject's own personal experiences, and thus assists in building good relationships between both parties.

Neuman (1997) summarised the feminist approach to interviewing as having two major goals; first, it should promote a greater awareness of, and give prominence to, the subjective experience of women and second, it should encourage a greater level of subject empowerment and involvement in the research process. As Harding (1987) stated feminist interviewers should not only listen to, but also *hear*, what women are saying and should

utilise their data to challenge conventional conceptualisations of women's lives. In addition they should be concerned with observing those areas of women's lives that traditional sociologists have not considered significant.

The second stage of this research consisted of twenty five in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with staff and residents. This period lasted for approximately twelve months, from March 1993 to March 1994.

The interviewees were not randomly selected and nor is it assumed that they, or their opinions, were in any way representative of a wider population. Given the relatively small number of staff and residents within the hostel who were available to participate in this research, any attempt to generalise findings to a wider population would have been invalid. However, as a case study, the small number of interviews conducted can be justified methodologically because, as Worrall explains about her own research, the subjects

...were chosen in the expectation not that their statements would be typical but that they would provide compelling illustrations of (or challenges to) my theoretical propositions (1990: 12).

All nine staff were interviewed along with sixteen residents. In addition, two further, much more informal meetings were arranged with the Executive Officer and the Chairman of the Church of England Council for Social Aid. Neither individual was keen to be more formally interviewed and thus these meetings took the form of general conversations in which broad issues relating to the hostel were discussed.

For the most part the selection of residents depended on simple availability. Although many more women had agreed to take part, by the time the interviews took place many had left the institution, or had been sent to prison or had simply changed their minds about participating. With regards to the staff interviews, it was fairly easy to follow Oakley's (1974;

1981) lead and 'close the gap' between interviewer and interviewee by answering questions and engaging in personal dialogue. To some extent this was also the case with residents, all of whom were well acquainted with both the research and myself prior to interview. In addition, the setting was informal and took place at a time and place that was convenient to the participants rather than the interviewer. However, there were some restrictions placed on personal dialogue with the residents by the hostel management. As mentioned previously, I was informed that particular personal discussions, which included for example details of where I lived, my phone number, where my family lived and so on had to be avoided. Because the staff were not allowed to divulge such information to residents it was felt that for me to do so would be to compromise myself, the position of the staff and the rules of the hostel. In reality this only posed a problem on one occasion (during the period of participant observation) when I was asked directly where I lived. Answering in general terms did not satisfy the woman concerned and she asked me on which street I lived in the area. On (subtly) declining this information I seriously offended the woman and consequently she refused to take part in an interview.

As mentioned previously, an in-depth, semi-structured approach was taken with the interviews in order to allow the staff and particularly the residents to make their voices heard. In accordance with a feminist methodology the idea of conducting more structured interviews, in which answers are defined according to the questions asked and the categories given, was problematic.

It was during the interview process that the epistemological problems that Harding (1987) and Worrall (1990) highlighted, with regard to the scientific claims of the existence of one true 'reality', became apparent. With regard to the hostel residents, it was quickly discovered that no such rigid 'truth' existed with regards to some aspects of their everyday lives and instead, what did exist was a form of 'truth' or 'reality' which was

relative to the events of each particular day. The answers given when women were asked to compare their experiences of prison life with their experiences of hostel life are a good example of this. During the interviews, and indeed during the period of participant observation, this issue was discussed between the women frequently. Given that Adelaide House was, at the time, one of only three all-female probation hostels in the country, many of the residents found themselves at a considerable distance away from their homes. For the most part the women still believed they were better off within the hostel (due to the fact that they still retained a fair degree of liberty, they could potentially have better quality visits from family, friends and children and they were in receipt of benefits and could therefore buy themselves items and, if possible, send some money home). However, this perception or 'reality' could change due to particular circumstances, for example the birthday of a child or partner who lived too far away to visit, or the arrival of one of those days when a woman had no money and there were still several days until she received her next giro cheque. On these days, the same women who had adamantly argued that they would rather reside at a hostel than in prison would articulate an alternative, but just as convincing, set of arguments as to why they would be better off in prison (they may be nearer home and so could receive poorer quality but more frequent visits, they would be away from 'bad influences' such as other women, drugs or alcohol or simply, they would not have any responsibilities and they would not have to face the frustration of several days liberty with no money). This point seems extremely obvious and could be easily dismissed as 'moodiness' on the part of the women but that explanation is inadequate. I would argue that this is an example of how 'truth' is not established and consistent but is dynamic and can be manipulated by competing 'realities'. This discovery further justified my detachment from the conventional epistemological search for 'truth'.

With regard to the specifics of the interview process, each interview began with an introduction reminding the participant of what exactly the research

was about and of my responsibilities (to ensure participants' complete confidentiality and anonymity and to ensure their own stories would be accurately and sincerely recounted). Participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any questions posed to them and were encouraged to ask questions during the interview process. The interviews took place for the most part in the 'quiet room', apart from on one occasion where, having left the hostel suddenly but still wishing to participate, a resident requested that the interview take place at her new home. All interviews were tape recorded apart from the one mentioned above in which the woman expressed concern at being recorded on tape. In this case the interview was recorded on paper.

The interviews lasted anything from half an hour to three hours, with the average length of time being two hours. It was hoped that, in accordance with feminist methodology, the women could be interviewed more than once however due to the rate of turnover of residents and the time constraints on staff, this was unrealistic. With regard to structure, both interview schedules (staff and residents) began with some introductory questions that were factual in nature (for example, age, ethnic origin, educational and employment background). These questions were useful if, for no other reason, they highlighted the diversity (at least with regard to age and employment/educational background) of the interviewees, particularly the residents, as well as some notable examples of consistency (for example, none of the women interviewed, or indeed encountered during the whole period of fieldwork, were black). In both schedules the subsequent questions were more open-ended and semi-structured in nature.¹⁴

¹⁴ A copy of the interview schedules for both staff and residents can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

Numerous problems were faced in attempting these interviews. First, although they were all scheduled at the participants' convenience on many occasions women who had agreed to be interviewed would have left the hostel before the interview could take place, either because they had been sentenced in court, had been released by the court, had been breached, or had left the hostel of their own accord. Second, some women, although still resident at the hostel, would simply fail to show up as arranged as, understandably, this research was not a priority in their lives and thus other issues would take precedence over an interview for this research. These problems meant that scheduling and conducting the interviews was an extremely time consuming practice and this contributed to the fact that only a small number of women were interviewed.

Also, with regard to the staff, it was impossible for them to predict what their following shift would involve, given the frequency of emergencies, fights, traumas and dramas that were an inherent part of hostel life. As a result most interviews had to be re-arranged three or four times before they took place and this was the main reason why the interview period lasted so long (twelve months).

Overall, the interviews with both residents and staff were stressful, tiring and often emotionally draining. Stories of violence, abuse, separation from children, drug use, psychiatric intervention and incarceration were common amongst the female residents. Tales of long hours, stressful working conditions, fear of assault and actual assaults were all mentioned in the staff interviews. Once again, the adoption of a *partial* approach did not mean I did not become involved in, and consequently take home aspects of, the lives and problems of the people interviewed. As Liebling (1999) states about her own research in prisons, this is really inevitable when interviewing articulate human beings.

Our research participants did not want to be 'subjects' but acted as

agents. They participated, made choices, *drew us into relationships with them, and involved us in their world* (Liebling, 1999: 158, emphasis added).

This involvement is not, of course, necessarily a negative aspect of interviewing, even when it leaves the interviewer feeling stressed and emotional. On the contrary it is often a rewarding experience and, if nothing else, serves as a reminder of the importance of such research.¹⁵

Once the interviews were transcribed,¹⁶ the final stage was analysis. There is a great deal of feminist literature available which eloquently documents the methods and methodologies employed in feminist research. What is less frequently discussed however is the way in which feminists might analyse the data they collect. As Devine and Heath (1999) state, many authors who conduct research which aims to deconstruct underlying discourses using post modern, or post structural approaches, actually write very little about their actual process of analysis. It is apparent that such researchers must have taken decisions with regard to what texts, themes or theories should be utilised in the process of deconstruction but these are rarely explicitly discussed. They go on to state that in those rare cases where the process of analysis is mentioned, it is often only in very abstract terms. So although many books discuss 'discourse analysis' or 'discourse deconstruction' as a theoretical approach, few discuss it as a practical means of data analysis.

In the case of the interview transcripts, this analysis was conducted in a similar way to that described by Bosworth (1999) in that the answers given were not 'coded' in the traditional way. Rather the theoretical framework (discussed in Chapter Two) was utilised to establish and identify particular pertinent themes, issues and arguments. The interview transcripts were then

¹⁵ For further discussion of the importance of emotion in social research, see chapter four of Gubrium and Holstein (1997).

¹⁶ This was completed by the researcher over a period of three months.

scoured for discussions, comments or assertions that either supported or refuted these theoretical propositions. Through this process, the theoretical foundations of the research were developed in a contemporary context and the results of this analysis are presented in Chapter Seven.

Looking Backwards to Look Forwards: Historical Documentary Analysis

History will rehabilitate you (Koestler, 1947: 18).

The final stage of the research consisted of an analysis of original historical documentary material. This material was originally thought to have been lost during a World War II bombing raid that destroyed the previous hostel site. Out of simple curiosity, and with the permission of the hostel warden, I, along with the hostel secretary, searched the attic of the hostel and discovered several boxes of original records, ledgers, accounts and letters pertaining to the institution from its creation in 1823 up until the 1970s. This material included unpublished reports charting the history of the institution, matron's log books (ledgers which recorded general information regarding the referral, arrival and departure of residents throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), matron's reports (ledgers which recorded more detailed information about each individual resident's stay), rule books, annual reports, minutes of meetings of staff and management committees, medical reports and a selection of memos and personal letters. The overwhelming majority of this material was hand-written and much of it (being over 100 years old) was barely legible. However most of the reports and documents were dated and this facilitated the production of a chronological history of the institution. More importantly the wealth of information about individual residents and the, often frank and emotional language used to describe and discuss them, provided a wonderful opportunity to uncover a previously hidden history of (semi-penal) institutionalised women.

When analysing historical data, the emphasis for the feminist researcher should be on deconstructing and reconceptualising traditional accounts that misrepresent and distort the experiences of women (see Bosworth, 2000). In analysing the original documentary evidence pertaining to the institution, this research aimed to do this through a production of a faithful and honest history of both the experiences of women within the often forgotten semi-penal arena and an analysis of the discourses and ideologies that underpinned and influenced the existence of such institutions.

Traditionally, historical studies in the field of criminology followed a similar approach to other types of conventional social science research in that neutrality and objectivity were seen as paths towards 'scientific' legitimacy. Inciardi *et al* state that

...in recapturing the past, or in constructing that portrait of past events, the historian must do so as accurately as possible, and it is at that point that history also becomes a science. The methods of history, then, are the methods of science (1977: 23).

However from the 1970s radical and feminist writers began to question the relevance and usefulness of such objective research, challenging the validity of simply *recapturing the past*, and a body of critical work developed in response. As Harvey (1990) commented, this radical response hypothesised that historical research should be an interpretative and dynamic process instead of simply an objective recording of 'facts'.¹⁷

One way he identified that this could be done was through the adoption of a wider critical theoretical perspective which could be utilised in the reconstruction of historical events. In addition, he states that an acknowledgement of historical continuity is also important. In other words,

¹⁷ Harvey identifies several approaches to conducting research into the past and differentiates between terms such as historicism, historicism and historicalism. For a full discussion see Harvey (1990) especially pages 26 – 28; 215; 217.

the researcher works from the premise that particular social structures presently exist (for example, racial or sexual oppression) because they have materialised from previous practices that have continuously justified and legitimated them. This perspective was particularly important for this research being, as it is, a longitudinal case study of one particular institution and given that one of the aims was to uncover any themes of continuity (and indeed discontinuity) between past and present. As Beddoe comments, this continuity is crucial as

We need to know our past to understand our present. The present is a product of the past: we are moulded and conditioned by a past of which we are alarmingly ignorant. We need to look backwards to seek the origin and development of many of the wrongs and inequalities which women suffer today (Beddoe, 1998: 2).

In order for feminists to achieve these goals, as Lindfield (1992) asserts, established historical knowledge must be re-assessed and re-examined against feminist theories and standards. However, as many feminist researchers have discovered (see for example Purvis, 1985; Gordon, 1991; Lindfield, 1992) even the basic practicalities of this process are not as straightforward as they might at first appear. Lindfield identifies several practical problems with regards to locating relevant primary material for analysis. She states that original sources of data may not actually exist, either because they have been lost, or suppressed, or never produced in the first place and therefore the feminist researcher must acknowledge from the outset that the materials to which she will have access will only be a partial account of women's history. When examining the position of working class women within institutions, which was the focus of Lindfield's thesis, the relatively powerless position of those subjects meant that their personal experiences would probably never have been recorded.

Working class women in the nineteenth century had little access to education. It is therefore not surprising that diaries, autobiographies and articles by such authors are few and far

between (Lindfield, 1992: 5).

Lindfield goes on to state that even in cases where women *were* the producers of records and texts, it is possible that these accounts no longer exist due to them having been deemed unimportant and hence suppressed or excluded from public archives.

The feminist historian must make herself constantly aware that the materials with which she has to work are...a product of the many instances in which power has been exercised in relation to the text at both the macro and the micro level of society (Lindfield, 1992:8).

As Spender (1980) argued, women were historically excluded or marginalised from the production of knowledge hence their 'reality' is not easily uncovered. Information can be gained, however, from other, more official, sources, for example documents that have been produced *about*, rather than *by*, the subjects of the inquiry. In other words, records produced by doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, church officials or managers of institutions, although not ideal, may be useful sources of evidence.

However, as Purvis (1985) claims, the ways in which women are frequently categorised within official records, may itself serve to further conceal or obscure particular aspects of women's lives. But she goes on to assert that it is therefore the duty of the feminist researcher to uncover as much of this information as possible and through a process of reconceptualisation and reassessment, challenge the traditional and stereotyped perception of women as

...voiceless, passive, determined beings who are made by history, but do not make history.... (Purvis, 1985: 200).

In order to challenge this view, feminist historical research must therefore be both involved and dynamic, in the same way as feminist contemporary

research. As Stanley and Wise (1983) have pointed out, an element of subjectivity should be present at all stages of the research process. However, as Lindfield (1992) argued, this is a desirable, but much more problematic process, for historical study. Due to the fact that the majority of literature available will have been that produced by those who claim to 'know' women (academic or medical professionals, social commentators and institution managers) rather than by women themselves, some degree of interpretation and detachment from the research subject is inevitable. This was certainly the case with the present study. Although, as Lindfield found in her own research, it was possible to examine the reports and documents from a perspective which empathised with the position of the women concerned, which placed them at the forefront of the study and which aimed to expose and legitimate their experiences and challenge the ideologies which influenced those experiences, it was nonetheless impossible to achieve a similar level of subjectivity to that which was achieved in the contemporary study in which women were allowed to speak for themselves. Consequently, the historical data utilised in this research did provide a crucial insight into the discourses and ideologies which underpinned the perception and treatment of women within the semi-penal institution. However, as Purvis (1985) recommends, it was acknowledged that these sources of data could only ever provide a partial, and somewhat interpretative account of women's experience. Thus, although some records *were* found which made reference to incidents of resistance and rebellion, without the women's own accounts the process through which these women of history were allocated a sense of agency was a very interpretative one.

One final problem with the historical data in this research was that, although a substantial amount of documentation was discovered, it did not consist of a complete set of records. On the contrary, there were periods for which the documentation was sparse or where no records at all could be found. This was a problem that Bosworth (2000) encountered in her

analysis of women's incarceration within the Hopital de la Salpetriere in Paris.

Because no archive is ever complete, exploring them demands distinct skills from those required in other forms of research (2000: 268).

She goes on to cite Farge who recommends defeating this problem by using whatever 'odd scrap [or] snatch of phrase' (Farge, 1989, cited in Bosworth, 2000: 268) could be found and weaving them together in order to construct a picture of social life. Bosworth comments that this process may indeed lead to a richer, rather than an inferior, analysis as the researcher has the space to '[follow] the evidence where it leads' (2000: 268) rather than being constrained by an established history.

The historical data was analysed through a similar process to that employed in the analysis of the interview data. Again, the idea of coding the material in the traditional sense was rejected and instead the records, ledgers, reports, letters and minutes were deconstructed and re-assessed within the context of the feminist theory set out in Chapter Two. Theoretical themes, similar to those identified for the contemporary study, were specified and the historical material was used to develop these arguments. A full presentation of the analysis of the historical data, which takes the form of both a theoretical discussion and a chronological analysis of the history of the institution, is found in Chapters Five and Six.

In conclusion, given the multi-methodological approach taken in this research, and given some of the problems and difficulties highlighted in this chapter, it is important to make some mention here of the search for validity. Although this research was underpinned by a particular methodological approach and theoretical perspective, it did not hinge around the concept of hypothesis testing. Therefore with no hypothesis there was no argument for representativeness. Although it was the intention

of this study to identify any themes of continuity and discontinuity that may have existed with regards to the discourses that have underpinned the semi-penal institutionalisation of women, past and present, it was *not* the intention to examine the experiences of particular groups of women at particular moments in history and then generalise conclusions to *all* women and to *all* periods of history. Therefore the methodological aim was for *validity* rather than *reliability*. With regard to the contemporary fieldwork undertaken, because replicability is not a realistic criterion (as the accurate replication of fieldwork is impossible) this makes the issue of validity even more important (see Hammersley, 1990; Neuman, 1997; Flick, 1998). Validity in this case relates to the extent to which the researcher's data and analysis authentically represents the social arena under study. It was anticipated that the approach adopted (participatory, multi-methodological and involving the elevation of the subjects to the centre of the inquiry) would assist in the production of credible and valid data. Also, the extensive period spent in the hostel (regular visits over two years followed by another year or so of less frequent, but still consistent, visits) provided me with a comprehensive understanding of hostel life from both the perspective of the staff and the residents (formally recorded in the form of a day-to-day diary). This provided me with a source upon which to draw in order to validate claims made by the participants during interview.

With regard to the historical aspect of the research, data must be accepted as both *internally* and *externally* valid in order to be legitimate (Berg, 1998). First, the researcher must determine whether a source material is authentic (external validation). In the case of the historical data utilised in this study the authentication of the material was in no doubt. The fact that its existence had not previously been known, the circumstances under which it was discovered (by myself in the hostel attic), the apparent age of the documents, the accuracy of information contained within them when compared with other authenticated sources (newspaper and local history records for example) and the fact that the Church of England Council for

Social Aid (the trustees of the hostel)¹⁸ were extremely keen to take possession of the documents once they had been discovered, left me assured that they were genuinely what they appeared to be.

Second, and more difficult to ascertain, is the accuracy of *meaning* within the material (internal validation). In other words, was it possible to be sure about what was meant by particular comments within the documents and was it possible to accurately predict or 'know' the impact of specific statements or testimony? Of course, when examining any primary source documentation retrospectively it is difficult, even impossible, to claim to 'know' and understand meaning and, as discussed previously, there was no real way of 'checking' particular comments or assertions (for example, it was not possible to interview the authors of the documents nor the people about which the documents were written in order to confirm that my interpretation of a record was an accurate one). However, as discussed extensively in this chapter, the perspective adopted for this research, which fully acknowledged the inevitability of partiality in such a case study did, I would argue, promote validity. So, although this research is unashamedly partisan, in that it is concerned with deconstructing and reconstructing the history of the semi-penal institution for women from a feminist perspective, the material used was critically evaluated in the light of a rigorous theoretical framework and as such a complacent and 'face-value' acceptance of the data was avoided.

So far this thesis has presented the theoretical and methodological perspectives that underpinned this research into the semi-penal institution for women. However, before the analysis of the data collected can be discussed it is first necessary to explore in more depth what is actually meant by the semi-penal institution. The following chapter will therefore

¹⁸ For a more complete explanation of the role of the Church of England Council for Social Aid, see Chapter Seven.

take up this issue and present a critical examination of the genesis and history of these institutions from the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century along with an analysis of those aspects of continuity and discontinuity which link past with present.

Chapter Four
Wayward Girls and Wicked Women: The History and Development
of the Semi-Penal Institution¹

The unruly woman is the undisciplined woman. She is a renegade from the disciplinary practices which would mould her as a gendered being. She is the defiant woman who rejects authority which would subjugate her and render her docile. She is the offensive woman who acts in her own interests. She is the unmanageable woman who claims her own body, the whore, the wanton woman, the wild woman out of control. She is the woman who cannot be silenced. She is a rebel. She is trouble (Faith, 1993:1).

As discussed in Chapter Two women are deemed to be ‘deviant’ or ‘unruly’ for many different reasons. Consequently they are subjected to a whole range of strategies, *applied within both formal and informal arenas* of social control, all of which are designed to regulate, discipline and reform these recalcitrant women back to an appropriate standard of feminine behaviour (Smart and Smart 1978). It is the purpose of this chapter to critically examine the history and development of one particular arena of social control, an arena which combined both formal and informal strategies of discipline and regulation, an arena which Weiner (1990) described as semi-penal. Weiner uses the term semi-penal to define those institutions created during the nineteenth century for the purpose of containing, controlling and reforming ‘deviant’ individuals (particularly women and juveniles). The focus of this thesis is specifically the use of semi-penal institutions for women and Weiner’s definition will therefore be utilised primarily in this context. It will be argued that such institutions originated in the eighteenth century, somewhat earlier than Weiner suggests. In addition, it will be argued that such institutions continued to exist, in one

¹ An article entitled ‘Wayward Girls and Wicked Women’, which is a summarised version of this chapter, was submitted to the *Liverpool Law Review* and is due for publication summer 2001.

form or another, throughout the twentieth century, much later than he claims.²

This chapter will examine the genesis and development of these institutions, analysing the methods and discourses employed to regulate and reform their female residents. The way in which these institutions united and combined the formal control strategies of the prison³ with the more informal methods of social and domestic control found within the family and the home⁴ will also be discussed. Semi-penal institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries existed under a variety of names (for example refuges, reformatories and homes), names which in many ways conjure up images of care, sanctuary and welfare and thus detract from their other, more regulative and punitive purposes.⁵ These institutions catered for a variety of different 'types' of women, all of who were perceived to be in some way dangerous or unruly, all of who had broken away from the boundaries of appropriate female behaviour. Such women included convicted offenders, prostitutes, inebriates, the 'feeble minded' and others who, it was believed, required a form of preventative regulation and guidance to stop them from straying into a life of crime or vice. However, the concept of semi-penal institutionalisation did not disappear with the demise of the reformatory movement. Rather, as this chapter will illustrate, semi-penal institutions continued to exist for women into and throughout the twentieth century in the form of halfway houses, homes for unmarried mothers and, most recently, probation hostels. The theoretical and practical themes of continuity that link the early reformatories with the latter day hostels will be identified in this chapter forming a foundation

² See also Bosworth's (2000) article in which she challenges male definitions of historical time-periods as they apply to women.

³ For details of the regimes and strategies employed in the nineteenth century prisons see Dobash R, Dobash P and Gutteridge S (1986) and Zedner L (1991)

⁴ See Smart (ed) (1992)

⁵ Similarly to the image that 'community' conjures up compared with 'custody'. See Chapter Two.

upon which the subsequent case study and analysis of Adelaide House, presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, can be built.

Fragile Moralities: The Origins and Characteristics of the Semi-Penal Institution

The first, and one of the most significant characteristics of the institutions created to reform deviant women, was that they were essentially outside of state control (as, indeed, were prisons for much of the nineteenth century), set up by private organisations or charitable agencies and run by self elected management committees. In some instances the state did play a significant role in the creation or supervision of these institutions. The Inebriates Act (1898) for example provided for the creation of certified and state reformatories to supplement the voluntary institutions already in existence (Zedner 1991) and for some years there had existed government-appointed HM Inspectors of Reformatories (Rimmer, 1986). However, for the most part the various semi-penal institutions (whether they be for ‘fallen’, criminal, wayward or ‘feeble minded’ women) were private organisations, housed in privately owned buildings, run and managed by non-statutory bodies (for example the Temperance Society or one of the various Gentlemen’s and Ladies Charitable Organisations) and therefore almost completely beyond the reach of state regulation.

Second, as they were not officially custodial and thus very separate from the formal judicial system, most admissions were classed as voluntary. As will be highlighted in the following chapter, women were not (at least in some of the early institutions) *sentenced* to a period of residence in refuges or reformatories, instead their consent was required before they could be admitted. Indeed, most institutions would only accept women who were desirous of being reformed and therefore *keen* to be admitted (Mahood, 1990). Given that these institutions were usually funded by charitable donations, some level of effectiveness and success had to be achieved. It was therefore necessary to ensure that only those women likely to conform

and reform be admitted and this was accomplished through strict gatekeeping procedures.

Also as Finnegan (1979) states, women had to be consenting, compliant and co-operative in order for these establishments to function effectively, as being non-statutory they had no power to confine women against their will. However, as Dobash *et al* (1986) argue, women were frequently pressured into giving their consent to a period of residence through a network of influence which included family, friends, reformers, charity workers, police, court officials, clergy and prison staff. Also as Rimmer (1986) asserts, often women would agree to be admitted to these institutions, and consequently conform to their regimes, because the alternatives (or potential alternatives) presented to them were so appalling. Young women labelled as 'immoral', for example, might be willing to submit to a period of semi-penal confinement as they would be made well aware that if they were to become pregnant they stood a fair chance of being forcibly admitted, as were many unmarried mothers, to a lunatic asylum as a long term inmate. Also wayward girls 'in danger' of falling foul of the law would be regularly reminded about the severe conditions in local prisons, Bridewells and Borough Gaols.

Not all admissions were voluntary however, as specific pieces of legislation meant some women could be sent by the courts to particular institutions. For example, the Inebriates Act (1898) allowed for women to be committed by the courts to a specified period in an inebriate reformatory (Zedner, 1991). Also, after the passing of the Probation of Offenders Act of 1907, young women could be referred by the courts to a refuge or reformatory as a condition of their probation order. These institutions, although slightly different to the traditional 'voluntary' reformatory, will still be discussed and analysed here as semi-penal as they were portrayed as non-custodial institutions or 'alternatives' to prison and even these more formal institutions that had closer links with the official penal system still

employed regimes based more around reformation than punishment. Consequently, these institutions occupied an important place within the ever-expanding network of non-custodial, semi-penal control for women.

Third, although these institutions were not fully custodial or penal in the formal sense, they were not truly 'community-based' either. Indeed for the most part, once a woman had entered a reformatory, refuge or home, contact with her former 'community' was limited, if not prohibited completely. As the aim of these institutions was to provide women with a positive and appropriate role model, other external influences were kept to a minimum. If a woman had deviated from the norm within her own 'community' then any continued influence from that community was not considered conducive to her reformation. Contact with 'respectable' family members could be maintained (if deemed appropriate) through letters and visits, although these were usually infrequent and heavily monitored (Rimmer, 1986). Women would be allowed occasional contact with the outside world, usually in the form of organised day trips, church visits or for the purposes of employment, although, as will be discussed more fully in this and the next chapter, it was more common for religious worship and instruction, and even paid work, to be conducted on the premises. The female residents of these institutions may not have been formally incarcerated but their liberty was certainly heavily restricted. They were required to conform to a disciplinary and regulatory regime and their behaviour and movements were supervised and monitored. So many of the practices employed within the prison could be observed within these non-custodial environments.

This leads to the fourth defining element of the semi-penal institution in that it combined those formal regulatory practices, normally restricted to the prison, with a more informal, 'benign' form of discipline reminiscent of that employed within the domestic sphere. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the reformation of women, it was believed, could be best achieved

through a disciplinary process modelled around that which existed within the family. Rules were enforced by those in charge, usually either a single female matron or a married couple. These individuals would act as appropriate role model figures for the impressionable inmates, providing the sort of parental discipline that was considered to have been missing from the women's home lives. Respectable working class women were the ideal choice to oversee these institutions, governed by a (usually male and middle class) management committee. As Rafter (1983) states, these women were not only positive role models but they were also 'matron-mother' figures who could enforce discipline and encourage conformity under the guise of maternal 'protection', similar in many ways to the socialising of daughters by mothers within the family, what Walkowitz (1982) describes as the 'hierarchical female network'.

The fifth feature which distinguished these institutions as semi-penal, was the fact that they did not deal solely with women who had committed criminal offences. Fitting in securely with eighteenth and nineteenth century notions of unacceptable female behaviour, the reformers targeted a whole range of women who had failed to adhere to, or achieve, required standards of behaviour. Consequently, non-criminal women (for example those considered to be immoral, wayward or 'at risk') were categorised as in need of reform and could be institutionalised in order for this process to take place. As Weiner (1990) asserts semi-penal institutions were considered to be for the purposes of 'protecting' women by offering an alternative environment to, or impeding the progress towards, imprisonment. However in reality they served to extend those disciplinary measures normally confined to the prison to cases of 'less-than-full criminality' (Weiner, 1990: 130).

Although the reformist movement claimed that its intention was to 'protect' and rescue women from the brutality of prison and the criminal justice system, the ascendancy and consolidation of the semi-penal project

had the effect of expanding what was already a fairly encompassing system of social control and regulation for working class women. Dobash *et al* conclude that

These refuges, reformatories and shelters were not necessarily penal, but what they established was a wide, interlocking carceral network, based on the assumption that females needed a firm paternalistic hand to guide their development (1986: 72).

The ‘paternalistic hand’ mentioned by Dobash *et al* highlights the fact that these institutions were not solely concerned with the punishment of recalcitrant females but rather with their reformation and normalisation. The concept of reform (like the twentieth century concept of rehabilitation) is rooted in the notion that the individual requiring such treatment is suffering from some fundamental weakness or deficiency and this can only be remedied through external help (Faith, 1993; Worrall, 1997), hence the concept of supervision. It will be argued in Chapters Five, Six and Seven that the supervisory processes employed within the semi-penal institutions (based around the notion of ‘parental’ discipline) resulted in, what Faith (1993) and Carlen (1983) have termed, the ‘infantilization’ of the female residents. Women have always been perceived as immature and puerile (Hutter and Williams, 1981) and nowhere was this more strongly reflected than in the regimes created to discipline and reform ‘deviant’ women. As Rafter (1983) observed, women within these institutions were frequently reduced to the status of dependent children and denied the rights of non-incarcerated adults.⁶

So from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries women’s lives and behaviour became increasingly open to scrutiny and many different ‘types’ of women were defined by social commentators and targeted by reformers and charity workers as in need of discipline and reform. The next

⁶ See Rafter, 1983; Faith, 1993; Heidensohn, 1996; Carlen, 1983 for discussions of this issue in both a historical and contemporary context.

section of this chapter will provide an examination of the specific semi-penal institutions that were created from the late eighteenth century through to the early twentieth century for the purposes of controlling and reforming unruly women. Five groups of women have been identified for the purpose of this analysis; prostitutes, criminals, the 'wayward', inebriates and the 'feeble minded', and the particular institutions created to cater for each of these groups will be examined in turn. It should be acknowledged here that in many ways such differentiation is problematic for two main reasons. First, some women cannot be confined to one 'category'. Prostitutes, for example, were often labelled as alcoholics (and vice-versa) and, due to the nature of the law, criminals as well. Second, some semi-penal institutions catered for more than one category of women. Often, in order to remain financially viable, the nature of some semi-penal institutions changed over time and they consequently targeted different types of women at different periods in their history. However, in order to provide some form of chronological examination, and in order to highlight the wide range of institutions created to increase the social control of women, this categorisation will be employed as an organising principle on which to build the analysis.

Semi-penal institutions of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Institutions for 'immoral' women

Of all the women who have been targeted by the various 'interested parties' (for example social and religious commentators or charitable and philanthropic groups and reformers), prostitutes have historically been the focus of particular scrutiny. Prostitutes, more than any other 'type' of women, were considered to be morally corrupting and responsible for the spread of vice amongst the respectable poor. They were also perceived to be a considerable threat to the notions of the traditional patriarchal family by posing an unwanted temptation to husbands and sons (Mahood, 1990). Immorality was, and it could be argued still is, believed to be the worst form of deviance in women.

Because of the fragility of female morality and the growing associations between sexual activity and moral decay, moral reformers towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, were becoming increasingly critical of the effectiveness of custodial institutions with regards to their appropriateness for female inmates. There was growing concern that impressionable young women, particularly those charged with offences relating to sexual misconduct, required a separate environment in which they could be reformed and disciplined to adhere to appropriate standards of behaviour (Mahood, 1990). This would not be achieved in an institution where they could mix freely with other, more 'hardened' and corrupting offenders.

Consequently, prostitutes were the first group of women to become subjected to semi-penal institutionalisation (Mahood, 1990; Lindfield, 1992; Dobash *et al*, 1986). Towards the end of the eighteenth century new non-statutory, non-custodial female penitentiaries were established where women could be 'voluntarily' admitted (although often for indefinite periods) and receive moral education along with industrial and / or domestic training. These institutions existed under a variety of names but were most commonly known as Magdalene Homes or Asylums.

The sexual 'deviance' of women was at first dealt with through the formation of the Lock Hospitals. There existed both statutory and voluntary Lock Hospitals and although they were not semi-penal institutions in the same sense as the Magdalene Homes, because their primary role was the provision of medical treatment for women with syphilis and other venereal diseases (Lindfield, 1992), they are worth some mention here as they constituted part of a wider network of sexual and moral regulation for women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Significantly, the term 'lock' originated from the word 'loke' which was a house for lepers. Mahood (1990) states that the Lock Hospitals gained

their name because the first one opened in Southwark, London on the site of a medieval leper house however, as Walkowitz (1980) comments, there is another significance to the adoption of this name, as prostitutes were considered to be the 'social lepers' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She states that during this period

...syphilis replaced leprosy as the symbol of social contagion and disease (Walkowitz, 1980: 59).

As Mahood (1990) points out the lock hospitals were heavily criticised by religious fundamentalists who felt that such institutions would fail in their attempts to 'cure' women as they only focused on medical remedies for the body. What was required to complement this was some provision to restore and rehabilitate the mind and soul, an establishment that could provide moral reform and would thus prevent women returning to 'immoral' practices on their discharge from hospital. It was therefore decided that some further provision in the form of a home or penitentiary where the moral character of the woman could be rescued and reformed be provided, and the Magdalene Homes were the result.

The voluntary Magdalene Homes were usually private, charitable institutions and like many of the other types of semi-penal institution, were aimed at rescuing young women who were not yet too 'hardened' to be reclaimed and reformed.

Women were expected to be grateful for the opportunity afforded them by the Magdalene institutions and anxious to repent of their past sins. As stated above, the success of these voluntary institutions depended heavily upon the co-operation of their female inmates and so admittance could be refused to those women who did not appear susceptible to reforming influence or sincere in their wish to improve their lives. Hence for the most part the main pre-requisites for admission were a demonstration of remorse

for previous conduct and a sincere intention to reform to the middle class standards of femininity endorsed by the institutions (Finnegan, 1979; Mahood, 1990).

In 1809 a Magdalene Home (known as the Female Penitentiary) was established in Liverpool, its purpose being

...to afford an asylum to females who, having deviated from the paths of virtue, are desirous of being restored, by religious instruction and the formation of moral and industrious habits, to a respectable station in society (Smithers, 1825: 279).

As Walkowitz (1980) explains, this transformation from immorality to respectability was to be achieved through a strict regime of industrial and/or domestic training and moral and religious education, a disciplinary routine consisting of work, prayer and penitence. In Rafter's study of the nineteenth century Albion Reformatory in New York, she states that this institution used moral and domestic training in order to increase the social control of young working class women in two distinct, but 'mutually reinforcing' (1983: 291) ways. First, she claims, Albion provided vocational control over its inmates by training them to become wives, mothers or domestic servants. Second, it provided sexual control over the women by training them to conform to middle class notions of chastity, respectability and femininity, all the time reinforcing the virtues of marriage and fidelity.⁷ Although Rafter is discussing a reformatory in the late nineteenth century, and one that dealt with all types of 'young misdemeanants' (1983: 289) not just prostitutes, her analysis can be applied to the 'early nineteenth century Magdalene homes. The combination of domestic and moral training was aimed at making women productive (as wives, mothers, servants or legitimate workers) and non-threatening

⁷ Rafter states that this was achieved not only through a process of instruction and education but also through other methods of negative reinforcement such as parole revocation for any lapses of behaviour whilst on conditional release, or the threat of transfer to a custodial institution for the 'feeble-minded' where women could be held for indefinite periods.

(chaste, respectable, married). Women were expected to become self-sufficient, dependable, wholesome and harmless. As the governors of the London Female penitentiary for prostitutes commented, the aim of the institution was

...to destroy the habits of idleness and vice and to substitute those of honest and profitable industry, thus benefiting society whilst the individual is restored (Quoted in Dobash *et al*, 1986: 73).

Institutions for 'guilty' women

Given the high standards of behaviour that were set for women during the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that those women who had transgressed legal (as well as moral) boundaries were considered more deviant and more morally corrupting than their male counterparts. As Dobash *et al* (1986) comment, male offenders who had served a prison sentence were either released unconditionally or released on licence, but either way they were allowed to return directly to their communities. However for women, the completion of a prison sentence did not necessarily qualify them for social re-integration. Instead, some women were subjected to an 'intermediate period of confinement' (Dobash *et al*, 1986: 72) after their official prison sentence had ended.

Weiner (1990) cites two major institutions that were built for the reception of women leaving prison, these being the Fulham Refuge in England and the Golden Bridge Reformatory in Dublin. Women entered these institutions as a condition of their early release from prison and once there they would be released only when 'judged reformed' (Weiner, 1990: 140). The superintendent of the Golden Bridge Reformatory '(cited in Dobash *et al*, 1986: 75) justified the utility of these institutions, arguing that female offenders required longer periods of detention than their male counterparts because they were more difficult to reform than men. This statement does appear to conflict with the dominant ideas of the day which proclaimed that women were *more* impressionable and hence *more* reformable than men.

However offending behaviour was not as incongruous with nineteenth century notions of masculinity as it was with the dominant ideas around femininity. Therefore, unlike male offenders, for whom a single punitive sentence was sufficient, female offenders were perceived to be in need of something more than punishment for their offences, they required a further process of moral reform.

She goes on to argue that after release from prison men would usually undertake outside employment, whereas women would be occupied within the domestic sphere (either in their own homes or as a domestic servant in the homes of other people). Consequently given the high level of responsibility required to run their own, or other people's homes, a longer period of 'training and testing' was required (Dobash *et al*, 1986: 75). Finally, she asserted that female offenders were inherently inadequate and deficient, and so before they could be reformed and retrained, they first required a period where they could be 'untrained' and thus 'unlearn' their bad behaviour.

So, these institutions, with their reformist regimes, were developed to 'supplement and in part replace the work of jails and prisons' (Weiner, 1990: 131). Their regimes and routines were similar to those in the Magdalene Homes, and many other types of semi-penal institution throughout the nineteenth century. Although sent from prison, women would only be admitted if first, they had a genuine 'desire to reform' and second, if there was some likelihood of reformation being achieved. As in the Magdalene Homes, many women would be deemed unsuitable for admission to these refuges if they were believed to be 'hardened' criminals and therefore beyond hope of reformation.

The regimes of the refuges and reformatories were primarily based on training and moral reform. Women were isolated from the world outside and provided with a positive role model, usually in the form of a 'matron-

mother' figure. However, these 'post-prison' refuges differed from other types of semi-penal institution in one significant way in that they had an extra element of threat due to the fact that they could return women to prison at any time. Although these refuges were technically 'voluntary' institutions, their operation did not depend completely upon the co-operation of their inmates in quite the same way as Magdalene Homes or other types of 'pre-prison' institution. Women were under real pressure to behave and conform or face a return to custody.

Institutions for 'wayward' women

In contrast to those women who were sent to reformatories *after* they had served a sentence in prison, many young women and girls were institutionalised without ever having committed a criminal offence at all. One of the most common types of establishment within this network of control was that which aimed to 'rescue' females *in danger of becoming* criminal or immoral. As stated previously, during the nineteenth century, women were considered 'childlike' and immature, and their good behaviour required constant reinforcement and supervision. Their fragile characters could be easily corrupted through contact with undesirable others and so prison was deemed particularly unsuitable for their delicate moral states. Subjecting women to a system of reform after they had been in prison was not appropriate for some as by then the damage may have already been done. Instead what was required for some girls and women was a period of reform aimed at *preventing* their certain degeneration into a life of crime or sin.

This preventative work could not be achieved whilst women were allowed to continue their normal daily lives and their association with undesirable acquaintances and so the creation of rescue homes and reformatories became popular philanthropic projects (Lindfield, 1992). As stated previously, women during the nineteenth century were perceived to be both 'corruptible' and 'corrupting', 'in danger' and 'dangerous' at the same

time. Consequently 'wayward' girls and women were not admitted to these homes for purely philanthropic reasons, instead corrective training was required in order to reduce the threat that these working class women (and 'immoral' working class women in particular) posed to middle class sensibilities. This is highlighted in the emotive language used to describe the young female residents of the Mount Vernon Green and Toxteth Park Girls' Reformatories in Liverpool.

The girls are taken from a class which is familiar with criminal practice and immoral living. The life, from day to day, under the discipline of the [institution] ... gives evidence of what lies beneath the surface, and of the strong passions more or less kept under control. During the past year there have been outbreaks of evil tendency and inclinations reverting to acts of theft, lying, disobedience, rudeness and impropriety....To raise such a class from the depth of depravity and utter neglect in which they have been sunk is indeed a work of Christian charity and mercy; but it is one of labour and difficulty, and only a certain amount of success can be anticipated. (Major Inglis, HM Inspector of Reformatories, 1880, quoted in Rimmer, 1986: 45).

The purpose of these institutions was to offer the moral training and conditions for reform which impressionable young women would not find in their communities and homes, indeed women were most commonly committed to these institutions by their own husbands or families if they were believed to be 'out of control', as will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

Once a woman entered these institutions her period of residence would depend primarily on her assessed character and she would not be released until judged reformed. However, in reality, these rescue homes did not have the coercive powers of the reformatories for women released from prison and so could not officially hold women and girls against their will. Indeed more than any other type of semi-penal institution, these homes relied considerably upon the co-operation of their inmates for their effective operation. In addition they relied on the industry of their inmates for their

financial survival. For the most part these institutions were funded by charitable donations but many had to find other ways of supplementing their income. Dobash *et al* (1986) cite the Dean Bank refuge in Scotland. This institution took in washing and ironing for local families, charging a nominal sum. By doing this it could not only provide productive domestic training for its inmates but it could also pay for the running of the institution. This form of 'training' however was hard, laborious and often dangerous. Rimmer describes the hazardous conditions that faced the young inmates of the School for Delinquent Girls at Ford, Liverpool.

Work in the laundry was like slavery, with limited and defective equipment in appalling conditions.....All the water...had to be heated, and this operation resulted in horrendous accidents, scalds and burns...In December 1873 a piece of soap slipped down the back of the copper and whilst trying to retrieve it [one of the inmates] stood upon the pieces of loose wood which covered the boiler. The wood cracked and the screaming girl plunged into the boiling water, scalding her legs.... [she] died the next day from shock....The floor of the laundry was constantly awash and there were many instances of girls and staff slipping and breaking limbs. Harsh soap peeled the skin from chilblained hands and the dark, foul atmosphere and searing fumes took their toll on constitutionally weakened lungs and rheumatically limbs (1986: 53).

As with the Magdalene Homes and the 'post-prison' reformatories, the regimes of these institutions were based around 'family-style' discipline. As Lindfield (1992) comments, they provided a form of regulation, for working class girls and women, that their middle class and 'respectable' working class sisters received at home. This was mainly achieved through constructive training, however in contrast to the industrial or manufacturing work undertaken in some reformatories and most prisons, in the rescue institutions women were trained primarily in household and domestic skills. As well as laundry work (washing and ironing) women were trained to sew, weave, knit (often mending and making their own clothes), cook and clean (see Dobash *et al*, 1986; Rimmer, 1986; Chapters Five and Six of this thesis). These institutions, according to Dobash *et al*

(1986), basically became schools for servants. Of course the inmates were also subjected to a process of moral training. If they were to enter middle class homes as domestic servants they would need to meet the required standards of decency and respectability. The desired result of the reform process in these institutions therefore was the same as that within the Magdalene Homes, in that the young inmates would become not only non-threatening to the middle class but a productive source of labour for them too.

