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SEX AND GENDER

A CASE-STUDY OF SEX EDUCATION IN ONE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

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CONTENTS

		Page
Contents		i
Acknowledgements		ii
Abbreviations		iii
Summary		iv-v
1.	Socialisation, Sexuality and Schooling	1
2.	Locating Sex Education in the School	56
3.	Strategies of Production, Control and Negotiation	90
4.	Youth's Sexuality and the Formation of Proto-Marital Relationships	130
5.	Nurturing Heterosexuality	169
6.	Marriage, Choosing One's Gender-Destiny	206
7.	The Formation of Gendered Citizens	247
Appendix - Doing the Study		273
Bibliography		291

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.B.C.	British Broadcasting Corporation.
C.S.E.	Certificate of Secondary Education.
D.E.S.	Department of Education and Science.
D.H.S.S.	Department of Health and Social Security.
F.P.A.	Family Planning Association.
L.E.A.	Local Education Authority.
'O' Level	Ordinary level of General Certificate of Education.
V.D.	Veneral Disease.

SUMMARY

The thesis examines Sex Education lessons integrated to the fourth and fifth year core curriculum of a mixed comprehensive school. It studies their stated objectives, contents and implementation in the classroom and analyses how pupils interpret curricular meanings with regard to their gender expectations from sexuality, employment and domesticity. A variety of qualitative methods - in particular, participant observation and informal interviews - has been used.

The first chapter argues that sexual and gender socialisations must be understood from a materialist position and that the Sex Education curriculum may be structured by the fundamental functions of schooling in a gender - and class - divided society. The second chapter locates the marginal position of Sex Education within the Health Education course of the deeply divided school. Strategies for control over curriculum and classroom social relations developed by both Sex Education teachers and pupils constitute the theme of the third chapter with illustrations from the lesson on childbirth and pregnancy. Contraception, sexual intercourse and marriage are discussed in the next three chapters which follow the same pattern. Each considers the selection of curricular meanings, their transmission in the class and boys' and girls' perceptions of these topics.

The last chapter underlines the dominance of traditional views on sexuality, gender and marriage in teachers' and pupils' perceptions alongside a liberal reformist theme. Both dominant and negotiated meanings form the ideology of personal relationships which blends objective information with commonsense knowledge of sexual - and gender - conflicts. Consistent with the social democratic views of

education, this ideology serves to negotiate the fundamental contradiction between the socialisation of pupils to ascribed positions (sexual, familial and occupational) and individuals' self-determination with regard to these. By and large, pupils' accommodative strategies based on conflicting sexual - and gender - interests validate this ideology but also give them some limited control over definitions of appropriate behaviour.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIALISATION, SEXUALITY AND SCHOOLING

> "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the cat.
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Following this unquestionable logic, I shall briefly map out where I intend the study to go first, then I shall define its starting point before I finally develop the plan of the journey.

There is certainly a widely-shared commonsense awareness in our society that some form of Sex Education does go on in schools (1). According to Burke (1974, p.34), Sex Education in the United Kingdom has involved considerable action at the level of central government, of local education authorities and non-governmental organisations. Given these activities, the near absence of sociological research in this area of the curriculum needs some explanation.

It may reflect our deep-rooted dual view of the sexual as innate and sex-differentiated, and as something mysterious and dangerous; that which is usually queried is not our "negative" attitudes towards sexuality - to use Reich's phrase, (1951), but the morals of sexuality triggered by questions such as "What makes a sexual act moral?" rather than by the query "What makes an act sexual?" (2). One probable consequence of our ambivalence towards sexuality is that it allocates sexual experience to a special sphere of human conduct distinct from the social in spite of the erotisation of the environment. For instance, parents keep their children away from the secrets of the bedroom or may

experience difficulties in talking about sex to their children because it involves presenting them, according to Simon and Gagnon, with "a sense of their own sexuality" (quoted in Farrell, 1978, p.82). For Bernard, "the great fundamental issue in the area of sex has to do with the normative control of non-reproductive heterosexuality" (1966, p.77). If this is so, disparities in parental beliefs and moral panics about school sex education make it all the more strange that the learning and teaching of sexual knowledge has been largely ignored by sociology (3).

The available sociological research is characterised by quantitative measurements such as the ratio of parents receptive to sources of information on Sex Education (4) or correlations between Sex Education provisions and rates of schoolgirl pregnancies (5). These studies point to a considerable increase in school sex education, especially in secondary schools from the 1960's onwards which perhaps underlines a growing acceptability of Sex Education among adults. Farrell's random survey of 1556 fifteen- to nineteen-year old teenagers in 1974-75 confirmed the extension of provision and some disparities in the programmes for girls and boys. 97% girls and 87% boys had some Sex Education lessons in secondary schools (6) and there was a greater proportion of young people who reported on Sex Education topics in single sex schools than in mixed schools. According to Schofield's similar but earlier study (1968) :

> "nearly half the boys (47%) and girls (43%) felt they should have been told more about sex at school. The teenagers were dissatisfied with the amount of Sex Education they received, and with its quality (...) But there is also plenty of evidence from this research that teenagers are anxious to be informed about sex and want Sex Education providing it is given with an assurance which is backed by knowledge and a proper understanding of their particular problems". (p.226)

Farrell (1978) also reported that young people were divided in their appreciation of school sex education :

> "45% of the young people have made mainly positive comments about their Sex Education lessons, 36% had made mainly negative comments, and 12% were identified as neutral, unenthusiastic comments, and 7% made comments which could not be categorised in this way" (p.145).

She added :

> "working class children 'appreciate' the lessons more, possibly because they are less likely to have been told anything by their parents. On the other hand, middle class children appear to relate more easily to teachers in terms of finding them more approachable". (1978, p.146).

These studies indicate that sex and class factors are noticeable in the learning of Sex Education but how this is so, is left unexplored. They sketch out a movement from the provision of biological information to a wider area of Sex Education with an emphasis on education for personal relationships and family life. The reasons for this development have not been researched either. The studies are, by and large, descriptive and not analytical, with a behaviourist orientation which takes an unproblematic assumed notion of sexuality. Two examples can be drawn from research that is widely quoted.

In The Sexual Behaviour of Young People, Schofield has aimed "to measure the extent of sexual experience in this age group" (my emphasis) and "to identify some of the sociological and psychological factors associated with sexual experience". (1968, p.19). The first aim supersedes the second as the study quantifies "sexual facts" such as the age of first intercourse in isolation from social and subjective factors. Sexual experience is equated with sexual intercourse and a male definition of sexuality - for example, boys were

asked to tell where/when/how often they had kissed a girl but girls were asked where/when/how often they had been kissed : surely, some girls must be good at initiating a sexual relationship as well! In My Mother Said, Farrell tabulates sources of information about sex and young people's attitudes to these sources as well as some of their attitudes to sex and birth control. There is no discussion of the different meanings on sexuality produced by parents, the media or schools. Neither is there any analysis of the relation between learning and sexual behaviour as we are reassuringly told that there is no direct causal link between the two. Learning about sexuality is reduced to what is being remembered and sexuality to conscious sexual behaviour. Biological information is assumed to be separate from the social relations in which it is transmitted. Both surveys argue for the extension of school sex education with no critique of its practices.

In contrast to these studies, Jackson (1978) situates Sex Education within schooling and argues that it is sexist :

> "Sexism is evident both in the 'facts' that are taught and the moral attitudes conveyed with them, in the emphasis on reproductive biology and in the values placed on marriage and the family. This bias limits the relevance of Sex Education for all adolescents and in particular excludes information related to female sexuality which might help girls to discover and develop their sexual potential". (1978, p.341).

According to Jackson, forms of information, values and topics could marginalise female non-reproductive sexuality. Girls' sexuality would be further undermined by the incorporation of Sex Education into the curriculum which, by excluding pupils' everyday experiences, offers objectified and inadequate knowledge to both sexes.

Thus, Jackson suggests interesting areas for research and, in this study, I shall attempt to test and develop her brief analysis. In particular, I shall focus on how sexism, if it is present, structures school sex education; how it can be produced by the organisation of the Sex Education curriculum; how Sex Education relates to the formation of gender identities. Another concern forms the distant goal of this exploration. If Sex Education legitimises sexual and gender inequalities, does it, nonetheless produce objective understandings of personal relationships with which boys and girls assess their future roles as adults?

The journey to discover whether school sex education is an agent of cultural change starts here with a discussion of sexual socialisation. Then, this chapter will trace the historical developments of school sex education; it will examine policy documents and critiques of its aims. Finally, I shall turn to the sociological literature dealing with the formation of sex roles by schools in the attempt to locate Sex Education within its institutional system.

A. SOCIALISATION, SEXUALITY AND SEX EDUCATION

There is no natural way of considering the body (Douglas, 1970) and there is nothing metaphysical about the biology of sexuality. As sexual beings, we are always concerned with its concrete, socially and historically, determinate forms of existence (7). Forms of sexual expression are not just a capacity inherent to each single individual.

Sexual meanings arise from a definite form of society and so does sexual knowledge as biological and social factors interact with each other. This means that some form of sexual socialisation has to take place in any society.

Sexual behaviour, like any other action, through the mediation of symbolic orders such as language, may convey meanings, values and motivations which are not necessarily sexual, i.e. which do not aim at the release of libidinal tension. The border line between the sexual and the non-sexual is diffuse, open to many cultural interpretations and social pressures.

In our society, the sexual world is in a continuous state of change, conservative or radical (8). This has been demonstrated recently, for instance, by birth control and fertility technologies or by reduction in backstreet abortions (Simms, 1981). The sexual order may never be static because of the infinite plasticity of sexual desires and their relations to the social structures they emerge out of or dissolve into, in particular the historical power struggles between sexual groups (male/female, McIntosh, 1978; homo/heterosexual, Weeks, 1981) and between socialising agencies and class interests (Foucault, 1976; Flandrin, 1979; Duby, 1981). Whatever their particular emphasis, sociological and anthropological studies (Mead, 1950; Barrett, 1980, Ch.2) have shown that models of masculinity are normatively related to erotic behaviour and there may be a problematic, unstable and historical relation between biology and gender-identities (Sayers, 1982). The degree to which eroticism is linked to gender roles is itself a matter of sexual socialisation (Oakley, 1972; Comer, 1974).

If the importance of culture partially explains the definitions of the categories of sexuality and gender, the significance

of education necessarily follows, as shown by Maccoby (1966) and Belotti (1975) (9). Jackson makes a similar observation :

> "The aspect of pre-adolescent development that has the greatest relevance for sexuality is the learning of gender roles. It is the feminine or masculine self-identity acquired through this process which provides the framework within which the learning of sexual scripts occurs". (1978, p.14).

She views the emergence of sexuality in children as contingent upon gender behaviour and not vice-versa as with Freud's biologically reductionist views on femininity (10). Changing ideas on gender influence sexual practices (11) and, as Barrett argues,

> "the link between biological reproduction and eroticism is one which operates to a considerable extent in social and ideological terms. It is situated within an ideology of femininity and masculinity which reproduces socially gendered subjects" (1980, p.77).

Sexual ethics and practices have to be understood in a broad social and political context.

Barrett's approach may be useful to a study of youth's sexual socialisation given some evidence that their sexual codes are integral to ideas on masculinity and femininity. Thus, in an interview with Willis, a working class school leaver called Spike, remarked :

> "I've got the right bird, I've been goin' with her for eighteen months now. Her's as good as gold. She wouldn't look at another chap. She's fucking done well, she's clean. She loves doing fucking housework. Trousers I bought yesterday, I took 'em up last night, and her turned them up for me (...) She's as good as gold and I wanna get married as soon as I can". (1977, p.44-45).

Willis reports that to be masculine, working class boys enact sexist attitudes alongside the aspiration to marry eventually a sexually inexperienced girl. According to McRobbie (1978), working class teenage girls who live in a "sexual twilight" have a high commitment to early marriage. So, for most boys and girls, sexual socialisation may be codified by marriage.

Using various psycho-analytical theories, Mitchell (1974), Zarestky (1976) and contributors to the journal M/F (12) correctly attribute current sexual expectations and values to family relations (13). However, they have tended to overlook secondary forms of sexual socialisation by focussing mainly on the family.

This neglect may be short-sighted for two reasons. The first deals with Freudian pronouncements on sexual stages, in particular vis-a-vis the relation between past and present. With Freud, childhood experiences structure adults' sexuality and psyche through the interplay of the instincts which mostly determine our future. This is queried by Simon and Gagnon :

> "rather than the past determining the present it is possible that the present signicantly reshapes the past, as we reconstruct our autobiographies in an effort to bring them into greater congruence with our present identity roles and available vocabularies". (1969, p.734).

This argument points to a second reversal in Freudian theory which is the relation between childhood and adulthood. Adult sexual practices may not be totally determined by reference to past childhood experiences, conscious or not. The possible interpretation, or rather re-interpretation, of one's past sexual life may occur at adolescence. Jackson observes :

> "Adolescence is the period of life when conscious sexual learning begins. At this time children make discoveries concerning the facts of sex and reproduction, experience changes in their own bodies, and begin to learn the socio-sexual scripts that govern adult sexual behaviour". (1978, p.25-26).

Along with Simon and Gagnon, Jackson underlines the importance of adolescence in the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the significance of schooling in this process.

This symbolic interactionist approach (14) is given some support by recent historical developments concerning youth.

Secondary socialisation of sexual identities may have taken a greater significance since the 1960's than in the past, due to the availability of birth control advice and free contraceptives without regard to age or marital status. Youths over sixteen know that they may have licit sexual intercourse relatively free from fears of pregnancy. However, their interpretation of "adult socio-sexual scripts" in relation to recent experiences and, for instance, legal norms, does not necessarily disregard what they have already learnt, consciously or unconsciously, about sexuality. To stipulate that conscious sexual learning "begins" as late as adolescence assumes a mechanistic dichotomy between secondary and primary socialisations.

Yet, to emphasise the social construction of sexual and gender differences particularly appeals to those concerned with cultural change. To say with Stone, for example, that "despite appearances, human sex takes place mostly in the head" (1977, p.483)(15) suggests that educating men and women into non-sexist views could open up the possibility of less discriminatory practices against women. However, this position tends to reify cultural labels. It limits social change to forms of consciousness separate from their material conditions of change and it loses the sense of what constitutes the sexual from non-sexual experiences (16). By contrast, I have suggested that sexual socialisation has to be conceived from a materialistic view of the world because such a conception neither removes biology altogether from socialisation nor assumes apolitical and deterministic relations between biological factors and social milieux. It acknowledges both the primary role of early sexual socialisation and the active interpretations of its meanings by

individuals, in particular post pubertal youths. Thus, the study will examine how school sex education portrays the biology of sexuality and gender differences and, in order to narrow its focus, I shall, now, turn to its historical antecedents.

B. HISTORICAL TENSIONS IN SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

I State definitions

The historical foundation of contemporary school sex education lay with the Edwardians. Unlike the Victorians, they held the conviction that some degree of Sex Education would benefit boys and girls and, hopefully, the nation's physical and moral health. Bland (1982) links the growth of Sex Education to the middle class obsession with the falling birth rate and the fear of the physical deterioration of the race at the beginning of this century. The diffusion of prophylactic knowledge was central to the hygiene movement. Seen as Guardians of the Race, "Women were being enjoined to plan for rational, responsible and healthy motherhood" while "sex was increasingly seen as the physical basis of love" (Bland, 1982, p.373). This new sexualised image of motherhood was the praised alternative to being an "amateur prostitute" who was said to come from all classes and give "sex for free" (17). In order to move women away from promiscuity into the ideals of healthy motherhood, Sex Education was encouraged by voluntary associations which addressed themselves to each sex differently. Scare tactics were used in the teaching materials for girls and women whereas a chatty style reassured the boys :

> "Girls had to be kept in partial innocence cum-ignorance while they would assume responsibility both for their own sexual behaviour and that of the man". (Bland, 1982, p.380).

Females could have access to biological information if this merged with ontological views as expressed in this doctoral statement :

> "The longing of every normal woman to find happiness in sex union and to exercise her functions physically and psychically in marriage and motherhood is an ineradicable instinct" (Dr. Chesser, Woman and Womanhood, 1912) (18).

A medical moral coalition redeemed female sexuality. In the inter-war period, this alliance was actively developed in schools by the School Medical Service. Its Journal, Health and Empire, was set up in 1926 with the aim of

> "maintaining the family, the reduction of promiscuous incontinence, and the elimination of those infectious diseases which such promiscuity brings usually in its train". (Musgrave, 1978, p.70).

Through the development of school health education, Christian ethics sought to create a strong consensus amongst pupils for gender differentiated sexual norms. However, the school medical staff were mainly concerned with hygiene and considered that Sex Education remained the primary responsibility of parents and voluntary agencies.

With the Second World War,

> "evacuation greatly extended the 'parental' role of the school ... with the teachers acting as 'communal' parents, over-seeing, billetting, checking on children's welfare and emotional needs, as well as their usual educational functions. The state, through schools and billetting officers, took on direct responsibility for children in an unprecedented way ..." (Summerfield, 1977, p.34).

This development probably facilitated the state intervention in school sex education in response to the growing concern with venereal infections amongst the civilian and military populations, as noted in the annual reports by chief medical officers of the Ministry of Health (19) :

> "For the male population (civilian and service), syphilis reached a peak in 1942, at about 113 per cent more than in 1939. (...) For women, syphilitic infections increased by over 59% between 1939 and 1944". (1946, p.67).

Sexual morals were being loosened amongst vital sectors of the population and, in the same year, for the first time, the Board of Education published a document on Sex Education in schools (20). It strongly urged teachers to extend "sex instruction" to elementary and secondary schools as a prophylactic policy and also insisted that the "fear of disease should not be put forward as a prime consideration in the sex-conduct". It contrasted its liberal stand with the "shock tactics" used by the Central Council for Health Education and the Ministry of Information against "what we could call "The Enemy from Within"". Thus, whilst other state agencies used more repressive procedures (21) to protect service men, the Board of Education adopted a persuasive tone, in spite of militaristic images, and lay no strict rule of sexual conduct to adolescents. It encouraged teachers to extend discussion topics from "plain facts" to "friendships between people of the same sex or opposite sex". It also suggested the reason for this less prescriptive approach. Now that "boys and girls are meeting and working together under all conditions", a close supervision over them could not be implemented in the "social dislocation" ensuing from the war.

However, the report assimilated the sexual activity of "young girls" to either "mental disturbance" or "social maladjustment". There appeared to be no such deviant among

boys. Paradoxically, given their apparent instability, girls were still expected to understand sexual impulses in each sex! Boys were not mentioned when extensive instruction in childcare was recommended.

Thus, in spite of its non-prescriptive tone, the report held to traditional expectations of gender roles. The reality of 9 single women out of 10 and 8 married women out of 10 working in industry by mid-1943 (Summerfield, 1977) made no impact on the ideological insistence on domestic training for girls.

After 1945, women workers found themselves back in their homes but increased demands for new sources of cheap labour, triggered by fast economic growth, gradually recalled married women back into full and part-time employment. Also, the increased number of marriages, the reduced fertility and the expansion of home consumption called for new definitions of female roles. Hall (1977) has traced the development of domestic ideology in the inter-war period. It was consolidated in the fifties as a response to the objective contradictions that women's dual roles created (22). To mediate them, the "scientific management" of the home was glamourised as a new ideal for women which sought to compensate for their unskilled and low paid jobs. The notion of the sexes being "equal but different" gained strength and women were encouraged to explore their feminine qualities within the confines of the home and marital bed. The sexual education of wives by husbands became a popular theme with such writers as Dr. Mary Macaulay :

> "Just as the success of the erotic side of the marriage is chiefly the husband's responsibility, so the atmosphere of the home is chiefly the wife's" (quoted by Wilson, 1980, p.93).

Sexual submission by the wife was meant to be a sign of feminine care and true to the point where

> "It is a shocking thing to hear a woman say that ... she will not be raped by her husband. Such an attitude would be impossible in any woman to whom loving and giving were synonymous" (Macaulay, 1957, p.79).

The portrayal of such conjugal harmony coexisted with the increased respectability of the family planning movement (Cartwright, 1970) and notorious controversies surrounding, for instance, the Kinsey Reports (1948, 1953), the Wolfenden Report (1957) and the trial of Lady Chatterley's Lover (1960) (23). The sexual debates of the fifties and early sixties particularly focussed on pre-marital sex, female chastity, orgasmic moment for women, homosexuality and prostitution. Hall et al (1978) and Smart (1981) have seen the legislation on sexual behaviour (24) as an attempt, amongst progressive reformists and paternalist conservatives, to define the boundaries of sexual permissiveness and, thus, to seek a new consensus about "public" as opposed to "private" morality. They have argued that the distinction between the law and private morality was a key principle in the legislation concerned with heterosexuality and public morality, leaving the police to interpret unclear legal norms in the field.

The Handbook of Health Education (1956) which the DES provided for student-teachers illustrates well the ongoing struggle of the times over definitions of private and public sexual norms.

The Handbook's idealism reflected the optimism of the period. It argued for a holistic view of health seen

as the well being of body, mind and spirit. This well being could be achieved through the development of a "corporate way of life" in a "harmonious community" for which the family was the model. Its authors rebuked teachers for instructing young girls with rigid, quickly out-of-date advice on childrearing. They advocated a comprehensive review of motherhood away from hygiene and bottle feeds which recalls the insistence by Bowlby (1953) on the psychological bond between mother and child. Sex Education was moved away from the specialist domain of biology and yet, the "ways of sex" were not to be discussed by teachers who had to focus only on reproduction and menstruation. In a sense, the sex education curriculum became narrower than the one recommended in the war. However, it was meant to be interdisciplinary and non-instructional since direct advice on sexual matters was ineffectual and potentially harmful to young people :

> "In the long run, the force of example, or what is learned in other fields of education, may prove more successful than direct advice in helping the individual to exercise self control" (p.57).

Informed by the humanist values found in the whole school curriculum,

> "the sex urges will be more easily sublimated, coming to be taken for granted as a natural part and not too troublesome phenomenon which is part of growing up" (p.57).

Its Freudian concept of graduated but sex differentiated sexual growth was implicitly rooted in the ideology of domesticity mentioned earlier - the teaching of mothercraft was urged for. Calls of guidance in "human relationships" and "community

services" remained vague and boys seemed to have little to do with these.

The Handbook both departed from and supported the Edwardians' conception of Sex Education. It questioned zealous dogmas and their benefits to the individual but, in a contradictory way, it upheld, like the Edwardians, the necessity to impart some sexual knowledge to young people. How this was to be selected was left to the private judgement of sensible teachers:

> "Equipped with the necessary knowledge and a balanced point of view, the young teacher will be in a position to deal with the natural questions which can arise at any time in any subject and later, perhaps, with some of the more difficult problems; only he must never forget that the solution for any of these will be always individual and unique" (my emphasis) (Handbook, p.61).

The 1956 Handbook exposed major developments in the DES policy concerning Sex Education. Firstly, it encouraged the contribution of subjects other than biology. Secondly, it preferred a humanist and individualist rationality to the Edwardian codification of sexual norms in order to foster private morality. Overall, consensual seeking principles rather than detailed instruction were meant to constitute Sex Education.

In the late fifties and in the sixties, there was a proliferation of government and sociological works on family trends (25). These reflected the growing concern that "the Family cannot be taken for granted as an everlasting biological unit" (Crowther Report, 1959). The ideology of domesticity and its tenet that sexual pleasure should be confined to husband's and wife's "bedroom olympics" (Campbell,

1980) was eroded by the employment of married women (26) and the liberalisation of many aspects of social life including sexual roles (27). Wilson (1980) noted the "psychitrisation of personal relationships and the expansion of psycho-sexual counselling services" and how definitions of mental health were being worked out in public policies. According to Musgrave (1978, p.81), the discovery by social sciences that "there is no sharp cleavage between right and wrong or between sanity and insanity" led to the relativistic notion of morality found in the schools' moral curriculum and, one should add, child-oriented educational policies (28). The repeated editions (1964, 1968) of the Handbook were part of a number of state policy documents concerned with the problematisation of personal relationships, private morality and the formation of family skills (29). For the first time, with the 1977 Handbook, teachers were advised to discuss various sexual practices like homosexuality, sexual deviarces or the sexuality of the physically handicapped. The "sexual revolution" of the 1960's had made its impact on the official Sex Education curriculum a decade later.

The focus on individuals' responsibility which had emerged in the 1956 edition was now fully developed in a whole chapter given to Sex Education. The explosive nature of sexual behaviour among the young had to be guided by an informed "understanding of relationships essentially sexual" which would help boys and girls to reach moral decisions. Sexuality was not, now, one of those instincts which had to be mastered but a formative agent of the personality

structure. Informed judgements rather than moral norms were expected to regulate youth's sexual behaviour. This, in part, came from the upgrading of sexuality to a major factor in young people's struggle towards self-identity and, in part, from the recognition of youth resistance to institutionalised forms of sexual control (Handbook, 1977, p.113-114). Now that responsible sexual activities amongst youth were legitimate, if not quite desirable, the ideological legacy of motherhood, however, as the sole desirable channel for female sexuality, was toned down. Contraception should be discussed by both sexes to prevent illegitimate births and abortions (30). However, the convergence between definitions of male and female heterosexuality retained the notion of male sexuality as being "more abundant" and "less controllable" than the girls' (31). The sexual controversies mentioned earlier did not undermine the view that nature has ordained sexual responsibility onto girls and not on boys - not because of potential motherhood, an argument put forward by the Edwardians, but, now, because of sex differences in orgasmic patterns.

This legitimisation of sexuality was paralleled with a blurring of parental roles. Teachers were urged to foster notions of marital and parental responsibilities amongst boys and girls in order to prevent broken marriages and unwanted pregnancies. The limited re-definition of the father's role sought to prop up the vacillating nuclear family.

Since the Edwardians, the concept of formal sex instruction has broadened to include state intervention into schools.

The definitions of school sex education have reflected the sexual debates of the times and issued from a concern with regulating female promiscuity and VD to the endorsement of non-reproductive sexuality, first within marriage, then in contracepted pre-marital sex. By the late seventies, a biological and medical model of sexuality coexists with an implicit psychitrisation of family relationships. Private responsibility is a key concept in the regulation of youth's sexual behaviour into traditional notions of gender and a liberal view of sexuality. Agencies involved in school sex education exposed similar tensions between liberal and traditional themes. Their aims must be examined more closely.

II Aims of Contemporary School Sex Education

A first tendency proposes to teach Christian sexual ethics to young people and does not separate sexual relationships from other commitments, especially to the family. This tendency, found in a few LEA reports on Sex Education (32), has certainly many variations but its major theme lies with the historical origin of school sex education. It still reflects the Church Information Office statement made in 1964 :

> "It (Sex Education) should include reliable knowledge of human reproduction and of the physical and emotional developments in each sex; it should prepare both boys and girls for marriage, family and homemaking; it should help young people with their own present personal problems; it should look outwards to the wider community which has responsibilities for, and makes demands on, individuals". (quoted in Harris, 1969).

The other approach upholds the liberal theme exposed in the 1977 DES document. It tends to cover sexuality within

a broader scheme of moral education which would be integrated into several areas of the curriculum like science or social studies. The educationalist Harris aims to adcpt "a wholly positive approach to Sex Education, instead of grudgingly throwing a few titbits of information in an atmcsphere of moral gloom", (1974, p.22). He adds :

> "we should be as scrupulous about setting children on the road to sexual autonomy as we are about offering them the chance of becoming original scientists, mathematicians or engineers", (1974, p.22).

This integrative and liberal approach is supported by Dallas (1972). She argues that Sex Education should offer adequate biological knowledge, end anxiety due to ignorance, increase the autonomy of the individual and help partners to develop sensitivity and consideration towards each other.

These two approaches share striking similarities. Firstly, they are both reformist although they portray different sexual ethics. They see school sex education as a possible way of altering young people's sexual and non-sexual relations. Secondly, there is a tension between the aim to give accurate and adequate information and the aim to instil some form of morality. But, from the description of their aims, it seems that the traditional approach puts a greater emphasis on the first aim than the second. Thirdly, the two tendencies share some difficulty in defining what constitutes adequate information. This historical problem is compounded, in the liberal approach, by the vagueness of its formulations which allow quite different interpretations and methodologies by schools of what is a "considerate" sexual partner or "adequate"

knowledge. Rogers (1974, p.5) notes that restrictive as well as permissive approaches to youth's sexual behaviour are compatible with such overall aims. Were there a broad apparent consensus on aims, it could still hide a great disparity in practice between courses and, probably, contradictions within one syllabus. It may be reinforced by the absence of a professional tradition in teaching 'Sexuality' as opposed to 'Maths' or 'Literature'. Sex educators have to define their topics and methods from their own assumptions on sexuality and on the so-called "needs" of the pupils.

From this review of the literature, it is reasonable to expect that different sets of concepts, values and ideas are produced by school sex education, especially if it contains the following paradox. On the one hand, it may reflect one prevailing cultural attitude : sexuality is something intensely private, the ultimate asocial act. On the other hand, it exposes sexuality in the school curriculum. What is meant to be mostly private becomes public, what is judged to be natural behaviour calls for social intervention. Is, then, school sex education an implicit acknowledgement that "sex is the supremely social act, a human exchange of love and power" (Zarestky, 1976, p.122)? Dallas (1972) emphasises that it is the invasion of personal privacy which is the most crucial aspect of sensitivity in Sex Education with parents, teachers and children alike. How school sex education negotiates this paradox will probably have a determining effect on the selection of aims and sexual meanings whose cultural and ideological elements will depend largely on its institutional context.

C. GENDER DIVISION AND SCHOOLS

With the advent of the Women's Movement, the construction of gender by schools has become the object of sociological studies which correct the long-neglected absence of research in this area. Sharpe (1976) and Wolpe (1977), for instance, argue that state education tends to channel most girls to their future roles as mothers, wives and low paid workers in sex-segregated occupations. Byrne (1978) points out discriminatory practices in school management which allocate female teachers to low-status posts. After examining curricular options, Deem observes :

> "(sexism) is present in the characterisation of some subjects as male and some subjects as female; it is found in the content of some disciplines which emphasise the male rather than female endeavour, or which take for granted the existing position of women in society; and it is found in the orientation of subjects towards boys and girls" (1978, p.46).

Instead of examining the formal organisation of schools, Spender and Sarah (1980) analyse everyday interactions whereby women and girls in mixed schools become invisible and their experiences silenced or marginalised. After surveying a large number of publications on women and education, Delamont argues that

> "schools develop and reinforce sex segregations, stereotypes, and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world ..." (1980, p.3).

Whatever their foci and explanations, these studies highlight the protean character of sexual discrimination in comprehensive schools. By and large, these are portrayed, in the sociology of education, as meritocratic institutions

which redistribute individuals within their parental class through selection and elimination (33), although most studies have largely ignored the gender factor, irrespective of their views on the relationships between the educational system and social class (34). Deem's and Wolpe's work, however, goes a step further by locating sexual discrimination within schools to the formation of differential, marketable but ill-defined skills which loosely correspond to varying aspects of the labour process (35). For example, Wolpe (1974) analyses how, since the 1950's, educational policies had conceived the sexual division of labour in a way which contradicted patterns of women's employment and policies for the recruitment of married women. In a later article (1978), she argues that the hidden and formal curricula, school organisation and the culture of femininity make academic achievements not only less meaningful for girls than for boys, but also, out of their grasp :

> "For example, just over half of all British girl school leavers in 1974 had no "graded result" in public examinations, or had one or more grades which were below the ordinary or advanced certificates of education. This group probably comprises part of the 78 per cent of school leavers who went directly into employment on leaving school" (1978, p.314).

Working class girls are all the more vulnerable to this selective system. As they tend to prefer "a nice job for a girl" to a "career", this propels them towards subjects leading to spare time jobs (36) and domesticity (37). Girls, according to Sharpe, are "in an ambivalent and contradictory position (1976, p.135). They are under pressure to succeed academical

but may experience "a fear of success" which hinders their performance since femininity is not meant to be compatible with competition and academic achievement; especially when these are achieved against boys. This contradiction is compounded by pubertal developments. For girls, sexuality is especially distracting from schoolwork since school itself re-inforces the feminine, nurturient stereotype as shown by the studies discussed here. This is less so for middle-class girls who feel that they might accommodate a career with a family, in particular in sex-segregated occupations like nursing. The structure of the time-table restricts further their vocational aspirations (38) and the DES survey on curricular differences for boys and girls concluded :

> "there are significant differences in subjects studied by girls and by boys and these differences are too striking to be accepted without question" (1975, p.21) (39).

All of these factors tend to legitimise the dominant culture and, in combination with the vocational function of schools, produces marketable qualifications which reflect the sexual division of labour - as, for instance, female school leavers having less GCE qualifications than males in subjects labelled unfeminine like science (40).

Thus, as a result of complex, and at times, contradictory practices and the central role played by femininity within these, the educational system is partial to gender divisions within shifting requirements for particular forms of labour.

However, schools appear to channel individual aspirations into social positions which are not all totally circumscribed by parental class and sex. As a minority of pupils obtain qualifications which potentially allow them to move up the

social ladder, a degree of openness and self-determination must be part of comprehensive education, especially since part of its political philosophy has been the promotion of equal educational opportunity for all (Kogan, 1971)(41). Given schools' autonomy from an unstable labour market and the creation of their own values and mentalities (Bourdieu, 1977; Apple, 1979), what is at stake is the extent to which pupils "choose" their future positions in the labour market and in their families, and the roles of schools in this.

In their classroom studies, Lacey (1970) and Hargreaves (1967) have shown how the legitimisation of academic divisions and mechanisms of control are worked out by teachers and boys. Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979) have developed their argument further by showing how disaffiliated working class schoolboys "choose" their working class jobs. However, most school pupils do not systematically resist school authority and values and, for the majority of non-disaffiliated boys and girls the question of how they "choose" their future domestic and occupational positions is still under-researched.

