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URBAN YOUTH CULTURES

Gender and Spatial Forms

JENNIFER PEARCE

Abstract

In this paper I argue for a localised detached youth service that works across the public and private domain. I refer to my research with young people whose social and educational activities occur within a one to two mile radius, within and on, well known, well trodden estates, shops, streets and parks. My work to date suggests that rigid divisions exist between the way that most young women and young men have access to and across inner city spaces: young women tend to frequent familiar 'private' indoor spaces such as their homes, friends homes and local shops while young men occupy 'public' outdoor and indoor spaces such as streets, estates, pubs and clubs. While I may have hoped that the gender divide demarcating boundaries around acceptable behaviour and movement for young men and women has been broken down, my research shows otherwise. Despite this, I argue that young women develop and employ certain unacknowledged, unrecognised skills and expertise which enable them to explore, negotiate and in some instances control specific spaces within inner city environments. I move through three stages. Firstly I expose gender as a determinate for inequalities in the treatment of young people within welfare and justice systems. Secondly I argue that a study of these inequalities must accommodate issues of space and safety for young people. I look at questions raised by a feminist geographical tradition which explores connections between gender, spatial forms and safety. Finally I connect the above to findings from my own research, drawing out implications for youth and social work practice with young women.

Myth and stereotype:
gender as a determinate behind inequalities in the treatment of young people.

It has long been argued that socially constructed 'differences' exist between the male and female domain. Gender specific discourses position 'masculine' and 'feminine' as self contained categories carrying their own fields of knowledge and expectation with them (Sydie 1986). Identifying this binary opposition of male against female, feminists have shown how 'gender' is a significant determinant behind the creation of knowledge (Harding 1986 pp 24-29). The following list illustrates how this opposition functions to create 'assumed' bodies of knowledge about young men and women.

YOUNG MEN	:	YOUNG WOMEN
Masculine	:	Feminine
Objective	:	Subjective
Cultured	:	Natural
Aggressive	:	Passive
Separated from feeling	:	Immersed in feeling
Occupying the Public domain	:	Occupying the Private domain
Credible on the street	:	Credible in the home
Creating territory	:	Creating home
Active sexual predator	:	Passive sexual object
Deviant: bad	:	Deviant: mad

We know that these stereotypes do not live up to the reality of many young people's lifestyles and activities. It is not a clear case of boy winners and girl losers. Boys do not always benefit from having to present the hard, tough image (Seidler, 1991) and girls are not necessarily passive victims (Walkerdine, 1990; McRobbie, 1991). Despite this, research into youth justice issues show how gender specific stereotypes affect many young people. For example, social work with young women has been shown to be notoriously anxiety provoking for many practitioners (Brown and Pearce, 1992; Pearce, 1995). Lesbian or heterosexual sexually active young women have had their sexual behaviour policed while lenient acceptance of the sexually active heterosexual young man prevails (Hudson, 1985; Lees, 1993; Griffin, 1993). Young women's moral and sexual behaviour is brought into judgement alongside offending behaviour, resulting in disproportionately higher sentences for the same offence than their male counterparts (NACRO, 1993).

> *...some commentators... suggest that girls' delinquency is currently defined or interpreted in a different way to boys' delinquency and in a way which leads into a network of children's homes, assessment centres, special schools, secure units and so on, rather than into the criminal justice system... But we know, too, that paternalistic concerns about girls' moral welfare have sometimes led to them being dealt with more severely than boys, in the sense that they are judged not only for what they have done in terms of criminal offences, but for who they are and how they behave in general (Gelsthorpe, 1989, p.12).*

I argue that a study of the prejudices and inequalities explored above must accommodate the differing ways that young people have access to and use their immediate environment. Focusing on the relevance of 'environment' and 'location', feminist geographers have asked us to address the way that gendered knowledge has arisen within a masculinist tradition. They look at the way in which a gendered knowledge becomes a situated knowledge, created and developed within the spatial forms occupied by men and women (Rose, 1993). My work has been informed by these debates in two ways. Firstly, through identifying how space and place has been interpreted to create knowledge of the public, outside world, to the exclusion of private, indoor environments (Rose, 1993). Secondly through suggesting that young people develop and acquire various skills through their interaction with environment (Katz, 1993). Questions emerge about the extent of our knowledge of urban youth cultures: has our research and practice fully accommodated young people's relationship with the private, indoor domain? Is there not room now for an analysis of indoor/private environments, of the way that young people develop through use of the home, friend's homes, shops and bedroom spaces?

Environmental knowledge: a masculinist tradition

Continuing the theme of gendered binary opposites, it is argued by feminist geographers that a masculinist rationality, the male self, has been endorsed over the passions and torment of irrational nature, the female other. Male truths create the norm, as maps impose their explanations on subjective and female locations. These maps chart the environment as if male inscriptions were defining the contours of the female body.

> While men claimed objectivity by denying their specificity and pretending to enact pure reason, women were understood to be incapable of transcending their position. The other of rational masculinity was feminised (Rose, 1993, p. 9)

Although the geographical tradition, alongside the sociological tradition and the study of youth cultures, has historically been dominated by men, not all men concur with conspiratorial attempts to dominate nature or women. Again we see that there are no clear winners or losers. Not all women recognise a need for, or desire a change in the map or mapping process. Patriarchal power is not monolithically stable. Male and female selves are changing, fractioned under the stress of difference. It is the humanist geographers who have made moves to linking the self with its location. They make a distinction between the significance of how people experience space and place. Space is open to scientifically rational measurements of location, while place is open to human interpretation and significance (Rose 1993 p. 43).

> *to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place (Relph, 1976, p. 1 in Rose, 1993).*

Asking if there has ever been a self defined 'place' for women, Rose argues that a humanist geography embraces the significance of place, but describes it as 'the other' 'the female' 'the home'. But such glamorisation of the home and the feminine overshadows the oppressive nature of spatial domains constructed to provide emotional release for men. Women who see the home as a site of oppression may have little sympathy with the claim that home provides the ultimate sense of place (Rose, 1993, p. 55).

Skill development and environmental factors: an integral relationship

The process of negotiating and defining identity is intricately linked to the adolescents' access to space and the creation of a 'place' of their own. Although this varies somewhat across the life course and across different cultural norms and expectations, Katz shows how girls and boys, and subsequently men and women, have differential access to space. For example, contrary to an expectation that girls living in an advanced industrial city in the USA may have more and freer access to spaces than girls living in rural Sudan, she shows that restrictions on children's movements in both locations were concerned primarily with access to girls' bodies.

> *While purdah is recognised as an explicit means of effecting this control, equally powerful codes - implicit and explicit - limit female access to and control over space in the heart of the advanced capitalist industrialized world as well (Katz, 1993, p. 103).*

The control over access to young women's bodies appears to originate from a need to protect them from danger; understood as sexual attack from strangers. Yet it is acknowledged within criminal statistics that it is young men who are most likely to be in danger from physical attack from strangers (Kirby, 1990; Barclay, 1993; Mooney, 1995). Recent research indicates that young men are most at danger of attack within the public, outdoor arena, while it is the private domain, occupied by friends and family that causes most danger for young and adult women (Mooney, 1995). Looking into the misconceptions about safety for young people, Katz distinguishes between unsafe and dangerous spaces, developing a three point argument. She claims that

1. *parents do not restrict their children's access to the outdoor to protect them from 'unsafe' environments as much as from 'dangerous ones';*
2. *childhood injuries from 'unsafe' environments exceed those from 'dangerous' ones in number and in frequency; and*
3. *girls are perceived to be at disproportionate risk from both (Katz, 1993, p. 104).*

The result of this is that boys have more access to outdoor spaces than girls, although they are more at risk from danger from the streets than their female counterparts; while girls have more access to indoor spaces than boys, although they are more at risk of danger within the home than their male counterparts. Although this line of argument is familiar territory for many youth and social workers, Katz more specifically asks us to consider the effects of the loss of environmental experience on young people, particularly young women. She argues that it is through the exploration of space that young people develop and acquire specific analytical skills. The development of autonomous and self-directed sequences of behaviour provides scope for developing analytic ability, the ability to picture space as `cognitive maps' and predict and analyze spatial ability. If young women are being denied access to the outdoor space, are they also denied access to the development of specific analytical and cognitive skills?

Researching the process: Making Maps and Charts

In my own research I explore these questions. Are young women restricted, or restricting themselves, from exploring and using outdoor spaces? Is there room for developing an analysis of the relevance of private indoor spaces to young people? Are young women losing out on the development of specific skills and expertise associated with plotting and charting the outdoor built environment?

This research work has been located in a large comprehensive school in the East End of London. My previous work with a team of researchers concentrated on bullying and violence amongst young people (Pitts, 1993). It concluded that bullying was not contained only within the school gates, but was invariably a part of a continuum between life outside and inside the school (Pearce, 1994). It was boys who were attacked most, perpetrators were identified as older than their victims and were moving in groups.

I was interested in exploring who had access to and use of the streets, and how young people negotiated their way across the boundaries of school, street and home. Following discussion with staff it was agreed that as a part of the personal and social development aspect of the national curriculum I would work throughout the school in the classroom context to explore where young people spend their time, why they go to specific places, what they do, and how they feel when they are there. I asked the students to draw maps of their local area, explaining that they should not be concerned about the `quality' of the map; it did not matter if the proportions were incorrect or if details were omitted. They were to be spontaneous, recording places that immediately came to mind. Once the maps were drawn, I then asked students to complete a chart, listing the places where they spend most time, explaining why they go there, who they meet and how they feel about being there. The students were asked to indicate their age, sex and racial origin. They were asked not to record their name on the map or chart so that their work remained anonymous. I have drawn results from the year 11 classes with a total of 43 students: 25 male and 18 female students aged 15 and 16 years old. While the focus of the work has been on gender, where possible I incorporate ethnicity as a determinate of young people's access to and use of space. Racial tension is high in the area, acted out between young people who fight and compete for dwindling resources within an arena of change and uncertainty. The school population has changed significantly over the last decade, reflecting demographic changes within the

East End since the demise of the London Docks. A residual population of white unskilled or semi-skilled workers unwilling or unable to leave for employment elsewhere remained in the area. Young people have had little access to the service industries that have developed within the urban regeneration schemes. By the 1990s the borough had the second highest level of youth unemployment in London and the South East (Pitts, 1995). At the time of the demise of the traditional dockland industry, an orchestrated influx of low earning Bengali piece-workers and refugees were housed on the estates (Pitts, 1995). The proportion of Bengali young people within the school rose from 18% in 1981 to 54% at present, meeting a corresponding drop in the proportion of English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish pupils from 62% in 1981 to 30% at present (Tower Hamlets, 1995). The rapid change within a poorly resourced and geographically isolated local area has provided the location for tensions and fears to be manifest through racism. The local schools manage the changes competently, noting overall harmony and cooperation within the school population (Tower Hamlets, 1995). However, as is the case with many inner city boroughs, young people's absences from school are high, with the borough coming seventh in a list of 109 maintained secondary schools recorded in the 1994 National Pupil Absence Tables (DFE, 1994). Local statistics show that non-attendance rates within the borough are higher for girls than for boys, with girls absences accounted for in the main because of sickness and family holiday (Tower Hamlets, 1994). My own observations of children on the streets during school time suggests that it is mainly white young people who truant and spend their time on the streets during the day. While the vast majority of young people attend school regularly (90% of boys and 88% of girls in Tower Hamlets during 1993), a significant minority do not (Tower Hamlets, 1994). My work with young women in the area suggests that a culture emerges for a small number of absconding students who interact between the school and surrounding streets. It is these young people who invariably know of and are involved with local disturbances, violence or bullying which, as argued earlier, moves across school boundaries. Alongside working with students on maps and charts within the school, I have been engaged in youth work with three 14 to 15 year old white young women who were truanting, needing extra support to remain at school. I agreed to work with them to make a video tape about their local area: what they do, where they go, who they see. The purpose was twofold: firstly to see if through extra support the young women could look at their difficult and challenging behaviour; and secondly to give me access to three young women who were operating outside the expected `gender specific' domain. These young women were known as bullies, having a reputation for intimidating and frightening both white and black students within and outside the school. They were often truanting, spending time on one local estate, and were known to spend time with boys who were linked into the violent `gang' culture of the local area. This work, along with the mapping project within the school was to explore the ways that young women and young men have access to spaces inside and outside the school.

Girls and boys come out to play: mobility and location

Before looking specifically at the details arising from the statistical information given below, it is important to note that most of the maps focused on a locality ranging between two or three streets. The vast majority of the maps focused on areas immediately surrounding their home, or between their home and the school. Those few maps that mentioned streets or localities outside of their immediate area

recorded them because relatives, usually grandparents, lived further afield. Many of the students who identified themselves as Vietnamese or Chinese recorded visits to the West End to spend time with relatives and friends. Otherwise there was little variation in movement of groups of children according to ethnicity. The school is located between major 'A' roads and one motorway, and is immediately surrounded by large housing estates where adult unemployment and levels of poverty are high. Young people develop a compact and detailed knowledge of a significantly small local geographical area. In defence of proposals for small and localised youth provision, this work confirms that young people are unlikely to be willing or able to travel to resources outside their immediate area. Cuts in youth service provision have often directly hit the detached youth work service and small localised youth club provision. If constructive work is to develop with marginalised and isolated communities it must accommodate the restrictions on geographical mobility experienced by young people who spend the majority of their time on one or two local estates or streets.

Observations from maps and charts

The figures below show the percentage of young people who identified specific places on their maps and charts. They are calculated according to how many young people mentioned the spaces and places named. Maps and charts record different information: maps identify spaces within their local area known to them, while charts list those places which have most significance as places to use.

Maps and charts: young people's knowledge and use of environment

		OWN HOME	FRIENDS HOME	RELATIVES HOME	SCHOOL	SHOPS
CHART	F	*44%*	*50%*	*22%*	*55%*	*44%*
	M	*20%*	*52%*	*16%*	*52%*	*12%*
MAP	F	*44%*	*50%*	*16%*	*33%*	*16%*
	M	*72%*	*56%*	*16%*	*56%*	*16%*
		PARK	**PUB**	**SPORT**	**YOUTHCLUB**	**MARKET**
CHART	F	*38%*	*0%*	*0%*	*11%*	*38%*
	M	*52%*	*16%*	*36%*	*76%*	*38%*
MAP	F	*38%*	*22%*	*22%*	*17%*	*33%*
	M	*76%*	*28%*	*28%*	*76%*	*20%*

From the information above it can be seen that young women tend to identify indoor spaces as of significance to them. They mention their homes, their relative's homes and shops on their maps and charts as significant, while boys record their home on the map but not, in such large numbers, on their chart. This is demonstrated by the following list which puts the places named by young men and women on their charts into a priority list.

Priority list: places noted on the charts to be of importance to young people

PLACES	YOUNG WOMEN	YOUNG MEN
School	55%	52%
Friends home	50%	52%
Own Home	44%	20%
Shops	44%	0%
Park	38%	52%
Relatives Home	22%	16%
Youth Club	11%	76%
Pub	0%	16%
Sport place	0%	36%

Outdoor spaces were identified more frequently by young men. This was more common for white and African or Caribbean young men who mentioned parks, youth facilities and sports areas as significant to them on their charts. Bengali young men were less likely to mention outdoor spaces as locations for recreational activities on their maps or charts.

The significant indoor space recorded by young people is their friends homes. Next to school, friends home is the most significant place for young women, being recorded on both maps and charts by young women irrespective of ethnicity. The friends home is also significant for young men, although for different reasons. While young women explain on their charts that they visit their friends to chat and meet other friends, boys noted that they meet to watch television, play computer games and collect mates ready to go out again. The importance of home, and more specifically of bedrooms to young women, is confirmed by the video project I am undertaking with the three young women mentioned above. The bedrooms become a 'place' for young women, a location within which plans are made, arguments are had and preparations for the outside world occur. As young women have access to very little money, they create a varied wardrobe by sharing and swapping clothes, make up and perfumes. These belongings move between the bedrooms which become a place for dressing up and preparing to go out. The irony for them is, in their words, that they are 'dressing up with nowhere to go'. As can be seen by the maps and charts, there are few other places to go to than into another bedroom or back to school. I have started to talk to these three young women about the importance school has to them, noting the significant impact temporary or permanent exclusion has on their social life. Two of the three have begun to attend an off site educational support unit. We will be looking at how this affects their social life and educational development in future work.

When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping

Young women go to shops to 'look and window shop' but also to see friends, to hang around and, in their words, to have somewhere safe to be. This has been confirmed by the three young women's video project. The local newsagent shop bears great importance to the these students, who will sit and chat with the shop keeper and shoppers for long periods of time. Although they will buy the occasional packet of crisps or chocolate bar their purchases are minimal. They stay in the shop as it provides a focus for social activity. Boys will record the local shops on their maps, but place less significance on their value as a 'place to be'.

And the rest go out to play

As we have seen, the indoor 'private' spaces are of significance to young women while the park, the place for sport and the pub are of significance to young men. HOWEVER, it was white young men in the main who identified 'pub' on their charts as a place to meet and talk. I identified the space for sport as it was clear from the maps and charts that despite the absence of a specific local resource for sport activities, young men find places to exercise - mainly to play football and to ride bikes. On some maps a football pitch is drawn, but in most cases it is an open space or a specific street identified as the location for playing games or riding bikes. There appears to be little comparable activity for young women, who fail to record 'outdoor' 'public' places such as the park or the youth club as significant to them on their charts.

For both young women and men, standard educational and health resources were of little significance: none of the young people mentioned libraries or museums on their maps or charts. While two young women noted the doctor on maps and charts, and one young man noted his church to be of importance to him, the remainder made no reference to other resources.

The above exercise confirms the gender specific delineation between the public and private domain for young people, the lack of mobility for young people beyond a certain limited radius, and the inventiveness of young women and men to use 'familiar' spaces to create a place for social activity. When I began this exercise I had hoped that the maps and charts might have shown some challenge to the gender divide which charts social activity for young women and young men along different routes of development. I had hoped for mobility and choice in this apparent post modern, post industrial society, where master narratives are broken down and opportunity is expected to transcend male and female, rich and poor divides. Instead I found little mobility for the majority of young people living in under resourced areas, with clear distinctions between access to specific spaces for young women and young men. This leaves renewed questions about young women's access to public spaces and youth resources. It returns us to familiar questions: how appropriate are services run within youth clubs to young women, how can the male domination of open spaces be worked with to enable young women to develop sport and recreational activities? It asks us to address the important need for an analysis of the domestic, indoor youth culture along with developing arguments for a gender aware detached youth service which can respond to youth across the public and private domain. Central to this are questions of safety and dangerousness. As argued earlier, it is young men who are most at risk of danger in the form of attack on the street while we know that it is young women who are most at risk from abuse and danger within the home (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Despite this, it is these very places that young men and women frequent. It is the skills employed by some young women to negotiate their way into the public, male dominated, domain that I want to touch on further.

Negotiating time and space: young women entering the public domain

Katz's work referred to above suggests that young people develop specific skills through their relationship with their environment. I want to finish by referring to one issue arising from my work with the young women's video project. Drawing from theoretical principles developed by some feminist researchers, I do not intend to make any generalised statements about all women's behaviour from my work with three young women. The acknowledgement of difference between women

raises complex questions on the validity of asserting one unified truth representing 'women's' experiences. I prefer to abandon a pursuit for one representative truth from my research but look instead for accommodating individual experience. This must not fall into untheorised narrative, but can be helpful in locating the centrality of individual experience in the construction of specific and situated knowledge (Probyn, 1993, p. 11; Haraway, 1991, p. 188).

Watching, waiting and winning

The three young women undertaking the video project could be argued to be exceptions to the gender specific rules suggested above. They spend time in their rooms, preparing and planning for excursions outdoors; but they do also spend large amounts of time on the street and on the local estate. They describe this as 'hanging around'. There is one particularly graphic image of this recorded on the video camera. Being pushed by me to give an explanation of 'hanging around', one of the young woman paced up and down on the same short space of pavement saying 'it's this, it's watching and waiting, nothing happens but it's just hanging around, waiting'. She later explains that 'somethings happen sometimes' in that they meet up with their boyfriends, who usually move around in groups, or other young people who live on the estate. When this does happen they take turns in going to respective boyfriends' flats. Two of the three young women will stay waiting in one of the alleyways while one goes off with a boyfriend. The two wait for her to return (often after ringing the boyfriends' doorbell a number of times). After reassembling, a different one of the three goes off with her boyfriend. The pattern continues until each has had individual time with their boyfriends. This way two young women stay together on the estate and they each get individual time with their respective boyfriends. A further component to this arrangement occurs when there are younger children 'hanging around' the estate. The three young women dislike younger children being around as they say that it is the younger ones who stir up trouble, provoking the older boys (their boyfriends) into gang fights and arguments. The young women devise activities for the younger children in attempts to keep them occupied and to stop them 'winding up' the youth on the estate. Through occupying the younger boys, the young women manage to secure more uninterrupted time with their boyfriends through the rota system explained above.

The tactics employed by the young women explained above show how they negotiate safe access into the local estate and individual access to their respective boyfriends. This is but one example of the way that these young women develop skills to allow them access to the outdoor, public domain. Through this it could be argued that not only are the young women developing analytical skills by exploring their local environment, but they are also developing negotiating, communicating skills which allow them safe access to outdoor space. While it is evident that such skills are stereotypically gender specific we can begin to see how they develop and are employed with a purpose. The purpose is to enable young women to move from the private into the public domain, to enable them to gain access to the male youth cultures and to provide them with opportunities to explore parts of their local area.

Conclusion

Returning to my original questions, my research to date suggests that young women do make less use of outdoor, public spaces. The findings from the maps and charts suggest that in order to understand the ways that young women develop

through their adolescence we must accommodate a perspective which incorporates their domestic arrangements; their use of the spaces within their homes and rooms; and their use of outdoor enclosed spaces such as shops. My second question asked about the skills acquired by young people through their access to specific spaces: the outdoor public and the indoor private domain. The maps and charts do suggest that young men develop skills associated with creating outdoor spaces for recreational use. With this it could be argued that they develop the sense of exploration and adventure within the outdoor environment. The majority of young women however have tended to concentrate on developing and using the indoor arena as accessible places. The video project with the three young women suggests that in order to gain access to the outdoor environment, young women use and develop skills which live up to and reinforce gender specific 'feminine' stereotypes. They involve negotiating and communicating skills, as young women organise between themselves and their boyfriends to ensure that no one young woman is on her own on the estate at any one time. They involve child minding skills, to ensure that younger children on the estate are occupied to prevent trouble breaking out. These skills are promoted not through altruistic intentions but as a means of self preservation. They are the foundations for skills required by women to maintain safe access to the outdoor world.