The institutions discussed above (the Magdalenes Homes, the reformatories for women on release from prison and the rescue institutions for girls and young women 'at risk') existed throughout the nineteenth century, with some continuing into the early twentieth century. The institutions that catered for the two other groups of women highlighted at the beginning of this chapter (inebriates and the 'feeble-minded') did not emerge until the late nineteenth century and, in comparison to the other types of semi-penal institution, were relatively short lived. However, they played an important role in the ever-expanding regulatory network of women and are thus discussed below.

Institutions for 'drunken' women

From the early part of the nineteenth century, alcohol was considered to be a severe social problem. It is not surprising then that a strong association should have been made by the 'respectable classes' between poverty, escalating crime and excessive drinking. Contemporary observers tendered a plethora of 'cause and effect' opinions to account for this phenomenon and to many, the conditions experienced by the poor were seen to be a direct result of their excessive consumption of alcohol. Consequently, bars and pubs were seen to be the breeding ground for evil and criminality.

The tavern throughout the centuries has been the ante-chamber to the workhouse, the chapel of ease to the asylum, the recruiting

station for the hospital, the rendezvous of the gambler, the gathering ground for the jail (Burns, 1904, quoted in Loweson and Myerscough, 1977: 67).

These assumptions were believed to be especially true where women were concerned. Women were considered to be more susceptible to the corrupting effects of alcohol than men and, because of their accepted status as family makers, they were condemned more fiercely. Shimmin, when discussing the dancing halls of Liverpool, refers to the female clientele as being 'in their transition state from virtue to vice' (1856: 53). He goes on to observe that

A girl may come here innocent and chaste, but after spending an evening in such company she cannot leave without contamination. From this point the descent is rapid, easily made; the return is doubtful, and seldom, if ever, effected (1856: 53)

Family life and social stability were perceived to be severely threatened by female alcoholism. As Zedner (1991) states, fears that society was degenerating through hereditary drunkenness led to an increasing focus on women as the agents responsible for these problems. Female alcoholics were considered to be dangerous individuals responsible for the destitution and suffering of their children. As an article the *Liverpool Review* reported

No form of domestic misery is more hopeless and few more frequent than that caused by the intemperance of a mother (1899:11).

In addition they were often held accountable for the corruption and moral deterioration of their husbands.

Sometimes husbands, far from selfishly squandering the family income, came home to find that their wife had drunk away the furniture....even where...male selfishness did exist, there were good reasons for it (Harrison, 1971:69).

Furthermore they were even sometimes believed to be responsible for the downfall of whole communities.

One drunken woman in a street will set all the women in it drinking. A woman is so often talking with her neighbours; if she drinks they will go with her (Booth, 1970, quoted in Hunt, Mellor and Turner, 1989: 249).

As Zedner comments, it is in fact very difficult to get a true picture of the actual, rather than perceived, extent of female alcoholism. She does however state that during the nineteenth century the largest category of summary convictions for both sexes was for drunkenness and it accounted for a greater proportion of female convictions than for male convictions. However such statistics do need to be approached with caution, as they do not necessarily indicate a widespread problem of female intemperance. It is likely that women were more prone to arrest than men when inebriated because drunkenness represented an aberration from 'appropriate' feminine behaviour. Drunkenness amongst men, on the other hand, was likely to give validity to nineteenth century notions of masculinity. Thus, as Harrison (1971) states, statistics showing rising numbers of arrests were probably not a reflection of increasing alcohol consumption and related crime. Instead what they might reflect, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century, is a growing fear and intolerance of drinking and drunkenness, especially amongst women.

Whatever the extent of female inebriety, female drinking and drunkenness were certainly considered to be growing social problems, problems that required urgent remedy and this remedy came in the form of the 1898 Inebriates Act. The Act focused on two main groups, habitual drunkards and those who had committed serious criminal offences whilst inebriated (Zedner, 1991) and it allowed for individuals to be committed to an inebriate reformatory for a period of up to three years, in order that they overcome their addiction and hence reform their lives. According to

Zedner, many magistrates believed that the act was more appropriate to women than men, and consequently they were more willing to detain them in these institutions. As the Medical Officer in Millbank Prison stated, some women, including those convicted of drunkenness, required

..not only preventive, but protective detention in some kind of institution other than a prison for a much longer period than any term of penal sentence their offences would justify (Quinton quoted in Sim, 1990: 137).

A Departmental Committee established after the 1898 Act, determined that the inebriate institutions would aim to reform, not punish, inmates and therefore penal sanctions should not be used for punitive purposes (Zedner, 1991). This was not always adhered to and there are examples of harsh punishments being enforced on recalcitrant women. Reports indicate that women at the Farmfield Inebriate Reformatory in Surrey could be admitted to cells for periods of up to six days for offences ranging from violence to bad language or attempting to escape (Hunt *et al*, 1989: 263). This method of control stands in sharp contrast to the 'family-style' discipline that was also employed within the institution. The staff, for example, were known as 'sisters', implying a regime based on empathy and support. However, regardless of the implication, the fact that the women within the inebriate reformatories had been *committed* there meant that the regime was in a sense more penal than in any other type of semi-penal institution

The aim of the inebriate reformatories was to effect long term changes in the behaviour and lives of their inmates and, as with the institutions already discussed, this was to be achieved through regular hard work and religious and moral training. Hunt *et al* (1989) discuss the regime at the Farmfield institution, where women worked for eight hours per day on a variety of tasks including laundry work, general domestic chores or farmwork (the institution having its own farm and dairy). Even recreation time was filled with domestic tasks such as sewing and making clothes. In addition to

domestic and moral training, a degree of importance was placed on the physical appearance of the women inmates. The emphasis on encouraging the women to take an interest in their hair and clothing, according to Zedner, served several functions. First, it outwardly portrayed an improvement in physical and moral health. Second, an improvement in outward appearance was seen to encourage a degree of self-esteem and self-respect and, third, possibly the most significant purpose was that

Such superficial alterations to appearance were clearly seen as reflective of a more profound feminization of character (Zedner, 1991: 242).

Once women had served their sentence they were released. Some women were released on licence a short time before their sentence officially ended. This allowed the institution to maintain some element of control over the women once they re-entered the community and any woman found to be inebriated whilst on this conditional release would be immediately returned to the reformatory to complete the remainder of her sentence (Zedner, 1991). The inebriate reformatory differed from the other types of semi-penal institution due to this element of continued supervision after release. Farmfield employed a 'travelling sister' to monitor and report on the progress of women once they re-entered the community. Records from the institution appear to indicate only a limited amount of success with accounts of women returning to drinking as soon as they returned to their homes and communities (Hunt *et al*, 1989).

However it was not solely lack of success that led to the demise of the inebriate reformatory movement. Understandings of, and explanations for, inebriety had begun to change. Whereas at the start of the experiment it was believed that drunkards could be *morally* cured and reformed, by the end of the experiment this moral discourse had been largely supplanted by a 'pseudo-psychiatric discourse' (Zedner, 1991: 260) and those women who

had once been considered morally depraved were now believed to be mentally inadequate. By the early years of the twentieth century, feeble-mindedness was considered a *cause* rather than a *consequence* of inebriety and these explanations were utilised particularly when explaining women's behaviour. During the nineteenth century women had already been perceived as neurotic and over-emotional (Showalter, 1981, 1987) and so these new psychiatric discourses were quickly accepted as unproblematic when discussing deviant or drunken women.

The medicalisation of drunkenness meant that the inebriate reformatories no longer had a legitimate role in society. As inebriates were now considered to be feeble-minded rather than morally corrupt there was little, or no, hope of their reformation and the reformatories thus became redundant. However the 'discovery' of feeble mindedness as an explanation for behaviour did not spell the end of semi-penal incarceration for women. Instead, as the section below will highlight, 'mad' women became subjected to the forms of control and regulation that had previously been employed with 'bad' women.

Institutions for 'mad' women

As discussed above, the end of the nineteenth century was a time of increasing social concern and fear of intemperance, moral degeneration and the prevalence of petty crime. In accordance with these growing concerns, criminology at the beginning of the twentieth century was dominated by attempts to identify the causal factors of criminal behaviour and increasing credibility was given to emerging positivistic theories. This period witnessed an increase in scientific and medical explanations of criminal and deviant behaviour (Garland, 1985). These deterministic theories undermined the assumption upon which criminal legislation at the time was based, that individuals commit crimes of their own free will. Consequently criminal behaviour became individualised and pathologised and the positivistic paradigm gave credence to an increasing amount of

psychological and social intervention by scientific 'experts'. Consequently, their theories legitimated methods of sentencing that focused on the criminal rather than the crime (May, 1991; Harris, 1995).

These new scientific explanations of criminality were found to be particularly useful when attempting to explain and deal with deviant women. Zedner (1991a) states that by the start of the twentieth century social inadequacy and 'feeble-mindedness' had been identified as serious *medical* conditions which were believed to be the source of many social problems. Poverty, intemperance and crime, which had previously been blamed on the lack of morality amongst the poor, were, by this time, beginning to be seen as the result of mental inadequacy. The eugenics movement proclaimed that these social deficiencies would be bred into future generations by the mentally defective poor if left unchecked and consequently 'feeble-mindedness' became viewed as a dangerous social condition.

'Deviant' working class women became particular targets for the attention of the eugenics movement. By the early twentieth century, sexual promiscuity was considered to be evidence of mental inadequacy⁸ and it was believed that if these socially inept, promiscuous women were allowed to retain their liberty, they would procreate freely and cause the degeneration of the race (Zedner, 1991). It was imperative therefore, to contain, control and, hopefully 'cure' these women and to achieve this, special reformatories were developed. These new specialist, non-custodial institutions claimed to have supplanted the notion of moral reformation and instead focused on the medical treatment of inmates.

⁸ The discussions which preceded the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 went as far as proposing a new category of 'sexually feeble-minded' which referred specifically to sexually 'immoral' women. See Zedner (1991a).

Showalter (1981) commented that women constituted a high proportion of inmates within all types of public and private institutions for the 'mentally defective', including reformatories, lunatic asylums, homes and hospitals. She goes on to suggest that women were certified as insane or feeble-minded much more readily than men and often for very trivial reasons such as perceived promiscuity or dominant, assertive behaviour.

The Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 required local authorities to establish committees that would provide community and institutional 'care' and support for the various categories of mental defectives as defined by the Act. These included the feeble-minded, idiots, imbeciles and moral imbeciles. This classification of madness served to expand the concept of mentally inadequate to a whole range of individuals including the poor, inebriates, offenders, pregnant or promiscuous girls and single mothers and consequently considerably widened the regulatory net for women (Ussher, 1991; Zedner, 1991).

Zedner comments that although the 1913 Act emerged from the new scientific theories which explained deviant behaviour as a consequence of pathological, rather than moral, deficiencies, where women were concerned the two discourses were never entirely separate. As will be argued in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, for institutionalised women the notion of moral reform was never entirely abandoned. Instead, it could be argued, the new psycho-medical theories served mainly to justify, legitimate and reinforce the ever-present moral expectations of women.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the demise of institutions for the 'feeble-minded' as well as institutions such as the Magdalene Homes for immoral women, the refuges for 'wayward' girls, and the reformatories for the inebriate. However many of the fundamental concepts which underpinned the reformatory movement persisted and were apparent in the rise of other non-custodial institutions for women.

It will be argued in the following section of the chapter that many of the non-custodial institutions created throughout the mid to late twentieth century adhered to the theory that although particular women did not require imprisonment, their 'deviant' behaviour nonetheless required some form of regulation and control, elements that were obviously lacking in their personal lives and home communities. The dominant feminising discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology continued to be utilised to understand and explain the behaviour of women and to identify non-conforming women as 'deviant' and pathological. Consequently these discourses continued to underpin the construction of new twentieth century semi-penal institutions where recalcitrant women could undergo a process of normalisation and reformation. The following section of the chapter will identify three types of twentieth century institution as semi-penal, examining the dominant feminising discourses which served to both distinguish those women in need of reform and establish the institutional regimes required to reform them. The three forms of institutions examined are the homes for unmarried mothers, the halfway houses for delinquent girls and finally, and most pertinent to this study, the female probation hostel.

Semi-penal institutions of the Twentieth Century

Institutions for unmarried mothers

..on the whole, morality as regards women has nothing to do with ethics; it means sexual morality and nothing but sexual morality
....This means it is far easier for a woman to lead a blameless life than it is for a man. All she has to do is avoid sexual intercourse like the plague (Carter, 1986: x).

One of the major themes which has emerged from this chapter so far is the threat that those women who have outstepped their traditional domestic and maternal roles have been seen to pose. Women's sexuality and sexual behaviour has historically been considered dangerous and contaminating unless controlled within the confines of marriage and domesticity.

Consequently women who indulged in sexual activity outside of those confines were in need of strict regulation.

Spensky states that until very recently unmarried mothers were considered to be the 'delinquents of gender relations' (1992: 101). During the nineteenth century women who bore illegitimate children often found themselves in the workhouse or, worse still, in mental hospitals or asylums where, as Rimmer comments, their outcast status meant they were often treated quite differently and more severely than the other inmates.

'Lunatics and Idiots allowed visitors' read the notice posted on the wall. Unmarried mothers were not permitted visitors (1986: 48).

Ideas about women's immorality appeared to alter little between the mid nineteenth and the mid twentieth centuries. Although, as discussed above, women's deviant behaviour became medicalised and pathologised, the discourses of morality never disappeared entirely and were often used in conjunction with the new scientific discourses in the treatment of delinquent women. The first institutions set up specifically to deal with unmarried mothers were opened in the 1860s by the Female Mission (Spensky, 1992). Here women would stay with their children for periods of one to two years. As with the early reformatories, the discourses employed within these institutions were based around morality and reform and women were expected to repent of their sinful behaviour.

Pregnant and immoral girls were frequently banished to a penitentiary to spend many hours on their knees in devout prayer asking the Lord to forgive the error of their ways (Rimmer, 1986:49).

In addition to the emphasis on penance, women would be trained for employment, most commonly domestic service. As Spensky asserts, one of the main objectives underlying the development of these institutions was to reduce the numbers of pregnant girls and unmarried mothers entering the

workhouse but this was not their only aim. She goes on to state that these homes were utilised as a way of regulating female sexuality and, as Rafter (1983) has also argued, as a way of altering the whole way of life of the inmate, transforming them into domesticated, productive workers.

Once an inmate had completed her period of training she would be found employment in order to pay for her child's upkeep. Although the child would be placed with foster parents, contact with the biological mother was strongly encouraged although the primary goal was always to ensure the women did not go on to have more illegitimate children. Homes for unmarried mothers, according to Spensky, remained based around these ideals and regimes until the Second World War, after which their purpose and philosophies changed dramatically. By this time, as Sim explains

...individual psychology and the family environment were the rocks on which professional and state intervention into the lives of criminal women were built (1990: 153).

But it was not solely upon the lives of *criminal* women that the dominant psychological discourses impacted upon. Unmarried mothers also found themselves subjected to institutional regimes built around the new psychological debates. Unmarried mothers were no longer considered to be solely sinful or foolish but rather, by the 1950s, single women with children were identified as pathological. However, as stated previously in this chapter, even during the mid twentieth century, psycho-medical theories were not the sole influence on institutional regimes for women. Rather they worked in conjunction with, and gave some scientific credibility and legitimacy to, the established ideas around respectability and morality. Consequently, as Spensky asserts, after the Second World War the institutions for unmarried mothers functioned not to transform the deviant woman into a good mother capable of financially supporting her child, as had been the case previously, but rather to 'correct' or 'legitimate' the situation in a wholly different way. Women entered the homes just prior to

the birth of their child, after which time they could remain together for only a few weeks. The baby would then be adopted. This process served to reinforce the notions of respectability and the 'normal' family in three ways. First, the 'illegitimate' child would become 'legitimate' by being adopted by a married couple. Second, the married couple would in turn become a proper, well-adjusted family by the addition of a child and thus a childless, but otherwise 'normal', married woman would be provided with the means to fulfil her 'natural' role in life. Finally, the unmarried mother would be 'legitimated' by the removal of the child, thus proving she was not excessively pathologically disturbed for wanting to keep the baby and, indeed, for all intents and purposes, not pathological at all as no one need ever know she had had a child.

In many ways the treatment of unmarried mothers during the twentieth century was depressingly reminiscent of the treatment of prostitutes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The dominance and persistence of discourses around sexuality and morality for women in both centuries meant that both unmarried mothers and prostitutes were exposed to intense scrutiny and regulation. Both groups were allocated an outcast status and both were subjected to a combination of moral, social, psychological and medical intervention. This however is not the only example of continuity between the semi-penal institutionalisation of women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Just as reformatories had been developed for women released from prison in the nineteenth century, so the halfway house movement was utilised to receive and reform girls and young women on release from custody during the twentieth century. These institutions will now be discussed.

Institutions for delinquent girls

The ethos of the halfway houses...have a peculiarly indefinable quality; they are neither like a traditional...institution nor a 'home' (Apte, 1968: 58).

As discussed previously, it was not uncommon for women during the nineteenth century to be admitted to a semi-penal institution, on release from prison, before they could return to their communities. Some one hundred years later, during the 1960s, several projects were set up to assist girls and young women on release from custody (Elder, 1972).⁹ They aimed to provide an element of support and care, in the form of 'halfway' accommodation, for girls who had been released from borstal but who were 'without intact homes' and the objective was to assist these girls towards independent living (Elder, 1972: 357).¹⁰ The literature on the way in which halfway houses were utilised for women and girls is generally scarce however one important report by Elder (1972) highlights the discourses which underpinned the regimes in such institutions. In his discussion of one particular institution, 'Avalon House', Elder states that these homes were not intended to be punitive or disciplinary, but instead regimes were based around the care and rehabilitation of the female residents. However, as far as Avalon House was concerned, this 'rehabilitation' did not take the form of practical assistance but rather the regime was structured and orientated around notions of moral and psychological reform.

The staff at Avalon, described by Elder as caring but 'firm', came primarily from psychiatric and nursing backgrounds. Before any girl could be admitted she would be seen by a psychiatrist (Elder) and tested by a psychologist. This process of analysis was used as a method of screening in order to exclude cases of

..firmly established homosexuality, ...drug involvement, mental deficiency and pregnancy (Elder, 1972: 359).

⁹ See also Timms (1968) for a discussion of two other projects which, although they did not provide institutional 'care' for girls on release from borstal, did attempt some post-custodial support in the form of assisted lodging schemes and day centres.

¹⁰ In addition, some of these institutions accepted referrals from probation officers for girls on probation orders.

The dominant discourse within which women and girls were classified at Avalon was rooted in the notions of pathology and all of the residents were categorised as having some form of 'character disorder'. In his report the women are frequently discussed within medical terms, many being described as 'depressive' or 'compulsive'. Anne, for example, had given birth prematurely to her first baby who had consequently died at three days old. She became pregnant for a second time but decided to have an abortion. Only a few weeks later she discovered she was pregnant again and decided to keep this child. Anne was an unmarried woman whose 'men friends were always tenuous partners' (1972: 367) and she did not want to marry the father of her child. She was consequently described as having a 'compulsion towards pregnancy' (1972: 367) and her sexual behaviour and her maternal status were considered abnormal.

The control of women's sexuality was of primary importance. Staff wanted to avoid pregnancies amongst the residents at all costs and so birth control was offered, although as Elder states, this 'advice' was often strongly resisted by the women and girls.

...birth control was considered taboo and usually offensive, and above all the notion of routine vaginal examination was held in utmost fear (1972: 358).

In spite of the fact that Elder's report cites only a small number of women who did become pregnant, *all* of the residents were continually offered birth control and 'routine vaginal examinations', the assumption being that *all* of the women and girls were inherently promiscuous.

One of the main reasons why pregnant residents were unwanted at Avalon was that, in line with the nineteenth century notions of women as both corruptive and corruptible, the staff believed that pregnant women had a negative effect on the other residents. Pregnancy, it was believed, led to a pathological state of 'physical regression' in some women, the symptoms of

which were shying away from work and taking no interest in personal appearance. These symptoms, it was believed, would 'spread' to other women.

Staff discouraged this as far as was humanely possible but the strength of the regressive need was so strong that it overcame all their efforts. The effect of the pregnant girls' regressive needs was to evoke parallel regressions in the non-pregnant ones (1972: 367).

The girls and women at Avalon were also expected to adhere to the dominant notions of femininity and in keeping with the overriding medical model of the institution, and strangely reminiscent of the feminising goals of the inebriate reformatories, a resident's outward physical appearance was taken to be indicative of the condition of her internal mental health. Elder discusses Kelly, who was one of the first residents to arrive. Her newborn baby had recently died and her fiancé was still serving a prison sentence. Consequently on her arrival

She looked depressed and apathetic. She slumped around with little regard for her sloppy, ill-clad appearance (1972: 360).

Over a period of months, through a process of 'minimal' staff intervention, Kelly is described as nursing herself back to health. Her new found physical and mental well-being were apparent through her change in appearance.

When three months had elapsed she was transformed. Her hair and face were full of life, her clothes were carefully chosen, she was pretty and had purpose (1972: 361).

Avalon House was eventually judged to be a failure and was subsequently closed, as were many similar institutions. Elder lays the responsibility for the failure of these institutions on the inherent deficiencies of the residents themselves proclaiming that the women's psychological abnormalities became more obvious, and hence more difficult to control, in the 'socially normal' world of Avalon. He concludes that

...the anti-social acts which bring [the women] to court are one facet of broad personality difficulty or incompetence. That being so, it is possible that early 'taking off' from Avalon was precipitated by its being 'too good'. If Avalon indeed offered optimal opportunity for working towards 'normal' social living, then the obviousness of personality distortion was maximised (1972: 371).

Although Elder's report only focuses on one particular institution, it is useful as a method of demonstrating how the discourses around women and their 'deviant' behaviour changed little over a period of almost two hundred years. It also highlights how the discourses of pathology and morality were frequently used interchangeably and were indeed believed to be mutually supportive in institutional regimes for women.

All of the institutions discussed above can quite easily be identified as semi-penal in the sense that they fit all, or most of, the five criteria outlined earlier in this chapter. Most of the institutions were created and run by private, charitable organisations and even those which functioned in accordance with some formal intervention from the state (such as the inebriate reformatories or the halfway houses for delinquent girls) still managed to retain some degree of autonomy and independence. Most of the institutions relied on voluntary admissions and many did not deal solely with women who had committed criminal offences. The most significant issues which link the institutions discussed above however are the fact that *all* managed to merge and combine the formal methods of control normally found within custodial institutions (restrictions on liberty, punishments for misbehaviour, enforced labour or training and so on) with the more informal practices normally found within the home (parental discipline, domestic training, 'communal' living arrangements, reduction of residents to a 'childlike' status and so on). In addition, *all* of the institutions utilised this combination of practices not solely to punish their female residents but rather to ensure their normalisation and reformation of behaviour.

However, the halfway house is not the final semi-penal institution identified by this thesis. On the contrary, as Chapter Seven highlights, the dominant feminising discourses that underpinned the regimes at the range of institutions identified throughout this chapter were still found to be evident in an institution for 'deviant' women at the end of the twentieth century, namely the probation hostel for women.

The Probation Hostel for Women as a Semi-Penal Institution

...[the hostels'] precise functions are as difficult to pin down as are those of the family, which serves a similar type of general purpose for its young, dependent, members (Otto and Orford, 1978: 27).

It is difficult to write a completely gendered history of the probation hostel as so little has been written specifically about it. Much of the literature pertaining to hostels throughout the twentieth century focuses on their use for male offenders. Yet the history of the hostel is very closely linked with the reformatory movement which, as shown earlier in this chapter, was a particularly 'gendered' phenomena. Some of the first individuals to be admitted to non-custodial, semi-penal institutions as part of a probation order were in fact women.

According to McWilliams (1983) a system of probation supervision developed primarily through the missionary work of religious groups, in particular the Church of England Temperance Society. Between the mid to late nineteenth century concern was growing within the church about the extent to which their work was being hampered by drunkenness, and levels of drink related offences appeared to confirm these concerns. Consequently in 1862 the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) was formed, its original purpose being to carry out practical temperance work throughout England and its primary focus being the rescue of individual

inebriates who required reclamation from a life of sin (McWilliams, 1983). On the instigation of Frederick Rainer the church began to attach its temperance missionaries to the Police Courts in order to 'reclaim' those drunkards who agreed to sign the 'Pledge'

Garland describes organisations like the CETS as 'private agents of moralisation' (1985: 44), arguing that they constituted part of a co-ordinated network of agencies which was primarily concerned with regulating and controlling various aspects of the lives of the poor. Indeed, after discharging offenders under the Summary Jurisdiction¹¹ and other Acts, magistrates would often call upon a missionary to exercise supervision over the released offender (Bochel, 1976). By the Probation of First Offenders Act of 1887, missionaries were responsible for conducting social inquiries about offenders in order that the court might be able to determine more easily those offenders for whom probation might be appropriate (Brownlee, 1998).¹²

According to Garland, the last few decades of the nineteenth century were characterised by the growing science of criminology. As highlighted previously in this chapter, pseudo-scientific explanations for deviant behaviour had begun to dominate contemporary thinking, and discourses around criminal activity had, by the end of the nineteenth century, shifted away from notions of sin and inherent wickedness towards pathological explanations for deviancy. However, it is important to acknowledge that groups such as the CETS Missionaries, probably the most significant and

¹¹ The Summary Jurisdiction Act of 1879 served to increase the range of offences with which the magistrates' court could deal as well as providing a statutory basis for the suspension of punishment. Offenders could have a prison sentence suspended on their recognisance of good behaviour and their agreement to supervision within the community. This Act had the effect of involving the missionaries for the first time in the official supervision of offenders.

¹² Once the missionaries became involved in the practice of conducting investigations on behalf of the court, their aim of saving suitable souls was, in practical terms, more easily achievable. Missionaries, like the reformatories and refuges discussed earlier in the chapter, could now select 'appropriate' offenders, those who showed reasonable hope of, and sincere desire to, reform.

important independent charitable agents working with offenders at that time, still relied heavily on the notion of salvation through religious doctrine whilst at the same time adhering to the reformatory and individualised ideals of the new criminological programme. The Howard Association for example lobbied and campaigned for the same supervisory programmes that were being demanded by advocates of the 'new criminology' (Garland, 1985). In other words, both were calling for increasing use of non-custodial supervision and reformatory programmes. However the Howard Association (and this is also true of the CETS Missionaries) were at the same time rejecting the crucial convictions of criminological science and continuing to adhere to evangelical and religious doctrine.

Police Court Missionaries and magistrates were particularly keen to recommend probation as a suitable disposal for young women who were too impressionable for prison but who still required some form of intensive supervision nonetheless. As Leeson (1914) comments, magistrates were frequently reluctant to prosecute girls and young women for fear that a conviction would mean their committal to an industrial school or prison. Here, it was believed, the offender would be exposed to further contamination and degradation, becoming unreclaimable and a greater threat to society. As Leeson comments

The result was that female offenders were often hopeless even before their first arrest. The probation system [had] the special advantage in these cases in that it [was] not repugnant to public feeling (1914: 149).

In other words, in the pre-probation years, female offenders were often perceived to be beyond help and hope because of their assumed corruptibility and a general reluctance to prosecute them. This, it was believed, meant their further degeneration because no 'help' was made available to them. Probation supervision was therefore held up to be

particularly appropriate for these women because is constituted a disposal that combined a humane approach (palatable to the agents of justice) with a method of reform that tackled their deviant behaviour.

When it becomes generally known that prosecution of girl offenders is likely to result in friendly supervision and help, rather than commitment to an industrial school or other such institution, it is probable that the early offences will no longer go uncorrected (Leeson, 1914: 149).

By the early twentieth century probation had been generally accepted as an appropriate disposal for women. Supervising wives and mothers in their communities would avoid breaking down the family unit, as this, it was argued, caused more harm than good (Bochel, 1976). However it was asserted in the 1907 Probation of Offenders Act that, although the individual was not being sent to prison, it was often not desirable that he or she be left to return to the precise conditions within which he or she originally offended. Initiatives therefore had to be enforced in order to prevent further corruption within the community or home and, hopefully, to encourage reformation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Police Court Missionaries set up temporary homes where boys on probation could be housed and receive supervision as an alternative to both prison and their own homes (Andrews, 1979). According to Sinclair (1971) boys would be placed in these homes as an emergency measure, residing for usually no more than a few weeks before being sent to more permanent living-in jobs, but for women the situation was to develop somewhat differently. Magistrates, although reluctant to send women to prison, still considered institutionalisation a more appropriate option than mere supervision within the community. However, unlike boys on probation, girls and young women were not sent to institutions as an emergency measure until employment could be found, rather they were sent with the aim of a longer term process of reformation.

So with the aid of the missionaries, women were often found places within one of the established semi-penal institutions (such as the reformatories or refuges) where they would still receive their non-custodial supervision but where they would also receive a more intense form of reformation.¹³ The regimes for the female probationers within these institutions would have been the same as for the other female inmates. Records for the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge indicate that the women on probation did the same jobs (usually laundry work), were exposed to the same methods of moral reform (usually religious instruction), participated in the same activities and were subject to the same rules and regulations as the non-probationers.

So for the early years of the twentieth century the institutions to which probationers were sent were run by private, voluntary organisations such as the Church of England Temperance Society or the affiliated Police Court Missionaries and were consequently not under any central control (Barry, 1991). In addition the process of referral was extremely informal and intermittent. The situation became more formalised after the implementation of the 1914 Criminal Justice Administration Act, which introduced the first residential probation orders, but the probation service still continued to utilise the homes and refuges run by voluntary and charitable organisations. Barry (1991) states the new residential orders, which integrated the welfare-based techniques of probation supervision with the elements of confinement and constraint fundamental to any form of institutionalisation, established the paradoxical and contradictory nature of probation hostels (in other words the combination of formal and informal, or punitive and welfare based regimes) which remains a contentious issue today.

¹³ See Chapters Five and Six of this thesis for a discussion of women sent to the Liverpool Refuge as a condition of their probation orders as early as 1887.

At a broader level, the increasing state interest in probation hostels throughout the early twentieth century was indicative of a general move towards professionalisation and formalisation of most areas of social welfare. However, as Clarke (1985) points out this move towards 'modernisation' by the state was largely influenced by the dominant knowledges and discourses of the day, hence for women in probation hostels (as this and following chapters will highlight) increasing state intervention did not constitute any move away from regimes and practices based around the dominant discourses of femininity, morality, respectability, domesticity and sexuality.

In 1927 the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders observed that a period of residency in a home or hostel, coupled with a probation order, was not just a means of reforming individuals, or an alternative to unsuitable home circumstances, but was actually a real opportunity to divert offenders from custody. It therefore recommended that these institutions be formally inspected and approved and that a central body be responsible for their financial support.

The Home Office accepted the Committee's recommendations and agreed to set up a scheme to formally approve hostels and then make a financial contribution towards the upkeep of the residents. A report issued the following year encouraged the use of conditions of residence but outlawed the use of training programmes in hostels (Sinclair, 1971; Barry, 1991). For those young offenders who were deemed to lack discipline, alternative accommodation was provided in the form of Probation Homes. Homes differed from hostels as they employed regimes which were specifically designed around training. The object of a Home was to prepare a probationer for employment.

One or two kinds of training might be selected for boys such

as small holding, market gardening, gardening and greenhouse work; woodwork, carpentry and joinery; electrical and motor engineering; bakery; building construction, bricklaying; painting, plastering, domestic jobbing. For girls there are all the branches of domestic work, laundry, secretarial work, greenhouse work, market-gardening and the like (Home Office, 1942: 2).

By the 1930s and 1940s the emphasis within hostels was on 'family' style discipline, similar to that employed in the semi-penal institutions for women during the nineteenth century. The Home Office's *Notes on Homes and Hostels for Young Probationers* states that institutions should be 'small so that a homely atmosphere may prevail and institutionalisation be avoided' (1942: 2). In addition, the recommendation for a recreation area within hostels clearly highlights the differences in the way in which male and female probationers were perceived.

..there should be small rooms where boys can carry on hobbies or where girls, when they return from work can wash, iron and mend their personal clothing, do dressmaking or carry on any other small activities. For boys in particular there should be a playground and if possible a large indoor room where high spirits can find an outlet (1942: 2).

Two issues are raised by this statement. First, the way in which the young female probationers were expected to behave stands in sharp contrast to the expectations of their male counterparts. Boys, it would appear, were expected to be boisterous, high spirited, and in need of space and entertaining activities. Girls, on the other hand, were expected to be respectable and domesticated and apparently without need of further mental stimulation or physical exercise. Domestic chores for girls and women were meant to fulfil both their training and their recreational needs. Second, this therefore implies a much more repressive and regulative regime for females. In their semi-penal world life was all work and no play.

In a Hostel, the probationers who go out to work cannot be expected to do much domestic work, though girls naturally do more than boys (Home Office, 1942: 2).

As with the nineteenth century institutions for women, it would appear that the mid twentieth century hostels for females were aimed primarily at domesticating women in order that they become submissive and yet productive mothers or domestic servants.

The 1948 Criminal Justice Act gave the Home Office the power to inspect, approve and fund probation hostels. This Act also reversed the 1927 committee's ban on training and required that every hostel (as well as homes) provide some useful training scheme for residents. The training schemes ultimately established were very close to those in prisons and other penal establishments (Barry, 1991). In addition, hostel wardens were now no longer able to use their discretion and reject referrals that they would previously have considered 'unsuitable'. This practice, which had been used a great deal in the past with regard to women, was aimed at keeping particular cases (specifically those deemed unlikely to be a 'success') out of institutions. Whilst hostels, homes and refuges were dependant on charitable donations, this selection procedure could be easily justified, however once funding became formalised and centralised, the court had greater control over admissions. Nonetheless, the *Approved Probation Hostel and Home Rules* (Home Office 1949) still advocated fairly strict guidelines for probation officers, court officials and hostel wardens with regard to the selection of suitable residents. As Monger (1972) states, this meant that many of those probationers deemed 'suitable' may not have been the ones in most need of help and support.

..hostel residents were expected to be, if not paragons of virtue, at least more solidly equipped with social virtues than many probationers. They were to be healthy, amenable to discipline, reliable employees, and with difficulties which it was reasonable to expect could be dealt with in six months, in most cases. If all these conditions were satisfied, it might be wondered, was a period in a hostel really necessary (Monger, 1972: 170).

By the 1950s and 1960s the emphasis within hostels was on a 'complete' rehabilitation of the individual. The Morrison Committee (1962) re-affirmed the benefits of combining training, treatment and reform, recommending the importance of work, physical activities *and* social and relationship skills. They stated that hostels should provide

..training, with mature adult support and control, in regular habits of work, in the useful employment of leisure, in personal hygiene and, above all, in living acceptably with contemporaries and older people (Morrison Committee, quoted in Sinclair, 1971: 13).

It was still believed that the best way to provide emotional support and practical skills within hostels was through the 'quasi-family' environment. As Sinclair (1975) comments these institutions were still usually supervised by couples who combined the roles of warden and matron with those of husband and wife. This period is important as it highlights clearly the way in which hostels still attempted to combine the methods of control from both the formal penal sphere (training, regular work, routine) with those more informal methods from the family (parental discipline, provision of socialisation skills, control of leisure pursuits, domestication of females).

Sinclair (1975) argues that much of the literature on institutions has been based around the influential work of Goffman (1961) which identified the 'total institution' and the family as two opposing and polarised environments. Consequently, according to Sinclair, insufficient sociological attention has been given to the relationship between the role of families and the role of these institutions. Sinclair examined the extent to which hostels operated like families and the extent to which the influence of warden and matron was analogous to that of parents. He found that those institutions with the highest rate of success were those where the regimes were 'paternalistic' (1975: 130). In other words, those institutions where the male warden was the dominant role model and where his matron-wife

conformed and complied with his ideals and practices. Sinclair cites a probation officer who describes one such successful scenario.

The matron fitted in with the paternalistic pattern. She was a very charming person not unduly dominated by her husband. He was very much the master in his own household and I think she played along with this. I think the boys saw her as a mother figure although she was not sloppy (1975: 131).

Another officer explains why some hostels had a *low* success rate. Much of the blame for failure appeared to be centred on the over-assertive or dominant role of the matron.

In two regimes, the warden and matron had problems with their marriage which in turn probably affected their behaviour. In one, the matron withdrew almost completely from the hostel and....only came into it to shout at the boys for not cleaning the dishes. In the other...the matron became provocative towards the boys and obsessional about the house. In other regimes, the matron usurped her husband's disciplinary role and was bitterly resented for it (1975: 131).

Otto and Orford (1978) make much of the intentional similarities between the hostel and the 'normal' family home. The home they state is

...small and informal, and there is no hierarchy, at least amongst the adult members. There is much contact with the outside world and the expectation is that members will interact much, will show a great deal of friendly and supportive behaviour towards one another, and will feel that others care about them and that they can rely upon them (1978: 1).

They assert that this is the impression that most people hold about the realities of family life and it is also the image that most people believe constitutes the best set of circumstances under which to live a free, responsible and respectable life. Of course, as Dahl and Snare (1978) assert (and as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis) this idealistic vision of the family home does not necessarily accord with reality for women as wives,

mothers or daughters. Otto and Orford go on to examine the 'family-related' functions that hostels attempt to fulfil. First, they claim that hostels (whether they be for alcoholics, young delinquents, offenders, or any other group requiring 'behavioural correction' (1978: 28)) endeavour to provide a process of 'socialisation' for their residents. In addition, they state, hostels aim to provide residents with appropriate skills and resources necessary to live productive and independent lives in society and they claim that this function is particularly useful for those individuals who have no family support. All of these ideas are reminiscent of those that underpinned the nineteenth century reformatories for women and, it is argued throughout this thesis, continue to underpin the various semi-penal institutions for women in the twentieth century. For example, the predominant notion of the family as the 'normal' means of control and socialisation, the reduction of residents to a childlike and dependant status, the attempts to instil 'appropriate' attitudes and behaviour and the provision of new 'suitable' positive peer group influences, are all mechanisms through which women have been traditionally and, to a great extent, continue to be regulated and controlled.

Although the studies discussed above are mainly based on research conducted in hostels for men, their conclusions have important implications for women and gender relations. First, the very lack of studies of females in hostels has hidden the experiences of these women from public scrutiny, placing them even further away from the reach of formal accountability. Second, as Sinclair's study highlights, it was assumed that the socialisation of deviant youth could best be achieved through a 'quasi-family' environment in which the female matron was submissive to her warden-husband. Any independence of thought or action on the matron's part was deemed to be detrimental to the success of the institution. These ideals of male dominance and female acquiescence were presented as 'normal' models of social and family life and played a significant role in the socialisation of both male and female residents. Third, Sinclair argues that

the most successful institutions were those that showed evidence of 'interdependence' between staff and residents (1975: 133). Parsons and Bales (1955) state that although parents influence their children, they cannot play their role adequately without the children's co-operation. Therefore the effective running of a hostel depended not only on the matron and warden accepting their submissive and dominant parental roles, but also on the residents accepting their roles as submissive and co-operative 'children'.¹⁴ Thus, the process of 'infantilization' is justified for the successful reformation of deviant women.

By the end of the 1960s the definitive objectives of hostels were becoming considerably blurred and varied. Some institutions acted mainly as accommodation units, some provided therapeutic conditions under which psychological problems could be dealt with, some focused on vocational and/or social training and some aimed to provide full and complete rehabilitation. In addition some (as the Wooton Report recommended) were used primarily to 'contain...immature and inadequate offenders' (quoted in Barry, 1991: 20). As Barry (1991) contends, the use of the word 'contain' here appears to indicate a closed and restrictive regime, similar to that found within the more formal penal establishments and somewhat removed from the traditional hostel ideal. The *Approved Probation Hostel and Home Rules* (1949) had allowed each individual warden and Hostel Committee a significant amount of freedom with regard to the management and function of their institutions. As a result, by the late 1960s and early 1970s hostel regimes varied considerably from one institution to the next.

By the mid 1970s concern was being expressed about the imprisonment of women with children and the greater use of community penalties for mothers was advocated. A report from the Howard League (1979)

¹⁴ For further research on the relationship between home circumstances and delinquency see Davies (1969); for further research on the relationship between family life, hostels and delinquency see Davies and Sinclair (1971).

highlights how the call for decarceration for particular women was not a purely humanitarian movement. Rather it was to preserve the sanctity of the family unit (at a time of growing unemployment and social discontent) and to ensure that women did not stray too far from their ascribed roles.

We believe that it is particularly important to the health of society that women, especially mothers, should be dealt with in a way that does not make matters worse for the next generation, their children.....the choice of sanctions ...should above all do the family no harm....For those who need to acquire social, housekeeping or mothering skills, probation with attendance at a day or evening centre, or with support from a specially trained home help, could be suitable (Howard League, 1979: 3).

In addition, a study by Sheppard (1979) found that the decision to recommend individuals for a condition of residence did not depend on factors such as the risk of a custodial sentence or the nature of the offence, but rather on the personal characteristics of the offender, as interpreted by the probation officer. Sheppard states that those recommended for hostel places were those likely to be 'seen to be in need of the 'structured environment'' and naturally 'such an offender is more likely to be young and female' (1979: 21).

However, although it can be seen that women were still deemed to be inherently *unsuitable* for prison and inherently *suitable* for this form of semi-penal institutionalisation, by the 1980s female only probation hostels were consistently failing to meet minimum levels of occupancy. One reason for this paradoxical situation could have been the restrictive gatekeeping procedures of these institutions for women. As Carlen (1990) comments many women only hostels are fairly exclusive and refuse to accept particular groups of women, for example drug users, alcoholics, those with psychiatric and mental health problems, women with children, or women convicted of violence or arson. Although decisions not to accept such women would most likely be made on the basis of safety considerations, it

could be argued that, as with the nineteenth century reformatories, some women are deemed to be just *too* problematic or *too* dangerous to be successfully reformed.

During the 1980s a combination of factors, including the problems with under-occupancy, the need to provide accommodation for individuals on bail and the need to deal ‘appropriately’ with the more serious offenders, led to significant policy developments with regards hostel accommodation. Bifurcation meant a tougher response to offenders convicted of sexual or violent crimes (through longer prison sentences) and a less severe approach to those convicted of non-violent offences. These non-violent offenders, it was believed, should be diverted from custody and dealt with through suitable community based penalties. The Government’s Green Paper ‘*Punishment, Custody and the Community*’ (Home Office 1988) and a subsequent White Paper ‘*Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public*’ (Home office 1990) spelled out the proposals for diverting these offenders and introduced recommendations for new, tougher non-custodial penalties. The Green Paper suggested that the new penalties should combine elements of punishment and deprivation of liberty with strategies to reduce offending behaviour, and advocated the use of home curfews and conditions of residence in suitable hostels as restrictive methods. Contrary to what many probation officers articulated at the time, these ideas of restriction of liberty, regulation and control were not in any way new to probation hostels. As this chapter has shown these elements have always been a significant part of probation and probation hostel history. However, as Barry states, what was new was the concept of utilising these regulatory and controlling elements ‘..without the justification of welfare objectives inherent in the traditional concept of the probation order’ (1991: 21). Rather than combining the concepts of ‘care’ and ‘control’ the new proposals meant the notions of rehabilitation and welfare were to be diminished *in favour* of punitive ideals. This new restrictive approach was

intended to provide sentencers with more credible community based sentences.

It is believed that the courts are attracted to, and have an expectation of, a more intensive level of probation supervision with a stronger element of control via the condition of residence and the curfew (Devaney, 1986, quoted in Barry, 1991: 5).