The question of self-determination is particularly relevant to Sex Education because of the noted tension between traditional and liberal aims - the first ascribing determined roles to pupils and the second assuming equal control by all pupils over their lives. In particular, if there is a legitimisation of social divisions, it will be necessary to examine how it affects the commitment to individual's choice and self-determination noticed in its liberal policy. Even if its

curriculum is remote from vocational concerns, it could, nonetheless, include notions of paid and urpaid skills or assumptions about employment or "housewifery" as a career for girls. Then, the articulation between the formation of gender and class identities will need to be explored.

If Sex Education legitimises social inequalities in some way, it would not turn, necessarily, all pupils and teachers into passive, docile subjects of ideology, contrary to Althusser's thesis (1971) (42). Consent to ideological views is never totally secure and its effectiveness could depend on power struggles within the school, and not the least between teachers and pupils as they are both active social agents. Willis establishes this argument clearly :

> "Social agents are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggles, contestation and a partial penetration of these structures" (1977, p.175).

Willis stipulates a conception of cultural reproduction whose subjects may negotiate some of the ideolcgical and political relations in which they are located by class and sex. This critical concept allows the possibility of self-determination for the agents of cultural reproduction although it recognises that schooling produces specific forms of consciousness in the formal and hidden curricula. Thus, Sex Education may produce some objective understanding of sexuality and gender which may provide girls and boys with an arena for defining their own sexual and gender-identities away from stereotyped views on roles. In particular, it may allow girls some form of assessment of their life-chances, especially if the contradiction noted by Sharpe between

choosing a career or femininity and motherhood, is open to classroom discussions. In addition, the sexual experiences of pupils and their understanding of biological factors may conflict with curricular representations of sexuality.

For instance, boys' expectations of sexual behaviour may incorporate expectations of female behaviour born out of contemporary ideas on sex-equality and the availability of free contraceptives. If it is so, pupils have to assess what they are being told with regard to their own sexual knowledge and this self-determination may differ with girls and boys.

There is another reason to reject the view that school sex education could produce only stereotyped ideas on sexuality and gender roles. It concerns the complex relationships of schooling to family structures and the changing position of youth in our society. Family structures are not static, and nor are the forms of sexual division of labour within them (43). There is no evidence that this has ceased to be the case, given several factors of change : demographic (44); women's greater control over their fertility through safer contraception (45) and abortion (46); over their marriages owing to liberalisation of divorce laws (47) and their changing position in the labour force(48);the feminist critique of women's positions at home and at work (49). Also, young people's positions vis-a-vis the labour market and family relations have been changing too, as testified, for example, by the fluctuating leisure consumption among teenagers and increased unemployment in this age group since the 1970's. Youth is not marginal to the organisation of the economy (Frith, 1978)

nor to the organisation of the family and, with changing situations on both fronts, they may perceive personal relationships differently from their parents (50). If changing work and family relations are the "new conditions" that school sex education has to make sense of for youth, its target audience may re-interpret some of its meanings in opposition to it.

This chapter rejects a Durkheimian view of socialisation premised on the assumption that role-expectations are based on a fundamental harmony and consensus issued from the division of labour. Instead, it puts forward a materialist conception of sexuality and cultural production by schools. The inter-relations between culturally available concepts, knowledge and values may produce conflicting pictures of reality; other experiences, unchartered by these images, could still question them. This applies to all the participants of the educational system which, in a class and gender-divided society, is bound by contradictions which may be themselves sources of internal struggles.

The review of the relevant literature gives no evidence to believe that these patterns are essentially different in primary and secondary socialisations. Both may produce objective and ideological meanings on the biology of sexuality and gender which are, in part, specific to their institutional context and, in part, related to the dominant consensus of the time with sexual matters. This articulation lays open to boys and girls a whole range of meanings from which they can choose to make sense of their own actions.

In order to be sensitive to the complexity of curricular meanings on sexuality and gender, the study has to be both

comprehensive and symmetrical. By comprehensive, I mean that the collective experience of girls' marginalisation in schooling as well as the variety of girls' experiences, inside and outside schools, has to be reckoned with to understand their perceptions of sexuality and school sex education. In a symmetric study, the same approach should be applied to boys since their individual and collective perceptions of adult roles are also likely to affect classroom interactions and meanings. How teachers come to select and organise 'appropriate and adequate knowledge' on sex must also be investigated alongside other mechanisms of control established in the classroom. A few factors have to be borne in mind :

a) the degree to which a school approach to Sex Education is compatible with external constraints, for instance, from parents or the LEA.

b) the degree to which internal constraints may be added to the above - how far, for instance, could a Sex Education course preserve or disrupt the existing social order of a school?

c) the degree of autonomy given to the teachers in their choice and use of resources; their "practical management" of the class (Payne and Hustler, 1980).

d) the degree to which pupils are able to express their opinions. If boys respond differently from girls, how is it taken into account by all participants?

In no way is this an exhaustive list of institutional factors which may shape the reformist intentions of Sex Education! They just suggest that its curricular meanings

are, probably, not produced at random but are framed by the complex ways in which schooling is involved in the formation of consciousness. As such, contradictions, ruptures and inconsistencies may be expected from its teachers with, perhaps, diverse and diffuse aims even within the same course. Here, I dissociate myself from Jackson's position on schools which she portrays as conspiratorial institutions :

> "The reproductive focus is itself calculated to make children think of sexual activity as rather odd and perhaps unwholesome" (1978, p.350)(my emphasis).

She implies that the outcomes of Sex Education are the deliberate product of homogeneous objectives and non-conflicting practices. She wrongly assumes that there may be a complete consensus as to the aims and methodologies of Sex Education and she overlooks implementations in specific institutions. Beechey sums up, in general terms, the argument developed here :

> "I think we are wrong to assume that domination assumes the same form in all social formations and in all kinds of social institutions within a society (...) I think we should find that the forms of domination of women, and women's experience of it, would be different in different institutions, depending upon the role of the particular institution within the organisation of the capitalist economy as a whole, the form of its material organisation, and the form of ideology and power-relations which prevail within it" (1979, p.80).

To assume otherwise would reify Sex Education outside its educational practice. This, in turn, would imply a fatalistic attitude towards any potential form of Sex Education which would contradict the feminist call that it should "question the view of women as sex objects, and the stereotypical roles of wives and mothers" (51).

A feminist Sex Education programme would question

the centrality of heterosexuality and situate sexual practices and values in a critical assessment of gender relations, representations of sexual pleasure and their interpretations by boys and girls. To help such developments, and to be in a position to understand how Sex Education may contribute to the reproduction of the dominant culture, it is necessary to analyse both the outcomes of present-day courses with regard to female sexuality and gender-relations and the processes in schools whereby these are achieved.

The reasons for focussing on one case study and the use of a qualitative methodology, now, need to be examined in detail.

D THE CASE FOR AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

The choice of a methodology does not depend on the intrinsic superiority of particular methods but on the nature of research problems (Burgess, 1982). The methods used here were derived from the field of research and progressively selected during the pilot study (52).

I The field of research

The study will examine how meanings on sexuality and gender are selected, expressed and interpreted by teachers and pupils, males and females in Sex Education lessons. These lessons will be part of the core-curriculum of fourteen to sixteen year olds of a mixed, nondenominational comprehensive state school in Sparestown. This age group has been chosen on the assumption that :

> "It is at this period of transition from childhood to adulthood that these notions relating to masculine and feminine roles become clarified and reinforced,

> and perhaps even redefined in adult terms." (Wolpe, 1974).

The aims of the thesis are three-fold. It will attempt to define the range of meanings both in the definition of appropriate knowledge on the biology of sexuality and in the reformist views on sexual ethics and gender-identities. It will examine whether Sex Education meanings form competing or consensual models of sexual practices and of masculinity and femininity. Lastly, it will consider how Sex Education as a form of curricular knowledge provides a basis for negotiation by pupils of their expected positions in the adult world of employment and domesticity.

Within these aims, the thesis has a number of objectives. They are :

* to examine how curricular meanings in Sex Education are selected and organised by the teachers;
* to define the views which are shared by teachers and pupils, male and female;
* to delineate the areas of disagreement between teachers and pupils, male and female;
* to contemplate how the formation of curricular meanings is influenced by the teachers' disciplinarian role in the Sex Education classroom;
* to explore the production of Sex Education meanings in relation to its position in the school and the school's main educational functions;
* to examine how boys and girls interpret Sex Education meanings with regard to their own expectations about their adult lives.

II The pilot study

The pilot study surveyed Sex Education provision across twenty five schools, using a variety of research tools (53) and testing the relevance of quantitative and qualitative approaches to the field of study.

One interview schedule was used for all senior teachers. A large section of the questionnaire aimed to collect quantifiable data such as the number of hours allocated to Sex Education, or the sex of the teachers involved, while the shorter section used open ended questions.

However, where quantifiable trends emerged, they tended to have limited significance. For instance, although the lists of topics surveyed (54) showed some similarities and disparities, such comparisons could not be equated with differences in classroom practices as the recorded data was not sufficiently contextualised (55).

Whatever the types of questions, one-off interviews were difficult to conduct. Teachers shifted in their seats and quickly moved to another point, for instance, whenever I asked if their headteacher would allow young celibate, rather than older, married teachers, to take Sex Education lessons. Responses tended to be the predictable replies which close educational debates to outsiders. Since I visited each school for no more than two hours at most, I remained unaware of the social context in which responses were constructed. This made further probing tentative as in the school where, at the beginning of the interview, the female deputy head claimed that form tutors and house

heads collaborated with her plans for a two year health education course which had already started. Yet, as soon as the interview was formally concluded and the tape recorder switched off, she expressed her strong irritation with the male house heads who all resented teaching the new course :

> "Their boycott", so she feared, "could mean the end of the scheme altogether". After this revelation, she promptly dismissed me from her sight! I had noticed signs of unease and irresolution at different moments of the interview but, even after her final words, I was in no better position to interpret these. For instance, did her difficulty of creating a staff consensus for a new course reflect an organisational rather than a gender conflict? Such questioned suggested that complex inter-relationships had to be the focus of an in-depth study.

The rushed rationalisations, omissions and silences which I encountered with teachers in pilot interviews also indicated that Sex Education might still be lacking in conceptual frameworks, even for those already involved in its production.

These unformulated experiences may remain inaccessible to survey-questions which assume, by and large, verbalised and unproblematic equivalences between informants' experiences, irrespective of their class and gender textures (56). Because this type of question assumes that all individuals have an homogeneous entity and are engaged in reciprocal exchanges with others (57), it not only contains a consensual view of social worlds but, consequently, a masculine bias (58). To rely mostly on a quantitative methodology would, therefore, run the risk of remaining blind to those gender experiences

in schools which might either conflict with official accounts or be still "unspeakable" and "muted" (59). The preliminary yield of qualitative methods was more promising for the purpose of this study.

I observed, over ten weeks, a male and a female teacher taking small groups of fourth years for their Sex Education lessons and during this time, built up a trusting relationship with both of them. In informal exchanges after the lessons, their comments on my observation materials, on the school's curricular policies or on the teacher's roles in Sex Education pointed out rich areas of exploration. My presence in the classroom became familiar to pupils; some volunteered to be interviewed at the end of each course. These pupils, at times, assumed that we shared the same experience of the lessons and this helped me to clarify their views. For instance, in a group interview with boys and girls, the girls asked me if I had noticed the teacher's "hypocrisy" (their word) when he talked about homosexuality. Thereupon, the boys laughed loudly, joking amongst themselves and doing their best to wreck the interview! The girls, who were angry at the boys' response, pursued my opinion of the teacher's moral integrity. Having myself noticed contradictions in their teacher's presentation of homosexuality, I was able to make sense of the girls' comment. Their anger, in contrast with the boys' laughter, also suggested gender connotations attached to homosexuality which I later attempted to trace in the main fieldwork.

Testing different methodologies suggested that, by being immersed in the social life of the school, I could

begin to unfold, with the continuous feedback of other participants, intricate layers of conflicts and consensus. In contrast, a quantitative approach could produce only limited evidence of what participants considered to be legitimate ideas and values, without offering the type of data needed to understand how conflicting cultural codes framed Sex Education as a particular form of school knowledge.

The study demanded a detailed recording of everyday gender interactions. A reflexive methodology would offer the possibility of investigating both initial research proposals and those propositions which emerge out of every step of the research (60).

By nature (61), ethnography does not constitute research problems into objects outside particular social contexts. It is unlike a positivist methodology which, being only concerned with testing theoretical links between frequently observed events and forces external to these, disregards how social actors construct and may change their social worlds.

Nor does ethnography constitute informants or researchers into objects outside the research process. Both produce accounts which may move, for example, from simple descriptions to reflective observations or political comments, depending on the event under scrutiny and one's involvement and value codes (62). Consequently, the researcher's participation in the informant's world promised to undermine power relations between respondents and researchers which Oakley (1981) and McRobbie (1983), for instance, have criticised in conventional interviews. Doing ethnographic

fieldwork had another merit. Since ethnographers rely on their commonsense experience to document the milieu observed, I felt that my gender-experience of social relations could help to explore the web of images used by teachers and pupils in which sexual meanings are embroidered. In this, I supported the view that no sociological research is untainted by one's gender consciousness and to recognise this is treating the gender of all participants seriously, "not just as a matter of exploring sexism but as a scholarly requirement" (Morgan, 1981, p.87).

There was another reason to consider gender seriously which came from the ethnographic tradition in the sociology of education. Since the 1960's, ethnographic studies had been concerned either with the processes whereby pupils (mostly boys) are divided into success or failure or with the marginalisation of working class boys by state education and its impact on their subculture (63). For reasons discussed earlier, I shared both concerns and it was, then, pertinent to use similar research methods while investigating systematically how the gender factor affected social relations in the school and the definition of one of its subjects.

Once I had opted for an ethnographic study, the fieldwork had to be narrowed down to one school as doing a comparative in-depth study was beyond the resources of a single researcher.

The pilot study suggested similar traditional and liberal trends in Sparestown as those analysed in the literature. Consequently, I chose to study a course which initially appeared to be progressive. This decision was informed by the proposal that the liberal tendency aimed to conciliate

changing sexual norms with changing gender roles. This orientation could come closer to my interest in changing socialisation patterns than a paramount focus on maintaining traditional norms.

III Research methods

To decide upon an ethnographic study did not end research decisions concerning methodological procedures. Ethnographic studies encompass a variety of research activities (Hammersley, 1979, 1983) which are not, as often assumed, necessarily incompatible with quantitative techniques (Evans, 1983). When deciding to rely mostly on a qualitative approach, I had not totally ruled out the collection of some quantitative data as a way of validating observation materials.

Thus, during classroom observations at Fieldclose School, I tried to use Flanders' grids (1970) to count the number and types of interactions between the teacher and boys and girls, once I noticed the unequal verbal participation amongst pupils. However, I stopped using Flanders' teacher-oriented classifications since they left aside non-verbal forms of communication like laughter, and fell short of collecting data relevant to the observed control struggles over curricular meanings. Likewise, the survey which I administered to all fifth years failed because of the already noted difficulty of obtaining significant measurable data on contentious issues. Eventually, the case study was conducted with only qualitative techniques.

In the same way that defining research problems involves the researcher's biography (Corrigan, 1979), so does the selection of qualitative tools. Having been a secondary

school teacher, I decided not to teach although the technique of filling in the teacher's role has been widely used in school studies (64). I feared that, once labelled a teacher by pupils, I would be precluded from access to sensitive information. So, whether I had access to the backwaters or the main stream of school life, I mostly relied on the same research techniques : focussed and unfocussed interviews with pupils and teachers as well as persistent observation of the social scenes in which I found myself.

Participant observation covers a range of roles and techniques (65). In informal situations, like tea breaks, I was just "hanging about": listening, watching and taking part in conversations. In more formal occasions like lessons, I opted for the "fly on the wall" technique used in some film documentaries. I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible (66). Contrary to appearance, the classroom observer's role is far from being passive. It demands repeated decisions about the research values of one's observations while time blows away their phenomenological scent. Since tape recording was ruled out so as not to alarm teachers and pupils, I had to rely on copious fieldnotes and these tended to record verbal exchanges, perhaps to the detriment of other communicative forms. However, my experience as a teacher assisted me in confronting the jungle of classroom events by drawing my attention to the less transient phenomena (67). For instance, latent bids for control turned out to be the daily menu of Fieldclose. Having tasted it myself in other schools, I could select, amongst witnessed interactions, those which

promised to be structural struggles.

Not surprisingly, the various and, at times, contradictory significance of being a woman doing research on a not quite legitimate area of the curriculum, also had methodological implications - see p.279. While being a woman was sometimes an impediment with male senior staff, it tended to facilitate my exchanges with females and junior staff who were more willing to talk about their school experiences than any other group of teachers (68).

With my main informant, Elena Firestone, the Health Education team leader, I doubted the value of trying to establish a conventional style of interview (69). As with survey methods, this would have meant running the risk of leaving aside the subjective and conflicting processes whereby she, as a female teacher, defined Sex Education knowledge. Over several months, we established a series of "interactive" interviews (70), in which my own viewpoints could be used with directive and non-directive questions, as a means of clarifying Elena's cultural codes and mine. Being both women facilitated our dialogue on gender consciousness. This was especially important since there emerged a few disparities between my own analysis and hers (see chapter 5). According to Willis (1980), such tensions are bound to happen in a reflexive methodology informed by a political concern with contradictions and layered patterns of cultural determination. The researcher who recognises the play of contradictions can use these tensions as "a way of locating particular research questions" by using the strength of ethnography to cast off opposite risks : isolating experiential

accounts with intellectual constructs; reducing theoretical claims to empiricist observations.

With pupils, I collected two types of data in addition to observation materials, see p.281. The first came from semi-structured interviews with forty-two fifth years (nineteen boys and twenty-three girls) who volunteered to be interviewed and tape-recorded for their views on the course after its completion. I later transcribed these interviews and used those from seventeen boys and seventeen girls. As the study unfolded, another source of data was needed in order to compare inferences drawn from the already collected data obtained from observation and focussed interviews. For this triangulation, I asked three English teachers to give their fifth year English classes an essay to write on their expectations of their life-to-be after compulsory schooling. I used no evidence from children who belonged to ethnic groups other than white amongst the thirty-two essays.

As with staff, being a female researcher had contradictory effects on my exchanges with pupils - see p.282. Girls were more willing to collaborate than boys. With hindsight, interviewing boys on their own, in their homes, might have undermined their defensiveness.

The different types of relationships which I established amongst staff and pupils resulted in the uneven quality of the data on their conceptions of sexual identities and experiences. Had I been admitted into the school, on the understanding that I would focus primarily on gender socialisation across the whole curriculum instead of a specific area (see

p. 278), I might have been in a better position to pursue some of these issues.

There are shortcomings in ethnography since its methodology tends to be naturalist, ahistorical and parochial owing to its "here and now" focus on a particular milieu (71). I have attempted to counteract such impressionist trends by locating the case study within the historical development of school sex education and educational debates on pupils' self determination and equal opportunity. Different sources of data - for instance, literature on youth sub-cultures - provided some insight into cultural codes which would have been, otherwise, inaccessible to me, because of the limitation of the fieldwork to one school. Thus, theoretical propositions, drawn from the particular context of Fieldclose School, could be, nonetheless, compared with females' and males' perceptions of social relations concerning work, domesticity and sexuality. In other words, different types of data were used to maximise the internal and external validity of the findings by either confirming earlier proposals, refuting them, or suggesting new ones.

The immediacy of ethnography was pertinent to a study of ideological production. Since to be successful, ideological ideas have to appear timeless, their phenomenological forms had to be examined. By analysing how these are sustained, I have pointed out the historicity of ideology in Sex Education and, eventually, its partial effectiveness. Here, the appeal of ethnography lies in the discovery of vivid evidence of the theoretical problems which are also at hand in other milieux.

The organisation of most chapters around observation materials and teachers' and pupils' accounts aims to assist, discreetly, a creative connection between different fragments of reality.

There comes a time when one is confronted by the limits of reflexivity (Hammersley, 1983). In this chapter, I have argued that forms of sexual socialisation may depend on the organisation of the institution in which they are produced, and the cultural and ideological concerns which prevail within it. The "illumination of the concrete" (72) begins with a portrait of the school in which I consider each of these factors.

FOOTNOTES

1. p. 2 This is shown, for instance, by frequent comments on school sex education in the press and 'phone-in' radio programmes.

2. p. 2 The former question on sexual morality lurks behind most writings on Sex Education which I examine later in this chapter.

3. p. 3 For Plummer (1975) sociologists have overlooked sexuality as an object of study for cultural reasons similar to those which I have just sketched out. However, the sociology of medicine has been concerned with human reproduction but it has focussed on women and mothers rather than men, adults rather than children, and it has ignored sexual socialisation. The exclusion of the male as a gender-category in sociology may have also contributed to the separation of sexuality from other forms of social expressions by sociologists. There is this exclusion since "men" as "males" are not usually part of the conceptual object of research and a presence since "men" as researchers and participants present their views of the world - see, for instance, Mathieu (1977, p. 29) and Stacey (1981).

4. p. 3 See, for example, Gill et al (1971).

5. p. 3 For an exhaustive review of the relevant literature see Reid (1982).

6. p. 3 Farrell, 1978, p. 124. This compares favourably with Schofield's random survey in 1962-3 of 1873 people aged fifteen to nineteen. Of the girls, 86% said that they had been given some Sex Educaion in schools in comparison with only 47% of the boys.

7. p. 6 The dialectical relationship of biology and history is precisely illustrated by Marx in the following quote :

> "Hunger is not hunger. But the hunger which is satisfied with cooked meat eaten with knife and fork is another hunger than that which swallows raw meat with the aid of hands, nails and teeth. The mode of production produces, both objectively and subjectively, not only the object consumed but also the manner of its consumption" A contribution to the critique of Political Economy.

On a materialist account of the relationship between biology and our social world see, for instance, Timpanaro (1976), in particular his critique of idealism in Marxism.

8. p. 7 Here I depart from Foucault's essentialist view of the sexual in La volonté de savoir (1976).

9. p. 8 This view corroborates the findings of the contemporary research into genetic sex-differences and sex-identification such as the evidence provided by research on psycho-sexual abnormalities - for instance, John Money's studies of hermaphrodites (1976). This type of study emphasises the social construction of gender-identities as opposed to biological sex in the formation of self-identity and Brake (1976) put their argument bluntly :

> "A particular set of genitals is irrelevant to one's gender".

However, research into the biological roots of gender-roles has not given indisputable evidence as to the relative weighting of biological and environmental factors but it is still legitimate to support Weitz's comment :

> "This literature suggests that both factors are significant and that biology is malleable *to a surprising degree when faced with the impact of socialisation" (1977, p.* 54).

10. p. 8 There is a fundamental contradiction in Freud between a dynamic conception of sexual impulses with their never resolved conflicts to which I do not refer here and a static picture of sexual roles separate from the social conditions in which the two biological factors are framed. See, for example, the "Three essays on the theory of sexuality" (1905) and "Female Sexuality" (1931).

11. p. 8 See, for example, Pearsell (1969), Shorter (1976) and Stone (1977) for historical analyses of how ideological shifts influence sexual practices.

12. p. 9 See, for example, "Representation and Sexuality" by Adams, M/F, No. 1, 1978, and "Rethinking Marxism" by Coward, M/F, No. 2, 1978.

13. p. 9 For a critique of the dualism embedded in Mitchell's separation of the cultural sphere from the economic structures see, for example, Beechey (1979). For general questions which Marxists and feminists address to psychoanalysis, see, for example, Poster (1978) and Barrett (1980).

14. p. 9 See, also, de Beauvoir (1953), Gagnon and Simon (1974) and Plummer (1975). I am not interested here in the differences but in the similarities within a social constructionist conception of sexual differences. They focus on the conscious learning of sexual identity. For them, "nothing is sexual but naming it makes it so. Sexuality is a social construction learnt in interaction

with others" (Plummer, 1978, p. 30). In this perspective, something is sexual only when the individual perceives it as such. Then, s/he has acquired a sexual script.

15. p. 10 De Beauvoir (1953) made the same argument as Stone and heralded the call by the Women's Movement, in the early 1970's, for women to define their sexuality :

> "It is not the body-object described by biologists that actually exists but the body as lived in by the subject.
>
> Woman is a female to the extent she feels herself as such. There are essential features that are not a part of her real experienced situation. Thus the structure of the egg is not reflected in it, but on the contrary an organ of no great biological importance, like the clitoris, plays in it a part of the first rank - It is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life."
> (emphasis added)

That De Beauvoir rejected the tyranny of biology over women's lives makes sense of the historical and anthropological evidence on the enormous diversity in sexual practices amongst the human species (see, for instance, Ford and Beach, 1952). To supplant it with the tyranny of the mind over the body is, however, a metaphysical error :

> "One cannot, without falling into error, conceive things in a metaphysically rigid way as finished and unchangeable. Equally, however, one cannot dissolve things completely into the moments of the social process which mediates them, for this would amount to the same metaphysical error with reversed premises". Schmidt (1971, p. 67).

16. p. 10 Or else, one runs the risk of assimilating sensual nose-rubbing to orgasmic experience if the former is labelled as pleasurable by particular cultures! See, for instance, Jackson (1978, p. 3).

17. p. 11 Bland correctly points out that the term "amateur prostitute" reflected a difficulty in understanding active female sexuality outside the institution of prostitution (1982, p. 381).

18. p. 12 Quoted by Bland, op. cit., p. 376.

19. p. 12 Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health (1939 - 45) : On the State of the Public Health during six years of war :

> "Social conditions in England and Wales during the years 1939 to 1945 have favoured the spread of venereal diseases far more than in the years 1914 - 18" (1946, p. 66).

20. p. 13 Sex Education in Schools and Youth Organisations, 1943.
The scope of the Board of Education report was comprehensive : it was based on enquiries about the provisions for sex education in elementary schools, secondary schools, the youth service and training colleges by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

21. p. 13 The 5th November, 1942 Defence Regulation 33B sought to install a system of surveillance over women's sexuality not unlike the intentions of the Contagious Diseases Acts passed in the 1860's. It stipulated that any person reported responsible for the infection of two or more patients in special clinics should undergo a medical examination. After two reports by medical practitioners, and failure to attend, prosecution would follow. 82 prosecutions occurred in 1943.

22. p. 14 For a development of this argument, see, for example, Birmingham Feminist History Group (1979) and Wilson (1980).

23. p. 15 On the Kinsey Reports see, for instance, Campbell (1980) and Wilson (1980). On the Wolfenden Report see, for instance, Bland et al (1979). On the acquittal of the Lady Chatterley's Lover and the alliance which the case created across political parties around a "humanist" view of sexual relationships which "rendered women non-problematical" see Wilson, (1980, p. 134 - 138).

24. p. 15 See the Sexual Offences Act (1956), the Obscene Publications Act (1959) and the Street Offences Act (1959).

25. p. 17 See, for instance, the Morton Report (1956) on divorce and the Ingleby Report (1960) on juvenile delinquents; the works of sociologists like Willmott and Young (1957, 1960) and Klein (1965).

26. p. 18 The ideal of traditional gender-roles was eroded by such evidence as the growing employment of most working-class women in part-time unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in 1961 (Klein, 1965). Middle-class married women were employed in such professions as teaching.

27. p. 18 The reformist spirit of the 1960's was given a public legitimacy with, for instance, the Abortion Act (1967), the Divorce Act (1967) and the National Health Service (Family Planning) Act (1967). Yet, the emergence of youth sub-cultures (Cohen, 1972), of an articulate feminist movement (see, for instance, Greer, 1970) and racial conflicts (see, for instance, Gorz, 1970) alongside a growing economic crisis questioned the legitimacy of the state and prevailing ideologies (see Hall et al, 1978).

28. p. 18 See, for instance, with the advent of comprehensive schools, the development of schools' pastoral systems and the intervention of counsellors concerned with children's emotional and family lives (see, for example, Davies and Gibson, 1967). One of the comprehensive schools I surveyed in 1978 identified "vulnerable children" according to 13 categories such as children whose parents have remarried; adopted children or children and/or family who are or have been involved with an outside agency, e.g. Social Services, Family and Child Guidance Clinic, Probation Service, Education Social Worker, Psychiatric Clinic, Intermediate Treatment.

This type of classification raises the question of whether the "helping profession", while caring for pupils' welfare, also "covertly justifies their status, power and authority" (Apple, 1978, p. 184).

29. p. 18 The first major appeal for educating children for parenthood in the 1970's came from the Conservative Sir Keith Joseph when secretary for the D.H.S.S. in the introduction to his departmental report, The Family in Society : Preparation for Parenthood (1974). To educate future parents was supposed to break "the cycle of deprivation" noted by social services. His successor, Dr. Ennals, supported a broader emphasis on preventive medicine in the Court Report (1976) which, with a joint D.E.S. and D.H.S.S. White Paper, Prevention and Health : everybody's business (1977) advocated more health and sex education in schools to all children, whatever their intellectual attainment. They endeavoured to strike a balance between giving concrete guidance to pupils and "principles rather than prescription" (Court Report).

30. p. 19 The Court Report clearly saw the regulation of women's fertility through contraception as an effective tool for family policy.:

> "Family Planning is potentially one of the most effective measures in preventive medicine. It can save the anguish and distress of unintended pregnancies, abortions

> and of unwanted children growing up in unpromising circumstances. It can result in considerable savings for the Health and Social Services since unwanted pregnancies may result in abortion, or involved treatment for serious stress, or require intervention following a breakdown in the case of children" (1976, p. 173).

31. p. 19 "Boys in particular should come to realise that for girls there are times connected with menstrual periods or with episodes in their emotional development when they may be distressed or tired through no fault of their own, and that both should realise that the emission of semen is abundant, and sometimes uncontrollable. Girls should also understand that they may quite inadvertently impose great stresses on boys by arousing sexual reactions in them which they do not fully comprehend and may not be able to control (sic!). As integrity and respect for truth are basic in this, (sic!), as in all teaching, it is dishonest and futile to hide, at the proper time, that sexual intercourse should be highly enjoyable - if this were not so most of this chapter would not have to be written - and that it includes much more complex activities than elementary accounts of reproduction suggest". (The Handbook of Health Education in Schools, 1977, p. 116 - 7).

32. p. 20 A few L.E.A. documents on the education for family skills and personal relationships, made available to me, either sternly upheld Christian sexual ethics or the liberal theme discussed earlier. For a discussion of L.E.A.'s official attitudes to Sex Education see, for example, Harris (1974, p. 67 - 71).

33. p. 24 On how schooling relates to a closed system of social mobility see, for example, Westergaard and Resler (1976) Chapter 3.

34. p. 24 Examples of the near absence of girls in the sociology of education cover many areas of sociological interests. For instance, Halsey et al (1980) do not consider girls in their large study of social mobility for methodological reasons (see p. 19)! Neither does Bourdieu (1973) consider the reproduction of sexual divisions when discussing the reproduction of cultural capital. There is no mention either of gender-differentiation as a social principle of curricular organisation of knowledge in Young (1973). For a rare Marxist review of how sociologists, in the last two decades, have explained changes in the educational system and the maintenance of social inequalities, which takes account of sex as well as class divisions, see, for instance, Unpopular Education, 1981 chapters 6 and 7.

35. p. 24 On the dynamics between capitalist crisis, and the transformation of the labour market, in particular the limited requirement for technically qualified labour, see Braverman (1974). It must be stressed here that school qualifications, or lack of them, by no means guarantees access to employment or particular jobs, or else, one would conflate the formation of the class-structure by the mode of production with the differentiation of pupils according to ill-defined skills by schools.

36. p. 24 On the unskilled character of 16 year old girls' labour, in comparison to boys, see, for instance, Frith (1978, p. 29 - 31) and Wolpe (1978, p. 324).

37. p. 24 With regard to the cultural processes whereby working class girls are diverted from pursuing academic interests and resist school authority see McRobbie (1978, 1980).

38. p. 25 On curricular discrimination through the range of options offered to boys and girls see, for example, the evidence collected by Deem (1978, p. 64 - 70). For a general critique of subject-choices, see Woods (1976) and for a case-study, see, for example, Ball (1981, Chapter 5).

39. p. 25 However cautiously the D.E.S. interprets the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), this document constitutes, nevertheless, a noticeable departure from earlier educational reports. They have consistently insisted on the nurturance of femininity and accompanying skills for girls such as "housewifery" (Board of Education, 1904) and that of masculinity for boys who were meant to be naturally interested in outdoor pursuits or craft, but not the "subtleties of language construction" (Norwood Report, 1943).

40. p. 25 We may be told that if girls do not take up science options, it is because of their lack of scientific experience at home and at work and, this is due to the absence of girls in science subjects at schools. Such teleological arguments result from a lack of understanding of contradictory pressures put on girls. See, for example, Kelly (1981).

41. p. 26 On social mobility, educational status and equal opportunity, see, for example, Glass (1954), Floud and Halsey (1958), Hopper (1971) and Silver (1973). These studies looked to educational reforms for economic and social progress. For Marxist critiques pointing to the power of ideology in schools, see for example, Young (1971), Bernstein (1971) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). For

an historical analysis of the comprehensive movement, see, for instance, Rubinstein and Simon (1973).

42. p. 27 This proposal also departs from Foucault's argument (1976) that sexual ideologies particularly determine individuals' subjectivity by speaking in the "name of sex" and thus, "constituting sex itself as something desirable" (1976, p. 207). His thesis has the merit to point out how sex has not been denied or silenced in our society but constantly organised by changing ideological alliances. Yet, it reduces sexuality to discourses by overlooking determining factors external to these for instance, biological differences between males and females; individuals' or groups' appropriation of and resistance to ideological constructs.

43. p. 28 On the historically dynamic character of family-relations, see, for instance, Engels (1972), Stone (1977) and Hamilton (1978). On the dual shift at home and at work for working women and its relations to capitalism, see, for instance, Beechey (1978) and Barrett and McIntosh (1980).

44. p. 28 By the mid-seventies, birth trends indicated an overal decline in large families, a delay in starting a family especially amongst women aged 20 - 24 and child spacing (Cartwright, 1976) with persisting differences in parity between classes (General Household Survey, 1974).

45. p. 28 In 1977, an estimated 5 million out of 8 million women in the fertile age range (15 to 44) were being protected by any form of regular and reliable contraception (Family Planning Information Service, June 1977). On the gains achieved by women owing to contraception and their limits, see, for example, Gordon (1977) and Doyal (1981, Chapter 6).