From my research to date I argue that tasks emerge: we need to look towards developing more local detached youth work which addresses the relevance that indoor 'private' spaces play for young women. We need to encourage and develop research which accommodates the relevance of space and place as gendered and racialised to explore the way that young people develop specific skills in relationship to their built environments. Overall we need to be prepared to work with young people who have been or who feel rejected by mainstream provisions, including the minority who experience difficulty remaining at school. Young people who use the street, estates and shops during the day can often become involved in a vicious cycle of creating fear and feeling frightened at the same time. Recognising the relevance of young people's use and abuse of space and place will inform issues of crime prevention and community safety.

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IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR YOU TO TALK:

Lesbian Identification in Feminist Theory and Youth Work Practice

JANET BATSLEER

This article is written from the standpoint of a practitioner tutor in the professional area of community and youth work. I also teach on a Women's Studies course and I (still) call myself a feminist: by which I mean that I am engaged in the development of analyses and practices which will contribute to the empowerment of all women. I also recognise the erasures and exclusions which the term feminist has carried historically. I am committed to feminist practice which is pluralist, self- critical,capable of allying with and participating in all sorts of movements against injustice and oppression. My experiences of teaching and tutoring have offered a meeting place for all sorts of conversations on the theme of sexuality. The range of registers in the conversation about sexuality is represented by the quotations which follow:

The univocity of sex, the internal coherence of gender and the binary framework of both sex and gender are considered throughout as regulatory fictions that consolidate and naturalize the convergent power regimes of masculine and heterosexist oppression.

The final chapter considers the very notion of the body not as a ready surface awaiting signification, but as a set of boundaries, individual and social, politically signified and maintained. No longer believable as an interior 'truth' of dispositions and identity, sex will be shown to be a performatively enacted signification (and hence not to be), one that released from its naturalised interiority and surface,can occasion the parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings (Butler, 1990).

I just want to be true to myself. (Young woman, Manchester Young Lesbian Group, 1993)

to make gender trouble, not through strategies that figure a utopian beyond, but through the mobilisation,subversive confusion and proliferation of precisely those categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as the foundational illusions of identity. (Butler, 1990)

I want to be treated as an ordinary everyday person. (Young Woman, Lesbian and Gay Youth Group)

I mean the term lesbian continuum to include a range - through each woman's life and throughout history - of woman identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support; if we can hear in it such associations as marriage resistance and the 'haggard' behaviour identified by Mary Daly we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of lesbianism, (Rich, 1987)

In recent teaching I have heard the assertion that 'sexuality is not an issue from a Black perspective'; a challenge to that statement on behalf of an 'inclusive' conception of Black community work practice; a white young woman who unexpectedly tells me that she is feeling embarassed to work on sexuality in the seminar group because I am old enough to be her mother; a woman questioning of the need for 'labels' about sexual identity and of the medical/psychological origins of those labels ('are you a lesbian? no! are you a heterosexual? no! are you bisexual? no! what are you then? I'm me!'); discussion by lesbian workers about acting as a positive and confident role model to younger women when experiencing serious personal levels of crisis/oppression; discussion by heterosexual and lesbian workers working with young women survivors of sexual abuse about appropriate support.

At the same time some recent feminist writing, particularly work by Judith Butler, is questioning the whole notion of identity and 'coming out' : they are no longer thought of as unquestionably positive and useful concepts. So I find myself involved in 'minding the gap' that is constantly being created by the apparent division between theory and practice, between non-academic work and academic theorisation. There is a wonderful old essay by Stanley Cohen called 'It's All Right for You to Talk: Political and Sociological Manifestos for Social Action.' In it he discusses the impact of Marxist theory and deviancy theory on social work theory and finishes with his own suggestions for a radical social work programme. The first and last suggestion will give some of the flavour and explain my pleasure:

1. *Tell those sociologists who urge you to be theoretically more sophisticated to get off your backs.(They are the same sociologists who want to turn their own subject into matters of epistemology and philosophy).*

2. *In practice and in theory, stay 'unfinished'. Don't be ashamed of working for short term humanitarian or libertarian goals, but always keep in mind the long term political prospects.*

3. *Most important: don't sell out your clients' interests for the sake of ideological purity or theoretical neatness. But keep telling sociologists and political theorists 'its all right for you to talk'. (Cohen, 1975)*

In work on the subject of sexuality, there is a danger again that theoretical analyses will leave practitioners with a sense of desperation and powerlessness. The inevitable contradictoriness, compromise and even complicity of community work practice is highlighted by theory, but theory then offers little guidance for better practice. Of course this is largely to do with sources of funding for the work. A good deal of the most explicit work on sexuality is currently being funded via Health Authorities, in relation to the aims of the Health of the Nation. The clear focuses for the work are H.I.V. and A.I.D.S. Education, prevention of teenage pregnancies, and reduction of the teenage suicide rate. Adolescent female sexuality is conceived of in social policy as a zone of hazard, danger and risk to which work programmes must respond.

It is easy, from almost any feminist perspective, to identify that these social policy initiatives are not woman-centred and are largely concerned with the control of young women and the redirection of thinking about sexuality. Despite the 'gay plague' ideologising that has surrounded H.I.V. and A.I.D.S., there is little explicit

attention to the needs of young lesbians and the targetting of work is towards the promotion of 'safe' yet heterosexually defined sexual practice by young women. The climate of social policy in which this work has developed is one in which 'back to basics' means not promoting homosexuality and clearly claiming that two parents of two sexes are better than single mothers.

On the other hand, projects which operate at a great distance from Government social policy objectives (and are often therefore poor, underfunded, struggling to set their own terms) may be caught up with the more 'avant-garde' aspects of theory. Positive 'queer' identity, not defined by male and female polarities, not 'normalised' by heterosexist psychosexual definitions of identity is clearly culturally and politically exhilarating. Listening to young women shouting 'we're here, we're queer and we're not going shopping' on a demonstration is wonderful. Pride is wonderful. And yet these same young women community workers who are taking such pride in themselves, and are able to operate from within lesbian and gay community projects, have to decide how to work with young people who still ask for equality with those they perceive as privileged, rather than celebrate their outsider status. Young people involved with the lesbian and gay youth groups ask for 'the same opportunities as other young people'. And there are still other gay young people within the same context whose sense of exclusion and 'being on the edge' leads not to celebration of difference but to despair, attempted suicide and self-harm.

Much theory, including some feminist theory seems capable of offering a critique, of providing the 'negative' moment of analysis and distancing. It can be exciting when it unsettles and makes practitioners and tutors see the world differently. But without a practical engagement, this empowering potential is lost. Of course this is an overgeneralised statement, and there are clearly examples of focussed empirical work such as Tamsin Wilton's work on representation and Celia Kitzinger's work on the social construction of sexual identities, particularly lesbian identities, which students have gained access to and found useful (Kitzinger,1987; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1993; Wilton, 1992).

There is also an emerging literature on Black British lesbian experience which is offering important points of connection. (Mason-John and Khambatta,1993, Mason-John, 1995). The problem is more with work at such a high level of abstraction which argues often for attention to the concrete,complex and historically particular in mystifying and thoroughly Olympian tones. In community and youth work training, we are aiming all the time to enable a self-reflective practice which is theoretically engaged but not thereby disabled from community action. What would it mean for cultural theory to return the compliment and to become attentive to practices outside the domain of academic work? I am convinced that feminist theory must be capable of challenge by feminist practice, should be suspicious of its own authority and actively seek out an engagement with practices outside the academic institution. There has been much discussion of 'groundedness', particularity, perspectives and standpoints within feminist epistemology recently. I hope this will contribute to some grounding.

The rest of this article gives an account of how lesbian sexuality has become an issue in feminist community work practice and explains how I have drawn on more theoretical writing in the context of training.

There is now almost twenty years of practice to draw on in the field of feminist work with girls and young women. I will simply give an indication of the range of work that can be considered. It is important to acknowledge from the beginning the contribution of lesbian workers to this movement, and also the problem that this practice has very often tended to be 'white- defined.' In each of the examples I am citing here, I have particular projects and workers in mind, and permission to draw on their work has been given. However, because I do not wish to contribute to further vulnerability in the position of some workers, I am not always very explicit about sources. Public information about lesbian youth groups can be obtained from the Lesbian and Gay Youth Group, based at Manchester Gay Centre and about feminist work with girls from the National Youth Agency or from Youth Clubs U.K.

Lesbian Identification in the context of Young Women's Centres and Young Women's Groups

In the last twenty years, separate social and political education work with girls and young women has drawn strongly on feminist commitments to autonomy, and arguments for the positive need for separate space for young women, in order to break away from the pattern of dependency on and subordination to men. The process of establishing separate space has been different from area to area, and to some extent has depended on the strength and organisation of women's groups in particular Local Authorities. In some authorities, for example in Wigan and in Sheffield, separate provision was argued for at a policy level, senior managers were appointed with responsibility for work with women and girls and separate Young Women's Centres with their own full time workers were established.[1] The pattern in most cities has probably been for clubs and centres to continue as mixed centres, but with separate work occurring within the authority in the form of special projects.

Finally, at the level of individual projects, there has been a recognition of the potential of single sex work for girls and the development of resources for education about sexuality. (Clarity Collective, 1985; Aggleton et al, 1990). The principles of such informal social and political education work are well established and involve patterns of experiential learning which build on and validate young women's own starting point. Work often involves sharing cultural activities, residentials and 'non-traditional' opportunities such as adventure education. In this context, female friendships and relationships are highly valued. It is much less difficult for lesbian identities, desires and relationships to be acknowledged, and to some extent, young women's groups have provided a 'safe space' for the development of young lesbian groups (Green, 1986). The extent to which this has been possible has, of course, largely depended on the openness of workers to such possibilities.

Within the practice of separate girls work, there has been a serious block to development created by the pressure of homophobia and fear of lesbian identification. (Nava, 1992). Girls have been frightened about participating in and identifying with girls groups because of the 'labelling' by boys that is still likely to occur. 'Lezzies' is a powerful term in the armoury of control of women. Workers, both lesbian and heterosexual, may have been frightened by such possible attacks and have then defended separate work with girls by either a) explicitly denying and refusing any potential accusations of lesbianism or b) developing an informal cur-

riculum that steers the work away from questions of sexuality and/or promotes heterosexuality through a clear emphasis on contraception, 'looking after yourself' (make-up and jewellery workshops) and discussions about relationships which focus on relationships with boys. 'Out' lesbian workers have played an important role in counteracting these processes, but they have too often carried all the pressure and I will return to this later in the article.

This particular method of policing girls work is very much a method that applies to white communities. Asian (and particularly Muslim) women community workers have pointed out that the patterns of relationship between men and women in their communities make it perfectly acceptable and expected for women to work together as women and that therefore homophobia has a different form. The space and possibility for bonding among women appears to be greater than in white communities, but is contained within a 'female sphere'. Professional workers from all communities and backgrounds tend then to assume that sexuality is not an issue within community work with Asian women. This experience of invisibility and of being defined by others is an aspect of racism which prevents women's groups making connections with one another. Again, the role of 'out' lesbians from different Black communities has been very important in challenging these patterns, as has the creative work of poets and film makers (for example, Grewal, 1988; Parmar 1991). Since the mid-eighties, however, there has been a movement towards the establishment of young lesbian groups, often in the context of city centres and voluntary sector projects, often with links with gay men.[2] Some lesbian workers have defined their priorities for work very clearly, and have been able to achieve a certain level of support from projects and employers.

Lesbian identification
in the context of violent and exploitative heterosexual relationships.

In many community work settings, lesbian identification has to be understood in the context of heterosexual violence and exploitation. Support to young women questioning their sexuality is shaped by the encounter with violence linked to poverty. During a student placement in a youth club on one of Manchester's outer estates, two feminist workers attempted successfully to establish autonomous girls work. In the process of establishing the work, they encountered a high level of physical aggression between the young women, who saw one another as competition for the scarce resources the boys/men of the neighbourhood had to offer. Some of the young women saw sex as a trade very explicitly (discussions revolve around the question of 'how much you can get out of him' and 'how little you can get away with giving'). Such discussions about relationships with boys occur in the recognition that being actively sexual towards a number of different men means risking a beating up, either from the men or from another woman who regards a particular man as her territory. In this context, lesbian identification is very risky. In response to explicit lesbian identification, young people and many workers will draw on stereotypes which make lesbians seem predatory and extremely threatening: predatory because that is how independent female sexuality of any kind is experienced, threatening because it represents an attack on the economics of sex in such settings. Positive community building among women is a long process and one in which the choice to be 'out' about lesbian identity can be experienced as physically dangerous. In the case I mention above, one of the workers was indeed threatened on suspicion of being a lesbian, even though neither of the workers had made any explicit identification of themselves to the group.

The explicit use of trading sex and of prostitution as a means of income by poor women changes the context of work about female sexuality in a number of ways. For some women, lesbian relationships can clearly offer a positive alternative to 'the game'; for others, lesbian relationships become defined in the same brutal terms as heterosexual sex. The issue of lesbian identification in the context of heterosexual violence also occurs frequently in the context of projects working explicitly with survivors of rape, sexual abuse and incest. There is a continuing discussion among lesbian identified and heterosexually identified women workers about their own support needs in the context of receiving 'disclosures' about violence from young women. This also involves workers responding to young women who are in the process of clarifying their own sexuality, and who may feel that they are identifying as lesbian because of their experience of abuse in heterosexual relationships. In this context, the need for the worker to act as a positive role model is very strong. One of the most creative aspects of this process is that the opportunity of acting publicly and professionally from a strong feminist or lesbian identity is often very strengthening for workers. Women workers' own experience of oppression and crisis becomes a professional resource. Where feminist practice allows some of this mutuality in a relationship of professional support to be named and explored it can contribute to the creation of new social possibilities and solidarities and break out of a philanthropic model.

Lesbian identification in the context of health promotion work

The context of 'violence' and 'risk' which is the framework for 'peer education' and street based sexual health projects is probably now the dominant social policy framework within which community workers are encountering questions of sexuality[3] and discussion of sexuality is linked to explicit discussion of sexual practice. Peer group learning programmes clearly originate in a matrix of informal social education, the provision of medical services often via the Family Planning Services associated with the health authority, and the Health of the Nation Targets to reduce the rate of conception of under 16s by 50% for the year 2000 and reduce the incidence of gonorrhea by 20% in 1995. This has led to the development of specialist, time limited projects, geared to meet these targets. The work of such projects ranges from the very practical distribution of condoms and 'clean works' on street health projects to the development of 'sexuality residentials' for young women, in which explicit discussion of sexual practice has become possible. Here workers are drawing on an established practice of informal sex education and support to young women in which it is not unusual for explorations of lesbian identity to follow from positive opportunities to discuss and understand female sexuality. Young People's Advice Centres, established by community projects in conjunction with the Family Planning Association, have sometimes identified that the counselling and advice needs of young lesbians and gay men are not being met and been able to develop support services or forge links with existing voluntary sector advice provision such as Lesbian Link. It is certainly in this context that discussions about sexuality, ethics and relationships are very highly developed. (Nathan, undated) The threat of A.I.D.S. within the gay community has led to an intensification of a life-affirming counterculture in which the ethics of personal relationships are highly articulated, and this links to earlier feminist and lesbian attempts to create new ethics of friendship and community, from which the straight world has much to learn.

Lesbian Identification in the context of political movements
Finally it is important to acknowledge that in some settings there has been a commitment to attack homophobia and promote homosexual choice. This has led to involvement from a community base in some of the political actions associated with defending and extending the civil rights of lesbians and gay men: projects which support the right to mother, the right to foster and adopt, not to be sacked because you are a lesbian, the right to show affection in public. Of course, these are nearly always projects which have a strong lesbian presence in the staff team and are already involved in some of the work mentioned above.

The role of the youth and community worker.
The short description of the field of work I have given indicates a little of the potential for understanding sexualities in social contexts represented by the work of feminist youth and community workers. Workers have been active in creating and constructing opportunities for new understandings of female sexuality to develop. The social construction of sexuality occurs in part perhaps because of such practices and organisation. This is often the result of a conscious political and personal survival strategy on the part of lesbian and/or feminist workers. Professional interventions contribute to the development of social trends. As the nature of the political context has changed in the last twenty years, new strategies have been developed and old ones jettisoned or perhaps 'put on hold'. For example, the presence of confident and 'out' lesbian workers made an enormous difference to the development of feminist youth work in the early eighties, but the political climate has made the choices about being 'out at work', when you are involved with work with young people, much more difficult (Evans, 1990). Therefore it has become necessary to develop other strategies for offering lesbian friendly environments that do not depend on the personal strength of individual lesbians. At the same time the gains of the earlier moment of 'gay pride' are still evident. It is possible for young people legitimately to claim a non-heterosexual identity and to seek support. The role of heterosexually identified feminists in actively supporting the creation of lesbian friendly projects is clear. At the same time the difficulties of a 'closeted' existence are still very evident. Young women exploring their sexuality do need contact with older women who are able to be positive and open about their own lesbian identity.

The impact of social policy about H.I.V. and A.I.D.S. has been very significant and has challenged a feminist practice about sexuality that seemed to make lesbian identity synonymous with female friendship. It carries the possibility of 'lesbians talking safer sex...' and women talking from a woman-centred perspective about our bodies, desires and needs. It also seems to facilitate the re-making of alliances with gay men.

What sort of feminist theory has supported this work? Where is the feminist theory that can assist this work to develop? In training youth and community workers I have drawn heavily on the work of Adrienne Rich and on the writings of Audre Lorde (Rich, 1987, Lorde, 1984). These writers have consistently met with a positive response from groups of women from different class and community backgrounds, who have either identified clearly as lesbian or heterosexual or as bisexual or else who identify as confused (possibly the commonest position of the lot and one I have found myself in quite frequently as a married woman who has the usual wild dreams

and mistaken identities). The positive response comes partly in recognition of the poetic power of the writing. But notions of 'lesbian continuum' and of the female erotic as a locus of power to challenge oppression enable differences between women to be downplayed, sexuality explored and spoken about in terms outside those of medical textbooks or tampax adverts. Rich's essay on 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' enables the discussion of the problem of 'labels' for sexuality which derive from sexology to occur. Both Rich and Lorde provide a language with which to speak across difference: particulary across the charged power differences which can mark relationships between lesbian identified and heterosexually identified women. And yet at the same time there is tendency to minimise the impact of difference. It may be too easy for white heterosexually identified feminists to read Lorde on the erotic as power out of the context of the rest of her writings on racism and homophobia; too easy to celebrate our erotic power and minimise the power of conflicts among women based on access to privilege.

Rich and Lorde are sometimes read as relying on an 'essentialist' account of womanhood, assuming some underlying unity of female experience. This claim to unity, it is argued, prevents the acknowledgement of difference and contributes to a denial of questions of power between and among different groups of women. Although I believe it is difficult to sustain this view, particularly of Lorde's work, it is certainly how both Adrienne Rich and Audre Lorde have been read at times. Perhaps this year extracts from Judith Butler's work will be on my handouts to enable the exploration of different non-identities, different performative acts, whether lesbian, queer, straight fag hag, stone butch, fem or feminist. Why am I so hesitant to explore this potentially liberating theory, which proposes an end to the binary oppositions of compulsory heterosexuality and sidelines the concept of identity (after all it sounds like just the thing for a confused old socialist- feminist)?

The answer lies in part in a recognition of the way homophobic discourses are still active in work with young women. Binary divisions - between normal and 'queer', straight and lesbian - have a power that can not be unmade by theory alone. 'Compulsory heterosexuality' does involve the production of subject positions for young women in which fists and knives can name at least as powerfully as other performative acts of speech. Resistance to these forms of compulsion involves forming alliances and alliances are supported by the recognition, however non- essentialist, of commonality and shared identity as well as of the play of difference.

Secondly, the concept of identity operates very positively within the context of feminist community work practice. 'Coming out', 'being true to yourself', 'not living a lie', being able to find out who you are, exploring your choices, knowing what you want from relationships, all these personal and ethical questions do depend on a sense of an 'inner world' on a sense of 'being' as well as 'doing' that does not have to be coterminous with the Cartesian ego in order to be real. Some of the accounts of identity which derive from theories of narrative, from discussions of biography and autobiography and perhaps of some forms of psychoanalysis seem to have more to offer to feminist practice than deconstructionist approaches. Theories which enable conversations in a number of different registers and discourses are going to be necessary if feminist theory and feminist practice are to be brought closer together. The discussions by the authors of the WRAP Papers of the alienation from embodiment which occurs for many young

women in the negotiations of heterosexuality are a very positive example of the kind of theorising which assists the development of practice, linking a reading of Foucault with an understanding of the talking about sex which girls have access to (Thomson and Scott, 1991; Holland et al, 1994).

Lastly, given the nature of funding for the kind of community work practice I have described, it would be helpful to see further feminist discussion of the practice of resistance to the definitions of female sexuality by social policy, the law and the market. Didi Herman's work 'Rights of Passage' is helpful in analysing the attempt to clarify the issue of civil rights for lesbians and gay men (Herman, 1994). But much theoretical work seems skilled at the moment of analysis of regulation, less helpful in offering a focus for the understanding of resistances.

Training courses and women's studies courses provide a forum for the kinds of conversations indicated by this article to take place. The paper by Stanley Cohen which sparked these thoughts was based on an assumption that the conversation might continue. I hope there is no objection to my pirating his conclusions of nearly twenty years ago and turning them to another use as a cryptic manifesto for a feminist conversation on sexuality:

1. *Refuse the ideology of 'risk' and 'danger' but be aware of 'risks' and 'dangers' Your constituency is not just feminist academics, or even feminist activists and feminist projects, but also young women who prostitute themselves, young women in care, suicidal girls. You don't have to be sentimental about these people, but feminism can't write them off.*

2. *Take the insights that derive from theory seriously...think concretely about how to enable discussions about identity that do not assume it is fixed and immutable or polarised, about how to enable the presence of coercion in the development of heterosexuality to be understood, and the relationship of lesbian identification to the compulsions of heterosexuality to be explored.*

3. *Stay in your agency or organisation, but do not let it seduce you. Take every opportunity to unmask its pretensions and euphemisms. Use its resources for young women, for young lesbians. Make sure you always are able to speak at least two languages about sexuality and that you know which ones you like to speak the most. And keep telling feminist sociologists and political and cultural theorists 'it's all right for you to talk.'*

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Notes

1. A national survey of this work was conducted for the DES in 1986 and is available from the National Youth Agency.
2. For example in Manchester, three city centre projects now have young lesbian or young lesbian and gay groups linked to their work. These are all voluntary sector projects, and they openly publicise the work of the groups. In contrast, attempts to establish young lesbian and gay groups in Lancashire and in Norfolk were stopped by frightened Local Authority officers.

3. A discussion with a current course group (10 Youth and Community workers working in a variety of settings) revealed HIV/AIDS education as the only possible current way in to work on sexuality.