However, although by the late 1980s and early 1990s hostel managers had acknowledged that their institutions provided a method through which offenders could be punished within the community, according to Barry none of the twenty one hostels in his study had adopted, or had any intention of adopting, the 'government inspired correctional concepts which have been highlighted in the Green paper' (1991: 6) although some were considerably more liberal than others. An information sheet for Norfolk Park hostel states that in 1989 their purpose was

..to *advise, assist and befriend* residents with an emphasis on residents setting their own aims and objectives (Barry, 1991: 6. Emphasis added).

Likewise a hostel in London was reported to have adopted '..a non-authoritarian regime where privacy and the individuality of the resident is respected and valued' (Barry, 1991: 7) and yet another combined

..a community based residential facility with a liberal regime within the constraints of the order...residents are allowed maximum individual freedom whilst at the same time learning to co-operate with each other in work and play (1991: 7).

However, some hostels in Barry's study had taken a more restrictive and punitive approach, with one claiming to offer 'a way in which the offender can be *punished* in the Community' (1991: 6, emphasis added) and another stating that 'Courts and the Probation Service can be assured Elm Bank is not a soft option' (1991: 6). Although Barry's study does not make any

explicit reference to hostels for women it does highlight two important factors. First, as had historically been the case, many probation hostels appeared to be resisting national changes in probation practice thus remaining, essentially, on the periphery of state control. Second, they tended to vary significantly in their aims and objectives, a lack of standardisation that was essentially a reflection of the individual ideals of wardens and staff.

Barry argues that this level of diversity, individuality and independence within the hostel system meant hostels were left exposed to accusations of inconsistency. As the HM Inspectorate of Probation stated

There was a tendency for approved probation and bail hostels to form an adjunct to mainstream probation service activity rather than being fully integrated into its work (1993: 13).

However hostel managers were still concerned that any method of national standardisation would lead to more restrictive and punitive regimes and leave little, or no room for liberal, welfare based social work. On the surface it would be easy to justify this resistance to the introduction of a punitive system of control in favour of retaining more welfare orientated hostel regimes, however it should not be forgotten that with regard to women, the independence that hostels have historically had with regard to admissions and regimes, meant that many female residents were subjected to a whole range of dubious 'treatments', training methods and moral expectations, which were, to a great extent, administered outside the realms of state regulation.

Anne Worrall claims that by the 1990s much of the work carried out with individuals on probation was based on the idea of 'confronting offending behaviour' (1997: 101). As such, programmes were no longer intended to reform the whole personality or character of the probationer, but rather to focus on those 'particular pieces of unacceptable behaviour' (1997: 101)

and attempt to change them. So according to Worrall, at the end of the twentieth century reformation (whether ‘complete’ or ‘partial’) was still on the probation agenda. She goes on to identify two sites within which this form of ‘help’ takes place, namely the probation day centre, which provides ‘programmes of normalising instruction to compulsorily attending groups of offenders’ (1997: 101) and the probation hostel, an institution which has, according to Worrall, become ‘less a roof over one’s head and more of a *house of correction* in its own right’ (1997: 107, emphasis added).

The Criminal Justice Act (1991) introduced minimum National Standards for community penalties, including the management and administration of probation hostels, and these came into effect in October 1992. These National Standards stated that hostels should be ‘offering an enhanced level of supervision within a structured and supportive environment’ (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 1993: 13). As Davies (1996) contended, the purpose of hostels would be to assist the offender to lead a responsible and law abiding lifestyle, help them to find work and suitable accommodation on departure. However, by 1993, when the Inspectorate report was compiled on probation and bail hostels, it was found that many hostels were still ‘struggling to find a regime suited to the new rationale’ (HM Inspectorate of Probation 1993:13) and a diversity of programmes and management systems was still evident.

These last two issues, those raised by Worrall and the HM Inspectorate of Probation, signify a suitable point at which to end this chapter. Worrall’s comments about the ‘corrective’ nature of probation hostels and the fact that reform is still perceived to be a function of the probation service appear to bring the debates in this chapter full circle, confirming to some extent the position of probation hostels as semi-penal institutions. It is not really important that Worrall is not specifically talking about women’s hostels as that case will be taken up in great depth in the case study presented over the next three chapters. Also the comments made in the

Inspectorate report about the diversity of hostel practices and regimes also confirms this chapter's contention that probation hostels can be considered semi-penal in that they are able to adapt, or even resist, formal state regulation in a way that conventional probation programmes cannot and as such they manage (however tenuously) to remain on the periphery of full state control.

Finally, as the research conducted for this thesis was undertaken between 1992 and 1994, it seems inappropriate to continue this examination of the developments in women's hostels beyond this date. The analysis of the data collected is presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven and will pick up on the points raised in this and the preceding chapters. The way in which one particular reformatory/hostel has managed, over a period of nearly two hundred years, to remain largely autonomous of full state control will be discussed. In addition the way in which the dominant feminising discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology, in conjunction with the ideals of normalisation and reform, have influenced and determined the treatment of women within that institution will be critically analysed. The analysis begins in the following chapter with an examination of the genesis of the institution and its early years as a reformatory throughout the nineteenth century. Chapter Six will continue the discussion by scrutinising the history of the institution throughout the twentieth century and finally Chapter Seven will present an analysis of the institution as a modern day probation hostel and the experiences of its staff and residents between 1992 and 1994.

Chapter Five

Semi-penal institutionalisation for women on Merseyside: The Nineteenth Century

[Adelaide House] owes its existence ...to that great Christian lady [Elizabeth Fry] who gave herself so unstintingly to the service of her unfortunate and distressed sisters (Church of England Temperance Society, undated and unpublished report).¹

Adelaide House is a women's probation and bail hostel on Merseyside, England, funded by the Home Office but owned and co-managed by the Church of England Council for Social Aid (CECSA). It is an institution with an extensive history. It is the oldest Diocesan charity in Liverpool, older than the Diocese itself, and its origins can be traced back to the early nineteenth century and the influence of penal reformer, Elizabeth Fry, the 'great Christian lady' mentioned in the quotation above. It is the intention of this and the following chapter to utilise original historical data found within the hostel in order to examine the genesis and evolution of Adelaide House from a nineteenth century refuge for destitute women to a twentieth century female bail and probation hostel. This chapter will focus specifically on the origins of this institution and its development throughout the nineteenth century whilst the following chapter will bring the debates up to date by charting the history throughout the twentieth century. This chapter will not be merely a chronological historical account. On the contrary it is the intention to build on the theoretical perspective outlined in Chapter Two and thus provide a critical analysis of the way in which women were regulated and disciplined within

¹ This undated and unpublished report, entitled *The Church and Social Service: Adelaide House*, was found in the attic of Adelaide House during the period of fieldwork for this thesis. The majority of material utilised in this chapter originated from the same source and is currently the property of the Church of England Council for Social Aid (CECSA), formerly the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS). The documentation found consisted of unpublished material including Matron's log books, Matron's reports, rule books, annual reports, minutes of meetings, medical reports and several memos and personal letters dating from 1823 to the mid 1970s (see Chapter Three for further details of this material). Henceforth, when referred to, this material will be referenced as Adelaide House Archives (AHA). Although the majority of the information was dated, some documents were not and so specific (day, month, year) dates will be given whenever possible. For some material, only a general date (year) is given and for a further selection, no dates are recorded at all.

this institution during the nineteenth century and, in doing so, begin to uncover those themes of continuity which link its previous existence with its present one.

The way in which women were categorised and ‘normalised’ according to dominant feminising discourses around domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology will be critically discussed. In addition, themes of *discontinuity* will be identified and explored, in particular the way in which the institution responded to historical shifts in the dominant discourses around female deviancy and thus the strategies through which the female residents were disciplined according to different ideological concepts at different periods of history.² The institution will also be analysed within the context of the semi-penal criteria outlined in Chapter Four. In particular the way in which it managed to combine notions of care and control, welfare and discipline will be examined along with its ability to unify those formal methods of control, normally found within the prison, with a more informal, domestic style discipline reminiscent of that employed within the family and the home.³

Finally, an analysis of the way in which women coped with or resisted the regimes and discourses that sought to discipline and normalise them will be presented. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, this was not an easy goal to achieve. All of the original historical data gathered for this research was in the form of documents written by ‘experts’ or professionals who claimed to ‘know’ these women of history. No documentation was found which recorded the experiences or motives of the women themselves. Consequently although several incidents of recalcitrant behaviour were recorded within the official documentation, these were always contextualised within the discourses of morality or pathology, labelling the women concerned as inherently morally or mentally deficient.

² This issue of *discontinuity* is more relevant to the following chapter in which the history of the institution throughout the twentieth century will be explored. During the nineteenth century the dominant explanations and responses to female deviancy remained fairly constant within this institution and it was not until the early twentieth century that significant ideological trends began to impact upon the female residents.

³ Although it should be acknowledged that prisons also operate similar domestic styles of discipline. See Chapter Two for a further discussion of this issue.

Without the women's own explanations of their behaviour, the motives behind their actions can only be assumed. Nonetheless, as Cain (1993) argued, the ultimate form of knowledge subjugation is the ignorance, or refusal to accept, that experiences are still valid even if there exists no discourse within which to articulate them. She highlights the case of sexual harassment as an example stating that women experienced such incidents long before a name was given to the issue. Thus, the fact that women's unruly or rebellious behaviour was not defined as acts of resistance may be because such a discourse was unavailable to the women or was suppressed by other, dominant (moral / pseudo-scientific) discourses.

Therefore, in order to remain faithful to the feminist methodological and theoretical approach that influenced this research, and in order to 'liberate' these women of history from the feminising discourses that have historically bound them, incidents of confrontation, insurgency and insubordination will be analysed within feminist debates around women's agency and resistance.

The early years of the institution: Origins and Organisation

Elizabeth Fry had family connections in Liverpool. She is reported to have called upon her relatives sometime around 1820, possibly at the same time as her venture to Kirkdale gaol (CETS, undated and unpublished report, AHA). Details of her relatives are sketchy but examination of the Fry family tree indicates that they were most likely Mrs. Ann Waterhouse, her husband Nicholas and their thirteen children (Smith, 1878). The Waterhouses resided in Everton and were the founders of Waterhouse and Sons Merchant Cotton Brokers, in Oldhall Street, Liverpool. They were wealthy, well connected and 'locally distinguished for their public spirit and good deeds' (*The Welldoer*, 1909: 2). It is not surprising then that they were enthusiastic and excited to hear about their cousin's unprecedented philanthropic work. Like many other middle class Quaker families of their day they were keen to become involved (or at least be seen to partake) in charitable enterprises and so as a result of Fry's visit they became determined to undertake some 'rescue work' of their own. The Waterhouses bought a property at no. 17 Roscoe Lane, Liverpool

and, in 1823 opened it as the Lancashire County Refuge for the Destitute (CETS, undated and unpublished report, AHA).

The Refuge was a charitable organisation, supervised by a Matron and managed by a Ladies' Committee and a Gentlemen's Committee. Early documentation indicates that although the Ladies' Committee was primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of the Refuge, major decisions (for example those regarding staff appointments, resident admissions and financial matters) were made by (or at least could not be made without the approval of) the Gentlemen's Committee.⁴ There are no records to suggest that permission or approval for any decisions taken at the institution was sought by any higher authority than the self-appointed Gentlemen's Committee and thus, during the first century of its existence at least, the Refuge operated well beyond the reach of formal state control.

During its early years of operation, women were received at the Refuge directly from the various prisons throughout Lancashire, in particular Kirkdale Gaol, Preston Gaol, Lancaster Castle, the Borough Gaol, and the Liverpool Bridewell, being recommended by the Prison Chaplain or the Ladies' Prison Association.⁵ The original aim of the Refuge was to help women who had been imprisoned for theft or debt. However this did not mean that *any* female thief or debtor would be admitted. The Refuge had particularly strict gatekeeping policies that were strongly enforced in order to ensure only particular 'types' of women were admitted. An Annual Report from the following century describes the Refuge of 1823 as being utilised for the reception of

..discharged female prisoners and others of whose desire to reform their life (*sic*) there appears to be a reasonable hope (Adelaide House Annual Report, 1963, AHA).

⁴ Matron's Report books (AHA) for the early years of the Refuge provide many examples of the Ladies' Committee meeting with the Gentlemen's Committee in order to gain permission for the reception of inmates and the allocation of funds (for books, games and clothing).

⁵ Women would also be referred by their husbands or families and this issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

This statement indicates two important criteria that were used as a form of gatekeeping at the newly opened Refuge. First, all admissions were required to show a 'desire to reform' their lives, an acknowledgement and sense of remorse of their previous behaviour. As discussed previously, this wish to reform was often an essential criterion for admission to the various semi-penal institutions for women.

Women would therefore only be considered for entry to the Lancashire Refuge, if they voluntarily renounced their past 'sins' and showed a genuine desire to amend their behaviour. Given their non-formal status, semi-penal institutions such as the Refuge technically had no power to confine women against their will (although, as will be discussed later in this chapter, women were often subjected to a great deal of pressure from both the reformers and their families and thus the boundary between consent and coercion would become somewhat blurred). Consequently this meant that women were essentially 'voluntary' admissions and as such only those who seemed likely and willing to submit to the reforming regimes were accepted.

Second, there had to be some early indication, or 'reasonable hope', that amelioration was likely. The assessment of 'reasonable hope of reform' was of course subjective and prone to moral judgements, and it was therefore uncommon (although not unheard of) for women with a long criminal history or known prostitutes to be admitted. These women were generally believed to be morally corrupt, capable of corrupting others and impossible to reform. Only on those occasions when such women were represented as helpless and hapless casualties of circumstance would admission be granted (the representation of prostitutes as harmless and non-threatening victims will be discussed later in this chapter).

Thus we have a picture of the origins and early organisational structure and philosophy of the Refuge in terms of management, referral and gatekeeping procedures. The following section of the chapter will focus specifically on the way in which women were regulated within the institution by critically examining the feminising discourses that sought to rationalise and subsequently normalise their behaviour. The way in which the Refuge utilised methods of regulation and

discipline from the whole 'continuum' of social control (merging formal with informal techniques) will also be analysed.

Paternalistic Discipline: The Formal and Informal Regulation of Women within the Lancashire Refuge

Once women were admitted to the Refuge they were subjected to a regime based primarily around moral reform and religious instruction. This was supported by a schedule of strict and arduous domestic work. This work, unlike the more formalised 'training' introduced during the twentieth century, was not necessarily a means of reform in its own right, but rather served to compliment and reinforce the process of moral salvation. Hard work was seen as a means of atonement for previous sinful and deviant behaviour. In addition, hard labour was essential as idleness was equated with sin, and thus industry was perceived as a means of preventing further moral degeneration. Keeping women busy was essential as indolence was considered to be a significant cause of their deviant behaviour.

Ladies, hard work is important to the Refuge for several reasons...not least because it occupies the women's day. As we are all aware the devil frequently finds mischief for idle hands (Letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee 19th June, 1835, AHA).

..it was not enough to isolate...women from the contamination of drink. It was necessary to find them something to do, idleness being notoriously the main cause of inebriety amongst women (*Liverpool Review*, 1899: 11).

The first set of rules and the early Matron's report books indicate that life was extremely structured for women within the institution. They had to rise at 6am in the summer and 7am in the winter, make their beds and clean their rooms before attending 'family worship'. After breakfast they were expected to work till 8 o'clock in the evening with an hour's break for dinner and exercise and a half hour break for supper. The work itself consisted of knitting, spinning, making shoes, laundry work and general housekeeping duties. Occasionally the women were offered some education in basic literacy skills but this was rare and considerably

more emphasis was placed on domestic work in order that they might be reformed to be obedient and diligent wives, mothers or servants.⁶

Although the domestic work at the Refuge was hard and laborious, it was represented by the Management Committees as a benevolent, 'homely' form of discipline that, under normal circumstances, the women would have received from their families. However this training was not quite as 'benign' as the management committee proclaimed. First, the domestic discipline was supported and maintained by a much more formal, custodial style of control. Whilst at the Refuge women were allowed no visitors and were only allowed to leave the premises with special permission from the Matron and even then, they often had to be accompanied by a chaperone (First Book of Rules, 1822, AHA). In addition they were intensely supervised and a detailed daily record of their activities and behaviour was kept in the form of Matron's Reports. Second, the domestic training itself was not imposed on the residents solely to facilitate their reformation.

Mahood's (1990) analysis of the Magdalene Homes highlights how, because of their charitable status, the women in the Homes were required to work, not only because they might be morally and domestically reformed, but also because they could help raise money to keep the institutions financially viable. The women at the Lancashire Refuge were expected to fulfil a similar function. Thus although they were required to engage in a range of domestic duties in order that they might be reformed to an acceptable feminine standard, they were also encouraged to spin, knit and sew in order that they could make clothes for themselves and for other residents.

The Refuge also took in laundry from other institutions and organisations (although none are named in the early records) and charged a fee for this service.

⁶ The Matron's Log Book for the years 1835 - 1838 is a record of all admissions to the Refuge. Of the 75 women admitted during this time, 40 are identified as being able to 'read sufficiently', 16 are described as able to read 'imperfectly' and 19 are recorded as 'illiterate'. However although there was a fairly high rate of illiteracy amongst the residents, this was not recorded as a priority in the reform process.

The women were paid a small amount of cash for the work they did but most importantly, according to the Refuge administration, the work allowed them to 'keep their heads dry and their bellies full' (Letter from Gentlemen's Committee to the Matron of the Lancashire Refuge, March 6th, 1830). Without this type of work, the Refuge would have faced severe financial difficulties during its early years and, although its primary purpose was to reclaim and reform its female residents, ironically the institution was largely dependent on them for its own survival. This goes some way to explaining the, often desperate, need to retain those women who were extremely productive or had desirable skills. Elizabeth Harris, for example, was admitted from Kirkdale gaol in 1826, after her husband had been transported.

If she behaves well, will make a great acquisition to the Refuge as she makes shoes, weaves fringes and various other works, which are wanted here (Matron's Reports, February, 1826, AHA).

Ellen Bowden, admitted in 1834, was described as a good seamstress and an industrious and diligent laundry worker. As a result considerable concern was expressed when she requested her discharge from the Refuge in 1835.

Ladies, the discharge of Bowden was a great loss to the Refuge. Her industrious spirit and keenness were an inspiration to others and *her sewing ability most useful to us throughout these difficult months*. However, our work with her was done and she was restored successfully to her family so we should rejoice in that (Letter from Matron to the Ladies' Committee, February 21st 1835, AHA. Emphasis added).

The 'reasonable hope of reform' criterion was most strongly enforced during financially lean years. Letters from the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Committees indicates that the Refuge suffered a great degree of financial insecurity during the 1830s. One letter in particular states that although the situation was not desperate, it did require the assistance of the Matron

...to ensure that only the *most deserving and industrious girls* be admitted. We have not the means or desire to support unwilling or idle cases (Letter from the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Committees to the Matron, August 21st, 1835, AHA. Emphasis added.).

Regardless of the somewhat self-serving practices of the Lancashire Refuge, the institution was nonetheless perceived to be a place where, if nothing else, vulnerable women could be 'protected' from corrupting influences. The whole semi-penal movement had been developed on the principle that women, like juveniles, were inherently impressionable and therefore required segregation from dangerous company, hence their removal from the prison system and their subsequent confinement in reformatories, refuges and homes. Of course, not all women at the Refuge were referred from prison. On the contrary, for the nineteenth century female, the family home and local 'community' could be just as dangerous and corrupting a location as any gaol. Consequently, many women at the Refuge were admitted by their families or husbands as a last attempt to assert some paternalistic control over their wayward females.

Eliza Walton was admitted in 1826 after becoming involved in prostitution. This, it was believed, was due to her contact with corrupting influences. Her own family had attempted to 'protect' her from her corrupting acquaintances but when these informal measures proved ineffective, stronger methods of control were required.

[Eliza Walton] had been confined in Kirkdale 12 months for stealing a watch in a house of ill-fame. *Was imprisoned by her relations* to keep her from dangerous company having always been wild and worthless (Matron's Reports, August 1826, AHA. Emphasis added).

A letter requesting admission for Eliza, written to the Refuge by her father, goes on to state that

...we are sure that she will be returned to her family her behaviour having been reformed and her soul reclaimed. We need not remind you of the importance of keeping her apart from bad company as she is very giddy and easily encouraged (Letter to Matron from Mr Frederick Walton, 2nd August, 1826, AHA).

This close contact between the Refuge and the women's families was an extremely significant aspect of the paternalistic philosophy underpinning the institution. A case could be made for admission of almost any woman, regardless of the nature of her offence, as long as it could be assured that discipline could be maintained by an 'appropriate' family member (preferably a father or husband) once her period of reformation was complete. This merging of formal and informal methods of control is highlighted in the case of Mary Ann Roberts who was referred by the Chaplain of Kirkdale prison in 1831. In his letter of referral he describes Ann's situation.

A young woman 22 years old has been six months in prison for stealing money from a man in a public house, and is desirous of admission into the Refuge. It is one of those cases which as far as crime is concerned I would not recommend to the Refuge – she has been two years on the town but she has been well educated and one of the jury stated that he knew her late father who was a most religious man and a Preacher She also has an uncle ... who is a Preacher and who says he would receive her if he knew that she was reclaimed so far from her bad habits and company as to be an Inmate of the Refuge. She is very modest and retiring in her conversation and keeps aloof from the other prisoners – it is plain she has been a spoilt child and reared by indulgent parents. It is only to say that she is determined to seek for the means of salvation in the Refuge and I hope the good seed which has been sown in her early years will be matured with you and bring forth the fruit of everlasting life (November, 1831, AHA.).

In Mary's case, agents from the whole control spectrum or 'continuum' were instrumental in negotiating her future control. Members of her family, the Chaplain of the prison, the Matron of the Refuge, the Gentlemen's Committee and even a member of the jury that originally convicted her, all played some role in deciding how best to discipline, control and thus 'save' this unfortunate woman. The Matron's Reports for February 1832 indicate that Mary was 'successfully reformed' and duly returned to the 'care and protection' of her family (AHA).

Close links with the families of women at the Refuge were essential to ensure their 'total' control and to ensure that the hard work of the institution would not be 'undone' once a woman returned to her home community. In particular, the

forging of these links was deemed to be most necessary for those women who provided a 'sexual' threat to feminine 'norms'.

Sexuality constituted one of the most pervasive discourses through which the women at the Refuge were constructed and understood. As previously mentioned, the Refuge employed a strict gatekeeping policy with regard to prostitutes up until the mid twentieth century. Experienced prostitutes, viewed as unreclaimable and morally corrupt were rarely admitted to the Refuge and only those with special circumstances (like those women from respectable backgrounds or pathetic victims who had been 'led astray' by others) were accepted.

The Matron's Reports highlight this with the case of twenty three year old Frances Patterson. The Chaplain of Kirkdale Gaol referred Frances to the Refuge in 1831. The Chaplain reported to the Matron that she had turned to prostitution out of desperation when her sailor husband had failed to provide her with money to sustain herself and her children. The Matron agreed to admit Frances to the Refuge on a trial period, acknowledging that she had 'fallen into prostitution through no fault of her own' (Matron's Reports, May 1831, AHA). However her stay lasted only a few weeks and a subsequent entry in the Matron's Reports records her release.

After showing much penitence and sorrow for her past conduct she grew tired of confinement and desired to have her discharge. There was much pains taken in pointing out to her the misery she was exposing herself to by prostitution which she did not deny but nothing could restrain her...as is so often the case, the souls of prostitutes are so easily lost (Matron's Reports, May 1831, AHA).

As Mahood (1990) points out, the nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic increase in the amount of charitable work carried out with prostitutes and 'fallen women'. In order to financially support this work, organisations such as the Magdalene Homes and other institutions created for the reformation of 'immoral' women, were keen to portray the prostitute as someone worthy of sympathy, pity and charity. Mahood asserts that prostitutes were frequently depicted as luckless,

ill-fated women from otherwise 'respectable' families who had been corrupted by unscrupulous company and manipulating lovers. This method of classification, which characterised the prostitute as a non-threatening victim rather than a sexually depraved, inherently immoral offender, served to reduce the sexual and social threat that prostitutes, and working class women in general, posed to 'respectable' society.

As the example above indicates, Frances's drift into prostitution was indeed attributed to social circumstances rather than inherent, moral failings. However, her subsequent desire to leave the institution, and thus her obvious failure to reform, was understood and explained through moral discourse. This inability or unwillingness to separate the social and moral dimensions of women's lives and experiences was to become a lasting theme within the institution throughout the nineteenth century.

Another woman, whose immoral behaviour required controlling (first by her family and friends and finally by the Refuge) was Ann Tyrer, who was admitted in 1825.

Ann Tyrer is of a respectable family in Liverpool....her last husband, Capt Gurnell is now living but has long been separated from his wife, owing to her own misconduct and love of liquor. She has repeatedly left him and associated with depraved characters of both sexes- *her friends have tried every means to reform her conduct...* She is a desperate character...a Child of the Devil and acts like one...is so cunning and immoral ...a dangerous and wicked woman (Matron's Reports, September 1825, AHA. Emphasis added).

Ann left the Refuge in 1826, and a subsequent entry in the Matron's Reports records that

..the Matron has been informed that [Ann] is guilty of every crime but murder and *that she attempted*. Is reportedly in bad health, nothing reformed. Most likely dead (Matron's Reports, February 1826, AHA. Emphasis in original).

What is particularly significant about this example is that Ann Tyrer was thirty-five years old on her admission to the Refuge in 1825. The reformist ideology that underpinned the work of the Refuge, and many other similar institutions at the time, centred on the notion that women were inherently irresponsible, infantile and therefore in need of protection. Thus women like Ann, a mature woman in her thirties who had been married at least once, were still discussed within a discourse that served to 'infantilize' them, reducing them to the status of children. Several feminists have argued that the regimes within modern day custodial institutions deny their female inmates the right to take control over their lives, thus inducing a dependency culture which in turn promotes the infantilization of those women (Carlen, 1983; Rafter, 1983; Faith, 1993; Heidensohn, 1996). This was true for women at the Refuge however it was not *solely* the institutional regime that reduced them to less-than-adult status. Rather the process of infantilization often began even before admission, with negotiations between families (usually husbands or fathers) and the management of the institution serving to envelop the women within a demeaning patriarchal discourse.

The discourse around sexual immorality and inherent wickedness pervades the historical documentation for the Refuge throughout the nineteenth century. The examples of moral decency promoted within the institution were believed to provide an ideal environment to reform and normalise 'fallen' and criminal women back to acceptable standards of behaviour. Other institutions, such as the Workhouse or the gaol, were not perceived to adhere to the same moral standards as the Refuge, and were thus viewed as corrupting and unsuitable for the reformation of their impressionable female inmates. In his letter of referral in 1831, the Warden of Kirkdale implores the Refuge's Committee to accept seventeen year old Catherine Connolly as her prospects in the Workhouse, he claimed, would be grim.

I cannot but think if she were so inclined that she would be admitted into the Workhouse but I fear from the lack of circumspection in that building, and in consequence the opportunity of young people of different sexes mating each other, there is little hope of a doubtful or vicious character

being reclaimed there. (Letter of referral from Warden of Kirkdale to Lancashire Refuge, June 7th, 1831, AHA).

The request for twenty year old Margaret Saxon to be admitted in 1855 is based on a similar premise.

She was a woman of the town and has been in the Penitentiary here but was discharged from thence, *and is now diseased and corrupted*...I have good hopes that she is now fully convinced of her sinful nature and wicked habits and is in earnest in desiring to flee from such courses in future and of becoming a sincere Christian (Matron's Reports, April 1855, AHA. Emphasis added).

The sexual behaviour of another woman, Ann Hassel, was also the cause of much concern within the Refuge but for somewhat different reasons.

In consequence of an unpleasant intimacy with one of the inmates, felt much inclined to allow her to leave the Refuge....but she saw her error and was thankful to remain longer (Matron's Reports, August. 1833, AHA).

The 'unpleasant intimacy', although not defined within the reports, undoubtedly refers to a sexual relationship between the two women. Although Ann was originally allowed to stay after acknowledging 'the error of her ways', it was unsurprising to find that one month later the Matron described her as

Unthankful and disobedient. Expelled without her earnings for bad conduct, immoral behaviour and using improper language (Matron's Reports, September 1833, AHA).

Catherine Briggs, one of the first residents to be admitted in 1823, left later that year but wished to return some months later. The Matron's Report indicates that this request was refused.

Considering her improved health and her sister's perfect willingness to keep her, it is the opinion of the Ladies' Committee that her return is not desirable, especially as she looks for *sinful and shameful indulgences* which are inconsistent with the rules of the institution (Matron's Reports, November, 1823, AHA. Emphasis added).

‘Immoral’ sexual behaviour, whether it be promiscuous or homosexual was unacceptable within the dominant discourses of respectability and decency, but sexual conduct which resulted in illegitimate pregnancy was the most intolerable behaviour of all. The case of Ann Cook, aged seventeen, highlights this. There is only one short entry for Ann in the Matron’s Reports which reads as follows.

Left the Refuge in disgrace - pregnant....Is not to be allowed back
(Matron’s Reports, January 1839, AHA).

Many women were expelled from the Refuge during the nineteenth century but usually for much less serious ‘offences’ than Ann’s. Whatever the transgression that led to their dismissal (whether it be refusing to work, using bad language or attempting to leave without the permission of the Matron), the behaviour of these women was always explained within a moral discourse. The following examples (all found within the Matron’s Reports) emphasize the way in which women were perceived to be intrinsically sinful throughout the whole of the century.

Mary Ann Gilmore, aged thirty three, was discharged from the Refuge for being ‘A wicked depraved character, capable of many sins’ (February 1828, AHA). Likewise, Ann Johnson, aged nineteen, ‘Would not settle to work...is vile and unprincipled and sinful in character’ and was subsequently discharged (July 1847, AHA). Ann Birk, aged twenty three was ‘very artful, sinful and wretched, went out at her own request with bad prospects’ (June 1868, AHA). Ellen Lynch, aged nineteen was described as ‘very deceitful and wicked, endeavoured to escape to pursue her former vile habit’ (December 1873, AHA). Finally Catherine Taylor, aged 22, was dismissed after it was concluded she was ‘naturally deceitful and cunning. A woman whose evil tendencies cannot be reformed’ (April, 1897, AHA).

It is apparent from the examples above what constituted a ‘failure’ at the Refuge. The inability or refusal to submit to and accept the feminising regimes of the institution caused the greatest disappointment amongst, and the harshest response

from, the management and staff. By the same premise, success at the Refuge was measured in terms of how closely the female inmates managed to adhere to the ideal model of femininity endorsed by the institution. A failure to return to criminal behaviour or the securing of gainful employment (which would allow the woman to become not only respectable but self-supporting too) was obviously accepted as some measure of 'success'. However the most celebrated form of 'success', and that which proved more than any other that a woman had been effectively reformed, was marriage. Rimmer comments that

As far as the reformers were concerned, the day on which an old girl produced her marriage certificate in order that she might claim an offered reward of 10 shillings was certainly an occasion for much rejoicing and ample evidence of their job well done. (1986: 6)

Marriage was the ultimate confirmation that a woman had been reformed and had willingly accepted and assumed the feminine norms that the Refuge worked so hard to promote.

Sarah Hill was admitted to the Refuge in 1835 after the corrupting influence of male companions had turned her from 'a respectable teacher into a wild and unruly woman' (Matron's Reports, October 1835, AHA). A year later, after her discharge, a letter from the Matron states that

Sarah Hill is now married to a steady young man. Much rejoicing
....*a better example of the success of our work we could not ask for*
(Letter to the Gentlemen's Committee from the Matron, August 23rd, 1836, AHA. Emphasis added).

Catherine Kelly, admitted in 1860, was also a success story for the Refuge.

We are pleased to record that Catherine Kelly, who left the institution in October, is respectfully married and settled at Bangor.. a wonderful inspiration for others (Matron's Reports, November 1860, AHA).

Likewise Annie Sharpe was 'wonderfully reformed...now married and far from her previous habits' (Matron's Reports, April 1831, AHA) and Flora Newgate was 'a

true success, married and restored to good health' (Matron's Reports, January 1841, AHA). Catherine Smith, although not newly married was still a cause for great celebration when she was 'restored to her husband much reformed' (Matron's Reports, March, 1855, AHA). Catherine was the ultimate proof that the institution could succeed where all informal measures of control had failed.

The gentleman [Catherine's husband] would like to thank the Committee for the great improvements in his formerly unruly and ill-tempered wife. Gentlemen, it is so often the case that the women in our care require guidance far beyond that which a loving husband or family can provide and this woman's case should remind us of our duty and function in that respect (Matron's Reports, March 1855, AHA).

As discussed throughout this chapter, the primary way in which the Refuge attempted to provide the necessary 'guidance' was through the promotion of a range of feminising discourses and practices that served to reaffirm the importance of domesticity, respectability and (legitimate) motherhood. This was primarily achieved through a process of religious and domestic instruction. However, instruction was insufficient without the provision of some 'good examples' to which the female inmates could aspire. The discussion that follows will examine the way in which the female Matron was expected to support the feminising regime at the institution by acting as an appropriate role model for the residents in her care. In addition, the way in which the residents themselves were required to fulfil a similar function in the setting of a 'good example' will be explored.

Discipline by example: women reforming other women

As highlighted above, the Refuge was often perceived as a 'last resort' for the salvation of unruly or immoral women who might otherwise have faced further corruption in prison, their homes or communities. However, once these women were received into the institution, there was no guarantee that they would become impervious to negative influences. As Mahood (1990) points out, it was acknowledged early on by the administration of the Magdalene Homes that there was a greater chance the female inmates would accept the reformist philosophies of the institution if, once there, they remained separated from 'contradictory

examples' (1990:78). The Refuge went to great lengths to ensure that those residents deemed to be potentially 'disreputable' were kept apart from their 'respectable' and potentially reformable counterparts. Margaret Roberts and Esther Smith for example, were discharged shortly after their arrival in 1826.

[Margaret] will be no loss to the Refuge as she is very idle and *sets a very slothful and disagreeable example to the younger females*. The Matron has allow'd her to smoke once a day for a week or two, to wean her off the woe of tobacco altogether but she smokes till she faints off her chair (Matron's Reports, April 1826, AHA. Emphasis added).

...The Matron has reason to believe Smith a vile and unprincipled woman dissatisfied with the Refuge *and desirous to make others so*...She is to be dismissed (Matron's Reports, September 1826, AHA. Emphasis added).

Likewise, in 1832, twenty three year old Elizabeth Moore was expelled from the Refuge because

[She] continues her wicked practice of contaminating the minds of the Inmates by encouraging them to be dissatisfied and discontent (*sic*). The Ladies...considered it necessary to discharge her immediately (Matron's Reports, June 1832, AHA).

Moore was mentioned again the same year in a separate logbook of residents where she was described as

A good washer but was sent out for deceitful conduct and causing the inmates to be dissatisfied and discontent (*sic*) (Record of Residents, 1823 –1844, AHA).

Some twenty six years later, similar concerns were being raised about Anne Wyn who, again, was quickly expelled.

Anne Wyn, by her influence and bad example, has led on Elizabeth Gascoigne and Sarah Cowley to very ill conduct. The two former have been dismissed from the institution, the latter made her escape but sent back the clothes which she wore which belonged to the Refuge (Matron's Reports, January 1858, AHA).

It would appear that the most, or perhaps the only, effective way to protect vulnerable residents from the corruptive influences of ‘undesirables’ was to dismiss those ‘bad apples’. It can be observed from the reports above that decisions to dismiss these ‘corrupting’ women seemed to have a note of urgency to them. Women who led others astray or who caused others to be dissatisfied with the Refuge were rarely given a second chance and the haste with which they were expelled is a good example of the fear that such women provoked.

However it was not sufficient to simply protect the women from negative influences, it was just as important to provide them with some alternative *positive* role models. Thus the appointment of a suitable Matron was felt to be crucial to the success of the institution. As Zedner (1991) points out, women's knowledge of household economics, their background of domesticity and their experiences of caring for the sick and infirmed made them an ideal choice for such a role. But, as Sim (1990) argues, throughout the early nineteenth century it was believed that the restoration of *idealistic* moral and social values could be best achieved by setting the inmates of institutions a *realistic* ‘feminine’ example. Thus, although institutions such as the Refuge aimed to restore women back to a middle class standard of femininity, it was *working class* women who were believed to be most suitable for undertaking this task

The notion of the respectable and honest working class woman fitted in well with the middle class ideals of ‘working class femininity’ (diligent, maternal and domesticated). A letter from Nicholas Waterhouse to the newly created Gentlemen’s Committee, prior to the opening of the Refuge, highlights the need for a respectable working class role model. He recommended that the new Matron be

...hardworking, clean and sympathetic. The lady appointed must show generosity of spirit *although she need not necessarily be a woman of means* (1st September 1822, AHA. Emphasis added).

The Matron was to be responsible for supervising the ‘complete’ reformation of the female residents and this was to be achieved through two methods. First, she was required to take responsibility for the women’s religious instruction thus ensuring their moral reform.

[The Matron] shall read a chapter out of the Scriptures morning and evening. Each service to begin with a Psalm or Hymn. She shall preside at table during meals, ask a blessing and permit the women to return thanks...(First Book of Rules, 28th October, 1822).

Second, she was expected to supervise their daily household chores, thus guaranteeing their domestic restoration which, in turn, would promote their ‘total’ reformation.

So the Matron played a crucial role in the restoration of women to an appropriate standard of behaviour. It should be acknowledged however that the responsibility of the Matron went far beyond the provision of a good ‘feminine’ role model. Arguably one of the most significant reasons why the Refuge required a female supervisor was the fact that, as Heidensohn (1996) has asserted, and as discussed in Chapter Two, these women were able to act in a conciliatory role, elucidating and interpreting the ‘expert’ knowledge of the Gentlemen’s Committee (and later other ‘experts’ such as doctors and psychiatrists) into ‘common sense’ discourse and practice which, in turn, could be appropriated by the already-failing residents.

Setting a ‘good example’ was not the sole duty of the Matron. On the contrary, the residents themselves were expected to play an active role in disciplining and reforming their sisters.

Twenty seven year old Margaret Downes was referred from Lancaster Prison in 1832 and was described in the Matron’s Reports after only a few days as being

A well behaved woman, very industrious and attentive to the rules of the House. *An excellent example to other inmates* (Matron’s Reports, October 1832, AHA. Emphasis added).

Similarly, twenty year old Ann Hughes, referred in 1856, was described as

... very clean and dilligent and likely to set a good example to the other inmates (Matron's Reports, August 1856, AHA).

Women who were perceived to be a good influence on others were extremely desirable and, as with those women who offered necessary skills, much effort was taken to keep them in the institution for as long as possible. Maria Phillips, aged twenty eight, was admitted from Kirkdale gaol in 1831. She had been abused at home in Glasgow by her stepfather and had decided to walk to Hereford to stay with her mother. She was found in Liverpool in a state of ill health and was sent to Kirkdale for seven days 'in order that her health might be recruited' (Matron's Reports, May 1831, AHA). Maria was described as being well educated, articulate and determined and in his letter of referral the Chaplain of Kirkdale explained that

Her language is much superior to her station in life and she has evidently experienced very great affliction for she would be thankful to remain in prison rather than go home where she expects to meet with nothing but unkindness from her stepfather whose conduct...drove her from a comfortable home into service. She is very anxious to be admitted into the Refuge and I have no doubt she will benefit by the means afforded by the institution and *also be useful to others by her good example* (Letter of Referral from Chaplain of Kirdale Gaol to Matron, May 12th, 1831, AHA. Emphasis added).

Once Maria's health had recovered she expressed a desire to leave the Refuge and continue her journey to her mother in Hereford. The Matron's Reports state that the Matron, Reverend Dawson of the Gentlemen's Committee, Reverend Horner (Chaplain of Kirkdale Gaol) and the members of the Ladies' Committee all tried to discourage Maria from leaving but they were unsuccessful in their attempts and she was eventually discharged in September 1831. Maria had not committed any criminal offence and was, according to the Matron's Reports, only sent to Kirkdale and subsequently to the Refuge, in order to regain her health. She was well educated, from a respectable background and was never once described as being in need of reform. However, she was felt to be such a good example to other

residents that this made her a desirable acquisition to the institution, so much so that profound concern was expressed at her request to leave and indeed great efforts were taken to prevent her departure.

Total conformity to accepted standards of femininity was required before a woman would receive the approbation of the Matron and the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Committees. A whole range of 'non-feminine' behaviour such as swearing, drinking and smoking were considered inappropriate and thus attempts were made to control such activities. However, moral judgements were not solely made by the management or staff of the Refuge. Whereas in some cases residents would, by their *good example*, set the standard for acceptable behaviour, in other cases residents would actively determine, by their *disapproval* of other women's actions, what constituted unacceptable, or censured, behaviour. These judgements tended not to concern minor misdemeanours such as using bad language, behaving boisterously or getting drunk. Rather they primarily came into force when a woman was perceived to have seriously transgressed the boundaries of female morality, most commonly when she had been accused or charged with the death, abuse or neglect of a child.⁷

Mary Bennet, for example, was admitted to the Refuge in 1825 after having served nine months in Kirkdale for 'stripping children' (Matron's Reports, April 1825, AHA). The Matron's Reports state that her youngest child had been admitted to the workhouse and her husband had left her. The Matron goes on to describe Mary as a 'bigotted Roman Catholic' claiming that

She has not made friends in the Refuge. The other inmates resent her bigotted views and the fact that she so cruelly treated her own children.

Likewise, Bridget Fothergill, admitted in the same year, provoked a similar reaction from the other female residents.

⁷ See Chapter Seven for a further discussion of this issue in a contemporary context.

She was imprisoned for deserting her child.....Fothergill has many good qualities but disgraces them with great violence of temper and bad language..Is always unhappy, *the other inmates are displeased and allude to her deserting her child* (Matron's Reports, July 1825, AHA. Emphasis added).

Although there is no evidence to suggest that these women were subjected to physical violence from their fellow inmates, records do indicate that some degree of verbal abuse was a common response to these 'maternal delinquents'. Bridget for example was described as being upset at the 'spiteful taunts she receives from the other women' (Matron's Reports, July 1825, AHA) and Mary requested her leave of the institution after 'becoming weary of hearing the unpleasant names she is so often called' (Matron's Reports, April 1825, AHA).

The demarcation and condemnation of 'non-appropriate' behaviour by their fellow residents represents one of the most powerful methods through which many women at the Refuge were policed and controlled. As Smith (1996) argues (in her discussion of contemporary women's prisons) the marginalisation and subsequent 'scapegoating' of particular women because of the nature of their offence, is a method through which other women can express their own frustrations and emotions by identifying themselves as 'different' and essentially 'superior' to those 'lowest of the low' females (Smith, 1996: 160). Likewise, women at the Refuge would set boundaries between acceptable, 'normal' behaviour and unacceptable, abnormal behaviour, thus segregating and castigating those women who fell into the latter category. Through this process, it could be argued, women who had found themselves deprived of any real status or power (through their admission to such an 'infantilising' institution as the Refuge) could retain some sense of influence and control by separating themselves (both physically and 'morally') from those that they considered to be real 'aberrations' of femininity.

Of course, women did not only police each other. From the Matron's Reports, which provide numerous accounts of women submitting to and accepting the regime at the Refuge, it could be argued that the inmates participated in a form of

‘self-policing’ too. This issue, along with a discussion of those women who did not accept the regime of the institution and thus rejected or resisted the disciplinary processes and discourses that sought to control them, will be explored below.

Responding to semi-penal institutionalisation: Conformity and resistance during the Nineteenth Century

For the most part women *appeared* to readily accept and submit to the disciplinary regimes at the Lancashire Refuge. The historical documentation records no incidents of serious collective insurgency and those women who were perceived to display rebellious inclinations were quickly expelled from the institution. The women who remained within the Refuge to complete their period of reformation were, according to the Refuge records, generally tractable and unproblematic. However this apparent passivity needs to be scrutinised closely and examined within the broader context of the situation of working class women in nineteenth century Liverpool.