46. p. 28 In 1978, 3592 abortions had been performed to girls under 16 resident in England and Wales and 24371 to women aged 16 - 19 (Family Planning Information Service, March 1978). On the Abortion Act (1967) and its implementation see, for example, MacIntyre (1973).

47. p. 28 "Seven out of ten divorces now filed are initiated by women", Gardiner (1984).

48. p. 28 Although women's overall employment has increased from 31% in 1951 to 40% in 1981, their unemployment has shot up by 700% between 1970 and 1980 compared with an increase of 200% amongst males (Sinfield, 1981, p. 83).

49. p. 28 For a recent development of the argument that feminism, since the 1970's, has contributed to real changes, see, for instance, Gardiner (1984).

50. p. 29 For instance, according to the Study Commission on the Family (1983), 9 out of 10 young people accept the idea of cohabiting before marriage.

51. p. 31 Spare Rib, No. 75, p. 1978.

52. p. 32 See the Appendix for a detailed account of the research.

53. p. 34 These included : structured/unstructured interviews; individual and group interviews; written questionnaires; observation of lessons.

54. p. 34 For example, I recorded which topics were included in each Sex Education syllabus as well as those which the staff had considered but rejected.

55. p. 34 For example, a deputy head told me that menstruation was a major topic discussed in his course and I duly recorded this on my check list. Responding to my interest, he invited me to observe the lesson a few weeks later. For thirty five minutes, seventy boys and girls, aged 15, listened to a health visitor showing slides on the menstrual cycle and personal hygiene. Then, pupils were divided into small discussion groups. I was assigned to a group where the teacher failed to get a word from anybody about the previous lecture. A shroud of silence and embarrassment weighed heavily on us, even after the teacher had summed up the main advice given to girls on hygiene. To everybody's relief, a boy came up with a question on circumcision! The rest of the lesson was spent in a lively exchange between teacher and boys while the girls listened eagerly and giggled. This incident made me wonder whether, for these girls, menstruation had been dealt with, as asserted by the senior teacher and recorded on my check list.

56. p. 35 For critiques of consensual ideology in surveys and census, see, for instance Denzin (1970) and Cicourel (1964).

57. p. 35 For critiques of survey methods positing equivalences between individuals, see for instance, Galtung (1967) and Garfinkel (1967).

58. p. 35 For a comprehensive review of feminist critiques on the impact of gender on quantitative methodology and its individualistic ideology (in particular, its design) see, for instance, Roberts (1981) and Graham (1982).

59. p. 36 See, for instance, Ardener (1975) and Rich (1980) on how women's experiences and knowledge, often seen as trivial in masculine cultures, tend to remain unformulated.

60. p. 37 See, for instance, Geer (1964) on working hypothesis as the product of ethnographic fieldwork.

61. p. 37 It is not the place to discuss how both ethnographic and positivist methodologies come close to the phenomena observed. Suffice to bear in mind, in spite of unfortunate formulae, Matza's statement :

> "Man (sic!) naturally - not supernaturally - transcends the existential realms in which conceptions of cause, force and reactivity are easily applicable. Accordingly, a view which conceives of man (sic!) as an object, methods that probe human behaviour without concerning themselves with the meaning of that behaviour, cannot be regarded as naturalist" (1969). Quoted in introduction to The Process of Schooling, O.U.P., 1976, p. 4.

For a thoughtful discussion of the implications of naturalism and positivism for ethnography, see for example Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, Ch. 1).

62. p. 37 For classical statements on symbolic interactionism and ethnography, see Blumer (1969) and Plummer (1975, p. 13). For a radical view of reflexivity and sociology, see Gouldner (1970).

This position is a realistic appraisal of sociology as a value-ridden search for social meanings. See, for instance, Wright Mills (1959).

63. p. 38 For the first tendency, see Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), Ball (1981), Burgess (1983). For the second, see Willis (1977), Corrigan (1979). Wolpe (1977) pioneered the ethnographic project I outline here in Some Processes in Sexist Education.

64. p. 40 See, for example, Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Burgess (1983).

65. p. 40 For a discussion of the main roles that sociologists are likely to play as observers see, for example, Burgess (1982)(a).

66. p. 40 On the marginality and, at times, uncomfortable position of the participant observer, see Gans (1982).

67. p. 40 As guides to classroom observation, see, for example, Walker (1975), Chanan and Delamont (1975) and Stubbs and Delamont (1976).

68. p. 41 This experience tangentially supports McRobbie's suggestion that women are usually "good research subjects" because of "their willingness to talk which is in itself an index of their powerlessness" (1983, p. 56). Yet, women's participation largely depends on the object of research. Research questions, by feminists or otherwise, are likely to provoke different degrees of collaboration from particular groups of women since these do not form a homogenous category.

69. p. 41 See, for example, Benney and Hughes (1977) for a textbook description of an interview style designed to erase the participant's personality from the data colleciton. One implication of this style is its potential sexism. According to Wakeford, the model of research presented to students in sociology textbooks is plain : the fieldwork is designed by men and carried out by less educated and conventional middle-class women who should be "without too strong prejudice" and "not too intelligent" (1981, p. 507).

70. p. 41 Laslett's and Rapoport's phrase (1975) for a discussion of ethnographic interviews "developed through a sustained relationship between the informant and the researcher", see Burgess (1982) (b) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p. 112 - 118).

71. p. 43 For critiques of ethnographic studies, see, for example, Young (1971) and Whitty (1974).

72. p. 44 Willis' phrase (1980, p. 91).

CHAPTER 2

LOCATING SEX EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL.

This chapter situates Sex Education within the social context of Fieldclose School. In the first section I consider the question 'What sort of school is Fieldclose?', and in the second ask 'How and where did Sex Education lessons start?'.

A. A DIVIDED COMPREHENSIVE

I. General location

Fieldclose school is a mixed comprehensive school on the outskirts of Sparestown, a working-class city. It was built in 1954 at a time when the Local Education Authority was organising its secondary schools into a network of purpose built comprehensive schools. It is surrounded by council estates and car-plants. Its buildings are scattered over hilly, well-kept grounds and, in 1978, showed signs of wear and tear but, above all, a feeling of space and order prevailed: chairs were often stacked, desks aligned, rooms locked with pupils acting as concierge. At this time, Fieldclose was a ten-form entry school with boys and girls from eleven to eighteen. Its catchment area had been altered in 1973 and lost its intake from a large, depressed inner city council-estate. Occasionally teachers referred to the school-intake prior to 1973 with signs of relief. They mentioned the discipline problems which they then faced. They thought that the new catchment-area included, in one teacher's terms, "mostly respectable working-class families some of whom are house-owners". According to the Headteacher, the school had a relatively small intake of children from semi-detached and detached house-owners. The working-class origin of pupils was confirmed by my own interviews with seventeen boys and seventeen girls

whose mothers and fathers predominantly held manual jobs in Sparestown factories.

II. Formal organisation

The school was originally designed around the House system whose importance was underlined by teachers and pupils. Each House building contained its own staffroom, dining-room and cloakrooms which were the centre of non-teaching activities. It was run by a House-head and an assistant accountable to the Head and Deputies. The House-heads were responsible for the welfare and pastoral care of two hundred and fifty to three hundred children who stayed in the same House from year one to five. All teaching members of staff were allocated to a House whose Head could interpret pastoral care in different ways. An assistant to a House-head remarked to me: "we are the only House who visits all the parents of our next batch of first years." Regulations also appeared to vary from House to House depending on staff and pupils:

"I think that Stone House has got a lot of discipline whereas Gravel seems to bring out all the vandalising and is not so self-disciplined. Cloak is the best of the Houses for strictness! In other Houses, there is litter, writing on the walls - whereas in Cloak, if anything like that does happen, we are all had up in front of the Housemistress and she sorts us out. So we have to do things right. That's a good thing to do." (Joanna)

The House system developed some feeling of identity with individual Houses among the pupils, which was also linked to competition and a lack of knowledge about the other Houses:

"I don't know if different Houses have different rules. I don't go there. My friends are in my House." (Andrew)

It was a divisive system as people within the House regarded other Houses as different:"Like my friend, she said our House was snobby." (Claire).

Discipline and sanctions varied from House to House, for instance with caning. Some staff and pupils reported that the cane and referral of serious cases of misbehaviour to the Deputy Heads were used more often by some Houses than others. This system emphasised the power of individual House-heads.

It produced a cohesiveness and sense of unity within the House but created a division and fragmentation within the global structure of the school.

The underlying structure of curricular activities was the Departmental system which also had a hierarchical organisation. The Heads of Departments were responsible to the Headteacher (and his Deputy in charge of the curriculum) for the quality and development of subject-areas within the general curriculum of the school. They were assisted by teachers with defined responsibilities and corresponding remuneration. There were closed boundaries between the Departments with few interdisciplinary exchanges. (1) Also, they were divided over the allocation of resources (including teaching-time) and the grouping of pupils according to academic ability. There was a strong objection to any move towards mixed ability teaching as advocated, for example, by the English Department. A main source of division came from the boundaries between the Department and House hierarchies which produced sectional interpretations of schooling. For instance, when I discussed problems of discipline with the staff I felt that generally the Housestaff thought that the breaking of school rules, if in the classroom, was mostly dué to the individual teachers' incompetence. But if rules were broken outside teaching time, they felt that it was perhaps due to the lack of parental control, brokem families and

so on. To them, the problems of control did not question the organisation of the school. By contrast, a few staff with no explicit House duties were inclined to explain discipline problems referring to the intelligence of the child, exam-pressures or teaching groups. Their interpretation took a pedagogical form. I came across numerous signs of an on-going power-struggle between the two systems and formed the impression that the historical dominance of the House system was being threatened by the Departments, as reflected, for example, by the gradual reduction of House-heads' posts from ten to six.

Final decisions and major co-ordinating policies came from the Headteacher, Mr. Apple and his two Deputies. Mr. Apple stressed to me the unified roles of the pastoral and academic staff irrespective of positions. He argued that they were united by the common goal to educate children into "universal values":

> "I think that any school teacher prepares children for middle-class values because all we mean by middle-class values are these values which have kept the country what it is. There is no doubt that middle-class values, in inverted commas, are the things like preparing for the future and hard work and the fact that, by and large, it pays to be honest, unselfish, and that generosity pays. This sort of thing is the ethos of any good school. But there are <u>all sorts of ways to put across these very broad concepts</u>." (my emphasis)

He insisted on the moralising aims of schooling and the necessity to prepare pupils for hard work:

> "The values that the schools are trying to instil are those values which any society must try to have if it is to survive. You can have rebels against it but the general thing is fairly (pause) somebody has got to do some work. It is no good to have a hippy philosophy for the whole country. Somebody has to do the plumbing."

Here, the Headteacher encapsulated a fundamental argument about schooling. It aimed to train pupils into obedient, responsible unselfish subjects of the social order (unlike the stereotyped hippie)

and direct them towards the hierarchy of skills established by the labour process. So in spite of tensions in the policy-making and the orderly enactment of the school-routine, sectional power-structures did not fulfill fundamentally conflicting functions. By submitting pupils to the laws of obedience and authority, the Houses supported the formation of a disciplined workforce. In addition to this role, the Departments classified their skills according to academic qualifications defined from the development of each subject.

The first three years were set into three non-parallel bands - the first band was meant to have a higher academic potential than the second, the second being higher than the third. There was also a remedial group in each year. After the third year, grouping varied with the policy of each Department who allocated pupils to particular sets. For some, it was based on direct exam-setting from the beginning of the fourth-year. For many, setting took place after mock 'O' level and C.S.E. exams had been taken later in the year. The two hundred and twenty sixth formers were physically removed from the other pupils being housed in a sixth form block and supervised by a sixth form master. They wore no uniform as a sign of their privileged status. Since they had quite a number of lessons in their own block, their presence was hardly felt in the rest of the school and fifth-years remarked that they had nothing to do with them.

The whole school seemed geared towards the production of exam-results. Unsolicited, the Headteacher drew my attention to the academic results of the school several times. The male Deputy head, Mr. Forthright,

set up a 'Board of Studies', that is a working party of teachers intended mainly to study the teaching of the 'bright' child. Even when exams had little vocational value, they still legitimated the schoolorder. For example, a few teachers acknowledged the lower status of school-qualifications such as a C.S.E. mode 3 in Outdoor Pursuits in the competing labour market but they usually supported the educational value of an exam-preparation. A Physical Education teacher defended the theory paper in Outdoor Pursuits because it forced pupils to take their projects more seriously although it did not give them "much of a qualification". A Handicraft teacher also remarked about his fifth-year mode 3 C.S.E. groups:

> "Without an exam, and some written work, these sort of lads would just mess around. Anyway, some still get a kick out of working for an exam. They like to be treated like the others (academic pupils)."

These teachers supported the symbolic function of exam-taking whatever the relevance of the qualifications to job-seeking school-leavers. For them, the exam system was a ritualistic form of social control (2), if not a way of differentiating skills. There were other forms of rationalised control in ritualistic acts like House-assemblies or tutorial groups. A blend of coercive and moralising styles of authority produced regulations on many aspects of school life. There were detailed rules about school attendance, smoking, drinking, uniforms, time-tabled homework, site-boundaries and the use of schoolbuildings in non-teaching time. Just a few weeks before the Easter vacation Miss Partridge, a Deputy Head, reminded pupils of their uniform rules in the Pupils' school bulletin. (3) Her warning was strongly worded: "Those pupils who persistently wear the wrong indoor uniform, after due warnings and letters to parents, will be punished and sent home to change." I was present in a

fifth-year tutorial (4) when this notice was read out by the teacher. The class sat in silence until the reading was over. Then the teacher asked if the pupils had any comment. Pupils did not offer any opinion. A question was asked about some other business of the day. Nothing else was said about uniform rules although, from the pupils' comments, uniform was most unpopular. In this incident, the uniform rules seemed to have been brushed off as if staff and pupils felt that the warning was quite unenforceable a few weeks before the end of compulsory schooling for most of the fifth-years present. The rationality of the system demanded from the senior staff a continuous attempt to enforce on the fluctuating school population, rules symbolic of authority like uniforms (5) and regular attendance (6). Pupils were under constant supervision as in the incident which I witnessed during a snow storm at morning-break. The female Househead of Cloak House caught a few girls coming into her premises:

> "Yes, girls? Are you Cloak girls? No! Which House? (I did not hear the girls' answer) Only Cloak girls use Cloak toilets. Are you good girls? Right! Go to your House toilets."

The girls left looking rather sheepish. Such detailed regulations gave pupils ample opportunity for trivial misbehaviour and formed a constant source of tension between staff and pupils especially, as in almost any social institution, there was little unorganised time. However, school regulations were probably no more constraining and numerous in Fieldclose School than in many similar schools. Among pupils there was little outright hostility to the school. Generally, they thought that it was "not too strict" and the staff was "friendly". Their instrumental attitude supported the moral

and coercive styles of control. Adam, who claimed that he "messed about" - something confirmed by the staff - epitomised this attitude :

> "We are here to get through these exams, aren't we? They (teachers) should make us work even when we just want to mess about"

To pass exams was a consensual creating force in spite of much ambivalence towards schooling as with Cathy who did not like any school :

Y.R. "How would you describe this school?"

Cathy "I don't know, rather free and easy ... a lot of the time you can do what you want. They are not very strict with anything. I think I would rather have been at a stricter school. There again, you would work harder".

Y.R. "Would you? Wouldn't you have disliked it more?"

Cathy "Yes, but there again you would work harder. Probably get better results".

Cathy's ambivalence exposed pupils' contradictory interests between the necessity to get qualifications and the desire to get away from compulsory schooling. This contradiction legitimated authoritarian work ethics. Jane felt that she "missed discipline in the school for when she was getting a job". She saw schooling as a preparation for work and Jim made the same point succinctly :

> "Usually, in lessons you get taught as a number. But that's how you'll get treated when you go to work any way. They treat you like a robot like over there" (he pointed at the industrial estate seen from the house window).

For Jim, schooling prepared pupils for alienating work conditions in factories which reduce the individuality of each worker, an ex-pupil of a school, to a sheer number. The harsh reality of work persuaded pupils to acquiesce to the social order of the school

but there were, nonetheless, incessant conflicts between the staff and their divided subjects.

III. Anti-schooling

Pupils' general passivity was compatible with routinised subversive strategies. In some lessons, rows of pupils did not open any books or take any dictated notes for exam-revision. In one History lesson, a group of girls sat with their back turned to the teacher polishing their nails, looking at girls' magazines. One of them indignantly retorted to the teacher who accused her and her friends of doing nothing that they had to talk since they were doing project-work. The class laughed at this justification. It used the diffuse line between discussing/working and talking/doing nothing against the teacher who retreated to more compliant pupils. I have seen boys running about, playing with a ball and boys and girls flicking rubbers in classrooms during lesson time. Such a normal activity as eating crips gave rise to much giggling (7). Pupils elaborated ways of undermining teachers' authority. For instance, a Biology teacher corrected a mock-exam paper in a fifteen minutes long uninterrupted monologue. The class (mostly girls) became restless; a few groups chatted. Finally, the teacher asked:

"Any questions?"

Julie "Yes. I want a new book."

Teacher (sharply) "That's not about the lesson, Julie!"

Other calls for new books followed until the teacher exploded with anger but in vain. Calls for new books continued. The girls laughed sarcastically at the despondent-looking teacher. Eventually,

he left the class to collect new books. The girls sent him out three times. They were relentless. While the teacher was copying notes on the blackboard, one girl called out :

> "Can you move away from the blackboard, sir?" the teacher moved aside.

2nd girl : "Can you move away, sir?"

Teacher : "I have done it"

2nd girl : "I didn't say anything"

Teacher : "I thought you did"

2nd girl : "Oh, no. (pointing) She did"

Teacher : "That's not the point. I have moved"

Owing to their complicity the girls managed to get a laugh at the teacher's expense and relieve the boredom established at the beginning of the lesson. They used a definition of the lesson conflicting with the teacher's when ordering new books. To them, the lesson was about writing; to him, it was about listening. Later on, again, they used the argument that they had to write the notes from the board to make the teacher move and implicitly acknowledge that he was wrong by being in the wrong place. So, overt defiance was shown by both girls (8) and boys but involved a minority of observed lessons, only four out of twenty-four. Most pupils in most lessons appeared to pay heed to the teachers' requests. I noticed boys who disrupted one lesson quietly sit throughout the next with another teacher. There seemed little systematic riotous behaviour. Both staff and pupils said that there were very few fights outside the classroom, (I saw only one) and were never serious - "just the sort of things to expect from boys" (female teacher). However, there were certainly pupils who stopped co-operating with the school.

Interviewed the Head mentioned the "1% or 2% pupils who are disruptive." He insisted that "there's not as much delinquency and vandalism as in the inner city schools of Sparestown." He thought that there were only 3% of pupils who absconded. Other teachers reported that there was more truancy among fifth years than other age groups. One teacher remarked that there were fourth and fifth years who belonged to a "counter-school culture." She explained that they wanted to have nothing to do with the school. My impression was that their presence was not much visible for those staff who were not involved in daily contacts with them. From staff-room conversations I formed the view that most of these pupils belonged to the remedial group and C.S.E. sets - namely, the less academic children. This was confirmed by the interviews. Pupils who complained about Fieldclose school's soft rules and, as one regretted, "slap happy teachers", tended to take most 'O' levels. True, I noticed disruptive pupils but, as I have just suggested, these did so occasionally when individual teachers failed to keep control over the latent power struggle between staff and pupils. If there were any nuclei of active anti-school culture among the fifth-years, they did not disrupt the running of the school. It was effectively under control. Nonetheless, routinised conflicts between staff and pupils and at times among pupils were anchored on academic divisions.

IV. Academic/non-academic divisions

Recording data about informal academic/non-academic divisions among staff was beyond the scope of the study. However, noticeable trends such as the customary absence of Woodwork, Metalwork and Home Economics teachers from House staffrooms and the Board of

studies suggested that such divisions existed. They formed a source of contention in the formal organisation of the school. Thus, the teacher in charge of fourth and fifth year remedial pupils talked to me about the "academic staff": "The academic staff pushed those children who were on the border line Remedial and C.S.E. to take C.S.E. So, with such a small group left, only one teacher is available." She saw a conflict between remedial teaching and teaching for examination. One did not seem compatible with the other. She thought that power in organising the time-table lay with the academic staff. Were the time-table suitable for remedial teaching - for instance "having the whole afternoon with such children with one male and one female teacher" - she could take the "girls for childcare and the boys could do environmental studies." Here, the overlap between two boundaries, the academic/non-academic on the one hand and the masculine/feminine on the other is exposed (9).

A strategy deployed by C.S.E. groups on several occasions consisted of turning the academic/non-academic division into a subversive tool. At the beginning of a Physics lesson, the teacher told the nine C.S.E. boys to get on with their project. Then, he ignored them and paid attention to the 'O' level (11 boys, 1 girl) pupils who diligently copied down notes and exercises from the blackboard at the front of the class. Meanwhile there were only a few signs of industry from the C.S.E. back rows. The space left between the two groups seemed to me to symbolise their polarisation (10). After fifteen minutes, a few C.S.E. boys had found some books and pens to use. The others went on talking.

The teacher occasionally broke the barrier between the two

groups by asking the C.S.E. boys to quieten down. The talk would be subdued for a while and grow louder again. The 'O' level group was the object of some lighthearted taunting. A couple of C.S.E. boys called an 'O' level boy who eventually turned round. They accused him of having cheated at the mock exam to come first in the class. The boy laughed and returned to his work. When the 'O' level boys answered the teacher, comments came forth from the back: "Creep!", "Wrong!" Incorrect answers were prompted. A C.S.E. boy gave me further evidence of the polarisation by shouting a correct answer to the teacher's question addressed to the 'O' level pupils and turned to me: "I should be with that group! (laugh) but I am too daft. I don't understand things. I have no memory for laws." He was the only boy who interrupted the teacher to get an explanation about his project. Perhaps because he thought that he was nearly one of the 'O' level group, he felt that it was still worth while to bother with work and temporarily comply with the teacher. This lesson showed the fifth years' clear perceptions of the academic hierarchy and how this polarisation engendered shifting alliances in the classroom (11).

V. Age divisions

The split between older and younger teachers was recorded by all staff. Senior staff felt that their duties were increased by the presence of young teachers:

> "The problem is that many young teachers are too young, too inexperienced to be really helpful in tutor-groups. They don't know yet what they can offer. Take a bachelor of 23. He has so many things to work out for himself in the school. Young teachers find school very stressful. Senior teachers are not away from school so often." (male Househead).

The Deputy Head even drew a graph to show the rate of absenteeism among staff according to age (12).

School regulations concerning appearance were applied to staff. A few female staff reported that it was forbidden to wear jeans even denim skirts - only cords were allowed. A few younger male staff had been advised by the Deputy-Head responsible for uniform to change and have their hair cut. These rules may symbolise the bureaucratic effort to differentiate, at least in looks, younger staff from pupils. The power conflict between senior and younger staff was expressed by a few probationers who felt unsupported by the management, ignorant of the school workings, powerless.

The staff used age divisions among pupils to ensure discipline. A few Houses had a fifth form common-room, with prefects being drawn only from the fifth years. Talking to pupils made me aware of another division which was attached to age: the division between adult status and children status. They often described a teacher whom they liked as somebody who treated them "not like a kid" but "like an adult". To share a joke with a teacher was the sign of being treated as such by the teacher. Asked why he enjoyed an 'O' level English course at the technical college (13), Jim replied:

> "At Tech. they concentrate on the people who want to work, and also there's no uniform, which means my Mum hasn't got to spend money on school uniform everytime and also you're not treated as a kid. They don't call you by your second name, they call you by your first. And I've even had times when they've called me 'Mr.' So I prefer it to school because you are treated more as a human being than at school."

For him, the use of names expressed the change from the formal to the informal, from the child to the adult relation. Like school uniform, he perceived shifts in status as a form of social control.

There were signs that age-divisions among staff and pupils tended to be linked to tensions from conflicting expectations about status and roles. In an 'O' level English class, the atmosphere was relaxed and informal. Pupil and teacher called each other by their first names which was unusual for the school. The teacher went from group to group pulling a chair to each table to sit with each group. Then, he asked for pupils' attention to read out a short story as a trigger for some creative writing. He had to stop reading several times because of pupils' interruptions. Most went on chatting and writing, occasionally stopping to listen. The teacher came to me and apologetically remarked: "It did not really work. I did not know when to interrupt them from what they were doing." This remark reflected his thoughtful treatment of the pupils and his questioning of his own performance. Some pupils spontaneously said to me that "he doesn't treat you like a kid." But this seemed to cause some unrest and confusion. They said that they could work if they wanted to and seemed to both regret and appreciate the fact that the teacher would not push them. A boy said to me laughingly "He (the teacher) is a good lad! But he's no control!" Another asked me: "Do you want me to rouse him? I've finished my work. You know, he gets ever so upset!" Here the teacher's role was the subject of class-room redefinitions. Pupils tended to reverse the teacher-pupil relation to become the judgemental adults. To them, the teacher was a 'kid' as he seemed at fault for not implementing his disciplinarian role adequately. But power struggles between both parties still remained. Age was a divisive factor in correlation with

definitions of status and roles mostly generated by the institution.

VI. Gender divisions

Most Heads of Departments were males apart from subjects usually labelled as feminine such as Home Economics, Typing and Commerce. Remedial teaching was co-ordinated by a woman. Sex-typing of subjects was combined with sex-typing of hierarchical positions (14). Men were likely to be in senior positions with females acting as assistant to the Head of the Department or House. All secretaries were female but the caretaker was male. The male Deputy-Head was in charge of the all important curriculum development and the welfare of boys. The female Deputy-Head was responsible for the welfare of girls and miscellaneous tasks like the enforcement of the uniform, liaison with parents and probationers. Female teachers were attending a male environment (15).

In the first years, all pupils took the same subjects but they were sex segregated for games. Each boy and girl had to take Metalwork, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Needlework and Home Economics on a rotating basis. In the second and third year, girls had to do Needlework and Home Economics while boys continued with Woodwork, Metalwork and Technical Drawing only. By the fourth year, these subjects became optional. According to the Equal Opportunity Commission, "Pupils must not be excluded from any course of study on the ground of sex, and pupils should not be required to make a special application to study a subject which might be described as non-traditional, except in a single sex school where non-traditional courses are not available." (16) (my emphasis) To restrict handicrafts exclusively to second and third year boys and Needlework and Cookery

to second and third year girls seemed purely a case of sex-discrimination. Generally, pupils thought that it was difficult for a boy to choose a feminine subject like Cookery. Equally, it was difficult for a girl to opt for masculine subjects given the rationale of exams:

"I think it is hard for a girl to choose Technical Drawing or Metalwork or Woodwork because of the fact that you haven't done it for two years, you see, there are three of them (options) which you can take, which even if the girl is interested in, she can't get a high standard and the boys have only got one. (Kaye)

For pupils, gender mattered in the school performance of these subjects. Neill explained why some boys and girls hesitated to choose an unusual option:

"I think some like to do it but they don't want to be different from the rest. They don't want to be the odd one out. But there are a few boys who do Home Economics. If they want to be chefs and learn how to cook a bit (pause) if they did Needlework, they might get it. But not with Home Economics. There's nothing wrong with it. We all had to do it in the first years."

To Neill, Home Economics was a more respectable subject for boys than Needlework because of career prospects. The staff seemed to share these attitudes. The female Home Economics teacher was most enthusiastic about male candidates. She had two boys this year, and said to me: "I push the boys when they take the subject seriously. Two or three years ago, I had eight or nine boys who took it as an escape subject. But that is unusual." She insisted that she set high goals for the boys to get them into management and to go to special colleges. She implied that she did not encourage the girls to enter into catering management. "There is no point. They do Home Economics to become Home Economics teachers or have an easy subject. Girls can't aim for as high a career as boys because they have a family." She implicitly pushes pupils doing her

subject into type-cast roles: boys to follow careers as Neill said - ".... to be chefs and learn how to cook a bit" - and girls to have feminine occupations such as teaching or being a mother. By contrast, when I raised the question why there was no girl in the Technical Drawing lessons in the present fourth year, the male teacher was less than enthusiastic about female candidates:

> "I would firstly do my best to discourage a girl if she wanted to take Technical Drawing. I would really examine her to find out whether she is coming for a lark or to get out of the other option subjects. I had a few girls once. They were excellent."

This shows clearly the other side of the type-casting coin. Not only was the school probably in breach of the Sex Discrimination Act, but the staff appeared to discourage positively boys and girls from opting for a subject labelled for their opposite sex. This was all the more dramatic in the case of choosing Physics at 'O' level in Sparestown, where jobs with engineering skills often required Physics as a qualification. Very few girls took this subject. Also Careers gave a low priority to any discussion of gender-typing (17). There was no policy to counteract stereotyped self-determination among pupils since the Headteacher sanctioned this situation. He justified to me the different time-tables for boys and girls on the grounds of pupils' self-determination and the competitive exam-rationale which indirectly supported sex-typing. Ultimately, the traditional sexual division of labour legitimated the gender-typed curriculum:

> "A girl can always opt out into marriage and have lots of jolly little children. They'll be very much occupied, probably busier than anybody. No, I think that whatever one says about the similarities between the sexes, (pause) a boy needs a job, something to work at outside the family much more than the girl."(18)

He exposed a strong awareness of the polarisation between masculinity and femininity, both presented as biologically given traits. He felt that the girls' exclusion from corporal punishment came from their weaker constitution but found it easier to deal with disruptive boys:

> "One can adjust to the physical manners of the boy; be aggressive; on the whole, non-verbal signals can take place more easily with boys than with girls, I think."

Boys and girls were also aware of female and male dynamics:

"If he is a male teacher, he is softer with the girls" (Guy).

"The boys seem to get it harder than girls, girls seem to get off the hook more. I don't think it's fair really to expect the boys to be always nice." (Kaye) (19)

Boys and girls agreed that somehow to be a boy or a girl confronting a male or a female teacher mattered in the enactment of school-discipline to some extent. Gender differentiation mattered in other areas of the hidden curriculum. In one lesson, I noted the following exchange between a female teacher and fifth year boys:

Teacher: "And now, you be quiet, everybody. You all have work. I want complete silence for half-an-hour at least."
The teacher walked around the class:

Colin: "Why don't you turn my page for me, Miss?"

Teacher: "Alright! I'll come right to you. I want your book anyway."

Colin: "What for?"

Teacher: "To write a love letter to you!"

Andy: (teasing Colin) "Creep!"

Here, the violation of both the feminine norm of passivity and the teacher's norm of asexuality became the source of humour.

On many other occasions, I observed this kind of bantering and

flirtation between males and females which was, at times, watched by an appreciative pupil audience. In a Metalwork lesson, a sixth form girl walked in to bring some papers to the teacher and she quietly walked out. The male teacher turned to the all male class:

"What's the matter, lads? You didn't react to her today? What? No clapping? No hissing?" (The boys laughed)

There was the feeling of some complicity in the sharing of male humour. Gender attitudes, too, merged humour with control in this female teacher's confidence:

"With a boy, even if he is outrageous, I can always try the charm bit, the feminine part (laugh) but with a cheeky girl, well, - I don't know - at times, I am lost."

Gender-polarisation appeared to be endemic to the school under various forms. It was an unstabilising element in the formal and hidden curricula.

This brief portrait shows a deeply divided school. Now I shall examine how this characteristic affected the establishment of a Sex Education course.

B. STRUCTURAL RELATION BETWEEN SEX EDUCATION AND FIELDCLOSE.

I. Introduction of Sex Education into the core-curriculum

A first account of the course came from the House Staff. It emphasised the history of Sex Education in the school. Ten to twelve years ago, Sex Education was given by a local clergyman and the Marriage Guidance Council "at odd moments." Since such interventions were not satisfactory, having no follow-up, the external visitors ceased to be invited. Sex Education was not mentioned again until a joint meeting was arranged between House

and any other interested staff, the Head, the female Deputy Head and the Medical Area Health Education Officers (20) "about three or four years ago." (i.e., circa 1974).

The Deputy Head, Miss Partridge, and other House-staff stressed the risks which girls were running at the time:

> "We had difficult children four or five years ago when we had the old catchment area and also when the school-leaving age was raised. They resented it! We had a fashion of girls getting pregnant; eight or nine a year, in about 1976-77. The first R.O.S.L.A., girls, (21) really! I know it was one way of getting out of school."

Miss Partridge linked the introduction of Sex Education to the school's control over disruptive pupils and the extension of the school-leaving age. She reduced pregnancy to a sign of rebellion, by girls only, against the school's authority. By comparison, boys' sexuality did not seem to be a problematic issue.

The second account was that of the Head. He emphasised the external pressures put on the school by the publication of a L.E.A. document, which, in 1975, recommended the extension of Careers and Health Education/Personal Development advice to all school leavers:

> "Other schools were doing it - it seemed the thing to do. A Health Education course started in 1977 because we accommodated Careers first in the time-table and we were also waiting for a suitable person to lead Health Education."

So, the Head stressed problems of resources and organisational adaptation to innovation backed up by advisory support. He denied that pregnant girls were ever a source of problem for the school - no more than any other school. In a sense, for him, Health Education belonged less to a separate area of preventive pastoral care than to the formal curriculum. He thought that the Health Education course was stimulating to the children and gave them a

new form of moral education:

"When we did Religious Instruction they were not very communicative - would not talk about 'would you steal from John?', about family relationships or things we do in the course you are interested in. It did not go down well. Films on Indian fakirs, alright! The Bible, that could not be mentioned! So, we scrapped Religious Education altogether for the fourth years and the fifth years and gave the time to Careers and Health Education."

Mr. Apple made it clear that there was a normative relationship between Religious Education and the introduction of Careers and Health Education into the core curriculum. Thus, Religious Education could be integrated to the educational philosophy of the whole curriculum without being time-tabled. The Health Education staff were accountable to the school hierarchy. The Head said that Health Education and Careers were inter-related:

"Surely Careers include how to live a happy life (laugh). They must interact - must have consultations. If there were any clash, the Head of Careers would say you must include certain things. But yes, Health Education comes under the Careers umbrella, though it is a separate thing on its own because, in this school, the Head of Careers is on a Scale 4, whereas the Head of Health Education is on a Scale 2, and Health Education has half the time of Careers. It has to grow softly."

