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# EXPLORING ENGLISH CHARACTER

BY

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## IDEAS ABOUT SEX

MOST ENGLISH PEOPLE'S views on sexual morality are more rigid than their personal practice; quite a number condemn their own lapses from their own high standards of complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity after: 'I did, but I wish I had not' is a recurring theme.

This does not mean that the English tend to underestimate the importance of sexual love inside marriage. To the question: 'In marriage do you think sexual love is: very important; fairly important; not very important; not important at all?' 55 per cent answered 'very important' and 36 per cent 'fairly important'; the small group of 6 per cent who answer 'not very important' consist predominantly of the very young, the old and the poor; and the tiny group who say it is not important at all or don't answer are almost entirely old women.

Men, particularly between the ages of 18 and 34 in the medium income groups, stress the major importance of sex in marriage; women, particularly those under 18 and over 45 in the upper middle and lower middle classes, and also the unmarried, are more likely to qualify it as 'fairly important' with other components playing a major rôle.

Despite the importance that the majority of English people give to sexual love in marriage, the majority think that both sexes should approach marriage with no prior sexual experience. Slightly more than half the population in the case of men, and nearly two-thirds in the case of women, disapprove of any sexual experience before marriage. Roughly an eighth say that they do not know. A third of the population in the case of men, and just under a quarter in the case of women, are in favour of some sexual experience before marriage.

In the case of both sexes, men are markedly more in favour of some pre-marital sexual experience than are women; 40 men to 26 women approve of a young man having some experience, and 30 men to 14 women approve of a young woman doing so. As will be discussed at some length later, quite a number of women support a 'double standard' of sexual morality in which what is sauce for the gander is taboo for the goose; men are much more likely to invoke a 'single standard' in which they will not deny to others what they claim for themselves.

The most numerous advocates for sexual experience before marriage are the divorced and separated; and many of them advance their own unhappy stories of ignorance or maladjustment to justify their choice. The single are slightly, but only slightly, more in favour of such experience than the married; the widowed are least in favour.

The very young tend to be more severe in their ethical judgments than their elders, though nearly a quarter of the under 18's have not made up their minds; the height of permissiveness is reached by the people aged between 25 and 34, but it is only a small difference; people between the ages of 18 and 24 are just as severe in their moral notions as people 20 years older. The old people, aged 65 and over, tend to be very non-committal; they have markedly fewer advocates for sexual experience before marriage than their juniors.

With one exception, social class makes remarkably little difference to the views on the desirability or otherwise of experience before marriage: a far higher proportion of the lower working class are in favour of sexual experience before marriage than of any other group. It is only in this group that there is an absolute majority in favour of pre-marital experience for men; and a third are in favour of it for women too. There is a folk tradition that in some of the metropolitan and rural groups of the lower working class marriage normally follows pregnancy; and it is possible that these figures echo this alleged practice. The upper middle class have the greatest number of undecided respondents; it will be remembered that many of this class were students.

Far more determining than social class is family income. Here there is a steady and marked increase in permissiveness directly correlated with the increase in income, ranging, in the case of men, from 25 per cent in those with incomes of under £5 a week through 35 per cent in the £8-£12 to 42 per cent with incomes of over £15 a week. Parallel figures for young women are 18 per cent for incomes under £5, 24 per cent for incomes £8-£12, and 30 per cent for incomes of over £15. Here once more we find evidence of the determining influence of money on the English ideas about and attitudes towards sex.

In the case of young men, town size makes a marked difference in the incidence of permissiveness, with 38 per cent in favour in the metropolises and only 20 per cent in the small towns and villages; the intermediate size towns, between 1,000,000 and 10,000 inhabitants, are on the national average. This difference practically disappears in the case of women, suggesting that the 'double standard' is almost entirely confined to the inhabitants of London and Birmingham

and their conurbations. The Midlands are by a small degree the most permissive region for both sexes, followed by London and the South-East; the North-East and North is by a small degree the most severe region.

My respondents were not only asked for their views, they were asked to give the reasons why they advocated them: after both questions appeared the word *Why?* with adequate space for an answer they cared to give. The great majority availed themselves of this opportunity; in the case of young men 13 per cent gave no answer and a further 2 per cent said they did not know; in the case of young women 12 per cent were silent and 1 per cent had no opinion. All the remainder made some sort of answer, though, in the case of 3 per cent for each sex the answer was the non-committal one that it depended on the people concerned.

People were given no sort of guidance as to the way in which their answers should be phrased; after a preliminary analysis I established twenty-six categories into which all the answers fitted adequately, though some of these had very few respondents. Nine reasons are advanced why some experience before marriage is desirable, and sixteen reasons why it is undesirable. It is interesting to note that, as far as this questionnaire is any guide, English people appear to be more prolific in arguments against a given course of action than in arguments in favour of it.

Fifty-two per cent of the population, it will be remembered, are against any sexual experience for young men before marriage and 63 per cent against any experience for young women; the following are the reasons advanced for this judgment:<sup>1</sup>

<i>Reason given</i>	<i>Percentage for young men</i>	<i>Percentage for young women</i>
(i) Marriage should be a new experience	13	12
(ii) Man wants virgin wife	0	9
(iii) Man should be pure because he wants wife to be	6	1
(iv) Against morality	7	6
(v) Against religion	4	4
(vi) Not necessary—Nature teaches	4	5
(vii) People should have self-control	2	2
(viii) Unfair to girl	2	1
(ix) Degrades girl	2	8
(x) Danger of pregnancy	2	6
(xi) Danger of V.D.	2	1
(xii) Danger to health or future children	0	1
(xiii) People wouldn't marry if they could get it without doing so	2	1
(xiv) Leads to promiscuity after marriage	1	1
(xv) Husband may bring up later	0	1
(xvi) Danger of invidious comparisons	0	1

The following are the nine reasons advanced why some experience before marriage is desirable; they apply to 34 per cent of the young men and 23 per cent of the young women.

