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# SEX & MARRIAGE IN ENGLAND TODAY

**A study of the views and experience of the under-45s**

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## 9 *Homosexuality and the gamut of attitudes*

### i

The final topic on which the whole sample was asked its views was homosexuality. To the best of my knowledge, a scientifically selected sample has never been simultaneously asked its views on homosexuality and the various aspects of extra-marital heterosexuality in any country; I thought it might be possible to establish whether the distaste for or disgust at homosexuality was of a different nature to the distaste for or disgust at pre-marital or extra-marital heterosexuality.

The question asked was 'How do you feel about people who fall in love with members of their own sex?' This form of words was chosen intentionally to imply emotional involvement, analogous to the questions about sexual experience before or after marriage; in this context I was not interested in investigating adolescent experimentation or the improvisations of sexually segregated groups. I wanted our informants to consider emotional commitments, not physical expedients.

Some people did, indeed, express revulsion, 23% of the men and 25% of the women, and they were not questioned further; the remainder were asked: 'Have you yourself ever felt any sort of attraction towards a person of your own sex? What did you do about it?' The 2% of the men and 3% of the women who answered this question positively will be considered later in this chapter.

I established the following categories on the basis of a 10% sample; I am giving first the key word, and then the synonyms I supplied, in some cases, to assist the coders.

Revulsion; disgusting behaviour, turns my stomach, makes me curl up inside: voiced by 23% of the men and 25% of the women.

Moral disapproval; completely wrong, awful: voiced by 5% of the men and 4% of the women.

Dislike; don't like it, don't agree with it, against it, no patience with it: voiced by 10% of the men and 6% of the women.

Not understandable; odd, abnormal, strange, queer, kinky: voiced by 14% of the men and 12% of the women.

Ridiculous: voiced by 4% of the men and 2% of the women.

Mentally ill; sick: voiced by 10% of the men and 13% of the women.

Can't help it; need help: voiced by 5% of the men and 9% of the women.

Need psychiatric or medical help: voiced by 3% of the men and 2% of the women.

Pity; sorry for them, thankful I'm not: voiced by 16% of the men and 28% of the women.

Tolerance; their own business, live and let live, it's natural for them, doesn't bother me, could happen to anyone: voiced by 16% of the men and 8% of the women.

Five per cent of our respondents had no decided views (some said so in as many words; some just did not answer); and a very few said it was unkind to make fun of homosexuals. Although I provided a special category for this view, I am omitting it in the following analysis.

These categories can be amalgamated into three major groups: the hostile (revulsion, moral disapproval, dislike); the neutral (not understandable, ridiculous, mentally ill, need psychiatric help, can't help it); and the tolerant (pity and tolerance). These three groups are of almost identical size.

The chief difference between the sexes is in the expressing of tolerance; twice as many men as women phrased this directly, whereas nearly twice as many women as men indicated their pity. The only other categories with a marked percentage difference were dislike voiced by 4% more men than women, and can't help it, voiced by 4% more women than men.

Tolerance decreases and hostility increases quite markedly with age, though the young, between 16 and 20, have a high

proportion (8%) with no decided views. Tolerant views were advanced by 30% of those aged between 16 and 20, 40% of those aged between 21 and 24, 39% of those aged between 25 and 34, and 28% of those aged between 35 and 45; hostile views were advanced by 27% of those aged between 16 and 20, 38% of those aged between 21 and 24, 34% of those aged between 25 and 34, and 43% of those aged between 35 and 45. The proportion of neutral views changes very little with age, apart from a slight drop over the age of 35. These figures suggest that there is a marked increase in the toleration of homosexuality in those under the age of 35.

With the exception of the rather anomalous group who call themselves upper working class, toleration decreases and hostility increases as one goes down the scale of self-ascribed social class or the Registrar General's categories. Regionally, the greatest amount of hostility is found in the North-West, followed by the Midlands; the greatest amount of toleration is found in the South-East, followed by the North-East. Possibly these contrasts could be correlated with increasing sophistication and education, or the increasing rejection of even nominal religion; but unfortunately these calculations were not made.