Unequal resources of time and finance created divisions between Careers and Health. With regard to the school-hierarchy, Health Education was secondary to Careers. Yet, with reference to his educational philosophy, they were both united in providing a forum where children ought to "work things out for themselves". This was consistent with his view where all subjects and all good teachers should teach universal values under different curricular forms.

The last account came from Elena, the Health Education team-leader. She had been involved with a Health Education programme in her previous school:

Y.R: "As far as you remember, do you know what were the Head's ideas when he initiated the course?"

Elena: (laugh) I am sure nothing particularly educationally ideal about it. He wanted to get the pregnancy rate down - the Government Reports said he had to, such as the Handbook of Health Education (22) - the Education Authority had been nagging him! (laugh) That's a bit unfair (laugh). It's partly true! It was an area he was aware of what wanted doing. The Head of Science said that when I appeared it was like manna from heaven. When he saw I did it in my old school, he had decided to have me"

Elena was appointed to the school as a biology teacher and she had been an assistant House-head before being given the responsibility of running the Health Education course. She insisted on the Head's pragmatic approach: external constraints in addition to school pregnancy rates pushed him to introduce a course. A consultative staff working-party was established in the school in 1976-77 and met with no opposition. The Health Education course was started in 1977-78 for all the fourth years and extended to the fifth-year core curriculum in 1978-79. Elena

recruited the team-members with the approval of the Head among the staff available for the part-time teaching of the new subject.

From these accounts, it is difficult to pin down the date and reasons for the curricular decision. Probably its power-base was divided between the Head, influenced mostly by constraints external to the school, and the pastoral staff concerned with schoolgirl pregnancy as a welfare and disciplinarian problem. Many staff considered the outcome of the Health Education working party as a "fait accompli" or did not know that it had been open to any interested teacher. This ignorance reflected problems of internal communication in an hierarchical organisation. Elena

forcefully stated that she had no wish to impose moral solutions on pupils:

"We give them a lot of factual information. We don't say 'You should not.' In no way do we say: 'you should not get drunk! No! We say 'You are likely to get drunk sooner or later. Then, you'll know what it is like and learn to handle your drinks a little bit better. For God's sake, make sure you are in a situation where you are not going to do yourself or anybody else any damage!' (pause) I suppose we do preach (laughter) but we are trying not to!"

Elena was very much aware of the tension between a deliberative, amoralistic approach and a behaviourist, moralising thrust. The Headteacher's comments echoed this problem:

"You may say: 'This is a specific rule and you must' but by and large, you must explain the reasons for the rules. You can't say 'This is right or wrong 'for the things Health Education is dealing with any more."

Mr. Apple feared that pupils would not be receptive to strict moral guidelines but thought that one social function of Health Education was to support family ethics: "Yes! Yes! The whole basis of the civilised role is built on families to some extent and extended families. This is part of evolution, isn't it?" This was consistent with his view that schooling educates children "to take a full part in society. This includes family-life." His view on the course reflected his organisational responsibilities while Elena, as a biologist, favoured the teaching of preventive medicine. She wished to underplay its moral connotations.

The Head seized the opportunity to find a substitute for unpopular Religious Education and undermine the potentially controversial nature of the course by stressing its moral support for family life.

II. Position of Health Education in the curriculum

Health Education was part of a rotating system with Physical

Education and Careers in the fourth and fifth year time-tables. It had a far less time allocation than these two subjects with ten lessons of Health Education a year compared to twenty of Careers and thirty of Physical Education out of a yearly total of 1600 possible lesson-units on the time-table. Such a restricted place in the curriculum formed a source of vulnerability for the Health Education team who complained that they could offer only 'one-off' lessons. Because of the complex rotating system, the composition of the Health Education groups never coincided with that of any other grouping. They were formed purely for the ten successive Health Education lessons in the year. At the beginning of each series, there was little corporate identity and little trust among pupils. Such groupings were certainly not conducive, initially, to 'communication and open discussion' - the aim put forward by senior teachers and the team leader. The course had no examination nor assessment. This added an innovative dimension to its marginal status for Elena: "It is our privilege to talk about what we want, to experiment and make lots of mistakes." However, its development was constrained by organisational pressures. For instance, Elena had to justify its time-allocation to exam-orientated Departments. Thus, in 1978-79, two Departments could have lost one thirty-minute period a week were the Health Education course to have the same groups of pupils as in Careers and Physical Education. Also, Elena had to be cautious about sensitive Sex Education issues as a result of her partially rationalised accountability to senior teachers:

> "I am free to do what I want but I know I could get the sack if things went wrong! Mr. Apple was not sure at all about doing contraception at the beginning (laughter). He used to be anxious because he used to come in quite a bit and see what we were doing. The Senior Deputy Head is a bit worried at times. We manage to pat her on the head and say she is old fashioned! She goes away! (laughter)."

This vulnerable situation made Elena stress her professionalism. A syllabus had to be defined carefully. The lessons were tightly structured. Discipline was maintained and pupils had to "use their brains." In these ways the course was similar to many formal curricular activities observed - yet, the team-members perceived it as something different. With senior teachers, Sex Education had a much lower status as a subject. Many a time, they directed my questions on Sex Education to Health Education topics like drugs, smoking or drinking. The special status of Sex Education was reflected in the parents' right to withdraw their children from one lesson (on birth control). This ambiguous status was increased by that of Health Education. Elena and the senior staff insisted that the course belonged to the pastoral side of the school but the pastoral staff whom I talked to did not know of its syllabus. For instance, one House-head was pleased to learn from me that the fifth years were currently discussing smoking and drugs as he was wondering how he could tackle these topics within his House. The position of Health Education reflected the organisational fragmentation of the school and its hierarchical subject-boundaries. Elena had the prerogatives and responsibilities of a Head of Department but on a low scale post. Neither the Head of Careers nor Elena claimed that they collaborated once they checked that their two syllabuses had no overlap. So, the classification of Health Education as a school subject was uncertain. It did not belong totally to the House system nor was it departmental. Its marginal position tended to increase the low status of Sex Education with those staff not involved in its teaching.

III. The Health Education team's social relations

There were three female Biology teachers and one male History teacher in the team. Elena was thirty-eight and the others were under thirty. As a more experienced teacher, Elena led the lessons. Each class consisted of two groups of approximately ten to fourteen pupils and the junior teachers acted as an assistant to Elena - giving folders to pupils, setting up films. S/he intervened occasionally and would make a brief contribution when asked to comment by Elena. These teachers had little significant role in the class. Each class was meant to split through the lesson into two smaller discussion groups. This occurred only rarely and always at Elena's initiative. The junior staff expressed deference to, and admiration for, Elena. When questioned about the course, they immediately quoted or referred me to her. On several occasions, they congratulated her for her lessons which they perceived as personal achievement and not a team-effort. They shared feelings of excitement and solidarity which mitigated the hierarchical relations of the team.

IV. The popularity of Health Education

The following incident illustrates the Health Education teachers' perceptions of their work. During the 5th year lesson on "Marriage, Hopes and Fears" the Deputy entered the classroom. He apologised to Mr. Sayer, a guest-speaker, for the interruption, gave an urgent announcement to the group and departed. After the lesson, Mr. Barley also present with Elena, warmly congratulated Mr. Sayer for regaining pupils' attention after Mr. Forthright had left as if there had been no interruption. "You were brilliant. You moved them", he said.

Elena expressed her annoyance at the Deputy-Head:

"He nearly destroyed an integrated group dynamic! I'll tell him! I'll have an argument with him! It is not a geography lesson like his! Next time he has to knock at the door and wait until we think it is all right for us to be disturbed."

For these teachers, a Health Education lesson was no ordinary lesson liable to unforeseen disruption. They requested special status for the subject because of its emotional involvement. In their informal feed-backs after lessons, I heard comments such as "You had them right in your hand!", "It stirred them" which exposed the objective of creating some kind of empathy between teachers and pupils. Elena agreed. She wished to alter their perceptions of the portrayed situation. If the emotional quality of teaching is not seen as essential to the pedagogy of a subject by most teachers, then the team-members had some grounds to feel involved in an innovatory process.

Most pupils considered Health Education as something different too. When asked in which subjects they thought they had a good teacher, the interviewees never mentioned Health Education. To explain this omission, they said that Elena was a good teacher, but did not count Health Education as a 'subject' for a variety of reasons: there was no examination or test; no written work. It was meaningful to them unlike many subjects:

"Health Education is preparing you for the outside world. It's more like a fantasy world we live in, the way we are not told we could meet drug addicts, the way nobody mentions anything about sex or anything, you know. You wouldn't say English prepares you for the outside world with its set things to say. In History, it's more like 'How war broke out in 1914?' It's just part of dates and places, not people." (Liz)

"A useful course. I knew a lot of facts already. I would have chosen it because of the discussion. It is a good subject, not geared towards exams, geared towards life (pause) How can the Himalayas be useful to you except for crosswords?" (David)

These responses may be an indictment of the examination system if it crams pupils with knowledge considered by them irrelevant to their future. By contrast, Health Education prepared them 'for life', a remark which I repeatedly heard. Asked to explain what they meant by this, they usually said it had to do with emotions, family, relationships and sex. If so, it had to do with people and not fossilised knowledge, and this explained its popularity. But a few comments hinted that it had, after all, elements common to any curricular activity:

> "She can be too forthright. With some children, if they put forward a question she sort of pulls them down - almost as if they should not have asked the question. (pause) She pulls the question into bits in order to show us that our way of thinking is not right and that we have facts and God knows what mixed up and then she'll put us right." (Alison)

> "People like her think they know everything. She has a superiority complex. She says she does not know the answers but she pushes you on one way and the other telling you how to behave." (Mark)

These pupils saw Elena as a teacher. Elena's proposal that pupils have to work out the right answers for themselves contradicted their perception of her authority and pedagogy. Her dual role as a teacher knowing the "answers" and, as the teacher only raising questions provoked some confusion and hostility. Among a minority, Health Education was an integral part of authoritarian schooling.

CONCLUSION: THE MARGINALITY OF SEX EDUCATION IN A MERITOCRATIC (23) SCHOOL FOR MALES.

I have underlined four organisational processes (the management of teachers, pupils, formal and hidden curricula) which interacted with competitive groups. Some of their structural boundaries were

usually strongly differentiated and resistant to change. The generic tensions produced by the unstable order of the school and its fragmented leadership, provided partially autonomous strategies for action amongst staff and pupils, hence the possibility of change within existing organisational arrangements. The conservative principle of equality of opportunity for all formed an integrative force. The differentiation of pupils into those who were likely to fail and those who were likely to succeed was fundamental to the school policies, its moralising and coercive control over pupils and classroom social relations. Protean gender-differentiation was lashed to this underlying structure. Females attended a school for boys and male staff. Yet, discrimination against girls went largely unnoticed but was implicitly rationalised by the meritocratic system. Sex Education was 'hidden' under the cover of a Health Education course which had a relatively autonomous position in the House and Department system. Because of such a location, I shall have to examine to what extent health care dominated the lessons on sexuality.

Also, did the marginal position of the course counterbalance the conservative and authoritarian tendencies noticed in the school? Was it involved in the creation of a moral consensus too? If organisational structures and curricular production were fused with each other as I suggest, how did it affect classroom relations when discussing sexuality? These questions underline the four following chapters.

FOOTNOTES :

1. p. 59 The staff felt that they would not know about new policies in Departments other than their own if their subject was not affected. If so, Fieldclose School curriculum could resemble what Bernstein described as the 'collection type' with a "strong boundary maintenance creating control from within through the formation of specific identities" (1973, p.374).

2. p. 62 See, for instance, Bernstein et al, (1966, p.429-36) for discussion of rituals.

3. p. 62 Pupils were distributed with a sheet of notices to which any member of staff could contribute every morning. It usually consisted of dated of future events, reminders of school regulations, records of attendance, congratulations for individuals and group achievements. Similarly, the staff communicated to each other by means of the Staff Bulletin.

4. p. 63 The tutorial was one of the few moments in the day when the fourth and fifth years were not classified according to their academic achievement. During that time in the early morning and afternoon, the teacher in charge took the register of attendance and drew pupils' attention to the school bulletin.

5. p. 63 See Woods, (1979, p.118) and Delamont (1980, p.92) for discussions of school uniforms.

6. p. 63 The Head regularly contributed to the pupils' bulletin in relation to one item, i.e. attendance records. He offered his congratulations to those classes which had 100% attendance on the previous day.

7. p. 65 See Corrigan (1979, p.57).

8. p. 66 My observations question the argument put forward by McRobbie and Garber (1977, p.220-1) that there is a continuity between girls' marginality in young working class sub-culture and their invisibility in classroom resistance to authority. This could be an over-simplification. It is more likely that there are girls' forms of resistance but these may not be sanctioned by teachers confronted with the public humiliation of having problems with "feminine" behaviour. An area under-researched is the conditions under which girls, compared to boys, involve themselves in strategies of resistance and how these differ in girls' schools as opposed to mixed schools.

9. p. 68 This overlap in the hidden curriculum was manifest when teachers asked remedial boys to do male jobs (car/building maintenance) and remedial girls to perform housework tasks (cleaning, dusting shelves) while other pupils worked on their exam-revisions.

10. p.68 I use Lacey's concept of polarisation (1970 p.57)

11. p.69 These findings confirm similar observations by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) but also support the criticism by Ball (1981) of their rigid dichotomy between pro and anti - school groups.

12. p.70 What was perceived as a natural age division might be based on a hierarchy of power which would lead to different degrees of motivation and absenteeism. This hypothesis could be explored by comparing the Deputy-Head's graph with the distribution of scale posts.

13. p.70 Jim attended the Technical College in the evening, so he said, because he was not allowed to take the 'O' level English class at Fieldclose School on account of his poor achievement in the subject.

14. p.72 The disadvantageous position of women teachers in comparison to men is well-known. See, for example, Byrne (1978) or Deem (1978).

15. p.72 I was often reminded of Byrne's observation that in co-educational schools, "girls are attending a boys' school and women teaching in a male environment". (1978 p.233)

16. p.72 Equal Opportunities Commission, Do you provide Equal Educational Opportunities (1979 p.3).

17. p.74 I formed this impression by talking to Careers teachers, observing six fifth-year Careers lessons and by talking to pupils. Girls were critical of the number of films on engineering watched in Careers. I reported this feeling to the Head of Careers who dismissed his responsibility for changing the girls' self-allocation to 'women's jobs'.

18. p.74 Notice the idealisation of domestic life - girls "opt out", their children are "jolly" - and the apparently natural character of men's employment as they "need" to work away from their families.

19. p.75 When aware of double standards of discipline, girls talked about their "unfairness to boys" as did boys. Less often did they complain about being forbidden to wear make-up and jewellery as if discrimination against boys mattered more than against girls. On this, see, for instance, Spender (1982).

20. p.77 According to the earlier stage of this study (see the appendix), the Health Education Officers from the Medical Area Health Authority had been most influential in persuading senior teachers of local comprehensive schools of the need to develop health and sex education courses.

21. p.77 R.O.S.L.A: Raising of the School-leaving Age.

22. p.79 I discuss this D.E.S. document in the last chapter.

23. p.85 By "meritocratic" I refer to Ball's description (1980 p.7) of one model of comprehensive education. However, I regret his total blindness to gender differentiation and polarisation in a model which systematically produces cultural and organisational conflicts between males and females.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIES OF PRODUCTION, CONTROL AND NEGOTIATION

This chapter is the first of three which will examine meanings produced and interpreted by teachers and pupils in the Health Education classes.

It has two aims: firstly, to highlight the main themes and orientations of the course; secondly to analyse teachers' strategies, that is processes by which the teacher produced and controlled curricular meanings. The third is to examine pupils' strategies, that is the means whereby they confronted those of the teacher. There are four sections. Part A will analyse the selection of topics and the course's general objectives while an examination of classroom interactions will constitute Part B. As I shall comment on data from lessons observed and interviews, it is important to consider how the noted strategies occurred in one lesson. So, Part C will examine the teacher's strategies in the production of meanings on pregnancy and childbirth while Part D will consider how pupils negotiated them.

A. THE HEALTH EDUCATION SYLLABUS

I. Selection of topics and materials

The selection of topics became crucial as the course consisted of only twenty-two periods. The following list shows their distribution for the fourth and fifth years in 1978-79:

Fourth year topics

1. Self portrait
2. Friends and gangs
3. Family rows
4. Physical and emotional changes during puberty for girls
5. Physical and emotional changes during puberty for boys

Fifth year topics

1. Children's development
2. Children's development
3. Marriage: Hopes and fears
4. Violence in the family
5. Violence in society
6. Mental Health
7. Physical handicap

6. Alcohol
7. Smoking
8. Drugs
9. Sexual intercourse
10. Pregnancy - birth
11. Contraception
12. Moral attitudes and sexual feelings
8. Venereal diseases
9. Cancer and Heart attack
10. Death

Topics were organised around the biological phases of the human life-span; birth, puberty, illness and its extreme, death. Family-relations appeared to be a focal point of interest.

Each lesson lasted one hour ten minutes. It consisted of an introduction by the team-leader (ten to fifteen minutes), films or slides (twenty to forty minutes), a discussion (ten to twenty minutes) and a worksheet (ten minutes). The lessons were carefully planned. Elena insisted to me:

> "I spend literally hours preparing lessons, thinking: How am I going to do that? How to present it? preparing worksheets (1) and things."

This was confirmed by the team-members who all praised her thoughtful preparation of lessons and materials used. Elena thought that "the lack of suitable teaching materials is the number-one problem" which she faced as her course dealt with topics such as death or sexuality which were not much discussed in schools. The availability of resources affected the choice of topics as she explained:

> "We establish a long list of possible themes. To some extent we throw out things we know we can't find resources for or it is impossible to deal with. But there are things, I feel, however difficult it is to touch, we have got to mention. I felt that "family violence" was something we have got to talk about. Yes! The only picture they have is from newspapers who use it as a piece of sensationalism and that is the idea they end up with: 'Isn't it awful! I'll never do that!'"

There were undeniable tensions in this account. On the one hand,

Elena claimed the availability of resources to be the essential

criterion of selection; on the other hand, she overlooked it if she chose. She added:

"We can use a film like Cathy Come Home (2) but it is not something which we can push at the top of the list, it is not of paramount priority."

Y.R: "Are you saying that homelessness is not a problem for this city?"

Elena:"No! But it is not for the kids we have got: Not many of our kids will ever be in that position. With the catchment area that the school has. There is no point. What I can do is make them understand that childabuse is not a working-class phenomenon. In another school, maybe yes! But we are not an E.P.A. (3) school.

In her view, Fieldclose pupils came from respectable working-class families with aspirations for their children. So, problems of tenancy and homelessness were not part of their families' experience. But, arguably, since there was a deprived inner city area a few streets away from the school, such social problems were part of their working-class experience or, at least, they were aware of them. Either way, this example shows Elena's assumption on their parental class which, in this case, directly influenced the syllabus. Her justification for selecting childabuse and not homelessness came from the assumption that more children experience the first than the latter. This suggests a selection criterion of a unifying nature: topics assumed to relate to most pupils' experience tended to be those selected (4). I noticed another aspect in the teacher's relevance-structure during a Parents' Evening.

It was set up for the new fourth-year parents to introduce them to the Health Education course. Elena emphasised to the parents that the course could be useful in their dealings with their adolescent children. Worksheets could be read and discussed at home and used as an approach to difficult topics such as adolescent

moods, sex, contraception. A few parents remarked that she overstressed the lack of communication between parents and children. Elena agreed that this depended on every family. Yet she maintained that often a lack of communication existed between parents and children and probably came from sons and daughters themselves. This view reflected an approach to family welfare which could be that of a health visitor - in one lesson, pupils were urged to put pressure on their parents to stop smoking, especially when Mum happens to be pregnant. It supported the Headteacher's view that schools should educate for family-life and raises the question of the course's aims and objectives.

II. General objectives

Senior staff and the team-leader stressed the necessity of giving correct factual information about topics such as sex, drugs and smoking. They also added that "skin-deep knowledge as in biology is not sufficient" (female Deputy-head). It had to be supplemented with the attempt to "de-mystify" (Elena) some attitudes and taboos as with sex and death. The course should show that such topics can be discussed "easily, openly, not in whispers" (male Deputy-head), "honesty" (Elena) so that pupils may learn to "communicate about their immediate and future personal problems" (Elena). The staff's comments indicated that the overt aims of the course were preventive and directive in the encouragement of self-knowledge and communication in order to reform young people's attitudes and values on sexuality and family-life. But the control over the syllabus also had to be produced within the classroom.

B. CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Classroom events are complex (5). This section cannot explore them all in their subtle ramifications but focuses on salient features in the Health Education lessons. First of all, I shall consider the question of classroom control. Then I shall discuss pupils' accounts of teacher-pupil interation.

I. The teacher's strategies for control

The Health Education course had a spatial identity. All lessons took place in a classroom situated in the science block. It was decorated solely with posters from the Health Education Council. The organisation of the classes rarely varied (when it did I shall comment on it). Boys sat together as did girls, in rows behind pairs of desks facing the blackboard. There were very few direct interactions between boys and girls as pupils' talk was directed to the teacher and, occasionally, to their neighbour. They had a few opportunities for chat and whispers when the film was being re-wound or during the completion of worksheets when both teachers walked around and offered individual help. Otherwise, pupils were coerced into formal attention and silence. When they demurred, Elena established her control through displays of anger and/or irony. This rarely occurred, but I did witness one such incident. My fieldnotes read as follows:

> The rooms of the science block are locked during lunchbreaks. Pupils pile up at the door waiting for Elena. Other teachers demand that pupils file into the block in pairs. Elena does not. She arrives with her key. Pupils follow in. Today, there is an enormous push on the landing next to the Health Education room while Elena opens her room. I am crushed against the wall. Elena yells at the pupils. There is much screaming and jostling. The class is noisy when settling down at their desks, laughing and arguing about the fray. Elena looks furious, she shouts at them. They quieten down. A boy mutters something to his mates, they laugh. Elena shouts at him:

"What's happening today? There is nothing I hate more than juvenile behaviour when it means not having the courage to speak out your comments! Now in five minutes you have spoilt all that we've tried to do during the past few weeks. The lesson is destroyed. We were going to discuss your sexual attitudes to each other and your responsibility. Now, it isn't worth putting the effort into it. We're back to the teacher-pupil relation we wanted to get away from. I hate this type of behaviour. I loathe it."

The boy who had muttered is sent out of the class. Elena stops marching back and forth. She sits on the desk and smiles. The class relaxes.

This incident constitutes a fine example of how school norms impinge on classroom interaction regardless of the subject. The control of the class was Elena's job, not that of the female, junior teacher who remained silent. Elena gave two conflicting impressions of the situation. She implied that in the ordinary run of Health Education lessons she was not a teacher and yet she acted as one. She distinguished her disciplinarian role, which she claimed she was reluctant to take, from her instructive role. Also, her first definition falsely assumed that there was no power-struggle between teachers and pupils in lessons undisrupted by pupils' misbehaviour. Such an assertion formed one control-strategy at overt moments of conflicts; yet institutionalised power-relations were fundamental to the classroom dynamics. The school norms of discipline were integrated into the teacher's expectations of pupils' behaviour. Thus, an authoritarian control had to be established before any other role could be assumed by the teacher either as a parent or health education officer. When pupils did not conform to their teacher's expectations there was a conflict. What Elena perceived as the special, non-disciplinarian relationship between herself and the class was superseded by the necessity to enforce institutionalised behaviour on pupil and teacher such as

locking the room or filing-in in pairs. Senior teachers and Elena thought that a sex educator should have good control over the class so that sex matters could be discussed with sensibility and good humour. The controversial aspects of Sex Education legitimated disciplinarian norms and potential conflicts.

The teacher clearly indicated when she expected pupils to speak although, at times, they did so unsolicited. But most often the teacher directed their intervention with such cueing techniques as shown in the following extract from my fieldnotes:

Elena: "Don't you think there is pressure on you to have a sexual relationship?"

Boys and girls: (chorus)"No!"

Elena: "Boys, what do you feel if your girlfriend said "No" to you?"

Silence from the boys.

Elena:"Henry, would you have more respect?"

Henry:"Yes"

Elena:"Why ask her then?"

Girls laugh. Henry says nothing.

Elena:"Come on Henry, why would you bother to ask her? You must know what you are doing!"

Laughter. Elena waits for an answer.

Henry:"To see what she is like!"

Girls laugh and boo.

Another boy: "I would respect her if I liked her. It would depend on the situation."

Elena turns to the girls: "How many of you would be offended if your boyfriend tried to have a sexual relation with you or if he didn't?"

The girls laugh but give no answer.

This exchange was not untypical of many exchanges which I observed.

There were implicit but real conflicts among pupils and between teacher and pupils. Here, boys and girls were divided, since each sex was expected by the teacher to take a position on the issue of

sexual double standards. Confronted by pupils' silence, Elena resorted to directive methods. This left little room for pupils' arguments and emotions but protected them from public scrutiny by allowing them to find refuge in either silence, cursive answers or laughter. Thus, Henry did not have to explain why he would "respect a girl more" if she were to refuse to have sex with him. In effect, pupils' silence and fear of embarrassment reinforced the teacher's control over the discussions. This gave her the opportunity to suggest her own opinions as in the following incident. In a fourth year lesson a film was shown. In its first section, Boys' talk, four sixteen year old boys discussed sexual relationships. One of them, Simon, was teased for having failed to convince his girlfriend, a virgin, to have sexual intercourse with him. Before its projection, Elena said:

"The film is called Loving and Caring (6). It is a new film which consists of five parts. They have been received by the City a few days ago. I don't know yet what is the best way of using them. We'll have to assess them together."

The first two sections are viewed. Pupils look attentive. There is much laughter but it dies out during the second section, Girls' talk, where Simon's girlfriend who is very upset talks about what happened to female friends. Straight after the film, Elena comments :

"We must try to assess these films. I think the films would be more appreciated if they were shown to older people. Raise your hands all those who think that only fifth years and sixth formers should see them!"

Only three girls do so, the other pupils sit silent. Elena remarks several times that pupils are too immature yet to appreciate the film as they have little or no sexual experience. The last two film sections are shown. Mother and Daughter presented Sandra's worried mother's attempt at talking to Sandra about her evenings with her boyfriend without much success. In Mother and Father, Sandra's mother urges her husband to have a word with Sandra; the couple meets another couple who has a son of Sandra's age. The boy's father jokes about his son's sexual prowess. Pupils appear to watch the films; there are a few giggles. After the films, Elena tries to resume the discussion:

"Were these conversations part of your life-style or not? Did you identify with them or not? Did you?" (pause; silence) I am talking as a teacher now. Has it made you think or not?" (no response)

(to the boys) "Why are you so reticent? Christ! It's your bloody life, sunshine! I had mine! Ugh! You are like stones! I'll go back to teaching 'O' level biology. Come on, which films did you prefer? The parents' films?"

At last there comes a reaction. Pupils laugh. Mostly girls answer in chorus. "Yes!" Boys also say that the parents sounded just like theirs. They laugh. Elena states her position:

"You see! You identify with the parents' and adolescents' situation. I think that the other two films were too advanced for you. What do you feel about that? Should I not show the films to fourth years?"

Again there is no answer. Tracy, sitting next to me, whispers: "You should show the films." I urge her to speak out but she shrugs her shoulders.

In this incident there were moments when Elena created a collaborating response swiftly followed by misunderstandings between both parties. Moments of collaboration and resistance would fluctate and this pattern was typical of other lessons too (7). To urge pupils to speak up, Elena had to put pressure on them. She acknowledged this at the end of the lesson: "Thank you for being guinea-pigs. I am sorry I had to <u>bully</u> you." (my italics) Pupils smiled. In Part C, their interviews will show how they perceived this "bullying". In the lesson, I had the impression that they thought that the films were suitable for fourth years. I was confirmed in this by a dialogue which took place after the lesson. Five girls stayed behind during break and talked to Elena. I wrote down their conversation from the back of the room:

Girl A: "I thought the acting was awful."

Girl B: "I didn't believe a girl in Sandra's position would talk about what happened the night before straight away to her friends."

Elena: "Why didn't you speak if you found the films interesting? Why didn't I get any feedback from you?"

Girl A: "We didn't identify with their way of talking. We don't do it like that!"

Elena: "Oh! I see. I did not mean to ask you to identify with their way of talking but with the situations they talked about."

Girl C:"That's it. That's why we didn't talk."

Elena: "But you see, you prove my point. It's a sign of your lack of maturity that you misunderstood me (the girls looked glum; pause)

Girl D:"It's true. Some of the boys are not very mature. But now, it's much better. Last year they would have giggled all the time."

Girl A (forcefully): But we wouldn't have answered your questions in front of everybody else. They might think we are in the same position."

Girl D:"Why don't we split up? Boys together and girls together."

Other girls: "Yes! Yes!"

Elena: (forcefully)"I am absolutely against it. It would destroy what we are doing. To bring boys and girls together so that we can discuss those things together. No! I am against it. All I meant was: 'Do you discuss such things?' Should you or should you not have a sexual relation?"

Girl A:"Somebody is going to be involved in that sort of situation, so when you asked us, we had to identify with it."

Before leaving the girls assured their teacher that they found the lessons "ever so interesting".

The girls' explanation revealed a chasm between the deliberative style of the film-talk, similar to the teacher's, and their own rational judgement of the film which led to a sort of "deaf and dumb dialogue" with Elena. Eventually, the girls' intense emotional identification with the film-situation confirmed the teacher's opinion of their lack of maturity. Thus, she ignored their feminine sexual identity but revealed a teaching objective: to promote some understanding between the sexes through classroom discussion. This intention was also apparent in the syllabus with equal weight given to the boys' and girls' puberty, in the teacher's appeal to one sex to answer questions concerning mostly the other sex -

for instance, asking boys to explain the menstrual cycle.

Usually, the lessons were entertaining as Elena provoked much laughter through irony, humour and jokes. A few examples which created ripples of fun among pupils show that Elena seized a remarkable range of opportunities to raise a laugh and express her educational meaning:

a. To dispel fears about "wet dreams", she showed a slide of a boy asleep, dreaming of a woman in bed, surrounded by a huge red heart and commented:

"Wet dream, it's wrongly termed! It doesn't wet the bed! Also, boys, you have no need to dream about Raquel Welch! It may just happen and you notice it when you wake up!"

b. When talking about menstruation she said:

"If you think women bleed to death, you have no such luck, mates!" Then, she explained that menstrual blood would not fill an eggcup.

c. Pupils were asked to tick a box saying "true" or "false" next to this statement written on the worksheet given at the end of a lesson.

"Women are able to have sex more often than men."

After they had done so, Elena turned to the girls:

"I tell you ladies, you'll have a few minutes to get rid of all those chauvinist pigs who have here put 'false' down."

Elena used humour to illustrate particular teaching objectives (examples a and b). To make pupils laugh she used gender-typing, (examples b and c) where she formed a temporary alliance with one sex against the other. Bantering was another source of humour. In a lesson on pregnancy and birth, she called Anthony "Aren't you a breech-birth? you are so awkward!" Pupils laughed, Anthony looked pleased. This type of comment might not seem humourous to an outsider. Yet, within the context of the observed lessons, it was to those present (8). Elena remarked to me that

"kids are used to Coronation Street (9) and not to the serious treatment of a serious problem." Because of pupils' sensibility to the media, she argued that humour had to be incorporated in visual materials and classroom relations:

> "We find it works, you see! It stops the kids being tense. Then, you can be serious and you can go on. The kids will do it themselves. The odd crack! You see it happening to release tension."

She justified her technique because of its consensual effects (10). Humour alleviated vulnerability. It created a learning situation by bridging distance between members of the class, when, through laughter, topics that were difficult to tackle because of cultural values could be raised by the teacher. Teacher-initiated humour was not just one way to facilitate control; it was also an instructive tool. In two fifth year Biology lessons taken by Elena which I observed, there was less joking and teasing. This shows that the humour present in Health Education was not just due to the personality of the teacher but corresponded to a situation probably specific to Health Education. In this context, it tended to unite, on the one hand, teacher's control and classroom knowledge and, on the other, teacher and pupils through reference to conflicting assumptions on sexuality and gender.

II. Pupils' negotiation of classroom order and curricular meanings

I have just noted that Elena and her pupils shared humourous comments. Occasionally, boys cracked jokes. For instance, in the lesson on "family violence" when the teacher said: "What would you do to stop somebody who batters a kid?" a boy provoked much hilarity by shouting: "Smash his head in!" People laughed as the boy's response feigned to offer an efficient solution to the teacher's

question and thus undermined her by suggesting that only violence can cure violence. Later, she argued that people enjoyed being aggressive. A boy exclaimed:

"What about fighting at a football match? People don't fight because they enjoy it."

Elena: "Why do you do it then?"

Boy: "To support the team!" (teacher and pupils laughed; the boy's point was not taken up by the teacher)

Boys made such comments to express a counter argument. Here, the boy suggested that one cannot reduce crowd behaviour to the fulfillment of the aggressive drive. He used humour as a reasoning tool while disagreeing with impunity. The perpetrator of the humourous act faced no public humiliation and did not confront the risk of having to account for his argument. Laughter defused latent conflicts in opinion between teachers and pupils (11).

None of my fieldnotes record any public joking by the girls. While they did not make any outspoken humourous comments, they nevertheless laughed with the teacher, like the boys, and at the boys. The earlier example of the girls laughing at the boy who wished to test his girlfriend's respectability shows that girls too used the same strategy of opposition as the boys'. By laughing they distanced themselves from his position without openly challenging it as if they were in a similar weaker position vis-d-vis the boys (12), as pupils were vis-a'-vis the teachers. At times, masculine laughter excluded girls. In the lesson on venereal diseases, the teacher, Mr. Barley, and the boys reproduced sex-typed humour which girls could share only as outsiders. Jokes were whispered and the teacher could pretend that he had not heard them. When pupils had left the classroom, he said to me:

"Lads crack jokes but I think it's alright to let them. Maybe one of them fears something about himself and disguises it under a joke."