<i>Reason given</i>	<i>Percentage for young men</i>	<i>Percentage for young women</i>
(xvii) To avoid ignorance, maladjustment, etc., on honeymoon	13	7
(xviii) To make certain marriage not based on physical glamour	4	3
(xix) To avoid woman's fear or disgust	0	2
(xx) Makes for fidelity after marriage	1	0
(xxi) With future husband or wife only	2	3
(xxii) Not to include intercourse	3	3
(xxiii) For good effect on character—makes more mature, etc.	6	3
(xxiv) For physical or psychological health	2	1
(xxv) It is normal and natural	5	2

Before these reasons are examined in greater detail, the list itself seems to call for a few comments. What seems to me most noteworthy is the high seriousness with which the great majority of English people approach and regard marriage. Whether pre-marital experience is advocated or reprobated, the effect on the future marriage is the preponderating consideration. Secondly, the high valuation put on virginity for both sexes is remarkable and, I should suspect, specifically English. Thirdly, it is interesting to note that what might be dubbed the hypochondriacal attitude towards sexual activity has apparently achieved very little currency. This hypochondriacal view, derived from assorted popularizations and vulgarizations of psychology and psychiatry, connects sexual activity with physical and mental health, so that abstinence becomes, as it were, a rather more dangerous type of constipation and sexual activity a kind of prophylaxis. In some other societies, this view would appear to be very widely held.

The argument (i) that marriage should mean a new experience, a new 'thrill', that intercourse should be confined to marriage, is one that is advanced considerably more by women than by men for both sexes; it is particularly stressed in the lower middle, upper working and working classes, and is mentioned relatively little by the lower working class. It is an argument whose use decreases consistently with the increase in income, and is relatively little advanced by people with incomes of over £12 a week. In the case of young men the rural South-West finds this argument particularly cogent; and it is advanced from this region too slightly more in the case of young

women than elsewhere. The replies advancing this view vary relatively little; the same form of words recur with great regularity.

The high evaluation of virginity in women (reason ii) is advanced slightly more by men than women, and finds some concentration in the middle income groups, and the upper working and working class; the lower working class advance this relatively little. A great number of synonyms are used for this desirable state, many of them metaphors from merchandizing—'new', 'not second hand' 'not shop-soiled' and so on. The converse, that a man should be pure because he wants his wife to be a virgin (reason iii) has very similar distribution for income and social class, with the exception of the well-off and the upper middle class, who advance it even less than the lower working class. Women advance this argument slightly more than men, but it has its relatively numerous advocates in both sexes. Thus, a 20-year-old middle class man from North London:

Some sexual experience may be necessary and is useful but I, when I marry want a pure girl, so the least I can do is to be the same myself.

A 23-year-old bachelor from Stockton-on-Tees:

Why should he? What good can it possibly do? If I ever marry, I would like my wife to be a virgin—is it fair to expect this if I haven't been chaste myself?

A 41-year-old married working class man from East London:

From my own experience, I'm glad I only had mild petting flirtations. Which I'm not ashamed to tell my wife.

A 42-year-old working class man from Sutton-in-Ashfield:

I can only answer this. It was a joy on my wedding night to know this was my first experience.

A 38-year-old working class man from Penrith:

Because I married a virgin as I always hoped I should, that is why I never had sexual intercourse before marriage.

A 28-year-old working class married man from Prudhoe, Northumberland:

He enjoys his sexual experiences to the full with his wife if he is still a virgin and he will never wish to wander from her. Variety may be the spice of life but it can be fatal in this instance. Secondly it can also be fatal as regards V.D. I was at sea at the age of 17 yrs and have been in all the 'spots' and had lots of chances yet I remained a virgin & so bought no 'spots'.

A 24-year-old bachelor from South-West London:

It's my belief that a man should be content to wait. I personally would feel shame for myself, and a slight contempt for the girl. (if it happened before we married.)

A 27-year-old married working class man from Dudley:

He should keep himself to himself until he gets married. Should not like to think some man could point out my wife.

A 25-year-old married working class man from Dartford:

If he has ideas of finding a virgin he should do likewise.

A 19-year-old middle class bachelor from Liverpool:

Every man expects to marry an untouched woman therefore should not have any sexual exp. himself. I think all women should be married in white and can't do so if she has had sexual exp. with men.

A 35-year-old labourer from Huddersfield:

A man likes to be first and marry a virgin. I did. I learned my sex experience the dirty way. In the mills, My father died when I was ten."

A 27-year-old married woman from Bishops Waltham:

Men of today expect the best when they marry so should be prepared to give the same.

A 50-year-old married woman from Croydon:

In my opinion my husband and I were 18½ years of age and we fell madly in love and having no other experience our marriage has lasted.

A 29-year-old working class wife from Birmingham:

Should imagine no decent man would ever regain his self-respect. May I say that though sorely tempted during engagement I never did and have never regretted it."

A 31-year-old married man from Streatham:

I did, but I wish that I had not, because I think this experience should only be had at the peak of a love match, namely a honeymoon.

A 45-year-old working class man from Southend-on-Sea:

I did have that experience and regretted it, one loses self-respect and also respect for the girl.

A 21-year-old bachelor from Lincolnshire:

Would not like my future wife to have had sexual experience with other persons prior to our marriage. Matter of principle also.

A 23-year-old working class bachelor from Tilbury:

I think it is wrong for anybody to gain experience at the expense of somebody else. I should hate to think somebody had tried married life out on my wife to be.

Besides the arguments about the intrinsic value of virginity there are also appeals to the rules of morality and ethics and mistaken views of common law (reason iv); and, for a small group, an appeal to the prohibitions of religion (reason v). The argument from ethics is advanced much more by women than by men, and is particularly favoured in the rural South-West; it is little stressed by the upper and lower working classes. In its application to women, the married stress it more than the single, and the older more than the young. The appeal to religious sanctions is advanced nearly equally by both sexes, but chiefly by the elderly and by members of the lower middle class; it is hardly used at all by members of the upper middle or lower working classes.

An interesting point is that the appeal to religious principles is often advanced by people whose practice would appear to be agnostic; thus a 42-year-old married man from Enfield who says flatly 'Sexual experience before marriage is not Christian' practically never goes to Church or prays, nor does he believe in a future life. In similar case is a young single woman from near Portsmouth who says 'It is against the law of the Country and the Church and leads to moral degeneration of the community.'

A middle class married woman of 39 from Chippenham in Wiltshire:

Sex should be regarded as sacred by both sexes. An affair before marriage could lead to one after marriage. [for young women?] Again for sacred reasons. A girl seldom goes 'scott free' and an easy woman does not usually mean she makes a good wife and mother. Pre-marital sexual experiences leaves one with a tainted mind and guilty conscience.

A 29-year-old married middle class woman from North London:  
Promiscuity in either sex can never be right, in any case, sex is not always 'all it is cracked up to be'.

A twice-married 47-year-old London man:

If a man *really* loves a Lady, he doesn't necessarily or shouldn't expect sexual experience, for my part it wouldn't worry me if I never did any more. I know I am 47 yrs. now but it never has worried me much anyway. [for young women?] I say, again, if a couple really love one another that shouldn't worry them, if one of the couple says No, then the other shouldn't ask or expect it. Again for my part, I've honestly never had or expected it before marriage and wouldn't lower myself to ask for it, from a Lady.