Some of our informants expressed their hostility in very violent terms, but so did others on the topic of casual adultery. 'I can't put words strong enough; utter contempt; would drown the lot of them' (a 38-year-old cemetery foreman); 'Terrible; shocking; degrading' (a 37-year-old painter and decorator); 'It's revolting; disgusting; can't see what's in it; there must be something wrong with them' (a 37-year-old holiday-camp assistant); 'Pity, no, disgust, I think it is an incurable hereditary disease brought about by the fault of the mother' (a 41-year-old shop-manager); 'I don't agree, and would not allow any excuse for this practice' (a 36-year-old butchery manager); 'Disgusting; not only going against God's laws but also defiling their bodies; using their organs for things they were never intended for, and reaping disease from it, which they do' (a 28-year-old greengrocer, a very observant Jehovah's Witness); 'I dislike the practice; I believe it is due to lack of early sex with girls' (a 43-year-old garage owner); 'Do not like them – have nothing to do with them – but they cannot help it; they are

just perverted' (a 19-year-old unmarried\* charge-hand fitter, a very observant Roman Catholic); 'Disgusted, but sorry for them; however I do not think such conduct is acceptable, or that it should be tolerated' (a 45-year-old draughtsman, an observant Baptist); 'I accept it – I can understand women, they seem harmless, but not male homosexuals; I'm always wary of them, find them off-putting' (a 31-year-old solicitor's clerk).

Female hostility can be illustrated by: 'Personally, I think it's awful. I don't like it. It's repulsive to me to think of women going together. I'd rather a married woman having an affair with another man than that. I think it must be something they are born with' (the 24-year-old wife of a self-employed builder); 'Disgusting; they want shooting' (the 41-year-old wife of an electrical engineer); 'Horridifies me; I hate to see it' (the 38-year-old wife of an inn-keeper); 'Terrible that is; it makes me feel sick' (the 24-year-old divorced and remarried wife of a steel-fixer); 'Revolting – not so bad in a man but unforgivable in a woman' (the 24-year-old wife of an industrial engineer, who was born in India); 'Terrible: not right having "bread and bread"' (the 45-year-old wife of a taxi-driver.)

Neutrality can be illustrated by: 'Must be crackers – just not natural – hard up for sex' (a 38-year-old accountant); 'They are hypocrites; they are probably idiots; they just annoy me and I have no time for them' (a 26-year-old unmarried medical orderly); 'It is a little bit unnatural, due to some hormone imbalance; they are unhealthy people who need treatment' (a 33-year-old anaesthetist, born in Pakistan); 'Until a few years ago I was disgusted, but as I get older I think they need special help' (a 32-year-old skilled engineer); 'They are like a music-hall joke; they need medical treatment' (a 37-year-old carpenter).

Among the neutral are the 33-year-old wife of a factory charge-hand: 'It seems silly to me; quite honestly, I can't see what fun or enjoyment there is or anything in it really.'† 'I don't think they can; they only think they do' (a 27-year-old

\* In this chapter, for the first time, I am quoting some unmarried informants; the reason, I think, is obvious.

† In reply to the question whether she had ever felt any sort of attraction herself, this informant said: 'No; I do not think women can agree; I think they are like cats and dogs.'

unmarried woman, working as an upholsterer); 'I don't know very much about it, but I feel they need help. It's probably something medical, or perhaps frustration, or perhaps something happened to them as children to put them off the opposite sex. I don't understand it, but I don't condemn; there but for the grace of God . . .' (the 41-year-old wife of a lecturer in economics, an observant Anglican); 'I don't think it's their fault; there must be something wrong with them' (the 23-year-old wife of a self-employed builder); 'Not much; but then I do not think they can always help it. They do what they like; you only have one life and you can do what you like with it as long as they do not involve anyone else' (the 30-year-old wife of a carpenter); 'I think it's natural really. It may be their nature; some people can't help it. I feel I can understand the men, perhaps, but not the women' (the 35-year-old wife of a service manager); 'Just one's make-up; one can't help it' (the 27-year-old wife of a machine manager).

Pity is predominantly a feminine response; it was very succinctly phrased by a 16-year-old schoolgirl: 'I pity them; not at all disgusted, but glad I am normal'; 'I think it's just very sad for them; I don't think they can help it; it's born in them; I don't condemn them' (the 26-year-old wife of an overseas service engineer); 'Sorry for them actually; I think it's sex off balance. Although it's legal now, it's still looked down on. You can't blame people' (the 32-year-old wife of a technical representative, an observant Roman Catholic); 'I don't quite know. I was never one of those to have crushes on female school-teachers. I think this is a general problem; I feel sorry for them' (the 32-year-old wife of a surveyor, an observant Methodist); 'With men I feel sorry for them; but with women it disgusts me' (the 23-year-old wife of an R.E.M.E. craftsman); 'I feel sorry for them; I feel they are missing a lot in life. When a relationship between a man and a woman works out all right that is how it is meant to be' (the 36-year-old wife of a businessman).