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ACCOUNTS OF DISPLACEMENT

Irish migrant women in London

BREDA GRAY

The Irish community is by far the largest ethnic group by migration in London when second generation is included, comprising 9.6 percent of the total and 12.2 percent of the white population (Action Group for Irish Youth, 1995).

In this article, I provide a brief profile of young Irish women's migration to London and present some accounts of displacement as expressed by Irish women who have taken part in my study of Irish women, emigration and national identity. As my research is still in its early stages these themes emerge from only an initial analysis of some of the women's accounts. Cherry Smyth (1995, p.221) describes her emigration in terms of 'a struggle against displacement' which is a recurring theme amongst the Irish women migrants to London taking part in my study. Before exploring this theme further, I want to sketch an outline picture of Irish emigration in the 1980s and provide a brief profile of recent Irish women migrants in London.

The 1980s saw a return to high levels of emigration from Ireland due to economic recession. Most emigrants in the 1980s migrated to Britain (mainly London) where there was more chance of employment and career development. Bronwen Walter's analysis of the 1991 Census Action Group for Irish Youth (AGIY) suggests that the number of young Irish people in London increased sharply in the 1980s and this is particularly so in the case of young Irish women (Action Group for Irish Youth, 1995; Roots and Realities, 1993). There was an 81 percent increase in Irish-born women between the ages of 15-24 in London between 1981 and 1991 (Roots and Realities, 1993)

> *Irish born women are clustered on the west side of Inner London and adjoining boroughs. Growth since 1981 was greatest in Outer London Boroughs, notably Harrow, Waltham Forest, Enfield and Hounslow (Action Group for Irish Youth, 1995).*

While some Irish emigrants in the 1980s and 1990s leave Ireland[1] with a high level of education and with plans for career advancement[2] (Mary Corcoran, 1994 calls this group 'eirepreneurs'!), many leave without qualifications or plans for their future lives outside of Ireland. Jim Mac Laughlin's 1994 survey[3] of Irish families and emigrants in 1989, suggests that emigration from Ireland today, as in the past, 'is a survival strategy which allows poor families in particular to shed their surplus sons and daughters' (1994, p.10). He also found that many emigrants are leaving at a very young age suggesting a lack of preparedness for living in a new culture in the absences of family and friendship networks. Large numbers of emigrants are emigrating before finishing secondary school education (Mac Laughlin, 1994, p.10). Mac Laughlin suggests that

> *for many Irish young adults the teenage years are years of considerable psychological stress, augmented by the threat or reality of emigration. Forty percent of emigrants to Britain in this survey left Ireland before they were 20 years old, and two-thirds had left before they were 22 years old (1994, p.11).*

Bronwen Walter's analysis of the 1991 Census, suggests that the Irish experience disadvantage in the areas of housing, unemployment and health. These issues have also been identified in many previous studies and surveys (London Irish Women's Centre, 1993; Walter, 1989; Connor, 1987, Kowarzik, 1984). Bronwen Walter (1989, p.94) suggests that an 'immediate crisis facing young Irish-born women is homelessness'.

> *The full extent of this problem remains concealed by informal arrangements made within the Irish community leading to overcrowding and stress (Walter, 1989, p.94).*

The need for ethnic monitoring is being called for by all Irish welfare agencies in London and, in 1994, the Commission for Racial Equality funded a research project to establish whether discrimination towards the Irish in Britain exists. This initiative received a mixed reaction in the media 'from disbelief in *The Sun* through to attacks in the *Sunday Times* (Irish edition)' (Hickman and Walter, 1995, p. 6).

Despite economic restructuring and representations of Irish emigrants to Britain in the 1980s/90s as taking up a more diverse range of jobs than in the past, Mac Laughlin's 1989 survey results suggest that 40 percent of men emigrants worked in construction. Just under 50 percent of women emigrants in Mac Laughlin's survey worked in lower middle-class jobs 'like secretarial work, nursing, teaching and banking' (1994, p.11). As Mac Laughlin points out, while this work profile might suggest that Irish women do better than Irish men migrants in the labour market, when it comes to wage levels, men involved in the construction industry earn more. Although the men may be financially better off, the women's work positions offer more security of tenure, holiday pay and other important conditions of employment (Mac Laughlin, 1994). Bronwen Walter points to the clustering of Irish migrant women in 'low status and poorly rewarded jobs'.

> *A very close resemblance between the work patterns of the Irish-born and Afro-Caribbean women suggests that certain groups of migrants shoulder a disproportionate share of traditional female work in London (1989, p.93).*

Evidence from the 1991 Census suggests that unemployment for Irish-born men is higher, at 17.1 percent, than for the rest of the white population. The figure for women, at 8.1 percent, is below that of most other ethnic groups, although, like other white women, Irish women are strongly represented in part-time work (Action Group for Irish Youth, 1995). 'Unemployment totals for Irish women include only those entitled to register and greatly understate the actual numbers' (Action Group for Irish Youth, 1995).

Having sketched a picture of Irish emigration to England in the 1980s and 1990s and some examples of how the experience of emigration is gendered, I now want to look behind the statistics to some of the people that these figures include. I am currently researching emigration and Irish women's relationships to their national identity, in other words their sense of being Irish. Part of my study is based on group discussions with Irish women in London about what it means to be an Irish woman and how being Irish is affected by migration to London.

Negotiating Irishness in London

Because it is usually women who deal with schools, health centres, social services and other services in Britain, women are frequently exposed to everyday attitudes to the Irish (McAdam, 1994). Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter (1995) suggest that

> *Through their productive and reproductive roles Irish women have always had wider contacts beyond the 'community' than have Irish men (Lennon, 1988, p.16). This has exposed women directly to racism at a personal level, but helped conceal them as a group (Hickman and Walter, 1995, p.14).*

Marie McAdam (1994) points out that the assumption is often made that Irish women assimilate more easily into British society. Many of the women taking part in my study see themselves as adapting to their new environment better than Irish men but the level of work and skill that goes into their everyday negotiation of their Irishness remains invisible. They represent themselves as more capable and adaptable than Irish men, for example Mary[4] has the following to say *'You know we survive, we find work and develop ourselves and make the best of it, the men aren't always as good at that...'*. Yet, this sense of adaptability often disguises the difficult negotiations involved in 'adapting'. All of the women express a consciousness of being Irish which is accentuated by living in England. In one group discussion the work that women have to do to maintain a sense of Irishness in London is discussed.

(Mary)

> *...You think about being Irish. Your roots are very strongly Irish. You get very emotional about your patriot home when you see them on the television playing sports and stuff like that. I actually feel more Irish away from home, than I felt in Ireland. I wasn't aware of feeling Irish when I was at home - I was just there, you don't have to think about it. But anything to do with being Irish... I find in this country you've got to go for it more. You've got to sort it out yourself, even simple things like if you go to mass on a Sunday, you've got to find a church, there's nobody that knows... If you need a priest you've got to find a priest, in Ireland there's always one looking over your shoulder! I find that very difficult, very different if you want to go for something you've got to go and do it yourself...At home...there's so many back-up networks you don't even think about it, somebody knows somebody, everybody knows somebody, you fall into place with things, but you don't seem to find them over here.... It's very much isolated. The English over here, I don't know half my neighbours, I haven't spoken to half my neighbours in the two years that I've lived over here.*

(Sue)

> *The English are like that too, they don't know each other. They don't ...At home everybody knows their next door neighbours or somebody down the road...*

(Mary)

> *That's what I'm saying, that it's a different lifestyle....*

Although Irish women see themselves as adapting and getting on with life in England, they also speak of the many efforts that they have to make in order to maintain their Irish identities whether through the Catholic church or cultural activities. The cultural back-up networks are missing and they are forced to think

more about which aspects of their Irish identity they want to maintain. Their sense of difference (from English people) is accentuated at points of crisis in life. Mary, later in the discussion, speaks of one time in particular when she felt she was Irish in England rather than Irish in Ireland and highlights the sense of displacement that living in England brings about for her.

> *I must say one of the times just recently I've had an experience where I've felt very, very Irish in England, and it wasn't a nice experience at all... my brother died in Ireland in October and it was the first real tragedy since I moved over here and I didn't like coming back. I went home on my own because it was an emergency situation so my husband or my children weren't with me. I came back on my own and I came back into a situation where I work where I live and there's sixteen staff in the pub where I am and I came back on a Thursday and by Monday nobody had even said to me I was sorry to here about your brother. These are people I work with and live with, customers, everything. That absolutely made me feel more isolated than I have in the eight years that I've lived in England. There is no concern, there's no natural understanding of the closeness of a family life I find in this country and that to me I hate, I really hate and I will never get used to it. They can't see the support, there's no support network within families here....*

For Mary, her Irishness is very much connected with her family, the support of family members and family rituals around death, birth and marriages. Her perceptions of English life and English people is in relation to values of family closeness and community which she associates with Ireland and Irishness. She expresses a sense of displacement that she 'will never get used to'. Instead, her life in England involves the process of adapting while, at times, being acutely aware of how her life might be different if she lived in Ireland.

Women's work: maintaining connections between Ireland and England.

Another theme emerging in the above quote from Mary, and one that comes up in many of the group discussions, is that of returning to Ireland to keep in touch or for family events. Many of the women who are married or in relationships (even when with Irish partners) find that they frequently travel to Ireland alone to visit family. Because they live outside of Ireland another layer of their everyday life in England is taken up with keeping in touch with family and friends in Ireland. Although geographically separated from Ireland, emotional ties and responsibilities are not severed by distance. These aspects of young Irish women's lives in London are often invisible to the outside observer.

Connolly et al, (1995) reinforce the significance of the work of keeping in touch when they suggest in their discussion of Irish migration to Britain in the 1950s and 1980s, that '[wo]men have...played a critical role in these migrations and in the maintenance of connexions between the two societies' (1995, p.3). This maintenance of connexions is important to the survival of both societies and of Irish families which have recently been described as 'transnational households' (Mac Laughlin, 1994). It often involves Irish women in complex and emotional processes of translation as one culture comes into contact with the other. For example, Fionnula describes being distanced from family in times of crisis which is complicated by having to explain and justify family commitments in Ireland and Irish cultural practices within an English work situation.

If I had found the same opportunities in Ireland that I found here, I think I would have been happier in the long run, because the practicalities that I have encountered in the last few years. with my mother's failing health, my brothers, who have young children and their marriages are split up, I can see where I could have been of assistance and I'm not around, and you know, when you have a crisis in your family as I've had, and you're a long way away, well, you're a long way away, but you're not there. And you've got to tell people in your work here that you've got to go away, and they're not quite as understanding as they would be in an Irish situation...cos they don't understand our position.

Fionnula wonders about how her life might have been different had she stayed in Ireland and suggests that migration is unsettling and often means living with feeling displaced. It also involves having to explain yourself to people who 'don't understand'. She knows that she is 'not a long way away' but has to accept that she cannot be 'there' for family members and friends in the same way as she would if she lived in Ireland. Other women describe the effects of 'not being there' in terms of hearing of a parent's illness after the event or missing seeing your sisters and brothers growing up. One way to solve this sense of loss is to return to Ireland regularly. However, for many migrant women their financial positions prevents such frequent contact. For example, Nora in one group discussion pointed out that *'the telephone call home takes a lot out of your weekly money, with a child and everything, I often think I can't really afford to ring'*. Keeping in touch involves time, emotional and financial resources and can be a stressful as well as enriching aspect of Irish migrant women's lives.

Irishness - an invisible/silenced identity

Hickman and Walter (1995) suggest that the Irish, as an ethnic group in Britain are invisible. Irish ethnic difference is masked, according to Hickman and Walter, by the ways in which

'colour' has become a marker of national belonging and being of the same 'colour' can be equated with 'same nation' implying 'no problem' of discrimination (1995, p.8).

Maggie, in one group discussion, spoke of the responses she gets when she draws attention to her Irish identity and to anti-Irish racism. She speaks of her life in London as

(Maggie)

...a struggle to survive and that takes up most of your time... you know, if you talk about anti-Irish racism people look at you as if you had two heads as if what's the problem, you're white, you speak English, they don't understand there's a huge cultural difference and I don't think I understood that there was a cultural difference till I came to live here and

(Researcher)

a cultural difference between.

(Maggie)

Between English people, like you know, English/British people and Irish people. And my English friends sort of say to me Oh you're, oh, you do go on a bit about the fact that you're Irish and I don't notice, but possibly I do. But I only do it now because I'm living in England if I was still at home it wouldn't be an issue....

Because Irishness is taken for granted in Ireland the need to question what it means and to define it in her own terms was not necessary for Maggie. Her consciousness of her Irish identity is heightened by living in England. Yet, she finds that any attention she draws to her Irishness in London is seen as too much and she is silenced or challenged. This process of silencing makes her doubt herself and whether she is taking her Irish identity too seriously. By pointing to the stereotypes of Irishness of discrimination, Maggie challenges perceptions of Irishness and attempts to define herself, and her Irishness in her own terms. Stereotypes generalise and suggest that all members of particular groups are the same. Stereotypes of Irish people deny individuality and different ways of being Irish.

Irishness is not a homogenous identity whether in Ireland or in London. Later in the discussion, Anne points out the many differences amongst Irish people. She worked for a while in an Irish welfare agency and this highlighted how her life and her sense of Irishness differed from many of the Irish people she met there.

(Anne)

> *and that was where ...I discovered huge cultural differences in so far as, eh, the through flow of people from there [Ireland] were people like I wouldn't have even come into contact with at home. You know your nice secure middle class, father head master and all that, and meeting people some of the people coming over, that you'd read about. You know, literally, literally, one pound fifty in their pockets and they'd come over here with that amount of money. But and then, you know, once you get over the shock of that the braveness and foolhardiness, whatever way you look at it, ...life is just very different and that struck me that their turn of phrase was different from mine even you know. As an east coast person and meeting people from much more south say, ...I notice differences more so between myself and themselves, you know that sort of emigrant coming over, but then likewise you can identity clearly differences between ourselves as Irish people and English people. English society if you like in terms of like language as well can be one thing, you know the way we speak...but I say about, as you say about the Irish pubs, and being in the Irish centre as well, brought it home and it was something that I actually found I backed off from, because again I didn't do any of that at home so I certainly wasn't going to start doing it here you know.*

Anne wants to differentiate herself and her middle-class Irish identity from some of those using Irish welfare services in London who have different backgrounds from her. As well as class differences, she also points to differences amongst Irish people from different regions within Ireland. She highlights some of the many differences in how Irish women perceive their Irish identity. For most, the freedom to express their personal sense of Irishness openly is important. Others try to fit in by separating their Irish identity from their work identity, for example, Fionnula suggests

> *I had no family and no friends here when I came and my objective was to get myself as Anglicised as possible as quickly as possible for economic reasons as much as anything. So I don't have many Irish friends even now only a few who happened to come over anyway.*

Fionnula felt that if she was to do well at work, she had better play down her Irish identity. She sees London as offering her the opportunity to meet different people

and is not keen to be part of an Irish community. As a white middle-class Irish woman, perhaps her access to a cosmopolitan lifestyle in London is greater than for many other Irish migrant women. Fionnula and Anne could possibly be seen as falling within the parameters of Mary Corcoran's category of 'eirepreneurs' who 'are tied to professional networks rather than immigrant networks and are as a result much less ethnically bounded in terms of their social interaction' (1994, p.6). Those encountering housing, health and employment problems are more likely to be defined by official institutions as Irish and their needs and entitlements defined accordingly. Many such agencies have little or no knowledge of the demands, expectations or experiences that young Irish women encounter following migration to London. This lack of sensitivity to the complexities of their experiences is reinforced by their relative invisibility. While Irish migrant women in London have to adapt to living in England, different groups of Irish women have access to different resources in living their Irish identities and varying experiences of displacement in an English context.

Conclusion

I hope, in this article to have fleshed out some of the numerical data discussed at the beginning with some of the more subjective experiences of Irish migrant women in London. The experience of migration is a significant one involving varying degrees of physical and emotional displacement and the ongoing work of negotiating gender and ethnic identities.

If young Irish women are to overcome the high levels of housing, employment and health problems that they encounter following migration to London, then the achievement of visibility and recognition is just one of the necessary steps towards gaining appropriate support services. However, Bronwen Walter later suggests that 'to a greater extent than is true for Irish men, Irish women's needs are submerged within those of the white majority of UK descent' (1989, p.23). As more Irish migrant women speak about their experiences, differences and commonalties will become more evident.

The London Irish Women Centre Report, *Roots and Realities* (1993) suggests that 'the Irish community' in London has, since the mid 1970s and early 1980s become more vocal and 'politicised'. Irish groups began to address issues publicly and to challenge

> *the old strategy of post war survival - 'keeping your head down, your mouth shut and going about your business without rocking the boat' (1993, p.6).*

As Irish women become more publicly vocal in Britain, perhaps their experiences of displacement which are reinforced by anti-Irish racism might be more openly acknowledged and addressed.

Breda Gray, *Lancaster University.*

Notes

1 As my research focuses on the Republic of Ireland, most of the discussion in this paper relates to the Republic.

2 Just under 30 percent of emigrants to Britain surveyed by Jim Mac Laughlin (1994) had third-level qualifications. Thirty-six percent of university graduates emigrated in 1988 (Corcoran, 1994).

3 Jim Mac Laughlin's survey was carried out in rural and urban areas throughout the west and south of Ireland between February and June of 1989. He targeted 6,900 families and 2,200 emigrants.

4 The names used are pseudonyms as many of the women in the group discussions wanted to remain anonymous.

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YOUNG PEOPLE, ALCOHOL AND SEX:

Taking Advantage

CATHERINE DONOVAN

In this paper I discuss some of the perceptions young women and young men hold about the ways in which alcohol affects the sexual behaviour of women and the implications this might have for working with young people on issues to do with alcohol, sex and especially consent. The paper draws on some of the findings from a focus group study of young people in the North East of England which examined what young people thought the effects of alcohol are on their behaviour, especially 'risky' behaviour, and particularly 'risky' sexual behaviour. All of the young people held the view, which is reflected in the literature, that women are more likely to have sex if they have drunk alcohol. This study suggested that young women and young men draw different conclusions from this shared belief. The young men believed that when young women are drunk they become sexually available; when young women are drunk they are indiscriminate in their sexual availability; and that issues of consent are different when a woman is drunk. Young women believe that when they are drunk they are more likely to have sex when they want sex; they might be targeted by men who want to have sex; they may come under pressure to have sex they do not want or would not have had if they had been sober. The paper concludes that work needs to be done with young women and men to challenge their beliefs about the effects of alcohol on women together with their notions of rape and consent.

Introduction

Everybody 'knows' that alcohol disinhibits sexual behaviour (Leigh, 1990; Rhodes and Stimpson, 1994). However, this 'common knowledge' has also been articulated in a gender specific way because of the beliefs about the different ways women and men express their sexuality. Women are believed to have passive sexualities and indeed, are often expected to exercise what Leigh (1990) calls negative control over sexual behaviour: men attempt to engage in sex with women while the latter attempt to set limits on sexual behaviour and control its timing (Wight, 1993). The effect of alcohol on women therefore is believed to disinhibit their usual sexual passivity and socially expected resistance to sex. Women under the influence of alcohol are believed to be sexually promiscuous (Leigh, 1990), at risk of being taken advantage of by men (Plant and Plant, 1992) and lose their 'resistance' to engaging in sex (Abrams and Wilson, 1979). What I will be concerned with here is the ways in which the young heterosexual people perceived the effects of alcohol on women's sexual behaviour, and how young men and women draw different conclusions based on their perceptions.

The existence of a causal relationship between alcohol and sexual behaviour has not been shown (Leigh, 1990). Several studies have indicated that whilst subjective reports associate raised sexual arousal with the belief that alcohol has been imbibed, objective measures of physiological changes show diminished sexual arousal as a result of alcohol intake (in Leigh, 1990; Wilson and Lawson, 1976; Ridlon, 1988). Harvey and Beckman (1986) found that women's retrospective perception of the influence of alcohol on sexual desire and behaviour was contrary to their actual behaviour. As Leigh (1990) says:

It may be that drinking does (subjectively, and for cognitive rather than physiological reasons) increase sexual desire, but not the ability to act on those feelings. (Leigh, 1990: 136)

Very little research has been conducted on the relationship between alcohol and sex in women (Leigh, 1990), but most studies have led to the conclusion that it is culturally engendered expectations rather than actual experience that have the most influence on people's beliefs and 'common knowledge' about the links between alcohol and sex, and alcohol and women's sexual behaviour (Brown et al, 1980; Harvey and Beckman, 1986; Flannigan et al, 1990).

Method

Over five months in 1994, 12 groups of young people were recruited by a market research recruiter, to take part in a focus group study examining the relationship between sexual behaviour and alcohol and to shed light on the relationship between alcohol and risky sex. The study did not ask young people to talk about their own behaviour or experiences but their perceptions. The focus groups were kept internally homogeneous for key variables: age, sex, sexual orientation, race, social class and experience of alcohol. This paper only refers to the data from the 10 heterosexual groups. All the groups were tape recorded with permission and took between 45 and 60 minutes. In the following section where excerpts from the focus groups are reproduced, YW means young woman, YM means young man and Q means the researcher.

Results

YW1: *I think in a lot of cases where one night stands are concerned, the woman is far too drunk, you know, they wouldn't normally do this and they're far too drunk to know what's going on, so they basically don't have the capability to say 'shall we use a condom' cause nine times out of ten, I think the lads know exactly what they're doing, exactly what they want, they don't have to be totally mortal to have sex, it's the woman who's normally like mortal. I think generally speaking that's the way it is.*

Q: *what do you think of that - do you agree with that?*

general agreement

YW2: *there's a lot of them take advantage I think*

YW1: *they know what they want before they go out and ...*

YW3: *they're out to get it*

YW1: *... Oh definitely, they...*

YW2: *and if they see a girl who's really drunk, they think 'of yeah, here we go, I'm in here'*

YW4: *they go straight for her*

agreement

This excerpt comes from the group of 18-19 year old, white, working class (w/c) women. In the first young woman's opening remarks she says something about the

way women, alcohol and sex are perceived - men don't have to be 'mortal' (very drunk) to have sex but the woman usually does. She also implies that when a woman is mortal she is unable to say what she wants. Somebody else introduces the ideas that men will 'take advantage' of women when women are drunk. What exactly does this mean? These young women also seem to believe that the link between alcohol, women and sex are so close that men will head 'straight for' a woman if she's drunk. In almost every group at least one person talked about the way in which women could be 'taken advantage' of by men when they (women but not necessarily the men) were drunk. For example, the following exchange took place in the 18-19 year old, white, middle class (m/c) women's group said:

YW: *A lot of times, lads, boys take advantage of you as well when you're drunk. They can see that you're drunk and they can take you home and things like that and take advantage of you and you don't know what you're doing.*

someone disagrees (discussion)

Q: *so in general you don't think lads take advantage?*

disagreement

YW: *I think if they were sober and you were drunk I don't think they would*

agreement

YW: *some would*

YW: *they aren't going to say no though, they're not going to reject it*

YW: *exactly*

agreement

YW: *it is easier for them as well if you are drunk. So they think 'Oh I may as well have a go'*

agreement

Here, although there is some disagreement about whether or not women are also responsible for what happens and whether it's all men or just some, there is still agreement that when women are drunk they can become sexual targets for men - and that they become easier targets than when they are sober.