The belief that experience is unnecessary, because 'nature teaches' (reason vi) is one particularly favoured by the upper middle class

and completely rejected by the lower working class. Otherwise it finds its advocates in nearly every category, approximately equally. Thus, a 39-year-old married working class man from Bradford:

Sex is an instinct which everyone is blessed (or cursed) with therefore it does not need a 'tryout'.

The appeal to self-control (reason vii) is in many ways similar to the confidence in nature, and to the appeal to ethics; the actual phrasing is different to the extent that it does imply that there are some emotions to control; it is used somewhat more by the middle aged and by the well-off. A typical statement is that of a 36-year-old working class married woman from Sendon, Derby: 'He should respect women and curb his desires till married.' Or a separated woman, 43 years old, from Evington: 'If control is not obtained before marriage, it certainly will not after.'

There are three closely related reasons (viii, ix, and x) for abstaining from all sexual experience before marriage; these are all connected with the effect on the girl involved. The fact that it is 'unfair' to the girl is advanced as a reason for male abstention; and many of the male respondents refer specifically to their own sisters or daughters as a reason why men should be chaste. This argument is somewhat favoured by the lower middle class, and is not used at all by the upper middle; otherwise the distribution is very even.

Thus an unmarried working man from Runcorn:

I don't think it is really fair to the girl he is going to marry (although I should not talk because I have and am now sorry).

A 45-year-old working class man from Southend-on-Sea:

I have two daughters of my own (verb sap).

The argument that such experience degrades the girl and cheapens her, makes her feel tawdry or second-hand, and destroys her self-respect and the respect of others (argument ix) is advanced more by women and for women than it is by or for men; but it is invoked for both sexes and by all groups, though least of all by the young people, under 24. For the lower working class it is easily the most important reason for restraint. The danger of pregnancy (reason x) which can be considered the physical complement of the feelings of degradation is much more stressed by the married than by the single, and by the upper and lower middle classes. It is little advanced by the lower working class.

A number of the women who advance this latter argument bolster

it up with their own distressing experiences; thus, a 16-year-old girl from Birmingham:

A girl might have a baby, she has the worry and disgrace the man just has his fun. Marriage should last and she should be pure. Anyhow I am illegitimate, but my mother had four children before me, legitimately.

A 25-year-old married woman of the working class from Shropshire:

We had been married 3 months when our oldest boy was born and though we love each other very much we both realize that we behaved foolishly. Not only does it mean sorrow for the boy and girl, but their families too. We were lucky. Our folk helped us.

A 31-year-old married woman from London:

She takes a chance and nearly always pays for her experience with a baby, like I did, while the wolf goes free.

A married woman from Sheffield:

In these days of womens clinics it is not needful to try before you buy. From my childhood I made up my mind I would never marry a man who had sexual relations with me before, my mother was pregnant when married and hated my father for it.

The other physical danger, venereal disease (reason xi), is advanced more by and for men, particularly younger men, than by women; the group is not large, but it does suggest that the anti-venereal-disease campaign has on occasion been too successful and created unrealistic phobias.

Thus, a 22-year-old working class bachelor from South-East London:

In my opinion it is immoral to have sexual experience before marriage, thus creating V.D.

or the 21-year-old Bristol bachelor:

It seems to me that this sort of thing lowers the general moral tone of the populace. Also, I think it a crime to be responsible for congenital syphilis in children.

This fear runs into the obscure fear (reason xii) that such conduct will in some way cause harm to future children; only a small and scattered group takes up this attitude.

There is a small group which has the odd idea (reason xiii) that nobody would get married if they could have sexual intercourse outside marriage; these people are barely represented in the more

prosperous groups, the upper middle or lower working class. Thus, a separated lower middle class woman from Nottingham:

If a husband has some sexual experience before marriage he really has nothing to look forward to, and there is no point in his getting married.

A 29-year-old spinster from Putney:

If he finds he can gain this before marriage he naturally doesn't want to get married. Also a man seems to lose respect of the woman in question.

A 30-year-old married woman from Sunderland (Durham):

If young men had it women should too, I think they should start off together at marriage. If women had sexual experience before hand most women I know wouldn't have been married.

The lower working class are among the most convinced that experience before marriage leads to promiscuity after (reason xiv); but a few of all groups, except the young and unmarried, advance this argument. Thus, a 40-year-old married woman from Thorpe-next-Norwich:

Its moreish, the more you have the more you want. Because he rarely marries the girl he has his experience with, and has nothing to lose, so just continues from one to another.

A single woman from Putney, aged 29:

She is liable to become loose with every man. Also men talk about these things to one another and in this way a woman can lose her good name forever.

It is chiefly from the upper middle class (followed by the lower working class) that the arguments are advanced (reasons xv and xvi) that pre-marital experience could be inconvenient after marriage, either because the other spouse would use it as a reproach, or because he or she might draw invidious comparisons between lover and spouse. Thus, a single girl of 21 from London who describes herself as 'a member of a well educated family who have known better times':

As far as women are concerned, once having had this experience, one always wants it and it is injurious to health and the wife may become impatient with her new husband if he could not satisfy her as did her previous lover.

A national service man whose home is in Merton Park:

Every man wishes to marry a virgin. Also there is danger of comparison when married. (Comparison between husband and other man.)

A 46-year-old working class man from Romford:

If you were not so satisfying for them, they would, one day, tell, how nice so and so did it.

A single middle working class man from East London, aged 21:

If she has she would tend to compare her sexual experience with her present husband and so might be unsatisfied.

I shouldn't like a woman to have sexual intercourse before marriage and therefore nor should the male.

Among the smaller group who do advocate some experience before marriage, far and away the most important reason advanced for this is the desire (reason xvii) to avoid ignorance, maladjustment or clumsiness on the honeymoon. Nearly one man in six and one woman in ten advances this as a reason why men should have some previous experience; nearly one man in ten and one woman in twenty-five advance this as a reason why women should do so—one more example of English men being more in favour of female emancipation than English women. This is an argument whose use increases consistently with income and decreases with town size, as far as men are concerned; it has its most numerous advocates in the upper middle and lower middle classes and in the age group 25–34. As far as young men are concerned the single, married and divorced have similar figures; but for young women, the married and divorced have twice the number of advocates that the single do. The lower working class, followed by the upper working class, stress this argument in the case of young women.

A number of respondents cited their own unfortunate experiences to justify the course they advocated. Thus, a 37-year-old married woman from Barnshurst:

My own husband made such a mess of it, we ceased relations after the first year.