Among the men who express pity is the 40-year-old divorced and remarried schoolmaster, who was quoted in the last chapter:\* 'Revolted; but sorry for the disease they have; one could almost say "There but for the grace of God go I"; it is a disease'; 'Seems silly, but I appreciate there may be something

\* See p. 183.

wrong with them; and they should be treated with some sympathy in this respect and helped where possible; they should not be condemned out of hand' (a 26-year-old bank clerk); 'I am at a loss with this one; it is some form of illness and more to be pitied than anything else' (a 44-year-old heating engineer).

Many of the married men and women who express tolerance or indifference have a very active heterosexual life, whether in the number of partners or frequency of intercourse; the first two quoted have intercourse nightly. 'Nothing wrong with it as long as they keep it to themselves' (a 22-year-old electrician's mate); 'I think it is up to them; it doesn't appeal to me but I don't condemn other people for it' (a 20-year-old painter, very recently married). Many of the others had admitted to numerous heterosexual adventures: 'It doesn't worry me so long as it doesn't interfere with me' (a 35-year-old divorced and remarried representative); 'I've an open mind; it doesn't bother me' (a 40-year-old holiday-camp assistant); 'I understand it; it's fair enough; everybody to their own liking' (a 28-year-old postman); 'They are entitled to it; it happens in a big way, a lot, and they have the right to do it' (a 41-year-old divorced and remarried plumber); 'That goes on a lot more than people think; up to a point I can understand it and I can agree with it' (a 44-year-old gas-board foreman); 'They are perfectly entitled to it, as long as it is kept private and not flaunted' (a 39-year-old chauffeur courier); 'Live and let live' (a 32-year-old self-employed taxi-driver, and several others).

A smaller group of women answered in much the same terms: 'This is up to them; I feel that it is up to people to live their own lives in the way they wish' (the 26-year-old wife of a factory foreman); 'Doesn't matter; let them if they like it' (the 22-year-old wife of a labourer); 'I think it is quite natural for some people; some people have not the right balance of hormones' (the 22-year-old wife of a computer engineer).

A few of our informants instanced their personal experiences as the reason for their feelings, predominantly hostile but occasionally tolerant, about homosexuals. 'Terrible; shocking; I saw it happen too much when I was in the Navy' (a 40-year-old fitter); 'Where I work I come into contact with quite a few of them and I find them quite obnoxious, especially when they start taking a fancy to me' (a 29-year-old male nurse); 'No

particular feelings; it just doesn't interest me. Actually I have a very good friend who is a bit 'that way' and he's a bloody good bloke and I feel a bit sorry for him; he can't help it' (a 28-year-old electrical engineer); 'I know several homosexual men; they are friends of mine and I accept them. The actual physical side of it I prefer not to think about, but I appreciate that that is how they are' (a 39-year-old bank official, an observant Roman Catholic); 'It's queer, rather repulsive; I've had advances made but I don't like that sort of thing' (a 41-year-old small-holder).

'I understand them; I have met quite a few lesbians at work' (the 29-year-old wife of a press operator); 'Unhealthy; I find women become attracted to me but I never feel anything like that for them' (the 33-year-old wife of a design draughtsman); 'I feel desperately sorry for them; I was a nurse so I understand it and feel sick inside; but I think it's the way they are made' (the 41-year-old wife of an engineering foreman); 'Terrible; it's an illness really. . . . I have seen it; two women at work – they had to be separated – they messed about with each other. One of them had a rubber thing she used to strap around herself; she showed it to us at a Christmas party; I thought it was horrible' (the 32-year-old wife of a gardener).

## ii

Among our unmarried male respondents there were a few, without any heterosexual experience, who expressed their interest in homosexuality fairly unequivocally: 'Intrigued – not revolted, just curious' (a 27-year-old civil servant); 'Fairly sympathetic – probably men who can't get on with women' (a 28-year-old joiner); 'Why not? No reason why not if consenting adults' (a 31-year-old writer); but they all denied any overt activity.