A lot of the older women in the study said that drinking helped them feel less inhibited, that they felt more able to relax and socialise, to dance and chat up boys and chat on with boys. They also said that they were more likely to have sex when they had been drinking. I asked the 18-19 year old white m/c women why they thought that happened:

YW: *because the situation comes up more often, I think, well more easily. Because you have the confidence ...*

YW2: *It's all confidence isn't it?*

agreement

YW1: *... Inhibitions go when you are drunk, you don't care about the consequences*

The groups of 18-19 year old women talked about there being less need to drink once you were in a relationship so drinking before sex for relaxing and losing inhibitions were associated with first time sex or one-off sex. They also realised that their judgement became clouded when they had been drinking. One woman in the 18-19 year old w/c white group put it very clearly when she said: 'You never go to bed with a pig but you've woken up with a few'. However, it is important to recognise the difference between feeling more relaxed and sexually disinhibited and actually deciding to or having sex. The young women believed that young men think women are more likely to have sex when they are drunk. They talked about men either picking out women who are drunk or deliberately plying women with drink to make them drunk and therefore more likely to have sex. Most of the young men also agreed that women could be 'made' to have sex if they were drunk enough and that getting women drunk was a recognised strategy for getting sex. The 18-19 year old, white, w/c group of men said:

YM1: *Well it gives them [women] less will to resist doesn't it?*

agreement

YM2: *well they're less likely to say no if they've had a drink than if they haven't*

Q: *and are you less likely to say no as well?*

YM2: *it would depend how bad they were*

laughter

YM2: *I don't think I'd refuse anyway...*

laughter

YM2: *...depend who it was, you know, but eh, I don't think it would bother me*

YM3: *some lads and blokes like, them, them just tap a lass just to get her drunk, them stay sober and get her drunk so they can get their wicked way with her*

Q: *do you think that happens among people your age?*

YM3: *I don't know*

YM2: *people definitely appreciate the qualities of alcohol on women and I think they do use it to get their way with women definitely*

agreement

This group of young men talked with consensus about the way they believe alcohol effects women's sexual availability and the ways in which some men might use that knowledge to get the sex they want - regardless of who the woman is. There is also the underlying issue of consent that is revealed in this excerpt. One reference to consent is concealed in the comment about the belief that alcohol gives women less will to resist, another in the comment about the belief that a man can get his 'wicked way' with a drunk woman; and a third is confirmation of the second that men can get their way with women who are drunk. Even the 16- 17 year old young men - who were highly unlikely to be talking about their own experiences - believed that when they were drunk, women could be taken advantage of by unscrupulous men.

An important question to be addressed is what 'being taken advantage of' means. Several of the young women used the same way of talking about this as the young men in the last excerpt, that is, that women can lose the will to resist sex when they are drunk. The 16-17 year old white w/c young women said:

In what way can people take advantage of you?

YW1: *When a lass is drunk a lad takes advantage of her more because they think they can get away with anything and ...*

YW2: *most lads do [try] at the end of it ...*

YW3: *But then again they could pressurise you for sex and keep on saying well 'can I, can I', then somebody could just give in to them.*

Note the contrast here with the comments of 18-19 year olds above when they were talking about having sex that they wanted when they were drunk. What is also interesting is that even among the Black young women's group, all of whom were Muslims and only one of whom said that she had ever tried alcohol, there were the same beliefs about the possibility of women being taken advantage of if they were under the influence of alcohol. In the literature, studies on the effects of alcohol on sexual behaviour strongly suggest that it is *expectations* that affect people's beliefs about the links between alcohol and sex rather than their actual experience of the effects of alcohol. I think this study indicated the strength of those expectations given that even in the group of Black young women, the majority of whom had never had alcohol or any sexual experience, and in other groups where it was clear that sexual experience was limited, the ideas about the links between alcohol and sexual behaviour were as strong as they were in groups where individuals spoke with reference to their own experience of sex and alcohol. The group of Black young women like the group of young Black men and some other groups illustrated how the line between being taken advantage of and being raped can be very blurred:

YW1: *I've heard of some cases where ehm, drinking leads to rape sometimes*

general agreement

YW1: *I'm not sure. There's violence and there's the sexual urge as well so I don't see why there shouldn't be...*

YW2: *because they take advantage of people who are drunk, like, rapists of women who are drunk because what they might not remember it the next day or something, I'm not sure.*

At the moment when alcohol is expected to live up to its reputation and facilitate a sexual encounter, the issue of consent is crucial. In the focus groups consent was apparently differently perceived by young women and young men. The following excerpts illustrate the extreme differences in perception between the young women and men. The first excerpt comes from the young 16-17 year old, m/c white women after the group had been talking about ways of protecting themselves after a night of drinking. One of the strategies that emerged was that of not going back to a man's house alone with him. The first young woman says:

YW1: *Plus going back if you don't know them...*

YW2: *could be a rapist*

YW1: *...ehm they could like pressure you when you don't want to do nowt...*

YW2: *and then like, if you took it to court it would be your own fault because they would say you went back to the house sort of thing so you'd have nothing, it would be the alcohol that caused it but you wouldn't get no say in the matter.*

YW1: *...Like if there's you and the lad in the house and you're drunk and he's pressuring you he's going to get his own way in the end 'cause like, there's nay way you can stand up to someone if it's like in their house and everything*

the following excerpt was from the 16-17 year old young white m/c men:

YM1: *...there's also the chance of like the woman could wake up right and she, they were next to a man, and although she's been drunk she might think she's been raped or you know, because she didn't want to have sex but she was so drunk that she'd lost the will to say no...*

YM2: *that has happened*

agreement

YM1: *...exactly and she's like claimed that she's been raped and although the man probably didn't rape her that puts him in trouble and then causes trouble for both of them, you know what I mean, they're both going to feel absolutely terrible.*

The perceptions of the young women are clearly that they know, whether they are drunk or not, when or whether they would like sex. Nonetheless they also recognise the possibility that when they are drunk they could be put under pressure to have sex that they would not have had or wanted if they had been sober. In the main the young women called this being 'taken advantage of'. However, some of the young women and young men also understood that taking advantage and rape are not very far away from each other although they talked about this cautiously and made a distinction between this scenario which would involve a 'rapist' and other scenarios in which potentially any man they might meet could take advantage of them. The young men in the main did not talk of rape. However, in this excerpt it becomes clear that these young men were aware that what *they* believe to be legitimate pressure to have sex under the influence of alcohol could be misconstrued as rape by a woman who did not want to have sex but had 'lost the will to say no' as a result of the alcohol.

Discussion

This study provides some insight into some of the perceptions of young women and men about the effect of alcohol on women's sexual behaviour. The young people gave limited information about how they actually behave when they combine alcohol with actual or potential sexual behaviour. However, the beliefs about sex, women, men and alcohol were pretty constant across all groups regardless of age, gender, race, social class or experience of alcohol. This study has highlighted how both young women and young men share the same belief about the effect of alcohol on women but the conclusions drawn as a result of this belief are dependent on gender. Both young women and men believe that women are more likely to feel relaxed and sexually disinhibited when they are drunk. For young women, the consequences of holding this belief are that:

- they are more likely to have sex with somebody they want to have sex with
- they might be targeted by men if they are drunk or could be 'made' drunk in order to have sex
- that if they are drunk they are likely to come under pressure to have, and possibly lose the will to resist, sex

In contrast, the young men concluded that :

- women become sexually available when they are drunk
- that women under the influence of alcohol are indiscriminate - they will have sex with anybody
- that issues of consent are completely different when women are drunk ie. if a woman loses the will to resist (or stops saying no) she is saying yes and that this is more likely to happen the drunker she gets.

This study suggests that 'taking advantage' might be a euphemism for persuading or coercing somebody to have sex against their will because they are drunk. Losing the will to resist or being unable to keep on saying no can apparently be reinterpreted as consent by some men. Clearly there are implications for working with young people around alcohol, sexual behaviour, consent and sexual health issues. Drawing from the results of this study I have compiled a list of questions or issues that might be raised by those who work with young women and men in order to facilitate discussions and challenge 'common knowledge' about alcohol, sexual behaviour - including safer sex- consent and sexual health:

- talk about the differences in beliefs of young women and men about how alcohol affects women
- explore what 'taking advantage' means
- talk about what rape means
- explore and challenge beliefs about consent: eg if you stop saying 'no' this doesn't mean 'yes'; and 'losing the will to resist' is not consent
- explore protective strategies with young women. Some of the young women in the focus groups talked about how they protect themselves by staying together as a gang, looking after the drunkest person and making sure they get home alright, not going back to the man's house alone and so on.
- challenge young men's beliefs about women when drunk: they are not automatically sexually available; and they are not indiscriminate about who they want sex with.

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FEMINISM IN WORK WITH GIRLS AND WOMEN

JEAN SPENCE

Context

The research which informed this article focuses specifically upon white women community education workers in the North East of England who are involved in work with girls and women. In undertaking the research I was influenced by a previous piece of work undertaken in collaboration with Muriel Sawbridge and published as 'The Male Agenda in Youth and Community Work' (Sawbridge and Spence, 1990). There we had been concerned to find out how women youth and community workers in general experienced their work as women. We argued that our research demonstrated that female workers were perpetually 'wrong-footed' by the masculine environment in which they practised. We found that those we interviewed were 'recruited by men, are generally managed by men and work with men. Male perceptions of the work dominate all aspects of their lives...' (p. viii) Some of the significant issues which emerged were the unwillingness of women workers to become involved in formal management because of the masculinism of community education management styles, the prevalence of sexual harassment and the extent of female anxiety in some clearly unsafe working environments. There is evidence from other research that the gender inequalities of community education organisations are not unique. Similar systems of the maintenance and reproduction of masculine power operate in a wide diversity of employing organisations in this country. (Cockburn, 1991; Hearn et al, 1989).

In choosing to focus in upon those who specifically work with girls and women, my expectation was that most of these women would have some commitment to changing the gender balance of power in community education organisations. I was concerned to discover whether or not this was true and if so locate the methods and strategies such women use when engaging with masculinity at work.

It seemed reasonable to assume that involvement in work with girls and women implied a working philosophy which was, whether implicitly or explicitly, to some extent influenced by feminist ideas. If this was true, then the women involved would include a political perspective in their work and have developed some methods for dealing with masculine power. Feminist thinking was clearly a central motivating force in the generation of work with girls and women in the 1970s (Carpenter and Young, 1985; Spence, 1990) and that history has not yet been forgotten. However, what I could not assume, and what this project to some extent set out to discover, was that feminist ideas and politics continued to play a central role in the work.

I considered it to be problematic that after 20 years of an apparent 'feminist' presence in youth and community education work and in the face of much positive and exciting work with girls and women around gender issues (Nava, 1984, Carpenter and Young, 1985), community education organisations continue to operate with structures, methods and procedures which leave masculine agendas intact and dominant. (Sawbridge and Spence, 1990). Why had the work which women undertook from an avowedly feminist perspective been so successful in providing increased access for girls and women and apparently so unsuccessful in creating structural change? The questions which I was asking centred around two main issues.

Firstly, I wondered about the current state of feminism in the work and what it now means to women workers. Thinking about feminism in the current climate is not as easy as it used to be in the day when everybody was striving for and believed in the possibility of 'sisterhood' (Spender, 1985). Questions of difference and inequality between women are now acknowledged to be as important as the similarities (Davis, 1982; Barrett, 1987) and the women's movement can no longer be said to exist in any recognisable unified form. The fragmentation of feminism has affected the development of work with girls and women in a very real way, with splits and divisions occurring as often as creative work around issues such as racism and heterosexism. (Parmar, 1985; Field, 1985; Cuffy, 1987; Nava, 1992). My initial questions, were therefore about how this has impacted upon the ability of women workers to organise and work with the political questions raised by feminist thinking.

I deliberately refrained from debating the complexities of feminism in this research. Feminist thinking is still evolving and incorporates numerous political positions and identities within it (e.g. Collins, 1990; Gunew, 1990). To enter this arena would have been a diversion from the practice issues confronting women workers. My interest was in whether or not any notion of feminism informed their work. In this sense, I restricted the definition of feminism to its most general formulation. I use the term collectively to seek equality for women in a society characterised by gender inequality. Where the meanings adhering to the term are more precise than this, I hope that will be clear from the text.

The second issue which I considered it important to acknowledge in my initial thinking was one relating to community education organisations themselves. There was a primary question about the relationship of women workers to their employing organisations. How do women workers engage with the organisations which are the context of their professional lives? A secondary, but perhaps more immediate question concerned the current situation of community education funding and policy making. Savage cuts in budgets, the reorganisation and rationalisation of services, targeted finance and increasingly management-led services (Jeffs and Smith, 1990, 1994; Bloxham, 1993; Hanbury, 1994) do not provide a secure environment for the development of ideas or practices which might challenge the prevailing power structure. How could women hope to organise as feminists in such an environment? What strategies had they adopted for survival?

Of the above two issues, the question of feminism in community education work with girls and women became increasingly important as I analysed the data. Although I shall allude to the organisational issues where relevant, this article seeks particularly to outline some of the issues and dilemmas provoked by the feminist meanings in community educational practice with girls and women.

The Research

The following analysis is drawn mainly from data collected through in-depth interviews with 21 women in the North East of England. Of the women interviewed, 16 were currently actively involved in face to face community or youth work as full or part time workers. Two had only very recently left their jobs and still considered themselves to be involved in work with girls and women. Two were involved as community education managers. One had been actively involved in the work as it was beginning in the North East in the late 1970s but had no current involvement. The women were to some extent

self-selecting. A number responded to a request for volunteers from a Women Workers Group which meets monthly. Others were asked to participate as I came upon them through my work. The project was time limited and I simply interviewed as many women as I could between January and March 1993.

This method of recruiting interviewees was fairly arbitrary and as random as I could manage in the circumstances. However, it is inevitably skewed to some degree to the women who fall within the range of my own professional field. It does not represent the whole range of possibilities in work with girls and women. There are no Black women in the sample. Only one of the women identified herself as a lesbian and disability did not seem to be a personal issue for any of the women involved. This imbalance probably to some extent reflects bias in my professional network but that in itself is significant in relation to the real situation in the field in the North East. It is suggestive not only of the fact that women worker's networks are divided but also implies the invisibility and marginalisation of different groups of women in the community education profession in this region at least.

The women interviewed represented past and current experience of work with girls and women in Sunderland, North and South Tyneside, Durham, Newcastle, Northumberland and Gateshead. Some of the women had also had experience outside the region. They had between them worked voluntarily, part time, full time and as managers and trainers in both the voluntary and statutory sectors, but the majority of experience was within the statutory sector.

Each interview lasted about two hours covering a range of questions about experiences, opinions and attitudes towards work with girls and women, feminism and work organisations and policy. The women who participated talked openly and freely and the interview schedule, though structured, was designed to enable the interviewees to pursue their own thoughts and analysis of some of the issues raised. There is a wealth of data in the interviews and I have extracted some of the comments made by the women as illustrations for the points I wish to make. Many of the women's statements almost speak for themselves in terms of the issues and dilemmas which face them in their professional lives.

Workers as Feminists

Every one of the women interviewed acknowledged the general influence of feminism in work with girls and women. Seventeen identified themselves unequivocally as feminists. Three acknowledged themselves to be feminist but with qualification. One refused feminist as a personal identity, but with qualification. Personal feminism is clearly identified with professional feminism and the women did not make clear distinctions between their personal and professional selves in this respect.

> *It's central to what I do...My mam used to introduce me as a feminist.*
>
> *You can't talk about one without the other...feminism is girls' and women's work.*
>
> *I came to it from my experience as a woman and how you have to fight. So I came at it for personal reasons.*

However, being a feminist is not straightforward for women workers. Whilst feminism is tied up with both their personal and their professional identities and whilst

they experience feminism as a positive motivating and creative force in their work, they are at the same time constantly assailed by negative stereotyping around the image of feminism.

To be accused, (accused being the operative word), of being a feminist is experienced negatively and the concept of feminism is strewn with anxiety and discomfort.

> *I always used to have this problem about describing myself as a feminist because of the images in my mind...I still have to think about it to be comfortable because it's had such a negative name attached to it.*

> *It's given me problems to do with people's understanding of feminism and how feminism's been blamed for things. The main one is that people have an idea that feminism's about women having power over men. ...My understanding is about women having power and control over their own lives.... I don't mind being called a feminist. But what becomes difficult is constantly trying to justify that position against illogical arguments. And that doesn't just come from men.*

Being keenly aware that their work is precarious at the best of times and that they are operating within agendas which have been set elsewhere by a masculine establishment, women workers are very self conscious about the potential impact of acknowledging the influence of feminism in their work. They do not want to marginalise themselves or the work they do with girls and women any more than is currently the case, they are anxious not to threaten hard won gains and they are concerned not to frighten off the girls and women with whom they wish to work. Accordingly, they adopt one of two stances in relation to feminism. Either they stop using the term altogether because 'it's not useful', or they justify their feminism in terms of what it is not '(it's not) about women having power over men'; it's not whatever the externally constructed stereotype claims it to be.

Unfortunately, both responses are negative for women in terms of their self confidence in their personal and professional identities. They are denied the opportunity of exploring the positive and creative aspects of a feminist politics, their power in naming their work is undermined and the very philosophy which motivates them and makes their work meaningful becomes a source of negativity and insecurity.

Silencing feminism

Historically, this has sometimes been recognised as a legitimate strategy, particularly in attempting to gain a foothold for work with girls and women in an otherwise hostile setting, (e.g., in the literature relating to the 1980 Sunderland Girls Day, feminism is noticeable by its absence. Yet my own involvement in that event tells me how important feminism was to the women involved). To adopt such an approach involves an accurate and realistic assessment of organisational culture and it has undoubtedly led to some success in gaining funding and access for work with girls and women. The liberalism of community education language and the claim that youth and community services are services for all have provided a means whereby feminist work could be accessed through the promotion of an equal opportunities perspective, and feminist workers have been able to exploit the obvious imbalance in numbers of men and women using community education facilities (Smith, 1983). However, it is a strategy with a cost and the women I interviewed, though aware of the process, were generally uncomfortable with it.

One plays some sort of game - or you don't mention it at all. Which means we're marginalising it ourselves.

If I'm trying to promote it, with some institutions I'd talk about it in what I think are their terms. I've got institutionalised into talking about what I'm doing in a particular way. We continually have to fit into others.

You can't have an image as a radical or feminist organisation because of the risk you run of challenging people in power. You have to keep those beliefs to yourself and do it in ways that it's not so obvious.

If I'm honest, I hate to admit this, I think what I usually do is that I combine girl's and women's work with another issue

The most serious effect of this strategy is that it hides feminism. It is clear that women workers continuously police themselves and censor themselves around the concept of feminism. The most common means whereby they achieve this is by avoiding language which could be labelled feminist and adopting instead an apparently 'neutral' language which conforms with mainstream community education expectations.

Historically, there was less risk attached to repressing feminist language when engaging with employers and managers insofar as there was time and space within the community education setting to pursue a relatively autonomous agenda. In less tightly controlled circumstances, women could and did meet, creating networks and groups. They could work across organisational and geographical boundaries and speak among themselves in a manner which kept feminist concerns on the agenda. (Carpenter and Young, 1985).

Prior to the sudden closure in 1987 of NAYC's Girls Work unit, under circumstances which led to a suspicion that antagonism to feminist ideas was a factor influencing that decision, (CYWU, 1987; Holt, 1987) there was in youth work a nationally organised feminist presence which found expression in conferences, training events and the 'Working with Girls Newsletter'. The documentation from the period between 1980 and 1986 reveals an active, enthusiastic and lively feminist subculture operating through work with girls and young women (NAYC, 1980-87).

The demise of a national network and the subsequent development of more rigidly controlled work patterns, has left women workers without the networks which previously nurtured feminist debate. In the North East the early 1980s witnessed the growth and development of women workers groups and girls and womens groups in practically every locality (e.g. Durham, 1982; Sunderland, 1980). Today, there remain only two women workers groups, each of which relies to a large degree upon the goodwill of employers for continued survival and one of which is struggling to survive at all. In this climate, to privilege the political language of feminist issues over the professional language of youth or community work would be, to say the least, problematic. However, to fail to talk about issues and methods in self-consciously feminist terms is to risk fragmentation between and isolation of women workers. At the very least it reduces feminism to the lowest common denominator of access for girls and women, suppresses questions raised by different groups of women and prevents women workers from collectively pursuing the logic of their own positions.

Silencing leads to a marginalisation of feminist concerns in the work with girls and women, a removal of gender politics and ultimately to a colonisation of women's work by masculine agendas. There is a danger of losing the original motivations and of being drawn into an approach which actually contradicts feminist principles.

I often think there's a rhetoric and we believe in it. We really believe in the rhetoric and I'm party to it because I push for resources and you don't want to admit that. So I'm conspiring with them. It's deliberate.

We wanted resources and acceptance. We got these things, but at a price. The price was that the political analysis has gone. In some senses it's an easy option now. It wasn't an easy option before. You had to fight for it. Some of the analysis, the clear motivation, the education has gone out of it.

The realistic assessment by women workers of the power of the establishment to deny resources and of their own lack of power within that establishment combined with the power of men and boys in clubs and communities to prevent and limit the participation of women and girls (Nava, 1984), can, through the process of self silencing, lead to a loss of clarity about methods, principles and direction among women workers.

The evidence I gathered about the present situation suggests a pessimism and a lowering of morale which must be at least partly attributed to silencing. To silence is to disempower (Olsen, 1980). It is apparent from the data that such disempowerment is effectively diverting attention away from the gains won through feminist approaches and away from the possibilities of building upon these gains. Not least it is eroding the collective power of women workers.

The meaning and power of feminist work can only be fully realised and its gains consolidated if feminist thinking and methods are credited. At the same time, the problems which feminism present in terms of definitions and differences can only be addressed effectively if this is part of a self conscious practice of debate, discussion and action by women.

'My feminism is not...'

When seeking to define their own feminism, many of the women identified it primarily as something which was not extreme, not man hating, not radical.

I am a feminist, but I like men.

I'm really aware of extreme feminists, a lot of whose attitudes are negative for women...it's extreme feminism that's got the bad name.