A 31-year-old divorced working class man from Greenwich:

I had no sexual experience before my marriage and I'd never want to experience my wedding night again.

A 32-year-old married working class man from Essex:

I had none myself and my marriage is now a physical failure.

A 27-year-old middle class man from Strood:

The failure of my own marriage was lack of sexual knowledge.

A 41-year-old married woman of the middle class from North London:

My personal experience with a virgin husband was most distressing.

A 26-year-old divorced woman from North-West London:

My marriage was reeked mainly through a lack of sexual knowledge. My husband had never had an affair before marriage. [for young women?] Yes, because one can be disillusioned or shocked by sex—and to be afraid can have a bad sycological effect if one does not know what to expect.

A 24-year-old married woman from West Bromwich:

A man should have had some experience because a woman expects a man to be able to love make. I was bitterly disappointed when I married. I had to teach him. Sexual experience teaches you things about each other you can't possibly know otherwise.

A 41-year-old married woman from Walsall:

The cause for much unhappiness for myself was because my husband had no sexual experience before marriage.

A 49-year-old re-married man from Willesden:

Lack of sexual experience was the cause of my first marriage breakdown.

A 40-year-old separated man from Yateley (Hants.):

Because I got married myself without any sexual experience whatsoever, to my sorrow. [for young women?] To help young men as unfortunate as myself as I have written about.

A divorced man, middle class, from Leigh-on-Sea, 45-year-old:

I didn't and my marriage went on the rocks from the beginning through shyness and ignorance of women.

A 30-year-old divorced working class man from Coventry:

My own failure in marriage was due to a lack of sexual experience.

Quotations with the same underlying theme could be continued over several pages; they strongly suggest that ignorance, particularly on the part of the men, is a major hazard in English marriages. A 36-year-old married worker from Nottingham says 'I met men in the forces who were Married and were dead ignorant about sexual Matters'. A great deal of my evidence bears out his observation.

The argument that experience before marriage will make for a more rational choice of marriage partner (reason xviii) is an argument advanced twice as much by men as by women, and (understandably) is particularly favoured by the divorced and separated. It also finds advocates particularly among the younger people and members of the upper working and working classes; it is not employed at all by the upper middle class.

A 27-year-old separated working class man from Shipley:

He has some idea what he is about when first married and he is less likely to be landed into marriage and disappointment to find in a few months there is no love as he thought at first.

A 20-year-old betrothed middle class girl from Birmingham:

Not necessarily 'should' but it's sometimes wisest. You see, I can quote at least one instance where a couple married and then the woman found she just couldn't stand him touching her, although she loved and trusted him.

A 25-year-old unmarried working class man from Hounslow:

The result is inevitably disappointing and he is thenceforth able to take a more rational view of marriage—stripped of its false glamour and accent on sex.

A 65-year-old working class man from Rainham:

For one thing it is natural and he's not likely to fall for the first pretty face and/or pair of lovely legs, the latter I think most English men fall for.

A widow from Weybridge:

A man should have experience, but not with the woman he chooses to marry. It is well for him to know whether such experience is worth marrying for. He is likely to be in less hurry to marry, thereby choosing wisely and ensuring future happiness.

A women's instinct will tell her whether she will enjoy the experience or not. If she intends to marry she should wait for fear what she or parents should suffer through unforeseen circumstances. If she doesn't intend to marry (or re-marry) she may provided she remains utterly true to one man.

A 26-year-old unmarried woman from Streatham:

Many young men marry from only physical attraction as the basis for their desire to marry. Sexual experience helps to curb that desire, he does not marry so young, and chooses much more wisely someone with whom he can be really happy, as well as sexually suited.

In a way the reciprocal to the avoidance of marriage based on glamour is the avoidance of women's fear or disgust at intercourse or physical intimacy (reason xix). This argument is most advanced by the divorced and separated, and by members of the working classes. Although not mentioned by very many, this, like male ignorance, seems a hazard of English marriage.

A 42-year-old working class married woman from Bradford writes:

Not knowing much about the facts of life before marriage, it came as rather a shock to my nervous system.

A 44-year-old married woman from a Norfolk village (who herself had two babies before marriage):

I knew a home that was nearly wrecked through a young woman that got married. She was disgusted when her husband suggested intercourse. She thought he married her to cook and keep his house clean.

The 46-year-old middle class woman from Folkstone may, or may not, be in a similar case; she writes:

A difficult question as I really loathe sexual experience. This has only happened since my marriage, as my husband was almost a sexual maniac.

A further small group argues that experience before marriage makes for fidelity after marriage (reason xx). This argument is chiefly used by the more prosperous women. Thus a 34-year-old married woman of the middle class from Carlingham (Yorks):

It is better to sow wild oats before, and not after, marriage. Some women cannot reconcile themselves to that side of marriage. Better to break an engagement than a man's heart.

A 17½-year-old working class youth from near Nantwich:

Quoting from my own experience of my father, what experience he's missed before marriage he will make up for after marriage elsewhere.

A 28-year-old woman, once widowed, once divorced, and now happily married:

I would sooner a man do it before marriage because after marriage he may feel he has missed something and start out *then* to sow his wild oats.

A 51-year-old lower middle class widow from London:

To sow a few 'wild oats' within reason helps him in experience when he gets married, and make things pleasanter for the wife; and if a woman 'tastes before she buys' there would not be so many broken marriages through incompatibility, or disappointment through couples being unsuitable to one another, as in my own case.

The group who favour intercourse with the betrothed only (reason xxi) are extremely evenly distributed. A 25-year-old betrothed man from Birmingham:

If the fellow is engaged to the girl and all is on the up and up I think it is an extra bond.

A working class married woman from Yorkshire:

A girl should not, because I did—with my husband and I've often wished we'd waited. Neither of us ever refers to it and we are very happy in our marriage even so.



A 34-year-old married woman from London S.E.:

I did myself, fortunately to the man I really love my husband, I became pregnant. I wish now that we had been sensible and got married first. If my husband hadn't loved me I would have borne an illegitimate child and 'labelled' easy to get. (We had been engaged 2 years when this happened).

A 49-year-old separated woman from Chelsea:

They might suit in everything but not in sexual love, if sexual love goes wrong everything goes wrong. Marriage is three parts sex.

A 30-year-old 'ordinary working class' married man from Leicester:

Because it means a lot in married life and its nice to know if you can get on alright with your lover. [for young women?] My reason is the same as above. But I don't mean they should go around trying whoever comes along. It should only occur if you intend to marry for love.