Probably more significant are the male virgins who express their hostility to the idea of homosexuality with excessive verbal violence; in some of these instances, it is difficult not to suspect a classic psychoanalytic defence against repressed homosexual desires. Thus a 37-year-old bachelor, working in a professional capacity in a large hospital, who has never had heterosexual intercourse and does not expect to marry, said about those who fall in love with their own sex:

'It's unnatural. A feeling of disgust. The more homosexuality is sanctified, this weakens the strength of the rest; this happened to a number of empires before. Must stop it spreading!'

In a similar case is a 36-year-old labourer who is 'disgusted' at the idea of people falling in love with members of their own sex, but has no interest in women; and a 24-year-old maintenance worker who said of homosexuals 'They should be done away with'; he too has had no heterosexual experience, and does not expect to marry.

As has been stated, 2% of the men and 3% of the women said they had felt some sort of attraction for a member of their own sex, though a considerable number of them said they had done nothing to give physical expression to these feelings. As with the admissions of casual adultery, I think it remarkable that the interviewers were able to get so many admissions on a single interview; but obviously these figures cannot be interpreted as a measure of the percentage of homosexuals in the younger English population; there was almost certainly a good deal of individual reticence. At the same time, my impression – it cannot be justified by any data at my disposal – is that these low figures for emotional involvement are probably nearer to reality than the inflated figures given by Kinsey\* and some books of propaganda which have used his material. I have tried to examine emotional commitment, not casual, uninvolved homosexual activity.

Most of the unmarried who admitted to having felt some sort of attraction for their own sex said they had done nothing about it; the one exception was a 38-year-old welder, without schooling or any heterosexual experience, who replied tersely: 'Yes; that's my business.' Much more typical is a 32-year-old army officer, without any heterosexual experience, who said that he sympathized with those who fall in love with their own sex and had himself felt some attraction but 'I did my best to ignore it and the situation cleared itself'. A professional entertainer aged 37 said: 'I agree: it is entirely up to the persons themselves; I don't see anything wrong with it'; he had felt some attraction and 'shared a flat with him for six months'; he also has quite an active heterosexual life. Similarly, a 29-year-old electrical

\* *Op. cit.* pp. 361–66.

engineer: 'I don't see anything wrong with it; I experimented, but found I didn't like it.' A 22-year-old skilled worker said he had felt 'deep friendship only; not physical attraction'. A 28-year-old joiner, without heterosexual experience, and who doesn't expect to get married, feels about homosexuality: 'Fairly sympathetic; probably men who can't get on with women'; but denies that he has ever felt any attraction himself.

A rather interesting comment was made by a 23-year-old draughtsman:

'With mixed feelings. The homosexual act in itself revolts, but reason behind it now invokes my sympathy. I was approached in Brussels when a kid and was terrified; but I understand now I'm older that much of it is a passing phase, and of no lasting significance.'

Unmarried women have rather similar replies. A 23-year-old virgin, the daughter of a railway worker, considers that those who fall in love with their own sex are 'in need of medical help'; she had felt attraction for another woman but 'ignored it, when I was much younger'. A 19-year-old girl, studying to be a teacher said: 'I feel sorry for them because so many people mock them'; she had only felt attraction 'inasmuch as I have noticed other girls who are pretty'. A 24-year-old nurse had felt some attraction but 'we did nothing; it was just a very good friendship; we worked together'.

Some of the successfully married admitted that they had been attracted by members of their own sex, but had either not given their feelings physical expression or else the episodes were brief. Among those who said they had done nothing was a 45-year-old representative, who considered homosexuality 'very wrong' and had been attracted by another man 'but not completely; it was very deep friendship.' In similar case was a 41-year-old civil servant: 'I waited until the attraction wore off.' A 35-year-old commercial engineer, with a very active heterosexual life said of homosexuality: 'I think the relationship would be more intimate'; but he had never given expression to the attraction he had felt. A 32-year-old estate agent, an observant Roman Catholic, said of homosexuals: 'I feel sorry for them because they cannot help it; but they should not be social outcasts'; as a schoolboy he had felt some attraction and 'we engaged in a

certain amount of play and finally both went our separate ways from school'. A 29-year-old cartoonist with an active heterosexual life, said:

'Nothing wrong with it; it is a question of personal preference. Some of my best friends are queer. Once I did go through a stage; we indulged in sex play; we didn't enter one another. It only lasted three or four months; I was only 16 at the time.'