To appear moderate is to adopt a mainstream stance in community education work. Taking an apparently extreme position on any issue can become problematic in an environment wherein workers are expected to reach the maximum numbers of people living in local communities and where a part of the definition of the work implies responsiveness to the needs of others. However, there seems to be an issue here about women workers themselves accepting the myths about feminism put forward persistently by the media and by representatives of the masculine establishment. In her study of women in organisations, Cynthia Cockburn details a catalogue of invective with which men label women who they identify as 'feminist':

women's libbers were I was told, harsh, strident, demanding, uptight, aggressive, dogmatic, radical, zealots, crusaders and overly ambitious. They are the extreme element, the Greenham Common type, the burn-your-bra mob. Feminists bash people over the head with their ideas, they ram things down your throat, take things to ridiculous lengths, niggle about semantics and, not surprisingly, given all this, put people's backs up. They are always going on about women having a hard deal. They are more assertive than other women for equal treatment. They feel men are all enemies and that they must undermine them. They make snidey comments about men's sexist jokes. They have no sense of humour. They are a minority group, shouting and screeching. And they wear...badges - at worst, badges that say 'I am a lesbian' (Cockburn, 1991, p.165).

If these views are in any way representative of the reactions which women community education workers have experienced in asserting their feminism it is in some ways hardly surprising that they recoil from naming their views. Yet the all-pervasive image of the 'man-hating extremist' is something of a stereotype generated within a climate of reaction to the potential of feminist politics to achieve a change in gendered power relations. 'Extreme' feminists do exist, but they would find it difficult to survive comfortably in the prevailing conditions of community and youth work. Not one of the women who I interviewed identified herself as a 'radical' feminist.

The definition of moderation and extremism can of course be a moveable feast depending upon a number of variables. What is extreme after fifteen years of right wing government is not the same as what was extreme prior to that ascendancy. Moreover, the definition of extremism depends upon who is doing the defining. Whilst moderation can seem to be a sensible approach in some situations, in others it is simply an excuse for refusing to take risks. Any assertive, confident demand from a group of excluded or marginalised people representing a collective demand can be categorised as 'extreme' or 'confrontational' by those whose power is challenged. 'Moderation' frequently implies not challenging the power structures of the status quo.

The idea of extremism is problematic. The problem resides in whether the definition comes from within or without. Are women workers deciding themselves what is extreme or are they colluding with the definitions of others and thereby being prevented from pursuing the inherent oppositional meanings of their own positions? If they are accepting an external, and masculine, definition of moderation and extremism, women workers are policing themselves and each other. Their vigilance is directed inwards rather than outwards. Self imposed barriers to action are being constructed which act as a powerful brake upon intervention which it is feared might lead to open conflict or to the accusation of being an extremist

One of the outcomes of moderation is that the only issues which are pursued are those which can be accommodated without too much disruption to the status quo. The price for the survival of the achievements already won appears to be a compromised feminism which recoils at the actions necessary to achieve structural change not only in terms of gender but in terms of other social inequalities.

It appears that certain groups of women have been able to benefit from the impact of earlier feminist activity. These women, who are in the main white and able bod-

ied, as reflected in my sample, have found a position for themselves within the organisation on certain terms. They believe that these terms include not being 'extreme', not pursuing conflictual agendas, sometimes even becoming 'invisible' so that they can carry out their work with girls and women without harassment. For those women who are not white and/or able bodied, for some women who are openly lesbian the previous wave of feminism did not make much impact in terms of their access to or accommodation within organisations. Now that feminist thought is addressing issues of difference and inequality among women, the debate has been excluded from practice, leaving some women stranded on the margins of organisational life and thus deepening the inequalities between women.

Gains and Limitations

It could be argued that silencing and self-censoring around work with girls and women has had some positive outcomes. It has enabled the work to gain a foothold within community education organisations and has led to greatly improved access and hence, opportunities for some girls and women. The importance of this in improving lives cannot and should not be denied. Many girls and women involved over the years have benefited from a widening of choice and an increase in personal confidence through their involvement in this work.

> *...they came to all the sessions, their confidence just grew...*
>
> *...They achieved a sense of their own identity, of their own worth.*
>
> *...you can measure success by how they come back and talk to you and want to share their experiences.*

All of the women interviewed talked about the successes of the work in terms of increasing confidence - both their own and those of the women and girls with who they worked. It was apparent that the workers felt both competent and enthusiastic about this aspect of the work which after all corresponds directly with the best principles of community education. Indeed, it could be argued that the most successful practice in community education settings, in developmental education terms is frequently that which is in process within the girls and women's groups.

Yet despite the successes of practice, despite the hard won improved provision and consequent growth in numbers of girls and women using community education services, despite pursuing a 'safe' non-political stance in their public advocacy of female centred work, the women workers who I interviewed were bemused that they receive little, if any, organisational recognition for their achievements. Certainly the recognition which they do win is not expressed in their own terms.

> *In terms of my line manager, it's definitely kept in the female arena. There's no adequate recognition. It's still a battle.... part of the struggle, is not being near the centres of power.*
>
> *In the last ten years, people have begun to say we need it and to pay lip service to it. New budgets are set aside. Maybe that's a step forward. But I'm not sure how useful that change is for what I see as girls work because what I've seen is a lot of part time workers set up girls groups which are activities groups and not what I'd class as girls work,*

There's little recognition of the politics of the work we do in any sense and work with girls is no different. There's enormous pressure for the work to be public and big and the only way work with girls can be public and big is to be more like boys.

There are two issues of concern here. Firstly, the concentration upon raising confidence, which is indeed an integral aspect of feminist practice, can be easily depoliticised. Insofar as a neutralised language of personal development is mobilised to establish 'confidence-raising' then there is no reason why the work should ever move beyond individual, personal development. There is no intrinsic reason why confidence-raising should become consciousness-raising. Individual personal development is not necessarily feminist. Feminism involves a politics of collective change. There can be, but there does not have to be, a relationship between growth in confidence for girls and women and a challenge to masculine structures of power. Feminism might be girls and women's work but girls and women's work isn't necessarily feminism.

Indeed, insofar as it corresponds with the liberal ethic of individual self help, the personal confidence agenda itself can be a means of limiting the potential breadth of focus of the work, breaking the link between ideas of equality and empowerment. In this way, equality for girls and women becomes simply 'equality' within inherently unequal, pre-given and unquestioned structures. Alternatively, it comes to mean confidence to 'assimilate' into a pre-given masculine format (Cockburn, 1991).

You might use words like; 'confidence-building', avoid words like 'assertiveness' and use 'building up self-esteem'. They just don't want assertive girls.

You have to sell it to men. For example, International Women's Day. You tell them there's advantages in increasing the confidence and the employability of women. The things that come to mind are quite negative for women e.g. untapped potential, flexible, low paid work force. I'm promoting things I wouldn't want to.

Secondly, it is the women workers themselves who are subduing the politics in their work at the point where they meet directly the masculine power structure. If the work is promoted as something which confirms to pre-given expectations then there is little chance that it would be recognised in anything other than those terms. If the feminist aspects of the work are not articulated then women are doomed to be disappointed in their hopes for recognition in terms which they really think are important. The general invisibility and marginalisation of girls and women in communities (Marshall and Borrill, 1984) is confirmed by the protective strategies adopted in feminist community and youth work practice.

I find myself at times not emphasising women's and girls' work here to certain audiences. I'm also very careful when doing displays that they're not overtly female, but in some ways that's silly because all the volunteers are female...I make a conscious effort that balances things to keep the peace.

The whole business of childcare...We know that women's education is only possible if you talk about childcare. There, I don't say 'mothers', I say 'parents'. If you say 'mothers', which is true, you get 'bias!' thrown at you.

Overall, if women continue to think about their work in terms which are a political and individualised, if they continue to believe that progress is only possible through the adoption of the tactics of subterfuge, (Rowbotham, 1973) then they will constantly find themselves struggling in individualised situations to achieve what it is that they want in their work.

For example, the principles of single sex work with girls and women are at their foundation feminist principles. However, single sex provision in Community Education organisations has been won only as a principle of equality, as a necessary means of attracting girls and women, as a means of encouraging the development of individual confidence and competence in order to create more effective citizens, according to an externally defined notion of citizenship. The single sex environment has not been conceded as a principle of women's self directing political organisation or as a basis for collective political action around self-defined and mutually recognised interests, which might be oppositional to the status quo (Thompson, 1982). As such, single sex work can be easily lost and there is some evidence in the interview data that this is beginning to happen. In one area, as I write, one of the two female-only young women's projects in the North East has lost its single sex facilities, with expenditure cuts given as the reason. Yet the documentation provided by the workers in that project suggests that it would have been possible to sustain the project despite a financial cut similar to that endured by other projects in the same authority. In these circumstances, questions must be asked about the underlying reasons for such closure. (Rosehill Young Women's Project, 1995).

Over and again the women I spoke to detailed struggles which they were having to sustain conditions for female work which they had thought had been won. For example, in one area, responsibility for organising the annual Girls Day was given to a male trainee worker resulting in a negative experience for those girls and women who attended. In another area, there was no acknowledgement of the need for female focused work at all. In general there was anxiety about continuously needing to justify the resources and time needed for single sex work. The work remains as vulnerable as it ever was and women workers are forced to continue to use their energies to maintain what is an inherently unsatisfactory situation. They are left with little space to face the challenge of structural change.

Those gains which women workers have made are important. However, they are gains at the level of individual achievement not at the level of structural or organisational change. Moreover, I gleaned no evidence from the interviews that the gains had been consolidated. Every woman I spoke to was insecure about the long term future of work with girls and women, whether it was feminist or not, and no one really believed that there was a principled commitment to such work from services which continue to be male dominated and which themselves are suffering from declining resources. Continued success and continued existence of anything which might be identified as feminist work remains dependent entirely upon the enthusiasm, energy, skill and commitment of individual women.

Personal Identification

Individual women give unstintingly of their time and energy to further their work with girls and women. Their feminist beliefs are personal and they bring this personal commitment into their work, wanting young women to gain in the same way as they often had done themselves from the development of a 'feminist' understanding.

I've had some wonderful, very personal moments of sharing with women, which has brought us closer. In some respects the division of being a worker and being a member of the groups has been partly removed

I can relate it to my experience.... I can see unfairness and restrictions in my life and I want to be an influence in changing things for young people.

Being able to relate to younger women, you realise that the issues for them aren't very different from the issues for you. Quite often its mutually supportive.

It gave me confidence, wider understanding, close colleagues, a relatively safe environment to learn the job I was doing.

This personal identification is crucial in motivating women workers, in helping them to continue to find the energy to carry on with the work in often adverse conditions and in enabling them to empathise with the girls and women with whom they work. In terms of face to face work, this generates loyalty and comradeship between women and girls and can lead to creative and innovative working practices, to say nothing of providing a framework within which girls and women can use the facilities on offer to grow and develop.

However, to invest so much personally in the work, raises questions about professional practice on three counts. Firstly, where personal identification is not possible with certain groups of girls and women, then there is a danger of unintended exclusion of these groups. There is a danger for example, that white women will work comfortably and exclusively with white women and girls without even raising questions of racism which might lead to pain or discomfort. Secondly, personal identification suggests that individual women experience any challenge to their work as a personal challenge. As a consequence, women workers can suffer severe stress in their relationships with male managers and colleagues and can fail to develop political strategies for dealing with organisational conflict. Thirdly, in identifying so fully at the fieldwork practice level, there is a danger that questions of organisational identity will be forgotten or underplayed. For example, some women might experience their work as a personal crusade without fully recognising the inevitable boundaries created by the organisational context.

Exclusion

The interview data demonstrated problems of exclusion particularly in relation to Black women and lesbian women, although it was also clear that disabled women were also marginalised. All interviewees were aware of the importance of working across differences between women and all had commitment to providing a service relevant to all. However, in these cases, there was an acknowledged gap between the theory, the politics and the practice.

As indicated, all the women interviewed were white. Except the one case where the woman concerned spent most of her time working with Bangladeshi young women in a small and fairly isolated community, all the women and girls groups mentioned were predominantly white. Dealing with racism was acknowledged to be important but there was a loud silence from most of those interviewed about the practicalities of doing this. The absence of Black workers in the sample was mirrored in an inability to identify or act upon Black female concerns in the work.

It's not that easy to look at issues around, for example, racism or disability. We know the theory. Actually working with young women around those issues is different because you have to start at a different level. If you go in too heavy with things they might not come back next week.

In contrast to this, the woman working with the Bangladeshi community was persistently aware of the significance of difference in her work and of the necessity to struggle with this:

You learn about institutional racism...It's given me lots to think about. It's forced me to do things like anti-racist training which I think if I hadn't been doing this work I wouldn't have taken on board so much.

Yet organisationally, including Bangladeshi young women creates its own problems and struggles on top of the everyday gender struggles:

The management committee at the end of the day initiated and prioritised the work. So to that extent they supported it but they didn't understand the detail and some management committee members have been unhappy that work with the Bangladeshi has been at the expense of the white community. So we've had to make sure we work with white girls in the area...I would have expected more from the Community Education Service than from the management committee, but we've had nothing from community education but hassle.

For this woman, it became clear that young Bangladeshi women also needed women from their own community as workers in order to pursue understanding based upon common experience. This involved a struggle with the community education organisation which refused to fund such workers because they could not meet the same criteria for employment as white workers. Consequently, it was necessary to find charitable funding for their employment. Not insignificantly these workers are thereby marginalised and excluded by the mainstream organisation.

In general white women workers do not pursue a professional agenda which fully articulates difference between women. To move beyond personal identification and take on board issues emerging from inequality which cuts across gender involves those concerned in both confronting organisational power structures and taking responsibility for aspects of organisational power which reflect their own personal areas of powerfulness. When this is combined with the history of conflict around racism within feminist community and youth work, (Parmar, 1985; Field, 1985; Cuffy, 1987), and the personalisation of women workers' practice, it is apparent that such commitment involves stress and discomfort. There are few who take such risks, particularly when to do so might threaten professional survival. The consequence is a continued marginalisation of Black women and Black perspectives in feminist women's youth and community work.

In looking at how exclusion operates, the interview data was particularly rich in relation to the question of female sexuality, revealing a minefield of confusion. The problems raised by 'identification' for those in the majority who identified themselves as heterosexual were only compounded by the reality of Clause 28 and the fear that this was a high risk area of concern. Some of the comments in relation to this issue speak for themselves:

Within the confines of community education, sexuality is very much a taboo issue.

Gay issues are very difficult...There are always limits, but no directive says 'You don't work with lesbians and gays', but there's a lack of understanding...But there are lesbian young women and we should be working with them...

We had a real dilemma recently about a poster. Stop Clause 28 poster. It was about real families but because on the bottom it said stuff about lesbians and gays, we had battles with ourselves. Do we put the poster up....or turn up the bit about lesbians and gays, or take the poster down according to who was there? In the end, it was taken down. We completely compromised our beliefs because of who we work for.

Issues around sexuality, we don't go out there and make a big thing about it. It tends to be part of another session.... but also some women wouldn't come along to the project because it would be seen as a 'lemon hut' and I felt that stopped young women coming...I think we want to support young women if they want to come out as lesbian....Obviously it would be best to have a group, but in reality, it would be one at a time ... It's partly about protecting young women but for me its about how then do we support a young woman coming out. The reason this came out was the young women knowing the staff have male partners. Does this indicate that we're doing something which makes it difficult for young women to come out or to come into the centre?

The manner in which the issue of sexuality was identified as problematic related both to the question of empathy and to the question of sensitivity to organisational responses. When women workers themselves do not have to deal with particular issues on an everyday basis, then their approach to these issues in their work is problematic. In this case, the question is to some extent that of female sexuality and one need only understand the manner in which young women's sexuality in particular is problematised to understand this, but fundamentally the heterosexual women experienced questions around female sexuality as questions relating to lesbianism. It was this which caused the greatest discomfort in their work. Clause 28 merely adds to this. Without feminist debate and association in the work, with the voices of lesbian workers being heard, it becomes impossible for heterosexual women workers to either prioritise these issues or to discover strategies which are adequate to deal with the heterosexism of the organisational context. Correctly perceiving the organisational framework to be heterosexual (Hearn et al, 1989), women whose ears are keen on matters of disapproval seem to retreat into their isolated units, suffering guilt and confusion without the means to develop a strategy which is appropriate to their feminist politics.

I have used the issues of racism and heterosexism here as illustration, but similar processes are at work in relation to other issues of marginalisation and exclusion such as disability. The destruction of feminist organisation and the absence of feminist public debate and the feminism of the workers interviewed. This essentialism is clearly associated with uncritical personal identification in the work with women and girls. It can lead to highly successful development work with certain groups but its consequences are an insecure incorporation into the pre-existing structures and functions of the organisational context for some women and a reproduction of the exclusion of others.

Personalisation
I did not specifically ask questions in the interviews about the personalisation of challenges to the work. However, specifically in discussions around 'feminism' and sexuality, it became clear that most of the women preferred to steer clear of conflict. They tended to anticipate what might lead to conflict and to restrict themselves or to compromise in order to pursue their work without hindrance. Many gave instances which demonstrated that in some situations there is still an everyday struggle to have the work accepted by male colleagues.

> *Our group is in a church building.... I had to wait until the male worker turned up with the keys to open the office and the cupboards. I told him he was the man with the keys, with the power. I won the battle. I haven't the front door keys, but the office and the cupboard. I opened the cupboard and there was nothing there! After I'd got the keys. He said,' I decided to have a change-around!'*

Such struggles are demoralising and undermining in professional practice, but when there is also a personal-political identity interwoven with the work they can be experienced as personal threats, leading to stress and lack of confidence. It is therefore unsurprising that the women attempted both to head off all foreseeable conflict around this work and to hide those aspects of their work which might lead to vulnerability around resourcing and funding. It is often in this respect that the feminism of their work was subdued.

Organisational Identity
Avoiding conflict in work with girls and women is unfortunately problematic in terms of the longer term goals of the work. Ironically, in personalising their work to the extent which they do, personal feminism as it relates to the individual women worker's position cannot be fully articulated. If the identification with female users is privileged, then a parallel agenda concerning the possibility of developing collective, feminist strategies as employees is left underdeveloped. Thus the women I interviewed were generally not thinking of themselves as women workers. Apart from the officers, (and that difference supports the point) they were not engaging with trades unions or professional associations and they were excluded from organisational debates and systems around even equal opportunities. It was surprising to discover in the data a very low level of information and knowledge about Equal Opportunities policies and statements of employing organisations. Association for most of the women interviewed meant attendance at worker's meetings, but these were generally managerially directed. The only exception to this was the remaining Women Workers' groups.

During the research, I made contact with one of these women workers groups. Though it was apparent that often group meetings prioritised practical task orientated co-operation, nevertheless, a number of interviewees belonged to this group. The issues raised in this paper are issues which have been raised partly through discussion with them. Moreover, it is clear that there is within the group a desire to use the possibility of female co-operation to pursue gender-based debate and discussion. There is a gap between the realities of meeting in the group and the issues which the women workers articulated as important to them. To close this gap seems crucial as an objective if women workers are to address collectively the contradictions and dilemmas raised by feminist practice. It is certainly important if women are to begin to find a way of naming their values and beliefs.

Conclusion

If the preceding analysis is accurate, then it is apparent that feminism, with its 'long agenda' (Cockburn, 1991) of achieving justice and equality for all girls and women is under great stress within community education. As a philosophy and politics it has been instrumental in enabling women workers to gain increased access for girls and women to the facilities of what is an increasingly impoverished service. However, as resources have declined and central control increased, feminism has been undermined and silenced in the work. Its oppositional potential has been recognised as problematic for organisations by the women workers themselves and women working with girls and young women have found themselves caught in a dilemma. Either they pursue an openly feminist agenda and risk losing the gains already won, or they police themselves and risk losing the feminist meanings of their work.

Those who I interviewed had tended to adopt the later strategy with the consequence that they were focusing increasingly on a 'short agenda' (Cockburn, 1991) of improved access and raising confidence. Whilst this has enabled the work to be maintained, and even perhaps to grow in numerical terms, such work privileges particular groups of women and increases inequality of organisational access between women. It cannot continue as a strategy in the long term without itself jeopardising and undermining single sex, developmental work. Women workers are experiencing unease and disquiet about the process of disempowerment which is progressing not only for them as feminist community education workers, but for all workers whose philosophy of practice suggests opposition to dominant organisational policies and practices.

For women workers, the situation is complicated by their personal investment in their work, by the slippage between the personal and the professional, by the subordination of their understanding of themselves as employees, as workers.

In order to begin to address the problems of the current situation, and thus to work towards sustaining work with girls and women as feminist practice in the long term, it is necessary that women workers begin once more to acknowledge and interrogate their feminism. What does it mean for them? What are its implications in the work? How can it be pursued strategically and systematically without risking gains already won?

Part of this task involves disentangling the personal and the professional. This does not necessarily imply a loss of commitment to the work, but suggests that some aims and objectives which women have as feminists might be best achieved outside the employment situation - as personal politics whereas other aims and objectives can be clarified and valued as professional practice. Development of an awareness of professional possibilities and limits can only be pursued in feminist terms if women workers acknowledge their role as workers as well as their role as community educators. They need to consider their organisational context as well as the fieldwork.

In the current climate this is not an easy task. Moreover, success undoubtedly depends upon open debate between women, upon acknowledgement of differences between women and upon a willingness to engage in collective critical practice. Central to this process is breaking the taboos against feminism, reclaiming and asserting its real meanings. There is some evidence that this process might have begun for some women and I would like to end this article with two quotes from the interviews which point in this direction.

I don't really believe we should hide anything. If you hide you become a threat and the power structures close in. I don't think I'd want to hide anything. I'd want to open up more things. If you do that, people are forced to deal with it. For example, sexual abuse.

I have (considered myself a feminist) for ten years and for at least eight years have felt proud and confident and love the way it takes people aback because they expect you to deny it. It's like saying you robbed a bank!
I've started calling myself a feminist again. I stopped saying 'as a feminist I think' for a while, because it lost its power, but now I say it because I see so many women who are feminist denying it.

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WORKING SPACE

SURVIVORS SPEAKING OUT - ARE WE LISTENING

An Outline of the Work of the Open Voices Project, Barnardo's North East

FIONA CAMPHUIS

Underpinning Philosophy

In 1989 Barnardo's, under the organisation's 'Moving Forward' initiative, introduced a national 'Agenda For Action' which allowed for the development of work in relation to HIV/AIDS, Homelessness and Child Sexual Abuse. The Open Voices Project was established in November 1993 under the umbrella of Child Sexual Abuse, with initial funding for three years.