The five arguments so far advanced are all concerned with the success of the marriage subsequent to the pre-marital experience. Together they account for nearly two-thirds of the reasons advanced for young men having some experience before marriage, and nearly three-quarters of the arguments for young women. The remaining reasons are concerned with various theoretical views concerning 'human nature' and the effect of sexual intercourse on health and character, none of which are very widely spread; the position of the 3 per cent who would exclude intercourse from pre-marital sexual experience is however somewhat ambiguous.

Sexual experience without intercourse is presumably the English equivalent of what the Americans call 'heavy petting'; and it is probably significant that the advocates for these practices are heavily concentrated in the upper middle class, followed by the lower working class. The upper middle class emphasis follows Kinsey's finding<sup>2</sup> that in the U.S.A. this custom is most widespread among the college-educated portion of his sample.

Examples of this attitude are a 19-year-old middle class youth from Leicestershire:

My answer 'no' stands definite if by 'sexual experience' you mean intercourse. I have no objection to moderate 'pretence' love-making or 'fair-play' kissing.

A working class youth from Reading of the same age:

If by sexual experience it means sexual intercourse, this is wrong as I believe that a man should enter marriage 'clean'. I do think there is nothing wrong with 'love making' before marriage provided both parties are sensible about it.

A 31-year-old married lower middle class man from Manchester:

Whilst not condoning pre-marital intercourse, I do think 'petting' can be a great help. My reason is that for the first few months of my marriage I had a lot of difficulty in this direction, most of which could have been avoided had my wife and I had some previous experience.

A 19½-year-old middle class Liverpool girl:

Don't know. Can't make up my mind about this but I am sure I would never hate a boy for this as if I loved him I know I should want to as I think Nature is a beautiful thing. [for young women?] Don't know. Again I am uncertain as my boy friend has often asked me often and as I love him very much to me it does not seem wrong. Its just that I am afraid as I do not want to hurt my family.

A prosperous upper working class girl aged 18 from East Croydon:

It helps him to be more gentle and understanding. I do think, however, that he should not go the whole way until he meets his future wife. [for young women?] Really the same as for a man. When people have had a little experience they know how to make their loved one happy and content without too much misunderstanding, shyness, etc.

An upper middle class 18-year-old youth from Berkhamsted (Herts):

I don't really think a young man should experience actual intercourse before marriage; a certain amount of passionate love-making and possibly homosexuality are not harmful.

The argument that sexual experience has desirable effects on the character, by making the experienced more mature or more confident or with a broader outlook finds slightly more advocates among the women as far as male experience is concerned; this pattern is reversed (though the numbers are barely half as many) in the case of female experience. This argument is most heavily pressed by the divorced and separated; it is also favoured by the younger groups (especially the under 18's) and members of the middle class. The lower working class advance it hardly at all, and the upper middle very little.

A 28-year-old unmarried man from Mitcham of the lower middle class:

It broadens a chaps mind. It has a Psychological effect on a young man, it fetches out the manliness. No woman likes to think that she is going around with an inexperienced overgrown schoolboy.

What might be called the therapeutic attitude to sexual experience—the belief that it will ward off physiological or psychological disturbances if taken regularly—has very few advocates among the English and these are significantly concentrated in the most prosperous groups of the middle and upper middle classes living in big

cities. These small groups presumably represent the extent of the impact of diluted psycho-analytic thought and simplified versions of mental health on an English audience; it seems probable that such reasons would be advanced by a far greater portion of the population in the United States.

This viewpoint is typified by a 58-year-old married working class man from Morecambe and Heysham (Lancs):

Nature cannot be hidden—the natural tendency is ever prominent and perversion can be averted by practical experience with a young woman with the same desires. [for young women?] As above and for both male and female sexual desires are far better eased by intercourse than by personal actions.

The periphrasis employed above occurs with some regularity. An attempt at plainer speaking by a 61-year-old working class man from East Kirby (Notts) resulted in: 'Yes. Its either that or mastication'.

Finally there is the group (5 per cent in the case of men, and 2 per cent in the case of women) who consider pre-marital experience 'natural' and 'normal'. I was myself surprised at how small this group turned out to be. This view of human nature is held much more by men than by women, and finds its greatest proportion of advocates in the lower working class, followed by the working and middle class. It is advocated very little by the upper working and lower middle classes; it is a relatively popular idea in the Midlands, but is little held in the South-West, or North-East and North. Thus a married coalminer aged 45, from West Melton, Yorks:

Yes, Because he cant help reacting to nature and I dont think there are many who dont. [for young women?] Dont know. I think I would have to change sex to be able to answer this truthfully.

A 30-year-old Surbiton bachelor who describes himself as 'A low paid relic of the Bourgeois Intelligentsia':

A man's nature demands sex satisfaction before he is sufficiently mature to contract matrimonial responsibilities.

A 61-year-old married middle class woman from Margate:

For men, yes, because it is natural and men are made of a different kind of ruling. [for young women?] No, because when a girl goes to the altar a virgin she can hold up her head and tell her husband to go to hell if she had due cause to in the case of ill treatment.

A 27-year-old married man from Wealdstone (Mddx):

Yes, because it is normal and providing precautions are taken not to get the girl in trouble, in the same way for women though I didnt touch my wife until we were married.

A 36-year-old miner from Barnsby:

It is only natural, whenever anything Bird, Beast, or man decide to become mates they have to have that experience, i.e. you would hardly buy anything without taking a look at it first.

Presumably the same argument was advanced for the unfortunate 17-year-old girl who writes:

Recently I was sexually assaulted it was horrid and for a few weeks after I thought sex was a shameful thing but now I understand it isn't, it was just the way this man approached me.

In this review of the reasons given for and against sexual experience before marriage, I have not, except incidentally, paid attention to different respondents' views of the relationship between what is considered appropriate conduct for young men and for young women. In current phraseology the term 'double standard' is used for the view that sexual experience before marriage is suitable for one sex (typically and almost universally, men) and not for the other; 'single standard' is used when the same rules of conduct are applied to both sexes.

Cross-correlations show that the vast majority of the English population employ a single standard of sexual morality. The only significant exception is that slightly under a third of those who are in favour of pre-marital experience for young men are against such experience for young women, and this is barely 10 per cent of the total population. There is a tiny (and somewhat inexplicable) group of less than one in a hundred who reverse this preference, and would allow experience to the woman but not to the man. For nine English men and women out of ten what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

My impression—for this cannot unfortunately be completely substantiated with the figures at my disposal—is that it is the women who tend to advocate the double standard, whereas the men (albeit often unwillingly) opt for the single standard.