The 35-year-old wife of an artist said: 'I feel it's sad. It can't be satisfactory although one knows of many cases where it compensates fairly well.' She had been conscious of some attraction and 'as a schoolgirl, the nearest thing to making love'. The 44-year-old wife of an ex-serviceman, now training to be a teacher said: 'I had a crush on the geography mistress, but that soon passed. We didn't do anything in any sexual way; it was just a school-girl crush.' The 35-year-old wife of a worker in a hospital finds homosexuals 'just unfortunate'; she had felt some attraction but grew out of it. The 35-year-old wife of a skilled worker, born in Scotland, had similarly felt some attraction 'when I was still at school; but apart from that, no'. The 27-year-old wife of a docker:

'It doesn't bother me. I feel it is all right. When I was single I palled up with a girl and felt a lot for her. We went around together until my future husband came along and he split us up. My husband split us up, but she stood for me at the wedding. She got married and I haven't seen her since.'

### iii

The question about homosexuality came almost at the end of the questionnaire; and, after I had analysed several hundred, it seemed to me that I could forecast what a respondent's attitude to this topic would be, on the basis of his or her attitudes towards extra-marital heterosexuality (pre-marital, discussed in Chapter Two, casual adultery, discussed in Chapter Seven, and serious adultery, discussed in Chapter Eight) and towards female sexuality (discussed in Chapter Five). We therefore had the appropriate cross-correlations made, to check whether there was any substance in my hunch that the rigidity or permissiveness of people's attitudes towards unlicensed sexuality

was not much influenced by the sex of the hypothesized illicit partner.

Because the answers to the questions about homosexuality and casual or serious adultery were so numerous, I have only transcribed the polar categories in the accompanying tables: the components of toleration or hostility towards homosexuality; the most marked disapproval and the most marked indifference towards casual adultery; and either the choice or the rejection of drastic action in the event of the discovery of a spouse's infidelity.

**Table fourteen**

Correlations between attitudes towards homosexuality and sexual experience before marriage

<i>Attitudes to homosexuality</i>	<i>Toler- ance</i>		<i>Revul- sion</i>	<i>Moral dis- approval Dislike</i>	
	<i>12%</i>	<i>Pity 22%</i>		<i>24%</i>	<i>4%</i>
Do you think young men should have some sexual experience before marriage?					
No (37%)	16%	42%	38%	42%	33%
Yes (52%)	67%	49%	50%	46%	59%
If Yes, one person or persons only (30%)	33%	30%	32%	24%	38%
Just anyone (19%)	32%	15%	16%	19%	18%
Do you think young women should have some sexual experience before marriage?					
No (54%)	29%	60%	63%	56%	49%
Yes (35%)	59%	33%	29%	35%	45%
If Yes, one person or persons only (25%)	38%	23%	21%	22%	36%
Just anyone (8%)	19%	7%	6%	13%	4%

**Table fifteen**

Correlations between attitudes towards homosexuality and casual adultery

<i>Attitudes to homosexuality</i>	<i>Toler- ance</i>		<i>Revul- sion</i>	<i>Moral dis- approval Dislike</i>	
	<i>12%</i>	<i>Pity 22%</i>		<i>24%</i>	<i>4%</i>
A married man having an affair with a woman he does not love					
Strong moral disapproval (22%)	14%	21%	29%	29%	17%
Disapproval of character (22%)	15%	23%	20%	18%	22%
Won't judge (10%)	19%	11%	6%	13%	13%
No attitude unless it affects me (5%)	8%	5%	4%	2%	5%
It's natural (3%)	5%	2%	2%	6%	3%
A married woman having an affair with a man she does not love					
Strong moral dis- approval (23%)	13%	23%	30%	29%	20%
Disapproval of character (18%)	15%	19%	19%	19%	22%
Won't judge (8%)	17%	10%	5%	10%	10%
No attitude unless it affects me (6%)	10%	5%	4%	6%	6%

So few people thought such behaviour natural in women that this line has been omitted.