However, I did not notice such joking among the girls who laughed at the boys' jokes. Neither did I record anybody laughing (13) when the lesson came to discuss venereal diseases among females. This sex-typing meant that boys' sexual activity could be acknowledged publicly with the complicity of adults. By contrast, there appeared to be no such cultural form of expression for female sexuality publicly available to girls and through which they could expose their fears. Laughter when oppositional was still under the teacher's control. I observed an attempt by boys to transgress Elena's norms in a fifth-year lesson on depression and mental illness. Elena asked the class what they meant by "mentally ill", boys shouted "loony", "mad", "thick", "slow". The class laughed. Elena looked irritated. When she defined what she meant by mental illness, boys mimicked the looks of what they thought were mentally-ill people - rolling their eyes, looking dumb. She sent a boy out of the class and in the following silence, she exclaimed:

"Now, lads, look! I am faced with a choice. Either I'll get angry again or I'll give up. But your answers shock me and your attitudes underline the facts that such a lesson is necessary, that you have lots of confused ideas and prejudice about mentally ill persons. Yet, (in a firm voice) I refuse to play the role of the teacher here - impose discipline on you. No! either you co-operate or we stop here. We'll give up! (pause; tension) In this class one third of you will be under doctor's treatment for some form of depression once in your life!" (the pupils looked shocked; Elena explained her remark with no further interruption from the group).

By mocking mentally-ill people pupils' laughter(initiated by boys) was subversive of the teacher's authority and statement that mentally-ill people are curable like any other patient. Here

pupils' laughter arose out of the conflict between traditional views on mental illness (pupils') and liberal views (the teacher's). This type of laughter was rare. Most often they laughed with the teacher, not at the teacher.

I never noticed any bantering between the teacher and girls whereas there was some between Elena and boys. I made this observation to her. Laughingly she agreed that "with boys, she could always try the male and female game". Perhaps as the teacher directed her wit more often towards boys than girls, these were more circumspect in cracking public jokes. Also this form of humour contradicted the peer group assumption that girls were not expected to express sexual values in public (14). For this reason, Louise would not talk in any lesson when "it's about sex and vaginal diseases. Sometimes you can get some boys who can take the mickey out of you and call you names." Not surprisingly boys contributed to the lessons more actively than girls. Elena felt that this happened because boys were at times more interested. If she implied a preference for male pupils she would echo quite a few teachers as research indicates that teachers in mixed schools think that boys make a better oral contribution, add variety and enthusiasm to the class (15). There was no collaboration between boys and girls, for instance when completing the worksheets, but there was a greater occurence of direct verbal exchanges between the teacher and boys. These observations support feminist findings on male dominance in the classroom (16). So, gender-norms and assumptions either expressed by the peer-group or the teacher or the communication systems used (laughter and language) affected the classroom relations of the Health Education course.

In their interviews, pupils appreciated the relaxing character of the teacher-pupil exchange. Only one boy referred to the teacher's strictly disciplinarian role:

> "She makes us sit in silence. You have no choice but to listen. You are not treated like an adult."

If Derek's remark was the exception, it was perhaps because pupils generally felt that the teacher's demand to sit in silence was so routine-like in schooling that it was mundane; perhaps it was not worth mentioning. Pupils were keen to comment on what they perceived as more specific to the Health Education class. To my question: "How would you describe the atmosphere in the class?" Boys and girls agreed with Beverley: "It's relaxing because she talks to you like an adult. You are expected to speak." Jane felt at ease in the group where "you have to be mature and student-like." Yet she continued:

> "Sometimes, it's difficult because she has a different outlook on things. You say something and she cross-examines you and what you said ends up not making sense at all. (laughter) It's got to a point when I said to myself: I'll never say anything because you look a fool and I am not too happy about that."

Her embarrassment came from the fear of having nothing intelligent to say when faced with the teacher's probing. For Neill, the perpetrators of a public humiliation were, potentially, all the classroom participants - and not just the teacher:

> Neill: "Sometimes she was putting things over that I completely disagreed with."
>
> Y.R: "You disagreed with? Did you tell her then?"
>
> Neill: "No! No! Not really. I just want to keep quiet. I don't want everybody to say 'Oh! Did you hear me in the class and that.' Saying outside: 'You were wrong to say that' I just keep my own opinions to myself."
>
> Y.R: "You told me that in Health Education you could speak your mind."

Neill: "You could but I don't like it. It was just that there were so many around (pause) I was a bit embarrassed with having to speak up."

Y.R: "Would the teachers have minded if you had told them your opinions?"

Neill: "They wouldn't mind. They would just try and prove you wrong a bit. They would stick to their point and I'd probably be sticking to mine so it would get you nowhere."

Neill made clear that at the best, to reach a stalemate or at the worst, to lose an argument with the teacher would be a public discredit, inside and outside the class. The teacher's authority and control, combined with the object of the lessons -"kids wouldn't answer questions, they could have been embarrassed by talking about sex" (Jim) - provoked, in pupils, deep fears of embarrassment and a reluctance to participate in the discussions especially on emotional issues. They were moved into silence. Her influence was keenly felt. Adam portrayed it as something close to endoctrination:

> "With a film, she'll tell you before what it is about and expect you to think the same afterwards, you see what I mean? She wants you to have the same ideas as hers when you leave."

Unlike him, most pupils perceived a more fluid relationship between their opinions and the teacher's. Gordon thought that "you are likely to believe the teacher unless you know a lot about it yourself." Most expected the teacher to impress them with her views except, perhaps, on the question of teenage culture. Unlike the teacher's claims, one boy said that he never went out at night while a girl said that she did not enjoy violence on the television. John epitomised a dialectical process of learning: "She makes you think your own thoughts." The teacher seemed persuasive for two reasons. Firstly, her views as those of a teacher were likely to come close to some knowledge of the truth.

Secondly, as an adult she had experience of the personal relationships discussed. To explain why he thought that Elena was a good teacher, David said:

> "I think she compares films with her own life. She has a family of her own. She sometimes talks how she felt. How she feels like hitting her kids (laughter). She talks about pressures on marriage."

David was more likely to acquiesce to curricular meanings when these appeared to be based on family and marital experience as well as on professional judgements. In the same way that some pupils' critique was formed from their experience as teenagers outside schooling pupils validated their teacher's curricular knowledge with her experience outside the school. This suggests that, ultimately, to pass the test of experience was crucial to legitimate the teacher's knowledge. In this, as in other aspects of pupils' interpretation, there was no difference of accounts between girls and boys. Yet, there were two noticeable exceptions.

No girl referred to the course as a subject where they could have a laugh. This was, perhaps, not so surprising as only two girls mentioned humour as a characteristic of their favourite teacher, like Louise: "You can talk to him, you can joke, have a laugh, not just get on with your work." This may suggest that for most girls, classroom laughter generally did not constitute a major feature of the learning situation. By contrast, most boys attached a greater significance to having a laugh in Health Education:

> "You like to have the odd joke, with some teachers you can't, you know, it makes the lesson a bit easier, you work more. You can have a good laugh in Health Education." (Richard)

This was consistent with their views on their best teachers. For Adam, with his favourite teachers: "You can joke half the lesson and still walk out and say: Oh! I've learnt something!" Boys appreciated teachers' ability to crack a joke with them. This significant difference in accounts may support the argument, suggested earlier, that there might be gender connotations attributed to humour and these might not be specific to the Health Education classroom relations.

Three girls wished to be in single-sex teaching groups but no boy did. But even these girls felt ambivalent about single-sex lessons as "it is nice to hear the other sex speak". The girls were, perhaps, more embarrassed by the boys' presence than vice-versa but their feeling was counterbalanced by their interest in the boys' opinions (17). Joanna explained why she enjoyed the course:

> "Boys are not all in for a laugh and that. You see, in the classes, it seems to me they are just larking about but they can be serious and you see their feelings, their views and things."

This feeling of discovery of the emotions and opinions of the other sex was sustained by the teacher's use of gender-dynamics and insistence on having mixed classes. The boys did not express a similar enthusiasm for listening to the girls' opinions. But they recognised that the course "tells us that girls have problems, more than us, with things like periods, birth. You have to understand them, be careful with them." (Peter) The course encouraged boys to be protective towards girls.

Overall, boys and girls reported strikingly similar perceptions of the teacher-pupil exchange. Perhaps, their conscious ways of evaluating classroom relations were predominantly based on their

status, roles and expectations as pupils rather than on their gender-position. Their accounts closely reflected the salient features of the classroom interactions observed but tended to dissociate what they had been told by the teacher from how they had been told. Yet, the transmission of curricular meanings in the class and the selection prior to it merged with each other to form a coherently structured production process in which the teacher and the pupils constantly defined their respective power-positions. I wonder if, in a lesson mostly transmitting uncontroversial information, there was still room for a few disagreements between participants. To explore this, I shall turn to the lesson on pregnancy and birth but firstly, I shall consider the range of meanings produced by each and how they related to each other.

C. FORMING FUTURE PARENTS

The lesson on childbirth and pregnancy was the ninth lesson in the fourth year syllabus. There were twelve boys and fifteen girls present with Elena and Ann, a junior team-member who acted silently as an attendant - seeing to the film and giving out worksheets. Elena took the lesson structured around the teacher's introduction, two films and the completion of worksheets. The rhythm of the question-answer pattern was the quicker as the teacher concentrated mostly on short factual information with which pupils seemed familiar, for instance:

Elena: "How does a doctor test somebody's pregnancy?"

A boy shouted: "He gives her a urine test."

Everybody laughed. It was the only occasion when pupil-initiated laughter occurred, as if the topic was no laughing matter.

I. Promoting the use of Ante-natal Clinics

Elena explained to her attentive audience her aims. The first, so she said, was to offer biological information about pregnancy and childbirth. The second was to urge pregnant women to attend ante-natal clinics for medical check-ups. Thus she introduced the theme of pregnancy with a comparison with France's "National Health Service" where maternal benfits are granted only if the mother attends the ante-natal clinic. She suggested that attendance should be compulsory here. But she did not ask the group for their opinions. Her third aim was to "demystify" - Elena's word - pregnancy and birth. She pointed out the variety of individual experiences by referring to her own two pregnancies and by asking pupils if they had known any pregnant women. Different symptoms of pregnancies were mentioned from the physiological - "Did she feel sick?"; "How much weight did she put on?" - To the psychological which Elena called "the pregnant woman's fantasies - "Did she have any craze?". Self-control by the pregnant woman was called for - "Don't eat twice as much. "Don't panic." (18) To me, she seemed to assume the role of a health visitor mostly concerned with medicalised experiences of pregnancies in order to promote the informed use of the National Health clinics and alter some attitudes on pregnancy. For instance, she discussed the involvement of the father-to-be at all stages of pregnancy and birth. Never once did she give the impression that pregnancy and birth were solely female concerns. Her aim became clear to the class when she addressed herself to the boys directly: "Boys, how would you react when you hear that your wife is pregnant? Would you worry? Go to the clinic with her?"

Boys and girls looked shocked. Some laughed; others shrugged their shoulders; a few whispers were exchanged. Her question certainly created a stir - I shall discuss this response later on when a similar incident occurred. Elena did not engage any discussion. The film The Ante-Natal Clinic was shown.

II. The Biological process of pregnancy and birth

The first shots of the film open on a couple, in their mid-twenties, playing with their toddler in their fair-sized garden. Then, a male speaker describes all that happens before this happy moment. With the help of diagrams, he gives a biological description of fertilisation as well as of the first signs of pregnancy. A series of slides shows the development of the foetus and an interview with a male family doctor insists on the medical importance of attending an ante-natal clinic. The main tests given to pregnant women are explained and ante-natal classes are shown. White articulate, attractive pregnant women express their satisfaction with the ante-natal service in brief interviews which conclude the film. They disregard their previous anxiety about the clinic: if you ask for information and help, the staff are willing to explain things but it is up to you to ask.

Pregnancy was located within marriage. The first images associated pregnancy to a marital relation. The shots of the house, garden and homecoming father suggested that the couple was happily married. The biological information served to persuade viewers that attendance at the clinics was vital to both mother and foetus. The film aimed to reassure by dispelling fears that the National Health Service clinics might treat women with a lack of thoughtfulness.

For five minutes, after the film, Elena checked pupils had acquired the biological information with quick questions. She never once alluded to the material conditions of such clinics nor to the reasons behind the fears referred to by the interviewed women. Elena's collusion with a perhaps idealised picture of the National Health Service may come from her health visitor's role. Anxious to urge pregnant women to attend the clinics, she would not want to present a picture which might deter them. Also her interest lay not in women's emotional involvement in their use but in the biological process of pregnancy. This paramount focus was exemplified in the worksheets which were filled in by the pupils individually after the film. The sheet titled 'Pregnancy' listed nine questions. They were all to do with biological information such as: "At first Mum only has to go once a month and then as the pregnancy progresses her visits to the clinic become more frequent. What things do the doctors check on each time and why?" They referred to information provided by Elena in her introduction or by the film. The questionnaire on 'Birth' had three questions out of twelve which did not directly deal with biological information - they referred to the second film The First Days of Life. The unity between the teacher's meanings and those of the first film must be emphasised as well as their shared omissions; for instance, the absence of any critique of National Health Service provision and other forms of medical care in pregnancy such as obstetrics nurses performing home deliveries or the ignorance of the diversity of mental attitudes to pregnancy and birth. Both presented pregnancy as an unavoidable experience for women sooner or later, especially

when married. At no time was there any mention of pregnancies to single women or unwanted pregnancies by married women and neither teenagers nor women over 40 were shown pregnant. Perhaps it was thought undesirable to have children in these age groups. It meant that schoolgirl pregnancies were not discussed and, also, sexual pleasure was dissociated from conception. However, some of the social aspects of pregnancy and birth were mentioned on three occasions. Firstly, maternity allowances could be made conditional to clinic-attendance. Secondly, paternity leave was talked about in these terms: "In Sweden, fathers can take time off at the birth of their children." Although the pupils showed some surprise, it was not discussed but Elena did say that "women can keep their jobs in this country now after having a child." She did not provide any information on the conditions of employment which women must fulfill to have their jobs protected. Thirdly, Elena hinted once more at the social dimensions of fatherhood: "Should fathers be present at the birth of the child?" Elena's question created great interest and contradictory feelings among both sexes, especially when she insisted:

> "The contact at birth with Dad is as important as with Mum. It is called bonding. Anyway, it might be the most important experience you share with your Missus. Think about it!"

There were a few giggles, some embarrassed silence followed by the loud comments:

"It's her job!" (boy)

"No husband with us!" (girl)

"The father present! Ugh! He'll see us like that!" (girl)

"Yes! It's a fifty-fifty job!" (girls and boys)

As shown here, while the teacher carried on questioning pupils on their knowledge of the biological process under study, she rarely pursued a 'social comment' through a discussion. She asked a challenging question, pupils might record their interests and attitudes in short comments and, either something else was raised or, as in this case, a film followed. This indicated the high priority given to the acquisition of biological knowledge. The above pupils' comments expressed a strong reluctance to include men in a non-professional role in a traditionally female experience. Girls were noticeably forceful in their opposition. They appeared to agree upon the shame of being seen in a messy state. This attitude may reflect the fear of a permanent loss of sexual attractiveness to the fathers since, culturally, blood sweat and screams are dissociated from female sexuality while childbearing is associated with a loss of interest in sex (19). This brings out a clash between sex for women being defined in terms of procreation and procreation being seen as antithetical to sex (20). These conflicting attitudes were present in the lesson. Perhaps, the absence of sexual pleasure from curricular meanings contributed to the omission of unwanted pregnancies, that is when intercourse occurs for non-reproductive purposes. Now I shall show how the second film appeared to provide an answer to the teacher's probe about the father's role.

The film, The First Days of Life, shows a hospital delivery according to Leboyer methods (21) of "gentle birth". They question current obstetrics practice such as the use of lightspots, anaesthetics and induction. The greater part of the film presents

pictures of a growing foetus. One recurring point in the film is that nothing is forgotten, everything matters, from drugs taken when the foetus is three months old to the way the baby is introduced into the world. Thus, it provides information concerning each stage of development and how it can be altered by drug-smoking, genetic diseases and so on. There is a tension between two representations of pregnancy and birth. Firstly, a traditional theme emerges with the glamourous and moving spectacle of nature: the foetus, presented as if floating in space looks glorious in its growth to the sound of religious music. Secondly, there is the exposure of the drama of birth through shots of stages in labour, the medical staff at work and the delivery room. Its purpose is to reveal what usually happens in normal Leboyer deliveries. This liberal theme aims to reassure and demystify stock expectations. It forms a medicalised model of birth rather than a romantic one. There is a tension between these two positions. The glamour centres on the child; the matter-of-fact approach focuses on the bio-chemical process. In the embryo's visual odyssey, the mother is absent except in the shot on the birth. She is reduced by the commentary to a physiological threat to the foetus in case her behaviour does not subscribe to the medical norms. The reversed relationship, i.e., the foetus as a potential physical and mental threat to the mother, is partially overlooked apart from the mention that pregnancy may threaten women's lives. Thus, ante and post-natal depressions are overlooked.

This second film overlapped with the first and complemented it. Pupils witnessed the same show - the growth of the foetus twice in the same lesson. '<u>The First Days of Life</u>' added a feeling

of wonder to the first. Pupils seemed to respond to it. One was in tears; a girl fainted, half the group stayed during break, captivated, to watch it to the end. By playing on emotions, it reinforced the medical advice that attendance at the clinic was necessary to safeguard a beautiful, fragile growth. As in Ante-Natal Clinic, a married couple was involved in the drama of birth which was seen as a significant moment of marriage by provoking in husband and wife similar emotions - the camera focussed on the tears of each parent. Bonding was now part of the marital relation.

III. Becoming a father and a mother

The films and the teacher gave two meanings to bonding. The first was biological. The bond between the mother and child appeared to be of a bio-chemical nature - for example, through a hormonal reaction when the child sucks the mother's breast as, according to Elena, between cat and kittens. Bonding also had a psychological meaning insofar as the mother collaborated with the medical staff out of love for the child.

The father too was shown to be emotionally as well as physically affected by labour as the camera constantly shifted from the sweaty face of the mother to the equally sweaty face of the husband at the bedside. Precisely because of the emotional involvement of the father, Elena thought highly of the film, presented to the class as "her favourite film". The construction of the role of the husband as a father was present earlier in the lesson. The boys were asked if they would take their pregnant wives to the clinic. Mike, the father, in the

first film, was told by nurses how to guide his wife with her breathing exercises. Through partnership with the mother-wife, the male was given a role as a father before the birth and, then, at the birth itself. Objectively, the father's attachment to the child prior to and at birth is psychological and social. Yet bonding was given biological connotations as if the male had a similar bio-chemical relation to the child as the female. Through this "naturalisation" of fatherhood, sex-differences in pregnancy and childbirth were seemingly undermined in order to give an importance to fatherhood within marriage. While males were urged to see to their wives' ante-natal care and to create an indissoluble link with the child, they testified to their attachment to their wives. Parenthood bonded husband and wives through their exposure to childbirth. Elena underlined this: "(Birth) might be the most important experience you (boys) share with your missus" (my emphasis). This "feminisation" of the father's role (22) challenged the stereotyped attitudes that, in our culture, a male becomes a father (23) after the birth of the child. Instead, the liberal view expressed here told us that becoming a father ought to take place alongside the female who is becoming a mother before the actual delivery. In other words, the stereotyped conception of the male gender was altered whereas that of the female was maintained. Being pregnant was still seen as being the passive concern of women as patients. This active model of a woman "having a child" was juxtaposed with the first romantic image of a passive woman "being pregnant. There was some tension between these two models (24)

throughout the lesson as, for example, in the romantic 'First Days of Life'. The film underlined the passive nature of childbearing alongside preventive medical actions. On one hand, ante-natal care affirmed the active role of the pregnant woman and, on the other, it made it secondary to and conditional on her traditionally passive role; she had to submit to medical authority. Thus, the "social father" may nurture her into the role of an ante-natal patient. Bonding, therefore, was given another meaning by the convergence of the liberal and traditional themes on gender. It created the image of a responsible ally between the father and the medical staff for the welfare of mother and child. If this was so, the role of the father prior to childbirth was premised in the teaching of health care on the interest of the medical professions to facilitate their tasks rather than to give priority to those of the woman.

An ambiguity in Elena's attitudes towards the National Health Service tended to support this argument. When interviewed, she forcibly stressed - in her words - a "feminist" line to childbirth:

> "I certainly preach the odd Woman's Lib line! I have got this thing about bossy midwives and gynaecologists and that comes over quite strongly!" (my emphasis)

She added that the sole moment of the course when she would support a feminist line (25) was when she urged pregnant women to refer themselves to consultant care. But she also indirectly admitted to a feminist concern in her introduction when she stated power-relations between male and female practitioners:

> "The mystique about childbirth has been increased by women themselves, by midwives. For once, they did know something that men did not know about."

Her two statements may not just come from a feminist concern. The fact that no further explanation was offered to pupils raises doubts as to her claim. It could be interpreted as a stand against professional staff, male and female, who may be perceived as authority figures mystifying the natural process of childbirth, a theme developed in the second film. Elena could offer only a limited challenge to medical practices since she referred pregnant women to institutionalised care with mostly men in its ranks. Also, to put forward the interests of female patients as opposed to male medical practice would contradict their assumed unitary interests in ante and post-natal care. It could be construed as a divisive stand against the male-female, husband-wife bond reflected in the assumption that pregnancy and birth were of equal relevance to boys and girls.

This analysis has exposed a model of partnership between married parents and a correspondence between the feminisation of the male as a father and medical interests. This left unquestioned ambiguities in pregnant women's roles and status and tended to support the power-relations between women and the National Health Service (26). Now, I shall examine pupils' responses to the lesson. Two questions will be raised. Did pupils perceive its meanings in the same ways as their teacher's definition of her aims? How much did their interpretation vary with the gender-factor?

D. <u>PUPILS' INTERPRETATION OF CURRICULAR MEANINGS ON PREGNANCY AND BIRTH</u>

Thirteen boys and sixteen girls out of the seventeen boys and seventeen girls interviewed as volunteers expressed an opinion on the lesson on pregnancy and birth. Seven boys thought that it was boring or they did not remember it whereas only two girls just said:

"I don't remember much". The others reported the main aims of the teacher. The later type of responses will be examined first, then the boys' indifference to the lesson.

> "She told us that it wasn't all how it's made out to be; not just wonderful and nice." (Gaynor)

> "It tells you it's a trying time" (Derek)

Pupils understood that one of the teacher's objectives was to question the unproblematic and glamorous model of childrearing. Boys and girls said that they were given biological information; they recorded the drama of birth, the bonding between parents, and between parents and child. The majority agreed with the involvement of the father in ante-natal care like Jim:

> "I think that the teacher tried to show that just because the woman is the actual one who is pregnant, the man should be concerned as well and follow the development of everything. If the man is present at the birth it shows how big an event it is and it might stay in his mind and he might be able to look after the child."

Mandy expressed the same position with passionate overtones:

> "Childbirth! It's everyday life, isn't it? Why should they (men) be ignorant about it? They should realise what a wife goes through, it's not rosy to have a child. The mother will feel more secure and more relaxed if the father is here. It is his child as well. He should want to be here. (giggle) It takes two to make a child. Instead of being something in a box, he would feel it is his child, not another child."

For her, bonding meant that the husband acknowledged responsibility for the pregnancy, an awareness of labour and an emotional attachment to the child at its birth. There was a strong indication from pupils that they saw childbirth as a marital experience.

Those pupils who explained why they were bored said that they "had seen it all before" either on television or when younger at school. Yet, some of these girls were still interested in the

boys' responses if not in the over familiar films:

"They are a lot of boys who just sort of saw the baby being born and didn't want to be at the birth. 'It's revolting! They didn't want to watch it and we spoke to a couple of our lads afterwards and they said they thought that lesson was very good because they had never done anything like that before. So they benefited from it."

Liz seemed fascinated by the boys' exposure to the sight of birth and their contradictory feelings. As she supported the father's presence during childbirth, it might have been pleasing for her to think that a few boys had altered their attitude to it owing to the lesson. I have noted that seven boys out of thirteen showed indifference, not outright hostility, to the lesson. Their response came as a surprise to me given boys' participation in the class but their interviews gave a few clues as to why this was so:

Y.R: "What did you feel when you watched the films on childbirth?"

Gordon:"Not a lot! I've seen it all before on television."

Y.R: "Do you think that fathers ought to be present during birth?"

Gordon:"It's not really useful for father to be there. It's the wife who is doing all the work, isn't it? He can't do anything, can he?"

In addition to boredom with familiar pictures of childbearing also expressed by some girls, these boys rejected the teacher's advice.

Thus, Martin insisted on the superfluity of the lesson:

"I couldn't see no point in it myself, not for the boys, anyway! I could have done without it! A child is born and it is born. I don't see the point of knowing everything why it works. Just like a car works. No point in knowing how it works. Just know if anything goes wrong how to put it right."

Y.R: "Are you telling me that girls do not need to know what's happening in pregnancy?"

Martin:"Oh! No! They need to know, they want to know, what's happening, things like that. Me and my friends thought it was boring. Lots of other boys thought it was boring. If you don't want to be there, you don't have to be. She says 'You should. It's your child. You should. You have to admit responsibility towards it.' You don't need to be there."

A pupil may perfectly well understand the teacher's advice and, yet, reject it! This was the case with Martin who objected to information about biological processes irrelevant to males and assimilated medical care to mechanical maintenance. Boys opposition to bonding was based on sex-typed roles and thus, pregnancy and birth, for them, remained a feminine experience. This attitude opposed the feminisation of fatherhood. Boys showed much less interest in the topic when interviewed than in the class, whereas the girls expressed a greater interest in the interviews than their classroom contribution would suggest. Perhaps when the girls were confronted with a familiar, feminine topic of concern and at the same time, the opportunity to listen to the boys' views about something perhaps rarely discussed among male and female teenagers, they adopted a listening, non-participatory role. When asked in the interview to evaluate the lesson-meanings, they momentarily put aside their pupil identity and expressed their gender-interest in motherhood. By contrast, boys may have felt less inhibited in providing the teacher with biological information on something which appeared to have little to do with them. They would seek her approval rather than face the embarrassment of having to explain their own conviction against her opinion. But away from the class, boys would resume their identification with traditional sex-typing towards female experiences. The comparison of pupils' responses in the classroom and their later accounts brings out two important elements. The degree of pupils' involvement cannot just be seen as an index of sheer interest and, because of classroom dynamics, gender-identification may affect pupils'

interest in curricular meanings differently during the lessons than outside. In the interviews, girls identified with the liberal theme and boys were divided. It is not my intention to suggest that girls were free of ambivalent feelings towards the lesson meanings. Some of them who welcomed the liberal messages did so with caution. They said that the father ought to be present only at the mother's request. Phillipa was still more reserved:

Y.R: "Do you remember the film on childbirth?"

Phillipa: "Yes. A boy fainted."

Y.R: "A boy fainted. What did you think then?"

Phillipa: "At the moment you don't really think of anything, but I think when you are married, some men like to watch what you go through. They think it's a fantastic sight. While you are just sitting there pushing. I think at the moment they just want to see a woman's body now but I think when they get older they will understand it."

Y.R: "Do you think the father should be there at birth?"

Phillipa: "Well, I wouldn't. I'm very sort of shy. I wouldn't want anybody to see me go through that."

Phillipa felt ambivalent towards males witnessing birth. She feared that they might watch it as a show, even when married and she associated the spectacle of birth to men's sexuality. But, overall, girls were certainly receptive to the call for the father's involvement as it seemed supportive of women vis-à-vis males, a position expressed in the girls' repeated remark "let them see what we have to go through."

CONCLUSION

The lesson-meaning on pregnancy and childbirth tended to create a consensual, unproblematic and reformist view of these two experiences whose strength was reflected in the absence of subversive humour. Mothers-to-be were seen mostly as patients needing information on healthcare. This position overlooked an explicit critique of consultant care and never located pregnancy as a choice in relation to birth control. Sexual pleasure was invisible and there was no opportunity to discuss unplanned pregnancies. Yet, schoolgirl pregnancies were said by senior staff to be one main reason for establishing the course. Also, according to national statistics (27), one in every forty-four girls aged sixteen was pregnant in 1977. So, among the fourth year pupils, to be pregnant was not such a remote prospect. Thus, curricular meanings on marital and medicalised models of pregnancy and birth overlooked areas of tension between girls and schools. But they cannot be reduced to the formation of a smooth socialisation process because of two main factors. Firstly, the teacher's talk itself produced a negotiable meaning in the feminisation of the father's role. Secondly, there was some disagreement with the liberal theme among a small minority of pupils, especially boys, because of their identification with segregated gender-roles. Also, to a much lesser extent, there were ambiguities among girls towards pregnancy and labour. It was reflected in the contradictory wish to be invisible to and yet get support from the male in such states and, perhaps, in the indifference to familiar visual images. Most pupils were indifferent to

the biological descriptions compared to their responses to the social dimensions of the lesson (the use of the National Health Service and the construction of the father's role at the birth) whether they agreed with the advice offered or not. Also, there was a greater awareness of the teacher's contribution than that of the audio-visual texts. Whether these are two constant patterns must be examined further. The lesson analysis has substantiated earlier arguments. Curricular meanings in Health Education could be re-interpreted by pupils. Their strategies of resistance (non-participation and humour) and those of the teacher (disciplinarian and consensus-seeking) were consistent with the portrait of the school. This chapter has shown two sets of divisions at work, those between the teacher and the pupils and, those between males and females. The tasks of the subsequent chapters will be to see if this analysis holds true for non-reproductive sexuality. Will there still be a consensus created around the notion of sexual pleasure? Will there be negotiable meanings produced within the biology of sexual pleasure as its contentious character in our culture may produce a greater plurality of curricular norms and values? It is these questions which will be used in the next chapter to analyse the material on birth control.

FOOTNOTES:

1. p. 92 The worksheets were questionnaires related to the information just given by the teacher and to be filled in by individual pupils. They were kept in folders handed over to pupils in each lesson.

2. p. 93 Cathy Come Home, television play on homelessness.

3. p. 93 E.P.A.: Educational Priority Area - see Halsey (1972) on deprived, urban schools.

4. p. 93 Grace, (1978 p.82-6) points out that the concept of socially relevant education may be an indication of teachers' defence of their professional autonomy. In Elena's tentative claim about the difficult character of the social problems faced by an E.P.A., school, there may lie a bid for teachers' professional control over the curriculum, reflected in her stand against the School Council which, she thought, assumed that all pupils are the same.

5. p. 95 See, for example, Stubbs and Delamont (1976).

6. p. 98 Loving and Caring a film produced by the Family Planning Association and the Health Education Council.

7. p. 99 Yet, I did not notice as many pupils silenced and as much "bullying" in other groups by the teacher as in this lesson.

8. p. 101 This illustrates an observation made by Walker, Goodson and Adelman and quoted by Woods (1976 p.186). In a study of school-jokes, they show that joking is heavily situated; that it might not be appreciated by an outsider unfamiliar with the history and general context of the relationships under observation.

9. p. 102 Coronation Street a T.V. programme noted for its mass popularity.

10. p. 102 Woods (1976 p.178) describes teacher-initiated laughter as an instrument of policy to forge better relationships.

11. p. 103 This type of humour appeared to be similar to Freud's "hostile" joke, i.e., a joke which served "the purpose of aggressiveness, satire or defence" (1905 Vol.VIII, p.97).

12. p.103 Humour may alleviate gender-conflicts and simultaneously express them. In other settings, according to Whitehead, it may "express concrete and ideological structures which reinforce and perpetuate sexual antagonisms". (1976, p.78)

13. p.104 The film used in the lesson on venereal diseases also had jokes on males only:
"What's green and leaks out?" (boy on the film)
"Show me your scar! Is it as big as mine? (boy in the class)
"Having it chopped off?" (boy in the class)

14. p.105 I discuss these assumptions in Chapter 4.

15. p.105 Davies remarks: "One significant feature of sex-roles in the school is the generally greater appreciation of the boys, by both men and women teachers." (1979, p.65)

16. p.105 See, for example, Spender (1980) on men's verbal domination and Elliot (1974) on pupils' participation in discussions. He suggests that non-participant girls may fear to adopt an'unfeminine' role by active participation.

17. p.109 This may also contribute to the girls' apparent lack of participation in the lessons if they were keen on listening to males.

18. p.111 Oakley (1981) shows that medical descriptions of "normal motherhood" presents it, like Elena, as an exercise in self-control.

19. p.115 According to Rosser, pregnancy is feared as "a disruptive part of a woman's sexual career, causing problems for her sexual identity." (1978, p. 8)

20. p.115 I wonder whether Freudian theory has elevated this cultural contradiction to the rank of psychological knowledge by equating sexual maturity with the wish for the child.

21. p.115 See Leboyer (1977)

22. p.118 See Richman (1982) on men's involvement with pregnancy.

23. p.118 See, for example, Raphael (1975, p.66) on the birth of fathers across cultures.

24. p.118 See Graham's analysis (1977) of the two models of pregnancy in ante-natal literature.

25. p.119 See Chapter 5, for example, p. 184, where I consider her opposition to a feminist line.

26. p. 120 This second film could have been exploited to raise criticisms about maternity-ward practices such as time inductions, waiting periods and de-personalised relations between staff and pregnant women as exposed by Oakley (1976) and Homans (1980). Kitzinger (1979) records Sparestown clinic as a "cattle-market" according to the attending women.

27. p. 125 The National Council for One-parent Families (1979, p.1).

CHAPTER 4

YOUTH'S SEXUALITY AND THE FORMATION OF PROTO-MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

During a briefing evening with fourth year parents held by the Health Education team and the senior mistress about the course, a film called Responsibility was shown (1). Elena explained that it was the most controversial material used on the course since it gave contraceptive information. She wanted, therefore, to hear parents' opinions. After its screening, no heated debate followed. Parents, the majority of whom were women, looked like deferential, well-behaved pupils intent on the teacher's words. Yet, a small minority initially voiced some criticisms of the film. A woman attacked the film's assumption that teenagers might have sexual relationships without being married: "Surely, this is wrong", she said. A few whispered "yes", some nodded, but no other parent pursued the point. Elena did not reject the criticism, neither did she support it in her diplomatic defence: ,"Yes, one could see a film on contraception starting with the assumption that the couple is married. But don't forget, it is a film made for a teenager audience."