At this time in history, many women who became labelled ‘criminal’ or ‘wayward’, even as children, could find themselves in a persistent cycle of poverty and incarceration. The Matron’s Reports (December 1825, AHA) highlight this with the case of Helen Malone. She had lived much of her life in the Workhouse but escaped and, in order to avoid starvation, resorted to begging. She was accused and found guilty of theft and was sent to Kirkdale. From there she was referred and admitted to the Refuge but left after a few days, as she did not like the regime. Consequently she returned to the workhouse but escaped again and finally ended up back in prison.

The Matron’s Reports from 1831 recount another similar case. Sixteen year old Harriet Pickford was abandoned at a canal in Stockport when she was two months old. She was taken to the Workhouse where she remained until she was ten at which time she went to work in a local factory. However work became scarce and she is described as having frequently gone days without food. She subsequently left the factory and went to work as a servant in the country but after several months

of abuse and no pay she left, taking with her an apron belonging to her mistress. She was sentenced to six months imprisonment before she was finally admitted to the Refuge (Matron's Reports, May 1831, AHA).

These women, and many others like them, spent much of their lives shunted from one institution to another. In the cases of Helen and Harriet their lives revolved around the workhouse, the prison and the Refuge with periods of poverty and abuse in between. It may have been the case therefore, as Okley (1978) has argued, that many women were willing to participate in their own regulation, by conforming to the disciplinary regimes imposed upon them, as a means of avoiding further and more intense intervention from authority. Thus, women may have submitted to and accepted the regime of the Refuge in order to avoid the more harsh and severe conditions they would face in the Workhouse, the prison or on the streets. Indeed, life within an institution (whether it be a prison, as in Zedner's (1991) argument, or a reformatory as in this case) could be preferable to life at home for some working class women during the nineteenth century. The Refuge undoubtedly offered some women a period of respite from the chronic prison-poverty-workhouse cycle, providing living conditions that they may not have found elsewhere.

Examples of those women who *did* resist the regimes of the Refuge and who consequently ended up in more desperate circumstances were often presented to other residents as a warning of the penalties for bad behaviour. Ellen Partridge was only seventeen when she was received at the Refuge in April 1823. She had been tried for burglary and was acquitted whilst her co-accused (her mother and sister) were sentenced to death (Matron's Reports, January 1823, AHA).⁸ Ellen could not settle at the Refuge and absconded after eight days only to be subsequently charged with another burglary for which she was sentenced to seven years transportation.

⁸ There is no record to confirm if the death sentence was carried out on Ellen's mother and sister. During this period of history, it was quite common for capital sentences to be commuted.

A letter to the Ladies' Committee from the Matron (20th November, 1823, AHA) explains the situation.

Ladies, I have been informed by our dear friend the Chaplain [of Kirkdale Gaol] that Ellen Partridge, who absconded several months ago, has since been sentenced to transportation. It is distressing to hear we could not help this poor creature *but this should act as a warning to others who may be thinking of similar action* (Emphasis added).

A similar case was that of Ann Simpson, aged eighteen, who was admitted to the Refuge in 1844.

[She was] favourable on arrival. Discontented, left at her own request. Has been since in Preston Prison and sentenced to 10 years transportation (Matron's Reports, October 1844, AHA).

A later entry records that

The women were most upset to hear of the fate of Ann Simpson but are all the more sensible and grateful of the comforts of the Refuge because of it (February, 1845, AHA).

The staff at the Refuge were well aware that many women only conformed through fear of what might await them outside the institution's gates but as long as the women were hardworking and not disruptive, the motive behind their conformity was unimportant. One such example was eighteen year old Ann Shaw, referred from Manchester Prison in 1845.

[She is]...much addicted to story telling and very bad tempered....She is very ignorant and dull in all kinds of useful learning. But she takes great pains to behave as she is *quite sensible of her destitute situation and therefore very afraid of being discharged* (Matron's Reports, April 1845, AHA. Emphasis added).

Twenty nine year old Emma Stubbs, admitted to the Refuge in May 1831, also expressed such fears.

On first admission very thankful but soon became unsettled and anxious for liberty...she is ashamed of her weak and fickle mind and knows she shall have many difficulties to encounter if thrown upon the world again, without a change of heart (Matron's Reports, May 1831, AHA.).

In addition to the warnings of the consequences of disobedience or non-compliance the women were also made aware that their chances of finding employment on departure depended heavily, not only on their conformity but also on their level of gratitude. Twenty year old Ellen Deane and nineteen year old Ellen Bradley were given glowing reports by the Matron on their departures. Ellen Deane is described as being 'every way improved and most grateful' and therefore 'most deserving of her domestic position' (Matron's Reports, February 1837, AHA) and Ellen Bradley as 'an excellent workwoman....well behaved and truly grateful...thoroughly deserving of her new position' (Matron's Reports, June 1846, AHA).

On the other hand nineteen year old Mary Molloy was described a few weeks after her admittance in 1859 as

Most ungrateful of being here and ignorant of the blessing of help.
She is unthankful and shows no desire to reform (Matron's Reports, September 1859, AHA).

Finally, on her dismissal, the Matron comments that

..her ungrateful attitude make her difficult to place in employment...*we cannot help one who lacks such an appreciation*...she is to be dismissed and no position found for her (Matron's Reports, October 1859, AHA. Emphasis added).

Thus it would be fair to assume that conformity was a more common response to institutionalisation than resistance for the women at the Refuge. However, as Bosworth (1999) asserts, there exist other, more subtle, kinds of behaviour in addition to the explicit forms, such as violence or aggression, that are generally defined as 'resistance'. As suggested above, it would seem that many women conformed to the regime in order to avoid further, more severe subjugation or

deprivation, rather than to simply satisfy the desires of the reformers. In that sense their conformity could indeed be considered as a form of resistance.

Not all women at the Refuge adopted this approach however. As Sim (1990) argues, institutional regimes established around domesticity and paternalistic surveillance were frequently (and explicitly) resisted by women and he cites several prison protests concerning food and unreasonable punishments as examples. Records do show frequent minor incidents of disobedience and non-conformity within the Refuge but these were seldom collective protests. Rather they were usually incidents of *individual* resistance. Any incidents of collective resistance usually only involved small groups of two or three women and these were, according to the official records, quickly dispelled through the immediate disposal of the 'ringleaders'. The Matron's Reports highlight this with the case of Margaret Brown, who showed considerable resistance to her confinement and subsequently endeavoured to make her escape with another resident.

Margaret Brown was immediately dissatisfied with the restraints imposed upon her and declared that she would not submit to it (*sic*). She endeavoured to persuade Sarah Burns to escape and live with her, but failed in this by the exertions of Mr Dawson.... Most thankfully for the other women, Brown was dismissed (Matron's Reports, October 1828, AHA).

For the most part the women's resistance consisted of verbal protests (using bad language or talking disrespectfully to the staff), general disobedience (refusal to work or disregard for the rules of the Refuge) and leaving without permission (even though the women's stay at the Refuge was not compulsory there are many accounts of women 'escaping'). Twenty one year old Elizabeth Jones from Holyhead was one of many women who refused to submit to confinement.

[She is] dirty to a degree, would not be trained, went over the wall April 25th (Matron's Reports, May 1827, AHA).

Similar accounts from the Matron's Reports occur throughout all of the nineteenth century records. Susan Campbell, aged sixteen, was 'expelled for disobedience and other faults' (February 1828, AHA); Ann Hassel, twenty one, was 'Expeld (*sic*) for bad conduct and using improper language' (August, 1833, AHA); Jane Williams, sixteen, was described as 'Brought up in the Workhouse and returned to the Workhouse. Troublesome and disorderly and not suitable for the Refuge' (August, 1839, AHA); fourteen year old Mary Pope was 'Discontented, insolent and would not submit to work. Likely to cause unrest amongst the inmates due to her bold and independent manner' (December 1844, AHA); Ellen Bradley, nineteen, was 'remarkably bold, daring and unruly. The Matron expects to have a difficult task to bring her into order' (March 1852, AHA); and finally Eliza Gibbons, twenty three, was 'Bold and rude and independent of all rule. Would not accept help nor submit to the rules of the Refuge. Dismissed' (October, 1855, AHA).

It was usually the extremely structured and disciplined regime of the Refuge that many women would not or could not adapt to. Although living conditions at the Refuge were undoubtedly better than those in prison or the workhouse, and possibly better than those at home, the constraints on liberty were a frequent cause of complaint amongst the women. One such woman was twenty eight year old Elizabeth Collins who was admitted to the Refuge in 1826 from Kirkdale.

She has been a woman of the town. Had a child born in Kirkdale, dead. Has something bold in her manner. Collins has frequently expressed a desire to go out, thinking the Refuge not half so cheerful and pleasant as Kirkdale. She expected, she says, that they might amuse themselves as they please (Matron's Reports, April 1826, AHA).

Elizabeth was obviously under the impression that the Refuge would be a less restrictive environment than the prison from which she had been sent. Finding that this was not the case, she requested her discharge and was ultimately granted permission to leave. Ann Jane McBride, aged sixteen, also showed considerable resentment at the restraints on her liberty.

..is heartily tired of such confinement and says she cannot bear it much longer (Matron's Reports, October 1826, AHA).

According to Mahood insubordinate and unruly women were a great cause for concern at the Magdalene Homes. She argues that these women did not perceive themselves to be immoral or in need of discipline hence 'their refusals may be interpreted as acts of resistance to moral reform and surveillance.' (1990: 101). There is evidence within the Reports from the Lancashire Refuge to support Mahood's assertions. Many of the women dismissed for unmanageable or uncontrollable behaviour did not believe they required the strict discipline and structured regime of the Refuge. Mary Evans, admitted in 1860, was described by the Matron as

..very unruly and insolent. She refuses to abide by the rules of the Refuge and complains that *she is not a criminal and should not be treated as one*. She is most defiant and ungrateful (Matron's Reports, November 1860, AHA. Emphasis added).

Women like Mary, who rather than displaying the gratitude and appreciation so desired by the Management Committee, declared instead feelings of resentment and indignation at, what they considered an unnecessary intrusion into and constraint upon their lives, were deemed to be the most intolerable type of resident. The Matron finally agreed to the discharge of Mary Evans, after her profound discontentment proved her to be 'stubborn, morally unmovable and completely untrainable' (Matron's Reports, November 1860, AHA). A letter to the Gentlemen's Committee explains the Matron's decision.

Gentlemen, this woman, Mary Evans, was beyond our help, indeed it would appear she was beyond help of any kind. Alas she was ignorant to the fact that help was what was offered her, thinking instead that she was being unduly restrained here in the Refuge....I fear the likes of Evans will never redeem herself and will forever remain bound by her own stubbornness (Letter from the Matron to the Gentlemen's Committee, December 2nd 1860, AHA).

This chapter has identified and analysed the genesis and development of the Lancashire Refuge throughout the nineteenth century in terms of the management and administration of the institution and the dominant ideologies and discourses through which the female residents were disciplined and reformed. In addition the way in which women responded to their confinement, through either displays of conformity or through both subtle and explicit forms of resistance, has been explored. The following chapter will take up these theoretical debates, scrutinising the history of the institution throughout the twentieth century.

Chapter Six

Semi-penal Institutionalisation for Women on Merseyside: The Twentieth Century

During the twentieth century, the dominant disciplinary discourses were subject to several periods of ‘modification’. In other words, unlike the nineteenth century when the Refuge was underpinned by a prevailing moral paradigm, the twentieth century institution was characterised by two opposing, but at the same time, mutually reinforcing discourses built around morality/religion and medical science. Both of these discourses were employed to explain and understand women’s deviant behaviour and although each of these discourses had periods of influence throughout the century, neither one ever gained total, singular dominance over the other. Because these discourses tended to re-emerge at the Refuge at particular points during the twentieth century, this chapter will be structured differently to the previous chapter. So although similar themes to those addressed in the previous chapter will be tackled (themes of continuity between past and present, the merging of informal and formal methods of control for women, the way in which women responded to, or resisted, the disciplinary discourses and regimes imposed upon them and so on), a chronological (as opposed to a thematic) structure will be applied here.

In some cases the time periods covered by the sub-headings overlap (the first sub-heading for example covers the first two decades of the century whilst the second sub-heading covers the period between the wars). This was essentially unavoidable given that the chapter deals with changes, shifts and modifications in both organisational structure and dominant, disciplinary discourses and, whereas sometimes these two aspects were found to be interrelated, at other times they were not. Hence, the chapter will broadly maintain a chronological ‘flow’ as far as possible but will ‘backtrack’ in places where necessary.

However, before any discussion regarding the twentieth century can begin, it is first necessary to revisit the latter years of the nineteenth century in order to briefly outline some important changes that occurred with regard to the refuge.

In 1847 the Refuge had moved to Mount Vernon Green, Edge Hill and in 1864 had been re-named The Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge. It was from this period to the late nineteenth century, that two significant and powerful organisations, namely the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) and the Probation Service, became influential in the institution's development.

The Temperance Movement had developed a particular stronghold in Liverpool throughout the nineteenth century. However, apprehensions for drunkenness (both locally and nationally) continued to increase and in 1876, on the instigation of Frederick Rainer (generally acknowledged as the pioneer of the English Probation Service) the CETS began practical rescue work with the intemperate (Jarvis, 1972). Missionaries were attached to Police Courts in order to 'reclaim' the souls of drunkards who agreed to sign a pledge of temperance and the first ones arrived in Liverpool in 1879 (Merseyside Probation Service, undated and unpublished report, AHA).

The Police Court and Prison Gate Missionaries had two major objectives. First, through the undertaking of social enquiries into the background and antecedents of offenders at the request of magistrates, they aimed to prevent those who were in danger of being sent to prison from going there. This work was extended after the implementation of the Probation of First Offenders Act of 1887 when the Missionaries became largely responsible for the supervision of offenders released by the court on probation orders (McWilliams, 1983).

Their second objective was to succour and comfort on their discharge, those released from prison (*Liverpool Review*, 1928). In Liverpool, missionaries were placed in attendance outside the Police Courts in Dale Street and in a Mission Room outside the recently opened Walton Gaol. Newly released prisoners would be received by the Missionaries daily, given breakfast and then encouraged to sign the pledge. Those who complied (and there were many, in 1898 for instance over 1000 declarations were made (*Liverpool Review*, 1928: 31)) were then assisted in finding accommodation or employment.

The Probation of Offenders Act of 1907 increased the powers of the courts to release offenders on their own recognizances or on the sureties of others. What was particularly significant about the 1907 Act, however, was that it finally formalised the system of supervision. On hearing of the appointment of supervising probation officers, the CETS immediately contacted the Home Office offering the services of its missionaries, who by 1907 had had many years experience in the supervision of offenders. By December 1907, 120 missionaries had been appointed nationally as probation officers (Jarvis, 1972: 20).

One consequence of these appointments was that from the late nineteenth century women were being referred to the Lancashire Refuge via the police court missionaries and then later, by the new probation officers, in addition to those referred by prison chaplains, husbands and families. This new method of referral was to have a significant and lasting impact on the development of the institution throughout the twentieth century.

Adelaide House: The first two decades of the twentieth century

By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Refuge was still operating under the same 'catch them young' philosophy that had been employed during its early years. An article in *The Welldoer*, the newsletter of the League of Welldoers, records the kind of women targeted by the Refuge during the early 1900s.

Women 'from the streets' are not admitted, because there are now numerous institutions in Liverpool to receive such. Young domestic servants, who have lost their place and character by some act of dishonesty; girls over whom their natural guardians have lost control; first offenders bound over and placed under probation, form the class received at the institution (1909: 2).

The Refuge was still employing the same methods of gatekeeping that it always had. Those women considered incorrigible were generally not admitted. The women referred from both the prisons and the court missionaries or probation officers were young, first-time offenders and a genuine desire to reform was still a desirable criteria. The regime at the Refuge was at this time still based around the

combination of moral and domestic reform, as had been the case throughout the nineteenth century. Moral reform, it was believed, could be achieved through religious doctrine. Christian charity was still the overriding philosophy that drove the work of the Refuge and the practice of the inmates attending morning and evening worship was still enforced. However during the early years of the twentieth century the notion of 'training' took on a new significance and for the first time a set training period of eighteen months was introduced for the inmates. During this training period laundry work and the duties of domestic service were taught and the 'deserving' women who remained at the Refuge for the allotted time were found employment in this field when they left (*Welldoer*, 1909: 2). So, although there still existed a strong religious emphasis, the objectives of the Refuge were now not solely concerned with the saving of individual souls. Rather, the creation of an industrious, productive and controllable female workforce had become an important priority. A letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee highlights this shift.

Ladies, we must put our efforts into training and finding employment for our charges. The light of God will still lead their way but the development of useful skills is necessary if they are to lead productive, decent and sober lives upon their discharge (September 1st, 1908).

However this shift towards domestic discipline did not mean a total move away from the philosophies of moral redemption. On the contrary, as was to be the case for many years to come, and indeed had been the case during the previous century, these two discourses were employed as mutually reinforcing methods of regulation.

With the Refuge regime now emphasising strict and structured training, women were expected to work long hours in the laundry and learn general household duties. The Matron's Reports for December 1902 give an account of a prize giving ceremony held in November of that year. Twelve inmates received prizes and eleven received 'encouragement gifts' for categories such as Laundry Work, Washing, Cooking and Sewing which give a good indication of the type of work and training undertaken. In addition to these categories however, and in keeping

with the still dominant moral discourse employed, the women were given prizes for Scripture, Honesty, Good Example, Good Conduct, Obedience, General Improvement and Truthfulness.

The strict discipline, structured regime and the concentration on training at the Refuge, coupled with the emphasis on the teachings of religious doctrine, greatly appealed to the magistrates and judicial officials faced with young female offenders who, they believed, were in need of diversion from the corrupting prison system (Leeson, 1914). Hence from 1908, just a few months after the introduction of the Probation of Offenders Act, many women who had been bound over and placed on probation by the courts were referred on to the Refuge by their probation officers, where it was hoped they would be reformed and successfully returned to society. Given that the majority of the newly appointed probation officers were indeed former police court missionaries (who were still firmly attached to the Church and the affiliated Temperance Movement) it is unsurprising that the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge, with its strong religious emphasis and firm links with the Church of England, was well utilised by the courts for women on probation. From the first decade of the twentieth century the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge (along with a similar institution called the Women's Shelter in Toxteth, Liverpool) was used to house women on probation from all over the North West of England (Matron's Reports, 1908, 1909, 1911).

The earliest official records of women on probation being admitted to the Refuge are found in the Matron's Reports of March 1908. Margaret Thomas and Almenia Richardson are reported as having been 'sent from Liverpool Police Court under the Probation of Offenders Act'. However this development had actually begun some years earlier. The Register of Residents indicates that from as early as 1898 the number of women being referred via the court missionaries was already increasing whilst the numbers referred from prison was decreasing. In 1898 for example, of 17 women admitted that year, only two came directly from prison and similarly in 1900, of 16 women admitted, only three were referred from prison (Register of Residents, 1898-1948, AHA). Although the Register does not state

where the remainder of the referrals came from, it is reasonable to assume, given that women were only referred through three main sources at the time – prison, family and probation - that a significant proportion of women admitted to the Refuge from the late nineteenth century onwards were probation referrals.

By the end of 1908, however, concern was growing in the Refuge as to whether the acceptance of women on probation was indeed a positive development. Although it was acknowledged that probation officers were a most productive source of referrals, several reports describe the probationers as being more unruly and badly behaved than the other inmates. An entry in the Matron's Reports highlights this.

Maggie Asbridge absconded. She was one of the Liverpool probationers. *All the probationers have been most unsatisfactory* (Matron's Reports, December, 1908, AHA. Emphasis added).

Up until the Probation of First Offenders Act of 1887, all admissions to the refuge were classed as 'voluntary'. As discussed in the previous chapter, prison chaplains would generally only refer, and the Refuge would only accept, those women who had a genuine desire to reform their lives. However after the Act, women were sent on orders by the courts and, although the Refuge still had the authority to refuse a referral if they did not deem the woman to be suitable, the philosophies behind both the Refuge and the Probation Act were so similar it would have been difficult to justify the non-acceptance of referrals. Also as stated previously, the number of referrals from prison chaplains was falling and therefore, in order to stay financially viable, maximum residency had to be maintained. Consequently the Refuge became home to large numbers of women who did not necessarily have a desire to be there but possibly only agreed to a period of residence in order to avoid the probable alternative, a custodial sentence. Although the Refuge had experienced, throughout its history, some resistance from its female inmates, these new compulsory referrals were seen as a particular cause for concern.

I am concerned that those women sent by the courts will be more troublesome than those....who have a genuine desire to reform their characters...Our greatest fear is that these women will have an

unsettling effect on the others (Letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee, November 8th, 1908, AHA).

The female probationers were viewed as disruptive and disorderly and from 1908 onwards, possibly in response to this perceived unruliness, 'internal' punishments began to be enforced. This constituted a definite shift in philosophy for the Refuge. Primarily it represented a move towards a more formal form of institutional regime and although there is no record of any widespread, collective protest at the Refuge during this time, the introduction of 'punishments' indicates that the legitimacy of the social order within the institution was not always automatically accepted and tolerated by the female residents but was in fact challenged and resisted.

Throughout the previous century bad behaviour had been generally punishable by immediate discharge from the Refuge. After 1908, however, women could be punished through a variety of methods, including withdrawing their allowance (given for productive laundry work), vetoing visits from friends and families and banning the writing and receiving of monthly letters (Matron's Reports, 1908, 1910, 1918, AHA). In addition to the need to deal swiftly and effectively with recalcitrant inmates, two further (more practical) reasons could explain this change. First the Refuge was not as economically buoyant as it had been throughout the early to mid nineteenth century. Indeed, by 1900 it had suffered a series of major financial crises and therefore the Management Committees could not afford to discharge women at the rate they once had, as by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the Refuge depended financially to a great extent upon the industry of the residents. Second, although there is no definite evidence, it is likely that the Refuge would have to account and give good reason for any discharges of probation referrals, whereas previously, when the Refuge accepted only voluntary referrals, the committees were basically accountable only to themselves.¹

¹ The Matron's Reports do provide some examples (although not many) of probationers who were discharged. Annie Lunt, for example, was discharged in January 1919 and handed over to her probation officer for being a 'bad influence on the rest of the girls'.

Whatever the reasons, a change did take place in the way in which women were punished at the Refuge and this was not the only change to be observed. Around the same time (during the first two decades of the twentieth century), another change occurred, this time in relation to explanations of the women's offending and social behaviour. During the early years of the 1900s a new and oppressive paradigm emerged within which the women at the Refuge, and indeed women offenders more generally, were viewed and categorised. This new, 'scientific' approach to understanding female deviancy, and its impact on the women at the Refuge, will be discussed below.

The appliance of science

The scientific / medical claim to understand Woman and render her intelligible was part of science's wider project: the understanding and controlling of Nature (Bland, 1995: 53).

Up until the end of the nineteenth century the fundamental philosophy of the Refuge had been the reclamation and reformation of women through moral salvation. Domestic training had been employed but this was primarily used to support the notion that hard work and diligence facilitated the process of atonement and moral reform, as idleness was seen as the cause of a great deal of deviant behaviour in women. However after the turn of the century other theories and philosophies became prevalent within the Refuge. Religious doctrine remained popular but an increased emphasis on formal training as a means of reform *in its own right* (so that women could become productive as well as moral subjects) gave rise to a more corrective culture. Under this more secular regime emphasis was placed on the social, as well as on the spiritual, reform of women. In addition to these developments, the end of the nineteenth century had seen a rise in medical explanations of criminal behaviour (Zedner, 1991) and this doctrine was also to greatly influence the regime of the Refuge. What developed was a situation where no single philosophy was dominant but instead several

(often somewhat contradictory) theories existed.² As a result, the classifications of the women at the Refuge became remarkably diverse and the female residents could find themselves and their conduct explained in medical and moral terms at the same time. Faith was placed in both God and science in an effort to modify the behaviour of the women and salvation and ‘treatment’ existed side by side as the dominant methods of reform.

‘Scientific’ explanations of crime had, from the latter end of the nineteenth century, already begun to gain credibility and in turn gave rise to theories that advocated medical treatment rather than punishment. This medical model was found to be particularly useful when attempting to rationalise women’s offending behaviour. Zedner (1991) states that by the end of the nineteenth century social inadequacy and ‘feeble-mindedness’ had been identified as serious medical conditions, conditions that were believed to be the source of many social problems. Poverty, intemperance and crime, which had previously been blamed on the lack of morality amongst the poor, were, by the end of the century perceived to be the result of ‘feeble-mindedness’ and mental inadequacy. The Eugenics Movement at the time went further by asserting that these social deficiencies would be bred into future generations by the mentally defective poor and consequently ‘feeble-mindedness’ in females became viewed as a dangerous social condition (Zedner, 1991).

This ‘medical paradigm’ became extremely influential with regard to the way women were viewed and treated at the Refuge. Within the institution women were frequently discussed and classified within both moral and medical discourses, indeed as Zedner (1991) states, as far as deviant women were concerned, there was a strong link between the two models. She claims that the very definition of ‘feeble-mindedness’ was influenced by both moral and medical debates, asserting that judgements regarding a woman’s mental condition were often made on the

² See Young (1981) for a further discussion of the way in which criminological theories in general do not emerge in distinct historical phases but rather can appear simultaneously as competing paradigms.

basis of her moral conduct. In other words sexual promiscuity or immorality was commonly used as evidence of mental inadequacy.³

The register of residents (1898-1948) indicates that from around 1907 (although no exact date is recorded) potential residents at the Refuge were examined by a doctor and their suitability for admission was assessed primarily on the state of their physical and mental health. It was the responsibility of the doctor to declare each referral as fit or unfit for training at the Refuge. The assessment of the women's physical health was justified in two ways. First, the women were expected to work long hours in the laundry and therefore they would need to be in a reasonable state of physical health to cope with these demands. There are indeed many accounts of women being refused admittance because they were not deemed well or strong enough to undertake such work. Eighteen year old Elizabeth Walton for example was restored to the care of her mother in 1900 after serving a prison sentence because she was declared 'medically unfit for work' (Register of Residents, 1898-1948, AHA). Likewise, Annie Cooper (1900), Daisy Wright (1900), Jessie Davies (1900), Jessie Bowley (1909) and Lilly Burrows (1919) were all categorised as medically unfit for work or training due to their poor state of health and were returned to their families instead (Register of Residents, 1898-1948, AHA). Not all women were returned to their families however. The Register of Residents records cases of medically unfit women, such as Edith Donald in 1902, who, on having no family to receive her, was sent straight to the Workhouse.

In some instances the work itself led to illness and hospitalisation and there are several recorded incidents of accidents in the Laundry. Eliza Brown suffered scalds to her neck and face in 1912 (Matron's Reports, August 1912, AHA) and Ruth Carter lost part of her finger in the washing machine in 1919 (Matron's Reports, November 1919, AHA). The year before Lizzie Holt had been sent to hospital after suffering a rupture doing laundry work (Matron's Reports, July

³ As mentioned previously in Chapter Four, Zedner (1991a) states that discussions which preceded the Mental Deficiency act of 1913 went as far as proposing a new category of 'sexually feeble-minded' which referred specifically to 'sexually immoral' women.

1918, AHA). The Refuge accepted no responsibility for any of these incidents. In Lizzie's case the accident was deemed to be of her own making because, as the Matron explained 'Holt [had] never been strong.' (Matron's Reports, July 1918, AHA). In the same report the Matron went on to declare that more care should be taken in future to ensure only strong and healthy women, capable of withstanding such laborious duties, be admitted.

The second reason why physical health checks were so important was because during the first two decades of the twentieth century, there occurred a great deal of sickness and death at the Refuge. Lucy Davies for example, aged fourteen, died of Scarlet Fever in 1900 and Mary Connely suffered the same fate two years later (Register of Residents, 1898-1948, AHA). The Refuge witnessed six deaths in the ten years between 1905 and 1915 along with twenty six admissions to hospital (List of Hospitalisations and Deaths, 1905-1915, AHA). Mary Barlow was one of several women who died from Influenza (Matron's Reports, December 1918, AHA) but her death was recorded in a very different way to many of the others that occurred at the Refuge. For the most part deaths were recorded as commonplace incidents, in much the same way as an expulsion or an escape. Mary was obviously an exemplary resident and her loss was a significant one to the institution. Her illness and death are mentioned several times in the Register of Residents (1898-1948, AHA), the Matron's Reports for 1918 and also in a separate letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee, all of which highlight the importance the Refuge attached, even in death, to reformed and grateful women.

Mary Barlow has died. She was a particularly nice girl and we are very distressed about her....She was bright and happy to the last and wished me to thank the committee for their kindness to her (Register of Residents, 1898-1948, AHA).

I regret to inform you of the death last week of Mary Barlow. She was indeed a most kind and pleasant inmate and an industrious and grateful worker. We are all very distressed about her death (Letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee, September 25th, 1918, AHA).

It can be seen therefore that the basis upon which the physical health checks were carried out were in many ways understandable. What is more difficult to justify, however, is the emphasis placed on assessments of *mental* health and the ways in which these were used in categorising and ‘gatekeeping’ the women at the Refuge. McWilliams (1985, 1986) claims that between the 1920s and the 1960s the nature of the probation service changed significantly as the emphasis shifted from religious salvation and the saving of souls to scientific assessment and the related ‘treatment’ of offenders. He also argues that offenders were still viewed ‘individually’ rather than as part of a greater social construction, however rather than being individualised with regard to their ‘morality’ they were now individualised with regard to their psychological characteristics.

McWilliams’ assertions raise very important issues with regard to the Refuge for two reasons. First, he states that one source of knowledge was gradually (although in a historical sense, fairly quickly) replaced by another. In other words faith in God was replaced by psychological science; an era of ‘idealism’ was replaced by an era of ‘professionalism’. However, at the Refuge the ‘idealist’ and the ‘scientific’ phases existed for many years side by side and indeed, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the Refuge witnessed a resurgence of the ‘idealist’ phase later in the century (around 1920) after the Church of England officially undertook trusteeship.⁴

Second, McWilliams claims that this ‘diagnosis’ phase of the probation service emerged around the 1920s and lasted until around 1970, however there is strong evidence to suggest that this paradigm became dominant within the Refuge much earlier, as early as the first decade of the twentieth century with women being frequently categorised as ‘mentally unfit for training’ or ‘feeble-minded’. From 1908 there are many references to this ‘condition’ within the Matron’s Reports. An entry from that year highlights this, stating that ‘so many of the inmates in the

⁴ McWilliams (1986) does assert that the replacement of one source of knowledge with another was a gradual process and he gives examples of casework reports where both ‘idealist’ and ‘professionalist’ paradigms were used together. This thesis argues that this situation was more obvious at the Refuge and also that this ‘duality’ continued for much longer than it did within the probation service in general.

Refuge just now are feeble minded and most difficult to train' (Matron's Reports, July 1908, AHA).

In 1917 Millie Worthington was deemed to be feeble-minded and was subsequently sent from the Refuge to the Institution for the Mentally Defective at Brock Hall, Lancashire (Matron's Reports, June 1917, AHA). This case highlights the powerless position of those women categorised as 'feeble-minded' or 'mentally defective'. Many of these women, most of whom had committed only very minor criminal offences, would find themselves shifted between various (semi-penal and custodial) institutions. Sixteen year old Lillian Bradshaw is an example. She was sent to the Refuge in June 1924 on probation for stealing a bag. In the Register of Residents her behaviour is recorded as 'very strange' and a subsequent doctor's report which labelled her as 'weak minded and medically unfit for training' led to her transfer, firstly to Mill Road Infirmary and from there to the Asylum (Doctor's Report, found as a loose attachment in Matron's Reports, July 1924, AHA).

As stated previously both moral and medical discourses were employed to explain the conduct of particular residents at the Refuge. This was most often the case if a woman's behaviour was judged to be sexually promiscuous. Molly Kelly, aged seventeen, was refused admission to the refuge in 1909. Although there is no record of a doctor's assessment, a letter from the Matron to the Ladies' Committee clearly highlights the concerns regarding her sexual conduct.

This woman has an immoral and unhealthy weakness for associating with members of the opposite sex. *This I believe is due to her low mental ability.* I believe her to be untrainable (Letter from the Matron to the Ladies Committee, March 22nd, 1909, AHA. Emphasis added).

A similar example is Lizzie Dobson, admitted to the Refuge in August 1911. Lizzie was described in the Matron's Reports for that month as being 'weak minded, wilful and wicked'. Again, her behaviour is explained and rationalised by intertwining discourses around morality and pathology. Women's 'feeble-

mindfulness' was now perceived to be the cause of their licentious and sinful behaviour.

The Refuge was therefore utilising pseudo-scientific explanations of (criminal and female) behaviour from the very early years of the twentieth century. However, although these scientific models went some way towards explaining the ('immoral') conduct of the women at the Refuge, thus justifying and legitimating further, medical *and* moral intervention, they were never used to mitigate or excuse the behaviour of the women. Conversely, as Zedner (1991) points out, the prevalence of feeble-mindedness and other forms of mental 'deficiency' amongst the poor and criminal classes *was* used to justify and rationalise the failure of institutions to control and reform refractory inmates.

During the early twentieth century (as had been the case during the nineteenth century) the Refuge took full credit for the successful reformation of its residents. Women whose lives and characters had been amended and restored to an acceptable degree of respectability were seen to be the product of an effective regime of discipline and moral teachings. The role played and the effort made by the reformed women themselves was only rarely acknowledged and the Refuge (in particular the Matron) was given full credit for any positive transformations. Conversely, 'failures' (in other words those women who would not submit to the regime and were subsequently not judged to be reformed) were not seen to be the responsibility of the Refuge. Instead blame was placed on the inherent badness, immorality or mental inadequacy of the individual women themselves. Examples include Catherine Williams who was dismissed after being described as 'lazy and idiotic. An imbecile and untrainable' (Matron's Reports, April 1909, AHA) and Maud Cooper who was 'unruly and untrainable due to her feeble-mindedness' (Matron's Reports, February 1912, AHA). On the other hand Elizabeth Howard left with glowing reports in 1916 but her successful reformation was proclaimed to be evidence of 'yet another example of the fine work of the institution' (Matron's Reports, January 1916, AHA).

It is worth making some further comment here on the way in which success and failure were measured during these early years of the twentieth century. Due to the emphasis on formal training, success was partially measured in terms of the acquisition of gainful employment. However, the most important measure of success was, still, marriage and (legitimate) motherhood. The Matron's records for 1906, 1908 and 1909 make reference to several 'successful' ex-residents.

Visited three girls who are married. It was most gratifying to see how beautifully clean and neat they keep their homes and their children (Matron's Reports, March 1906, AHA).

Two of our girls came back to visit. One is married and the other is in a respectable situation in Everton. It is most satisfying when one's hard work comes to fruition (Matron Reports, October 1908, AHA).

The Committee will be pleased to hear that Emma Steed was married to a very respectable young man on the 11th May. She had been a faithful servant in her first situation for over eight years (Matron's Reports, June 1909, AHA).

One might assume that any woman who avoided returning to prison or the courts, and who managed to secure legitimate employment would be seen as a 'good result' by the Refuge, however this was not the case. Ethel Withnall, admitted in 1921, left the Refuge two years later to enter domestic service. However she only remained in this position for a few months before going to work in a local factory. The Matron subsequently informed the Refuge Committees that

Ethel Withnall has turned out very badly....untruthful in her situation also rude to her mistress. I hear she is now working in some factory in Liverpool. *She is the greatest failure we have had* (Matron's Reports, September 1923, AHA. Emphasis added).

The utilisation of both moral and pseudo-scientific explanations of deviant behaviour was to remain a significant feature of the Refuge throughout the twentieth century. The end of the First World War coincided with several changes within the institution. Many of these were related to organisational and financial matters but they are important as they raise some important issues regarding the culture and regime of the institution and its peculiar role within the growing

probation service. Most significant though was the increasing influence of the Church of England and the subsequent shift back to a dominant moral philosophy. This period of the institution's history will be discussed below

The Refuge between the wars

The Refuge underwent many radical (primarily financial and organisational) changes between the two wars. Between 1913 and 1919, whilst the country was preparing for, fighting in and recovering from the First World War, there was a steady decline in the numbers of offenders placed on probation orders by the courts (Jarvis, 1972). However, whilst the probation service in general was witnessing a decline, the Refuge saw a steady increase in referrals and admissions and throughout the duration of the war, its occupancy levels rarely fell below maximum capacity.⁵ In keeping with the traditional paternalistic culture of the Refuge, this increase was attributed to the failure of mothers to control their wayward daughters without the influence of their husbands.

We have had more applications this year than ever before. The fathers have gone to the War and the mothers are unable to manage their girls (Matron's Reports, August 1917, AHA).

However, the high number of admissions brought other problems. The institution experienced a rise in unruly and disruptive behaviour from its female residents (although whether this increase was actual or perceived is unclear). The Refuge adhered to the traditional notion that idleness led to unruliness and during the war years a shortage of work was frequently associated with the lack of discipline. As the Matron explains

It is harder to keep up the discipline when we have not a comfortable amount of work for the girls (Matron's Reports, June 1918, AHA).

In addition, a rise in resident numbers coupled with the shortage of work meant

⁵ The maximum capacity of the Refuge during the First World War was 20. See Annual Reports, 1914 - 1918 and Register of Residents, 1898 - 1948.

that the Refuge had difficulty staying financially viable during this time. Although the institution was utilised more than ever in terms of referrals, funds were becoming scarce and from as early as 1880 up until 1920 it ran into many financial crises. One primary reason for this was that the Refuge was still a charity and depended largely upon voluntary contributions and donations for its existence. During the early years of the nineteenth century this did not present any problems but, as an article in *The Welldoer* (1909) points out, by the twentieth century philanthropy and charity in Liverpool had become a victim of its own success and there existed so many charitable organisations and societies that money to fund all of them was sparse. Also, after the First World War, the industry of the residents, which had in the past kept the Refuge afloat, had largely dried up leaving them financially exposed. At one point the situation became so desperate that the Refuge even considered asking the families of those residents on probation to pay towards the keep of the women. This scheme was proposed by the Management Committee in 1917 and would have meant registering all Liverpool probation cases with the Council for Voluntary Aid (CVA). A CVA worker would then visit the family homes of the probationers to see if the parents, guardians or other family members could afford to pay a little towards the upkeep of the Refuge (Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge Annual Report, 1917, MPS).⁶

As discussed earlier, because of its close links, the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) found itself bailing the Refuge out of financial trouble on several occasions between 1880 and 1919 with sums of up to £500 each time. Finally in 1919, with the Refuge facing imminent closure, the CETS decided to clear its debts completely and in doing so took full control and trusteeship of Liverpool's oldest charity, a position it still retains.

⁶ Annual Reports from 1917 onwards are located in the Liverpool City Records Office and are the property of Merseyside Probation Service, hence they will be referenced as MPS. Matron's Reports from this date remain located within Adelaide House and will therefore continue to be referenced as Adelaide House Archives (AHA).

Although this ensured a more pecuniary secure future for the Refuge it would still rely heavily upon voluntary contributions and upon 'the industry of the inmates' for many years to come.

The re-emergence of the 'moral' paradigm

With the powerful Temperance Society at the helm, the Refuge was obviously now seen as a more viable and worthwhile charity. This is reflected in the Annual Report for 1919 which gives details of 186 subscriptions as well as over 40 donations for that year, the total amount of contributions being over £500, a significant increase over previous years (Annual Report, 1919, MPS). The Refuge was now presided over by a Management Committee consisting of a Patron (The Earl of Derby), Chairman (Archdeacon Howson), two vice-presidents (The Lord Bishop of Liverpool and The Lord Bishop of Chester), a Men's Committee, a Ladies' Committee, Treasurer, Chaplain, Surgeon and Secretary (Annual Report, 1920, MPS). By the 1920s there were four full time staff, a Matron and three Assistant Matrons (Annual Report, 1927, MPS). Those members of staff who had most contact with the female residents were still, of course, all women while the formal management of the Refuge remained predominantly male. This situation, with women acting as the 'mediators of knowledge' between the male 'experts' of the Refuge administration and their 'failing' clients was to change little throughout the remainder of the century.⁷

The 1920s through to the 1940s saw significant changes to the rapidly evolving probation service. As stated previously, since 1908 the majority of probation officers had been closely affiliated to the Church of England Temperance Society. In 1920 the Home Office established a Departmental Committee responsible for the training, appointment and payment of probation officers and in response to growing criticism, this Committee set about re-evaluating the role of the CETS in the probation service. Concern had been expressed about the appropriateness of the association between probation work and a society whose primary aim was to promote temperance. However it was also acknowledged that nationally, the

⁷ See Chapter Seven for a discussion of this issue in the modern day hostel.

supply of probation officers depended heavily on the CETS, and other similar, voluntary organisations. The Committee finally recommended that although links would need to be maintained between the probation service and the CETS, a clear distinction would be drawn between the supervisory work undertaken by the Missionaries for the Probation Service and the temperance work still carried out by the CETS (Jarvis, 1972).

This is a further example of the paradoxical situation of the Refuge with regard to trends and developments in the wider realm of non-custodial penalties. While the probation service was taking steps to separate its work from that of the CETS (in order to 'professionalise' the service and cut ties with the old religious and moralistic philosophy), the Refuge was actually moving in the opposite direction. From 1919 the CETS was in control of one of the few institutions for women probationers and many of the traditional philosophies and values still prevailed.

Although the CETS had openly reported that their take-over would make no difference to the day to day running of the Refuge, the 1920s saw a strong re-emergence of the religious and moral discourses that had been dominant throughout the nineteenth century. Although the religious emphasis had persisted into the twentieth century it had been 'diluted' to an extent by the emergence of medical and scientific theories. However once the CETS had assumed control of the institution, religious and moral discourses began, once again, to dominate the regime. The opening address of the Refuge's annual meeting for 1919 states that

Never in the history of the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge was there greater opportunity for such a Home than that which is before them today. The growing importance which the Magistrates attach to the work carried on under the Probation Act emphasises the need for *a Christian institution*, when those who are in danger of developing unruly characters may be brought under wholesome discipline, and trained in habits of obedience, reliability and industry (Annual Report, 1919, MPS. Emphasis added).

The CETS placed great emphasis on the importance of the teachings of Christianity and the rite of baptism. From the time it took over trusteeship in 1919 it began, very quickly, to introduce these philosophies into the daily routine of the

Refuge. Compulsory attendance at bible classes and daily prayers was written into the official rules along with a warning that 'untruthfulness, swearing and disorderly conduct' would not be tolerated (Rules for the Matron, 1920, AHA). Perhaps one of the most significant changes as a result of the CETS take-over was that from 1920, women were prepared, under the guidance of the Chaplain, for confirmation. The Matron's Reports for the 1920s and 1930s indicate that as many as thirteen women were baptised each year and records show that this practice continued until well into the 1960s.⁸

In addition, whereas the probation service was attempting to distance itself from an organisation dedicated to the promotion of temperance, the new administration at the Refuge was busy implementing its doctrine of sobriety. In 1927 four women were awarded the Madden Memorial Prize for essays written on the subject of Temperance after a lecture given by the Diocesan Secretary. Another three women were awarded the same prize the following year along with prizes for achievements in Scripture, Religious Knowledge and Truthfulness (Matron's Reports, 1927, 1928, AHA).

By 1927 the Refuge had moved to an address in Edge Lane, Liverpool, the site where it stands today. The move to the new building provided accommodation for four more residents and eliminated the overcrowding that was beginning to occur at the previous location. Towards the end of the 1920s, the Refuge housed approximately twenty six women per year and the population was now significantly less transient than it had previously been. One reason for this was that the regime was now far more structured and the period of training, usually between twelve months and two years, was more rigorously enforced. Also, during the 1920s the Liverpool Refuge was particularly well utilised by probation officers seeking suitable supervision and training for their charges. An article in the Liverpool Review discussed the relationship between the Refuge and probation officers.

⁸ Annual Reports from 1919 to 1930 give regular accounts of women receiving confirmation. There are accounts after 1930 of confirmations but it is not clear whether or not this was a regular practice.