The original idea for this community development project came from a group of local women who felt that more community-based support should be available for adults, young people and children who are survivors of abuse. The Project's aim is to create a protective environment on a number of estates in East Gateshead. Its objectives are:

- *to raise awareness of all forms of abuse*
- *to promote preventative strategies in the community*
- *to support survivors of abuse.*

The Project was named by a local woman who saw it as a service which would assist adults and children to 'open their voice' and to maximise their potential. The Project seeks to raise awareness of 'silenced issues' and 'hidden experiences' and to promote the principle of partnerships in the community. It works within the feminist perspective that all forms of abuse are abuses of power. The Project seeks to empower people by actively promoting the individual's civil right to be safe: 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person' (Article 3, United Nations Declaration).

Ways of Working

Research suggests that abuse in the home, institution and in the community is a hidden experience and that victims of abuse are silenced. They are silenced by fear of the abuser, silenced by being in a powerless position and silenced by a society that often cannot hear. Informed by this knowledge, the Project's approach from the outset was to go out into the community, to network and gain the trust of local people and professionals working in the area. Listening to and validating people's own life experiences has been a fundamental and continual part of the Project's philosophy.

If a project such as Open Voices was to be replicated an essential aspect of its development and co-ordination would be an understanding of the needs and strengths of the community. Respecting already established networks and developing others can create a protective environment for young people and children, as often there is a great deal of potential within a community to listen, support and protect.

The work of Open Voices can be divided into specific areas: individual work, pair work (parents), group work, school work, training and consultancy and detached

work. Schools are often the focal point of a community. Working in schools with parents, children and young people can create positive foundations for local people to build on. The Open Voices Child Safety Programme, implemented in two schools, promoted the philosophy that lack of information makes children and young people vulnerable, and that talking and listening to them helps them to use and trust their own judgement and helps them to protect themselves and to be safe, aware and confident. The programme's main objective is to provide the opportunity for all young people to use their voice and to practice how they would use it to seek help.

The Project's consultancy and training work has sought to support and inform workers in other agencies, to enhance their understanding of all forms of abuse and to challenge the many myths surrounding abuse, particularly domestic violence - violence by a 'known man'. Research suggests that statistics from the family and criminal courts of physical, emotional and sexual abuse may only be a proportion of the abuse that occurs. It is estimated that three-quarters of a million young people witness domestic violence each year (NCH 1994). The most numerous type of assault uncovered by the 1994 British Crime Survey were incidents of domestic violence, estimated at 1,128,000 in 1993.

The Childline Review of 1994 recorded that 3500 calls are made daily by children and young people. This is an example of young people using their voice but it begs the question, why are they not heard in their own community?

The Response to the Project

Since 1993 referrals for individual and group work have come to the Project from a wide variety of health, statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. health visitors, social workers, education welfare officers, probation, community education workers), plus a number of self referrals. The Project has mainly worked with women and girls aged 11-30. However work with men and older women has also been achieved.

Due to personal circumstances and/or in recognition of trust and a relationship already having been formed with a worker who has referred someone, the Project has often offered consultancy to that worker. I have found that workers from other agencies can listen and respond appropriately but often need independent support to hear the dilemmas they face from involvement in this highly emotive and stressful area of work.

Working and networking with other agencies can often be difficult. This can arise from having experienced different training and people having a lack of understanding about different approaches. I believe that these differences can be overcome by being prepared to listen to each other, and to gradually earn and gain professional respect for each other. Working alongside other professionals, whether it be in a training or care plan situation or, as in the case of the child safety programmes, working in the classroom, cannot be successful unless people are open and respect each other. Everyone benefits when this is achieved. The Project has achieved working relationships in schools and with other services and as such there has been interest and participation in training, therefore giving workers the opportunity to listen to each other and, most importantly, to support and protect young people.

Networking with other agencies is fundamental to the Open Voices Project to reach people who are 'hidden'. Often, however, an isolated family or woman has no link with agencies other than their child's school. This is where the work of Open Voices is the most successful in the sense of reaching the most people; being 'seen' in school, not just linked to it, is the key. The child safety programmes have reached hundreds of children and have the potential to reach many more through work with parents, other workers and importantly with teachers. The Project has a follow up child safety programme to enable it to be incorporated into the curriculum and to evaluate its effectiveness, albeit that preventative work is not easily evaluated.

It is in this area of work that a project such as Open Voices can be most beneficial in meeting its aim to enable children and young people to speak out and to assist adults (teachers, parents and other workers) to listen - not just to hear a clear disclosure, but to be aware, to see and fully hear a person in distress. Protection from abuse is fundamentally linked to the prevention of mental health difficulties. Support and safety in the community is vital to young lives and to their futures.

Conclusion

Witnessing and/or being subjected to abuse affects and influences lives for many years.

> *The person growing up in a violent home lives in fear, feels uncared for and is full of anger and despair (Violence and Young Minds 1995).*

Literature tells us that those who experience abuse believe they are at fault and that they deserve abuse. Often this is what the abuser has told them. The power and control the abuser has, by the position held in the family, community or institution (church, school, college) conditions the person to believe they are a voiceless victim. Their trust in others has been betrayed. They feel alone and their self esteem is very low. They feel unable to speak out and see themselves as a 'nothing'. Their hopes and dreams, opinions and thoughts are not important and often they are no longer voiced. They remain buried as does the 'secret' they have not to tell.

The following poem, written by a young women who is involved with the Open Voices Project, demonstrates that voiceless victims *can* and *do* become strong survivors who speak out. Society, however, must learn to listen.

SURVIVORS

The little girl inside us is safe and wrapped up well
We keep her locked away, as she has a tale to tell
We smile, we laugh, we plod along, surviving yes we do!
And men they laugh and they crack jokes, they haven't got a clue.

Our hearts are filled with warmth and love, in life we do our best
Survivors, yes that's what we are, and yes we've done the test
Cupboards locked within our minds with never ending doors
Sometimes the skeleton jumps out, I hope it's never yours

We flee our homes, we flee for life, we run and run and run
And when we think it's over, the running's just begun
But stop! just wait I'm not with you any more, I'm a survivor
Yes a survivor, now quickly close the door

They hurt us once - they hurt us twice, they never will again
For now we have our own control - our lives are not the same
We built up courage, we built up strength, we've got lots of different masks
So go away we've closed the door, you're shadows of our pasts.

So stop and think! it's not ***our*** *shame, hold your head up high*
For we are all survivors and women never lie!!
Michelle Scott 1995

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Ronald J Angel and Jacqueline L Angel
Painful Inheritance : Health and the New Generation of Fatherless Families
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Pat Ainley
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Phillip Brown and Richard Scase
Higher Education and Corporate Realities: Class, culture and the decline of graduate careers
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Ruggiero V & South N
Euro Drugs - Drug Use, Markets and Trafficking in Europe
UCL Press 1995
ISBN 1 85728 101 2 (hbk)
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pp 229

PAUL HEBRON

Recent revelations concerning the misuse of drugs by high profile footballers Paul Merson and Chris Anderson and soap opera stars Danielle Westbrook and Simon Gregson, have thrust the issue of misuse into the headlines once again. The media, particularly the tabloid press, have taken the opportunity to relaunch their 'War on Drugs' campaigns and to focus on the links between drugs and crime, especially organised and violent crime involving firearms. In recent weeks this desire to link violent crime and drugs has found the ideal vehicle with an increase in the number of shooting incidents across the city of Liverpool. Despite denials from local councillors and the Merseyside police, several daily newspapers have reported these incidents as organised gang warfare with criminal gangs fighting for control of the drugs business.

What Ruggiero and South set out to do is look at issues of drug use, markets and trafficking in a reasonable and balanced manner, putting to one side this media obsession with the American driven, 'War on Drugs' approach, and consider the issues in a European context. They achieve this by considering drug use, marketing and trafficking in several European countries particularly focusing on the cities of Turin and London and offering a comparative study.

The authors begin with an introduction that takes into account drug use in the context of a changing Europe and also introduces their definition of illicit drugs as market commodities and an interpretation of illegal activities associated with drug use and distribution, as work. These definitions are key factors as they underpin and inform the discussions and descriptions of markets, trafficking and patterns of drug use put forward in the text.

The book is guided by a set of five themes which are outlined as hypothetical propositions. These propositions are then addressed in the main body of the book and are re-assessed in the final chapter.

The themes or propositions suggest that

1) *Drugs have become key commodities with the traditional criminal underworld and this has generated an impulse towards more structured forms of criminality, and has enhanced the organisational character of some criminal activity.*

2) *In the activities connected to drug distribution we may observe monopolistic tendencies in permanent conflict with strong counter tendencies of a competitive nature that fragment the market.*

3) The explosion of availability of illegal drugs in the 1980s continuing in the 1990s can be seen as impacting upon certain forms of criminal enterprise. Two models of criminal enterprise are considered, 'crime in association' which relates to individual entrepreneurialism in a non hierarchical structure and 'crime in organisation' which implies an industrial or corporate style structure.

4) There may be shifts occurring in types of criminal activity. The traditional skilled professional criminal may now be replaced, or partly replaced, by 'mass' criminals without specialist skills working in a 'chain' of production and distribution.

5) Drug cultures and markets have undergone changes which deemed a reappraisal of the conventional sociological theory usually employed for their interpretation. Here the authors are referring to sub cultural perspectives.

Ruggiero and South point out that they do not expect all their themes to be proved true. To test these themes the authors take us on a fascinating and enlightening journey that explores, amongst other things, drug use patterns, cultures and policies in Britain, Western and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. This is followed by an analysis of drug use in relation to social deprivation.

Although the authors look at many different types of illegal drugs they focus particularly on heroin and cocaine in relation to issues of trafficking, markets, and crime and control. These matters are considered on a European basis - then the authors focus on the two case study cities of London and Turin. These studies allow the authors to consider their central issues in more depth and provide the opportunity to explore issues of racism and the exploitative division of labour within drug economies.

Eurodrugs is a well put together and easy to read book. There is a clear structure and theme well supported with fascinating accounts from those involved at various levels within the drugs business. Although the authors state their support for a process of decriminalisation, particularly in relation to cannabis, they are not too close or for that matter too far removed to provide clear, in-depth descriptions of the various elements within the drugs economy.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in issues relating to the European illegal drugs economy. Finally it is worth noting that the book provides an extensive and useful bibliography.

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Teresa Smith and Michael Noble
Education Divides: Poverty and Schooling in the 1990s
Child Poverty Action Group 1995
ISBN 0 946744 76 9
£7.95 (pbk)
pp 149

TED HARVEY

Inequality has always been a thorny problem for the education system, even in the heyday of the comprehensive school, when at least an attempt was being made to address the issue, the debates over mixed ability teaching was a source of considerable friction in school staffrooms. In those days the central concerns were whether setting and streaming perpetuated the old inequalities, whether mixed ability classes were 'enforced mediocrity' and if indeed schools could 'compensate for society'.

It would all be so much easier if any differences in educational attainment could be attributed solely to innate ability, and this, of course, is just the assumption behind the government's promotion of league tables of raw data as a measure of a school's success. It also allows the rhetoric of diversity, parental choice and individual achievement to hold sway while ignoring the divisive and damaging effects of such policy.

'Education Divides' is a detailed examination of the impact of recent education policies, based on research carried out by the Department of Applied Social Studies and Social Research at the University of Oxford. It brings together a mass of official statistics and research findings in an incisive and convincing condemnation of these policies from the point of view of anyone with an interest in equal opportunities and social justice.

This achievement is all the more impressive given the nature of the beast under study. One of the features of the effects of these policies is that they are by no means uniformly distributed across the country. Some local education authorities have taken steps to maintain their strong traditions of equality, others have either not been so concerned or have had their hands tied by their Standard Spending Assessment, then there have been other developments such as 'opting out' and City Technology Colleges which further complicate the situation and make it hard to generalise.

However there is a general theme which can be discerned, and sadly it comes as no surprise. Whether examining resource allocation, pre-school provision, school meals, the costs of 'free education' or the theme of social disadvantage and educational progress, it is clear that the increasing social and economic gap between the rich and the poor is mirrored in education.

One of the problems with any text which explores this theme is that the causal link between social disadvantage and educational achievement is notoriously difficult to establish, hence weakening the argument against

those who are happy to blame the victim. 'Education Divides' tackles this and describes how disadvantage operates as a series of barriers to learning whose key elements are to do with access, choice and funding. While this is a perfectly acceptable explanation I feel it would be strengthened by the use of some more qualitative data to establish a greater sense of empathy with the children and families concerned, without compromising the rigour of the argument. Whilst remaining surprisingly readable for such a quantitative account, the reliance on statistics and analysis for me lacks a human factor which is ironic considering the nature of the subject matter.

This report concludes that specific measures in education can help children from poor families, these include high quality pre-school provision, special reading schemes, reductions in class size (topical in the recent debate over cuts), more effective schools and parental involvement. While they would dramatically improve the educational chances for children from poorer families they cannot address the wider effects of poverty which would still require, among other things, an increase in child benefit, a minimum wage and increase in childcare provision to be effectively reduced.

The CPAG has a tradition of being an effective, albeit lonely, voice pointing out the inequalities and injustices of our society, a role which becomes ever more important as the issue of poverty seems to become further removed from the political agenda. This book stands squarely in that tradition, hopefully it will serve to challenge those who are in positions of power at the moment and inform the policy and practice of those of a more sympathetic orientation in the future.

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David Parker
Through Different Eyes:
The Cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain
Avebury 1995
ISBN 1 85628 923 0
£37.50 (hbk)
pp 253

KERRY YOUNG

Through Different Eyes is a welcome addition to the slim collection of work focussing on the lives of young Chinese people in Britain. The book is based on open-ended interviews with 54 young Chinese people which explore their experience of living in Britain including working in the

catering industry, everyday racism and their connection with Hong Kong popular culture. The early chapters establish the background for Parker's work by surveying existing research and exploring theories of cultural identity and the historical conditions of identity formation.

The book is David Parker's PhD. As a result, it is not easy to read. However, the sections based on the interviews with young people are refreshing and insightful. And it is at these moments when the book actually comes alive. The conclusions are illuminating but somehow not surprising since much of what is written could apply to any young person of mixed heritage or those who find themselves 'living away from home'.

In the event, Parker suggests that there are five cultural identifications adopted by young Chinese people in Britain. This includes young people who express their Chinese identity only in private - often in Chinese only contexts. This, according to Parker, establishes a segmentation between their private and public lives and provides a shield against everyday incidents of racism and discrimination. Others adopt 'British regional identities' such as 'Scouse' or 'Geordie' which involves conforming to local norms in an effort to pre-empt racism and gain acceptance. Some young Chinese people identify clearly and positively with being British with their Chinese identity having a residual place in their lives. Others strongly identify as Chinese with their identities strengthened through the 'peeling away of their English exterior' to reveal their essential inner 'Chineseness'. Finally, there are those who understand their Chinese identity and work to develop it within the context of other identifications-for example being women.

Parker therefore identifies the range of young Chinese people's *response* to living in Britain whilst stopping short of examining what 'being Chinese' actually means to them. In doing so, he leaves the meaning of 'being Chinese' undefined and states instead that the desire of young Chinese people in Britain is to 'be Chinese' whilst asserting the right to stay in Britain. Parker comments that 'Being in Britain is not the same as becoming even partially British. For those with a strong sense of Chinese identity...a clear distinction is drawn between formal citizenship and subjective sense of identity.' (p239)

However, the curious thing about the book is that despite its focus and intentions the text often demonstrates an unquestioned acceptance of Western concepts and values, for example about the virtues of democracy as illustrated by Parker's reference to Hong Kong as 'a cultural autonomy without secure institutional moorings in democracy' (p240). Indeed, throughout the text there is a keen emphasis on the idea of 'being Chinese' whilst remaining distanced from China. The idea of 'being Chinese' does not include an interest in contemporary China (p142); trusting the Chinese government (p143); liking China Chinese people (p169) or indeed having any real sense of attachment to China (p164). Contained within all of this is therefore an implicit, and sometimes explicit criticism of China and its way of life. As one young person

comments. 'There's so many Chinese, you can't just say China Chinese, that's so Communist and not doing that well. You don't want to be that linked with it, whereas Hong Kong is more modern and more professional.' (P162). The alternative, it seems, is to embrace Hong Kong popular culture (cinema, magazines, music) with its Chinese faces but fundamentally Western content and image.

Parker also expresses the view that many young Chinese people have responsibilities thrust upon them at an early age. He bemoans young Chinese people's role in supporting the family business (eg by working in the take-away) and cautions against the potentially uneasy relationship between children and parents as employees and employers which this could create. But by whose standards are such instances to be judged? Are we to accept that the concept of 'childhood' as fashioned in the West as universal across all nations and cultures? Certainly Chinese tradition has within it the expectation that all family members contribute to the success and welfare of the family by taking on the roles and responsibilities of which they are capable. As one young person put it 'it's our duty' whether one feels one has been 'asked' or 'forced' to offer that support.

In addition, whilst it is acknowledged that working at the take-away counter exposes young Chinese people to the sharp end of racial (and sexual) harassment and abuse (p95-100) it is also important to remember that such encounters are merely another arena for the expression of racism pandemic in white British society. The question is not should young Chinese people work in the take-away but rather what is to be done about the racism to which they are subjected-in the take-away and in all other aspects of their lives.

What is clear from Parker's work is that the private identities assumed by individuals, whatever they may be, do not act as protection from the identities accorded to them by others. As illustrated by one of the young women interviewed you may feel like a Geordie, even act like one, but this does not prevent others from seeing you as Chinese and beating you up if that is their will. (p113). At the same time it is also possible, as Parker reports, for a young person to assume a British regional identity whilst commenting 'I'm happy being Chinese, I wouldn't swap it for anything in the world' (p112). But is this really an illustration of young Chinese people's uncertainty about their cultural identity or, as Parker puts it, their 'ambivalence of simultaneously regretting and revelling in difference (which) sets up a potential for plural and combinatory identifications...' (p112) or is it simply the assertion of the right to be who one is, in all its richness and complexity, without also having to face the objectionable attitudes and behaviour called racism? Surely there is nothing ambivalent about that.

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Managing Behavioural Treatment
Policy and Practice with Delinquent Adolescents
Routledge 1995
ISBN 0 415 05005 7
pp 181

JEREMY WALKER

This is a book for the purist or convert rather than the pragmatist or faint-hearted. Its publishers claim that it is 'an indispensable resource for psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, social workers, probation officers, nurses and prison staff who come into contact with delinquent adolescents'. That may be so but I suspect that it will lose a good many of its readers early on, partly because of the rather charmless reductionism unavoidable in monolithic theories such as behaviourism and partly because its first chapter - on the effectiveness of the behavioural treatment of offenders - is simply unconvincing.

In the behavioural scheme of things, thoughts, feelings and beliefs are seen simply as unobservable private behaviour or 'private events'. There is no room for mystery, uncertainty or the unknown in this world. Indeed, along with eclecticism, which gets a buffeting later in the book, I imagine they are seen as either slogans of the heretic or the product of the muddled thinking of yet-to-be-converted. Time and again, while reading this book, I wanted to reach for a Popperian antidote and be reassured that theories which cannot be falsified are not theory but dogma. There is a kind of conceit or disturbing omnipotence lurking behind conceptual systems such as this, which you also find in psychoanalysis, for example, it gives rise to a boundless belief that, one day, all will be revealed. Writing of 'the practical or technical difficulty...in the assessment of private events', the authors, all of whom work in or are connected with Glenthorne Youth Treatment Centre, conclude: 'it may be that as technology progresses these problems will be overcome; for the present we must work with these limitations'. I'm not quite sure what this means but it sounds, like other passages later in the book, somewhat chilling.

I would be more than happy to concede that these observations were just the irrelevant ramblings of the uninitiated, if the behavioural approach to children who offend could be shown to be effective and, more important, to bring about lasting change. The authors are alert to this issue but concede that 'preventing behaviour from returning to pre-intervention patterns soon after the programme is one of the most pressing problems associated with behavioural programmes'. At Achievement Place, for example, an Orwellian-sounding institution for young offenders in Kansas which they seemed to be rather impressed by and which uses a token economy, it was found that 'the positive effects on offending are largely lost at a one-year follow-up'.

And even if a behavioural programme could be shown to be more effective than the simple passage of time - since delinquency, like depression, has a

relatively short natural history - it is not clear from their 'meta-analysis' (studies of studies) of such programmes over the past 30 years, that it is the behavioural element rather than, say, the personality of the therapist or the therapeutic relationships per se which makes the difference.

But what is really missing from this book, which in some ways is admirable in the way it rigorously - perhaps doggedly sometimes - documents how behaviour programmes should be kept consistent and on track, is a sense of what the authors, as behaviourists, not only do with their clients at Glenthorne but also do to them.

We barely get a glimpse of therapeutic life in what Goffman would call a 'total institution', apart from the occasional vignette which illustrates little of substance. We are led to believe that their methods may include timing with a stopwatch how long a child calls out at night after going to bed or how long a child might spend watching TV, or using a decibel meter to measure a child's volume of speech. It is suggested that they might use closed circuit TV to monitor 'parts of the building where young people may remain unobserved for relatively long periods of time'.

It is even intimated that there might be a role for penile plethysmography (PPG) - an electronic device for measuring sexual arousal - in the treatment of young sex offenders. Tellingly, they write that PPG can 'provide an indication of (his) sexual interests, preferences and inhibitions' if used when the offender is exposed to 'stimuli of both deviant and non-deviant content' - pornography, it is suggested. What it can't reveal, of course, and what is far more important than a physical reaction to external stimuli, is the attitude or moral view of the person concerned both to the stimuli themselves and his reaction to them.

We can learn later on that so-called 'level systems give young people a structured and graded access to increasingly higher levels of privileges contingent upon their behaviour' and that 'young people on level 4 have no restrictions in a range of activities and reinforcers'. I have absolutely no doubt that the motives of those who devise schemes such as this are beyond reproach, and that they might well encourage children to behave better in the short-term - as they might encourage battery hens to lay more eggs - but what, in the long-term do they do to their recipients as people?

To take it a step further, what kind of parents do behaviourally treated youngsters become? Indeed, my thoughts, while the authors went on at length about designing and managing what they call the 'treatment regime', often drifted towards parenting. Their liking for the objective, observable and quantifiable - commendable but narrowly positivistic - and their disparagement of 'guesswork...personal bias and opinion', seem to negate the success of millions of parents in curbing the anti-social and delinquent tendencies of their children, relying precisely on these durable techniques. Maybe, though, they are being inadvertent behaviourists when they buy them sweets and magazines, described in this book as 'material back-up re-inforcers'.

My own theory is that you have to ask of every theory: how does it see people? Too often in this book they are seen as bundles or aggregates of behaviours instead of autonomous agents who act and make choices. Repeatedly - seventeen times in two pages at one point - the subjects of this book are described as 'difficult' and 'delinquent', thereby trapping them in a kind of conceptual and linguistic straitjacket, not to mention a regime from which it is far from clear whether they have a chance to opt out.