**Table sixteen**

Correlations between attitudes towards homosexuality and serious adultery

<i>Attitudes to homosexuality</i>	<i>Tolerance</i> 12%	<i>Pity</i> 22%	<i>Revulsion</i> 24%	<i>Moral disapproval</i> 4%	<i>Dislike</i> 8%
<hr/>					
If husband finds wife having affair with another man					
Divorce (7%)	6%	4%	9%	7%	8%
Separation (15%)	12%	9%	18%	21%	17%
Analyse situation (24%)	27%	27%	25%	25%	21%
Try to reconcile (19%)	19%	22%	16%	24%	23%
Talk it over with wife (28%)	28%	33%	25%	25%	28%
<hr/>					
If wife finds husband having affair					
Divorce (7%)	7%	4%	9%	6%	8%
Separation (14%)	10%	8%	17%	20%	17%
Analyse situation (25%)	27%	28%	27%	23%	19%
Try to reconcile (20%)	20%	24%	17%	24%	23%
Talk it over with husband (29%)	25%	34%	25%	18%	29%

**Table seventeen**

Correlations between attitudes towards homosexuality and female sexuality

<i>Attitudes to homosexuality</i>	<i>Tolerance</i> 12%	<i>Pity</i> 22%	<i>Revulsion</i> 24%	<i>Moral disapproval</i> 4%	<i>Dislike</i> 8%
<hr/>					
Do you think women have a real physical climax					
Yes (69%)	79%	72%	66%	62%	68%
No (21%)	13%	19%	21%	25%	19%
If Yes,					
All women (7%)	12%	7%	6%	8%	10%
Most women (38%)	43%	38%	39%	27%	37%
Some women (24%)	24%	26%	21%	28%	20%

As can be seen, there is quite a marked tendency for people to be reasonably consistent in their views. Those who disapprove of pre-marital heterosexual experience have low tolerance and high hostility towards homosexuality, and conversely. Those who think the unmarried should sleep with just anyone by whom they are attracted are particularly high in tolerance. Similarly, those who voice strong disapproval of the morals or character of a married man or woman having an affair with someone they do not love are markedly disapproving of and revolted by homosexuality; those who would not pronounce a judgement without more information, or said they had no attitude unless they were personally affected, were high on tolerance and low on revulsion. Those who would respond with automatic divorce or separation to the discovery of a spouse's infidelity have little tolerance or pity for homosexuals; those who would analyse the situation, try to reconcile and talk it over with their spouse are particularly likely to express pity for homosexuals.

To my mind, the most revealing correlation was that with the belief in female orgasm. It will be recalled\* that far more

\* See Chapter Five, p. 125.



women than men denied the existence of female orgasms; and those who do not believe in female orgasms are markedly hostile to homosexuality; those who believe that all or most women do have orgasms are markedly tolerant.

It would seem plausible to suggest that those who, whether from belief or experience, think of sex as enjoyable, as fun, are likely to be tolerant of the idea of homosexuality, or sorry for the pleasure homosexuals are losing; whereas those who think of sex as a 'sacred' duty, to be treated solemnly and not necessarily enjoyed, are hostile and disapproving. I think these tables suggest that the attitudes towards homosexuality are congruent with the attitudes towards heterosexuality and that the implication of general loathing of such 'unnatural' behaviour, advanced without evidence by the advocates of punitive legal punishment for detected homosexuality, has little justification in the views of the majority of the younger English people.

#### iv

There would appear to be a gamut of attitudes towards extra-marital sexuality (whatever the sex of the partner) among the younger English from extreme censoriousness ('He wants shooting', 'They should be done away with') often violently expressed, to extreme licentiousness ('If it comes along you don't turn it down', 'It's a bit immoral but it passes the time', 'Good luck to him if he can get away with it', 'Everybody to their own liking') where even the idea of sexual pleasure is welcomed with the equivalent of winks, nudges and leers. Between these two extremes is the majority who do not get over-excited about the idea of sex in either direction and who accept the fact that sexuality is an important and interesting subject which can be discussed without heat or embarrassment, to which the very low rate of refusal to answer the most intimate questions bears witness.

Is it possible with the data at our disposal to determine the size of the censorious and licentious groups? The answer can obviously only be an approximation; it would need more information than can be gathered in a single interview to state unequivocally that a man or woman was licentious, though censoriousness does appear to be manifested very convincingly.

The problem is complicated by the present state of mass communications. It sometimes seems as if the licentious were almost completely dominant in the popular newspapers, in the production of paperback books (or, at any rate, their jackets), in the theatre, cinema and television, and in what is implied in all the talk about our 'permissive' society, 'swinging' London or Liverpool, and the like; and it sometimes seems as if the vocal portion of the audiences for these mass media were almost entirely composed of the censorious.