Immediately another mother intervened:

"No! That would be wrong! One wants to talk openly about sex outside marriage. Adolescents know that this happens. One must bring things about sex in the lessons and talk to them just like one is talking about death, and cancer." For her, sexuality should not be given any special status in the course. A few people felt that some teenagers would experience sexual intercourse, whether parents approved of it or not, and they should be given proper information by qualified teachers. Elena pointed out that she strongly believed that birth control information did not encourage sexual promiscuity and that the film encouraged people to be sexually responsible. I did not record any other comment from parents -

none from fathers - on the film as the discussion drifted onto other topics. Elena achieved, so it seemed, her aim to get parental consent on the suitability of the film and, in particular, on the necessity of birth control information to teenagers in school. But the process of reaching a consensus obscured possible dissensions. Parents' consent in no way implied that they all agreed with Elena's values towards their children's sexual conduct and birth control advice. The precariousness of parental support raises the question of how the lesson defined "suitable" information to teenagers. What were the teacher's strategies in producing curricular meanings acceptable to her two audiences, that is adults (colleagues and parents) and pupils? This question is all the more pertinent as I have shown that pupils did not form a homogeneous, passively uncritical audience - any more so than the adults.

This chapter will outline two movements. The first (Part A) came from the legitimisation of sexual pleasure in specific relationships. The second (Part B) concerned pupils' partial receptivity to this liberal theme. These movements tended to orientate youth's sexual activities towards proto-marital relations by which I mean steady, caring heterosexual relationships, primarily defined by marriage, in which contracepted sexual intercourse would be permissible for females as well as males.

A. THE PRODUCTION OF CURRICULAR MEANINGS ON BIRTH CONTROL

I. The importance of contraception

In the lesson observed, thirty fourth years were sitting behind their desks with two teachers present, Elena and Ann. Elena

introduced the lesson by saying that young people ought to seek medical advice at the start of a heterosexual relation. It was their right to do so and get free contraceptives although there was a controversy concerning the administration of contraceptives to young people. She explained it in these terms :

> "There is the question to know whether it increases sexual relationships or not. There are arguments for and against. Nobody can answer the question. My feeling from what you say is that knowing about contraceptives does not increase sexual experience".

Elena juxtaposed two types of arguments : a seemingly objective and rational argument - "Nobody can answer the question" - and a personal account of her experience as a teacher. She both warned her pupils of the debate and justified her action as a teacher, thus providing them with arguments against those who might oppose birth control advice to young people. She stressed that unwanted children might suffer from people's lack of concern over their fertility : "Remember that kids are something special : they must be wanted. That's what I think. I don't know what you think about it. It's up to you to decide". Her justification for birth control implied that being sexually responsible derived its meaning from the relationship between sexual intercourse and procreation. To be sexually responsible meant to control one's fertility. She added that pupils had to be informed about the safety of available contraceptives and be aware of misleading information, a point which she humourously expressed :

> "I have a daughter. She reads these comics, these daft comics about John Travolta! The idiot! (laughter in the class) They have advertisements about foams. Look at them! They are misleadi These foams are not safe contraceptives. In a tiny corner, it says 'To be used with other contraceptives'. Be careful about ads".

By switching roles - from the teacher's role to the mother's - Elena took the opportunity to show pupils that she was aware of their culture. She made it clear that birth control concerned both sexes equally by addressing the same question to each sex alternately. For instance, she turned to the girls:

"What would you think if your boyfriend had a contraceptive in his pocket?" (confused reaction from the girls, awkward silence)

Elena turned to the boys:

"What about you, boys? What would you think?" (vague noises, no intelligible answer)

Elena hit a major source of conflicting feelings. The notion of equal sexual responsibility for the teacher and pupils constituted a most interesting element of the lesson. Elena stressed that the decision to contracept was a hard decision to make:

"The choice is open to you. It's difficult to know one's attitudes at your age. I don't envy you. You have the choice of being responsible. I didn't. I went straight to university. I had no sexual relationship until late, not because I did not want to, to be honest, but because I didn't know anything about contraceptives and had little opportunities! Now, it's different for your generation. It's difficult to decide to be responsible."

Here the teacher skilfully expressed sympathy for young people and at the same time took a strict, morally-neutral position about the decision to contracept or not. She attributed the difficulty of choice for young people to their age and to the generation exposed to the availability of contraceptives as well as sexual relations. This indicated that she considered the problem of being "sexually responsible" solely in relation to young people's sexual behaviour, leaving adults' sexual life shrouded in silence. But her direct reference to her sexual life contradicted her earlier remark that knowledge of contraception does not increase the likelihood of sexual intercourse occurring. This contradiction, perhaps, exposed

the ambiguous equivalence of sexual responsibility with knowledge of contraception, bearing in mind that the two are not necessarily synonymous with each other. She felt that parents had a difficult task in advising their children on sexual matters, the latter needing autonomy and support from the former:

> "You must remember it is difficult to be a Mum or Dad! If you didn't interfere, your kids are neglected! If you do, they think you are nosy and they reject you. I have a daughter and, when she is a bit older, I won't talk to her the way I talk to you now. It is because I have to give her a guideline as a parent. To you, I give only information. But to her, I'll have to help more and it is difficult!" (my emphasis)

For Elena, the roles of the sex educator as parent and as teacher differed. As a parent, she must indicate what to do in certain situations whereas as a teacher, she was restricted to the transmission of knowledge. There emerged an important meaning which recurred throughout the lesson. She insisted on a boundary between informing people and giving them direct advice, a clear demarcation between objective information and the subjective world of values, with the first being the domain of the school and the second, that of the home. This was a most significant professional code of practice. It pertained to the fundamental questions of the nature of school-knowledge and the divisions of roles between school and home in the socialisation of children (2).

The beginning of the lesson introduced a liberal theme. Birth control information was necessary to the sexual knowledge of adolescents. It also served to define the teacher's role. She imparted the information but did not tell whether and when to use it. The decision to contracept was phrased as a moral dilemma that each male and female partner must face. Yet, at no time, was the notion of sexual responsibility defined. Does this mean:

"Not to pressurize a sexual partner into further sexual activities?" "To have an abortion rather than an unwanted child?" "To remain virgins until marriage?" To be sexually responsible has a puzzling number of possible interpretations. By not defining it, the teacher did not run the risk of giving explicit guidelines, unlike, possibly, parents. Her insistence that young people had the "choice" to be responsible combined a sense of rational abstraction with a feeling of urgency, precisely because of the abstract character of the hypothetical questions thrown at pupils. As a result, the introduction took a predominantly intellectual, deliberative form. But the next stage of the lesson defined the notion of sexual responsibility further.

II. Defining sexual responsibility

Pupils watched the film Responsibility whose overt aim was to give comprehensive, biological information about commonly available methods of birth control and rates of safety. Each was explained in great detail. Charts, cartoons and actors were used. But the selection of a particular form of illustration was not random. For instance, drawings showed the use of contraceptives: a young couple turned into cartoon figures, then into blood and flesh again; the sheath was pulled by an anonymous hand onto an upright test-tube! This substitution for an erect penis implied that sexual pleasure should not be visible to young people (3). This suggested a contradiction between the illustrations and the film's main object. On the one hand, it aimed to teach young people how to use available contraceptives thus treating young viewers as responsible adults but, on the other hand, the illustrations infantalised them (4) by the use of cartoons to portray the less desirable situations. The biologi-

cal input blended with the film-story, in a conventional form, as the film started with a young couple aged approximately seventeen walking happily hand in hand. Romantic music flowed over the colourful background. Then, the girl told her boyfriend that she feared that she might be pregnant. From them on, the film dealt with two questions. Firstly, what should the couple have done to avoid pregnancy? Their worries were interwoven with information on contraception. Secondly, what would the couple do if the girl were pregnant? Romance was cut short with cartoon figures which portrayed, for instance, a teenagers' marriage. At the wedding ceremony, treated satirically, the couple seemed to apprehend Doomsday. Early marriage following a pregnancy rang the death-toll on happier fantasies about celibate life and romance after leaving school. Their early marital life was described in cartoon strips. All hell was let loose. Washing-up gathered in the sink; the father was resentful of his missed career-opportunity as he had to do a dull job; the mother was overworked with kids. But as if with a magic wand, all these domestic problems disappeared with the correct decision. We were watching real people again who had decided either to have contracepted sex before marriage or to have children in their twenties, when in a secure marriage with a secure job for the male. Finally, the couple was seen rejoicing about the confirmed pregnancy in contrast with the initial gloom of the unwanted pregnancy. Worries about how to combine parenthood with a working life had vanished with the mother supposedly staying at home. There was no washing-up in the sink. Under a "woman's touch", domestic work was out of sight. Gender-typed roles noticeably tied up contraception solely

to planned parenthood and not to sexual pleasure. Intercourse freed of the fear of pregnancy was hardly mentioned. Yet, the story suggested that contraception concerned both partners equally and both boy and girl must examine the options open to them. However, these mostly concerned the girl since only one option (marriage) involved the boy. The others showed the girl bringing up the child by herself, having an abortion, having the child adopted. Objectively, contraception has different meanings for each sex. This was indeed recognised in the fact that the film examined different solutions for the boy and the girl. But this differentiation was simultaneously erased behind the notion of equal responsibility which left open the social and personal problems of male exploitation of their female sexual partners. If boys are expected to contracept, should the girls trust their words? The film imparted an idealised solution to this dilemma. Equal responsibility to contracept was based on a romantic representation of heterosexual relations where both boy and girl confronted the problem together. The essential relationship was that of a couple and not that of a boy and a girl facing the decision on his or her terms. Furthermore, the model for the couple-relation was that of a mutual partnership in marriage, the only viable way to deal with sexuality. This solution was dictated by an idealised portrayal of marriage and not by the desirability of sexual enjoyment. Issuing from this traditional theme, other meanings became intelligible, such as the assumptions that unmarried people and people in their teens did not want children (5). These views implied a condemnation of childbearing for these two sections of the female population.

The film's meaning having been explored, one notices an extraordinary inversion. Its fundamental object was not birth control but the desirability of marriage. Also, it was through the representation of sex-typed gender-roles in a marital-like relation that the liberal theme supporting birth control for youth was condoned. Further evidence for this observation came from the absence of any reference to birth control within casual sexual relations where each partner is likely to have little opportunity to discuss at full length the suitable way to contracept! Here, I return to my initial comment on Responsibility. The film did not just transmit information on contraception. It produced meanings on forms of sexual behaviour for youth and gender-roles via its images and story. Although the story appeared to be incidental to the biological input, in effect, it set out desirable norms of sexual conduct. Thus, the story as a means of conveying biological information was essential to this very information, precisely because its meaning seemed incidental to it. Without its dominant meanings on marriage, information on birth control might have had to confront such questions as the suitability of certain forms of contraception in relation to sexual practices - for instance, casual sex or abortion - outside as well as inside marriage. The notion of equal responsibility, although negotiable by each partner, pre-empted the discussion of sexual exploitation, and its relation to youth's culture and marriage. Also, the story left no room for questioning the manufacture of contraceptives and their availability on the National Health Service (6). In other words, through the romantic story, information on contraceptives were dissociated from their social networks of production and

consumption, apparently erasing the power-relations inherent to them in the individualistic notion of choice. Contraception became solely an object of moral debate - hence the film title. So, Responsibility may be justifiably perceived as an ideological production sustaining power-hierarchies between sexes, adults and young people, users of contraceptives and their manufacturers. But there were meanings which apparently contradicted the absence of any moral tone in the teacher's information as well as her total silence over the necessity to marry or, at least, to be in love in order to have sex. At first, the teacher appeared to have lost control over the meanings generated independently for her by the film. Straight after the film, Elena remarked to the class:

> "There is something in the film Responsibility I am not happy about. It mentioned abortion. I am not sure it was in the right place. Abortion is not a contraceptive. It is to be considered when contraceptives have failed. But it is not the same. I don't know what you feel about that."

Her comment was the only time in the whole course when I heard abortion being mentioned. Also, it formed the only criticism of the film that Elena voiced to the class - no discussion followed her comment. Thus, she distanced herself from the film on a single issue. Given her careful selection of visual materials, it would be correct to say, not that she lost control over the film's meanings, but that she colluded with its other connotations, even when some of these departed from her own position. Nonetheless, she tacitly condoned them. Why was there, then, both distancing from and collusion with the audio-visual text by the teacher's talk? The verbal and audio-visual forms complemented each other in an ambiguous interplay between an encouragement of birth control for

young people and a traditional castigation of sexuality without love and marriage. The film displaced, to a subordinate position, the liberal theme introduced by the teacher. Thus, her negotiable ethical position became legitimate once it was incorporated with the film's closed meanings. Also, a teacher is not accountable for all the connotations attached by pupils to any classroom materials although s/he is responsible for their choice and their likely impact. It is still up to the viewers to interpret the film. The ideological shift from the dominance of one theme to the other and the relative autonomy of the audio-visual form compared to the verbal form created an ideological structure in which the teacher could express her own, personal opinions, without entering into an open conflict with traditional ideas. It allowed her to say during the display of contraceptives :

> "Little word of warning : I would not like my daughter to take the Pill because of the long-term effects. You heard the warning given on the film. Shall we say that if you start when you are eighteen or nineteen until twenty-eight and twenty-nine because you still don't want a kind, well, that's pushing it a bit".

Here, she made no reference to the desirability of marriage before starting a family. She merely referred to non-productive sexuality with the backing of the medical warnings given in the film but ignored their story-form. Thus, she recuperated one visual message while distancing herself from other meanings in the same material. This example highlighted the fundamentally ambiguous relation between the two movements (distanciation and collusion) which overlooked potential tensions between liberal and traditional themes. This strategy significantly contained the two types of parental responses noted in the chapter's introduction.

It embraced parental divided responses without challenging any of them explicitly except, perhaps, in the teacher's talk (7).

III. 'What about you?', the group's informal discussion

After the film, Ann left the classroom with her Health Education group. There were nine girls and six boys left with Elena. They moved their chairs around her desk. The atmosphere was relaxed, more intimate than earlier. There was a greater opportunity for pupils to ask the teacher their own questions and exchange comments among themselves.

Elena displayed a kit containing commonly available contraceptives such as packs of oral contraceptives, sheaths, diaphragm and spermicides. Picking up each of them, she once more re-iterated the biological description of their use and safety-risks. Pupils passed round each contraceptive in turn and asked the teacher for further information on their effectiveness. This gave rise to much teacher-initiated laughter, in particular with the different shapes of male contraceptives. The purpose of this session, she said, was to make sure the pupils had acquired vital information, and they, in turn, reassured her that they certainly had learnt something about birth control. The more personal situation allowed Elena to resume the discussion on parents' difficulties in giving Sex Education to their children. To her plea to understand them some pupils laughed : "No good to ask anything from my parents!" This girl's remark reflected the general feeling of the group. Even if they understood parental problems, they thought that "there isn't much one can do about it". In this feeling of helplessness, boys and girls were united. Their laughter might have expressed their

conflicts with their parents and, by proxy, the teacher. Their position conflicted with her indirect advice to take home information on birth control :

> "If your Mum is still taking the Pill, she must be about my age, in her mid-thirties, well, that's stupid!"

Perhaps because of this shift to a health visitor's role, this part of the lesson became littered with instructions such as : "Don't do this", "You should". A behaviourist line, subdued in her abstract and deliberative introduction, became manifest in the more intimate group-situation. Also, now that the pupils were assumed to be in possession of adequate biological facts, the teacher could rely on these while offering them advice like this one on the withdrawal method :

> "Think how difficult it is for the super young man to do this! It requests great control! His word is not enough! Don't be pushed!" (laughter in the group)

In her appeal to girls lurked a gender-typing of sexual roles with the female having more sexual control than her partner.

Contraceptive behaviour was ridden with such gender-meanings that Elena exposed them when she asked :

> "Contraception concerns everyone. Whose active responsibility should it be? The boy's or the girl's?"

Her meaning was clear, only one sexual partner was expected to contracept at one time and her question, repeated several times, created much interest. There were a few giggles, laughter, shouts of "his", "hers" and "both". Boys and girls did not appear to react differently. Each sex expressed contradictory positions shifting from one answer to

the other and finally settled, so it seemed, on the view that both should contracept. Elena increased their confusion when she pointed out that it would be "silly" for both to contracept at the same time. Pupils fell silent, their confused response pin-pointing a significant tension of the lesson. If one urges both sexes to accept contraceptive responsibility without examining it in the context of power-struggles between males-females and parents-children, one tends to fall into some idealist "silly" nonsense. Any quick, one-word answer, expected by the above question, tended to elicit an abstract rationalisation which would gloss over these conflicts. There emerged a class-room solution. Pupils' confusion was not entirely of their own making. It was consistent with the lesson's production of curricular meanings. An incident followed, the only one observed which challenged Elena's expertise in Sex Education. Pupils showed their resistance to her demand for a rational solution by transgressing a procedural classroom rule. To escape from their indecision, a boy asked Elena:

"What about you? Who decided first"

Everybody laughed. Elena answered:

"I can't remember." (new laughter from the group)

Elena: "Honest, I don't! Even if I did, I wouldn't tell you. That's a personal question. I don't ask you such questions, it's not fair!"

Another boy: "Yes you did! (nods, whispered "yes" from boys and girls).

Elena: (forcefully) "No! I did not! I asked you to consider a future situation you may be in and what would be your attitudes. I never asked what you do!"

The class was silenced into accepting her argument. But the apparently trivial pupils' question "What about you?" embodied one of the

greatest fears reported to me by senior teachers (8). Teachers should never share their sexual experience with pupils. This rule indicated a principle of organisation in school Sex Education which distinguished personal experience from curricular knowledge. Sex Education had to belong to the second. Elena made it clear by stating that personal questions were out of order. Such a rigid demarcation put teachers and pupils in a conflicting situation. They came together to talk about sexuality and sexual attitudes and yet, pupils could not refer to the teacher's sexual experience. But the teacher, on several occasions, could select personal examples which dealt with her sexual life more or less directly - for instance, her sexual inexperience when a student. Unlike pupils, she could manipulate the arbitrary line between private and public knowledge. This incident illustrates the third chapter's argument that the teacher's strategies for control and production of curricular meanings interacted with each other. Here, the production of a consensus of opinion on contraception closely related to classroom control because of these boys' resistance to it. By forming a consensus on privacy, Elena re-established her precarious authority which had been challenged by the boys' transgression and the group's laughter. Simultaneously, this strategy affected the production of meanings on sexual responsibility. Her formal distinction between personal sexual experience and Sex Education itself probably held in check some pupils - a boy that I interviewed reported that the teacher would not say if she "had had any pre-marital sex as she was embarrassed"; he laughed gleefully at the thought that he might have had the better of the teacher at that time. Meanwhile, the teacher's distinction reflected a conception of curricular

knowledge which tended to negate the experiences of the people involved in the classroom. Only those selected experiences within the range of the lesson-meanings could form a potential pool of public references for the pupils who would not, then, run so great a risk of being disruptive. For instance, it is doubtful whether a boy could argue against male contraceptive responsibility in a stable relation as his position would challenge dominant lesson-meanings, or for male responsibility when sex occurs with a prostitute, since this would tackle an area of sexual activities silenced by the course. The teacher negotiated tensions between sexual knowledge and experience, by distinguishing hypothetical, morally problematic situations from actual experiences, hence her insistence on the conceptual differences between two forms of questions "what would you do?" and "what do you do?". There were shared and unshared meanings by the teacher and her pupils in this incident. Both teacher and pupils referred to contraception in relation to the first sexual intercourse of young people and never to sexual relations in later life. Thus, the boy who asked: "What did you do?" and not "What did you used to do?" identified the problem with the teacher's youth. From the film's meanings, and those of the teacher, as well as those from the pupils, only youth's fertility became problematic in the classroom. But in contrast to the teacher, pupils appeared to give a greater range of meanings to the phrase "the personal" which was reduced by the teacher to implying just "actual experience". The boys' reaction showed that they felt that the teacher's probing was to do with the personal even if her questions took a hypothetical form.

I discussed the incident with Elena after the lesson. To my suggestion that, perhaps, some pupils considered that even hypothetical questions could be of a personal nature, she admitted that it could be so. But since she had made it clear that this was not her intention, it was a sign of their immaturity to think that she wanted to find out about their actual behaviour. I added that their confusion might have been increased by her questions orientated towards their future sexual behaviour. She remarked:

> "I assume that they have had no experience of intercourse yet. Even for the fifth-years. The popular myth about kids' sexual experience is totally wrong. I bet two-thirds of the sixth-form leavers have no experience of sex, apart from petting."

When asked, she said that she formed this judgement "from talking to them. The questions they ask. I don't think they know much more than their parents did." Our exchange showed that the pupils' resistance had confirmed her assumption about immature youth. She was far from seeing their challenge as a way to work out their own conflicts vis-á-vis gender and sexual roles in birth control. She defined sexual experience as experience of sexual intercourse while petting and any other forms of sexual practices were dismissed, probably as childish play. Like Responsibility, this position "infantilised" young people's sexual feelings and activities as something apart from the adult norm, namely heterosexual intercourse. Also it denigrated girls' common sexual experiences more so than boys' (9). Also, Elena directed her lesson to those who had never experienced sexual intercourse. Her disregard of the minority of pupils (10) who might have had this sexual experience could make them reluctant to come forward with informed comments on birth control responsibility. In turn, their silence would confirm the teacher's assumptions. Finally, I remarked to Elena that I found

it difficult to imagine such an informative lesson on birth control to a mixed group of school-leavers twenty years ago. Something must have changed. She agreed:

> "Yes! That's true. Some of it has. Something to do with the system the teacher establishes with the groups. It all depends on that, more than on the actual experience of the kids."

Significantly, she interpreted my comment as something to do with educational changes rather than sexual mores. Thus, she summed up an argument which has run through the last two chapters. The back and forth movements of "information" and "opinions" between herself and her pupils were not just shaped by their subject-matter, that is sexuality and its experience by participants. The formation of school sexual knowledge depended, as Elena pertinently said, "on the system the teacher establishes with the groups". It is now necessary to examine how pupils interpreted this system.

B. INTERPRETATION OF CURRICULAR MEANINGS ON BIRTH CONTROL

I. Pupils' appreciation of the lesson

Both boys and girls considered the lesson to be one of the most useful parts of the Health Education course. In the interviews, I asked them which topics they immediately thought of when the Health Education course was mentioned:

"Sex! It covers the lot!" (Martin)

"Violence and sex" (Peter)

Although a few girls mentioned the sex lessons - for Joanna "V.D. and sex" were the most interesting topics - most girls, unlike the boys, mentioned a large range of topics without a direct reference to 'sex'. A few referred to sexuality, but indirectly, like Kaye. She gave a whole list of Health Education topics which included 'V.D. and that sort of thing!" When urged to express the course-objectives,

she compared its information to what parents might offer on

Sex Education:

"I think the subjects they teach, it's about yourself and I think as well you get to know some of the things that your parents wouldn't tell you as well. They would be embarrassed or something and they think it's not to be spoken. In the classroom you don't think they're naughty words or something like that and you can talk about it and find out about it and so you are not ignorant."

Sex, reduced to the pronoun 'it', remained unnamed. Yet, Kaye argued that it formed an essential object of the course and that Sex Education was a liberating experience compared to her parents' silence. Similarly, Philippa explained that her parents never told her anything about "the birds and the bees and things!" She alluded to sexuality in vague terms but, gradually, she became more explicit:

Philippa: "I suppose sex had to come into Health Education, but I'm not really bothered about that."

Y.R: "What do you mean?"

Philippa: "Well, I don't agree with sex before marriage because I think it's too risky. Well, I mean, it doesn't bother me if other people do it - it's just that I wouldn't do it (pause) I mean, my Mum never told me anything because I always used to wonder: 'what am I supposed to do?'"

Y.R: "Was your attitude similar to that of your friends?"

Philippa: "Yes! My close friend. Yes, her Mum talked about it but not in great detail and she doesn't have Health Education at school at all. And she was asking me all the questions: She found this book and it had a lot of big words about sex and she didn't know what they meant and I said 'I'll try to find out,' so we sort of exchanged bits and pieces together."

Philippa was reticent to acknowledge her interest in sexual matters discussed in the course. Then she explained that, as she had little information from her mother and her close friend, the course seemed to fulfil a need for information about 'big words'. Compared to

the boys, the girls tended to disguise their sexual curiosity but both sexes shared the same understandings of the lesson's meanings. There was total unanimity about their preventive aims:

"It sorts you out, how to get it (birth control) and where - so you have help before." (Russell).

"It tells you where to get contraceptives. It's safer." (Isobel).

How did pupils perceive the relationship between information and moral guidance? They were told, so they said, the dangers of each contraceptive but given no moral advice:

"She just said: 'be careful'" (Neill).

"It's up to you. There's nothing wrong about sex itself." (Gordon).

"I don't remember that (moral advice)! But I should think they told you it's up to you. What they usually tell us!" (laughter) (Cathy).

For most pupils, the lesson expressed liberal attitudes towards youth's sexuality and contraception. This was confirmed even by those who held a more traditional outlook:

"The teachers didn't say that sex before marriage is O.K. provided you take contraceptives. They said it's up to you to make up your own mind and to decide when to have kids."(Carole).

Carole herself thought that girls should keep their virginity until marriage. She distinguished Elena's stress on individuals' responsibility from the condonement of specific attitudes. But there were a few pupils who were sensitive to the moral ambiguity of the lesson. For Daran, the teachers said:

"Sex is wrong in a way but it depends on the situation you get into. If you fall in love, you know, things happen. That's all there is about it. Things happen this way. That's how they happen."

Unless sex was redeemed by being in love, it was judged to be wrong since the irrational, impulsive behaviour of love retrieved sexual activities.

Other pupils reported a closer relation between birth control advice and marriage. Many understood the teacher as saying: "People could have trial-periods before marriage." Peter put it succinctly: "They said that sex is not just for the honeymoon." These boys thought that they were given an active encouragement to pre-marital sex but there was no such interpretation among the girls: "They just said it was our decisions. They didn't say anything about that really (pause). They said: 'Well, we all know it's wrong anyway, don't we sort of thing?'" (Kaye). Interestingly, Kaye's account did not reflect her own attitudes. She would not object to pre-marital sex "as long as you take precautions, it's better with the Pill". Nor did it reflect her conscious appreciation of her parent's views - they had given her no explicit advice. Nonetheless, she reckoned that within the curricular meanings, there were some negative, diffuse attitudes towards young people's sexuality. Cathy recorded such negative feelings which she partly explained:

> "Sex is not wrong. They didn't say it was right either. It's up to the individual. (pause) Perhaps they discourage people because they talk about sex and then, they have films about babies."

She pin-pointed the ambiguous relationship between the two themes. In the liberal theme, sex was seen as separate from reproduction; in the traditional one, it was tied up to it. This she saw as an indirect warning by teachers against sexual activities. One boy, too, vividly described the negotiable socialisation process at hand:

> "They did not say that sex is wrong in a stable relation. If you go and stay with somebody, it's O.K. but if you pick up somebody for the night, that's not serious, 'Don't do that!' They don't say it though. They show it on film and ask questions and make people feel that they're in court. They ask questions to catch people out to think the same as they are thinking, not from their voice - but from everybody else in the class." (Adam)

Adam was aware of the strategies of control over youth's sexuality in films and the teacher's style of discussion which attempted to guide youths away from casual sex. Overall, pupils shared the view that the lesson pointed out the necessity for young people to have accurate birth control information irrespectively of one's sexual attitudes. They were interested in seeing the display of contraceptives which appeared to be a memorable part of the lesson. Two girls and five boys said that they had never seen any contraceptives before. The interviews exposed some of the symbolic values attached to the use of contraception by each sex and so, I shall now study girls' and boys' accounts each in turn.

II. Girls' attitudes towards birth control

Girls were likely to have discussed contraception with their parents, boyfriend, girlfriends and relatives. Four girls had not seen the Pill before the lesson. Three girls told anecdotes about it:

"It was a joke, I think. Somebody sent some (Pills) through the post to me. I don't know what it was for. Perhaps, it was some sort of practical joke through the school or something." (Jane)

She dismissed the incident as inconsequential. However trivial, it indicated that, somehow, girls had to acknowledge the availability of female contraceptives and, perhaps, take a position towards them. Complex relations between contraception and non-sexual relationships made this difficult. I asked Jackie what she thought of birth control:

"I agree with it. But not if you have met him just for the night. You've got to know him for a bit and not make a habit of it."

My question showed that Jackie could not dissociate her attitudes towards contraception from her feelings about sexual relationships. For the girls, contraception was not a matter of abstract, generalising discussions, as in the intellectual presentation of the lesson.

Contraception symbolised particular sets of relationships with males. Jackie's account was most interesting as she unveiled what appeared to matter to the girls most - the forms of heterosexual relationships which might or might not allow sex, the use of contraception being dependent on them. Jackie's comment was followed by this exchange:

Y.R: "Has a girl got to wait a long time then before she feels that it is right to have sex with her boyfriend?"

Jackie: "Well, you must know that he is your type, not just a friend, he wants you as a person and not as a body."

Later when I remarked that she seemed to disapprove of people marrying in their teens, she replied:

Jackie: "I do. If a girl has had a steady boyfriend for four years, she thinks she's missed out on something like (pause) I'd like to have a good time with my girlfriends and boyfriend, but not always the same one."

Y.R: "If a girl is over sixteen and fancies a boy and vice-versa, she has known him for a while, she says: 'I'll sleep with him.' Is that alright for her to take contraceptives?"

Jackie: "Yes!" (shyly)

Jackie supported birth control and disapproved of frequent contracepted relationships. She was afraid that safer sex might turn into a habit for the girl and thus, she described two forms of heterosexual relationships for young people. Further evidence showed that girls and boys classified sexual relationships within these two models which affected their notions of birth control responsibility.

In casual sex, pupils assumed that no regular partner was involved, and, above all, affection was absent. It was the absence of love from the triangle of love, sexuality and marriage which distinguished casual sex from its opposite pole, the steady proto-marital relation (11). The girls told me that they would be

called "a lay", "a slut" by other girls, neighbours, boys and "jealous friends" if they had sex without "going steady" (12).

> "If a girls sleeps around, we'd take the mickey out of her, start calling her names. We'd probably think she should not sleep around. She should be like us, not act silly, be like us". (Louise)

Asked if she knew such a girl, Louise said that she did not but still maintained that "there were sluts around". I formed the impression that the "category of the loose woman/the slut" mattered more than who would fit the label (13). The girls' condemnation of sexual deviants cannot be explained solely in terms of their negative feelings on female sexuality. Material and symbolic interests induced them to move towards a compromise between the images of the "virgin" and the "slut" with which they classified their peers. They aspired to the establishment of a proto-marital relationship.

The proto-marital relation is intimate, romantic. It has been worked out by regular partners over time on the model of marital relationships as it portrays a steady relationship to which the same partners are supposed to have an emotional commitment. Karen described the proto-marital relationship when asked to explain what she meant by a "steady" relationship :

> "I think it's about how you feel about each other. It doesn't all depend on the length of time you've been going out with them but with how you feel towards each other and how your relationship is going. I was going out with somebody once and my friend said : 'Oh! you are going steady with him'. I disagreed. I said: : 'No!' She said : 'Oh! you are! You've been going out with him for so many weeks'. But I disagreed with her because she was saying it just on the length basis".

Y.R. : "Would you say the same things about boys? When do they go steady?"

Karen :"About the same really. They get to know a person well. They've got feelings behind it and you can talk about things and understand each other".

In the proto-marital relationship, what mattered most was not just the length of time the couple had spent together but the sharing of similar feelings and attitudes. This applied, according to the girls, to boys as well without necessarily leading to marriage. The partners might be very much aware of this lack of marital prospect. Jackie replied that one could have several stable relationships before marriage when she said that "I'd like to have a good time with my girlfriends and boyfriend, but <u>not always the same one</u>." (my emphasis) Joanna made this point clear: "In a steady relationship, you get something together. You don't necessarily have marriage in mind." Yet, it was the possibility of marital prospect which legitimated sex:

Mandy: "There's nothing wrong with sex. I couldn't jump into bed with anybody but somebody I really loved, knew well and <u>perhaps</u> planned to spend my life with." (my emphasis)

Y.R: "You would have sex only with somebody you are engaged to?"

Mandy: "Oh! No! With somebody I would be really involved with and to whom I <u>could</u> be engaged." (my emphasis)

In the proto-marital context of romance <u>and</u> mutual commitment, the girls could contemplate being sexually active, knowing that marriage would not necessarily follow their sexual involvement. This distinction is most important on two accounts. Firstly, to experience sexual intercourse in a relationship close to that of an engaged or married couple allowed the girls to dissociate their sexual activities from casual sex which would have meant the loss of their respectability. The display of emotions in the relationships made the girls' sexual involvement legitimate (14). Secondly, it gave them the possibility to test the boys' commitment and, perhaps,

use their sexuality to gain some control over the heterosexual relationship. A girl might hope to find out if she was "being used" (Carole) or still "treated as a person and not as a body" (Jackie). Joanna noted:

> "A steady relation is the same for the boys. But a lot of them are afraid. They steer away from stable relations, from committing themselves. But I don't think that when you are in a stable relation you can get up and walk away at any time."

The establishment of the proto-marital relationship could be seen as the girls' attempt at controlling boyfriends who, for instance, might be tempted to "walk away at any time".

Once in such a situation, so the girls seemed to argue, the boys had a moral or emotional and, perhaps, sexual interest in making it work. As in younger girls' romance, the proto-marital model is partly exclusive of other friendships but, unlike romance, it attempts to impose similar patterns of expectations on the boys as on the girls and to acknowledge the girls' sexuality as well as the boys'. The girls could exercise some demands on steady boyfriends to counterbalance asymmetrical power-relations.