[Probation Officers] all find the Liverpool and Lancashire Female Refuge ...of which the Diocesan C.E.T.S. is the trustee, of great use for girls, some of whom would run the risk of finding their way to prison were they not taken from unfavourable surroundings to a Home in which they receive kind treatment, coupled with wholesome restraint and discipline (Liverpool Review, 1928: 31).

By the late 1920s approximately fifty percent of the women at the Refuge had been placed on probation by the courts and were required to undertake the necessary 'training' that the institution provided (Matron's Reports, 1927, 1928, AHA). Identifying an appropriate period of 'training' was to be the cause of an ongoing disagreement between the Refuge and judicial officials who, by the 1930s, wanted to impose a standard period of six months training upon probationers. The Refuge administration, specifically the Matron, strongly resisted this proposal. The following quotation from the Refuge Annual Report for 1937 clearly highlights her concerns.

There are social workers who think that six months training is sufficient for these girls, but the Matron with her many years experience, is convinced that the two years which this Home makes its rule is barely adequate for the necessary training (Annual Report, 1937: 4, MPS)⁹

The Refuge staff, having spent many years working with 'a class of girls whose difficult dispositions and temperaments and characters made an incessant demand upon the patience, tact and sympathy of the Matron' (Annual Report, 1928: 7, MPS) believed they were inherently more qualified than professional social workers to judge what was best for their residents.¹⁰ This resistance to fall into line with the practices of the probation service did not abate throughout the 1930s. The Refuge remained, to a great degree, firmly unaffected by developments in probation policy, yet was still well utilised by the service in the supervision of women on court orders.

⁹ By the 1930s the Annual Reports were more professionally produced than they had previously been hence the presence of page numbers.

¹⁰ Eventually by October 1942 the Refuge had to concede and accepted girls on a minimum trial period of six months rather than two years.

In 1930 formal training was established for probation officers and by 1938 the Police Court Missions began to hand over full control of probation supervision to the Home Office (King, 1969; Jarvis, 1972). Throughout this time, the Refuge managed to maintain its independent status and its emphasis on moral reform and Christian charity. The Annual Report for 1937 clearly identifies its philosophy and role during these years.

[The committee] can tell once again of patient and faithful service rendered by the Matron and her fellow workers in a Home which, by the blessing of God, has been fruitful in the task of rescuing and restoring to a place of usefulness, more than one young life that has for the time being missed the right road and fallen on wrong ways....see these young lives in the places and homes where they were living and where they have failed and strayed from the right path, and then see the Home and its workers as friendly hands held out to lift them up to better and worthier living (1937: 3, MPS).

The CETS had incited a move back towards a strong Christian emphasis within the institution. As a result, the Refuge of the 1920s and 1930s provided a deeply religious and moral environment within which fallen and misguided women could repent, and reform their lives and souls to become 'worthier' citizens. The CETS attempted to ensure that the notions of salvation and reform underpinned all of the work carried out at the Refuge however the dominance of this moral and spiritual paradigm was to be relatively short lived.

The re-emergence of the medical paradigm

As mentioned previously 'psycho-medical' explanations of women's behaviour had been influencing the work of the Refuge since the early years of the twentieth century. However these pseudo-scientific discourses had tended to impact only upon the way in which women were *discussed* and *categorised* within the institution. In other words, although women were frequently labelled as 'feeble-minded' or mentally deficient within official records, there is no evidence to suggest that these women were offered any form of 'treatment' (other than the standard training programme undertaken by all of the residents) or treated in any way differently from any of the other women in the institution. Indeed the assessment of the mental condition of a referral was often used as a method of

gatekeeping or 'screening out' particular 'types' of women. For example those women found to have any form of mental inadequacy were deemed unsuitable for the Refuge and were quickly returned to their families or the Workhouse. If their condition was sufficiently severe then they would be transferred to hospital or to the asylum.

The 1930s, however, saw a dramatic change in this strategy. Psychological assessments were still carried out on women referred to the Refuge but the purpose of these examinations was no longer to keep the 'feeble-minded' out of the institution, but rather to get them in. Women identified as 'feeble-minded' had become, by the mid 1930s, a target group for the Refuge and mental inadequacy became almost a pre-requisite for admission.¹¹

Although women had historically always been subjected to the intense scrutiny of doctors and medical professionals, the 1920s and 1930s represented an exceptionally oppressive period for women diagnosed or labelled as mentally disordered. Despite the rise in the number of female practitioners entering the fields of psychiatry and psychoanalysis after the First World War, promiscuous, criminal or 'wayward' women were increasingly diagnosed as mentally ill. Treatments such as insulin shock, electro-shock and lobotomy were taken up with great relish by British doctors intent on curing female mental illness (Showalter, 1987).

According to Sim (1990) the psychological assessment and treatment of criminal women gained much credibility in the 1930s following the publication of a Medical Research Council report in 1933 which advocated the permanent segregation and sterilisation of mentally defective women. What was so significant about this report was that it supported and validated the notion that psychopathology and immorality, as far as the behaviour of women was concerned, were inherently linked.

¹¹ The term 'feeble-minded' had largely been discarded by medical professionals during the 1930s. However, in accordance with its incongruous position within the wider realms of criminological / criminal justice discourse and practice, the Refuge continued to use this term to describe women into the 1940s.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s many of the women referred to the Refuge (either by doctors or by their own families) had never been convicted of a criminal offence. Instead they were categorised as ‘preventative cases’ and were sent to the Refuge simply because they were ‘wayward’ or outside of parental control.¹²

For example Georgina Styles was admitted to the refuge ‘for her own protection’ in 1934 (Register of Residents 1898-1948, AHA) her parents being unable to control her behaviour. A year later in 1935 Elizabeth Moulds was also admitted ‘for her own protection’ on account of her ‘weak spirit and feeble-mindedness’ (ibid) and in 1937, sixteen year old Nora Cropper arrived at the Refuge, her ‘offence’ being that she was ‘weak minded’ and therefore in need of protection from ‘her own defectiveness’ (ibid).

The dual paradigms of ‘morality’ and ‘pathology’ fitted perfectly with this new focus and the role of the institution, as far as these ‘preventative cases’ were concerned, was to provide a structured, disciplined and ‘wholesome’ environment within which young troublesome women could be assessed, contained and ‘normalised’ back to the righteous path. The idea of targeting women *prior* to them having committed any criminal offence was, of course, nothing new for the Refuge. Indeed, as noted in Chapter Four, one of the features that characterized institutions such as the Refuge as semi-penal and indeed underpinned the establishment of the reformatory movement in general, was the fact that they served to expand the methods of discipline and control normally found within formal custodial environments to cases of ‘less-than-full-criminality’ (Weiner, 1990: 130). Targeting ‘preventative cases’ served to widen the, already all encompassing, disciplinary net for ‘deviant’ women.

Even with the prevalence of ‘pseudo-medical’ diagnoses, there is no record of any form of medical *treatment* being available at the Refuge during these years. However the regime for ‘preventative cases’ was both restrictive and oppressive.

¹² It should be acknowledged that no specific definition of the term ‘preventative case’ is provided in the records of the institution nor is it explained who was responsible for making this ‘diagnosis’.

‘Preventative cases’ were subjected to frequent medical examinations and regular psychological assessments throughout their stay, and for some women this could be many years (Medical Journals and Matron’s Reports, 1930s and 1940s, AHA). Also the Refuge possessed the power to restrain women on the orders of a doctor under the Mental Deficiency Regulations of 1935.¹³ Article 35 of this Act provided institutions that housed certified cases (such as the Refuge) with the power to mechanically restrain individuals for the purposes of surgical or medical treatment or in order to prevent injury to themselves or others. The means of restraint, recorded in the Refuge Medical Journals, included restrictive clothing (for example a dress or jacket with straps fitted to the sleeves enabling the arms to be tied around the body; gloves without fingers which fastened at the wrist making self-removal difficult); the ‘continuous bath’ (a covered container in which the patient sat with their head through a hole in the cover); splints and bandages; and a ‘dry and wet pack’ (although no explanation is given regarding the purpose of this procedure).¹⁴

As mentioned previously, women classified as ‘feeble-minded’ or admitted as ‘preventative cases’ could often find themselves institutionalised for many years. Individual medical records were found for only two women but these journals provide a detailed and disturbing insight into the lives of Constance Beacroft and Alice Cooper. Although neither of these women had any criminal convictions, Constance remained at the Refuge for twelve years whilst Alice stayed for eight.

The journals cover the whole period of residency for the two women although entries are spasmodic (for example there are sometimes entries made every few months but often only one or two entries a year are recorded). The journal entries

¹³ From 1930 separate medical records (entitled ‘Medical Journals for Patients under Guardianship and for Patients under Private Care with provision for Mechanical Restraint and Seclusion’) were kept at the Refuge for those women categorised as ‘feeble-minded’ or as a ‘preventative cases’. As mentioned in footnote 12, it is unclear from the institutional records who made these diagnoses.

¹⁴ It should be stated here that although the Refuge was afforded the authority to employ such disciplinary procedures, there exists no recorded evidence to suggest that these powers of restraint were ever implemented on women at the institution.

are written, dated and signed by the Refuge doctor and are recorded under the headings of 'mental condition', 'any change since last visit', 'visit of friends' 'state of house and furniture', 'employment' and 'exercise and recreation'. A further category entitled 'condition of wearing apparel' is the first real indication of the importance that the Refuge would later place on the relationship between a woman's physical appearance and the condition of her mental health (see Hunt *et al*, 1989; Zedner, 1991; Chapter Four of this thesis). The association between outward displays of femininity and internal mental stability was to become more prevalent during the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, as Chapter Seven will illustrate these two factors were, to some degree, still assumed to be connected well into the 1990s.

Constance Elizabeth Beacroft was aged fifteen when admitted to the Refuge in 1930 (Medical Journal for Constance Beacroft, 1930-1942, AHA). In a separate letter attached to her journal she is described as a 'notified case' although there is no further explanation as to the meaning of this term. She had been referred to the Refuge from the Waifs and Strays Society at Scholfield House under whose care she had been placed some years previously due to the poor condition of her home. The letter goes on to state that

She was recently found too poor mentally to be trainable. She was transferred to the care of Miss Clarke [Matron of the Refuge] some months ago with a view to being placed under her Guardianship. She is well and happy under Miss Clarke's care. She is never likely to be able to earn her own living (Letter from Doctor Russel to the Refuge Committees, February 20th 1930, AHA).

The first entry in her journal, dated February 17th 1930, describes Constance as 'very dull and slow' and goes on to state that she 'reads very badly and cannot deal with money'. A month later she had not improved and was therefore not suitable to be returned home. Instead she was to be trained at the Refuge until ready to return to a 'normal', independent life. One of the most striking aspects of Constance's journal is that the only visitors mentioned are two doctors, one of whom was Dr Russel, the Refuge doctor. There is no reference to her ever leaving the confines of the institution. Up until 1936, Constance's 'exercise',

‘employment’ and ‘recreation’ are all described in her medical journal as ‘housework’. Although defined by the doctor in his letter as ‘too poor mentally to be trainable’, Constance was nonetheless subjected to similar forms of domestic training as the other women in the Refuge. In keeping with the dominant feminising discourses, housework was utilised both as a means of (mental) reform and as a form of entertainment for Constance.

Although there is no indication of any specific ‘treatment’ or ‘training’ given to Constance within the Refuge (apart from housework), her condition is nonetheless described as ‘improving’ over the years. Thus, having been to some degree domestically reformed, she is described in October 1933 as ‘a useful worker under supervision’ even though she was still obviously ‘a feeble minded person of the lower grade’. By the following year she had achieved some progress towards complete reformation, having been restored to a (minimal, but nonetheless acceptable) standard of femininity. In February she was ‘well spoken, quiet and amiable’ and by May was ‘perfectly respectful...reformed in almost every manner’.

There was some discussion around this time as to whether Constance should be found employment but a ‘relapse’ in her condition in 1935 eliminated this idea. The entry in her medical journal for August 16th 1935 comments that she was acting ‘silly and strange’ and goes on to state that she was ‘occasionally upset like this for no apparent reason’. However by March 1936 she was again ‘brighter and more extroverted...happy and contented’ and by November 1937 she was ‘well behaved and apart from a tendency to quick temper she gives no cause for anxiety’. As a result of this improvement, and given that she had expressed ‘interest and satisfaction’ in doing housework and had attained six Girl Guide badges, she was found employment as a daily domestic in a nearby house. The final entry for Constance was September 1942, by which time she was still employed and continuing to improve in her ‘rather simple, good natured way’.

Alice Cooper was aged nineteen when admitted to the Refuge in 1938. Her mother had been sent to a mental hospital and Alice had been left to take care of

her family. However this was soon felt to be 'beyond her mental capacity' and she was sent to the St. Agnes Home in St. Helens. Once there she was diagnosed, like her mother, as being 'mentally inadequate' and with the agreement of a doctor was placed under the Statutory Guardianship of Adelaide Clarke, the Refuge Matron (Medical Journal for Alice Cooper, 1938-1946).

The first entry in Alice's journal, dated May 25th, 1938 states that

Alice is very simple and childish but she has a very pleasant manner and responds well to simple questions giving quite a fair account of herself. She says she is very happy and that everyone is very kind to her. She seems well placed.

However by September 1939 she had grown tired of her confinement. She is described as being 'very moody, simple and childish' and 'unfit to fend for herself'. By December the following year she was still unreformed having been found to be 'unreliable and slovenly' and suffering from 'outbursts of emotional disturbance'. Little is recorded about Alice after this date until October 1946 when she is reported to have left the Refuge to enter employment in a convalescent home for babies.

During the late 1930s and 1940s the Refuge was described as being '..not at first penal, but preventative, remedial and educative' (Annual Report, 1941, MPS). Thus, during this 'preventative and remedial' era many women were subjected to long periods of pseudo-medical supervision at the Refuge. In addition to Constance and Alice, another Board of Control case was Hilda who, after being admitted in March 1933 spent a total of nine years in the Refuge undertaking 'domestic training' (Matron's Reports, January 1942, AHA). In 1942 the Chairman of the Committee requested a list of residents who had spent over three years in the Refuge. The list contained a further three names; Eileen, who had been aged fifteen on her admission in March 1929 and who had spent over thirteen years in the Refuge; Lena, who was admitted in September 1933 aged seventeen and had been a resident for nine years; and Polly admitted in April 1937

aged fourteen who had spent over five years in 'training' (Matron's Reports, 1942, AHA).

What these cases highlight, above all else, is the inconsistent understanding and categorisation of mental illness within the Refuge during this time. All of the women mentioned above were sent to the Refuge for 'their own protection' and usually because they were too 'feeble-minded' to be trainable. However, ironically, training (in the form of domestic tasks and general housework duties) was exactly what they received as a form of treatment for their mental inadequacies.

Constance and Alice in particular were subjected to frequent medical intervention and psychological assessment. Yet, their journal entries do not provide the clinical discussions one might expect. Instead, the language of the doctors is emotional and paternalistic (describing the women as 'moody', 'childish' and 'silly') and as a result their mental condition, although assessed and monitored by medical professionals, remained embroiled within the discourses of morality and respectability. The assessment of the state of their mental health was based on how well behaved, submissive and domesticated they were, or in other words, how closely they measured up to the standard of femininity endorsed by the Refuge.

Some 'feeble-minded' women, however, did not stay long at the Refuge. In the past disruptive women, or those who would not submit to the reforming regime, were usually expelled. By the 1940s however, failing to adhere to the feminising discourses and normalising regimes could have much more serious and possibly permanent consequences. Emily Gallagher was sixteen years old when she was admitted to the Refuge in 1944. She was described as 'troublesome' and

..very unreliable and mentally unbalanced. She has never been before the courts. This girl may only be here for a short time to see if suitable...If not [the Matron] will remove her to be certified (Matron's Reports, August 1944, AHA).

Emily was found to be 'suitable' and as a result allowed to stay. Although the Refuge environment was oppressive, Emily could be described as fortunate given that the alternative, had she had been deemed 'unsuitable', was certification. Another resident, Betty Dodd, was not so lucky. She was described as 'disruptive' and consequently certified by the doctor as mentally deficient (Matron's Reports, March 1944, AHA). A letter from the Matron to the Committee states that Betty 'could not adjust to the training' and would therefore be transferred 'to a more appropriate institution'.

It is apparent then that, even as late as the 1940s, the refuge was still operating as a relatively autonomous institution. The end of the decade however was to be a period of increasing state influence and the Refuge consequently witnessed the introduction of a new, more structured and accountable system of administration. The following section of the chapter will examine the reasons for, the impact of, and the resistance to the involvement of the Home Office in the funding and management of the institution.

The Institution under Home Office Regulation

By the 1940s the Refuge was suffering once again from low occupancy levels. This was mainly due to the effects of war but the situation was undoubtedly exacerbated by the managerial and staffing problems that followed the death, in 1941, of the Warden, Clara Adelaide Clarke. Clarke had been Matron and Warden since 1888 (a total of 53 years) and her death left the Refuge in relative turmoil. Replacements were difficult to find and those who were appointed often stayed for only a few weeks (Annual Reports, 1941, 1942, MPS). More significantly, Clarke had been one of the few consistent influences in the Refuge for over half a century and her loss caused considerable anxiety amongst the Refuge committee and the CETS.

Our sorrow for the heavy loss which has fallen upon the Home must not be allowed to outweigh our thankfulness for past mercies. Miss Clarke came to the position of Matron of the Home at an anxious and critical time in its history....she was not only one who had a wonderful influence over the women who were put in her charge, but her life was marked by a deep

religious conviction. Under her guidance the Home developed its usefulness...[her influence] helped to brighten the life of the Home and to encourage the girls in ways of self-discipline and self-training, with a view to their general usefulness when they leave (Annual Report 1941:2, MPS).

Morale amongst both the staff and residents was low and did not begin to improve until a suitable replacement was eventually found. The new Warden, Maud Annette, was considered by the CETS to be ideally suited to the position, as she clearly possessed all of the qualities (including an adherence to the virtues of temperance) necessary to guide young, vulnerable and impressionable women through their journey back to respectability. The annual report for 1941 describes Annette as

..trained in the Church Army, a total abstainer and non smoker [although] her Churchmanship is not extreme (1941: 2, MPS).

Although the new Matron had a 'settling' effect on the Refuge, the appointment did not lead to any changes in the regime of the institution. All forms of contact with the outside world (specifically visitors and letters) were still vetted by the Matron (Rules for the Girls, 1942, AHA) and the emphasis was still firmly on training in laundry work and housewifery (Annual Report, 1942, MPS). The sum of 3d per week was also given as pocket money, however, in keeping with the emphasis on standards of respectability, only those women whose conduct and behaviour was deemed by the Matron to deserve it, received this payment (Rules for the Girls, 1942, AHA).

By the mid 1940s occupancy levels had reached crisis point. Women on probation were by now rarely sent to institutions not approved by the Home Office (Annual Report, 1946, MPS). As a result over half the beds stood empty and the Refuge was in severe debt ending the year with an overdraft of £162 6s 11d (Annual Report, 1946, MPS). This provoked much discussion within the Refuge regarding its viability and purpose. Concern was expressed that the institution could not justify its existence with so few residents and some members of the Management Committee recommended its closure. It was suggested that, because of the difficulties encountered in attracting the 'the class of girl for whom it was

originally intended' (Annual Report, 1945: 2, MPS) the Refuge should close and re-open as a Home for 'elderly gentlewomen in very poor circumstances' (Annual Report, 1945: 2, MPS). This was a popular idea as there was indeed a great need in Liverpool for support for the elderly poor. However the idea was eventually overturned in favour of proposals to apply for Home Office approval. This, it was believed, would not only allow the scope of the work of the Refuge to be widened but it would also overcome the serious financial problems facing the institution.

By the 1940s the Home Office had identified an urgent need for supervised accommodation for young offenders on probation. Home Office guidance notes on *Homes and Hostels for Young Probationers* (1942) state that most young offenders tended to become involved in crime through the corrupting influence of their friends or their home life. If any reformation was to take place, it was therefore essential to remove these vulnerable young people from their home environments and expose them to a different, more 'appropriate' way of life. Supervised Homes and Hostels, it was believed, fulfilled this purpose in that they provided an environment where

..young people can live under homely conditions and where they will learn much of value to them in life including cleanliness and decent manners, the wise spending of wages, the use of leisure and the give-and-take of working life (Home Office, 1942:1).

In order to receive Home Office approval, the Refuge had to undergo extensive structural alterations. Whilst these were undertaken, the institution once again changed its name and, in 1946, became the Liverpool Girls Home.

The administration of the Home continued their long-standing practice of targeting cases of 'less-than-full-criminality' (Weiner, 1990: 130). The Matron's Report for April 1946 states that both the Liverpool Education Committee and the CETS felt it would be appropriate to accept those young females who were in 'moral danger in their own homes'. Indeed the Annual Report for that year states that the Home would, in addition to accepting young first offenders, target 'persons, who by reason of their environment, were *in danger of* embarking on a

life of crime' (Annual Report, 1946: 2, MPS. Emphasis added). Exactly how these individuals were to be assessed or referred is unclear.

However these changes made little difference to the low levels of residency within the Home and by 1947 occupancy was down to two and the institution had an overdraft of £462. Nonetheless the staff were confident that the Home Office would soon grant approval and also that the new Criminal Justice Bill would increase the need for such Homes (Matron's Report, November 1946, AHA). Only the Matron had her reservations regarding the proposed links with the Home Office. She commented in her reports that although she understood the need for Home Office approval, she would prefer to take the Home in another direction as she 'did not like or understand the probation type of girl' (Matron's Report, November 1946, AHA). She was to be disappointed though as in 1948 the Home Office finally agreed to grant approval.

The approval did not come without conditions. First, although the Home Office promised not to interfere with the running of the Home (meaning that it would remain, to a great degree, outside of full state control) they stipulated that 'mental defective cases', epileptics, remand case and pregnant females were not to be admitted (Annual Report, 1948, MPS). The second condition was that, as well as the domestic training within the Home (which was still desirable), the women were to receive instruction in 'useful subjects' from Liverpool Education Committee. The Home Office drew clear distinctions between suitable regimes for males and females. Males were to be encouraged to take up training and employment within fields such as gardening, greenhouse work, woodwork, carpentry, painting or plastering. Females on the other hand, were still expected to undertake domestic duties and laundry work although secretarial work and gardening were also recommended (Home Office, 1942: 2).

The Home Office recommended that Hostels be small with a 'homely' atmosphere, and contain at least one recreation room and one 'quiet' room for

residents.¹⁵ As discussed in Chapter Four, it went on to recommend that Hostels for boys should have some outdoor playground facility 'where high spirits can find an outlet' (1942: 2) although this was not a recommendation for all-female institutions.

The third condition stipulated that all probation cases would be admitted for a specified period, usually a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months. No resident was to stay longer than twelve months unless special permission was granted by the Home Office because

Longer stay than a year in a Hostel would tend to defeat the object of 'supervision in the open' - which is to restore the offender to a normal way of life as soon as he (*sic*) is likely to withstand its temptations and difficulties (Home Office, 1942: 2).

Finally, the name of the institution would have to be changed once again, this time in order to emphasise the fact that it was now a Hostel and not a Home (Annual Report, 1948, MPS). The Home Office drew clear distinctions between Homes and Hostels for young probationers. The CETS and the Management Committee agreed to these conditions and finally, on 1st September 1948 the institution changed its name again, this time in honour of its long serving Matron, and opened its doors as Adelaide House Approved Probation Hostel for Girls.

The regime at the Hostel changed radically once it had been set within Home Office guidelines. The Christian emphasis still existed, because the Hostel was still owned and managed by the Church of England, however it was now solely utilised for fifteen to eighteen year old females who had been placed on probation with a condition of residence. This meant that only women who had been before the courts would be admitted, there was now no place for 'preventative cases'. The new regime was based around the notion of a 'normal, happy family' (Annual Report, 1948:2) with a great deal of emphasis on the teaching of good manners and habits (Home Office, 1942). In order to support these ideals of respectability,

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that at the time of research (1992-1994) Adelaide House still had both a recreation room and a 'quiet' room.

a married Matron was employed and both she and her husband were required to live on the Hostel premises. This idea was very quickly heralded as a great success.

...the happy relationship which can and should exist between husband and wife has been shown to these girls and has been a gracious influence in putting before them a happy life based on Christian principles (Annual Report, 1948: 2, MPS).

However, the CETS committee still felt the need to emphasise religious and moral reformation as well as 'family values'. The 1948 Annual Report states that

The spiritual side of the work has been kept in mind - there have been daily family prayers and regular attendance at the House of God each Sunday (1948:2, MPS).

Although the Hostel was never meant to be a fully penal institution, prior to the Home Office granting its approval it had functioned within strict notions of confinement. One of its basic philosophies was the belief that young women needed to be taken away from the temptations and iniquitous influences within society and placed in an environment where they could repent and reform. The Home Office saw such control as detrimental to reformation and it strongly encouraged hostels to build up links within the local community. It advocated that probationers should attempt to lead as 'normal' a life as possible and this included contact with friends (albeit only suitably respectable ones).

...normal friendships with people of a similar age, even if of different sex, need not be discouraged so long as reasonable supervision is maintained (Annual Report, 1948: 3, MPS).

Also, all work undertaken by the residents had previously been carried out on the Hostel premises (for example in the laundry) and the women were only allowed to enter the external world of employment once it was believed that they had been fully reformed. After the Home Office granted approval the situation changed. From the late 1940s the residents were allowed outside for their employment, working in shops, factories and nurseries, returning to the Hostel only in the

evenings and at weekends. Although they were expected to work long hours, these new rules meant that the residents could at least lead a more conventional and less oppressive lifestyle.

Although the institution now had Home Office approval to accept probation cases, the Management Committee still had trouble making it a viable project and the Hostel continued to face financial pressures because the number of referrals remained relatively low. The passing of the Criminal Justice Act (1948) managed to improve this situation. It enabled the Home Office to give greater financial assistance to Approved Probation Hostels, which meant that for the first time Adelaide House was not solely reliant upon charitable contributions.¹⁶ Although the Home Office did not award capital grants towards the establishment of hostels it would make public funds available for local authorities to support the work of such institutions. Also, as most probationers were expected to go out to work, they were usually able to earn enough money to contribute to their own support. So by the 1950s the institution became, once again, financially secure and could thus concentrate its efforts on the more important issue of the reformation of its female residents.

The 1950s and 1960s: respectability and domesticity

[The residents] are missing love and care at home, in the hostel they can mature....the home is the greatest training ground and in the hostel they should receive what is missing at home and learn to live with people as part of a community...They have lost the respect of others and they have lost their own self respect. In the hostel they can learn to earn respect, to respect themselves and to acquire standards. Their own homes are lacking, they are the future mothers and the basics of housecraft should be taught. Having achieved all this they are fit to enter society (Memo sent to Hostel Staff by Adelaide House Management Committee, October 11th 1967).

The 1950s was a period of 'gender readjustment' in Britain. During the Second World War women's lives had changed dramatically and many had left their homes, worked and learned new skills for the first time. Consequently, by the

¹⁶ Although by this time the Home Office was contributing financially, Adelaide House had retained its charitable status. This was still the case in the 1990s.

1950s efforts were being made to return to traditional roles and values, thus discourses around 'normal' gender relations (and in particular 'normal' femininity) were prevalent (see Smart, 1992a). Accordingly, as Sim (1990) has argued, the primary purpose of penal institutions for women during this period was to normalise and domesticate the inmates, ensuring they become respectable wives and mothers. This was also the case for women offenders on probation at Adelaide House. The women were by now receiving educational classes from visiting teachers but these consisted mainly of domestic studies, for example needlework and cookery (Annual Report, 1949, MPS). The overarching philosophy was to instil in the young female probationers the virtues of housewifery and motherhood. An unpublished information leaflet for Adelaide House highlights this.

Some of these girls will be the future mothers of our race and to place them for a period in a Hostel such as Adelaide House must give them some idea of right living and something to hold on to when they return to their own homes (1952: 3, AHA).

As had been the case during the nineteenth century, female virtue was still perceived to be fragile and the women at the Hostel, although they now mixed more freely within the local community, were still thought to be in need of constant protection from the corrupting influences of others. A letter written by the Matron (or Warden as she became known after 1950) to the Hostel Committee raises concerns about the dangers facing young women working within the local community. The Warden, a believer in strict discipline and supervision, felt sure that the probationers would benefit from being 'kept apart from other boys and girls, some of whom will no doubt be of dubious character' (Letter from the Warden to the Hostel Management Committee, April 4th 1952, AHA). The Home Office may have been of the opinion that employment outside of the Hostel would be beneficial to the young probationers but the Hostel Warden was not in agreement. In her opinion female morality was too fragile and thus too easily corrupted and she was concerned at the types of social activity the young women would be able to engage in during recreational periods at work. Factories in particular were the breeding grounds of iniquitous behaviour and residents would

never be reformed while engaged in ‘frivolous’ activity (such as playing card games and gossiping) and mixing with ‘undesirable company’ (ibid).

Even though the Warden strongly objected to ‘frivolity’, the Hostel did encourage the women to participate in respectable supervised leisure events, such as trips to the Blackpool illuminations, Christmas pantomimes, plays, concerts and rambles through Bromborough and Raby Mere (Annual Report, 1956, MPS). Many of the organised events were based around the church and the Annual Report for 1956 informs of the women enjoying musical evenings at Allerton Presbyterian Church, passion plays at St. Mary’s, Easter Services, Salvation Army Youth rallies and juvenile meetings of the Church of England Temperance Society. An unpublished information leaflet on the Hostel emphasises the importance of this contact with religious organisations.

There is close contact with the local church life, which ensures the creation of a spiritual atmosphere which is so vital in the building of character (1952: 3, AHA).

Throughout the 1950s there is no documented evidence to suggest that the women at the Hostel collectively or overtly resisted the religious regime imposed upon them. On the contrary, Annual Reports provide lavish accounts of yearly confirmations and enthusiastic attendance at church events. The Annual Report for 1956 reports that eight women had willingly signed the pledge of total abstinence that year. However, examples of internal disturbances or unruly behaviour were not generally reported in the widely circulated Annual Reports. Instead, such accounts would have been located within the Warden’s daily report books but unfortunately none could be found for this period.¹⁷ More information was available for the following decade when several reports of ‘problematic’ behaviour and incidents were recorded. These will be discussed later in this Chapter.

¹⁷ See Bosworth (2000) and also Chapter Three for a discussion on the inadequacy of historical data.

By the early 1960s the numbers of referrals had risen dramatically and once more there was a constant waiting list for places at the Hostel. The Church continued to be a major influence and in 1960 the institution still had its own Chaplain. That same year the Committee also proposed that £100 be spent from private funds on furnishing a chapel in the Hostel (Annual Report, 1960, MPS). The notions of decency and domesticity still prevailed and the CETS strived to maintain a 'family atmosphere' in order that the women might acquire, through experience and observation, the skills and characteristics necessary to look after their own future families and homes. The ideals of the 'respectable woman' went further during the 1960s and an interest in personal appearance, at one time considered sinful vanity, was encouraged. It was not enough that women acted feminine and respectable, they had to look the part too. As Chapter Four noted, institutions for women strived to instil the virtues of *looking*, as well as *being*, respectable (see also Elder, 1972).

At the Hostel women were encouraged to enter the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, taking such subjects as Personal Hygiene and Good Manners. In addition they were allowed to wear make up and visit a local hairdresser (Annual Report, 1963, MPS). The Warden's daily logbook for 1963 refers to the women being encouraged to look 'pretty' for special day trips. There is also a reference in December of that year to women being taken to the local hairdresser in order that they 'look their best' for the Christmas church events and their yearly home leave. In 1964 special arrangements were made with Whiston Hospital for the removal of tattoos from those women ready to be discharged (Adelaide House Care Committee Minute Book, May 1964, AHA).¹⁸

The women leaving the Hostel were expected to be well groomed, well mannered and fully equipped with domestic and maternal skills. However, not for the first time in its history, the Hostel clashed with the probation service as to how these goals should best be achieved. The probation service's theory that young offenders could best learn responsibility and self-control if they were allowed to

¹⁸ Whether this procedure was compulsory or voluntary is not mentioned and details of how the tattoos were removed are not given.

lead relatively 'normal' lives within the community was dismissed by the Hostel Warden. It was her belief that the strict supervision, segregation and discipline employed in the Hostel in previous years was the most appropriate way to deal with the errant young women in her care. As had been the case during the nineteenth century, idleness was still (by the 1960s) perceived by the Hostel staff to be the root of unruly behaviour. Even though the residents were employed daily, this work was considered to be insufficient to keep the women occupied and content. It was believed that a more satisfied and submissive group of residents could only be achieved through increased discipline. The Care Committee Minutes record this dispute.

..[there] ought to be firmer discipline in the Hostel. [The Warden] herself would not allow any girl out for a month after arrival - coupled with a system of rewards for good behaviour and added responsibilities for the girls who had been here longest. She fears the girls are aimless and bored and for this reason more rude and tiresome (February 1964, AHA).

Discipline problems are recorded as increasing significantly from around 1964 after the Government had raised the school leaving age. This change in the law meant that the age of admission for the Hostel was also raised and as a result, those admitted were becoming 'a little more worldly wise each time' (Letter from the Warden to the Management Committee, 15th November, 1965, AHA). Consequently the discipline problems caused by these new residents were perceived as much more serious and dangerous than those stemming from simple 'idleness' or boredom. Being somewhat older and 'more worldly wise' than their predecessors, concern was now centred on the sexuality and sexual behaviour of these new admissions. In 1966, the Warden stated that the Hostel was facing a 'moral crisis' when it was found that boys had been climbing over the walls and into the residents' bedrooms where they would spend the night (Warden's Daily Log Book, August 1966, AHA). It is interesting to note that although this problem was discussed urgently and frequently and several 'solutions' were proposed, for example the fixing of broken glass around the top of the Hostel walls (Warden's Daily Log Book, September 1966, AHA), the main concern of the Hostel staff and committee was not the protection of residents from physical harm or danger (this

issue is hardly mentioned in the Hostel records) but rather their protection from sexual corruption, temptation and moral degeneration.

The girls in residence are mostly at risk from serious delinquency or serious moral danger...(Adelaide House Managing Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes, October 11th, 1967, MPS).

In 1967, the Hostel's worst fears were confirmed when a fifteen year old resident became pregnant. It was consequently decided that the women should receive some form of sex education. As neither the Hostel Committee nor the CETS wanted to be seen to be encouraging sexual activity amongst their young female probationers, it was decided that the best way to approach the issue was to bring in representatives from the Marriage Guidance Council who could not only teach elementary sex education but could also go beyond this and give instruction on the institution of marriage (Annual Report, 1967, MPS). That same year permission was granted for the Hostel to be extended in order that a Warden *with a family* might be accommodated as this, it was believed, would be an ideal example to set to the impressionable residents (Adelaide House Managing Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes, June 14th, 1967).

The end of the decade did see some significant changes within Adelaide House. First, in 1967, the trustees (The CETS) amalgamated with the Police Court Mission to become The Church of England Council for Social Aid (CECSA), an organisation which still holds trusteeship (and, as Chapter Seven highlights, considerable power) today. The most remarkable change though came about in response to the 1968 Government White Paper *Children in Trouble*. This proposed legislation meant that no young people under the age of 17 could be placed on probation and therefore no orders of residency would apply under that age. The subsequent Children and Young Persons Act changed the whole concept of the Hostel's approach to its task. It now received only adult probationers and so in response it undertook a large upgrading project and an extension of the Hostel facilities. These facilities were to include provision for young expectant mothers and mothers with young children. By the early 1970s Adelaide House had become the first probation hostel in the country to make provision for young pregnant

women or women with babies. As the Chair of the Adelaide House Executive Committee explained,

Up to this time I had been prodding for a more humane approach towards these young women for I felt they were not being supported at the time when they were most vulnerable. (Emmanuel W, quoted in Emmanuel J, 1977, unpublished report, AHA)

Apart from some physical changes to the building itself, and some efforts to 'update' the regime, relatively little changed *for the women* at the Hostel throughout the remainder of the 1960s. In keeping with the medical model employed for many years, the Hostel appointed a psychiatrist in 1968 whose role was to examine and assess the probationers during their stay. An inspection report from that year records the case of Paula F.¹⁹ who stole a lighter from her employer whilst resident at the Hostel. Given that she would not acknowledge the seriousness of her offence, it was recommended by the Warden that she see the psychiatrist. On examination he recommended that psychotherapy would be of little use as her problem was simply that she was lacking in discipline and moral standards (Adelaide House Hostel Committee Inspection Report, May 8th, 1968, AHA). It is apparent that both the medical and the moral explanations for female offending behaviour were still being employed as mutually reinforcing discourses within the institution as late as the 1960s. In addition the discourses of domesticity and femininity were also still prevalent. The annual report for 1968 proposes a 'new' training programme for the residents. This programme would include dressmaking, personal hygiene, first aid, music, art, etiquette, personal grooming, keep fit, household management and swimming. It also recommends more visits to museums, galleries and theatres.

In this way it is hoped that not only would the girls be more able to manage their lives and future lives more adequately but that they would also begin to be less resentful towards authority and to regard it with different eyes (Annual Report, 1968, MPS).

¹⁹ This name is abbreviated in order to ensure anonymity.

As had been the case for over one hundred years, the women at the Hostel were still expected to adhere to dominant notions of femininity. Success was still primarily measured, not so much on the gaining of employment or the cessation of offending behaviour, but rather on the procuring of a husband and the successful management of a home.

Sir, I am pleased to inform the committee that Gladys [F]²⁰ has, since leaving the Hostel, married and settled down with a respectable man, a shopkeeper. A success story we should pass on to the other girls (Letter from the Warden of Adelaide House to Chair of the Hostel Committee, August 14th, 1965, AHA).

Of course, the Hostel staff were also pleased with other, more subtle, successes. Simple gratitude for the opportunity to reside at the institution was frequently presented as proof of a 'job well done'. A copy of a letter sent to the Principal Probation Officer, describing an incident at Adelaide House, was found in a wooden frame in the Hostel loft. It states that

When the girls attended church last Sunday they heard a sermon on 'God's Gifts'. On returning to the Hostel Margaret [H]²¹, who is by no means an intelligent girl, turned to a member of the staff and said 'I know what God's gift to me is, it is sending me here to Adelaide House' (Letter from Garston Probation Office to Principal Probation Officer, Crosshall Street, June 8th, 1966).

The 1970s and 1980s: Some Concluding Issues

It is at this point in history that the detailed records and accounts pertaining to Adelaide House begin to dry-up. As discussed in Chapter Three, the original archive documentation found in the attic of the Hostel primarily covers the period 1823 to 1970. Records after 1970 were predominantly financial accounts or brief memoranda to and from the Management Committee regarding funding or charitable donations. As also discussed in Chapter Three, permission to access more recent records which were kept by the Church of England Council for Social

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

Aid and the Hostel Management Committee was denied.²² Thus more general information, located at the Merseyside Probation Service Research and Information Unit was utilised. Due to the mainly statistical nature of this information, this section of the chapter will not be able to address in the same depth the range of theoretical issues that have so far been focussed on in this and the previous chapter. However it can nonetheless provide a sufficient conclusion to this chapter, presenting, as it does, a brief but functional account of the role played by Adelaide House in the wider criminal justice system during the 1970s and 1980s.

During these decades Adelaide House continued to accept only women aged seventeen and above. It also continued to provide accommodation for pregnant women and women with children up to twelve months old (Senior Staff Notice from Chief Probation Officer, April 18th 1984, MPS).²³ The Warden remained the primary role model for the women in the Hostel responsible for their supervision, care and control.

It is an important duty of [the Warden] to provide a caring environment in which young women can feel comfortable and secure whilst, at the same time, understanding and accepting the conditions of their residency (Memorandum from the Adelaide House Management Committee, March 1973, MPS).

By the 1980s Adelaide House still occupied a unique and autonomous position within the criminal justice system. Analysis of the occupancy figures for 1981 to 1983 indicates that the period of residency in the institution was significantly longer than that at the other (all male) hostels on Merseyside (Merseyside Probation Service, 1984).

²² It should be re-iterated here that neither the CECSA nor the Hostel Management Committee were aware of the existence of the archive records until they were discovered accidentally by the Hostel secretary and myself during the fieldwork for this thesis. Thus there was no objection to this information being utilised in this research. More recent information (pertaining to referrals, admissions and individual residents) did exist however it was decided by the Committee that this should remain confidential.

²³ By the late 1980s the Hostel no longer accepted pregnant women or women with children.

In addition, the same figures indicate that the Hostel was breaching the probation orders of residents at a higher rate than any of the other male hostels in the area. This analysis would seem to suggest that two traditional gender assumptions, which had for almost two centuries underpinned the philosophy and regime of the institution, continued to influence its operation in the latter decades of the twentieth century. First, the significantly longer period of residence is reminiscent of past debates between the Home Office and the Refuge / Hostel Management Committee regarding an appropriate length of training for women. 'Deviant' women, it was assumed, required a more intensive form of supervision than their male counterparts. Second, the higher number of breaches at Adelaide House is indicative of both the enduring theory that women are inherently susceptible to influence and hence need to be kept separate from other, recalcitrant or 'corrupting' women and the established practice within institutions for women (both penal and semi-penal) of 'zero tolerance' of 'inappropriate' behaviour.

By the mid 1980s the Hostel was once again suffering from a lack of referrals and low occupancy rates. In 1984 the average occupancy rate was twenty seven percent. The situation improved slightly the following year but by 1985 the Hostel still only had seven beds occupied from a total of eighteen (Burgess, 1985).

During 1984 the Hostel had closed for repairs after a fire damaged the building. Possibly in response to the occupancy crisis, its re-opening that same year prompted a memorandum from the Chief Probation Officer in which he reminds probation staff that the Hostel had widened its referral criteria. Adelaide House would now accept women who were already serving a probation order *without* a condition of residence as long as they met at least one of three conditions. Women would be accepted if they found themselves without accommodation as a result of 'either relationship problems or breakdown of family support' (Senior Staff Notice from Chief Probation Officer, April 18th 1984, MPS). In addition, women who, on the assessment of the probation officer, were 'at risk'²⁴ of 'community or

²⁴ There is no explanation in this document as to the specific definition of 'at risk' although from discussions with the Hostel Warden during the 1990s (see Chapter Seven) it is likely this referred to women perceived to be in physical danger.

cultural problems' (ibid) were suitable candidates for referral, as were clients who after committing a further offence whilst on probation were 'at risk' of committing yet another.

Although the motives behind this change in admission criteria were undoubtedly a mixture of benevolence and self-preservation on the part of the Management Committee, the effect was once again to widen the regulatory net for women offenders. Thus women who had already been sentenced by the courts to a probation order (their original offence not warranting extra conditions such as a period of residence at a hostel) could find themselves, through circumstances not related to their criminal activity, recommended for admission to Adelaide House and thus subjected to a much more intensive and regulatory supervisory process.

Of course there would be no legal compulsion on these women to agree to such a recommendation but even the existence of such a provision is symbolic of the traditional, unquestioned notion that the hostel (like the reformatory, the refuge and the home) is essentially a positive, protective and even therapeutic environment for women.

It is of course the intention of this thesis to deconstruct this assumption and in doing so proffer an alternative, more critical analysis of the probation hostel and other forms of semi-penal institution. This and the previous chapter have gone some way towards achieving this goal by examining the creation and development of Adelaide House from its early years as a nineteenth century reformatory to its more recent history as a twentieth century bail and probation hostel for women. In order to complete this investigation the following chapter will present an in-depth analysis of the fieldwork conducted in Adelaide House between 1992 and 1994 and in doing so will draw together those themes of continuity (as well as highlighting those aspects of discontinuity), relating to discourse, philosophy and regime, which link the institution's previous existence with its present one, thus answering the question 'is Adelaide House a semi-penal institution for the new millennium?'

Chapter Seven

Contemporary Semi-Penal Institutionalisation for Women on Merseyside.