The women, whether married or unmarried, who advocate the double standard do so with a view to achieving greater happiness, or avoiding unhappiness, in marriage. Thus, an unmarried upper middle class woman from Godalming, aged 23:

[for men?] Yes, because I can imagine little worse than two complete novices on a wedding night! [for women?] No, in most circumstances no.—I intend to be really in love with, and love, the man I marry and would prefer to keep myself for him.

A Liverpool girl of not quite 17:

I think yes because until a man has such an experience he really

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Figure VI

Question 49 by Question 50

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 49	Question 50				Total
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	
Yes	66	25	6	3	100
No	1	98	1	0	100
Don't know	1	31	66	2	100
No answer	5	15	3	77	100
Total	23	63	11	3	100

Figure VII

Question 50 by Question 49

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

Question 50	Question 49				Total
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	
Yes	97	2	1	0	100
No	13	80	6	1	100
Don't know	20	4	75	1	100
No answer	24	11	7	58	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100

cannot define LOVE as anything particular, because men fall victims to their emotions much more easily than women. [for young women?] No, because although I am a woman and believe in Equality of the sexes, I am still old-fashioned enough to believe a woman should be perfectly pure before she enters into matrimony.

A 33-year-old married woman from Hove:

On the husband's success at love-making depends his bride's physical and mental pleasure. A hesitating, shy man would be terrible. [for women?] No, because she must have lost a certain self-respect, and also may be tempted to marry purely for physical reasons. Also an old fashioned maybe, but deep rooted prejudice.

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A 23-year-old unmarried working class woman from Exeter:

I should think he would be much more considerate to his wife due to previous experience. [for women?] No, because most men prefer a pure wife, and it must be nice to know you are that.

A 25-year-old unmarried working class woman from Southampton:

I would rather have my husband know what he is doing, but for a girl I do not consider this necessary as she takes more risks.

This combination of arguments occurs with considerable frequency; it also has some, but fewer, male advocates. The reverse argument, as has been said, is advanced by very few and seems to be idiosyncratic. A 45-year-old working class man from a village in Leicestershire (who considers his major good qualities poaching, gardening and hard work) writes:

[for a young man?] It is unnecessary, as love will find a way as soon as a man and woman get to bed together [for a young woman?] She can easily spoil her life through ignorance, she will also know what to expect on her wedding night.

A 28-year-old 'middle working class' woman from Bromley:

[for a young man?] I think no because a man soon learns quick enough, if he has experience before marriage he wouldn't want to get married. [for a young woman?] Yes, here I think yes to save disillusion. A woman nearly always wants to marry for so many reasons beyond sexual love.

A single man from Bootle:

[for a young man?] It is not absolutely necessary. [for a young woman?] Yes. A woman is different they go for the man but a man does not go for a woman.

A 49-year-old married woman from Gainsborough:

[for a young man?] uncertain. [for a young woman?] Yes. Then she realizes what marriage means.

The advocates of the double standard seem to have as their major value their own happiness, or the success of marriage in general. The advocates of the single standard of complete pre-marital chastity for both sexes (and it is worth recalling that this is far and away the most widespread English attitude) presumably have as chief value the categorical imperatives of morality, according to their views. Similarly many of the advocates of the single standard, permitting pre-marital experience to both sexes, seem also to have as their chief value moral considerations, in this case justice or equity, which often over-ride deep-felt attitudes and prejudices. Emotionally,

many of the men respondents would prefer a double standard; but since they claim licence for themselves, their sense of justice will not allow them to deny the same licence to others (women). This lively sense of justice seems to me one of the most admirable, as it is also one of the most widespread, of English characteristics; and it seems worth while calling attention to it in this context, where it is in patent conflict with another aspect of morality.

These attitudes become apparent in the answers which men give to the question whether young women should have sexual experience before marriage, when they have already answered positively in the case of young men. This type of answer is fairly stereotyped, and a small selection can stand for the whole group. Typical is a 29-year-old lower middle class man from West Wickham:

It seems unfair to deny to a woman a right which I claim for myself, and yet I know I should be upset to marry a girl other than a virgin.

A lower middle class bachelor from Wallasey, aged 25:

I am torn between natural desire to marry a virgin, yet feel selfish if I say 'no' in view of my answer for men.

A 21-year-old bachelor from Halifax, middle class:

I am tempted to answer, a young woman should not have sexual experience prior to marriage—but if I agree that men should, then in my opinion it goes equally for both sexes.

A married man 'sort of lower middle class' from Sheerness (Kent) aged 41:

I've said 'yes' in the young man's case, so equal rights etc. gives me yes here, yet wishing I could put No.

A married working class man from Lincoln, aged 33:

Anyone who tackles a big job should be trained for it marriage and sex life is a big job, and for women my answer obviously has to be the same, but I suggest a woman does not obtain her training from too many teachers.

Besides the hypothesis just advanced that English men tend to place ethical principles first and English women more practical considerations, there is another possible explanation for women giving support to a double standard of pre-marital sexual morality, and men to a single one; this is the difference in views which English men and women appear to hold about the nature of women's sexuality. Stated briefly, English men tend to the belief that women's interest in sex is as great as, or greater than, that of men; English

women on the contrary consider that the physical aspects of sex mean less to them than to their menfolk.

These statements have been phrased rather tentatively, because they are derived from the answers to a question with the type of instructions which apparently<sup>3</sup> are too difficult to follow accurately. Respondents were asked to mark *one* of four statements which they most agreed with, and *one* which they most disagreed with; but more than a third of the population were unable to restrain themselves to a single choice in each column; and so, instead of the base-line of 100 per cent, there are 134 per cent of agreed statements and 127 per cent of disagreed. Men and women over-mark in nearly equal numbers.<sup>4</sup>

The sentences among which respondents were asked to choose were:

- (i) Most women don't care much about the physical side of sex.
- (ii) Women don't have such an animal nature as men.
- (iii) Women really enjoy the physical side of sex just as much as men.
- (iv) Women tend to enjoy sex more than men.

Sixteen per cent of the men and 26 per cent of the women agree with the statement 'Most women don't care much about the physical side of sex'; 55 per cent of the men, contrasted with 39 per cent of the women disagree with it. The agreement is most concentrated among the poor, the middle aged and elderly, members of the lower working class and especially the widowed; it finds fewest advocates among the young (under 34), the more prosperous, members of the upper working and lower middle classes, and quite markedly, the Midlands. Disagreement with this sentiment follows much the same pattern, with a concentration among the unmarried under 24, the more prosperous, and the upper working, middle and working classes.