Even in this model, the girls still faced vivid dilemmas with the availability of the Pill. When I asked Jackie if she approved of contracepted pre-marital sex, she said:

> "Yes. In a steady relation (pause) My Dad wouldn't like me to go to him and say: 'Well, you know,....' (Laughter). But I think he would like me to have a stable relationship but he would really know. It would really matter (laughter). My mother, I don't know, she couldn't stop me from being on the Pill at the age of 16. I don't know. She is very young whereas my Dad, he would be terrible."

She described a conflict of interests. Her gender-interests demanded her sexual interests to be achieved in a steady relationship and get her parents' approval. But their recognition of the sexual

relation might not be welcome as it might hasten her along the wedding path. This, she said later in the interview, she did not wish as she wanted to have several boyfriends and not get married too soon. Liz exposed intricate relationships between girls' sexual and non-sexual interests:

"I can talk to Dad about what age he would like me to go on the Pill. My Dad said he'd like me to only have perhaps a few sexual relationships before I get married and then he'd like it to be my future husband anyway. He said: 'I wouldn't want you to ask me if you could go on it but to say: 'Dad, there's no need to worry, I'm alright.'"

The girls' comments show that the decision to contracept is a portentous moment in a daughter-parent(s) relation, a point made by the lesson. According to Liz, her father saw his daughter's sexual relations as initiations into marriage. Did she agree with his position?

"Sort of. But I tend to get involved far too fast and I know I'm going to have sexual relationships before I do find my husband. Of course, it's just the in-thing to do today. If you don't want to do it then the lad just chucks you out. It just gets to that sort of stage and you are bound to make mistakes where you listen to all the rubbish he says, like how he likes you so much. Perhaps because you want to investigate as much as he does. Perhaps because you want to have sex. It doesn't have to be because you're fantastically in love with him. Why not have sex if you want to have sex?"

Liz, who told me that she was a virgin, lay bare the conflicts between romantic expectations among teenage girls and their awareness of heterosexual reality which included sexual desires. Because of the latter, she partially rejected her father's condonement of pre-marital sex. She felt that heterosexual relations were unlikely to offer the magical solution of having a single boyfriend who turned out to be her husband. She was wary of the persuasive language of romance and male sexual blackmail while approving of young people's sexual curiosity. No other girl overtly claimed that sexual intercourse

might be legitimate for girls without the call of love. But like the others, she adhered to the proto-marital model which encompassed a whole range of sexual attitudes from asexual romance to sexual experimentation as a dress-rehearsal for marriage. It gave girls the latitude to establish their individual positions between these two poles with most of them referring to the latter. Five girls preferred to remain virgins until marriage like Isobel:

> "If you want children, it's right (to lose one's virginity). If you don't, it's wrong."

She was the only girl who reduced sexuality to reproduction. For Annette and Claire, the discovery of sex in marriage could consolidate the marriage:

Claire: "I don't think you should do it (have sex) before marriage. It's too much of a risk. I'll remain a virgin until I'm married."

Y.R.: "Even if contraceptives are available?"

Claire: It's the risk and after that, well, there's nothing else left in life really! That's it! You know, you are or you get married, have children. Probably lots of arguments will happen because people can't save it until they are married. The marriage will break up."

For Claire, erotic expectations and enjoyment between husband and wife might bond them and perhaps, compensate for the liabilities of married life. Carole thought that girls should keep their virginity until marriage because "boys did not like to marry somebody that other people had possessed." The erotic value of virginity was meant to entice boys into marriage. By contrast, all the other girls rejected the idea of virginity until then. They approved of birth control within the legitimate proto-marital relation but their responses seemed confused and fragmented on the issue of responsibility. I asked them the question put to the

class by the teacher: "Who should contracept? The boy or the girl?" Half the girls said that the responsibility should be shared. Five girls thought that girls should contracept while the other four believed that boys ought to, because "a boy should care if he has any feeling for the girl." (Annette). Carole gave further reasons: "The boy should contracept because he will make the baby as well if she becomes pregnant. He will be responsible for it." Were the male contraceptive to fail, the boy would be more likely to be seen as responsible for the undesired child than with failing female contraceptives. The male control over the couple's fertility signified for these girls his acknowledgement of paternity. In their "trust" in him, there was a potential source of claim and control. The girls who advocated female contraceptives did so because the Pill was the safest method and "lots of men say they'll take it (condom) and they haven't." (Jackie) Contraceptive attitudes enmeshed conflicting material and symbolic gender-meanings. This would suggest why half the girls could not say who should be responsible for birth control. To answer "both partners" implied a neutral position towards two sets of conflicting but overlapping interests, between male-female and sexual-gender.

In her interview, Cathy's hesitation shifted to a romantic position:

Y.R: "In a couple, who should contracept? The boy or the girl?"

Cathy: "I don't know really. I've never thought about it. Probably both."

Y.R: "You mean they can both contracept at the same time?"

Cathy: "Yes. Safer, isn't it?"

Y.R: "Yes. But that's highly unlikely to happen. If the boy used contraceptives, do you think the girl is taking a risk?"

Cathy: "No! Not if the girl actually knows the boy properly because she should be able to trust him."

Cathy's contraceptive dilemma was hopefully solved in the proto-marital relationship. Liz also attempted to reconcile a girl's sexual interests in safer, female contraception with her gender-interest:

"I think I'll take the contraceptives, because the boy's contraceptives aren't as safe as ours, obviously. I mean if you're going out with a boy and you want sex as much as he does and it's not because you love each other, then it's you, you are looking out for yourself because he isn't going out to look for you."

She suggested that the girls had two birth-control strategies. In a casual relationship, the girl herself ought to contracept but under the guidance of mutual love, she might rely on the boy. Like Liz, the girls felt that a sexual involvement without love did not legitimate claims of accountability and control over the male's fertility. Their attitudes on contraception pointed out the constraining influence of the proto-marital model as well as the range of behaviour, values and control which, however limited, it offered to each one. The analysis of the boys' responses supports these two observations but with major qualifications.

III. Boys' attitudes towards birth control

Predictably, the boys' contraceptive attitudes were not removed from expectation and values concerning sexuality overall. But, unlike the girls, they were not forthcoming with comments about their parents' or peers' attitudes towards contraception. Also, they were far more reticent in commenting on the question of birth control responsibility in a couple. Perhaps, birth control had less significance in their peer-group culture than among girls or it had humourous meanings unscanned by the interview. It might

be, as I shall suggest, less problematic to them. In addition, their reticence might have something to do with being faced with a female interviewer (15). Apart from three who said that they had discussed it with either friends or parents, the boys did not report any discussion or incident about the Pill. Nine out of seventeen said that they had never seen it before the lesson. But like the girls, they understood the liberal theme of the dominant meanings and were divided on the notion of sexual responsibility. However, the range of their attitudes was much narrower. Most said that both partners or just one should contracept after a discussion with the other: "Contraception is just an agreement between partners" (Richard). After stating that contraception was a joint responsibility, Jim acknowledged that the girl might be taking a risk "because the boy could easily change his mind and not bother to put it on." Other boys presented the idealist solution to the tug-of-war between sexual partners:

"It should be probably better if they both took precautions" (Neill). Only two boys firmly declared that it should be the prerogative of the male to contracept for two different reasons. For Ian, to contracept was his "problem". He could not imagine himself talking to a girlfriend about contraception. He opposed pre-marital sex for boys and girls because the girl might get pregnant. Steve said that he had already mentioned contraceptives to his girlfriends but contraception was his responsibility:

Steve: "I don't know why. It's not the girl's. For a married couple, I don't know."

Y.R: "Why is it the boy's responsibility when the couple is not married?"

Steve: "The girl can get pregnant and the boy has to marry her."

The fear of an unwanted marriage necessitated his control over contraception. That was why he distinguished contraception for the unmarried from contraception for a married couple. It was "the marriage trap" set up by a pregnant girl, and not so much the unwanted pregnancy, that guided him. He suggested another conflicting meaning: girls might understand male contraceptive behaviour as a responsible commitment to a steady relationship whereas boys could see it as a protection against an unwanted commitment.

On the issue of pre-marital sex, there was a stronger consensus among the boys. Only two restricted young people's sexual activities to marriage overtly because of the pregnancy risks. The others were tolerant of pre-marital sex with, for some, the caveat that it should not constitute a marriage-trap:

> "You shouldn't wait (to have sex) until you are engaged. If you are married and you've done that and you find that you don't really like the person, you'll be stuck with them."

Here, Mark stressed the importance of sexuality in marriage. It justified trial-and-error sexual tests leading to the eventual choice of a marital partner. Four boys expressed a preference for girls' chastity. To my question: "Do you wish to marry a virgin?" Adam exclaimed: "Yes! If I marry her! But that's not for me! Ugh! I am a chauvinist pig! (roar of laughter)!" He could laugh in the realisation that double standards of sexual morality, if they applied to girls, did not apply to boys. Were they promiscuous, they would not suffer from a loss of prestige among male peers (16). Casual sex had, then, different meanings for boys than girls:

> "It's unfair to women, I suppose (pause) I wouldn't marry a girl who has had intercourse with someone else." (Derek)

In spite of the unfairness to girls, these boys expected chastity from brides and not bridegrooms as a matter of tradition. Gordon welcomed "girls who have the guts to say they want sex" and added:

> "There are sexual double standards. That's the way everybody thinks (laughter). I think the same (laughter). But I don't think it's fine to jump into bed with any girl."

Supposedly, with the girls with "guts", less restrictive norms could be enjoyed. The boys who dismissed the value of girls' virginity said that only love mattered:

> "Well! I'm not really fussy about that (marrying a virgin). If you love each other, what does that mean? It takes two to do it. Why should the girl be looked down on?" (Russell)

They talked with less conviction than the girls about their emotional commitment. They tended to acknowledge the girl's feelings rather than their own, like David who had some reservation about pre-marital sex: "I wouldn't really agree with it because after all girls have feelings, haven't they? The thing is not to force the partner to do things they don't want to do." Whatever their ambivalences towards female sexuality, the boys shared a liberal concensus on the legitimacy of sexual pleasure separated from the reproductive function of sexuality - no boy said that sex was for having children. They were conscious of the legal age of consent as an external source of control:

Daran: "The legal age is sixteen if you don't get married before sixteen. At sixteen you are old enough to take part."

Y.R.: "Would you say the same about a girl?"

Daran: "Let me see! I think that if you are old enough to do it and you are not married, you might as well take the opportunity to learn."

The Law seemed to regulate boys' sexual expectations although the Sexual Offences Act (17) was not mentioned by the course.

The prohibition being removed, sexual intercourse became legitimate

with the girls' consent "as long as you don't force her" (Daran).

The boys' interviews showed that they perceived sexual experience as part of proto-marital relations and wished to retain some control over fertility. For most, sex was expected in a steady relationship after the age of sixteen and a few openly supported casual sex as well as sexual double standards. Four boys had no objection to casual sex either for boys or for girls as long as it was contracepted.

As with the girls, birth control responsibility raised issues of self-confidence, morality and sexual politics blending with each other through the meshes of individual experience.

CONCLUSION: Living Sex in Proto-marital Relationships

There was certainly strong similarities between the lesson on birth control and the one on childbirth and pregnancy. Each topic was said to be of equal significance to each sex while gender interests and values remained mostly unexplored within the medical model which overlooked the social context of its preventive meanings such as the social use of welfare services, the social production of contraception and its legislation. The relative dominance of liberal and traditional themes varied within one lesson. This did not happen so clearly with the childbirth and pregnancy lesson because of its dissociation from sexual pleasure. The themes' interplay can be understood as a strategy for producing both liberal and traditional meanings on sexual pleasure without antagonising parents' and pupils' sexual values. Pupils' accounts confirmed the classroom observation that they, overall, felt unthreatened by meanings produced. It was the blending of the deliberative style

with preventive advice which made, for them, these lessons valuable. However, perhaps owing to this beneficial impact, a large number of pupils appeared to be unaware of being guided into proto-marital sexual behaviour. Perhaps this had something to do with their own sexual expectation and ethics. Indeed, the most interesting finding of this chapter lies with the evidence of a singular harmony between the consensus-creating process of the lessons on sexual responsibility and pupils' negotiations of the same problem in their social life within a proto-marital model. Both tended to regulate sexual permissiveness, not just fertility. In the lesson and pupils' accounts, marriage and sexual pleasure affected each other's relative dominance and produced separate but related meanings with a deep rooted ambivalence on non-reproductive sexuality. This normative relation (marriage-sexual pleasure) confirmed the legitimacy of the proto-marital background for teenage sexuality. But it failed to create a consensus on contraception, as both sexes had vested contradictory interests which they seeked to accommodate by condoning sexual pleasure according to its syle of consumption. Their proposal that partners should contracept at the same time must not be understood as a sign of naivety or immaturity. Such an abstract and idealist solution exposed the complex emotional rather than rational character of birth control decisions. It expressed a wish for heterosexual relations which would contain both each partner's sexual and gender-interests as well as the couple's mutual support and responsibility.

Paradoxically, perhaps, the public acknowledgement of youth's sexual pleasure in the formal curriculum incorporated a

conception of sexuality as private which served to regulate the selection of personal histories in the classroom. This privatisation tended to merge teacher-pupils conflicts over sexual meanings and classroom control with the transmission of biological information. This latter point raises the questions of what are the curricular conceptions of sexuality and objectivity of biology. These will constitute the two major problems examined in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES:

1. p. 131 Responsibility is a film produced by the Family Planning Association and the Health Education Council on contraception.

2. p. 135 Starting from the views that the curriculum is socially constructed (Young, 1971), that schools process cultural codes (Bernstein 1971) or that Bourgeois capital (Bourdieu, 1973) the sociology of educational knowledge questions the objectivity of school-knowledge. In the attempt to explain social classes differences in educational achievements, sociologists have conceptualised the relationships between home and school from widely different positions - for instance, by assuming a functionalist framework as with, Musgrove (1966), or in a Marxist conception of schools and families as two similar sites of ideological struggles (Althusser, 1971).

3. p. 136 How to show sexual pleasure away from pornographic conventions and medicalised model forms a representational problem endemic to our culture and not just with school sex education.

4. p. 136 In the film shown in the lesson on venereal diseases, the infantalisation of the audience was compounded by an anti-youth stand. The commentary inferred that teenagers only were responsible for the world increase in sexually transmitted diseases because of their sexual promiscuity.

5. p. 138 This view has been disputed by MacIntyre (1976, 1977).

6. p. 139 This omission denies any exploration of the reasons why young people would prefer either a general practitioner or a birth control clinic for advice. According to Farrell, (1978, p.198) the former is preferred by boys and the latter by girls. The film overlooks a feminist critique which underlines the sexual politics of birth control and its relation to the accumulation of profit in the manufacture of particular contraceptives. (Hanmer and Allen, 1980).

7. p.142 The same strategy was noticeable in other lessons, for instance on sexually transmitted diseases: the film used in that lesson castigated casual sexual relationships and youth's promiscuity. But the two teachers present never challenged nor explicitly supported the film's traditional sexual ethics. They limited their views to prophylactic advice. The ideological separation of teenagers' sexuality from adults' was reproduced.

8. p.145 I recorded this fear among senior teachers in Fieldclose and a variety of schools - (see the appendix on the pilot-survey). Thus one Deputy Head from a new comprehensive explained one of the reasons for the introduction of Sex Education in the core-curriculum: "Well, you know with all these young teachers and the kids, nowadays, sex crops up in every lesson. In geography, for example, if the children know the teacher will be willing to answer." Sex Education had to be moved from the hidden to the formal curriculum. It is this

8. p.145 cont... supervision over pupils' and teachers' talks on sexuality which caused the sacking of John Warburton by the Inner London Educational Authority in 1974 because of his refusal to give the L.E.A., the assurance that he will not, in future, discuss homosexuality when faced with pupils' sexual prejudice. see, Open and Positive, by the Gay Teachers' Group (London) 1978.

9. p.147 According to Schofield, (1968), over a quarter of the boys and a third of the girls have experienced kissing, deep kissing and breast stimulation over clothes by the age of sixteen. Although these figures need to be brought up to date they demonstrate that petting was a major sexual activity for teenagers, especially for girls.

10. p.147 According to Farrell (1978), one out of five teenagers under sixteen had experienced sexual intercourse by the early 1970's. Elena disregarded these figures as insignificant.

11. p.153 The girls indicated that casual sex was the wrong thing to get involved with, especially for a girl - when I asked Joanna what she was told about venereal disease she said: "Not to hush it up. It's very common. It's common. Anyone can get it. You don't have to sleep around to get it. Usually, you get it in casual relations but if your boyfriend goes away at the weekend and sleeps around and then, you catch it, it doesn't mean that you had a casual relation." Joanna sounded quite relieved to learn that a girl might catch V.D., through no fault of hers. She distinguished a sexual relationship with a boyfriend from such a casual sexual affair as a sexual encounter at the weekend.

12. p.154 By rejecting casual sexual relations, the girls interviewed obeyed the sexual conventions described by Wilson (1978, p.70) among working-class girls who "regulated their contact with other girls who were known as 'lays', in order to preserve their own reputations."

13. p.154 Cowie and Lees investigate the category 'slag' among 32 adolescent school girls and note: "It strikes us that it is the 'presence' of the category which is important, not the identification of certain girls." (1981, p.18). They correctly underline the blurring of the category "slag" with the "non-slag" (1981,p.21).

14. p.155 The degree to which girls support sexualised proto-marital relations would depend on their normative reference-groups be it peers, parents or teachers (as for their sanctions of sexual deviancy) who would reward such a behaviour.

15. p.161 I discuss these methodological problems in the appendix.

16. p.162 See, for example, Wilson (1978, p.71).

17. p.163 Pupils referred to the 1956 Sexual Offences Act which states that it is an offence for a male to have sexual intercourse with a girl under 16.

N U R T U R I N G

H E T E R O S E X U A L I T Y

In my first meeting with her, Elena said that she was most outspoken on the 'fun of sex' when talking about the lesson on sexual intercourse. I shall examine this in relation to the central problem of defining heterosexuality through biology.

Part A discusses the concepts of male and female sexual drives used in the lesson on sexual intercourse. Part B will study institutional and ideological processes in the selection of 'relevant' biological meanings on intercourse showing that, at specific moments of the lesson, the biological input had conservative or reformist meanings. To form some understanding of how girls and boys perceived sexuality, a question tackled in Part C, I shall use data from both their responses to the lesson on sexual intercourse and also those on sexual activities which have not all been formally included in the syllabus but which have, nonetheless, been touched upon on the interviews.

I shall argue that the pupils' responses brought some evidence that there were latent conflicts between sexual groups (male-female; heterosexual-homosexual). This would suggest that the control over the mobilisation of information and ideas concerning sexual roles would be only partially successful in securing pupils' compliance over sexual socialisation.

A. THE PRODUCTION OF CURRICULAR MEANINGS ON HETEROSEXUAL INTERCOURSE

I. The teacher's conception of sexuality

Heterosexual intercourse was the object of the eighth fourth-year lesson, "Human sexuality and intercourse". The lesson was taken by Elena with fifteen boys and sixteen girls (1) who sat quietly waiting for the teacher to turn to them after she had written the title of the lesson on the blackboard:

> "Human sexuality", Elena said,"is part of the animal kingdom. If we place it in an evolutionary perspective, human reproduction is more economical and safer through internal fertilisation and gestation than other forms of reproduction, for instance that of frogs who have to produce many eggs to ensure the survival of their species."

She firmly set human sexuality as a biological phenomenum since human beings are part of nature. They are mammals with a peculiar characteristic: They may be sexually active most of their lives:

> "Compare yourself to cats and dogs. The female may be on heat. She has a special smell. The only time when sexual activity takes place for them is when the female is on heat (signs of interest in the class, a few whispers). Humans are different. We are on heat every month. You can notice the difference slightly but what with clothes and cosmetics, we do not see it much but we are potentially sexually active. That's why adverts sell things through sex."

Elena referred to the human female in particular through her use of the pronoun "we", her allusion to "cosmetics" and, previously, to "female dogs". By stressing the animality of sex, an ambiguity concerning female sexuality cropped up. She indicated that human females, like their males, are constantly potentially active and also, their sexual apetite is tied up to ovulation and the female reproductive function. It might have been inferred from this that the expression of the female sexual drive was reduced to the ovulation period. This implication contradicted a statement which Elena forcefully expressed: "Women, after their menopause, may still be sexually active just as much as men."

Elena attempted to explain this paradox with reference to "our sophisticated reproductive function." This illustrated her tendency to highlight the reproductive parameter of sexuality when both erotic and reproductive factors were under study. She asked:

"Were intercourse not enjoyable for both sexes, would we as conscious human beings get engaged in this activity willingly?"

The chorus of "No!" from the class supported her dubious claim. Not all reproductive functions are physiologically and consciously enjoyable. Were childbirth a source of fun and not of labour, our intelligent species might have developed there a mechanism to multiply and breed faster still! (2) However, her statement openly acknowledged sexuality as a pleasure seeking drive for males and females while at the same time reducing it to reproduction. This tendency became more explicit in the film shown to the group.

II. Visual intercourse

Prior to the film, Elena said to the class that she had some difficulty in finding a "suitable" film on human sexual intercourse. She had to resort to a film for primary and lower secondary school-children:

"The film is very romantic. Remember when you were first-years, when you were not so blasé, as cynical as you are now! (laughter among pupils). The first-years think: 'I'm sure that Mum and Dad don't do it!' They are anxious. Remember for younger children it may be a shocking thought."

She implied that the fourth-years had a more sophisticated knowledge of sexual life than the first years. Therefore, they should see the film through the naive eyes of its expected audience and not laugh. My impression was that her introduction was an attempt at controlling the group's response by indicating their superior

knowledge of sexuality. Her strategy seemed to have partially failed. Boys and girls laughed on several occasions. After the lesson, Elena explained to me that even if the film was laughed at, it was still suitable as it gave the "right information" in a way which avoided embarrassment from inexperienced pupils. In spite of her warning, the group erupted into peals of laughter at the vital moment: the glamourous male and female cartoon figures, in all their splendour, shape and colour were locked in a static missionary position while the commentator talked about fast rhythmic movements and feelings of great excitement. The film did not appear to embarrass anybody. It started with a pregnant woman at a doctor's surgery. Then, the male commentator explained how she reached such a state with a series of drawings showing a couple making love. A detailed exposition of all the stages of pregnancy followed. It concluded with the young couple discussing what to buy for the baby. Elena said to me:

"One of the reasons why I keep this film is because it shows the young father doing the shopping."

Yet, she did not call the pupils' attention to this point nor did she discuss the film after its projection which clearly situated heterosexual intercourse as the norm of sexual behaviour and portrayed it in a highly-stylised way. The drawings had a distancing effect on the audience who, apparently, doubted the erotic experience of the stilted cartoon-figures. The near invisibility of sexual pleasure was consistent with a traditional theme which played down eroticism. But the film also contained more liberal meanings. It stressed that erotic behaviour involving both partners was not reduced to intercourse. Fecunding

males must be concerned with pregnancy. However, the focus on a mutually active sexual game was undermined by the traditionally dominating assurance of male performance, for instance, in the oral commentary on intercourse:

> "When a man and a woman love each other, they come close to each other. They touch sensitive parts of their bodies like the neck, the breasts. Then they want to make love. Each one is sensitive to the touch of the other one. They lie together, holding each other close. The man's penis becomes erect. He introduces it into his wife's vagina. If you were to look inside the woman's body, you would see it inside the vagina. We call this intercourse or making love. Later, the man's penis releases the semen fluid. When this happens, the man and the woman get a great feeling of pleasure."

This stereotyped view of intercourse provided much information.

Although important, fore-play was secondary to intercourse.

Simultaneous orgasms were the norm with the man taking the sexual

initiatives. At the moment of penetration, the "woman's" vagina became "his wife's vagina". Did it mean the husband's property? The shifting reference from the "man" to the "husband" as well as from the "woman" to the "wife" exposed some ambiguity towards matching sex with marriage only. Nonetheless, the film's dominant meaning was to make it legitimate through marriage-parenthood and, perhaps, a male-defined representation of heterosexuality such as, for instance, when the male voice suggested a dissection of the female body, shown in diagrams, in order to look for the penis (3). The interplay between the two themes undermined certain meanings. The centrality of male-initiated penetration displaced other forms of heterosexual behaviour and challenged the view of females being as sexually active as males. At other moments in the film, the opposite was true, with the traditional meanings being secondary to the liberal theme on sexual pleasure. This

process will be examined in the last two lesson-units.

III. Female and male arousals: Masters and Johnson revisited.

Elena gave an oral account of sexual responses mostly derived from the works of Masters and Johnson (4) straight after the infantile presentation of intercourse. She drew two graphs on the blackboard showing the phases of male and female sexual excitement. Whispers were heard when the diagram on the female pattern indicated the peaks of multiple orgasms. Pupils laughed at the deflationary period for the male. The teacher explained that, for both sexes, during the "plateau phase", that is the period when sexual excitement is maintained, "love-play" and other sexual techniques may be used to maintain the level of arousal. I overheard a few whispers of surprise such as 'what is this all about?' (a girl) or 'Is that it?' (a boy) while Elena insisted on the correct spelling and definition of words like "climax". She attracted pupils' interest when she concluded the description of the plateau phase:

> "The amount of time on the plateau can vary from couple to couple, person to person. You may reach orgasm together. You may not always. Don't be impressed by these daft things you hear: 'Oh! He is very good in bed!' Love-play and petting vary with people."

She stressed the individual character of eroticism and said that simultaneous orgasms may not be expected from every heterosexual relation. Hearing her remark, some boys stopped yawning and scribbling. The teacher added:

> "Girls get involved in love-play as well as the boys. Generally, people reach a climax. Girls as well."

A dominant meaning was that sexual satisfaction can be expected by each partner. But although Elena had used Masters' and Johnson's findings, there was no description of the clitoris and insistence

on its erotic significance. She just mentioned its name while describing the female plateau phase and, then concluded with a "few words of advice":

> "You have to learn about sex by yourselves. You have to learn what suits you. What the answers are. If you stop during love-play, petting, it's alright. Nothing wrong will happen."

Sexual activity short of penetration was not harmful. Then, Elena briefly raised the question of sexual morality:

> "You can tell yourself 'It's the first time he's taking me out. If I let him kiss me, he'll think I'm easy. If I don't, he'll get tired.' It's difficult. We can't tell you how to behave. You learn by trial and error."

Here there was a glimpse of gender-interests at stake in hetero-sexuality. Although these were left unexplored, her remarks provided, nonetheless, a non-traditional position unlike the film's dominant meanings. She emphasised female sexual exploration with the displacement of penetration as the quintessence of the sexual act. There was no reference to the married couple and Elena's final words made clear the hedonistic character of sexuality.

> "By the age of twenty, most people are sexually experienced. Now if we have been very serious, it is a pity because if sex is something, it is fun!"

Indeed, it was a serious talk. There was no comment from pupils who sat quietly. But the atmosphere changed dramatically during the correction of the work-sheets which provoked much laughter.

The first sheet had a list of statements which pupils had to classify as either "true" or "false" by ticking the appropriate answer-box. Five minutes later, Elena read out each statement and gave the correct answer briefly. Boys and girls enjoyed the exercise enormously as they laughed apparently about each other's

mistakes and the statements themselves. Noticeably, boys were more forthcoming with their own answers than the girls and laughed most. Elena had designed this exercise to raise a laugh:

> "When I tell them about multiple orgasms and say: 'Sorry boys, you aren't capable of such a thing! Women are able to have sex more often than men.' It's quite funny. We can deal with it on a sort of laughter basis. The girls can say: 'Ah! Ah! How about it, mates?' The boys get long-faced. By making a laugh like that, all the points come across and hopefully it does not create any hang-up for anybody if it is seen as a laugh."

For Elena, laughter was produced in this case by the challenge to stereotyped views of sexuality. I did not see any teasing of the boys by the girls or vice-versa. But both boys and girls became alive with bubbling fun at statements such as:

> "Proper intercourse is with the man lying on top of the woman."

Given the film, one would have been prompted to say "true". Protected by Masters' and Johnson's authority, Elena said to surprised looking pupils that"it was 'false' since there is no proper position. It's for the couple to work it out." To the statement, "Women are able to have sex more often than men" the correct answer was biologically speaking, "yes". It was false to state that "Women usually take longer to achieve a climax than men" since it is a matter for individuals. Similarly false were views that "the bigger the penis the better the man is at it", "coloured people are more sexy than white people", and old people cannot enjoy sex." To everybody's amusement, Elena joked about the number of"chauvinist pigs" in the class. Her humour seeked a consensus on what she called "the myths of love-making". This true-false exercise offered an outspoken liberal view on sexual

stereotypes regarding sexism, racism and ageism. It showed that biological observations could have reformist implications in the course. Yet, the emphasis was still on human behaviour as being generic rather than openly on socio-cultural patterns. Sexual prejudice and power-relations between sexual groups like the young versus the elderly, males versus females, were not situated in any social context. The biological framework, even if radical, now compared to the earlier focus on reproduction, presupposed a positivist conception of sexuality. Pupils were given "facts" on human sexual behaviour and the erroneous character of much sexual prejudice and expectation due to individuals' misinformation. This position left little room for any sociological questions - at no time was it asked why people held such views as those mentioned on the sheet. The liberal theme on sexual pleasure, however clearly stated and reformist, was within the traditionalist view of human sexuality. It assigned it to the realm of Biology and Nature and the private world of the individuals. These two themes came together in the second sheet distributed to pupils. There was a full page summary of the teacher's information on human sexual responses with definitions of ejaculation and orgasm. On a gapped text, pupils had to fill in the key-words with the correct spelling. Female climax was described as "an intense sensation of pleasure caused by waves of muscle contractions in the vagina." Vaginal orgasm was the norm and so was penetration, next to the written warning that "no harm will be caused if these first phases of excitement are ignored." Potential intercourse remained the yardstick of heterosexual behaviour, as implied in the

mention of "first" excitements and nine questions were devoted to the physiological phases of conception and pregnancy.

With both worksheets, the liberal theme stood out from the traditional theme without apparently losing its meanings. Pupils' laughter and interest confirmed this: they were aware that sex was being talked about. Of the observed lessons, this was the least moralistic of all. This may be surprising as it addressed itself directly to the debatable nature and functions of eroticism. Not once did I record any mention of self-control or sexual responsibility. Through its naturalisation, sexual pleasure itself was apparently amoral but still subject to essentially procreative sexual norms endorsed by the biological input which the school required.

B. CONTROL OVER CURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE ON NON-REPRODUCTIVE SEXUALITY.

I. Institutional constraints and the legitimacy of biology

It is necessary to recall that one reason which induced the Headteacher to trust Elena with the new course was her biological expertise. The senior Deputy-head stressed the factual side of Sex Education when I asked her if it was part of the course to help girls in defining their positions towards sexual mores. Miss Partridge replied:

"No! Actual moral standards have to come from parents. In this school, we give factual information. That's the job of the teachers. But you could be in a very difficult position in this area. We always make sure that parents are aware of the sort of things we are going to do. You could be in difficulty if you did not do that. The teachers give the children the facts, biological facts."

Miss Partridge gave the feeling that the school-authority relied on the objectivity of selected facts to ward off potential objections from parents. Leaving aside the assumption that such information could be unproblematically amoral within the context of the classroom, it is important to emphasise that no senior teachers doubted the adequacy of biology as the main approach to Sex Education. Again and again, they told me that the course had to give the biological "facts on sex". Yet they appeared to give little guidance to Elena as to what these might be:

Y.R: "How do you help the teachers to define the limits of the necessary factual information on Sex Education?"

Miss Partridge: "It's up to the teacher, it's difficult but it's up to the teachers."

Y.R.: "Do you think that if the teachers were to say: 'Girls enjoy sex as much as boys', would that be what you consider to be factual information?"

Miss Partridge: "(Silence) But I should think (silence) it is factual information. (silence) It's up to the teacher to decide. It's her job. But you have to be ever so careful how you go about it."

The Deputy-head's hesitation and silence suggested that she was aware of the immense difficulty of separating neatly what belonged to factual biological knowledge from subjective judgements. This tension had to be tackled by the teacher's professional skills. I raised the next question:

Y.R.: "Do you think that the course should include a discussion of sexual double standards? Would that be a necessary and important part of the course?"

Miss Partridge: "(long pause) Yes. (longer pause) I don't really support sexual double standards. (pause) I suppose that they ought to know about it. It's going to cause some conflicts for some of them anyway."

She was reluctant to pursue the matter further. Later on she

added that "it is important that girls should understand boys and vice-versa. The ways each one develops, I mean, physically and emotionally, in adolescence." She seemed to suggest that the course should focus on biological and psychological dispositions inherent to each sex. So, the conservative view of gender-divisions, endorsed by senior teachers, made a conventional biological approach desirable. Therefore, Elena achieved an extraordinary feat by challenging a few sexual and gender stereotypes. Before returning to this it will be useful to consider why she felt unable to include certain topics in the syllabus.

II. Interpreting the 'facts of sex'

Elena explained to me that she could not talk about abortion because it would antagonise too many teachers and parents. Her fear of endangering her credibility with such a contentious topic restrained her from selecting it. Yet, Miss Partridge reported that, to her knowledge, there had been two girls pregnant this year and probably others had had abortions. The school censored the girls' access to legal information on their rights laid down in the Abortion Act (1967) (5) and denied some of their experience and fears. The resort to biology largely defined the boundaries of the topics. This was the case with homosexuality. When interviewed, Elena reported that she was not dealing with homosexuality apart from a brief mention of its normality (6):

> "This is not really looking at society's hang-ups and attitudes towards homosexuality. It seems so obvious and down to earth to be tolerant, not to be ashamed since it is normal. So, why the hell is everybody so uptight about it? From saying that and dealing with it properly, you have to try to get them to look at that: why is everybody afraid? (pause) You see, by the same token, we don't deal with masturbation. It's just mentioned as something normal. But I don't know. We don't really deal with it (7). It is not because we refuse to do it. I don't feel adequate to deal with homosexuality as a biology teacher."