Adelaide House in the 1990s

As Chapters Five and Six have shown, Adelaide House has developed through a variety of guises and purposes over the past one hundred and eighty years. As Chapter One argued, it is the main intention of the thesis to draw together various themes of continuity and discontinuity between the institution as an early nineteenth century reformatory and the institution as a late twentieth century bail and probation hostel.¹ This was to be achieved through the pursuit of three main objectives. First, it was the intention to identify the meaning of the term semi-penal institution and this issue was examined in an historical context in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Second, the various discourses that underpinned the practices and regimes of the institution throughout its long history, and the way these discourses attempted to 'normalise' and regulate the female residents to an appropriate standard of femininity, were to be explored. Again, in terms of the historical material this issue was examined in Chapters Five and Six. The final objective was to explore the way in which women adapted to, endorsed or resisted this construction of femininity and the regulatory regimes imposed upon them. As with the objectives above, an historical analysis of this issue can be found in Chapters Five and Six. Thus the thesis so far has provided a comprehensive historical analysis of the institution from 1823 to the mid 1980s. In order to complete the analysis it is necessary to examine the institution as it existed at a particular period in the 1990s. Utilising the series of interviews conducted with staff and residents, and the period of participant observation carried out in the Hostel from 1992 to 1994 (discussed in Chapter Three) it is the intention of this chapter to conclude the

¹ The name of the institution when it opened in 1823 was the Lancashire County Refuge for the Destitute. Although this institution underwent a series of name changes up until it formally became Adelaide House in 1948, in order to achieve a sense of clarity, it will be referred to as either the Lancashire Refuge or Adelaide House throughout this chapter. For a full history of the institution and its various names / guises see Chapters Five and Six.

analysis by examining the three main objectives outlined above in a contemporary context.

The Hostel as a semi-penal institution

In Chapter Four, five defining qualities and characteristics that identified the nineteenth century semi-penal institution were presented. The semi-penal characteristics of these institutions included: their position beyond the reach of formal state control; their unique position on the social control continuum (ie. neither fully custodial nor fully ‘communal’); the fact that they managed to combine formal and informal methods of discipline; the essentially ‘voluntary’ status of their admissions; and finally the fact that they did not deal solely with criminal women but rather widened the net of control to encompass ‘non-criminal’ cases as well. Chapters Five and Six highlight the fact that the Lancashire County Refuge for the Destitute could be classed as semi-penal throughout its long history. This section of the chapter will revisit those criteria, applying them this time to the institution as it existed in the mid 1990s, as Adelaide House, thus establishing whether it is legitimate to discuss this Hostel in semi-penal terms.

Beyond the reach of state control

The first characteristic of nineteenth century semi-penal institutions was that they were usually set up beyond the reach of full and formal state control. Institutions for prostitutes (Dobash *et al*, 1986; Mahood, 1990; Lindfield, 1992), inebriates (Hunt *et al*, 1989; Zedner, 1991, 1991a) and various other groups of ‘deviant’ or ‘dangerous’ women (Dobash *et al*, 1986; Rimmer, 1986; Weiner, 1990) were popular philanthropic projects and consequently were often created and managed by charitable or voluntary organisations. As Chapter Five explained, the Lancashire Refuge was such a project, established by a wealthy Quaker family in 1823 as a charitable institution and fully independent of state control. It remained essentially removed from any formal state influence for almost a century until 1919 when the management and trusteeship of the institution were taken over by the Church of England Temperance Society. However, even with this much larger charity at the helm, and even though by this time the institution was accepting women released

by the court on probation orders, the Refuge still remained relatively free from state interference. By 1948 the amount of state input increased when the institution became an Approved Probation and Bail Hostel for women thus making it eligible for Home Office funding, however, as this section of the chapter will highlight, even by 1994 the institution was still a comparatively independent body.

By the 1990s, Adelaide House was primarily funded by the Home Office with money being allocated, as with all bail and probation hostels, according to bed space availability.² However, although the Home Office managed the overall budget for the Hostel, decisions regarding how that money was spent were made at a local level by the Adelaide House Management Committee, a voluntary and relatively autonomous group set up to oversee the day to day running of the institution.³ The Church of England Council for Social Aid⁴ were still the trustees of the institution and owned the building within which the Hostel was located. Consequently CECSA members constituted ten out of the twelve representatives of the Hostel Management Committee (the remaining two representatives being the probation appointed Warden and Deputy Warden of the Hostel).⁵

² Funding for approved hostels comes from various sources. At the time of research the Home Office were responsible for a direct grant of approximately 80% of the total running costs. The exact amount of this grant was based mainly on the number of bed spaces provided by the Hostel. The remaining 20% of costs would be provided by local authorities and residents own contributions (rent). For further details of this breakdown in funding see Probation Service Act (Home Office, 1994) and the Hostels Handbook (Home Office, 1995).

³ It should be mentioned here that the money allocated to Adelaide House by the Home Office would be supplemented by charitable donation as, by 1993, Adelaide House still retained its charitable status and was in fact Liverpool's oldest charity.

⁴ This body was formerly the Church of England Temperance Society, the charitable organisation that took over the running of the institution in the 1920s. For the remainder of this chapter the name of this organisation will be abbreviated to CECSA.

⁵ Some description of the way in which the Hostel was staffed is necessary here. In 1993 Adelaide House was staffed by a Warden, Deputy Warden and between seven and ten full time, and relief, Assistant Wardens. All of these members of staff, as well as all administrative staff (two secretaries) and all auxiliary staff (cooks, cleaners, caretaker etc) were appointed and paid by Merseyside Probation Service (although the CECSA did have an input with regard to interviews and appointments - this will be discussed later in the chapter). The CECSA appointed an Executive Officer who was responsible for day to day contact with the Hostel.

The retention of this church influence, and the fact that the Hostel did not fall completely within the realms of state control, had a considerable impact upon the institution and frequently caused tensions between the probation appointed Hostel staff and the CECSA dominated management committee. Many staff members complained of a lack of communication between these two groups and a general lack of understanding, on the part of the CECSA, with regards to the purpose and function of probation accommodation in the late twentieth century. Home Office National Standards (1992a: s8, para 5) identified the purpose of approved hostels as providing 'an enhanced level of supervision' for offenders under non-custodial supervision in line with the 'just deserts' philosophy underpinning the 1991 Criminal Justice Act. The CECSA, however, saw the function and philosophy of Adelaide House as somewhat different, adhering strongly to the traditional, 'welfare' based roots of the probation service.

The philosophy [of the Hostel] is Christian in its widest sense. That fits with probation because it has the same Christian background...The objectives for us have not changed or modernised since the 1930s because we want to retain the scope for who we can help (Chairman of CECSA).

The CECSA asserted that its philosophy and objectives fitted more with the original, rather than the current, aims of the probation service and on this point many of the Hostel staff agreed. In general, the majority of the staff felt that the work undertaken with women at Adelaide House was more akin to the 'advise, assist and befriend' ideals of the early to mid-twentieth century probation service, than to the 'confronting offending behaviour' (Worrall, 1997: 101) philosophy of the 1990s. Worrall has stated that under the punitive climate of the 1990s, probation hostels had become more like custodial institutions and less like the 'sanctuaries' they were perceived to be in the past (1997: 107). However the majority of staff did not see Adelaide House in this way, believing instead that the Hostel's fairly autonomous position with regard to national developments in probation and criminal justice in general, had left it somewhat 'untouched' by recent changes in legislation and policy.

I think we fit in well with the *old* style probation service aims...As far as I can make out the emphasis [in probation] now is on punishment and regulation and I don't think we fit in too well with that, at least I hope we don't. I don't think there is anything wrong with 'sitting outside' the probation service, you can't compare what goes on in here and what happens in the field. I think we punish because we have to, that is the nature of these institutions but the difference is we try to help while we are doing it (Assistant Warden 8, emphasis made in interview).

We sort of fit in [with the probation service] but we might do things differently from the other hostels. Like we are the only hostel that isn't totally run by the probation service and so although [all hostels] work along certain lines we sort of have a bit of leeway and we can use our own initiative and we have our own way of doing things (Assistant Warden 3).

For many of the staff this autonomy and 'removal' from full probation control was a positive aspect of the Hostel. However, not all staff saw this independence as beneficial and indeed the Warden herself commented that such independence had the potential to create a totally arbitrary system within the institution and she had consequently welcomed the introduction of National Standards in 1992 as a way of reducing this inherent problem.

..National Standards[are]trying to standardise things instead of having idiosyncratic hostels with idiosyncratic managers doing whatever they like so it stops Adelaide House having this cranky system, and its good.....It is very difficult because the Church of England likes to see this as their Hostel with a bit of probation involvement out of necessity for funding but they do not like to see the necessity of probation input and there is a possessive side to it as though the Hostel is *theirs*. Difficulties can occur and there are often tensions...and even though there is an input from the probation service in the shape of the Assistant Chief Probation Officer, it has little effect (Hostel Warden, emphasis made in interview).

Although the majority of staff felt there were advantages to be gained by remaining outside the realms of full probation control, the trepidation of the Hostel warden with regard to the input of the CECSA with the day to day business of the Hostel was mirrored by many of the Assistant Wardens who felt a similar anxiety regarding the level of power held by this group. Most saw the Management

Committee as out of touch and unenlightened, with regard to the Hostel client group, and agreed that this was problematic.

The general feeling though is that the Management Committee's influence is out of proportion to their actual involvement with the women. They take a lot of decisions and they don't know the women at all (Assistant Warden 6).

I can't believe that in the 1990s we still have a Hostel like this which is basically being run by the Church. It just astounds me. Those people on the Management Committee still see the women here as either fallen harlots or poor misguided girls who need to be shown the error of their ways. I don't think they have any idea of the reality of this place, how dangerous it can be, the violence we see, the horrendous abuse some of these women have suffered, the horrendous crimes some of them have committed. I think they'd be shocked if they knew (Assistant Warden 9).

The Adelaide House Management Committee, like the Gentlemen's Committee of the nineteenth century Refuge, had the final say over many decisions taken at the Hostel, mainly concerning the allocation of resources and the appointment of staff (with decisions regarding the acceptance and rejection of referrals left to the staff team). This level of authority was perceived as autocratic by some Assistant Wardens and only served to increase the tensions felt by Hostel staff. Many indicated a sense of isolation enhanced by the fact that even the Home Office was reluctant to challenge decisions taken by the CECSA.

The Home Office...the people you deal with are civil servants and their knowledge of hostels is minimal and so they are kept informed through people like [the CECSA Executive Officer]. So it would depend on whether it was in their interest to step in....I think they are quite happy because.....the accommodation is provided by the CECSA so it's quite economical for them. But it is a tension (Hostel Warden).

[The CECSA] wield the power here. I think even the Home Office and the probation committee are reluctant to challenge them because they own the building you see. I remember when the paint was falling off the walls and the springs in the chairs had gone....the place was a right mess and we had to wait for the Management Committee to give the go-ahead for a refurbish. It took months...it was embarrassing for women to

bring relatives or friends here...and it was depressing to work here too (Assistant Warden 9).

So it could be argued that the power of the Hostel Management Committee and the relative independence from full probation control served to enhance the potential for arbitrary decisions and strategies to be employed by the Hostel. This issue will be taken up later in this chapter when the matter of 'informal' discipline (methods of control and punishment developed within the Hostel) will be discussed. In addition, both the Hostel Warden and Deputy Warden felt further frustrations due to the fact that they were the only two non-CECSA representatives on the Management Committee and thus often felt unsure as to where their 'loyalties' should lie.

Generally [the dual control] is a disadvantage because sometimes Merseyside Probation Service policy either contradicts or is in disagreement with the CECSA policy..... I wear two hats, I'm still a probation officer employed by the probation service and so if they have a policy and the Committee doesn't agree with it then whose policy do I go with? (Deputy Warden).

This problem of 'dual control', the tensions between having to accord to some degree with state regulations and yet wanting to remain independent of state interference at the same time, is not new for Adelaide House nor indeed for the probation service in general. As Brownlee (1998: 67) states, the probation service has always 'operated within a range of contradictory aspirations'. McWilliams (1983) noted that the history of the service has always been a history of conflict: conflict between the ideologies of religion and science, conflict between the ideals of punishment and welfare and conflict between the church and the state. He goes on to assert that the Church of England Temperance Society Missionaries⁶ began their work, which was rooted in the concept of clemency, with magistrates who were rooted within a harsh and punitive system of justice. Hence, it was in many ways inevitable that the probation service would have to deal with the

⁶ The Church of England Temperance Society Missionaries were the forerunners of the modern probation officers. See Chapter Four for a further discussion of this history.

juxtaposition between their conflicting philosophies. In order to reconcile this conflict of ideals many missionaries saw their role as combining 'the grace of God...with sensible treatment according to the state' (Holmes, 1913, cited in McWilliams, 1983: 137), perceiving themselves as a kind of intermediary body which could temper the punitive ideals of the formal system with Christian philosophies of benevolence and mercy. The CECSA trustees of Adelaide House perceived themselves in a similar way.

The CECSA is trying to maintain the original philosophy of the probation service. We think we are not just here to contain women or indeed to punish them, although of course we are still part of the whole system. We think part of the role is to provide a place of care and support for the women here. We want to provide an environment where women can look at themselves and change their outlook on their own (Chairman, CECSA).

We are a church based organisation. We obviously have a religious conviction for this work. We understand that we are dependent on the Home Office and probation service for the funding of this Hostel and we admire a lot of the work the probation service does. But there is a movement [in probation] that we don't really agree with....away from the idea of helping those in need. We like to think that here at Adelaide House we can provide an element of Christian charity that is missing from a lot of other types of work with offenders (Executive Officer, CECSA).

Of course, this desire to retain some element of care and support in an otherwise punitive criminal justice system is not, in theory, a negative ideal. It is not the intention of this thesis to argue in favour of a move towards a more regulative and disciplinary regime in probation hostels for women. However, these ideals of Christian charity should be examined within a broader context. The way in which these ideals are applied in reality, and consequently the way in which they impact upon the women at Adelaide House, needs to be carefully addressed. As has been highlighted throughout Chapters Five and Six, the Christian philosophy underpinning the institution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries actually served to *increase* the levels of discipline that women were subjected to, as well as expanding the net of control to encompass those cases of 'less than full criminality' (Weiner, 1990: 130). Similarly, as subsequent sections of this chapter will show,

for women at Adelaide House these Christian ethics frequently served to entrap them within particular moralistic and feminising discourses that, in turn, created a very specific and unique gendered regime. A regime which, it will be argued, was more oppressive and regulative than those to which their male counterparts were subjected.

A unique position on the social control continuum

This conflict of ideals and the attempts to reconcile the, often competing, philosophies of the church and the state lead on to the second major characteristic of the semi-penal institution. One obvious criterion which identifies institutions as semi-penal is the fact that they are indeed *semi*-penal, in other words although they are not formally penal, or custodial establishments, they cannot be described as 'informal' or 'domestic' either. Instead they occupy a place somewhere towards the middle of the 'domestic-custodial' spectrum. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Lancashire Refuge occupied such a position during the nineteenth century and it can be argued that Adelaide House was situated within a similar space on the social control continuum during the 1990s. As described above, Adelaide House had remained beyond the reach of total state control and thus was necessarily removed from the formal penal sphere. However, due to the nature of its funding, and the fact that it received women on court orders, it was necessarily entrenched within the criminal justice system. Thus it could not be considered as an 'informal' environment in the way that, for example a local neighbourhood, a workplace, a social club or the family home could be.⁷ As a result it appeared to occupy a unique position within the 'control continuum'. This unusual status (neither formal nor informal, neither custodial nor communal) was highlighted through three major issues that emerged from this research. First, as discussed above, the Hostel was neither totally within, nor completely without, state or penal, influence. Second, as

⁷ It should be acknowledged here that these 'informal' environments and institutions can also be restrictive and disciplinary with regards to women (see the discussion in Chapter Two regarding the informal regulation of women through discourse). However, they occupy the opposite end of the control continuum to very formal and regulative institutions such as prisons or special hospitals and for this reason they are classed here as 'informal'.

will be discussed later in this section of the chapter, the Hostel attempted to combine formal (state legislated) rules and regulations with informal (*ad-hoc*, unofficial and often questionable) systems of control and punishment and in doing so created an environment that was a curious hybrid of penal and ‘familial’ discipline. The third issue, which will now be discussed, was the fact that there existed no consensus or agreement amongst the Management Committee, the staff or the residents as to the ‘overarching’ function or purpose of the Hostel. With regards to the Committee and the staff group, some members located the Hostel at the ‘benign’ end of the control spectrum, perceiving it as a place of sanctuary and support. Others, however, perceived it to be situated at the opposite, more punitive and penal, end of the spectrum, acknowledging its focus on punishment, containment and control. Some members of staff placed it squarely in the middle of the spectrum commenting that the purpose of the Hostel was to attempt to combine a variety of roles and functions.

We are here to help and support those who need it. A helping hand, a refuge....for some women it's a sort of retreat (Chairman, CECSA).

I see [the Hostel] as a support agency, or just a roof over the head for some women. It's everything apart from punishment. I don't see us as being here to punish at all (Assistant Warden 4).

I think I'd say [the Hostel is a] sanctuary, but certainly punitive in that it is a big restriction on liberty, a very large restriction on liberty and I don't think [all of the residents] recognise it...I think its also rehabilitative because of the set up we have here....It is a multi-purpose and multi-functional place (Hostel Warden).

The main role is to provide an alternative to custody and in those who are on orders or on bail assessment, to reduce the risk of offending (Deputy Warden).

The Hostel is a last refuge in the custodial system. In a sense it is still a custodial institution (Assistant Warden 9).

This lack of consensus regarding the function of the Hostel served to emphasise the ambiguity of institutions such as Adelaide House and the impact of years of dual control by two authorities. A study by Barry (1991) highlighted that amongst

twenty one hostels he studied in the 1980s and early 1990s, there existed no real consensus in the aims, objectives and regimes of the institutions. As discussed in Chapter Four, while some were very punitive, others were much more liberal. In addition, they all appeared to be extremely resistant to changes in national policy and practice. Some of the staff at Adelaide House saw this multiplicity of ideas and views regarding the purpose of the Hostel as positive:

I think having a diversity of views is healthy...it means we can satisfy many different needs and roles (CECSA chairman).

However, it could be considered as extremely problematic. Problems mainly arose due to the fact that, in spite of residents being made fully aware on arrival of the rules and regulations of the institution, they did not receive consistent information with regard to the *purpose* of their residency and the *function* of the Hostel, primarily because there was no agreement on these issues amongst the Hostel staff. Indeed, the diversity of opinions amongst the staff was reflected by the residents who also described the Hostel in a variety of ways, with some women likening the institution to prison whilst others saw it, almost, as a 'home from home'.

It's just a lock-up, this place. I don't care how they dress it up, that's what it is. I get told when to sleep, when to eat, when I can go out. Do you get told all that? No, that's because you live in the community and I live in a lock up (Sarah).

Well it's just part of the system isn't it? I mean I know you've got some freedom here but it's still part of the same system...prisons, police, courts, probation...just part of the same system. I mean I'm not here because the police or courts feel sorry for me am I? They say I've done wrong, committed a crime and so you have to be punished for it. If they think you're really bad you might get banged up, if they think you're not dangerous then they might send you here (Leanne).

[Coming to this Hostel] is like going from home to home because you can sit and talk to somebody as if you are at home. You have your own bedroom, or you might have to share but you still have a home environment around you. It's not as if you are shut in a room and told you have to stay there all day, you have a radio, TV, pool table, table tennis, you can go out and do your shopping....I think hostels are a good thing for

people who really want to keep themselves out of trouble and start afresh (Maureen).

[The Hostel] is a bit of everything really. I think the main purpose is to try and help people sort themselves out. If you take drugs then they try and get you on Meth.....If you need to see a drugs counsellor or a psychiatrist or whatever then they sort that out too. I think the main purpose is to help people. I don't think it's punishment really because you can come and go during the day as much as you want really and there is (*sic*) no real rules and regulations.....People learn to live with each other and get on with each other here, it's like a big family sometimes...it's not like that in prison, you just get on each other's nerves (Debbie).

It could be argued that likening the Hostel to a 'home from home' was a basic coping strategy for many women, almost a way of avoiding the reality of being embroiled within the formal criminal justice system, something which perhaps cannot be achieved as easily in a prison environment. Similarly, for other women, treating the Hostel as a custodial institution also provided them with an, albeit different, coping mechanism. By responding to the Hostel regime as they might to a custodial regime they set for themselves definite boundaries that were otherwise seen to be missing in an institution with no obvious coherent function. These coping strategies will be discussed more fully in the final section of this chapter.

However it is necessary to acknowledge at this point that the lack of consistency amongst the Hostel management and staff with regards to the purpose of the Hostel did filter down to the residents of the institution and, it could be argued, created uncertainty amongst the women with regards to how they were expected to relate to Hostel staff and the regime in general.

I think the staff are here to keep order in the place. They are nice enough and are willing to listen if you have got a problem but basically they can get you sent back to court if you are late in, they can tell you that you can't go out, they tell you when to get up, all the things a screw would do and just because they do it with a smile and a friendly joke doesn't really mean they are all that different. I like the staff here and I accept why I'm here but I hate the way they try to make out they are like social workers (Frances).

I think I see some of [the staff] as screws because I think some of them have got delusions of grandeur. They'll say things to you to remind you of the position you are in. That pisses me off. There's an element of misunderstanding between them and us (Carla).

With the keys they are like jailers but without the keys and when they mix in they are like friends (Mandy).

Some of them are caring but I think one or two of them are more like screws than anything (Leanne).

In addition, because of the differing attitudes amongst the staff group, some residents complained of feeling confused and unsure of what constituted 'acceptable' behaviour.

Sometimes you can say something to one of [the staff] and they'll laughlike someone made a joke about [the fire started in the resident's lounge] and [one of the Assistant Wardens] was laughing with us about it. Then we said the same thing to [a different Assistant Warden] and she gave us a lecture about not joking about things like arson. I sometimes don't know what I should say to them you know...I can't tell sometimes what they expect (Billie).

Each resident was assigned a key-worker, an assistant warden who provided one-to-one counselling and support. The uncertainty about the staff's role also appeared to lead to some degree of suspicion regarding the motives of Assistant Wardens who attempted to undertake this kind of social work with residents.

They think we are stupid, they think we think it's all about caring and sharing. It's not. They just want to know the details of your life, personal things and they keep records about it. There are more details about my private life floating around this Hostel than there are in my head. Maybe I'm being a bit hard on them...some of them do care...but I just don't fall for all this 'share your problems with me' stuff. No, it's not about that at all (Sarah).

The view expressed by Sarah was not, it should be acknowledged, the majority view. Most of the women interviewed stated that they enjoyed, and felt some benefit from their key worker sessions, indeed many residents became extremely

protective of their particular key-worker ('I don't like no-one talking to my key-worker like shit' Nikki). However these points do highlight a strong element of perplexity amongst the residents with regard to their relationships with staff and their expected behaviour.

Combination of formal and informal methods of control

One factor which possibly aggravated this situation was the way in which the Hostel attempted to combine both formal and informal methods of control and discipline. This is the third semi-penal criteria and is, in many ways, an inevitable consequence of both the unique non-custodial / non-communal status of the institution and the lack of consensus amongst the staff as to the purpose of the Hostel. As with the nineteenth century Lancashire Refuge, Adelaide House could not be described as either a custodial or a 'communal' institution but had developed a regime which attempted to amalgamate methods of control and discipline from both those arenas. Some methods of control and punishment were set by government legislation and thus the Hostel was required to abide by these rules. These formal rules included the set curfew times of 11.00pm to 7.00am, during which hours residents had to be on the Hostel premises. The Hostel was required by law to breach bailees who missed the curfew.⁸ These women would be required to leave the Hostel, the police would be informed that they were no longer adhering to the conditions of their bail and a warrant would be issued for their arrest. With women on probation the situation was different as only the supervising probation officer could breach a probation order. The staff of the Hostel could however recommend that Adelaide House was unsuitable for any probationer who regularly broke curfew and she could then be required to leave.⁹ Other formal rules included no drugs or alcohol on the premises and no violence

⁸ Obviously there was some flexibility regarding this issue. If there were exceptional circumstances which meant a woman was unavoidably delayed then the member of staff on duty would use his / her discretion as to whether breach proceedings were necessary. Although a degree of flexibility is obviously necessary, problems could potentially arise given the extent of disparity amongst staff with regards to how punitive / supportive the Hostel should be.

⁹ This issue of the different status of bailees and probationers at the Hostel will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

towards staff or other residents. The penalty for breaches of these rules was always exclusion from the Hostel and, for the most part, residents understood, accepted and adhered to this formal regulation.

In addition to these formal rules, however, were other, much more 'informal' methods of regulation and order which were determined 'locally', within the Hostel itself. One such rule was that residents had to be out of bed by 8.30am or they not only missed their breakfast, but were also subjected to an informal 'punishment' known as sanctioning. This involved either forbidding the woman concerned from leaving the Hostel premises for a period of one day, or requiring her to complete some set chore or task around the Hostel (for example doing dishes, cleaning floors or even, on one occasion, picking up litter from the grounds of the building). Sanctioning was such a significant and controversial aspect of the Hostel regime that it will be discussed again in the following two sections of this chapter. The way in which it was used to 'infantilise' the female residents will be discussed in the next section of the chapter and the way in which women resisted or conformed to this form of discipline will be examined in the final section. The concern here though, is the inherent 'informality' or familial nature of this form of discipline and how this was utilised within the semi-penal institution.

Many semi-penal institutions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attempted to combine 'familial' style control with more formal rules and regulations. As discussed in Chapter Four institutions for prostitutes, 'wayward girls' or inebriates frequently employed domestic labour as a form of social and moral training for women. Women at the Lancashire Refuge were expected to fulfil domestic chores in order to 'learn the way of ordered home life' (CECSA, undated and unpublished report, AHA) and as Rafter (1983) states, women in reformatories were frequently subjected to a 'benign' form of discipline, not dissimilar to that found within the family home, with the aim of encouraging (rather than imposing) conformity. So what were essentially 'punishments' could be in some ways concealed under the guise of personal responsibility, care and protection. At Adelaide House, this combination of 'domestic' style discipline with more formal

methods of regulation was relatively successful and residents often accepted these informal rules as part of 'normal' life. However, some methods of sanctioning could only be described as unreasonable. One particular form - whereby residents were requested to wash up after tea and if they refused then none of the residents would be given supper that night - did appear to take to the notion of 'parental disapproval' to extremes.

If they don't do the dishes then no-one gets supper that night so they get peer pressure then off the others to do them (Assistant Warden 1).

Many of the staff were themselves unhappy about the use of sanctioning as a means of discipline but they felt there were few options available which would allow them to keep a sense of 'order' in the Hostel. Consequently, during the first week of fieldwork for this thesis, a new practice was developed with the aim of getting residents out of bed in the morning without having to resort to sanctioning. This new procedure involved the Warden taking all of the staff and all of the residents who were already up, into the bedrooms of those women who had not yet risen. There she would ring a large hand bell until the woman woke up and the entourage would be requested to remain in the room until the woman agreed to get up. Unsurprisingly this method did not last long as both staff and residents blankly refused to take part in such an undignified and intrusive procedure. However, what this serves to highlight is the way in which the Hostel attempted (albeit unsuccessfully in this case) to merge authoritative discipline with a family style form of chastisement through a display of united disapproval and the use of 'sisterly' peer pressure.

'Voluntary' status of admissions

The fourth semi-penal characteristic identified in Chapter Four concerns the 'voluntary' status of admissions. As Chapters Four and Five explain, in the early semi-penal institutions, women generally had to provide their consent before they could be admitted as this consent indicated a desire to reform which was often considered an important admission criterion. Given that many of these institutions

depended heavily on both charitable donations and inmate labour for their existence, they had to ensure that residents were likely to be a 'success' (in other words inclined to conform and reform) and likely to want to work. Although Adelaide House no longer depended on the labour of its residents for its funding, it was still felt that the most useful and 'successful' work carried out within the Hostel could only be done with those women who *wanted* to be there.

As far as this Hostel goes ... the main problem is women who are here but don't want to be here, they want to be at home with their children....There are women here who want to continue their lives as much as they can as if they were living outside and so find it difficult to abide by certain Hostel rules (Deputy Warden).

I think the main obstacle [to the social work function of the Hostel] is the people themselves, whether they are prepared to co-operate or not. You can't work with somebody who is not prepared to tackle their offending behaviour (Assistant Warden 6).

If a woman doesn't want to be here then it's very difficult to do any real 'social work' with her. Someone has to want it for it to work (Assistant Warden 9).

Prior to the 1991 Criminal Justice Act probation was identified as an 'alternative to custody' (Brownlee, 1998) and as such individuals had to consent to a period of probation supervision. The 1991 Act established probation as a sentence in its own right and thus negated the requirement of the offender's agreement to such a sanction. For individuals on probation with a condition of residence however, consent was still required.

When the probation officer is writing the report they put in their conclusion, for instance 'I believe that a period of residence at Adelaide House is suitable' and then at the bottom of the report you say '..and I've discussed this with Ms so-and-so and she has agreed'. So she would have agreed beforehand. No magistrate will actually put someone in a hostel without there having been some process of assessment, they would always ask for an adjournment so she could be assessed at the hostel (Hostel Warden).

So in theory women would have to be willing to reside at the Hostel before they would be referred and accepted there. This process of gaining consent and requesting a period of assessment appeared to work primarily in the interest of the Hostel. The management of Adelaide House, similarly to the management of the Lancashire County Refuge, had no desire to take referrals for women without an assessment period. Generally, they preferred to take women who had been bailed to the Hostel prior to their court appearance

If somebody is coming on probation there has got to be a four week assessment period beforehand. So they will be referred here before their probation order is issued and so they will actually be here on bail for four weeks. [This is because] it's technically difficult to move somebody on once they are on probation so we like to see what we are taking on first. You see while they are here on bail they can just be breached but with probation you are sort of, to an extent, stuck with them once they are here (Assistant Warden 6).

The Hostel staff believed that the requirement of consent and, more importantly, the process of assessment was beneficial to the residents as, in theory, they were thus provided with the opportunity to decide for themselves if they actually wanted to spend a period of probation within such an institution. The Hostel staff frequently reminded residents that it was *their choice* to be at Adelaide House. In reality though the 'choice' that women had regarding being sentenced to a condition of residence was somewhat limited. As discussed in Chapters Four and Five many women admitted to nineteenth century semi-penal institutions only agreed to a period of confinement because the options offered to them were often much worse than a stay in a reformatory (see Rimmer, 1986). As a result it is unsurprising that many girls and women agreed to enter a reformatory for fear of the potential alternatives. Similarly, it could be argued that the element of 'choice' open for women regarding a condition of residence in the Hostel was an artificial one. All of the residents, and many staff, were fully aware that a refusal of a condition of residence meant only one alternative.

I had nowhere to live but I didn't have to come here...well I'd have been

on the streets and ..I'd have had to go into custody. It was here or prison (Nikki).

I think if I'd said I didn't want to come here I might have been sent to prison (Debbie).

Likewise women on bail faced a similar lack of real choice.

They have a choice [about coming here] but they don't at the same time. If someone was coming up for bail and the magistrate was asking for a hostel then they would have a choice - they could either come here or Risley....So really they don't have a choice (Assistant Warden 2).

I was just told I was being bailed to a hostel. I suppose I could have said no but it would have meant I'd have had to stay in Styal (Joanne).

I could've said I didn't want to come here but I would have ended up in prison. There wasn't really any choice (Maureen).

Even when some women tried to assert their right to say no, they were often strongly encouraged to consent by their solicitors or probation officers. For women like Billie, who definitely did not want to be sent to a Hostel, the weight of professional discourse against her was too much to resist.

My solicitor really pushed for this...I argued with the magistrate saying I'd rather be remanded and that I didn't want to go that far from home [Carlisle]. I said I'd end up on heroin if I went to Liverpool because I was only on speed before and I was right. They kept on and on at me...I gave in. Look at me now. Everyone said it was best that I came here so I agreed. I thought that when my case finally came up the fact that I hadn't been remanded might look better and I'd just get probation. Then my probation officer went and recommended I come back here as a condition of probation. The magistrates agreed. I didn't really want to...I told them I'd have been better off in prison because at least your remand time comes off your prison sentence. Your time on bail here doesn't come off your probation order you know. And at least in prison I'd have got a visit from my kids occasionally.

This case indicates how professional or 'expert' discourse was utilised to 'silence' a woman who wished to articulate an alternative understanding of her situation. As Worrall asserts, women's accounts of their behaviour or situation are frequently

only listened to if they are communicated through the 'dominant modes of expression' (1990: 11). As women are often not expected to be able to construct a coherent account or explanation for themselves it becomes necessary for professionals to construct that account for them. Billie's solicitor, her probation officer and the magistrates that dealt with her case did not 'hear' Billie's own account. She attempted to communicate throughout her case that she would rather be in prison for good reason. She argued that given the small number of female only probation hostels she knew she would undoubtedly be sent a considerable distance from her home in Carlisle. Prison, therefore, would have been preferable, as she would probably have been held closer to home. Being closer to home would have meant more regular contact with her family and children and finally, being in prison would leave her less likely to succumb to the temptation of hard drugs like heroin. Instead of 'hearing' this account Billie's professional representatives constructed an alternative understanding, adhering to the liberal notion of probation as a 'benign' and supportive alternative to prison. They decided they knew what was in Billie's best interest, even if she did not know herself. According to Billie, the magistrate who bailed her to Adelaide House stated that it was 'for her own good'. He wanted to move her to another part of the country in order to 'protect' her from the 'bad company' she was keeping in Carlisle and from the same corrupting elements she would encounter in prison. This notion of punishment combined with 'protection' is not new. As discussed in Chapters Two, Four, Five and Six women during the nineteenth century were frequently perceived as being dangerous but also as requiring protection from corrupting influences at the same time (see also Smart, 1992). Indeed, as argued in Chapter Four, this anxiety about the potentially damaging effects of prison on the fragile moralities of women was one of the primary beliefs underpinning the development of the semi-penal institution for women and children in the nineteenth century.¹⁰ For Billie, the consequences of her account being 'muted' (Worrall, 1990: 11) and reconstructed

¹⁰ See also Leeson (1914), Le Mesurier (1935) and Jarvis (1972) for details of the origins of the Police Court Missionaries and, later the probation service, which emerged primarily from a desire to take 'corruptible' women and children out of the 'corrupting' influence of the prison.

through professional discourse were disastrous. As she had predicted, she very quickly became a heroin user and eventually the separation from her children proved too much and she committed suicide in February 1993. This issue of suicide, and Billie's case in particular, will be discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Unlike Billie, the majority of women interviewed stated that, even if they did not want to be at the Hostel, it was still preferable to a prison sentence. However, ironically, sometimes women who were keen to be accepted at the Hostel found themselves excluded due to the gatekeeping procedures of the institution. The Deputy Warden explained that

[Adelaide House] will not accept women who are clearly mentally ill. Or if somebody has been at another hostel and wrecked the place...we won't necessarily say no but we will want to interview them ourselves. We don't have women with their children and we don't accept those drug users who use ampoules, in other words inject themselves by prescription. Also those women whose record of violence is such that we consider they are almost certain to be violent again...but that's when you get into the area of measuring risk.

Carlen (1990) has argued that women's hostels are frequently too selective with regard to their gatekeeping procedures and she goes on to suggest that by doing this hostels 'manage to exclude those most in need' (1990: 43). It was of course totally understandable that the management of Adelaide House would wish to protect the Hostel staff from any risk however even some Assistant Wardens stated that the gatekeeping procedures were verging on excessive and were consequently problematic, particularly with regards to the drug quota. This recently introduced measure meant that the Hostel would only allocate twenty five percent of its beds to registered drug users. Once this quota was reached, any further referrals for drug users would be rejected. Not only was this considered to be too selective by some Assistant Wardens but it was also perceived to potentially cause long-term problems with regards to under-occupancy. As Carlen (1990) has stated, rigid gatekeeping in women's hostels leads to under-occupancy which in turn can mean

hostels are closed and provision for women is lost. Similar concerns were expressed at Adelaide House.

I think having a drug quota is discriminatory practice... If [there are large numbers of drug users in] prisons or within groups of offenders we have got to reflect that otherwise we become a dinosaur in the system. We can't be choosy and say 'okay seventy five percent of offenders are drug users but we don't want this reflected in our figures'. I think if we keep doing that then we won't survive. We can't manipulate and block people out (Assistant Warden 1).

The gatekeeping criterion of the Hostel, in particular that which was focused around potentially violent women, raises another important issue. As Zedner (1991) points out, during the nineteenth century, institutionalised women were frequently considered to be more disruptive and undisciplined than their male counterparts and Faith (1993) argues that this is still the case today, with women prisoners being perceived as a greater threat to authority and more unmanageable than male prisoners. At the time of research, although Adelaide House actively attempted to screen out those women with a 'potential' for violent behaviour, this Hostel was the only one out of a total of four in Liverpool (the other three being men only) which had 'double cover' as standard practice. In other words, it was the only Hostel in Liverpool for which it was deemed necessary to have more than one member of staff on duty overnight. Given that this Hostel often had the lowest level of occupancy, this meant that the staff-resident ratio was considerably higher in Adelaide House (sometimes 1:5) than in any of the other male only hostels. When asked why this was the case, one assistant warden explained that

It's the nature of the cases we deal with. We have women here with a lot of problems.....I wouldn't like to be here on my own at night, you don't know what you might face. Like [Mary] is always trying something, usually cutting herself, and people like [Alice], well she's so unpredictable ...you just need two people here, or actually three would be better I think (Assistant Warden 9).

'Non-criminal' admissions

The fifth and final feature which identifies institutions as semi-penal is the practice of admitting women who have not been convicted of any criminal offence. During the nineteenth century many non-criminal women were declared to be in need of a reforming influence due to their 'immoral' or 'wayward' behaviour. As Weiner (1990) points out, semi-penal institutions were often promoted as offering 'protection' to young girls 'at risk', offering a means of reform which would prevent their otherwise inevitable progress towards incarceration. However, as Dobash *et al* (1986) assert, this targeting of non-criminal women who were deemed to be 'at risk' had the effect of extending the formal social control of women from the prison into the community.

Although Adelaide House only dealt with women who had already formally entered the criminal justice system (in other words those who had been *charged* with criminal offences) it did accept women who had not been *convicted* of criminal offences. The Hostel catered for women on bail as well as probation and, linking back to the issue discussed above (that of the Hostel preferring to deal with women who *wanted* to be there), this was occasionally perceived to be a problem by the staff.

One major problem is that if you have got women who are here on bail and are pleading not guilty then you have got nothing to work with. They come here and you can only work with what they tell you because obviously you are innocent until proven guilty and we can't go assuming anything. So we have a lot of women who just come and go and there is not a lot we can do with them or for them really (Assistant Warden 3).

Perhaps more significant than the problems of attempting to 'work' with women pleading not guilty was the issue of the often discriminatory practice of subjecting bailees and probationers to the same set of rules and regulations. The National Standards for Hostels made it clear that hostel staff were to ensure 'residents (on bail) [were] offered a place on any programme on how to avoid offending' (Home Office, 1992: s8, para 23), in other words they were to be treated in the same way as convicted offenders on probation orders. However, a thematic inspection of

approved hostels (Home Office, 1993) raised serious questions regarding the appropriateness of accommodating bailees and probationers in the same environment and requiring unconvicted bailees to take part in offence focused work. As a 1998 thematic review states, this meant that many hostels were dealing with bailees 'on the basis of a presumption of guilt' (Home Office, 1998: s6, para 7). Although the assistant warden quoted above states that the Hostel could not 'assume anything', many of the bailees in Adelaide House felt that there was a 'presumption of guilt' and this was a cause of frustration and contention.

Sanctions...I think they are a waste of time and they are not fair. You see I'm here on bail so technically I'm innocent till proven guilty yet I've got to be up at a certain time or else I can't go out that day. Who dreamt that one up? I may as well be on remand....I can understand there being rules for women on probation but it should be different for bailees (Frances).

Rather than there being fewer rules for women on bail, as Frances suggests should be the case, bailees often found themselves subjected to a more intense and regulatory regime than those women on probation who had already been convicted. As mentioned previously, they could be excluded from the Hostel more readily than women on probation for breaching the curfew rules. However it was the 'informal' regulations that caused the greatest displeasure amongst women on bail. These women complained of being subjected to a greater level of coercion with regards to attending particular group activities (such as programmes aimed at confronting offending behaviour) and often felt under greater pressure to conform to the petty regulations of the Hostel regime (getting up at a particular time, attending meetings, obeying sanctions) than probationers. The reason for this was that, unlike those women who had already been convicted (ie. those on probation), bailees still had a trial to face and thus felt compelled to conform as they were frequently told this would improve their chances in court.

It looks better in court if you go with a good record from the Hostel (Sharon).

I try to attend the meetings and get involved with all the activities here because they've told me it will go in my favour at my trial if I do (Kate).

Occasionally, women would be accepted to Adelaide House under the 'emergency accommodation' facility. The Warden explained the process through which a woman would be accepted under this provision.

We do have another facility which starts off with emergency accommodation. Say I was working in the field and I had a client on probation and something had happened in her life which caused her home life to be a bit of a danger, I could ring up the hostel and ask if she could come and stay for up to three days....During that period her probation officer would see if it would be possible for her to stay for a longer period and [the Hostel] would then be part of her supervision plan.

The Warden justified this process, stating that this facility allowed women already on probation to take 'time out' from the often difficult or dangerous circumstances of their everyday lives. However, once a woman entered the Hostel, and it became part of her 'supervision plan' she would be subjected to an altogether more regulative and restrictive environment than that to which she was originally sentenced. Although her home life may have become too impoverished or hazardous for her to remain there, being offered alternative accommodation in a probation hostel would mean she could then be informally disciplined (through practices such as sanctioning) for actions or petty infractions which, under her original sentence, she could not be disciplined for, such as getting up or coming home late.

It could be argued then that these five criteria, previously utilised to identify the nineteenth and early twentieth century semi-penal institutions, could be equally applied to Adelaide House, a late twentieth century bail and probation hostel for women. However, what is now missing from this analysis is an examination of the feminising discourses that underpinned this modern day institution.

As Chapters Four, Five and Six illustrate, the regimes of the nineteenth century institutions, which aimed to 'normalise' and 'feminise' their female inmates, were

constructed around dominant discourses of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology (Dobash *et al*, 1986; Mahood, 1990; Zedner, 1991; Lindfield, 1992). Although considerable research has been conducted on the way in which institutionalised women are subjected to these 'normalising' discourses and regimes in the late twentieth century (see for example Carlen, 1983; Faith, 1993), this latter body of work has essentially been restricted to an examination of women incarcerated within fully penal institutions, such as prisons. Little consideration has been given to the 'third arena' of social control, the contemporary semi-penal institution. The next section of this chapter will attempt to redress the balance and present an analysis of the extent to which similar feminising discourses underpinned regimes which, in turn, were utilised to normalise and discipline the female residents.

Discourses of discipline

As Chapters Four, Five and Six have argued, once women entered the reformatories and refuges of the nineteenth century they were expected to conform to a middle class construction of femininity and consequently, as Walkowitz (1980) asserts, in order to achieve this goal women were subjected to a range of 'feminising' discourses and controlling regimes based on domestic and moral training. The Lancashire Refuge unreservedly endorsed such discourses and regimes.

By the mid 1990s such explicit discourses had been generally suppressed and it would be unfair to claim that Adelaide House was in the business of training women to be 'good' wives and mothers. However, discourses around 'appropriate' or expected behaviour for women, although not explicit, were not entirely absent either in that the regime and practices within the Hostel were still constructed around a set of, albeit moderated, discourses which implicitly served to construct, regulate and control women as gendered beings.