My objection to this book is not about its content so much as its tone; and not about its account of questionable ends justifying dubious means so much as the fact that I couldn't help but feel angry on behalf of the young offenders in question. This is my own 'private event', but maybe it wouldn't have happened if we had had a more public exposition of the authors' work at Glenthorne.

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Philip White and Tim Pickles
Performance Appraisal: A Handbook for Managers in Public and Voluntary Organisations
Russell House Publishing Ltd. 1995
ISBN 1 898924 45 7
£14.95
pp 93

MERLE DAVIES

This handbook is an attractive, easy to read publication which is presented in the form of an A4, ring-bound paperback. It could be used as an aide memoir for any public or voluntary sector manager or as a general guide to the first time appraiser. In the opening page it gives a simplistic breakdown of the key elements of staff appraisal and the rest of the handbook considers these in further detail. It reminds the appraiser of their role when appraising. The authors suggest that *'unless performance appraisal is framed within a learning and supportive context,* it fails to be an empowering tool for managers and staff'. This ethos runs throughout the book and the reader is left in no doubt about the benefits for both the organisation and staff if an effective appraisal system is in operation.

This handbook is made up of 6 Chapters which cover the 3 main areas of appraisal. In the first chapter there is an overview of how the authors believe performance appraisal should fit in to the wider range of manage-

ment systems. In doing so they do not shy away from some of the issues surrounding performance appraisal, such as power and whether appraisal is used to reward, punish or develop the person being appraised. It was interesting to note their views on 'power with integrity' when discussing the appraisal system and how training is essential for both parties to ensure that power is neither used nor abused in this professional relationship. They discuss who judges performance and how those judgements may be used. The objectivity of the appraiser is also questioned and they discuss different appraisal systems other than the commonly used 'top down' method. They also consider whether appraisal is for the development of the person or the service and summarise that both are inter-linked. Without the personal development of staff the development of the organisation is difficult. Staff they define as being 'the *how* that will achieve the *what* of the organisation's objectives'.

This chapter is specially relevant to the Youth Service as it considers how appraisal may 'empower' staff. Youth Service staff often discuss the empowerment of young people but the empowerment of staff, by many authorities, is seldom addressed. The authors maintain that 'Appraisal is only likely to be effective in improving staff confidence and satisfaction if it is firmly embedded within a strongly supportive and empowering culture for the organisation'.

The 4 middle chapters give practical guidance on setting up and conducting appraisal meetings with staff. They provide checklists and case studies to help anyone, who either appraises or is appraised, to understand exactly what is expected of both parties prior to, during and after an appraisal meeting. These chapters cover the appraisal tools and skills needed by the appraiser as well as the performance management skills required to allow appraisal to take place, concluding with an illuminating chapter on the 'potential pitfalls' of appraisal. This section again addresses the power that exists in an appraisal situation highlighting the need for that to be acknowledged, and questions are asked throughout of the reader, encouraging them to examine their own practice and systems of appraisal. Under the Chapter on 'Performance Appraisal Skills' there is a useful checklist for both the appraiser and the 'job holder' on points to be aware of before, during and after the meeting. An interesting aspect for managers, in the performance management skills' chapter, discusses how to manage staff who over perform as well as those who under perform. Helpful information is given to enable the manager to positively manage staff at both ends of the spectrum by way of checklists. The case study at the end of this chapter may well ring a bell with some managers.

The final section of the handbook is aimed at helping anyone who has been set the onerous task of establishing or reviewing an appraisal system. It takes the reader through the 10 key stages, from the decision to develop staff development and appraisal system through to its implementation and endorsement. It even gives advice on what to look for if one decides to involve a consultant in the process.

This handbook is useful for any organisation which wants to introduce staff appraisal into their current management system or, wishes to take a fresh look at their current system of appraisal. It is also useful as a checklist for organisations which already have well established appraisal systems, enabling them to consider their own implementation against the suggestions in the handbook. For both appraisers and appraisees it is a useful tool to refer to, several times whilst reading through the book I found myself reassessing my own practice. As a manager I found it a good refresher in managing and assessing staff with practical ideas which can be implemented in future appraisals.

Merle Davies *British Forces Germany Youth Service.*

David Smith
Criminology for Social Work
BASW/Macmillan 1995
ISBN 0-333-58751-0
pp 180

STEVE ROGOWSKI

David Smith and his colleagues at Lancaster University are well known in the youth justice field, not least because of their pioneering work in the field of intermediate treatment in the late 1970s. This helped to ensure that genuine alternatives to incarceration were created for heavy end offenders and that systems management strategies were developed aimed at keeping young offenders out of the youth justice system wherever possible. His latest book is the first to make explicit the relevance of criminology for social work practice and as such deserves to be widely read.

Smith notes that there are three views of criminology and its uses. These can be summarised as: criminology does have an influence on criminal justice practice and it should not; it does not have influence and it should have; and, the view this book takes, criminology does have influence and this is to be welcomed and increased. Concerning the latter view an obvious example is the influence of labelling theory in relation to the systems management strategies and the development of intermediate treatment. Although the links between criminological theory and practice are sometimes complex, they are nevertheless real and 'criminological insights and research have the potential to make social work with offenders both more critical and realistic'.

The book examines both sociological and psychological approaches to criminology and other chapters consider, for example: labelling theory

itself; community and crime including situational crime prevention (increasing security and surveillance) and social crime prevention which includes a broader community development approach; feminist criminology; and race and racism. The conclusion summarises the main arguments and draws on Braithwaite's 'reintegrative shaming'.

I found the summaries of the sociological theories of strain, control and cultural deviance particularly interesting. It is pointed out that they can be seen as complimentary rather than mutually exclusive and all can have an influence on social work practice. For example, strain theories start with the assumption that people are generally disposed in favour of law abiding behaviour but are driven to deviance by a powerful strain or pressure.

The pressure which provides the motivation towards crime comes from legitimate desires: people who offend want the same things as everyone else but lack legitimate means of achieving them, hence they are driven to crime. As strain theories emphasise the importance of economic circumstances in relation to offending, they remind practitioners that they are in a difficult situation in that there are obvious limits to what they can do faced with, for example, the Thatcherite policies of the last fifteen years and the resulting increases in poverty, unemployment, etc. Nevertheless, welfare rights knowledge and skills are important and perhaps also the radical social work notions of 'politicisation' and 'consciousness raising', albeit unfashionable at present, are relevant.

Turning to feminist criminology, Smith rightly argues it has enriched criminology in four ways: previous criminology neglected the offending of women; it has focussed attention on the highly gendered nature of criminal activity, asking why females commit so few offences and why males so many; attention has been drawn to the treatment of females within the criminal justice system; and finally, it has opened up new areas for study in stressing the importance of previous 'hidden' forms of crime like domestic violence and sexual abuse within the supposed safety of the family.

Again, in relation to race and racism, it is rightly pointed out that black people are disadvantaged as suspects, defendants and victims.

In the conclusion Smith asks and tries to answer 'where do we go from here?' He argues that one of the limitations of criminology is that it has tended to focus on concepts generated within itself rather than drawing on wider debates in the social sciences and philosophy. He draws on feminist thinking in psychology and philosophy, and Braithwaite's 'reintegrative shaming' showing how this can be done. Thus, feminist modes of thought differ from those typical of masculinity - for example, 'relationalism' is emphasised rather than individualism, empathy and concern for others rather than social distance and objectivity, and moral judgements are based on the consideration of real human situations rather than on abstract principles. As for 'reintegrative shaming', it is argued that crime can be best controlled through public shaming or the threat of it (moral education rather than rational deterrence) and this is only used when informal processes of shaming have failed to produce the desired effect. Practical examples quoted are the 'community conferences' and 'family

group conferences' in New Zealand. These aim to regulate agreed responses to offences by juveniles and involve offenders, victims and their supporters. In some ways they are similar to the reparation and mediation schemes developed in the 1980s in England which aimed to bring victims and offenders together. The emphasis is on the immediate and practical and on human relationships, and has much in common with feminist thinking. The direction for criminal justice for Smith is, therefore, towards stressing problem solving, promoting empathy, expressing care and reintegration rather than exclusion. He acknowledges this may sound Utopian, but a start has to be made.

This book is a good introduction to criminology and, as the title says, will be invaluable to social workers. It will also appeal and be informative to all those concerned with youth crime and ways of dealing with it.

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Isobel Anderson & Deborah Quilgars
Foyers for Young People: Evaluation of a Pilot Initiative
Centre for Housing Policy: University of York 1995
ISBN 1 874797 67 6
£10.00
pp 80

BARBARA IQBAL

In 1991 prompted by Shelter a number of British agencies, including private sector employers, became interested in the French foyer network which provides hostel accommodation for young people whilst facilitating labour mobility and training opportunities. The Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) was formed by Shelter and Grand Metropolitan Trust to promote and coordinate foyer development in Britain. A pilot initiative involving the conversion of five existing YMCA hostels and the development of two purpose built foyers was set up. This foyer pilot initiative is the subject of Anderson and Quilgars' report.

Before discussing the pilot initiative in detail, the background against which foyers were introduced to Britain, the agencies involved, and the formation of the FFY are described. The British version of the foyer concept, which links the provision of short-term accommodation to the completion of a personal action plan designed to equip people aged between 16 and 25 to make the transition to adulthood and to prepare them for employment, is outlined. The background information will be of particular interest to those who are not already aware of what foyers are, the issues they aim to address, and the group whose needs they aim to meet. The report also sum-

marises the French origins of foyer and considers the extent to which the French model needs adaptation for use in Britain.

Monitoring and evaluation of the initiative took place between February 1992 and March 1994. The pilot foyers are considered from the perspectives of YMCA/YWCA, housing associations, developers of the newbuild foyers, employers, the Employment Service and Training and Education Councils and YMCA foyer users. The five YMCA foyers were operational during the research and their support services, referral mechanisms and client group are analysed in detail.

The two purpose built foyers developed by London & Quadrant Housing Trust in Camberwell and North British Housing Association in Salford were under development. The report was therefore able to focus on design and location issues, capital and revenue funding, opportunity cost, and the co-ordination of inter-organisational links. Discussion of newbuild foyers also extends to staffing levels and expertise, foyer management, allocations and referral policies, and conditions of residence.

One chapter of the report is devoted to the views of YMCA foyer residents. Anderson and Quilgars found that foyer participants tend to be existing unemployed YMCA residents. Neither they nor existing staff were fully informed about foyer before the initiative was introduced. The linkage of housing provision to participation in an agreed training programme, was felt by some residents to be unfair. This report recommends that any explicit link between housing and training should be avoided and that, in the interests of equity, any contract should apply to all residents.

In general residents viewed foyer support services favourably with the take up of employment and training related services perceived as being higher than it might otherwise have been. Improvements suggested by participants centred on the provision of better information, increased staff expertise, and on widening the scope and scale of foyer activities. Flexible, client centred service and housing provision which takes youth preferences into account rather than standard provision throughout the foyer movement is recommended. Recommendations regarding appropriate services include training ranging from basic life skills to further education, assistance with accessing move on accommodation. Customer satisfaction is crucial to the success of foyers and the report suggests that steering groups should place greater emphasis on the consultation and participation of young people and staff at the design, development, policy formulation and implementation phases.

As foyer offers an integrated approach to youth homelessness, unemployment and skills deficit, the report stresses the importance of forging links between housing and training organisations, youth support agencies and private sector employers. The stages at which partners involved in foyer provision should be drawn in are seen as vital factors in securing their continuing involvement. The importance of coordination of services is stressed as is the dissemination of information about the referral process, admissions criteria, and policies and procedures in general.

Anderson and Quilgars recommend that Central Government generate a cross departmental approach in order to ensure that coherent policies are applied to future foyer development and funding. They note that the foyer concept has helped raise the profile of youth homelessness and unemployment at policy level and that this momentum should be maintained, possibly through the medium of the FFY. It is also suggested that foyers should network with existing local employment and homelessness forums so as to achieve an input to youth policy issues at local level.

On the evidence of this report, the addition of foyer support services to existing YM/YWCA facilities is relatively cheap. If a foyer network is developed in Britain the issue of whether existing hostels or purpose built facilities are the most economic and effective way forward will have to be addressed.

As the report aptly points out, sources of long term funding must be identified if the financial viability of foyer is to be secured. Factors cited to demonstrate the instability of foyer finance include: Housing Association Grant is not available for non-housing elements of foyer; housing association reserves, charitable donations and business sponsorship are finite resources which cannot be relied upon as a source of revenue or capital funding. Reliance on rental income is subject to the vagaries of Housing Benefit regulations and void rates. Affordability is an issue since the cost of servicing loans could raise rent levels to the extent that residents could not afford to take up offers of low paid employment. The point is also driven home that, in a multi-agency environment, bidding for funds can be problematic given the need to meet the criteria of diverse organisations.

This report makes an important contribution to the debate on the extent to which foyer can provide a solution to youth homelessness and unemployment. The conclusions and recommendations detailed in the report are firmly grounded in the evidence cited. The report will be of service to policy makers and organisations wishing to evaluate their existing or future participation in foyer projects alike. It will also be of interest to anyone wishing to know more about foyer provision in a British setting.

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Thomas P. Gullotta, Gerald R. Adams & Raymond Montemayor (eds)
Substance Misuse in Adolescence
Sage Publications 1994
ISBN 0 8039 5878 1
£16.95 (pbk)

TRACY SHILDRICK

As a sociologist with a particular interest in drug use amongst young people I found this book disappointing. *Substance Misuse in Adolescence* is an edited collection, containing a series of articles by American authors which aims to provide 'a comprehensive overview of the field as it currently exists' (pvii). Accordingly, the chapters cover a multiplicity of issues, ranging from personality factors associated with substance 'misuse', through to the pharmacological aspects of psychoactive substances. The book emanates largely from a psychological perspective and the contributions reflect this. The primary focus is upon 'misuse' or problem use of drugs by young people which in their perspective includes both legal and illegal drugs. Unfortunately the nearest thing to a definition of what might constitute 'misuse' does not appear until the penultimate chapter, where it is somewhat simplistically and ambiguously described as 'when a drug is taken or administered under circumstances and at doses that significantly increase the hazard to the individual or to others' (p235). Indeed the notion of 'misuse' is never reflexively problematized at all, from the outset the authors assume that all drug use is 'misuse'.

Chapter One explores briefly some of the historical aspects of five specific drugs. It looks in turn at tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and heroin, in order to demonstrate that drug use is not a phenomena specific to contemporary society and also that there is no discernible relationship between the potential harm of a drug and its legal status. Surprisingly, there is no mention here of amphetamines or the group of drugs which have become known as 'dance drugs' in the U.K., such as M.D.M.A. (Ecstasy). Given the increasing popularity of such drugs, as evidenced by a growing social scientific literature in this country, it is odd that they are not discussed. It is clear that the authors write from a narrow and specific perspective and that their concerns are largely for drug use in the U.S.A.

The book goes on to present a series of chapters on factors which may affect whether young people 'misuse' drugs, and conversely what factors are important in helping them to resist such temptations. Predictable factors such as 'dysfunctional' family background and poor educational attainment are explored along with other factors such as a lack of religious beliefs. Very little attention is paid to the impact of unemployment on the ways in which young people use drugs, or to the influence of the 'rave/dance' culture that has become popular in recent years. Given that the focus of the book is substance misuse, one can only guess as to whether the use of Ecstasy and other 'dance' drugs is perceived by the authors to be either unproblematic or unimportant. Again it is the over-emphasis placed on the

concept of misuse which I found to be a problem. The authors disregard the view that drug use might for some groups, in some circumstances, be or be seen to be unproblematic or even a positive experience. For instance there is no qualitative appreciation of the appeal of the drugs to people (young or otherwise), nor are there any 'insider' accounts of drug use by young people which may serve to disrupt the view that drug use is always bad. As a result, although the chapters provide a swathe of evidence to support their claims, the analysis remains overly positivistic and as a result not particularly informative.

The remainder of the book deals with a disparate array of issues, ranging from how to treat those who 'misuse' drugs to questions relating to the possible legalisation of certain drugs. Chapter seven is clearly aimed at medical personnel, discussing the pharmacological aspects of certain drugs, and the implications for those professionals attempting to treat young drug 'misusers'. As with the rest of the book the whole analysis is underpined by the notion that drug 'misuse' can be detected, treated and analysed at the level of the individual. Drug 'misuse' is consequently seen to be the result of psychological dysfunction within the individual. This seems a rather limited view, especially given that a whole array of evidence suggests that drug taking amongst young people is rarely something which they engage in alone, but is more often than not something which takes place in groups. Indeed it seems that the authors of this collection restrict themselves to a very insular view of a very complex issue.

Overall, the authors provide lots of studies and evidence to support their views. Nevertheless, the views are clearly myopic in their focus completely neglecting many important aspects of adolescent drug use. As a result the book is likely to be of limited value to professional drug workers, students or academics interested in a more holistic account of the debates surrounding youth and drug use.

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Clyde Binfield
YMCA 150 Years on the Winning Side
YMCA George Williams College 1995
ISBN 1 870319 08 7
pp 50

JOHN KNOX

The title was a mis-print for '150 years on the young side'. But the error was allowed to stand by the author because he liked the tones and the ambiguities. He says that much in the book is an essay in Christian ambi-

guity - like 'empowering the powerless', 'the fascination of any Christian movement lies in its ambivalence: the inescapable fallenness of its humanity, as well as the selflessness, the credibility, the leadership and the service, the constant possibility and the fact of redemption', 'though the young are always there...they are young for so short a time', 'the winning side is inevitably the ageing side'.

Binfield is a professional historian and a widely respected expert in church history. He himself says that historians are nosey sceptics with a squirrel-like fascination for 'facts'. The main concern, however, is less with facts than with 'the myths which shape the facts and make sense of them'. He has been involved in the YMCA for 30 years and is currently Chairman of the English National Council of YMCAs. His detailed knowledge of the history of the YMCA and time spent in researching old correspondence and papers is very evident in this book which really is a lecture put into print.

The lecture was given in 1994 and shares fascinating insights into the impact of the YMCA in places around the world, much of it in the past 50 years. In places the lecture feels like taking gigantic steps from one country to the other with bewildering rapidity.

Of Communism, Binfield says its hard to over estimate its impact on the YMCA. He talks of tenuous contacts maintained during the Communist era in Central and Eastern Europe. An American in 1959 wrote of meeting Miroslav Feyrer from Prague YMCA: 'we could not talk with him too freely because he was being watched, knew who was watching him, and told us so. It is a very heart breaking experience to see this country...suffering as it is...'. Binfield also speaks of a show trial in Budapest when the YMCA had been singled out rather than the reformed church because it was 'considered to be a fascist organisation'.

Mention is also given to Haile Selassie and his last days in power in Ethiopia. For the five months following his fall from power the World Alliance of YMCA President was also the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. He was Endalkachew Makonnen. On Sunday 24 July 1974 he was shot with 58 others in front of a firing squad. He was still World President of the YMCA at the time.

The lecture also tells of the day after the Sharpeville shooting in South Africa. Richard Van Buuren was National General Secretary of the YMCA in South Africa. He spoke prophetically that 'things...will have to get worse before they start to get better...before, in agony and exhaustion, we finally find each other as a people and our way forward as a nation. This will come because it must come...but it is not yet at hand'.

Fascinating as the stories are, my main concern about this publication is the seemingly random selection of the incidents quoted. It is sometimes hard to link the extracts quoted with what was actually going on at the time. Perhaps it is because I am not steeped in YMCA history that I miss the point at times. For someone without a detailed knowledge of the people and incidents quoted it is difficult to see the significance of all the

events and the sequence of events in the book is not always clear. So while the lecture gives invaluable insight into events in the YMCA around the world, it reads like a book for an insider to the YMCA with an existing background knowledge. That is a great pity because some of the incidents and letters quoted give views of world events which are not readily available elsewhere.

We can, as Geoffrey Palmer says in the preface, 'hear' the author's voice. His enthusiasm and thorough research shows through. It does seem a pity however that the lecture was not expanded into something larger which would have given space to make the necessary links for those who do not know the inside of the story so well.

Binfield finishes by paying tribute to George Williams the founder of the YMCA and the YMCA itself: 'here, nonetheless, was a man, as here is a movement, on the winning side. And a Christian historian, of all people, is duty bound to add: in God's good time'.

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Mike Roberts
Skills for Self-Managed Learning:
Autonomous learning by research projects
Education Now Books
ISBN 1-871526-15-9
£6.95 (pbk)
pp 59

MALCOLM PAYNE

When I agreed to review this little book (on the basis of knowing only its title, and not including the subtitle) I assumed it would have wide applicability. Self-managed learning is an exciting concept. It conjures up ideas of autonomous learners - people in charge of their own destinies; development 'growth' change. Indeed, Roberts quotes some of these heady aspirations at the beginning of chapter 1.

Unfortunately, the book's applicability is severely limited simply because it generally fails to make the conceptual leap from its specific focus - an examination of the skills used by sixth formers undertaking a school-based General Studies research project - to any general theory of learning. In fact, it does the opposite: It takes some philosophical and theoretical models, such as those of Dewey[1] and Ginnis[2] and attempts to discover, through a research process, the extent to which associated skills were required or acquired by students.

Nothing wrong with that you might context say. Indeed not, but the result is an examination of a restricted pedagogy in a restricted: useful to teachers guiding research projects perhaps, but not to the wider education arena. The potential versatility of the concept of self-managed learning is thus left unexplored. Even a small leap - from learning in research projects to the wider arena of encouraging learner autonomy in school and college for example - would have served to broaden its appeal. But the style in which Roberts illustrates his findings; often a 'one-liner' followed by a direct quotation, does not serve well as a vehicle for useful generalisation.

Putting to one side the research methods employed, the book begins with a brief discussion of the range of skills required for research before examining each in turn. The simple model has four steps; planning, gathering, processing and presenting skills, each of which is the subject of the chapters which follow. Chapters examining what Roberts refers to as 'underlying core skills' (time-management, social skills, reflective, self-appraisal and help-seeking skills), student supervision, and a brief conclusion complete the book.

Roberts finds that teachers do not have a clear understanding of the skills students require for self-managed learning. Instead, their focus tends to be on the product: completion of students' projects. He briefly offers some didactic suggestions at the end: profiling students' skills; encouraging investigation; and offering one-to-one interviews and consultancy. Useful enough I suppose...but by page 59 this reader was longing for him to pose some of the unasked questions: why did some students become relatively autonomous and others not? What are the variables? Was learner autonomy equated only with skill - or were other factors at work? Did (apparent) student choice increase motivation? Or decrease confidence? What skills, knowledge and attitudes are required by teachers (and others) to encourage self-managed learning? What implications might this have for educational practice? And so on.

The back cover of the book tells us: 'This book is vital reading for any learner or teacher keen to acquire or promote autonomous skills through project work and support the development of effective learner-managed learning.' It is relatively systematic, brief and to the point, but 'vital' reading it is not.