A possible guide to the size of these two groups can be found in the answer to the question: 'Do you think a man and a woman can have a real friendship without sex playing any part?'; for it can be surmised that neither the censorious nor the licentious, though for very different reasons, would consider such a relationship possible. Twenty-nine per cent of the men and 27% of the women answered No; a further 3% of the men and 5% of the women said they did not know. The age-distribution of these replies is suggestive. Of those aged between 16 and 20 17% said No and 7% Don't know; of those aged between 21 and 24 23% said No and 4% Don't Know; of those aged 25 and 35 28% said No and 4% Don't Know; and of those aged between 35 and 45 32% said No and 4% Don't Know. Those who accept the possibility of a comradely relationship between a man and a woman, without sex playing any overt part, are markedly more numerous in the younger groups. About 70% of the total population would appear to be reasonable, cool and unexcited about the relationships between the sexes: the remaining 30% comprise the censorious and the licentious, but in what proportions?

Clues can be found in the answers to the questions about casual adultery\* and fidelity;† about pre-marital experience both in theory and practice‡ (those who consider that a young man should sleep with just anyone they are attracted to and those who admit to numerous partners can be considered to be among the licentious) and in the differing views on female sexuality§ (those who hold that 'most women don't care much

\* See Table Twelve, p. 156.

† See Chapter Seven, pp. 147-9.

‡ See Chapter Two, pp. 31-7.

§ See Table Ten, p. 123.

about the physical side of sex' must surely be counted among the censorious) and in some of the attitudes towards the birth-control pill.\*

Putting all these figures together, I would hazard, as a rough approximation, that the licentious represent about 10% of our sample of the English aged between 16 and 45, with about four times as many men as women; and the censorious represent about 20%, with twice as many women as men. Licentiousness decreases slightly, and censoriousness increases markedly with age; a sizeable minority of men under the age of 25 are likely to be licentious; about a third of the women over thirty-five will be censorious. Since these groups feel so intensely about sex, it is understandable that their voices are heard much more frequently than those of the majority whose imaginations are less heated.

### Figures of distribution

#### How do you feel about people who fall in love with members of their own sex?

Differences of 3% are treated as of possible significance.

**By self-ascribed social class** Middle class emphasize pity (26%)

Lower middle class emphasize not understandable (16%) and under-emphasize tolerance (9%).

Skilled working class emphasize not understandable (17%) and under-emphasize pity (19%) and can't help it (3%).

Upper working class emphasize pity (28%) and can't help it (11%) and under-emphasize moral disapproval (1%), dislike (4%) and not understandable (8%).

Working class under-emphasize pity (15%)

Those who will not place themselves in a social class emphasize tolerance (16%), mentally sick (14%) and ridiculous (6%); they under-emphasize revulsion (14%).

**The Registrar General's categories** AB strongly emphasize pity (33%) and less strongly not understandable (16%); they

\* See Table Eleven, p. 138.

strongly under-emphasize revulsion (18%) and less strongly mentally ill (7%); none in this category think such behaviour ridiculous.

C1 emphasize tolerance (15%), pity (28%) and can't help it (10%); they under-emphasize revulsion (20%).

C2 emphasize revulsion (23%) and under-emphasize pity (19%).

DE emphasize moral disapproval (7%) and under-emphasize tolerance (8%) and pity (15%).

**The regions** The North-East and North under-emphasize revulsion (18%).

The Midlands emphasize revulsion (28%) and not understandable (16%) and under-emphasize pity (16%) and can't help it (4%).

The South-East emphasize tolerance (15%) and pity (28%).

The South-West emphasize pity (26%), moral disapproval (7%) and can't help it (11%); they under-emphasize mentally ill (8%).

The North-West emphasize revulsion (29%) and mentally ill (20%); they under-emphasize tolerance (4%), pity (15%) and not understandable (10%).

#### Do you think a man and woman can have a real friendship without sex playing any part?

**By self-ascribed social class** Middle class: Yes 71%; No 25%; don't know 3%.

Lower middle class: Yes 64%; No 30%; Don't know 5%.

Skilled working class: Yes 63%; No 31%; Don't know 4%.

Upper working class: Yes 75%; No 19%; Don't know 5%.

Working class: Yes 63%; No 32%; Don't know 4%.

Those who will not place themselves: Yes 61%; No 27%; Don't know 8%.