One of the primary ways in which these discourses were astutely administered was through the utilisation of sanctioning as a method of discipline. Sanctioning, as

discussed previously in this chapter, was a form of informal punishment imposed for minor rule infringements (such as getting up late or missing meetings). Women who were sanctioned would be required to either remain on the Hostel premises for a period of one day or undertake some chore or task around the Hostel. The assumption, amongst some of the staff, and in particular members of the CECSA, was that requiring women to undertake chores or tasks around the Hostel was not really a form of 'discipline' but rather just part of a 'normal' disciplined life for women.

It depends how you define discipline. Is discipline having to get up and do jobs? I don't see it as discipline because that is just a way of life and in many ways it is easier because they might only do the dishes once a week here whereas at home they might do them three times a day (Assistant Warden 3).

Well I think it's a bit pathetic...making out that doing the dishes is a punishment for the women here. It's not about that, it's only doing the dishes, they'd do that at home anyway. Most of them here have it easy because at home they'd be doing more than a few dishes and making their beds....they'd be running around after husbands and families as well (Assistant Warden 9).

We expect the women here to treat this Hostel like they would their own homes. They have to do the dishes, sometimes they help to make the tea and they are expected to keep their own rooms tidy. It's nothing new for them, they'd be doing that at home wouldn't they (Executive Officer, CECSA).

Expectations of femininity were also found to underpin some of the activities and recreational facilities available for the women at the Hostel. Of course some activities (such as abseiling, archery, bowling matches) were original, stimulating and, as many women explained, empowering. But it could be argued that the more day-to-day recreational activities (such as the cookery and hairdressing sessions) functioned to endorse an 'appropriate' standard of femininity deemed necessary in order for true 'rehabilitation' to take place. The CECSA in particular saw such gendered activities as a means of normalising the women back to an acceptable role in society.

Rehabilitation is attempted through assertiveness courses, drug work, even the hairdresser coming in once a week. This gives the women pride in their appearance (Chairman, CECSA).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Bartky (1988) has argued that the constant demands placed upon women to adhere to particular standards of external 'beauty', or appropriate standards of outward appearance, leads eventually to the absorption of such images by women themselves. Consequently, constant reassertion of these idealised images would eventually lead to a self-regulating and, it could be argued in the context of the semi-penal institution, a fully 'rehabilitated' female subject.

This association of outward appearance with internal (mental and/or moral) well-being has long been an integral part of the reformation and rehabilitation of 'deviant' women. Records from the Lancashire Refuge during the nineteenth century highlight this alliance. Elizabeth Jones was described in the Matron's Reports as being 'dirty' and 'untrainable' (Matron's Reports, June 1829, AHA). Ann Hughes, on the other hand was described as 'very clean and diligent' (Matron's Reports, October 1865, AHA). In both cases the notion was that outward, physical appearance (in these cases cleanliness) and internal prosperity were mutually reinforcing concepts. This idea remained prominent in female institutions throughout the twentieth century. Elder's 1972 study of Avalon, a 1960s semi-penal institution for delinquent girls provided an example of how physical appearance was strongly associated with mental health (see Chapter Four for a fuller discussion of Elder's study). Girls and women in Avalon were expected to conform to particular standards of appearance (clean, well-groomed, wearing some make-up) as physical improvements were taken to be indicative of mental and moral improvements. It could be argued that this was still the belief of the CECSA. When asked why the Hostel had a hairdresser coming in every week, the Executive Officer of the CECSA explained that

... it gives the women something to look forward to. They get their hair done and they look better, they feel better and I suppose you could argue that they *are* better. What I mean is if they start caring about themselves,

that's good, that's part of the process towards getting on their feet and making a go of their lives again. It's a step towards independent living (Emphasis made in interview).

In addition to being self-disciplined about their appearance, residents were also expected to be self-disciplined with regard to their timekeeping. Residents were expected to be up by 8.30am (when breakfast was served) and dressed by 9.00am. If women did not adhere to these rules they not only missed their breakfast but could also be sanctioned. Many of the residents objected to having to be up at this time, complaining that, as they often had nothing to do, it made the day seem much longer for them. The Hostel staff claimed that this rule was in the women's best interest and served to introduce an element of order into, what they perceived to be, disordered lives.

[The residents] usually have really disorganised lives and part of what is expected at the Hostel is they get some order out of it. In the past they were allowed to sleep in all day and go around in their nighties but I actually don't think that's appropriate because it's not giving them an opportunity to change their behaviour and then in turn change their internal behaviour.....It encourages an element of self-discipline. We don't expect total changes in behaviour, its just basic stuff (Warden).

As Okley (1978) has argued, although females are often not allocated the level of adult responsibility that is afforded to their male counterparts, there is still a greater expectation placed upon them for self-regulation and self-discipline. Bartky (1988) argues that this creation of disciplined or 'docile' bodies is achieved through deliberate apportioning of women's time, space and movement. It would appear that in Adelaide House, the external regulation of time and movement was utilised as a means to produce an internally regulated subject.

We are stricter [than the men's hostels]....when it comes down to medication we have set times and we have set times for visitors, whereas in Canning [men's hostel] they can come and go all day and they can have medication whenever they want (Assistant Warden 2).

Worrall (1997: 9) asserts that the inference of any form of punishment based around the notion of supervision is that the offender is in some way inadequate and is therefore incapable of redressing his or her own behaviour without some external intervention. Consequently the practice of supervision is a dynamic one and its purpose is to instil in the individual the characteristics of 'normal' behaviour whilst setting the boundaries between appropriate and censured behaviour (see also Harris and Webb, 1987: 75). Hostel supervision may therefore have been considered salutary by Hostel staff, in that its primary aim was believed to bring about positive effects, but it can undoubtedly be seen as an intrusive process, the objective of which is to control and instruct the individual to a pre-determined (but discretionary) standard of behaviour. Thus what appeared to be happening at Adelaide House was that the boundaries between acceptable and proscribed behaviour were set beyond a criminal/non-criminal agenda, instead they were set according to a gendered agenda, creating a demarcation between 'respectable' and 'non respectable' behaviour. Staying in bed beyond 8.30am or walking around in nightclothes was not considered 'appropriate' and women were encouraged to change their 'internal' behaviour and become 'self-disciplining' subjects, thus adhering to more conventional or respectable norms.

We have a set routine where we will have something planned for the day or the week. They all have to get up early...they all have to get up as if they are going to work so it is important that they are not allowed to stay in bed and waste the whole day. They have to start addressing their problems and keep themselves busy (Assistant Warden 3).

They have a structured day, that is often the thing that is most difficult for residents but I think it is the one thing that can be most helpful in the long run because it does help break the previous pattern of disorganisation. I think that daily routine is a form of discipline, it encourages a sort of self-discipline (Warden).

The expectations for residents to be self-disciplining and self-regulating does seem a particularly gendered notion. At the time this research was conducted no similar rules existed within any of the three men's hostels in the immediate area.

We have the rule that you have to be dressed before 9.00am and I know Canning [men's] Hostel don't....its more sort of free and easy there, the lads can stay in bed all day if they want to (Assistant Warden 1).

Faith (1993: 165) has argued that even at the end of the twentieth century female prisoners were seen to pose a greater threat to prison authority than men. Consequently institutionalised women have found themselves disciplined and punished for often very minor rule infringements and for behaviour which was not deemed to be 'deviant' or worth regulating in men's institutions. At Adelaide House this appeared to be the case.

I've heard that some of [the men's hostels] let lads roll in till about half past twelve...We seem to be more strict here. I don't know if that's because it's a female hostel or if it's just the individual management or what (Assistant Warden 1).

Even the Warden admitted that women were often 'disciplined' out of proportion to their misdemeanours.

Sanctioning has changed now. The previous method of residents having to stay in was rubbish and none of us liked it. It used to get the staff in a total state and it seemed so punitive compared to what the 'sin' was, like not getting up for breakfast...it was so minimal it was ludicrous (Warden).¹¹

The utilisation of sanctioning as a method of discipline within the Hostel highlighted the, often contradictory, expectations and assumptions made about the female residents. On the one hand women were required to be self-controlled and self-regulating and this requirement was encouraged through particular regimes and rules aimed explicitly at encouraging a degree of personal responsibility. However when women failed to achieve this level of personal responsibility, albeit through very minor infringements (such as failing to get out of bed on time) they

¹¹ Although, as the Warden states, the *method* of sanctioning had changed (from requiring the woman to stay on the Hostel premises for one day to requiring the woman to complete some chore around the Hostel) what had not changed was the reasons for the sanction. In other words women were still being disciplined, albeit in a different way, for the same 'sins' (staying in bed late, not getting dressed etc), a point which the Warden fails to acknowledge.

were disciplined through a process which inferred a total inability for self-governance. The Deputy Warden admitted having serious reservations about this procedure.

In my opinion sanctioning is a nonsense. There are two reasons, one is it doesn't work and two is it seems rather ironic, trying to get the women who come here to behave independentlyinviting them to come here so that they have got some liberty and responsibility and then telling them they can't go out because they got up late. It just reminds me of school.

As has been argued throughout this thesis, women's behaviour is frequently understood and explained through two conflicting sets of discourses. It is assumed that women should be self-governing and they are expected to assume high levels of responsibility (not only for themselves but for their partners and families too). However, simultaneously they are assumed to be lacking in the ability to be self-governing and thus require levels of external supervision that reduce them to a child-like status (see Smart and Smart, 1978; Hutter and Williams, 1981; Carlen, 1983; Worrall, 1990 and also Chapter Two of this thesis). Together these opposing sets of expectations form the paradoxical nature of 'normal' femininity. Carlen (1983) described how these expectations were inherently present within prison regimes for women and how they, in turn, managed to reduce the female inmates to a less-than-adult status, denying them the rights and responsibilities that are frequently attributed to adult males. Within Adelaide House these inherent assumptions had similar consequences and this left some staff feeling uncomfortable.

[Sanctioning] is crap. It's like you would treat kids from a primary school, you know 'you are grounded you naughty girl'. I don't agree with it (Assistant Warden 4).

Yet although it was criticised for being inappropriate and although staff acknowledged that they were creating a paradoxical situation through its use for such minor infringements, sanctioning was still believed to be the only suitable way in which to instil in residents an appropriate standard of behaviour.

I don't think sanctioning is the answer because you are treating them like children but it's the problem of finding a good alternative...everyone needs to know that *misbehaviour is not acceptable* and the only way you get this across is to let people know that if you do something wrong you get punished for it. We choose sanctioning because that is the most lenient way we have to do it (Assistant Warden 3. Emphasis added).

In some cases women coped with or resisted this demotion in status by either ignoring their sanction altogether or consciously conforming to the rules in order to facilitate their time within the Hostel. These issues will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. What is important here though is the way in which some women *accepted* this form of social relegation and, to some degree, internalised the infantilising discourses imposed upon them. Even women like Maureen and Billie, who were in their thirties and had children of their own at the time of interview, readily submitted to an infantile status.

The rules are okay really because if you were at home, like when you were younger, your mum and dad would give you times to be in wouldn't they? It's not a matter of rules, it's a matter of looking after everybody. The rules are there for your own benefit and safety....If you do something wrong you get told off for it, a member of staff or your key worker will tell you off and that is a good thing because it makes you realise you've got to do what you are here for. You've got to get on with your life, put up with things (Maureen).

I suppose things like getting up early and doing the dishes and stuff is what you'd have to do at home. You'd have to look after your own family like that. And although I don't agree with it, even sanctioning is understandable ...you'd ground your own kids if they'd been naughty (Billie).

As with children and juveniles, women have traditionally been perceived as responsive and susceptible to reforming influences. During the nineteenth century many women who entered semi-penal institutions did so after a period of imprisonment. The idea was that whilst men could return directly from prison to their communities, women required a further process of 're-socialisation' or 'normalisation' to ensure they could return to their communities fully equipped to fulfil their feminine duties (Dobash *et al*, 1986). For some staff and CECSA

members, the primary function of the Hostel, in line with the traditional reformist roots of the probation service, was to secure some degree of 'rehabilitation'. However, often the rehabilitative criteria were set beyond the simple desire that residents abstain from re-offending. Instead, true rehabilitation (or 'success') was seen in much broader terms and included changes in lifestyle, social behaviour and personal responsibility.

I think the main aim of the probation service is to reintegrate women back into the community...the Hostel does play a part because this is like a middle step... A step towards reintegration back into the community (Assistant Warden 6).

Obviously a text book success would be if a woman came here, learnt various skills, got re-housed, settled down, didn't re-offend...That would be the ideal success (Assistant Warden 4).

I think a success is when a woman leaves here, settles down with her family and children if she has any, doesn't re-offend and lives a *decent, healthy life* (Chairman of CECSA. Emphasis added).

In order to facilitate this rehabilitative process, staff frequently, either explicitly or implicitly, imparted to the women idealised notions of domesticity and, in particular, motherhood which, it could be argued, served as an attempt to encourage the women to permanently alter, or reform, their behaviour.

According to [the Hostel staff] [the reason my children are in care] is because of my past record...always splitting up with men, not stopping in one place, they think I'm never going to settle down. So I've got to prove to them that I can settle down, get a decent job, start a normal life and then I might get my children back (Maureen).

I know its no good for my kids me being here and being separated from them is no good for me either, *the staff keep telling me that*, but what can I do now? I'm stuck here for the next few months (Billie. Emphasis added).

Of course concepts of domesticity and respectability were not the only discourses through which the behaviour of women at the Hostel was understood and explained. Historically 'deviant' women have been categorised as either 'mad' or

'bad'. Often, as Carlen (1998) has argued, this categorisation has very little to do with the offence a woman has committed but all to do with the extent to which she may or may not conform to dominant feminine expectations. In general the staff of the Hostel resisted the allocation of such labels to the female residents and indeed were well aware that these stereotypical classifications have traditionally served to construct an ideal of femininity and to punish those who fail to adhere to such ideals.

Really women are seen as mad or bad but they are all different. I don't think we should portray them all as being of a certain criteria (Assistant Warden 3).

I think often when they are up for the same offence it's seen as more acceptable behaviour in men than it is in women so [women] are more harshly treated or sometimes they are looked on as needing help... They are more often seen as sick (Assistant Warden 6).

Although the Hostel staff recognised and stated strongly that they deplored the stereotyping of female offenders in this way, they admitted that to some degree these stereotypes were inherently entrenched in the criminal justice system and, consequently, in the Hostel regime. This was manifest in the fact that Adelaide House had weekly visits from a psychiatrist, a practice that some members of staff found problematic.

We have a psychiatrist who comes in once a week and none of the male hostels have that so I question that. I have questioned that. That is the one difference that stands out (Assistant Warden 2).

Yes, we have a psychiatrist who visits once a week. Usually there is a queue of women waiting to see him and I think that is symptomatic of the way women are made to feel about themselves in the system. They are treated like there is something wrong with them and so they take on those ideas and sometimes, I think they start to believe them. I would never encourage any of these women to see the psychiatrist...well some of them need more professional help than we can give...Mary for example who cuts herself a lot, but the rest...no I wouldn't want to encourage them getting involved in the psychiatric system (Assistant Warden 9).

The Assistant Warden quoted above, along with other staff members in the Hostel, recognised the potential problem of women becoming embroiled within the medical system. However regardless of these motives and because of their inability to deal with particular 'problematic' women, sometimes these members of staff found themselves endorsing or advocating the very discourses or practices that they were actively seeking to reject. One example was Mary, the resident mentioned in the quotation above. Mary frequently cut herself and although these wounds were never life-threatening the staff often felt angry and frustrated and admitted they were not equipped to help her. The only alternative considered was a consultation with the psychiatrist and, eventually, hospitalisation for Mary. When she was asked how she felt about seeing a psychiatrist, she commented that

I did have some choice [about seeing the psychiatrist] but I did feel sort of forced into it. When everyone's telling you that you should go it's difficult to refuse. You think 'well they know best'. I hate it because when you tell people you've seen a psychiatrist they think you are mad. Also you start to wonder yourself if you might be mad. Here I am seeing a shrink so maybe I am mad, or do the doctors just think I am? Once you've got that label of nutter it doesn't matter whether you are one or not.

Of the sixteen women interviewed approximately nine had had some psychiatric intervention, either previous to their arrival at Adelaide House or during their stay.¹² It should be acknowledged that most of the women who saw the psychiatrist at the Hostel appeared to do so of their own choosing. Women like Mary (who became too much for the staff at the Hostel to deal with and was thus encouraged to seek psychiatric help) were relatively uncommon.¹³ However, the relative power of 'experts' such as psychiatrists and the dynamics of their relationships with both the residents and staff was an important issue and does require some discussion.

¹² The term 'approximately' is used here because it was impossible to say exactly how many women had really had contact with psychiatric services as some women refused to answer the interview questions relating to this subject.

¹³ As with the point above, it is difficult to know for certain the extent to which women were encouraged or coerced into seeking psychiatric intervention and the assumption that this was a fairly rare occurrence is made on the basis of interviews and informal discussions with both staff and residents as well as eighteen months participant observation in the Hostel.

The overwhelming majority of staff at Adelaide House were women. Out of nine Hostel staff interviewed, only one (Deputy Warden) was male. Indeed, apart from the Deputy Warden, the Executive Officer for the CECSA (who had an office in the Hostel) and the caretaker, all other staff (Warden, Assistant Wardens, secretaries and auxiliary staff - the people who had most day to day contact with the residents) were female. In contrast, the majority of the CECSA dominated Management Committee were male and, perhaps more significantly, *all* of the professional and medical 'experts' who regularly visited or were utilised by the Hostel (for example the psychiatrist, the doctor, the drug counsellor and the dentist) were male. As Chapter Two of this thesis argued, historically women have often been expected to take responsibility for providing an appropriate role model for their 'deviant' sisters. In the Lancashire County Refuge and other similar nineteenth century reformatories, female matrons were installed and expected to provide a form of 'maternal' discipline for their unruly charges. Worrall (1990) and Heidensohn (1996) have asserted that this is still frequently the case today. However, they argue that these women are not totally 'in control' but rather act as intermediaries between male professionals or managers and female clients, interpreting professional, male discourse into 'reasonable', common-sense ideas. In addition, as one resident articulated, female staff could legitimatise and justify practices and procedures in ways that male staff could not do.

I think there should be more male staff here. I know some women here, including me, have had bad experiences with men in the past but I just think it's unhealthy for us all to be shut up here with a load of women staff. I bet you the rules would be different if there were more men on the staff. I bet you wouldn't have to get up at half past eight or get sanctioned. *And no way would a bloke come into your room in the morning to get you up out of bed, no way* (Sarah. Emphasis added).

At Adelaide House the medical / professional 'experts' were essentially removed from the day-to-day reality of the Hostel and the residents but simultaneously retained a considerable degree of power within the institution. This is highlighted by the practice of disclosure of information to residents. Generally residents could

request to see all written information kept about them in their Hostel files. However, all medical and psychiatric records remained confidential.

If we had a psychiatric report on a resident, I couldn't show her that, I'd have to get permission from the psychiatrist. Or a medical report, I couldn't show her that (Warden).

They are allowed access to most of the files unless certain parties have asked for it to stay confidential....the psychiatrist for example. He might say 'I don't want the resident to see this document' and we can't argue (Assistant Warden 3).

The residents can see most of what we write about them, they are entitled to see everything I think apart from the log book, that's our record. But with regard to the psychiatrist and the doctor and so on, they don't have to show anything. They have more control over those things than we do. They can distance themselves from the women in a way that we can't. If a resident is pissed off with the doctor or the drug counsellor or the psychiatrist they don't usually have a go at them. They can make a sharp exit and they usually do, leaving us to deal with someone who's kicking off because they've been recommended for hospitalisation or a reduction in their Meth or something. We are usually the ones who have to try and explain why a decision has been made, the doctor or the psychiatrist....they just leave us to it (Assistant Warden 9).

Regardless of the relative power of the medical professionals within the Hostel, and despite the fact that sometimes the Hostel staff felt compelled to refer women to these 'experts', the staff in general resisted classifying or discussing women within these discourses and rejected the 'mad / bad' dichotomy. However, in keeping with the welfarist origins of the probation service, what was apparent within the Hostel, was the mobilisation of discourses that tended to categorise the female residents as 'sad'. The majority of the staff appeared reluctant to attribute the women with full responsibility and agency for their behaviour. This attitude starkly contrasted with the overarching philosophy of the Hostel which aimed to ensure women took some control over their lives, underpinned by the notion that women should be self-regulating and self-governing. So whilst the women in the Hostel were expected to take full responsibility for very minor aspects of their lives (such as getting up early, getting dressed and so on) and could be disciplined for

not adhering to these expectations, they were not perceived as responsible for the more significant aspects of their lives, such as their offending behaviour. Therefore although one member of staff acknowledged this problem, commenting that

Sometimes [women] are looked upon as needing help, they are not afforded a sense of responsibility like men are (Assistant Warden 6).

For the most part the Hostel staff endorsed the idea of women as victims.

I think most of them are probably victims of some sort. Victims of circumstance. If you look at a lot of their Pre-Sentence Reports and their backgrounds...it's really obvious.....I can't say any of them are criminally minded. It's all circumstances (Assistant Warden 2).

The majority seem to be victims of circumstance in that a lot of them have suffered abuse...In that sense I think their criminality could be defined as being victims of circumstances. A lot of their offending spins out from the fact that they don't get the love and care they should and so they look for an alternative. I know that sounds like an excuse but I think that is why a lot of them adapt and sort of like being in prison because they get the support and the attention that they haven't had outside and that makes for re-offending as an excuse to go back to an environment that is stable (Assistant Warden 1).

Some [of the women] I would categorise as victims. Victims of other people's actions or victims of circumstances, whatever. I don't think any of them are bad but some are definitely sad..... I think female offenders have a lot more psychological problems than men. They have often been abused...and so are victims as well as offenders (Assistant Warden 4).

Of course it *was* the case that several women in Adelaide House had suffered varying degrees of abuse throughout their lives and this had sometimes led *directly* to their offending behaviour. Debbie, for example, was charged with the attempted murder of her husband. She stated that because of the level of his violence, and the fact that the police had failed to assist her in the past, she was left feeling she had no alternative.

I felt I was driven to it in a way. I didn't know what else to do, that's how desperate I was. You see [my husband] used to beat me up, he was a wicked bastard and in the end I couldn't see any way out of it. I thought 'it's either me or him' and I wasn't going to let him kill me first. When the

police arrested me I said to them ‘can’t you just caution me?’ and they all laughed. One of them said ‘we can’t give you a caution for attempted murder love’. I don’t see why not, they’d cautioned my husband once when he tried to choke me and you could say that was attempted murder couldn’t you?

However, even women like Debbie often did not perceive themselves to be ‘victims’ of their circumstances. Debbie talked of her actions as ‘taking control’ and in fact complained that she had only attained the status of ‘victim’ once she had entered the criminal justice system. Her involvement, she stated, had *intensified* her feelings of powerlessness.

[Being at the hostel] takes a lot of control away from you, like I have no control about what happens to my kids now.... I can’t go and visit them whenever I want to....I’ve got no control over what I do myself, I can’t stay out after 11 o’clock, I’ve got to be up by 9 o’clock.....no control any more.

The way in which the residents of Adelaide House were able to assert their agency, and thus resist the discourses that denied them a sense of responsibility, will be discussed more fully in the next section of the chapter.

It would be unfair to claim that the staff were the only group able to mobilise discourses around appropriate and inappropriate behaviour within the Hostel. As Foucault (1980) stated, power is ‘capillary’ in the sense that it is dynamic and does not reside with one particular group. Thus feminising discourses that served to regulate and discipline the women within the Hostel were not always imposed upon them. Rather the women were sometimes actively engaged in the regulation of each other through the employment of discourses which set boundaries between allowed and censured behaviour. The most obvious example of this was the general consensus amongst the residents towards women who had abused, injured or killed children.

We advise women who have committed offences against children to tell the others that they are here for shoplifting or something. Although some

of their crimes are pretty horrendous, we [staff] try not to make assumptions but the women here...for them its a real taboo subject. Like in prison, hurting children, especially a woman hurting children, well that's just not allowed to go unpunished (Assistant Warden 9).

We don't like women who have hurt their kids. We don't accept bitches like that. I've never seen any real violence but I suppose we make life difficult for them but I've got no sympathy (Billie).

Children should be able to trust their mothers and it always seems worse if a woman hurts her children because she should be the one to protect them (Debbie).

The only thing you have to be careful about is what you are here for because [the other women] try to find that out as soon as you arrive. Loads of girls in here are here for 'shoplifting' so I think there are lots of us in the same boat (Sam).¹⁴

If you are in prison for a sex-offence the other women soon find out about it. They give you a really hard time. In the Hostel they still give you a hard time but there was no real violence, it was really only verbal (Joanne).¹⁵

For many of the women this intolerance was intensified by the separation from their own children. Women like Billie and Debbie, who cherished their status as mothers, even though (or possibly because) they saw their children very infrequently, were particular bitter about living with women who, in their opinion, had effectively relinquished any rights to their children.

Being in here has made me realise that there are a lot of women who commit the sorts of things that I only used to think men did, like child abuse and sexual crimes. I was really shocked when I found out. What really annoys me is that they bend over backwards to let those women keep in contact with their children even if they abused them and the likes of me just gets forgotten....if I had abused them or something then they'd all be running round making sure I saw them once a month. It really makes me sick (Debbie).

¹⁴ Sam was on bail for neglect

¹⁵ Joanne was on bail for sexually abusing her son

The mobilisation of such discourses is, of course, not a new phenomenon. As discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis, women in the Lancashire Refuge during the nineteenth century engaged in the construction of similar discourses around 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' behaviour with regards to children thus establishing an acceptable notion of femininity and motherhood (see also Smith, 1996).

So far this chapter has examined the structure and regime of Adelaide House and the dominant discourses which underpinned the administration of discipline and constructed an appropriate standard of femininity to which residents were encouraged (either by staff or by each other) to adhere to. However, as previously argued in this thesis (see in particular Chapter Two), women are not simply passive subjects upon whom such disciplinary discourses are imposed and who acquiesce without some form of response or resistance. Rather they frequently assume a strong sense of identity which enables them to assert their agency and thus manage, and cope with, their experiences of institutionalisation. The final section of this chapter will take up these debates.

Responding to semi-penal institutionalisation

From the women's own accounts two major strategies of coping have been identified, these being 'conformity', and 'resistance'. Within these broad categories were various, more specific methods of response. The methods of 'conformity' for example included 'compliance' and 'segregation' whilst methods of resistance included 'challenging authority', 'endorsing discourses' and 'asserting agency'. In addition to these strategies the women often described methods of, what they termed, 'not-coping' and these included 'over-dependence', self-harm and ultimately suicide or attempted suicide. Each of these responses will be discussed in turn however it should be acknowledged that these responses are not mutually exclusive or 'fixed' in any way. As Smith (1996) found in her study of female prisoners, women would employ different methods of response at different times depending on what they perceived to be the most appropriate strategy in any given situation. Alternatively, they might employ more than one strategy at any particular

time. What links these strategies and in many ways makes them mutually reinforcing, is the fact that they represent the plethora of ways that women, in everyday life as well as within institutions, attempt to deal with and negotiate the construction of the 'feminine' subject.

Coping through conformity: Compliance

Due to their charitable status, institutions like the Lancashire Refuge for the Destitute depended heavily upon the compliance and co-operation of their residents for their successful operation. As Chapters Five and Six highlighted, for the most part women appeared to outwardly conform to the disciplinary regimes imposed upon them. It could be argued that conformity may have been a conscious decision on the part of women who wanted to facilitate their period of confinement. This was found to be the case with many women at Adelaide House. Conformity to discipline was a more common response than resistance but this was not necessarily a passive form of compliance. Women on bail in particular often claimed that they deliberately chose to conform as a means of improving their chances at trial.

I think hostels like these are like a second chance...because if you get bailed here then you have got less chance of going away at your trial especially if you get a good report from here...I don't keep in with the staff or nothing but I don't get in trouble. I'm all right with the staff... I keep well in with [the warden] anyway. I do loads of posters for her and the Hostel (Roxy).

I just do as I'm told really, if I'm sanctioned then I don't go out. I don't go out of my way to make trouble like some do because I want a really good report for my court appearance. I just keep my head down and get on with it (Sarah).

Women like Roxy and Sarah were prepared to co-operate and comply with Hostel rules and regulations as they saw their compliance as a strategy which would benefit them in the long term. Other women, like Sandra, took a similar approach. Sandra openly admitted that she was totally prepared to conform to any rules, not because she expected this to help her at her trial (as she frequently commented

how she had 'the best barrister money could buy' to do that) but rather because she equated conformity with freedom. Having her own car, she could leave the Hostel on a daily basis and go and visit her children, family and friends as long as she was back for the 11.00pm curfew. Her total conformity meant she was never sanctioned and thus had the freedom to go out every day. So rather than making it difficult for her to abide by Hostel rules, Sandra's desire to continue a 'normal' life actually fostered her compliance.

There were other women, however, who did not have the personal (strong family connections) or financial resources that Sandra had. Neither did they have as much to gain from total conformity as Roxy and Sarah did, yet they still adopted this approach more frequently than any other. Rosie and Belinda were both on probation so were not reliant on a good report for trial, yet both adhered to sanctioning even though this meant on one occasion Rosie missed an appointment to visit her son and on another Belinda could not turn up to her part-time job in a shop and was consequently sacked. When asked why she had not just ignored the sanction and gone to work, Belinda explained that it was not worth getting into even more trouble and that she just wanted to get through her probation as quickly and as painlessly as possible. As Okley (1978) asserted in her study of a girls' boarding school, total conformity often meant a reduction in the amount of attention that the girls would otherwise be subjected to. In other words, as Belinda suggested, conformity was a means of avoiding or resisting further, more intensive scrutiny and regulation.

However, what women like Belinda did not appear to be aware of was the fact that, because disciplinary measures like sanctioning were informally imposed (in other words they were methods of regulation designed by the Hostel management and staff and were not part of any probation or bail requirements), they could not be formally administered. Thus, as one member of staff explained, the Hostel had no real power to *enforce* a sanction even though it had *imposed* one.

There is mild objection to sanctioning [amongst the residents] but they

will never just say 'well I'm going out' if they are sanctioned. Well some of them have done. There was one woman in the past and you just couldn't sanction her, she would just go out anyway and what can you do about it? The women here haven't cottoned on to it yet that if they go, well so what?....if they ever caught on to it that we can't force them to abide by a sanction...[laughs] (Assistant Warden 1).

When asked why they did conform to rules so readily the residents usually answered that they wanted to avoid being labelled as a 'trouble-causer' and thus make their time at the Hostel as unproblematic as possible. Some members of staff however, had a different explanation for the compliance of the residents. In contrast to the notion that incarcerated women have traditionally been seen as more recalcitrant than their male counterparts (Carlen, 1983; Zedner, 1991; Faith, 1993), some members of staff claimed that the women conformed primarily *because* they were women.

..whereas men often tend to fight the system, women seem to submit to rules more quickly. I know that is probably a gross generalisation because we do have women in here who will go out of their way not to conform, but I think looking at prisons...the protests always seem to occur in men's institutions (Assistant Warden 8).

The women tend to conform quite quickly. They generally just accept things like sanctioning. I think maybe the women here are more keen to please than the men in other hostels. I think women are more conformist than men. I don't think we'd get away with sanctioning for things like getting up late in a men's hostel....they'd just ignore us (Assistant Warden 9).

As discussed previously, there was some confusion amongst both residents and staff with regards to the real purpose and function of the Hostel. Some women complained that they were often unsure as to what was expected of them and consequently total adherence to the written set of Hostel rules was one method of laying down boundaries for themselves in order to facilitate and clarify their position within the institution. As women like Sam and Billie articulated, treating the Hostel more like a prison, where rules and regulations are clearly defined and imposed, made for an easier life.

I suppose it's easier to just follow the rules...like in prison. You know where you are then (Sam).

I think it's best just to behave like you would in prison. Just abide by the rules, don't question them, just accept them. That's the easiest thing to do. I've got other, more important things to worry about than whether the staff were right to sanction me or whether it's my turn to do the dishes. Do you know what I mean? (Billie).

Coping through conformity: Segregation

In addition to adhering to the rules, many women attempted to navigate through their period of institutionalisation by a process of segregation. This occurred in two ways. Some women would physically separate themselves from either staff or from other women in the Hostel believing the most constructive way in which they could facilitate their time at Adelaide House was to 'keep themselves to themselves'. These women perceived that by removing themselves from any real involvement with other residents, they had developed a means of avoiding potential trouble and this would thus help to expedite their time in the Hostel.

I just try and stay out of the way if there is trouble, I just keep myself to myself. Don't take sides (Debbie).

I try to keep my head down and keep out of it. You know who the trouble causers and the grasses are and so you try to keep away from them (Kate).

I just keep out of it, it does my head in. If [other residents] start having a go at someone...I'll say something like 'leave her alone' but anything more serious then you should just stay away (Carrie).

I just come in and go straight upstairs...The new girls now are really cocky, you ask them not to sit on the pool table and they tell you to shut your face. I just go about my own business (Marueen).

This strategy of 'shutting out' is in many ways similar to what Goffman (1961) termed 'situational withdrawal'. For the women quoted above this withdrawal took the form of physical removal from others. Other women however separated

themselves on a more metaphysical level, distancing themselves from the reality of their situation and developing a 'them and us' mentality, allocating themselves an almost 'non criminal' status thus separating themselves from other women who they perceived to be the 'real criminals'. These women developed strategies that allowed them to distance themselves from, or even totally deny, the reality of their situation. Margaret, for example, was a middle-aged woman convicted of business fraud. She was from a wealthy background and was well-educated, well-dressed and consequently noticeably 'different' (mainly in terms of her age, her accent, her mode of dress and the nature of her offence) from other residents in the Hostel. This 'difference' provided Margaret with a mechanism through which she could isolate herself from her reality in the sense that, because she looked different, Margaret asserted that she *was* different to the other women in Adelaide House. Informal discussions with Margaret highlighted the way in which she had set herself apart from her fellow residents. Margaret would frequently assert that the Hostel was a 'stop gap' in her life, insisting that she was only there because she was temporarily homeless. Often this was a strategy employed by women who had committed the most serious offences. So women like Maureen (who was on bail for aiding and abetting the attempted rape of a child), Joanne (on bail for sexually abusing her son), Debbie (on bail for attempted murder) and Mary (on probation for threatening behaviour) would constantly stress how they were at Adelaide House 'for their own good' or 'for their own protection' and very rarely acknowledge their status as 'offenders' or their period of confinement as a form of punishment and regulation. As quoted previously, Maureen (and several other women) perceived the Hostel as a 'home from home' rather than as an institution entrenched within the criminal justice system. Thus, through the utilisation of such strategies, these women would not only minimise the severity of their offences but also avoid the reality of their situation. However for some women (Maureen and Joanne in particular), the continual claims of being in the Hostel for their own protection had the effect of intensifying the reality of their situation as the other women quickly realised the nature of their offences and, as discussed previously, made life considerably more difficult for them. When asked about the difficult, and sometimes dangerous situation that women like her were in, Maureen's response

was surprising. Far from denying her involvement in the crime she was charged with, as was her usual response to her situation, her whole strategy altered and instead she asserted a strong sense of agency indicating that she ‘knew the score’ and was therefore prepared to deal with whatever situation she found herself in, even if that meant physical violence. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter when the issue of agency is addressed. However it is important to highlight Maureen’s change of attitude here as it is indicative of the way in which women could utilise sometimes very contradictory methods of coping depending on the situation and thus highlights the complex ways in which the residents navigated and negotiated their period of institutionalisation.

Of course, not all women chose to conform. Some actively resisted their period of confinement and this issue will be discussed below.

Coping through resistance: Challenging authority

At Adelaide House there were no episodes of collective protest during the fieldwork period and only a few instances of resistance in the form of violence (which will be discussed later) although women did employ various strategies through which they could negotiate and resist their period of confinement.

Bosworth (1999) utilises the concept of resistance in its broadest sense, moving beyond an examination of large scale protest and serious rebellion, and instead provides a wider frame of reference for understanding women’s responses to institutionalisation.

...resistance remains an extremely useful concept because of the way in which it illuminates small-scale attempts to disrupt power relations (Bosworth, 1999: 130).

Bosworth analysed how incarcerated women frequently utilise their own race-class-gender identities to disrupt these power relations and thus manage or resist the construction of themselves as gendered beings. A similar strategy was used by

some of the women in Adelaide House to deal with the gendered expectations imposed upon them.

During an informal discussion with a group of residents, one Assistant Warden commented that the women should accept the requirement to undertake domestic chores around the Hostel because this was something they would be 'doing at home anyway'. Most of the women acquiesced and agreed that this would indeed be part of a 'normal' routine for them however two women were visibly shocked at this supposition and employed their own class based experiences to negate the gender based assumption being made of them. Sandra¹⁶ explained that at home she had a dishwasher to do her dishes and a cleaner to do her housework and consequently was insulted at the way in which she had been stereotyped on the level of both gender (as a woman) and class (as a 'typically 'working class offender'). She stated that she had no real objection to doing chores but wanted it firmly acknowledged that she only submitted to this requirement as she saw it as an inevitable part of the regulatory mechanism that constrained all women embroiled in the criminal justice system, not as something she should undertake willingly just because she was a woman. In addition, as discussed previously, Sandra stated that she undertook these tasks as a means of avoiding further, more intense regulation (such as a sanction) as this would restrict her ability to make her daily visits to family and friends and thus prevent her from leading as 'free' a life as possible. Margaret¹⁷ also objected to such assumptions and supported Sandra's point that every task or chore she undertook in the Hostel, she did in order to comply with her probation order and to stay out of trouble and not because she accepted that this was part of her 'natural' role.

Throughout this thesis it has been argued that women have historically been considered as puerile, dependent and lacking a sense of adult responsibility

¹⁶ Sandra came from wealthy family in Chester and was on bail for threatening behaviour.

¹⁷ Margaret originated from a wealthy background in South Africa and was on probation for fraud.

(Worrall, 1990). This perception of women has in turn influenced the regimes within institutions for women and consequently female offenders have found themselves exposed to 'normalising' discourses which have served to 'infantilise' them, reducing them to a less-than-adult status and denying them a sense of authority (Carlen, 1983). In a system such as this it is unsurprising to find that, in contrast to those women who, for a variety of reasons and through a variety of methods, conformed to the regimes imposed upon them, were other women who openly and, through a variety of means, actively resisted them. Although, as discussed previously, most women adhered to rules and accepted discipline such as sanctioning, a minority of women simply refused to participate in their own regulation in this way. The most basic method of resistance was complaint. However, although the women would often complain about various aspects of Hostel life to each other, it was only occasionally that they voiced their grievances in a more public or formal way. The daily residents' meetings were set up in order that women would have a platform to air their complaints or discuss any issues of general concern. For the most part women were reluctant to complain at these meetings. Some women stated that this was because they had nothing to complain about but others commented that they were worried that complaining might label them 'trouble causers' and this might be recorded in their files and thus influence their chances in court. In addition, women felt fairly powerless and resigned to the fact that it was not worth complaining, as it would have no real effect.

There have been times I've really wanted to complain about something but I just don't. I want a good record for my court appearance so I don't do anything that might make me seem difficult. Anyway, complaining gets you nowhere because nothing ever changes. Well I suppose they changed the sanction so instead of not being allowed out you now have to do a job in the Hostel but really, nothing changes. No one is going to listen to us (Sarah).

Ironically, although the residents' meeting was established for the purposes of airing complaints, the compulsory nature of these meetings was one of the most frequent complaints made by the women. Because generally the residents were not convinced that their complaints would be taken seriously, they felt the meetings to

be a waste of time and so some would refuse to attend. This of course was met with the usual response - sanctioning.

I objected to the curfew and the house meetings. I hated [house meetings] and you get sanctioned if you don't go. Spent most of my life sanctioned (Mandy).

Because of her usual absence from residents meetings, Mandy developed her own, less formal, method of airing her grievances and asserting her rejection of authority. Mandy, who was twenty years old at the time of interview, responded to her 'less-than-adult' status by behaving in a less-than-adult manner. For example, she would spend her time pulling faces, calling names, throwing food, or pulling chairs away from other women as they sat down. She claimed that she found the process of 'winding people up' a great source of amusement and thus this was a strategy she used to manage her time at Adelaide House.

I get up about 9 o'clock have breakfast. If you don't get up you get sanctioned...Then about half past 9 you have a house meeting...and if you miss them you get sanctioned as well. That's it for the day. Then I'd either play pool or give shite to the staff for the rest of the time (Mandy).

'Giving shite' to the staff usually meant verbal insults or 'answering back' and Mandy was not alone in employing this strategy. Many women articulated their resentments by arguing with, or swearing at, members of staff and although the staff complained that they found this form of behaviour intimidating and sometimes frightening, it rarely escalated beyond verbal threats. However, violence was used against the staff on three occasions during the period of fieldwork. On one occasion Mandy swung a pool cue at an Assistant Warden and, although she claimed she was not seriously trying to hit her, she was asked to leave the Hostel. In another instance some weeks later, another resident did hit an Assistant Warden across the head with a pool cue and she also was required to leave. The third incident involved two members of staff who were taken hostage by a resident armed with a knife and a broken bottle. This resident threatened to harm both the staff and herself and the incident only ended when one Assistant Warden managed

to get to the alarm which alerted the police to the situation. The resident was subsequently arrested.

There are few accounts of collective protest in women's institutions (Madaraka-Sheppard, 1986). However some women at Adelaide House did engage in a form of collective behaviour as a coping strategy. Although some women, as discussed earlier in this chapter, felt inclined to distance themselves from other residents, for many women 'sticking together' was the most beneficial and positive way of managing their institutionalisation and challenging authority. These women employed a strategy more commonly associated with custodial institutions and had developed a set of informal rules between themselves that had the effect of adhering them to each other whilst separating them from the staff. The most common of these rules involved 'keeping quiet' or 'not grassing'. Informing on fellow residents was something most of the women agreed they would not do, either because they disagreed with the idea on principle or because they believed that 'keeping quiet' was the best way to avoid trouble.

Well I wouldn't grass on anyone. You get girls in here who'd grass about anything, they just like crawling to the staff. Another reason why you don't grass is because its not worth getting yourself into trouble with the other girls. We've all got to live here (Kate).

If [people] are having a joint you just keep your mouth shut. But there are some grasses in here (Nikki).

You don't grass to the staff. No going back to the staff if anyone does anything wrong. You sort it out yourself (Mandy).

I had two quid missing and I said if I find who did it I'm going to break their hands because we are all in this situation, we have all committed criminal offences. You just don't do that, same as you don't do it in prison...you don't nick from your own. (Roxy)

Sorting problems out informally, without involving members of staff, was a strategy that most of the women adhered to. As Frances articulated, although violence sometimes erupted between residents, mainly with regards to thefts, 'sticking together' was still a preferable response to 'grassing'. After having

clothing stolen from her room she was shocked when asked if she had reported the theft to the staff, replying that she

.. wouldn't want to get someone breached and maybe sent to Risley just because they nicked a pair of socks, that's the police's job.

Of course not all of the women conformed to this informal strategy. Mary, for example, was known as a 'grass' because she consistently resisted the idea of 'sticking together' stating that she would rather place her trust in the staff than in her fellow residents.

Some of the girls say you don't grass but it depends on what's been done. When the fire started in the TV room I had an idea who did that so I told [the Warden] because people could have been killed. I'd also tell the staff if I saw anyone bringing drugs into the Hostel (Mary).

Mary's attitude was not appreciated by her fellow residents and she was frequently ostracised and verbally abused for her actions.

Well some residents would tell the staff if someone had drugs or something. Someone did that a few weeks ago and it caused loads of trouble because some of the girls here say you shouldn't tell them anything at all.....some of them here though, they love telling the staff anything because they love to try and be well in with them, they just do it for attention and some of the others don't like that (Debbie).

In my opinion you shouldn't go running to the staff and grassing on other people, that's out of order. There's one girl here and she is always running in to the staff moaning and complaining and looking for excuses to grass on people. She is going to get into trouble one day. Anyway I don't think the staff like people like that either (Frances).