The other sentiment repudiating female sexuality—'Women don't have such an animal nature as men'—shows much the same pattern. Forty-eight per cent of the women but only 38 per cent of the men state their agreement with it; 13 per cent of the women but 21 per cent of the men their disagreement. Once more it is the poor, the middle aged and elderly, the widowed and the lower working class who stress this notion most; they are joined with—though to a lesser extent—the upper middle and middle classes, the divorced and separated, and the two Northern regions. The idea is most vehemently rejected by the young, the unmarried and the more prosperous; it is very little mentioned by the inhabitants of small towns and villages (presumably because they know something about animals).

The pattern already discernible continues with the egalitarian statement 'Women really enjoy the physical side of sex just as much as men'. Sixty-three per cent of the men agree with this statement, compared with 51 per cent of the women; a mere 10 per cent of the men, but 18 per cent of the women, reject it. Acceptance is markedly higher among the unmarried, aged between 18 and 24, the prosperous, especially the £12-£15 a week group, the upper middle class and, once again, the Midlands; it is lowest among the poor, the middle-aged and elderly, and the widowed. It is the same group which actively rejects this statement the most.

Fifteen per cent of the men, but a mere 4 per cent of the women, state their agreement that 'Women tend to enjoy sex more than men'; 39 per cent of the men, but 57 per cent of the women disagree with it. This rather surprising belief is particularly held by the young and unmarried; it may be a reflection of the difference in the conscious awakening of interest in the opposite sex already noted.<sup>5</sup> It is particularly held in the North-West, followed by the Midlands. It is little advanced by the widowed, or by members of the upper middle or lower middle classes. Its most emphatic rejection comes from the middle aged (35-64), the widowed, the poor and the upper middle and lower working classes.

These remarkable figures—and they do seem to me remarkable—allow some tentative conclusions. Among the young, the unmarried and the more prosperous, especially in the Midlands, there is a belief, held more strongly by men than women, that women's sexual feelings are as strong as, or stronger than, men's; this belief diminishes with marriage, increase in age, or decrease in income. Putting the tables together, one might hypothesise that thirty years ago there was a fairly widespread belief in the 'lesser animality' of women; and secondly that many women find disillusionment, at least on the physical level, in marriage around the age of 35.

The last two chapters have analysed in considerable detail some English attitudes towards love and sex. A number of cross-correlations were made to attempt to discover to what extent the views expressed were internally consistent; and also in the hope of finding out what other characteristics distinguish the minority who depart from the English pattern of complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity thereafter.

On the basis of these correlations, it can be said quite unambiguously that the greatest influence making for pre-marital chastity is the active practice of religion. Correlating the questions about

the desirability of pre-marital experience for young men or women with attendance at religious services there are nearly double the number of advocates for pre-marital experience from those who never go to Church, or only for weddings and funerals, as compared with those who go once a month or more often. The figures become even more marked if the questions are correlated with private devotions, where those who never say prayers, or only in peril and grief, have more than double the advocates for pre-marital experience compared with those who pray daily or more frequently. Religion, particularly private religion, appears the strongest bulwark of the austere English sexual morality.

Figures VIII and IX

Question 84 by Question 49

Question 84 by Question 50

84. Do you attend Church or religious services?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 84	Figure VIII					Figure IX				
	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No Answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No Answer	Total
More than once a week	17	70	9	4	100	14	75	8	3	100
Once a week	24	59	14	3	100	17	69	10	4	100
Less than once a week but more than once a month	24	63	10	3	100	16	73	8	3	100
Less than once a month	29	55	14	2	100	21	66	10	3	100
Once or twice a year	34	53	11	2	100	23	64	10	3	100
Only for weddings and funerals	42	44	12	2	100	28	57	12	3	100
Never	40	43	16	1	100	29	54	14	3	100
No answer	—	20	13	67	100	—	13	—	87	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	3	100

There is also some evidence for the often promulgated belief that the influence of American films tends towards the loosening of the bonds of English morality. It was only a very small group (7 per cent) who said they thought that 'English people fall in love the way you see Americans doing it on the films'; but this group are

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Figures X and XI

Question 85 by Question 49

Question 85 by Question 50

85. Do you say private prayers?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 85	Figure X					Figure XI				
	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total
More than once a day	22	60	13	5	100	16	69	9	6	100
Daily	25	60	12	3	100	16	72	9	3	100
Only in peril or grief	42	44	13	1	100	28	59	11	3	100
Very seldom	36	50	12	2	100	25	60	12	3	100
Never	46	39	12	3	100	34	50	13	3	100
No answer	24	53	9	14	100	21	62	7	10	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	3	100

Figures XII and XIII

Question 44 by Question 49

Question 44 by Question 50

44. Do you think English people fall in love in the way you see Americans doing it in the films?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 44	Figure XII					Figure XIII				
	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total
Yes	45	42	11	2	100	31	56	10	3	100
No	35	53	11	1	100	24	65	9	2	100
Don't know	25	52	21	2	100	17	61	19	3	100
No answer	24	32	7	37	100	11	36	6	47	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	2	100

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Figures XIV and XV

Question 42 by Question 49

Question 42 by Question 50

42. Would you say you had ever been really in love?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 42	Figure XIV					Figure XV				
	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total
Yes	34	53	11	2	100	23	65	9	3	100
No	34	49	15	2	100	23	61	13	3	100
Don't know	35	40	24	1	100	22	53	22	3	100
No answer	14	28	4	54	100	9	27	4	60	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	3	100

Figures XVI and XVII

Question 43 by Question 49

Question 43 by Question 50

43. Do you expect to fall really in love some time?

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Question 43	Figure XVI					Figure XVII				
	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total
Yes	40	41	14	5	100	28	52	13	7	100
No	30	57	11	2	100	20	69	9	2	100
Don't know	31	57	10	2	100	22	66	9	3	100
No answer	35	48	16	1	100	23	63	13	1	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	3	100

markedly more in favour of pre-marital experience for both sexes than are the majority who do not consider American films representative of English habits.

There seems no connection at all with the experience of having been 'really in love' and views about pre-marital experience; but those who expect to 'fall really in love some time' are consistently more in favour of pre-marital experience than those who do not. The relevant question was not asked; but it looks as though there are two groups in the population, one of which believes that falling in love is a unique experience in life, normally culminating in marriage, and the other that falling in love is a repeatable performance; for this latter group, with its expectations of the future, experiment in the past would appear permissible.