References

1 Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education,* New York, Macmillan
2 Ginnis, P. (ed) (1992) *Learner-Managed Learning.* Ticknall, Education Now Books

Malcolm Payne *lectures in youth and community work at De Montfort University, Leicester.*

Leslie J. Francis & William K. Kay
Teenage Religion and Values
Gracewing - Fowler Wright Books
ISBN 0 85244282 3
£9.99 (pbk)
pp 224

MAXINE GREEN

If you want some statistical, quantitative data about teenage religion and values it would be worth buying this book. Francis and Kay have collected information from 13,000 year 9 and 10 school attenders (14 and 15 years) about the beliefs and values these young people hold. The topics they focus on include school, well being, sexuality, right and wrong, substance use, leisure, work, worries, the supernatural, religious beliefs, politics, the church, society and their concerns.

Each area of study is treated in the same way. Up to ten questions are asked for each section which can be agreed with, disagreed with, or a 'not certain' response can be registered. For example in the section on Sexual Morality the question 'Is it wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage?' is asked.

The authors have analysed the results to these questions in the same way throughout the book; by gender, by year at school, by belief, by frequency of church attendance and finally by denomination. Using this technique they are then able to show links between beliefs the young people have and the values they hold. For example, they show whether a regular church attender is more or less likely to think it wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage than a non-attender (25% of church attenders think it wrong compared with 10% of non-attenders).

As the authors have results from two consecutive school years, they can show how the beliefs and values change in time. They thus conclude that young people are more likely to believe in their horoscopes as they get older and move from year 9 to year 10. Gender differences are also highlighted and they show, for example, that more girls (33%) than boys (27%) believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This huge data base reveals a lot of interesting information, some of it surprising. Francis and Kay show that young people are amazingly positive about work and career commitments. Ninety Five percent of year 9 think it important to work hard when they get a job. This figure alters with belief, with 96% of theists opting to work hard compared with 90% of atheists. Also denomination makes a difference with the Protestant Work Ethic registering strongly among the free church attenders with 99% registering the importance of working hard.

A quantitative research approach to beliefs and values is useful, especially for professionals who need empirical data to help plan their work. However, as a youth worker I could imagine several young people answering

'yes' to a question but with different reasons for doing so. For example the question 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God' could be answered as a 'fact', from Religious Studies at school and does not necessarily show that the young person has a Christian faith. Ten percent of atheists agreed with this question, that means conclusions that are drawn form this need to be carefully thought through. If there is this degree of care taken in applying the results, then they can be extremely valuable.

Each chapter ends with a section that explores implications of the research that are thought provoking and useful. However, it is important to note that belief systems are complex and I would have appreciated evidence from a smaller qualitative study to explore some motivations or reasons that young people had when they answered the questions. This sort of supplementary study would help endorse some of the conclusions that the authors make in the text. For example they speculate that 'it is probable that smoking is attractive to adolescent girls because it conveys an impression of adulthood and at the same time has a calming effect and reduces appetite, thereby helping slimmers' (p112).

Each chapter ends with a section which explores implications of the research, which are thought provoking and useful, though caution is needed with the occasional general remark in this section of the chapter which is not evidenced. Also it is important to note that the views are from school attenders, which means that the views of those not attending school are not registered.

The book is a useful data base and is accessible enough to 'dip in' and get some information on a particular issue or area of importance to young people. As well as being useful as a source of empirical data, individual statements would be an excellent discussion starter with groups of young people.

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Jones G
Leaving Home
Open University Press 1995
ISBN 0 335 192858 (hbk)
ISBN 0 335 19284 X (pbk)
£37.50 (hbk)
£12.99 (pbk)
pp 178

Jones G
'Family Support for Young People'
Family Policy Studies Centre 1995
ISBN 0 907051 78 2
£7.50
pp 36

ANDREW WEST

These two studies focus in on a simple question - that policy around young people leaving home and becoming independent assumes the presence of parental support. Although those who work with young people will know (or think they know) the answer, as Jones points out 'there has been relatively little research either to confirm or refute these assumptions'.

These studies demonstrate the fallacy of government (and perhaps popular) assumptions - or should it be ideologies? It seems rather kind to dress up such assumptions as ideology, whilst it is unkind to think of parental support as just abstract ideology, because parents in many circumstances do support - but not for ideological reasons, and this is not the end of the matter. Amidst a welter of evidence, especially quantitative data, Jones shows the complexities involved in leaving home. She emphasises the notion of *transition,* as have other writers recently, and opens the question as to whether *leaving home* is the end of such or just the process.

The book *Leaving Home* opens with a good summary of 'the construction of a social problem' followed by an examination of trends and traditions in leaving home. These two chapters, offering some historical and theoretical perspectives, are particularly interesting in providing an overview. In succeeding chapters Jones is bound up with the results of her empirical and largely quantitative data which, whilst useful and shedding new light, also reads at times haltingly as statements. Descriptions and propositions are developed by frequent reference to that data and to other research. It is an academic text and demonstrates scholarship: the problem is that the research has showed such a number of variations and complexities in this process of leaving home toward a finality of independence, that all categories require caveats and permutations. The second two chapters give some idea of the problem - 'leaving home' and;' returning home', as each is structured by gender and class, to say nothing of motivation for first leaving and an urban-rural divide. From here Jones goes on to examine the notion and reality of support in the transition and then the problems of 'The "youth housing" market'. This last is particularly apposite in the current

housing climate (and policies) and considers both the shortage of housing and the oft-repeated myth linking young women, pregnancy, babies and access to housing. The penultimate chapter examines stereotypes in the light of biographies.

Family Support for Young People is a report of research from the Scottish Young People's survey 1987/89, one of the main sources of data used in the *Leaving Home* book. The report focuses on support on leaving home offered by families, both practical and emotional, and also considers the phenomenon of leaving and then returning to the parental or family home before leaving and making some sort of final transition to independence. The report is generally well-laid out and easy to read, with highlighted quotes and some tables offering data from particular biographies.

In both the report and the book the centrality of transition is bound up with citizenship. This 'involves a package of rights and responsibilities which accumulate during youth and young people progress from an indirect relationship with the state, mediated by their parents, to a direct relationship as adults' (*Leaving Home* p. 19). The problem, for Jones (and many others) is that leaving home has been regarded as a 'normal' part of the process of moving from childhood to citizenship. Yet as is now so plainly evident on the streets, and a subject of speeches by politicians of both Conservative and Labour parties to the point of moral panic, this process for many young people is not possible. Thus, 'now, in the mid-1990s, there is more talk about preventing young people from leaving home than celebrating a major event in the transition to adulthood. Leaving home is seen as inherently problematic' *(Leaving Home* p. 1-2). Jones is right to suggest the focus has turned to keeping young people at home rather than examining the shortage of appropriate housing and the poverty and inequality of opportunity which structures so many lives. However, she also points to the complexity of the transition in reality of individual lives and motivations, and the problems of homelessness thus become diluted within the overall approach, although there is redress in the conclusions, where the responsibility of the state in withdrawing benefits amidst poverty is clearly marked.

There are some drawbacks in the use of this primarily quantitative data from Scotland in the attempt to draw a comparative and overall picture for Great Britain (which the author acknowledges). The data rather plays down what is common to those who work with young people's housing problems - that is, the extent of youth homelessness and the accompanying feeling of being trapped, and the extent of sexual and violent abuse that precipitates much leaving home and prevents return. These are all acknowledged as problems and that they may be understated by the method of data gathering - subjective personal experience would suggest that they are understated.

Another key issue deriving from the nature of the data is a focus apparently on a white heterosexual population. There is acknowledgement of the importance of class differences but, for example in the consideration of the youth housing market and the striving for 'nice' areas, there could

also be a consideration of additional disadvantages and problems, faced by young black people among others. The housing problems, transition and leaving home of young people with disabilities also require some mention, as do the issues of 'coming out' and leaving home for young gay men and lesbians. These are not issues of 'political correctness' but recognition of real social disadvantage and personal circumstances which structure peoples lives.

These two studies, however, remain important in challenging prevailing assumptions about not only the nature and extent of family support for young people leaving home, but the possibility of that support in poor families. The complexity of circumstances is clearly demonstrated, but at the core the inequalities faced by young people, and a real lack of rights show through. As Jones puts it 'two processes are occurring, whereby young people as a social group are increasingly marginalized, while inequalities among the young are increasing. The result is that while the risks for all young people have increased, some are excluded from participation in society' (Leaving Home p. 8).

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Kieran O'Hagan and Karola Dillenburger
The Abuse of Women Within Childcare Work
Open University Press 1995
ISBN 0335 19261 0 (hbk)
ISBN 0335 19260 2 (pbk)
£37.50 (hbk)
£12.99 (pbk)

PAM CARTER

How are we to make sense of a book which makes visible the abuse of women within a considerable amount of routine child care practice but is so apparently hostile to feminism? The first chapter of O'Hagan and Dillenburger's book begins with an account of two social workers conducting an investigation into an apparently 'non-accidental' injury to a child. Focusing closely on this encounter between a mother and what they describe as 'the child care system' they encourage the reader to focus on the mother's experience, rather than the social work perspective, within this situation. Her fear, anger, isolation and feeling of being trapped seem completely understandable. Mothering as an experience of responsibility without power is accurately and evocatively described. The authors are able to give the reader an insight into the mother's world as she tries to

manage her own feelings of fear and uncertainty while reassuring and comforting her child. This sensitive piece of writing does have the desired effect of shifting the gaze away from the professionals and the child and demands that we think about how women experience these kinds of encounters. In this way we are encouraged to ask questions about why it is mainly women who are the targets for such interventions while their own needs are not on the agenda. Such questions and observations are the stuff of feminism. It is feminist influenced research and practice which has demanded that we ask questions such as this, that we see women's knowledge and experience of the world as worth thinking about in its own right. But rather than acknowledging and building on the fruits of this engagement and scholarship O'Hagan and Dillenburger suggest that feminists are somehow part of the problem of the 'child care system'.

Their hostility to, even stereotyping of, feminists, is revealed early in the book:

> *Feminism has been a principal driving force in the exposure of child sexual abuse. This exposure depended primarily not upon feminist dogma and ideology, but on the testimonies of sexually abused women for whom feminists more than anyone else provided refuge, support and counselling...these experiences are what gave credibility to feminist claims about the prevalency of child sexual abuse. It imbued feminists with a near missionary zeal to expose it and a conviction that sexual abuse was the worst possible kind of abuse (page17).*

As an 'out' feminist I have learned to be cautious of words like dogma, ideology and missionary zeal when applied to feminism. There is a curious rehashing of feminist theory and practice here. The story from a feminist perspective would include women sharing experience of abuse through consciousness raising and later rape crisis work and building theory through engagement with these experiences. Here we are offered a picture of feminists with a spare theory who are conveniently rescued by 'real' women (who presumably are not real feminists!). These authors go on to accuse feminists of not really being interested in the abuse of women within child care and of only being concerned with 'broad brush' approaches to understanding women's lives - 'the structural, political, theoretical, historical underpinnings' (page 18) - rather than with the detail. Feminists however have for a long time seen the connection between the personal and political as being their central focus for analysis. O'Hagan and Dillenburger appear to want to separate feminists from women and to cast themselves in the role of rescuers through their own 'correct' analysis and solution. It is, I believe, their wish to supply the single correct analysis (eureka!) to the problem they have constructed - an abusive child care 'system' - which explains the contradiction between their sensitive handling of case material and their dismissal of feminism.

Is the idea of the child care system a useful one in this context? I believe there is reason to be cautious about it although it is certainly the case that

people can be treated badly in a way which no single individual intends. The very notion of 'structural' causes of oppression which are dismissed by these authors when attributed to feminism contain many of the same ideas. But there are also limitations arising from such a disembodied notion of an abuser. It ignores the fact that much abuse is deliberately perpetrated, that some people get pleasure from hurting others, and that there are contradictions and complexities within the social work world. In short 'the child care system' is less monolithic and seamless than this construction allows.

The third section of the book provides the supposed solution to the problem of the abuse of women. Again feminists and those influenced by feminist ideas will be unnerved to find the solution lies in science:

> *We will introduce a new theoretical approach that recognizes the quality of men and women in disciplined, scientific analysis rather than in gender dominated dogma, opinion or obsession (page 152).*

We are then told that workers need a firm theoretical basis for their practice and that this can be found in 'behaviour analysis' which can produce 'outstanding effects' (p. 155) and lead to 'a new thorough, non-abusive approach' to child care work. Such faith in a magic bullet seems odd in the 1990s. In the end this solution is unconvincing especially as the authors acknowledge that they are offering 'only a tentative and rather brief treatise of this theoretical approach (page 166). But it is not the brevity of their account which is the problem. Rather it is the very idea that a single perspective developed through 'science' and ignoring a wealth of feminist work conducted over more than two decades can prevent the abuse of women. There are nevertheless some important questions raised in the book and some sensitive handling of case material. Social work students and others can certainly make use of this provided they do so critically.

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Ronald J Angel and Jacqueline L Angel
Painful Inheritance : Health and the New Generation of Fatherless Families
The University of Wisconsin Press 1994
ISBN 0299 13960 6
£46.95 (hbk)
£17.95 (pbk)
pp 264

ANNA WHALEN

Taking a very broad definition of health, the authors have studied single parent families in the USA, with a specific focus on those experiencing poverty. Single mothers face a higher risk than those with partners of becoming and

remaining poor. The links between poverty, health and gender are well established, but this book attempts to review a wide variety of research in order to examine the implications for single parent families. Race, gender, age, government policy, family support programmes, father absence, divorce and multi-generational households are examined in relation to impact on health. This book provides a wealth of information on many linked issues, is thought-provoking and ultimately can only increase commitment to finding solutions to eradicate poverty for children.

There are many useful parallels which make this text interesting and easily applicable to the situation of single parent families in Britain. The recent concern voiced in the USA about single parents is all too familiar here, accusations around rising costs to tax-payers, dependence on the state and the levelling of blame for the disintegration of family values and hence society are all mentioned. However, this book does not try hard enough to unravel the 'chicken and egg' scenario it paints about family structure and poverty. Does the decline of two-parent families lead to chronic poverty or does chronic poverty lead to the breakdown of traditional family structure? I didn't want an answer but a bit more discussion would have been interesting.

It was a surprise to find, tucked away in the text, the information that the total number of births to 'unmarried' mothers in the USA hasn't actually risen since the 1960s. What has changed is that the number of children born to married couples has lessened significantly. This has pushed up the percentage of children born to single/unmarried mothers, although the actual number born annually has remained fairly constant. Less single mothers now go on to marry, and thus there is a growth in the overall statistics. The Angels also point out that single parents generally are better off financially than ever before. What has grown, both in Britain and the USA is the moral panic around single families, and the chronic level of poverty some experience over protracted periods of time. These two factors combine to make a study of the health of single parent families very timely.

Using a variety of European countries, the authors do some comparative study of family support programmes which either provide health care or relieve poverty and thus indirectly improve the health of both parent and children. Predictably Britain falls short in relation to other European counterparts in the provision of early childhood care or education. Cheap or free daycare provision as an investment in children and a means by which single parents can take up employment is not a feature of US family support either. The outcome of the comparison is to demonstrate the USA's traditional hostility to the notion of a welfare state. The predicament of the USA serves as a warning to those who seek to further cut back state funded services. It is this difference, rather than the many parallels which make this book a valuable read to those in Britain concerned with the situation of many single parent families.

The two-tier health system described in the USA gives ammunition to those who seek to reverse Britain's journey down this path. Medicaid is the government funded health scheme for those living in poverty.

Because it is means-tested, Medicaid covers only half of those living below the poverty line; those who move in and out of employment or who are low-paid are often not eligible. Statistics serve to confirm the dangers of this system: 'in 1986 nearly 20% of children under 13 had no health insurance' (p48) and, there are '35 million Americans who are currently uninsured' (p208). The cost of providing a universal health service is obviously unappealing, but political culture of the USA is not just concerned about hard dollars - the loss of personal choice is apparently another major obstacle. This is an argument used increasingly by the Right in Britain but will ring hollow with those who are finding the fund-holding GP service in Britain restricting rather than increasing their ability to get access to health care.

The high proportion of Black and Hispanic single parent families in the USA is examined in the book. The authors miss an opportunity to examine some of the historical factors associated with institutional racism, such as enforced family separation and Black migrant labour patterns, which would enhance understanding about Black family structures today. As a result there is no real acknowledgement of the white cultural values which are the yardstick by which normality is measured.

Research done in the 1980s is cited claiming that young parents (ie under 20 years old) and their children, in relation to older parents, face increased likelihood of disadvantage, including low-pay, unemployment, behavioural problems and dropping out of school. What would be useful here is some further research on family support services available and accessible to young parents. Without this perspective it is easy to fall into yet again blaming young parents for what appear to be inherent weaknesses. A similar lack of context initially caused me some confusion; references to the high health risks to young mothers and their new babies were made without an explanation. Later in the text it transpired that the risks were linked to young parents lack of access to pre- and post-natal services, rather than any physiological problem.

Any serious attempt to look at the long term health implications for single parent families, although welcome is likely to fall into the trap of making generalisations. This book is no exception, and whilst it makes very interesting reading, statements were not always justified. As a result, there appeared to be a switch between socio-economic and seemingly pathological explanations at times.

Solutions offered in the concluding chapter are acknowledged as not being radical. However, the purpose of the research was not to offer answers, but to ask questions in order to provoke more research. The final conclusion is that it is not family structure which ultimately causes health problems but poverty. The challenge posed is to find ways of ending the exclusion of chronically poor families from society, and so ensure better physical and mental health for all children.

Anna Whalen, *works for Save the Children's Equal Chances Project in Hull.*

Pat Ainley
Degrees of Difference: Higher Education in the 1990s
Lawrence and Wishart 1994
ISBN 0 85315 804 5
£12.99
pp 201

Phillip Brown and Richard Scase
Higher Education and Corporate Realities: Class, culture and the decline of graduate careers
University College London Press 1995
ISBN 1-85728-104-7
£12.95
pp 197

TONY JEFFS

Unlike some policy initiatives mass higher education stole up on us, climbing the back stairs arriving unheralded. Unlike the NHS or compulsory schooling no single Act of Parliament or date can be set aside to celebrate its inception - it simply materialised partially by design but also as a consequence of demand and mass youth unemployment.

Sixty years ago the student population of England and Wales was between 40 and 50 thousand of whom over a third were trainee teachers in predominantly single sex colleges. A quarter attended Oxbridge where men vastly outnumbered women, those from working class backgrounds were rarely encountered and almost all arrived hot-foot from public or grammar school. Today the student population in the UK hovers around the million mark and although funding is not planned to match future growth expansion is envisaged by governments and institutions alike. Indeed if it slowed down too abruptly or was reversed some universities face the real threat of bankruptcy, an occurrence American academics are familiar with but their English counterparts are not. Almost half of the student body are now women, more than 50 per cent are over 21 when they enlist, 10 per cent are from the ethnic minorities and most are destined to become first-generation graduates. These texts do not offer more than a cursory account of how those changes came to take place but each endeavours to provide an account of what it is like to be a student in the new world of mass higher education.

Degrees of Difference is the product of a comparative study of the student experience of two universities. One designated Home Counties the other Inner City, nom de plumes which convey their physical locality whilst barely concealing identities. Staff were also interviewed but the focus remains on the students. The former was a 'new university' created in the 1960s now perceived by staff and students alike as second-rank - employing and catering for those who couldn't manage Oxbridge. The students are mainly fresh from school, living away from the parental home for the first

time; young people who 'knowing they are neither exceptionally gifted nor exceptionally rich...played down their intellectual interest and appeared often indifferent to their course of study' (p. 55). The picture which emerges is of a middle brow and middle class student body taught by staff many of whom at best consider them less than stimulating and at worse a distraction; an inconvenience preventing them from 'getting on' with their research and careers.

Inner City is an ex-Polytechnic. Here students are far more likely to be women, older, working class, black and part-time. They are also it seems more likely to be appreciative of the experience. Until recently many of them were also offered a unique opportunity within British HE, the chance to study for a degree via Independent Study (IS). A fascinating chapter describes the development and demise of IS, recounting the experiences of some of the students who undertook it. IS allowed students to identify an area of special interest which 'was then seen as a vehicle for developing the generalised knowledge and higher level cognitive skills' (p. 123). Students with the help of tutors and the support of other students would negotiate supervision and learning programmes from staff throughout the University, learning via a combination of taught inputs and research. In a sector increasingly dominated by crude vocationalism, modularisation and a managerial structure seeking to impose control at every level over staff and students this type of innovation does not comfortably fit and Ainley provides a valuable account of why IS was axed and why it should be revived and introduced elsewhere.

Brown and Scase also feature somewhere dubbed Inner City University as well as an institution remarkably similar to Home Counties. In addition they ventured into Oxbridge to interview students. Their focus is on the links between the experience of being a student and subsequent labour market destinations. Follow up interviews took place with those employed as well as with employers. Sadly they did not re-interview unemployed graduates or those who opted to drop-out of the labour market. It all makes for entertaining but predictable reading. Class, gender and race, we learn, have a profound impact on the type of employment secured just as they did on the university individuals attend. The assumed status in the eyes of employers of the university makes a difference. How you speak, your interests and how closely you resemble the identi-kit image those doing the selecting have of themselves count for a lot in the current job market - but then haven't they always? They also predictably found amongst graduates 'widespread disillusionment with the realities of working life' (p. 147).

Each of the texts questions the assumption that further expansion of HE will provide a stimulus for higher productivity, and national economic well-being. They paint a picture of university being somewhere you cannot afford to forego but which will for most serve as a conduit leading towards a destination they probably predicted they would arrive at anyway. All the authors agree that unless radical reforms are implemented we will probably acquire an even more dramatically tiered HE system

than currently exists. One with Ivy League institutions catering for the financially and academically 'elite', hand-picking students, cornering the bulk of the available research funding and exploiting a sellers market by, for example, charging top-up fees. Below them a pecking order with, at the bottom, teaching only institutions catering for low income students most of whom will be struggling to balance full-time employment, home responsibilities and as much study as they can fit in. What sets the Ainley book apart is that he is rightly appalled by such a prospect and devotes considerable space to setting out alternative policies which if adopted might lead eventually to a more egalitarian and socially responsible HE sector. His willingness to tackle two difficult questions and seek alternatives to the depressing present and unappealing future make this an important book.

***Tony Jeffs** works for University of Durham.*

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Thus, for a book:
Hutson, S., and Jenkins, R. (1989) *Taking the Strain: Families, Unemployment and the Transition to Adulthood,* Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

For an article:
Willis, P. (1984) 'Youth Unemployment: Thinking the Unthinkable', in *Youth and Policy,* vol.2, no.4, pp. 17-24.

And for a report:
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