Frances' comment that the staff did not appreciate Mary's behaviour any more than the residents did was fairly accurate. Generally the staff perceived Mary as an 'attention-seeker' and a 'trouble-causer' who, by constantly informing on the activities of her fellow residents, which inevitably led to frequent friction amongst the residents, made not only her own life at the Hostel, but also the life of staff

members much more difficult. Consequently Mary found herself becoming isolated from all parties. Throughout the period of fieldwork for this research, Mary slowly became increasingly angry but at the same time depressed and her growing isolation appeared to reinforce her desire to 'grass' on other women which, in turn, amplified her 'outsider' status within the institution. Mary was eventually hospitalised on the recommendation of the Hostel psychiatrist after successive periods of self-harm and threats of suicide, which both her fellow residents and the Hostel staff asserted were all part of her 'attention-seeking behaviour'. This decline into, what many of the residents described as 'not coping' will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Coping by resisting: Endorsing Discourses

Bosworth (1999) states that the formation of the female identity is an inherent aspect of women's resistance to control and discipline. She states that although institutionalised women are subjected to feminising discourses and regimes, this does not necessarily mean that they render women powerless or passive, rather the construction of 'femininity' can be negotiated and utilised in order for women to achieve their 'own ends'. Although Bosworth's study focuses specifically on women incarcerated within formal custodial institutions, a similar analysis could be applied to women confined in semi-penal institutions.

Bosworth provides an example of the women in her study using bodily aspects of femininity to win disputes within prison. A similar scenario emerged during the period of fieldwork at Adelaide House. Margaret was a resident who was in her late fifties and was thus considerably older than the other women in the Hostel. As discussed previously, Margaret considered herself to be different from her fellow residents, perceiving them to be the 'real criminals' and consequently she objected to sharing a room with any of them. In order to assist her case for a single room Margaret employed 'feminising' discourses pertaining to 'appropriate' body shape, claiming that, because of her age and the condition of her body, she felt uncomfortable undressing in front of much younger women. Margaret won her case and was allocated a single occupancy room, something that Debbie was not

allowed. When stating her case, Debbie had not resorted to such feminising discourses but rather had articulated an account that emphasised her strong objection to drugs and the fact that she was sharing a room with a heroin user. She was informed that most of the women in Adelaide House were drug users and as such she would have to 'put up with it'.

The majority of women in Adelaide House did not perceive 'femininity' as a negative aspect of their lives or identity. Indeed generally they were proud of their feminine status. This was emphasised through the fact that many of the younger women in particular would not even enter the recreation rooms within the Hostel without their make-up on. Hair and clothes were also a source of pride and pleasure with frequent changes of hairstyle and clothes-swapping sessions. Frost (1999) has asserted that women often conform to acceptable standards of feminine beauty, through clothes, hair and beauty regimes, because, in addition to providing pleasure, this process can actually improve self-esteem and mental well-being. Thus it could be argued that for the women at Adelaide House, this adherence to conventional standards of appearance was a means of avoiding the 'outcast' status often attributed to women with alternative looks (Marshment, 1993) whilst at the same time promoting feelings of self-worth which served to empower women who may otherwise have felt relatively powerless through their period of confinement.

You have to make the effort don't you? If you just sit around in slippers and a nightie, no make up or nothing, well then you're beat. At least it's something to think about when you get up in the morning, 'what am I going to wear today'. It's a bit pathetic but it's better than just giving up on yourself (Sarah).

As in Bosworth's study, the most commonly endorsed aspect of femininity, and one of the most common ways in which the women maintained a sense of identity, was through their status as mothers.

If you look in this Hostel I reckon about ninety percent of them do nothing but worry and cry about their kids....no-one thinks you are a bad father because you go to prison but they think you are a bad mother (Frances).

As mentioned previously, women in the Hostel who were mothers generally did not accept women whose offences involved children. Often though, as Bosworth stated, even women who would not ordinarily be considered as 'good mothers' were keen to be perceived as such. One such woman was Anya who attempted to kill herself and her two children after finding her husband was having an affair. Although Anya was charged with attempting to murder her own children, she would frequently express her disgust at other women charged with child related offences and consistently maintained that she was a 'good mother' who loved her children and would never hurt them.

Other women whose children were either adopted or in care, would go to great lengths to explain and justify why this was so, all the time reiterating that their status as 'mother' was the most significant and important aspect of their lives.

[My daughter is] with adoptive parents in Southport. She's really well looked after I know, they've got a really big house and they can give her everything but I still wish things had been different so she could be with me. People think if you give your kids up for adoption then you mustn't care about them but I gave her up because I do care about her. It's no life for a little girl to see her mother on the gear and being farmed out when I'm in and out of prison....The bloke who beat me up....he threatened that in future if I couldn't pay then ...he wanted to sleep with [my daughter]. That scared the shit out of me so I finally made the decision although I'd been thinking about it for a while (Kate).

I don't see [my daughter] at all now really. You can't keep confusing kids. If I kept seeing her then she'd be all confused about who her mother is and it would upset her...and me (Kate).¹⁸

I fucking hate [my son] being in care. That's my fucking social worker for you, I hate her, could kill her....her and her big ideas. She just took him from the nursery, took him away because of the drugs and that. I didn't neglect him or nothing like that, I didn't hit him...it was just the drugs (Nikki).

¹⁸ This is the same woman as quoted immediately above

Apart from justifying why their children had been taken into care, for many women, the most effective way of endorsing their own 'good mother' status was through a rejection of other female figures in their children's lives, in particular foster or adoptive mothers. Roxy in particular had a passionate hatred for her son's foster mother and after every visit would spend hours criticising almost every aspect of her 'mothering' ability.

I've only seen the foster mother once but I don't like her, she's a tramp. When I went up to see him I asked for his coat and the one she brought out... I said 'you are not putting that on him'. Me and [Nikki] went out and bought him a whole new outfit. Also she said he is always being sick. I've told her it's because she's giving him baby food. He's too old for that (Roxy).

In contrast to women like Kate, who had deliberately distanced herself from her daughter for the child's sake, Roxy had no intention of relinquishing her role as a mother, even though she was physically separated from her son. For many of the mothers in Adelaide House, maintaining their presence in the lives of their children was a priority, primarily as this gave them a strong sense of purpose and identity that facilitated their time at the Hostel. This was of course easiest for those women whose children were not in care. Sandra, for example, (as discussed previously) saw her children almost every day. Another woman, Jean, also saw her daughter every day. Indeed Jean's daughter was not even aware that her mother was not living at home with her father. Jean, who was on probation, would leave the Hostel every morning and go to the family home in time to get her daughter up for school. She would stay at home until her daughter went to bed and then return to the Hostel in time for curfew. Through this method, Jean not only provided herself with a goal and a purpose but also caused as little disruption as possible for her family and child.

Many of the women attempted to maintain a sense of stability in their children's lives (even if they were in care) whilst at the same time maintaining their role as a

'good mother', by not informing their children that they were resident in a probation hostel.

[My son] thinks I'm still in Kirkby (Nikki).

[My children] don't know the full story because I don't think they'd understand but my mum has told them I'm in Liverpool and they write to me (Debbie).

[My daughter] knows I'm in Liverpool but I think she's too young to understand the full details. She just knows I had to go away for a while but she doesn't really understand why and I don't want her to (Frances).

They know I'm in Liverpool, the social worker told them but she didn't say why or exactly where I was. I explained to all three of them when they came to see me that I just lived up the road from the day centre where I was meeting them (Maureen).

Coping by resisting: Asserting Agency

In addition to maintaining a sense of identity through their role as mothers, many women held on to a 'sense of self' by taking responsibility for their actions and asserting a strong sense of agency with regards to their lives. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the Hostel regime was underpinned by a paradoxical discourse regarding the nature of 'appropriate femininity'. So whilst women were expected to become responsible, self-governing and self-regulating with regards to fairly trivial day-to-day activities (getting up, getting dressed), they were, at the same time, often not allocated with any level of responsibility for their offending behaviour. Assistant Wardens frequently described the residents as 'sad victims', rendering them benign and harmless. The women themselves, however, did not generally perceive themselves in this way and as a rule they resisted these discourses which, they believed, effectively rendered them powerless. Instead they attributed themselves with a much greater level of responsibility and agency for their actions and for their lives.

As discussed previously, Maureen would frequently distance herself from the severity of her offence as a means of coping. However, although she would often

achieve this by allocating herself a 'victim' status, she strongly objected to others describing her in this way. When discussing the way in which women are often disallowed a level of personal responsibility, she became brutally frank about her situation.

When you're at home with your family you are just a normal person and you have got to look after your kiddies and everything. When you go to prison you have got to learn to stand on your own two feet. You haven't got no husband to back you up there, or no family to back you up. It's like, with what I've been charged with [aiding and abetting rape]...if I get sent down you can guarantee I'll get a hiding so you have got to prepare yourself and say 'well I've got to be strong, I can take it'. Women criminals have got to be strong. I think if you've done the crime then you've got to be prepared to do the time...Yes, you've got to be strong (Maureen).

Many of the women interviewed possessed a similar attitude towards their offending behaviour. Although they would admit they had lived fairly financially deprived and, often unsettled and chaotic lives (either through violence, alcohol or drug use), not many ever mobilised such a discourse when talking about their offences.

I hate this attitude like 'oh I had to do it'. That's crap isn't it? You don't have to do anything. I know some people might need the money and can't see their kids with no clothes or going without food but most of them people would probably never steal if their lives depended on it..... I look at some of the women here and realise that I'm the lucky one, most of them are losers. I'm not here just because of an unlucky break or because I lost my temper and clocked one of my kids one, this is something I have to expect once in a while, an occupational hazard (Frances).

I've never been forced into doing anything. If I was feeling sorry for myself then I could say that my circumstances forced me into crime but that's a cop-out isn't it? You always have a choice, right to the last. You never have to do something (Kate).

I think [I stole] because I didn't like to ask people for money. I know if I'd asked I'd have got it but I didn't like to bother people, you know. Stealing seemed a better alternative (Carla).

Many women at Adelaide House had experienced violence in some form throughout their lives. The women who had been subjected to domestic violence did not, rightly, blame themselves for the violence inflicted upon them. However some women, primarily those involved in drugs or those who worked as prostitutes, had a very different attitude to the violence and abuse they were often subjected to and actually accepted some responsibility for, and resilience to, such incidents.

When you are on the gear your life isn't your own, you get beaten up and you get things stolen and its part of that lifestyle. It's like prostitutes, they know the score as well, they know what their lifestyle contains. I don't mean its right that you should get beaten up but you know what you can expect (Carla).

Well three weeks ago I was raped when I was down the beat. In a way it doesn't bother me because I know the risks that I take when I go down there. I think I've come to terms with it pretty well [although] the first week I was in bits (Roxy).

Overall, it can be seen that the women at Adelaide House utilised several strategies through which they could ease the 'pains' of their confinement (Bosworth, 1999). Some conformed to the rules, some segregated themselves from others, some grouped together against the staff, some embraced idealised images of themselves as 'feminine' subjects and some rejected disempowering discourses and took control of their lives, expressing a strong sense of agency. Some women utilised several of these methods depending on the situation. Whatever method they selected, for the most part the women at Adelaide House managed to find a coping mechanism that enabled them to negotiate their period of institutionalisation with the minimum of harm to themselves. However, not all women managed to do this. For some women, described by their fellow residents and staff as 'poor' or 'non' copers, confinement (often in addition to other, extra problems and difficulties) was not something that they 'successfully' navigated. The responses of these women will be discussed below.

'Not coping': Over-dependence

There are some girls here who have never lived on their own, they've been in care or in other hostels and I don't think this place prepares them to look after themselves at all. All they seem to do is move them on to other hostels (Frances).

Although the staff and Management Committee of Adelaide House were keen to portray the institution as one which attempted to 'empower' women, and although (as discussed previously) many of the rules and practices within the Hostel functioned to encourage a degree of personal responsibility and self-governance, in reality the Hostel (like the reformatories of the nineteenth century) often had the effect of 'infantilising' the women therein. Consequently, in contrast to those residents who rejected, resisted or consciously conformed to the regime, some women became reliant and dependent on the Hostel structure to such an extent that they found it difficult, if not impossible, to live independently after their period of residency had finished. Some residents would persistently visit the Hostel once they had left and indeed at one point this became such a problem for the staff that they established set visiting times to which even ex-residents had to adhere.

We had one resident and she got a flat on Princess Road and she's totally isolated now, she has contact with a probation officer but she has no support network like she had here (Assistant Warden 1).

Coping with the outside world is the major problem they face. I mean this place is like a world within a world and can sometimes give a false image of reality (Assistant Warden 4).

Although many residents did continue to regularly visit the Hostel after they had left, the number of women who became completely dependent was relatively small and only two obvious cases were observed during the fieldwork. Another form of, what was described as, 'not coping' was much more common. Incidents of self-harm, suicide attempts or threats of suicide were fairly regular occurrences. Of course it should be acknowledged that self-harm and suicide are not essentially related behaviour, indeed women who self harm do not necessarily go on to attempt or commit suicide. Billie, who did commit suicide, had never harmed herself previously and, indeed, until the actual day of her suicide, had apparently

never threatened or discussed killing herself. However, these two, albeit separate, issues will be discussed together in this final section of the chapter as they represent the most extreme responses of women to institutionalisation.

'Not-coping': Self-harm

Much of the literature on the subject of suicide and self harm pertains to women who are formally incarcerated in custodial institutions (Liebling, 1992, 1994; Heidensohn, 1996; Smith, 1996) and these analyses were found to be useful when examining self-harmful behaviour within a hostel setting. Apps (1988, cited in Smith, 1996) identifies the ways in which the construction of femininity contributes to incidents of self mutilation and injury arguing that because women are entrenched within a society which focuses heavily on the importance of women's bodily appearance, their anger or frustrations are frequently aimed towards their own bodies. The body is a site that women are made to feel constantly aware of, sometimes to the point of self-detestation. As Eaton (1993) argued, even behaviour such as amateur tattooing can indicate a sense of self-loathing. Amateur tattooing was relatively rare in Adelaide House and was mainly apparent amongst those women who had previously been in prison. One woman, Rosie, had numerous tattoos over her body, a mixture of both professional and amateur designs. Although she took great pleasure in showing them off to other residents she stated that she was not proud of them. When asked why she wanted to leave such permanent marks on herself Rosie stated that it meant nothing to her as she felt no affinity with her own body. Indeed she stated that her body was almost alien to her and thus it did not matter if she damaged or scarred it.

Most of the cases of self-mutilation witnessed at Adelaide House were more serious and potentially harmful than amateur tattooing. Women like Mary bore the scars of many episodes of 'cutting' and was labelled, by both staff and residents, as an attention-seeker. As Apps (1998, cited in Smith, 1996) argues, some women might injure themselves as a means of gaining and receiving attention and this may have been the case with Mary. However, the way in which her actions were responded to simply seemed to reinforce her behaviour. As Liebling (1992) has

noted, women can find themselves in this vicious cycle whereby 'cries for help' or 'attention-seeking behaviour' are actually responded to with little sympathy and the 'help' that is so desperately sought is often not provided. The staff at Adelaide House admitted that they felt frustrated with Mary's behaviour and, over time, were losing patience with her. Over a period of several months less and less attention was paid to her behaviour, behaviour which in turn was becoming a greater cause for concern. Eventually, when the staff felt they were unable to deal with her any longer, it was recommended by the Hostel psychiatrist that she be hospitalised for a short period.

Mary's label as an 'attention-seeker' appeared to be reinforced by the fact that she could not reasonably explain why she wanted to hurt herself. Maureen, on the other hand, was able to provide an articulate explanation of her own self-harmful behaviour, asserting that she felt unable to outwardly express her feelings of anger and frustration which stemmed from previous episodes of sexual and physical abuse, and therefore turned them inwards onto herself. As Apps (1988, cited in Smith 1996) argues, this is an unsurprising response for women who are reared to believe that outward displays of anger are 'inappropriate' and repression of these feelings is a more acceptable response.

At this moment I see the doctor down at Sefton General because I tried to slit my wrists... I just felt that no one would really want to listen to me because I'm just classed as a criminal. I didn't do it to hurt myself, I did it to get rid of myself.....It doesn't matter how much you talk about it, you've still got that experience and you've got a lot of anger with it. But the anger, half the time, you can't let it out. You hurt yourself (Maureen).

Staff generally agreed that many of the women who harmed themselves did so because of their experiences of a society that perceives inward aggression as a more 'normal' response for women than outward displays of anger.

Men have other outlets for their frustrations and aggression whereas women don't so they turn it all back in on themselves. I think that explains why there is such a high proportion of women drug offenders. Its also why

there is a lot of self-abuse in women, it's all turned inwards instead of outwards (Assistant Warden 6).

'Not-coping': Suicide

The most extreme form of self-harm is, of course, suicide or attempted suicide. As mentioned previously, during the period of fieldwork one of the women interviewed killed herself. Billie's case highlights a point raised by Apps' analysis. Apps (cited in Smith, 1996) asserted that incarcerated women often lose their self-identity and are frequently deprived of their social status. The most obvious social role that institutionalised women are stripped of is that of motherhood given that they are physically separated from their children. Although Apps is talking about causes of self injury, this analysis can be applied to the case of Billie's suicide. Billie originated from Carlisle and her children were placed in local authority care on her being sent to Adelaide House. Due to the long distance between them, she was unable to visit them regularly however she was still able to assert her status as a mother through letters and phone calls and utilised this as a coping mechanism, constantly looking to the future when her family could be reunited. Towards the end of her probation order she began to actively fight to have her children returned but encountered a problem that she considered insurmountable. Billie was informed that she could not obtain custody of her children until she had a house of her own. At the same time she was informed that she would not be considered as a priority for re-housing because her children were still in local authority care. In other words, without her children she would not get a house and without a house she would not get her children. Using Apps' analysis, it could be argued that Billie felt she had been deprived of her primary status. Indeed she commented to a member of staff on the day before she died that she had come to the conclusion her children would be better off if she was dead as it would, ironically, introduce a sense of stability into their lives that she did not feel she could provide. Billie hanged herself in February 1993, on her son's birthday.

It is of course debatable whether the women discussed above are indeed the 'poor' or 'non-copers' that they were often described as. Incidents of self-mutilation,

although harmful and dangerous, could be seen as a manifestation of feelings that women are expected to repress. In other words, self-harm can represent a form of resistance to 'silencing' and controlling discourses and regimes (Liebling, 1992). Eaton (1993) has argued that even suicide can be perceived in this way, representing as it does the final indication of control over one's own life, the ultimate decision that women are able to make in relatively 'powerless' situations. Billie's suicide could be seen as her way of retaining some influence over, not only her own life, but the lives of her children who, she argued, would be able to lead a more stable life without her. This argument needs to be dealt with carefully however as equating self-harm and suicide with resistance and self-determination could potentially lead to a glamorisation and trivialisation of such incidents. Instead, emphasis should be placed on uncovering and deconstructing those discourses, regimes and practices which eventually evoke such extreme responses from women.

This chapter then has examined the three primary objectives of this thesis, building on the historical analysis of the Lancashire Refuge for the Destitute presented in Chapters Five and Six, with a contemporary analysis of the institution as it existed in the 1990s. Through an examination of its structure, regime and the discourses that underpinned its administration of discipline, this chapter has highlighted the way in which Adelaide House, a bail and probation hostel for women, could indeed be perceived as a semi-penal institution for the late twentieth century. In addition it has shown how, far from being passive and powerless, women continue to develop strategies of coping and resistance, strategies that enable them to negotiate their periods of confinement. But how is this analysis useful for our understanding of the control of women as we enter the twenty first century? The major themes and issues of this thesis, and a discussion of the way in which this analysis can be utilised when examining the position of institutionalised women in the new millennium will be presented in the next, and final, chapter.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, this thesis is a case study of a particular and unique institution for women on Merseyside. As such, and as discussed more fully in Chapter Three, there is no argument for generalisation. In other words, the analysis presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven is specific only to the institution under scrutiny and it is not the contention of this thesis that these findings will necessarily apply to other women in other institutions at other periods in history. However, that is not to suggest that such findings are not significant or should have no impact at all on studies of other women in other institutions. On the contrary, the findings of this thesis are immensely important to any examination of the discipline and regulation of women both past and present. It is the intention of this final chapter to briefly revisit and draw together the major arguments and themes of the thesis and, in doing so, consider the contribution that this research makes to the literature and debates around the (historical and contemporary) confinement of 'deviant' women.

The first aim of this thesis was to fill a theoretical gap in the existing feminist literature by examining the development and establishment of the semi-penal institution as a significant arena of social control for 'deviant' women over two centuries. As mentioned in Chapter One, although there already exist some very comprehensive and critical analyses of various 'types' of semi-penal institutions for women, these studies primarily focus on distinct and specific nineteenth and early twentieth century establishments.¹ Thus what these studies have generally failed to do is explicitly identify the common theoretical issues and discourses that make the development of such institutions for women a *history* rather than *events in history*.

¹ See for example Hunt *et al*, 1989; Mahood, 1990; Zedner, 1991.

In constructing this history, presented in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven, this thesis has illustrated that there is indeed considerable historical consistency between the institutions of the nineteenth century (reformatories, refuges, homes and asylums) and twentieth century establishments such as homes for unmarried mothers, halfway houses for 'delinquent' girls and the contemporary probation hostel for women. Continuity was found in three ways. First, the distinguishing structural and organisational characteristics of the nineteenth century reformatory (as outlined at the beginning of Chapter Four) were found to be present in specific twentieth century semi-penal institutions, most significantly in Adelaide House during the 1990s (see Chapter Seven). Second, an element of permanence was uncovered in the discourses and processes through which women were *labelled* as 'deviant' and deemed to be in need of institutionalisation where they could be subjected to a process of reformation and 'normalisation'. Finally, and most importantly, the discourses and strategies mobilised within the nineteenth century semi-penal institution to facilitate the process of reform of 'deviant' women were found to be remarkably similar to those employed within a women's probation hostel nearly two hundred years later.

Once the issue of historical consistency is acknowledged, as it has been in this thesis, it is possible to re-assess the discipline and social control of women in two ways. First, as discussed above, continuity can be found historically. Second, this study highlights how the mechanisms of social control and discipline are 'all encompassing', not just historically but contemporarily too. In other words, the social control of women in modern society is not confined to two polarised arenas, namely the formal custodial institution and the informal domestic sphere. On the contrary, these two sites could be seen as the extremities of one single 'continuum'. Although this term has been utilised previously (see Carlen, 1983; Howe, 1994), it has usually been used to refer solely to the relationship between those methods of discipline imposed in the prison and those used in the home. The fact that

a whole range of other, semi-penal, semi-formal institutions have also existed, and continue to exist, has been insufficiently acknowledged.

The second aim of this study was to analyse the ways in which women were disciplined according to dominant feminising discourses. As Chapters Four, Five and Six have emphasised, the dominant, hegemonic discourses constructed around idealised images of femininity played a consistent role in the regulation and discipline of a whole range of 'deviant' women during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, as espoused in Chapters Six and Seven, these discourses, based around concepts of domesticity, respectability, motherhood, sexuality and pathology, endured well into the twentieth century and can in fact be found underpinning the regimes and practices of the modern day probation hostel studied in this thesis.

For over two centuries women deemed to be unruly, wayward, immoral or criminal have found themselves subjected to institutional regimes aimed at 'normalising' them back to appropriate standards of femininity. More significantly the condemnation of 'inappropriate' or 'unfeminine' behaviour and the practice of utilising feminising regimes and discourses to 'normalise' that behaviour does not appear to be abating as we enter the twenty first century. Although, as mentioned above, it is not valid to generalise the findings of the case study presented in Chapter Seven to the experiences of all institutionalised women, other recent studies do support the assertion that women's 'deviant' behaviour continues to be defined through dominant discourses of femininity and these in turn continue to reinforce 'normalising' and 'infantilising' regimes.²

It should be acknowledged however that the majority of these recent studies have focussed on the experiences of women within formal custodial institutions.

² See for example Faith, 1993; Howe, 1994; Smith, 1996; Carlen, 1998; Bosworth, 1999.

There have of course been several pieces of research conducted on women in probation hostels. However these studies have generally been concerned with one of two issues. First, there exist several investigations that aim to espouse the benefits of probation hostels as credible and indeed necessary alternatives to prisons for women offenders. Carlen's (1990) study for example examined the way in which certain 'alternatives' to imprisonment might be utilised in order to prevent women entering into the 'revolving door' scenario in prison. Second, other writers (Buckley, 1987; Wincup, 1996, Worrall, 1997) have examined the probation hostel by focusing on the advantages of single-sex hostels for women over mixed-sex institutions.

It was never the intention of this thesis to denounce the use of probation hostels for women. On the contrary, given the rapidly growing numbers of women in prison in England and Wales (Player, 2000) and given that the majority of these women are incarcerated for non-violent offences (Carlen, 1998) the probation hostel would indeed appear to be a viable and, it could be argued, an essential facility which could assist in reducing the numbers of women in custody.

In addition, it was never the intention to reject the important issues around female-only institutions. As Worrall (1997) argues, placing women in mixed hostels is wholly inappropriate as, due to the small numbers of female referrals, the reality is a very small number of women in an overwhelmingly male environment. This, she states, is problematic with regard to the safety of the female probationers and any attempt to segregate or 'annex' the women to particular areas of an institution can result in a 'feeling of entrapment' (1997: 109). Also, as Buckley (1987) points out, women are often not 'heard' in mixed, or more specifically, male dominated, groups and are consequently ignored. Finally, many women may have previously had negative experiences with men and would therefore want to avoid mixed hostels. This, Buckley asserts, is especially significant for women wanting visits from children.

Thus, a good case can undeniably be made for the retention and expansion of a system of female-only probation hostels. However, as important as they are, these studies have focussed quite specifically on the general issues of practicality, financial viability and 'effectiveness'. Consequently little or no consideration has been given to either the long-term experiences of women within hostels or to the theoretical and ideological assumptions that underpin the existence and utility of these institutions. Nor has the fact been adequately addressed that hostels, contrary to the 'popular' belief, might not represent an environment which is totally dissimilar to the custodial one in terms of dominant assumptions and feminising regimes. One important conclusion of this thesis (as discussed at length through Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven) is that many of the critical arguments made by feminist writers about the patriarchal, feminising regimes and practices within custodial institutions can also be made about the supposedly 'empowering' probation hostel environment.

Several studies have presented the probation hostel as an 'empowering' or even therapeutic environment for women. Wincup (1996) argued in favour of women-only hostels stating that they are able to provide a 'specialist' service for their clients. She articulated that the women in her study had often shared similar experiences such as emotional, physical or sexual abuse, unemployment and poverty and as a result many suffered problems such as low self-esteem, drug use, eating disorders and the tendency to self-harm. Consequently, two of the hostels in her study had developed links with specialist agencies that could deal with these issues. Wincup raises an important point here with regard to the personal and social difficulties that many women offenders face, a point that is in fact supported by the findings of this thesis (as presented in Chapter Seven). However, it is not enough to simply accept as unproblematic the idea of women in hostels requiring 'help' for such 'problems'. Rather it is crucial that such issues are examined within the broader theoretical debates around the pathologising of women's behaviour. If these issues are not examined within a more theoretical

framework this could lead to the perpetuation of the image of 'problematic' women requiring excessive medical or psychiatric intervention.

Buckley (1987) also presented the probation hostel as a site where women could potentially be 'empowered'. She argued that the rapid escalation of women through the criminal justice system is partly due to their failure to live up to or adhere to dominant stereotyped assumptions around femininity. Again, this thesis would wholly support that contention. However, she then goes on to argue that the women-only probation hostel could be seen as a 'powerful antidote' (1987: 13) to sexist practice and a possible site of retaliation against stereotyped attitudes. In theory this may well be the case. The women-only probation hostel certainly has the *potential* to challenge the dominant assumptions about 'deviant' women however, given the findings of this thesis it is debatable whether this is the case in reality. As far as Adelaide House was concerned both its entrenchment within, and its partial removal from, the criminal justice system served to produce a regime that whilst claiming to 'empower', actually led to the 'infantilisation' of its residents. To be fair to the institution in question, some practices did appear to be sincere attempts to 'empower' women. Activity days (which involved abseiling, archery, assault courses and other types of physical exercise), artistic pursuits (for example painting sessions), assertiveness courses and even the key-worker sessions (in which women were encouraged individually to discuss problems, issues or concerns with a designated member of staff) could all be described, to a greater or lesser degree, as methods to encourage self-awareness and self-confidence, or even just as 'time out' from the worries and concerns of everyday life. However, these activities were only part of a regime in which women were heavily monitored, surveilled and supervised. In addition, as argued in Chapter Seven, the female residents were rarely allocated a sense of responsibility for their own (offending) behaviour. Add to this the existence of powerful, dominant discourses, assumptions and expectations regarding 'appropriate' feminine behaviour within the institution and it becomes apparent that, rather than being an 'empowering'

environment, Adelaide House in many ways functioned to 'disempower', 'infantilise' and subjugate its residents.

Of course, this is not to suggest the women tolerate such regimes without question. On the contrary, as the third aim of this thesis uncovered, women employed a range of methods through which they were able to cope with or resist the disciplinary regimes and discourses that sought to explain, control and discipline them. In support of the studies of resistance within custodial institutions (see in particular Bosworth, 1999) it was found that through a range of processes women were able to re-assert a sense of agency and responsibility that the institutional regime aimed to remove. Indeed it could be concluded that the very regimes and discourses that sought to transform women into passive subjects produced, in some cases, the opposite outcome. Thus rather than accepting a submissive and powerless status, many women were able, through their strategies of challenge, to rediscover a sense of authority. In this sense it could indeed be argued that Adelaide House served to 'empower' its residents, albeit through the very processes that sought to subdue them. This investigation into women's resistance to institutionalisation is important as it facilitates an understanding of the dynamics of power relations that are frequently overlooked. As Worrall argues, power is not simply a one-way relationship between 'experts' or 'professionals' and those they seek to 'understand'. Rather the imposition of power can often produce a forceful reaction that can then redistribute that power. As Rose (1987, quoted in Worrall, 1990: 164) puts it,

...the power of expertise installs a new type of relation between authority and its subjects.

Thus far this conclusion has re-visited the main aims of the thesis and argued that women have been subjected to, and in turn have managed to cope with or resist, a range of feminising disciplinary regimes and discourses that have, to a great degree, remained constant from the past to the present. But it

would not be appropriate to conclude this thesis without some mention of the future.

Worrall (1990) has argued that although it is imperative for feminist writers to be constantly looking to uncover and deconstruct dominant structures, institutions and practices, it is also important not to become too 'obsessed with debunking' (1990: 164). Thus the dilemma Worrall identifies could, with regard to this thesis, be articulated like this. Is it at all possible (or even desirable) to construct 'solutions' to problems exposed by critical, theoretical studies such as this? Alternatively is it satisfactory to undertake such studies but then respond to those individuals who were the inspiration / subjects of the study that there is no 'solution' to the problems uncovered as there is no form of discourse or knowledge construction which would allow things to be different. Or indeed, there is no 'solution' as it was not the intention of the study to provide such 'answers'?

As mentioned previously it not the intention of this thesis to 'debunk' the use of hostels. But neither was it the intention to generalise its findings to all institutions nor to produce a policy-orientated conclusion. However, it was the objective to question the popular notion that hostels are unproblematic institutions which have traditionally been accepted as positive environments simply because they are 'not custodial'. In doing this, the thesis does indeed raise issues for the future of this form of institutionalisation.

One of the major findings of this study is that the methods of discipline employed within semi-penal institutions for women, and the discourses that underpin those methods, have changed only superficially over the last two centuries. Therefore, it could be assumed that if these processes continue to remain unchallenged, such feminising, 'normalising' strategies will continue to be perceived as 'appropriate' for women well into the twenty first century.

A recent report (Prison Reform Trust, 2000) highlights the dramatic increase in rates of women's imprisonment and makes recommendations with regard to dealing with this urgent problem. One way in which rates of imprisonment could be reduced, it is proposed, is through greater use of existing community penalties such as probation. In addition the report recommends that

... community penalties should be *refocused* so as to make them *more relevant* to women offenders (para 5.15. Emphasis added).

But no discussion follows regarding what makes community penalties (or indeed any sanctions) *more relevant* to women. This thesis has highlighted that 'relevant' regimes and practices can mean feminising and infantilising regimes and practices. As has been argued, such strategies are extremely problematic and simply perpetuate a whole range of stereotyped gender assumptions about what women 'do' and what women 'need'. They have traditionally been taken for granted and are rarely deconstructed and contextualised within a broader theoretical framework through which dominant explanations of women's behaviour can be demystified and exposed.

The report goes on to assert that forms of accommodation are required for those women offenders whose homes are, for various reasons, unhealthy and unsafe environments. It argues that

...accommodation is needed which is capable of imposing the necessary restrictions on liberty whilst offering *reintegrative and restorative* opportunities. Traditionally *hostels have provided this type of accommodation* (para 5.48. Emphasis added).

Once again, the presumption is that hostels for women provide an environment which is at once restrictive but also 'curative', uplifting and enriching.

As this thesis was being concluded, the probation service was dismantling its fifty-four local services. This move towards a national service will mean an increasing emphasis on consistency and standardisation with the introduction of accredited programmes for challenging offending behaviour (Home Office, 2001). It can be assumed that these shifts will eventually impact upon probation hostel practice and this may have significant implications for women offenders. First, nationalisation means a reduction in power and discretion at a local level. As this thesis has highlighted, the traditional autonomy of probation hostels, and in particular women's hostels, has led to unique regimes, based around expectations of 'appropriate' femininity. Thus, the move towards standardisation could have the potential to dismantle such idiosyncratic procedures. However, the emphasis on accreditation indicates that decisions will have to be taken regarding which practices or programmes are permissible or, indeed, 'appropriate'. Without further challenges to, and theoretical debates about, the existing feminising regimes that exist within Adelaide House, and possibly within other probation hostels for women, it is likely that the practices for dealing with 'deviant' women within semi-penal institutions will remain unaltered.

This thesis challenges the taken-for-granted perception that hostels for women are inherently beneficial and argues that whilst there is indeed a place for probation hostels in a future system of punishment and justice for women, these institutions must not be simply accepted as salutary, unproblematic environments.

Through a focus on the broader theoretical issues and on the long-term (as well as day-to-day) experiences and standpoints of the staff and residents, this thesis has provided an alternative understanding and conceptualisation of semi-penal institutions for women. As such it has gone some way towards dismantling the dominant liberal notion that the 'non-custodial' institution is a healthier and more progressive environment than the prison simply because it is *not* a prison. Striving to retain the liberal philosophy that traditionally

underpinned such institutions and resisting falling in line with the increasingly punitive, standardised philosophy of contemporary probation practice can, to some degree, be perceived as a genuine concern for women within hostels on the part of staff and management. However one of the problems with such 'liberal' regimes is that, as Chapter Seven highlights, they can serve to deny women many of the rights they should be able to take for granted. If women are to receive a form of justice that does not revolve around their adherence to, or deviation from, dominant gendered assumptions then attempts must be made to actively deconstruct (theoretically and practically), and make obsolete, the feminising regimes and discourses that reinforce institutions for women. With regard to semi-penal institutions, these methods of control and discipline have for two centuries been accepted as unproblematic. This thesis has attempted to redress the balance by challenging their role in reinforcing the subordination of women offenders.

Appendix 1

Interview Schedule for Residents ¹

Section A: Background details

1. What is your age?
2. Where were you born?
3. How would you describe your ethnic origin?
4. What is your marital status?
5. How would you describe your sexuality?
6. Have you any children? How old are they?
7. Have you studied since leaving school?
8. Have you any formal qualifications?
9. Are you working at the moment?
10. Did you work prior to coming to Adelaide House? What did you do?

Section B: Life Outside

1. Where did you grow up (ie. with parents, relatives, in residential care etc)?
2. Where did you live prior to coming to Adelaide House (own home, with parents or partner, homeless etc)?
3. If you have been in residential care would you like to describe your experience of it?
4. Did you receive help from your family / partner for any problems or worries you may have had (personal, financial etc)?
5. Do you receive help or support from these people now?
6. Are you receiving any benefits?
7. Can you describe the experience of claiming benefits?

Section C: Offending behaviour

1. What is your current sentence or are you here on bail?
2. What is the nature of your current offence or charge?

¹ Residents were reminded at the start of the interview that they could refuse to answer any of the questions and that complete anonymity and confidentiality would be assured.

3. Have you any previous offences? What are they?
4. How old were you when you were convicted of your first offence?
5. To what extent did money problems play a part in your offending?
6. Do you feel you had much choice about your criminal activity?
7. How much control do you feel you had / have over your criminal activity?
8. Is crime rewarding? Can you describe why you feel that?
9. Do you have any regrets about your criminal activity?

Section D: Drugs

1. Do you use drugs now? If so what drugs do you use?
2. Are you a registered user?
3. Have you received or are you receiving any help for your drug use?
4. Do you want any help for your drug use?
5. Have you ever been prescribed drugs by a medical doctor?
6. Have you ever felt you had a problem with prescription medication?
7. Do you see any relationship between your drug use and your offences?

Section E: Women and Crime

1. There are considerably less women who commit crime than men. Why do you think that is?
2. Do you think there is something different about male and female offenders? Different motives for example?
3. Do you think women who commit crime are rebelling or resisting traditional female roles?
4. Do you feel you were treated differently (better or worse) by the criminal justice system because you are a woman? If so, how?
5. Do you think you were treated differently (better or worse) because of your sexuality?
6. Do you think, from your own experience, that the courts are discriminatory? Who gets treated most harshly?
7. What about the police? How do they react to women offenders?

Section F: Experience of the Criminal Justice System

1. What was your first court appearance like? How did you feel?
2. Were you represented by a lawyer?
3. What about your last court appearance? How did you feel?
4. What support have you received from the probation service?
5. Have you ever received support from non-judicial agents like social workers or the local authority for example?
6. Do you think your probation officer, if you had one, gave you the help and support you required before and during your last court appearance?

Section G: Probation Service

1. Do you have a probation officer now?
2. How often do you see him / her?
3. Would you like to see him / her more often?
4. Do you think your probation officer really understands your situation and problems enough to be able to help you?
5. Is there anything you would like to add about the probation service?

Section H: Psychiatry

1. Have you ever received a sentence with a psychiatric order attached or received psychiatric treatment whilst in custody or on probation?
2. Can you explain the nature of this sentence or tell me why you think you received the treatment?
3. What medication were you prescribed?
4. Were the reasons for the sentence and / or prescription of medication fully explained to you?
5. Have you ever had any other contact with the psychiatric system?
6. Would you like to describe your feelings about and experiences of psychiatric treatment?

Section I: The Hostel

1. How long have you been at Adelaide House?
2. Would you like to describe the general routine of the hostel?

3. How much time do you spend in the hostel every day? Do you try to go out as much as you can or do you prefer to stay in?
4. What do you think of the hostel rules? Are there any you find difficult to keep to?
5. Are there any rules you strongly object to? Why?
6. Are there any 'unwritten' rules between the residents?
7. What do you think of 'sanctioning' as a punishment?
8. Do you think there are any tensions between the staff and residents? If so how do you deal with these tensions?
9. What role do the staff play here? How do you see them?
10. Is this the role they should play? Should they be more strict / lenient?
11. Were you given any choice about coming to Adelaide House?
12. What were the alternatives and were they offered?
13. What do you think is the main purpose of this hostel?
14. Has the hostel had any effect on you, positive or negative?
15. Has it helped you address any problems you had? Or helped you address your offending behaviour?
16. Have your problems increased in any way since coming here?
17. Had you been in prison prior to coming to Adelaide House?
18. How does this experience compare / differ to your experience of prison?
19. Where would you rather be now?
20. In general, what is your opinion about probation hostels? What purpose do they / should they serve?
21. Is there anything else you want to add about the hostel?

Section J: Victims of crime

1. Were you ever the victim of crime as a child?
2. What was the nature of that crime?
3. Would you like to talk about it?
4. Have you been the victim of crime as an adult?
5. What was the nature of this crime?
6. Would you like to talk about it?
7. Did you report these crimes against you? If so, to whom?

8. What was the response?
9. Do you feel you have been victimised in terms of your offending behaviour? For example through drugs or prostitution etc.
10. Is there anything else you wish to add about your experiences?

Section K: Children

1. Did you live with your child / children before you came to Adelaide House?
2. Where are they now?
3. Who helped you arrange things when you were sentenced?
4. How well are they being cared for in your view?
5. How often do you see / hear from / get news about your children?
6. What effect do you think being separated is having on you and your children?
7. Do you think you were treated any differently (better or worse) in court because you have children?
8. Do your children know where you are? If so, who told them?

Section L: The Future

1. How do you see your future when you leave here?
2. Has the hostel helped you plan / prepare for the future? If so how?
3. What do you think will be the major problems you will face when you leave?

Appendix 2

Interview Schedule for Staff¹

Section A: Background details

1. How old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. How would you describe your ethnic origin?
4. Have you any formal qualifications? If so, what?
5. Are you studying at the moment? If so, what?
6. Did you work in social work before coming to the hostel? In what capacity?
7. What other jobs have you had outside of social work?

Section B: Women and the criminal justice system

1. How would you describe the women in the hostel?
2. What do you think of the treatment of women by the criminal justice system?
3. Is it possible to 'categorise' women offenders?
4. What do you see as the major differences between male and female lawbreakers?
5. Do you think women respond differently to their involvement with the criminal justice system than men?
6. Have you noticed anything different in the way the criminal justice system responds to;
 - a. women of colour
 - b. lesbian women
 - c. single women
 - d. married women
 - e. mothers
 - f. divorced women

¹ Staff were reminded at the start of the interview that they could refuse to answer any of the questions and that complete anonymity and confidentiality would be assured.

7. What do you think are the main concerns of women offenders?

Section C: The Hostel

1. How long have you worked here?
2. Please describe the management of the hostel in terms of the probation service and Church of England input?
3. Who funds the hostel?
4. How much input does the Home Office have?
5. Please describe the process of referral for residents?
6. Do women have a choice about coming here?
7. What happens to probationers and bailees if they abscond or break rules?
8. What are the rights of residents in terms of the information kept about them here? Are they allowed access to any files kept on them?
9. Can you tell me about the daily routine of the hostel?

Section D: Role of probation hostels

1. What, in your opinion, is the major function or purpose of the hostel?
2. How well does the hostel fit in with probation service aims?
3. Is there any conflict between the criminal justice and social work roles of the institution?
4. What do you see as being the major differences between men's and women's hostels in terms of philosophy and discipline?
5. Do you find or believe that good social work is difficult in this environment? Why?
6. What do you see as the major obstacle to good probation work?
7. In the hostel environment, what constitutes good probation work? And how is 'success' measured?

Section E: Discipline in the hostel

1. What are the major forms of 'discipline' employed here?
2. Are there any problems with sanctioning as a form of discipline?
3. As far as you are aware, how do your methods of discipline compare or contrast to those employed in the men's probation hostels?

4. How do you manage tensions in the hostel?
5. How do you manage incidents like bullying or thefts in the hostel?

Section F: The hostel and the wider criminal justice system

1. Are there any problems with probation service provision for women?
2. Are there any changes in probation policy or practice you would like to see implemented in order to improve provision for women?
3. Why do you think women's hostels suffer from low occupancy rates?
4. How do probation officers view probation or probation hostels as an option for female offenders?
5. How have the changes recommended in the 1991 criminal justice act impacted upon hostels in general and this one in particular?
6. Have you noticed any change in the role of this hostel?

Section G: The future

1. What are the major problems or concerns of women when they leave Adelaide House?
2. What kind of help / support is made available to them before and after they leave?
3. Is this help sufficient?
4. Does Adelaide House prepare women for a 'positive', independent future?

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The following are the primary sources of material found in the attic of Adelaide House Bail and Probation Hostel. In addition to the sources listed below were numerous letters and memos (including letters of referral for residents, letters to and from the matron and the Management Committee and various form of correspondence with resident's families). These were usually found loose in other documents. As they are referenced fully in the body of the thesis they are not listed separately here but they are all property of the Church of England Council for Social Aid and the Adelaide House Management Committee.

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