There is also a convincing correlation between the attitudes to female sexuality described above and the desirability of experience before marriage. Those who think women's enjoyment of sex is equal to or greater than men's are markedly more in favour of experience before marriage than are those who consider that women do not care much about the physical side of sex, or do not have such an 'animal' nature as man. There would appear to be a connection between viewing men and women as equal or similar, and permissiveness concerning sexual experience before marriage. This does not however seem to apply to love affairs outside marriage; when the question about women's sexuality is correlated with the question 'Not counting marriage have you ever had a real love affair?' no discernible pattern emerges.

A possible explanation for this rather surprising result might be that the main motive for extra-marital love affairs is lack of satisfaction with the sexual aspect of marriage; in which case the unsatisfied women, or men with frigid wives, though they may have affairs outside marriage, would not be particularly inclined to agree with generalizations that women get as much or more pleasure from sex than men. This explanation is given some backing by the fact that those who have had 'a real love affair' outside marriage are more likely to answer the question 'In marriage do you think sexual love is very important?' emphatically than those who disclaim such experiences.

An attempt was made, within the limits of cross-correlation, to check a couple of psychological hypotheses. Dr Kinsey and others have stated that early onset of puberty and high interest in sexual activity are related; so I correlated the question about the importance of sexual love in marriage with the reported age of onset of

Figures XVIII and XIX

Question 53 by Question 49

Question 53 by Question 50

53. Please mark the statement you most agree with:

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?

Figure XVIII

Figure XIX

Question 53	Question 49					Question 50				
	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer	Total
Most women don't care much about the physical side of sex	27	55	14	4	100	18	68	10	4	100
Women don't have such animal natures as men	30	55	12	3	100	20	67	9	4	100
Women really enjoy the physical side of sex just as much as men	36	50	13	1	100	26	60	12	2	100
Women tend to enjoy sex more than men	47	42	9	2	100	34	52	10	4	100
No answer	19	45	18	18	100	10	59	13	18	100
Total	34	52	12	2	100	23	63	11	3	100

Figure XX

Question 47 by Question 53

47. Not counting marriage, have you ever had a real love affair?

53. Please mark the statement you most agree with:

Question 47	Question 53					Total
	Most women don't care much about the physical side of sex	Women don't have such an animal nature as men	Women really enjoy the physical side of sex as much as men	Women tend to enjoy sex more than men	No answer	
Yes	20	41	60	10	1	132
Not really	18	38	62	10	1	129
No	20	43	57	11	2	133
No answer	28	50	51	11	5	145
Total	21	43	58	11	1	134

Figure XXI

Question 48 by Question 47

48. In marriage do you think sexual love is very important?  
 47. Not counting marriage, have you ever had a real love affair?

Question 48	Question 47				Total
	Yes	Not really	No	No answer	
Very important	46	3	46	5	100
Fairly important	42	3	49	6	100
Not very important	32	2	54	12	100
Not important at all	26	2	57	15	100
No answer	7	11	15	77	100
Total	43	3	47	7	100

Figure XXII

Question 39 by Question 48

39. How old were you when you first started being interested in girls (boys)?  
 48. In marriage, do you think sexual love is very important?

Question 48	Question 39					Total
	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	No answer	
Up to 10 years	57	34	4	1	4	100
11, 12 and 13 years	62	32	4	1	1	100
14, 15 and 16 years	59	35	5	1	0	100
17, 18 and 19 years	50	41	7	1	1	100
20, 21 and 22 years	48	39	9	2	2	100
23, 24 and 25 years	47	40	10	—	3	100
26 years and over	43	39	11	2	5	100
Not interested	35	42	16	2	5	100
Don't know	50	33	6	3	8	100
No answer	49	38	6	1	6	100
Total	55	36	6	1	2	100

real interest in the opposite sex. The result is marked and consistent; there is a marked decline in the value given to sex in marriage by those whose interest in the opposite sex developed after the age of sixteen.<sup>6</sup>

A second hypothesis tested was that advanced by psychoanalysts on the relationship between early training in cleanliness and general

rigidity of character. The questions about the permissibility of pre-marital experience were correlated with the answers to the question 'When should a young child start being trained to be clean?' The results are an extremely neat confirmation of the hypothesis. In the two ambiguous categories 'as early as possible' and 'as soon as

Figure XXIII

Question 49 by Question 63

49. Do you think a young man should have some sexual experience before he gets married?  
 63. When should a young child start being trained to be clean?

Question 49	Question 63										Total	
	From birth	As early as possible	Up to 2 months	2-6 months	7-12 months	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	Over 4 years	As soon as it understands		No answer
Yes	16	12	8	17	16	11	2	1	2	11	4	100
No	18	12	11	19	15	8	1	0	1	12	3	100
Don't know	17	11	12	19	16	7	1	—	1	11	5	100
No answer	20	15	14	8	19	3	2	—	—	13	5	100
Total	17	12	10	18	15	8	2	0	1	12	5	100

Figure XXIV

Question 50 by Question 63

50. Do you think a young woman should have some sexual experience before she gets married?  
 63. When should a young child start being trained to be clean?

Question 50	Question 63										Total	
	From birth	As early as possible	Up to 2 months	2-6 months	7-12 months	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	Over 4 years	As soon as it understands		No answer
Yes	15	12	7	17	15	11	2	1	1	12	6	100
No	18	12	11	18	15	8	1	0	1	12	4	100
Don't know	17	10	10	19	16	7	2	1	3	12	2	100
No answer	21	12	11	13	18	5	3	—	—	10	6	100
Total	17	12	10	18	15	8	2	0	1	12	5	100



it can understand' the percentages for and against pre-marital experience are equally balanced. Those who advocate that cleanliness training should start after the child is twelve months old are also markedly permissive about pre-marital experience; those who advocate training from birth or during the first two months of life are more rigid in their attitudes towards sexual experience before marriage. Those who advocate the starting of cleanliness training between the age of two and twelve months are nearly evenly divided though with a little more permissiveness in those advocating the later start. The English attitudes towards sex fall more fully into focus when the factors involved in the training of an English man or girl are taken into account.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. A few respondents gave more than one reason, which accounts for the slight discrepancy of the total.
2. *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, pp. 345-7, *et passim*.
3. See Appendix Two, p. 318.
4. It is interesting to note that there is no social group, however high their income or social class (which on the whole correspond with education) which did not have at least a fifth of its members failing to follow the instructions, though the number of excessive responses are greater among the poor, the working and lower working class, the middle aged and old.
5. See p. 78.
6. Unfortunately the answers to the question about the onset of interest in the other sex had (for the purposes of this table) been rather clumsily categorized in groups of three years; consequently the contrast in the figures is, if anything, too blatant, and the variations do not come out as subtly as they probably would have done if the answers had been categorized by single years.
7. See Chapter Eleven.