Clearly, she believed that a biological explanation was inadequate to tackle attitudes and taboos, as some components of non-coital behaviour may have more to do with socio-cultural factors than biological predispositions. But she argued that nothing more could be done in the classroom with regard to the complexity of human sexuality :

> "Sometimes, the lads want to know about sexual techniques, the girls don't want to which is a shame. It's beyond our scope. All I would end up with would be talking about my personal feelings and attitudes and that's not good enough! That's not adequate!"

She implied that she had no training and no source of information other than her personal experience to talk about eroticism, a male - rather than a female - acknowledged interest expressed in the groups. She used the same objection to stressing the role of the clitoris in orgasm since this would be a "personal line". It was only when multiple orgasms were 'assumed' to be coming from vaginal contractions and penetration that her interpretation of Masters' and Johnson's works became classified as knowledge. Her control over the definitions of objective and subjective sexual experience justified her selection and presentation. Contrary to her earlier claim, she acknowledged that she gave a personal view on heterosexuality later in the interview :

> "The boys often believe and I suppose that's like the ideas of the majority on masculinity that what the girls like really is their big, masculine (pause) and when I point out this is totally wrong, (pause) this is exactly the opposite, (laugh) they are (laugh) surprised. I suppose we do push a line on sexuality, I must confess like 'the gentle, soft, kind bit will get you somewhere any time', you know, this sort of style. Again, it is probably not true of all the girls. I am sure it is not".

Elena felt that she put forward a style of heterosexuality supposedly wished for by the girls. As their 'interpreter', she encouraged a convergence between stereotyped sexual roles without suggesting that such a feminisation of male sexual behaviour came from a critique of the male sexual power over females. The changes hinted at in male sexual ideas and practice were recommended solely as a matter of style and feminine taste. Perhaps, Elena felt able to express her "subjective opinions" when they referred to masculine and feminine traits rather than purely sexual techniques. By contrast, to emphasise direct stimulation of the clitoris has implications of female sexual independence which might challenge gender stereotypes and the unitary intersts between gender and sexual roles. Elena explained her omission quite forcibly.

I pointed out to her that there was a whole body of scientifically conducted research which stated the importance of the clitoris (8).

She retorted :

> "clitoral orgasm was not a fact of science. It has not been proven. It is still a hypothesis. Nobody has proved it one way or another. You can always select enough people to verify what you can believe".

As a biologist, Elena raised doubts as to the scientific objectivity of such findings and added other objections :

Y.R. "You could say that by using information from the works of Kinsey (9) and Masters and Johnson that it is not just a matter of vaginal orgasm when females get excited. With these references you would not be pushing a personal line necessarily".

Elena "Yes! I could do that but I know it is, you see! I'd be pushing the sort of information which would justify my personal line, you see (pause) I could quite happily talk to my daughters about it (pause) but I am not skilled enough - of that, I'm sure! I would not dream of dealing with it with a class of kids".

Y.R: "I wonder if all the information on sexuality known to adults could not be given to children by teachers at the appropriate age and moments, just as teachers do when they get hold of information in History and Geography. I think this would be very challenging."

Elena: "Yes. We are dealing with something which is very private, personal. Most of us don't make love in front of thousands in the middle of a Pop Festival! Somebody like Masters and Johnson can hide behind their statistics (laugh). To me, anything sexual is still essentially private. I think there is a danger too (pause). If we teach it like History and Geography, we destroy that! For me, sexual life is very important, very vital. I think there is a danger that if we don't treat it like this, something private, in a small fashion, you have lost something. No! It is not like History or Geography, thank God!"

As sexuality was essentially private and vital to her, Elena would feel most vulnerable were she to express to pupils her personal sexual preferences. Interestingly, she misunderstood my remark, which was not intended to suggest that teachers should disclose their sexual activities but rather that they could view Sex Education as any other subject (10). Elena's confusion was based on the blurred line between what constitutes private sexual knowledge from publicly available information. Classroom discussions of clitoral orgasm became a private exposure and not a public disclosure of objective observations (11). She objected to my suggestion that teachers could see Sex Education as a political subject by encouraging girls' sexuality vis-á-viz men's:

"I find this attitude - am I too old? - very naive. I have no patience with people who think they are going to change the world, how they go about it, and shout loud at the kids. No! No! To change male attitudes and increase the rights of females, you have to do it chip by chip, and gradually but surely it will happen. If I were to push a harder line, I would alienate the kids."

Her teacher's experience provided her with an argument against the "naivety" of taking an explicit line against sexual stereotypes and

male sexual domination because, as she said later, "pupils would not listen to any of it." Teachers could not, therefore, use political arguments to bring out some awareness of gender-conflicts. Discussions dealing with overtly political areas of experiences like abortion had to be rejected or restricted to a biological input. The teacher assumed that Sex Education knowledge could be confined both to the public or private and the objective, scientific or political spheres of experience. She implicitly defined these categories not just to control pupil-teacher hierarchy but also to restrict the potential political ramification of the biological meanings on sexual pleasure.

III: The camouflage of sexual pleasure

The evidence on selection and presentation of meanings on eroticism as scientific information suggests that an ideological organisation of Sex Education meanings was at hand which was not necessarily worked out consciously as such by its active agents like Elena or the senior teachers. Yet the partial omission of masturbation, homosexuality, abortion and schoolgirl pregnancies were not produced at randon. Nor was the absent statement that heterosexuality might be problematic for both sexes and especially for girls, in specific ways owing to, for example, sexual double standards, rape or prostitution. It might be erroneous to consider some of these topics as 'mere absences' in the course since they were somehow 'camouflaged', that is, both present and absent, in the meanings produced. For instance, sexual promiscuity and the image of the 'loose' woman formed an implicit but overriding reference to

presentations of birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. This 'camouflage' partly came from the bio-essentialism of the course. Once gender and sexual roles were conflated with each other and appeared unproblematic and apolitical, it would be quite difficult to explore certain topics within a strictly biological explanation while still producing liberal meanings. For instance, the inclusion of lesbianism would tend to expose the contradictions between the biological determinism of the course and its reformist orientation. Lesbianism being commonly associated with childlessness and celibacy, such an exploration might also unveil conflicts among pupils rather than generate a less problematic concensus as to the sexual and gender behaviour appropriate within marriage and outside it. Were the course to have too many inconsistencies and confusion, its credibility with the pupils' audience would be endangered. This example indicates that the ideological fusion of sexuality with gender tended to limit the range of sexual behaviour which it could accommodate. The near-absence of the social world also defined the forms of solution to be envisaged. Issues of sexual and sexist prejudice were reduced to a question of individual ignorance.

C. PUPILS' PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND SEX EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE

I. Pupils' conception of sexual experience

For pupils, to be sexually experienced meant to have had sexual intercourse. This clearly showed in the interviews whenever I remarked that the sex educators had assumed that most of their pupils were sexually inexperienced. Did pupils think that the teachers were right in their assumption?

Peter: "She should be. You are just coming up to the legal age. Boys have experience of sexual intercourse after the age of 15 to 16."

Y.R: "What about the girls?"

Peter: "Sixteen or seventeen on average... They might be a bit more afraid of getting pregnant."

The girls briefly mentioned the age of consent and stressed, like the boys, that if girls tended to be older when they became sexually experienced it was because they "feared pregnancy" (Joanna). To pupils, sexual experience was essentially heterosexual and private. Thus, they would not welcome discussions of sexual techniques apart from a tiny number of boys but, however, no girl, because "that's sort of more private, I think, between just a man and a woman."

They had a similar position vis-d-vis pornography:

Y.R: "What about pornography? do you think that is a topic which should be brought up? Why people read dirty magazines, why they are produced?"

Jane: "I don't think so now. I don't think it's all that important (pause) I don't know really why it's not important."

Y.R: "Is it irrelevant to you?"

Jane: "Yes."

Like other pupils, Jane felt a strong indifference to the subject.

A boy, once more, referred to the Law to explain why he was not really sure about discussing pornography:

"Well, strictly speaking we are not meant to know about pornography. It's just one of those things, we're not old enough (pause) You've got to be eighteen." (Russell)

He stated that what was classified as illegal experience for youth could not possibly be talked about as a curricular topic. For him, the Law defined the division between public knowledge and private experience, a principle of organisation of Sex Education which

pupils shared with the teacher. However, the interviews exposed differences between pupils and Elena, as well as a gender-typed reluctance to talk about masturbation and homosexuality.

When asked if masturbation was mentioned in any part of the course, quite a number of pupils (four out of thirteen boys; seven out of thirteen girls) "didn't hear anything about it" (David). This response was not surprising given the short space allocated to the topic and its privileged relation to boys' sexuality - only the lesson on Pubertal changes for boys mentioned it. Those who remembered something replied like Mandy:

"They just said anybody masturbates. It's just natural. There's nothing wrong about it."

Like Mandy, a few boys and girls thought that, for the teacher, masturbation was a natural activity for both males and females but the boys were slightly less reluctant to talk about it in the interview than the girls:

John: "They (teachers) talked about it for about five minutes during the sex talk. They were on about old wives' tales saying that if you masturbate you turn blind and all that."

Y.R: "Did you think that applied to the girls as well?"

John: "Not really! I can't remember whether they spent so much time on it."

Y.R: "Do you think they should have talked much more about it or was it sufficient?"

John: "I think they should have gone into more detail."

If John felt that the topic could have been explored further, it seemed a matter of some indifference to him rather than of burning interest. He showed much less resistance than Philippa:

Y.R: "Was masturbation talked about?"

Philippa: "No. Not really!"

Y.R: "Do you think that masturbation should have been mentioned? How people feel about it?"

Philippa: "I don't know. I mean I would never do that!"

By acknowledging an interest in masturbation, Philippa feared to admit a personal interest in its activity. So, she hesitated to make a judgement as to its relevance. A few girls felt that female masturbation was something which did not equally concern females:

> "I know masturbation is normal and all that (pause) I don't know why because girls masturbate as well but I don't know, I always attach it to the boys, I just do! (pause) It is not fully understood yet." (Claire)

By comparison, the girls tended to be more receptive to questions on homosexuality when I asked if homosexuality should be included in a Sex Education syllabus. Four girls welcomed the idea. According to Carole, it should be discussed because there were so many confused ideas among pupils. It should include, she said, lesbianism. The other eight girls remained more indifferent but still with some ambivalence:

> "Homosexuality should be discussed. Most people nowadays turn a blind eye to it. Oh! NO, I'm not like that! It's not normal! They should learn us about it." (Joanna).

Here Joanna sounded confused about which attitude to adopt, tolerance or rejection, but felt curious about what she thought to be an abnormal sexual behaviour.

The boys were still more reticent. It was the section of the interview where I encountered most silences and fidgeting on the chair. To my question, Peter who had answered sharply to the point until then, exclaimed: "I'm not going to rush on that one!" (After a pause) "It might be just touched on."

Other boys were as cautious although not all totally opposed to the topic. "It should be touched on", Jim said, "because it's something to do with life, something which happens." Adam rejected the idea of talking about homosexuality.

> "It makes me laugh when I think about it. No! It isn't embarrassing, just (pause) I don't want to know about it. None of me friends either!"

Gordon commented on the question:

> "It's a hard one! I don't think you need to get into it unless you are a homosexual yourself (pause) No! It's not a necessary topic, not as far as I am concerned anyway."

He was loath to expose himself as a possible homosexual. Unlike some of the girls, none of the boys said that homosexuality was "natural".

Pupils' responses gave the impression that there was a lot of confusion on homosexuality and boys, in particular, were threatened by it as if homosexuality was assumed to be mostly a male source of conflict. Elena's decision not to challenge their fears and latent prejudice overlooked a real source of divisions in the school which was of direct relevance to boys. This was highlighted by an incident which took place in Grove House and uncovered the probable importance of the "homosexual role" in defining heterosexual norms through fears of deviancy and labelling" (12). A third year boy had accused a few boys a year ago of having tried to make him join them in some homosexual activities and of having hit him when he refused. The boy, deemed to be a slow-learner, had been moved to a special school but, now and then, rumours persisted about what had actually happened. Boys had recently been assaulted and bullied by others who were still accusing them of being "queers" and the last year's culprits. This bullying (13) might have come from the unstable articulation between sexual and gender-roles, the boys attempting

to re-establish the heterosexual masculine order of the school through the sanction of sexual stigmas.

The deep-rooted significance of the homo/heterosexual categories explained pupils' reluctance to discuss homosexuality in interviews and classroom. In this, they supported Elena's omission. Also, their rejection of any contentious topic on eroticism was probably linked to the real difficulty of dissociating personal experience from intellectual judgement. They did not seem aware that talking about love-play and petting was to transgress the assumed private realms of sexual techniques. This, again, suggested that they shared with Elena the same norms on heterosexual behaviour which would include and thereby, legitimate a limited range of erotic activities. Through this normalisation, meanings attached to other aspects of sexual behaviour, which might be perceived as endangering assumed boundaries such as the private/the political, the natural/the not-normal, the homo/heterosexual, would become a source of conceptual and/or emotional ambiguity and conflicts.

Not only did pupils share with teachers the notion of hetero-sexuality as the only orderly, and proper behaviour (14) but they also interpreted it within the constraints of the masculine and feminine peer-group cultures, for instance, the boys levelling the homosexual stigma at each other and fighting; the girls walking away from females with a "bad name". They were aware of changing sexual mores among youth and above all, females:

Y.R: "Would you say that it is true that in our society it's usually thought to be alright for the men to sleep around if they want but with women it's usually looked down on?"

Russell: (hesitantly) "Yes. (pause) I think that is true. They do get looked down on but I don't think that it really matters so much nowadays."

Y.R: "But why do people make a difference between the man and the woman if they think they have sex?"

Russell: "Well, I suppose it's because they think the woman is more genteel, and the men are sex mad or something."

Y.R: "Do you think that is going to remain the case for a time?"

Russell: "No. Ithink it will change with the younger generation, they don't bother now and it's not what other people think, it's what you think and 'to hell with other people.' So it will change."

Russell thought that sexual double standards were challenged by permissive ideas among youth. He maintained the same liberal attitude throughout the interview unlike a few boys whose attitude towards female sexual assertion was exposed as a mere veneer when they came to say that their wives preferably had to be virgins. Ian's succinct answer expressed their ambivalence when I asked him if he thought that, while men could sleep around without getting a bad name, women would still be condemned: "Things are getting worse now (pause) Younger girls are having sex with older men. They get them!" In other words, when things are going well for girls, they are bad for boys! Ian said that he opposed pre-marital sex for girls and boys, like his parents, and unlike his mates. His ethical position came from the fear of unwanted pregnancies and of younger-older males competing for female sexual favours.

Girls shared the overall view that "it's not as bad as it used to be "for women. Carole thought that "to have sex was the thing to do for a teenager" but sexual double standards still remained:

Carole: "If a woman does it she is called a 'tart' or something by all the people. But the man is not. If a girl at school is found out by people who do not like her, she'll be called names, by girls, I think. The boys don't do it so much. They may sleep with her (laughter) I don't know why this happens (pause) I don't think it's fair."

Y.R: "What do you wish things to be like?"

Carole: "They should stop sleeping around!"

Y.R: "Who? The boys as well?"

Carole: "Yes!"

Y.R: "And wait until marriage?"

Carole: "Most people do. If you've been out with a boy for quite a long time, you're O.K. But if it's after only a couple of weeks, that's silly. You have to wait for a long time or else you would feel used."

Carole felt under pressure to have sex by both the males and females of her age. Pre-marital sex, for a girl, could be exploitative. Like Ian, her solution to sexual and gender-conflicts was to advocate less permissive sexual expectations from her peers. Whatever their own position within the proto-marital relationship, all the girls felt ambivalent towards the increased sexual choice usually welcomed by the boys. They could not really describe any future significant change:

Jackie: "A woman is still expected to stick to one man rather than sleep around. It's because she can conceive babies."

Y.R: "Will it be always like that?"

(Silence)

Y.R: "Would you like the situation to be different?"

Jackie: "I don't know really. I have never thought about it. (pause) I wish things to be different. Men should not take women for granted. There are more contraceptives today. It's not so bad as it used to be."

The girls perceived in biological sex-differences the absolute, objective reason whereby their sexuality would remain more tightly controlled than the boys'. However, Liz's following remarks illustrated their receptivity to more permissive sexual mores as well as their limited expectations from these. But first she drew

my attention to differences in sexual norms between parents and their children with this anecdote:

"One of my friends' brothers asked his Mum if he could sleep with his girlfriend in the same house you see, and his girlfriend came and asked: 'can I sleep with Richard?' you see, and his mother said: 'You don't ask me. When I was younger, I never asked my Mum whether I could have intercourse with my, you know, with Don.' That was her husband. She said: 'You just do it. You don't ask this and that.' But they didn't want to have intercourse. They wanted to sleep with each other in the same bed. But she was, she couldn't, she couldn't understand it, you see, going and asking your Mum whether you can sleep with your girlfriend, I thought it was really funny!" (great laughter)

Liz felt that the couple did not equate sexuality with the wish for intercourse, unlike the mother. They were prepared to make their sexual behaviour known whereas the mother did not want to have to know about it - and perhaps, take some responsibility for it. However, Liz thought that changes in sexual mores were very limited as "men have always been in our society the dominant figure even right from Henry VIII." She explained herself:

"He had lots of mistresses and things, and then whenever his mistress got pregnant then he would just abandon her and he had bastards all over the place. I read a lot of Jean Plaidy books and historical novels. Well, the lad I was reading about, he was seventeen and he had about five mistresses and babies all over the place you know. And it's all historical facts as well."

Y.R: "You think that can be altered?"

Liz: "I hope it will change so that (pause) but it's because the girl is getting pregnant and the boy isn't, isn't it really?"

Y.R: "Now girls can take contraceptives."

Liz: "Yes."

Y.R: "She is in a different position now, isn't she?"

Liz: "Yes."

Y.R: "Do you wish you had talked far more about that in the course?"

Liz: "Yes. You can't really explain why (pause) except for the man who is a dominant figure and he's always been, because I mean (pause). As for Adam and Eve, they were brought up to have children, weren't they? A man's instinctive thing is to breed so, the man is always the dominant figure because he's the one who, you know, is inserted, isn't he? (pause) I can't explain it."

Y.R: "You are saying there are reasons for double standards, fundamentally biological reasons?"

Liz: "Yes, because he is the one giving and the girl is taking."

Y.R: "But you said that is changing."

Liz: "Well, it can't change priority. But I hope that they don't regard the girl as being (pause). She can't have sex when she feels like it without being discriminated against."

Liz looked for religious and historical sources to explain not just sexual discrimination but also, unequal power between men and women. With regret, she reckoned that biological differences were the reason for her observation that power had to be held by men over women. Heterosexual intercourse legitimated this relation. She thought that the male affirmed his superiority through penetration, the giving of sexual pleasure and of the baby to the female. Her typically Freudian conception had not been eroded by the curricular meanings on the near-symmetry between male and female reproductive and orgasmic characters. She was sensitive to a historical continuity in female heterosexual experience irrespective of the availablility of contraception, a feeling often suggested in the interviews. Pupils associated heterosexual norms with stock ideas on masculinity and femininity - Henry VIII being the phallic symbol of masculinity apparently resented by Liz. In spite of their ideological view that sexual

relations belong to a world of their own, they conflated sexual experience with gender-experience as if the two were naturally one. Yet, from their own accounts, the sexual and gender-socialisation processes did not always match neatly with each other even with regard to the prime relation of heterosexuality - marriage. For instance, girls' sexual aspirations conflicted with feminine respectability and boys' sexual interests contradicted their future interests as husbands. Through such ruptures reinforced by the perception of contemporary sexual permissiveness, boys and girls questioned the fairness of sexual double standards and discrimination as in the liberal theme on sexuality.

II. Pupils' interpretation of the lesson "Human Sexuality and Intercourse"

When I wanted to form some impression of how pupils perceived the teacher's presentation of male and female sexualities, I certainly did not expect them to repeat the lesson's account of how humans get sexually excited. It was such a sensitive issue that, had they even remembered it clearly, I did not expect them to reproduce the "information" in an interview-situation. I must, therefore, explain what I had anticipated. I had observed two groups of pupils with two different teachers being given the same talks during which pupils seemed relaxed, apparently supporting criticisms of a few sexual stereotypes. Given these observations and my analysis of the lesson meanings, I had expected a majority to be mostly sensitive to the liberal theme and to justify as something "normal" or "natural" erotic activities for youth and sexual minorities. However, their accounts were more complex, ridden with confusion and ambiguity showing a collective amnesia about the controversial

information on female sexuality. To the question : "Did your teacher give you the impression that sex for boys is mostly to do with sexual pleasure rather than having babies?" the boys replied like Daran as if the answer was a matter of course : "Yes. I should think so!" (laughter) Their response conveyed the feeling that the answer was so obvious as not to be worth much attention. For boys, sexuality meant the satisfaction of their erotic drive. There was the same consensus among the girls : "Teachers did not talk about boys and sex in terms of having babies!" Then Beverley laughed at this thought with no further explanation.

Pupils' responses ignored the male function in internal fertilisation. This also conflicted with their acknowledgement, however confused, of some male responsibility in birth control and childbearing. They probably conceived the male sexual drive as separate from its reproductive character as long as there was no mention of pregnancy. With the spectre of pregnancy and/or marriage, their feelings overtly exposed conflicts between heterosexual and masculine interests which appeared to be in abeyance until then. On direct questions about sexual arousals, pupils' responses were vague and non-committal :

Y.R. "Did your Sex Education teachers give you the impression that sex for girls is mostly to have babies and not to enjoy themselves? Was that the impression given or not?"

Neill "I don't really know. I think just mainly to enjoy themselves".

Y.R: "Was it the same about boys?"

Neill: "Yes. It was just mainly to have sex to enjoy themselves if they wanted to."

Y.R: "Were you told how females usually get sexual pleasure and what happens when they get sexually excited?"

Neill: "I don't think so. No."

Y.R: "Did they mention the clitoris?"

Neill: "I don't think so. No. I can't remember anything like that."

Y.R: "What about the boys? Were you told how boys get sexually excited and what happens to them?"

Neill: "No. I don't remember a lot about it."

Pupils tended to black out the lesson's information, apart from the expectation that "sex might be pleasurable for both partners" which boys were more inclined to stress than girls. A few girls and only one boy thought that, according to the teacher, female sexuality was mostly to do with reproduction and not enjoyment unlike "men who don't do it to have babies" (Karen). However, there were six girls who tended to dissociate the female reproductive function from her erotic capacity:

"Sex for girls is to have babies? That's always thought about (laughter) but I don't agree with that. I think (pause) it was not the impression given by the teacher and I agree with it. It's the same for boys. I think, now, sex is mainly for sexual pleasure anyway." (Joanna)

To my question whether the teachers related female sexual arousal

to conception or not, Mandy replied:

"Yes. That was the impression but it was also stressed that sexual relationships are good things if right precautions are taken. You should have sexual relationships, especially when you are married."

She explained that because of the importance of mutual sexual satisfaction in marriage, she approved of pre-marital sex with just a few boyfriends. Carole also understood that females may expect some pleasure out of intercourse and this was important since the "failure to enjoy sex may ruin the marriage." For this very reason, unlike Mandy, she objected to pre-marital sex before marriage. These comments illustrated girls' contradictory attitudes and interest created by marital expectations. Four girls said that the clitoris had been mentioned but made no further comment, except for Liz:

"They (teachers) say like, in olden times, the Mums used to say before the daughters went off with the King or whatever: 'If you were Mistresses, you'd just got to sit back and take it,' but they don't go so far as that. They abandoned that and say as long as the girls enjoy it as well, but like most things we do on sexual intercourse it is mostly breeding we do like the growing of the foetus."

Y.R: "Do you think you were told how females get sexual pleasure, what happens when they get excited?"

Liz: "Yes. All about the clitoris and all that. We didn't do very much on that. No! Just on the diagrams and they said this is for this, and that part is for that. The same for boys."

Y.R: "Did you expect more than that? Or something different? I don't know how to phrase it!"

Liz: "They said about the girls not knowing, you can't tell whether a girl is excited or not. You can obviously tell whether a boy is because he has an erection or his breathing effects, you know, there's not many ways to tell on a girl except for what they said, the nipples grow larger or something. But they don't really say you enjoy it because of so and so."

Y.R: "Would you have wished they had?"

Liz: "I don't know how they would say it though."

Liz realised that there were two curricular themes on intercourse: Girls may enjoy sex as well as boys and sexuality, for women, is presented still as something to do with "breeding". For her, the teachers acknowledged that there had been some historical change in social attitudes. Yet, she noted that the traditional control of female sexuality still subsisted in the course - in its persistent emphasis on conception and pregnancy - and, by the same token, in society. Despite her appreciation of those women who express their sexual feelings and her willingness to talk about sexual behaviour throughout the interview, she nonetheless disregarded a crucial meaning of the lesson. She implied that it was difficult for the sexual partner and, this is more important, for the girl herself to know when she was sexually excited or not. She knew of the symptoms of male and female arousal and yet overlooked their similar physiological patterns. Thus she shadowly echoed this comment from Elena:

> "For women, an orgasm is not so visible as for men. Before the Woman's Lib, a lot of women thought they were frigid but now, people know that it does not happen often."

Her remark was too vague for Liz who seemed to seize upon the discernible manifestation of the male climax to question female sexual potential.

The curricular strategy failed to dispel girls' fears of sexual inadequacies as with boys' fears of homosexual desires.

So, the camouflage of the complexity of heterosexuality behind a biological account did not appear to correspond to pupils' sexual identities. The form of presentation might also have undermined the impact of liberal meanings. Pupils spontaneously commented on the biological presentation and highlighted two contrasting characters: Firstly, the visual presentation of intercourse was a source of disappointment:

"They gave us a film, silly! I wasn't really listening. I couldn't really concentrate on it." (Beverley).

"We had a stupid old cartoon (pause) It was stupid! Stupid music! More for twelve-year-olds! (laughter) When you are a sixteen-year-old, you want more detail rather than stupid cartoons!" (laughter) (Steve).

Secondly, the sexological language estranged pupils:

"They gave us loads of words and (pause) diagrams" (Derek).

Probably, the presentation pre-empted any erotic identification with the information which became irrelevant and forgotten.

No pupil reported that they had fun in the lesson. Perhaps, since it was common to other Health Education lessons, the teacher-initiated humour was less memorable to pupils than their feelings of perplexity and estrangement. Their laughter masked discomfort rather than expressed agreement with the teacher. While humour might be, tentatively, a relaxing way of presenting sensitive material to the class, it might not be the best suited tool to deflate entrenched attitudes. This is possibly more so where its effectiveness in raising a laugh was based on cultural ambivalences towards sex and gender divisions which directly contradicted the reformist meanings aiming at bridging these very conflicts.

CONCLUSION: The Marginalisation of the Liberal Theme

The socialisation of youth's sexual drive into appropriate styles of heterosexual behaviour had been shown at work in the previous chapter in youth's negotiation of proto-marital relationships. Now, other related aspects of this socialisation have just been described.

The main interest in comparing curricular strategies together with their interpretation by pupils has been to analyse the interlocking processes which contributed to the mobilisation of a limited number of concepts, ideas and values on heterosexuality. For pupils and teachers alike, heterosexuality had come to designate not just a specific, natural, sexual relation but the conceptual categories of masculinity and femininity. However, I have underlined institutional, cultural and ideological processes present in the production of curricular meanings on biological factors. I have pointed out correspondences between these distinct processes. For instance, the pedagogical problem of finding an appropriate visual and verbal language to talk to pupils about heterosexual eroticism was bound, on the one hand, by the school's accountability to parents and, on the other, to visual conventions on intercourse. Whatever its solution by the individual teacher, this problem belonged both to the specific institutional conditions of schooling and to the cultural - ideological representation of eroticism as predominantly male and heterosexual. Without any moral pressure, this productive control tended to confirm pupils' compliance with the dominant

conception of heterosexuality and eliminate meanings appraising latent social conflicts - for instance, on the issue of abortion which pupils told me they would have liked to discuss. Yet, their perceptions of the empirical reality of heterosexuality concurred, by and large, with the traditional theme.

The analysis supports Hastrup's (15) argument:

> "One cannot understand meaning and significance of one single aspect of sexuality and reproduction without knowing its relation to related concepts of the same semantic domain, as we cannot deduce the significance of this particular domain without reference to the social context in which it leads its meaningful life."

Thus, I related negotiated meanings on sexual stereotypes to heterosexual meanings on intercourse. These I viewed with reference to dominant views of heterosexuality which were associated with the broad cultural and social contexts of masculinity and femininity. A specific, limited number of meanings on heterosexual intercourse have to be understood in relation to the social structures on which they are based. This means a focus on schooling but, more fundamentally, on those institutions involved in sexual socialisation and related to schools. I have repeatedly uncovered one of these, marriage. It forms the object of the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES:

1. p.171 The group was larger than usual because Ann was away. I observed her give the same lesson with another Health Education group. Her lesson followed the same structure as Elena's, produced the same meanings nearly word for word and the same omissions. The main difference lay in the near-absence of humour and Ann's obvious embarrassment when talking about female sexuality.

2. p.172 If biologists attributed sexual pleasure solely to a reproductive purpose, they would have to address the question of the function of pleasure or rather its absence to other aspects of our biological life. This remark is intended to show how speculative and metaphysical the answers might be, once one has departed from the limited field of biology and asks aesthetical as well as ontological questions. Although Elena's view was seemingly factual and credible to her pupils, as their enthusiastic nods showed, it was nevertheless simplistic and, perhaps, misleading. Yet, her statement provided an insight into her Freudian conception of sexuality.

3. p.174 This presentation substantiates the feminist argument on the objectification of women's body in dominantly male images of sexuality. For example, Chesler (1978) insists on the alienation of women from their actual experience of their own bodies when they watch visual images of the female body in our culture, whether in films, art or advertisements.

4. p.175 Masters and Johnson (1953) describe how females can be aroused to climax with clitoral and other non-coital stimulation. They consider the penis-vagina fixation as a source of frigidity. They find that the primary focus for sexual response in the human females' pelvis is the clitoral body.

5. p.181 A few schools which I visited in the pilot-study (see the appendix) explained to pupils the conditions in which an abortion may be legal.

6. p.181 Yet, Elena had an opportunity to explore pupils' attitudes towards homosexuality after showing the film Loving and Caring in the lesson on sexual attitudes and morality (see p. 98). One of the boys teased Simon about failing to get a 'bird' and called him 'a pansy' and a 'bloody puff'. Elena's questions centred solely on heterosexuality.

7. p.181 This was later confirmed to me by my observation of the lesson on pubertal changes for boys. Elena dealt with masturbation and homosexuality for males and females with a few reassuring comments on their harmless experience for quite a large number of people. Noticeably, there was no such reference in the lesson on pubertal changes for girls.

8. p.183 I quoted Pomeroy (1969)

9. p.183 Kinsey (1953)

10. p.184 I had in mind Harris's view (1974) of Sex Education information as a public body of knowledge on human sexuality and anthropological, sexological observations: the sex educators' responsibility was to communicate them to pupils without censoring the information available for ethical and political reasons. But his position reflects an idealist assumption on the objectivity of school knowledge.

11. p.184 To some extent Elena was right. A sex-differentiated portrayal of sexual pleasure could be political and/or personal since medical pronouncements on female sexuality may pertain to sexual ideologies but not to biological laws. See Faulkner (1980) and Sayers (1982) on the contemporary and historical morass of confusion in science about female biology. To suspect that the latest scientific findings on female sexuality may be part and parcel of power-struggles over - to use Elena's phrase "the rights of women" highlighted her sensitivity to the political economy of science.

12. p.190 McIntosh (1968) develops this argument in her article 'The Homosexual Role' - she portrays homosexuality, not as a sexual behaviour pattern but as a social role which operates as part of mechanisms of social control. While I uphold this view here, I depart from her assumption that the heterosexual role is, in itself, unproblematic.

13. p.190 This account came from an assistant Househead who, while obviously worried about the incident, saying that she might have to go and see the parents, tried to play down the sexual side of the story. Her attitude recalls Wolpe's observation (1977) that teachers tend to dismiss pupils' behaviour which might have sexual motivations to their acts as long as normal school restrictions and regulation could be re-established. They make little allowance for either sex of the obvious difficulties which girls and boys experience in schools in the acquisition of the appropriate gender-roles.

14. p. 191 "In the sense", to quote Hastrup, "heterosexuality is pure, it is not loaded with emotional ambivalence; it is orderly and proper in any sense of these words" (1974,p.137)

15. p. 203 Hastrup (1978,p.50).

MARRIAGE, CHOOSING ONE'S GENDER-DESTINY.

The first section examines meanings produced by the fifth-year lessons on "Marriage, hopes and fears" and on family violence which produced conflicting images of marriage. How these were normalised in particular with regard to women, constitutes the focus of the second part of this chapter.

Finally, I consider the pupils' perceptions of gender roles in marriage and parenthood, those on romance and paid work. These latter topics arose out of their accounts which did not neatly separate gender-roles and family-life from other social situations meaningful to their subsequent choice of marriage.

I shall show how teachers and pupils alike portray marriage as something, at times, close to a 'hornet's nest' and yet, view it as a desirable destiny. How this contradiction is established into a consensus forms the linking theme of the chapter.

A. WEEDING OUT MARRIAGES AT RISK

I. Marital experience as anti-romance

Three teachers were present in the lesson on marriage. They were Mr. Barley and Elena with their Health Education groups - seven boys and sixteen girls altogether and Mr. Sayer, a Housemaster in the school who was also a Marriage Guidance Counsellor: "That is why I asked him to come in and talk to us about marriage", Elena said to the class which was quiet and thoughtful throughout the period. When pupils laughed, they laughed at the teachers' jokes in a controlled way. They were not forthcoming in their answers to the teacher's probes and formed a passive audience attentive to Elena's introductory remarks:

> "It is easy for us, Mr. Barley, Mr. Sayer and me to think about problems of marriage because we have experienced marriage. You have to project yourself into the future. Yet, it is most important. It will dictate most of what your life will be like. Yet, we don't ever discuss it. To be teacher-cynical about it, maybe we don't do it because you can't probe into it! I don't know!"

By establishing a barrier between adults' and young people's experience, Elena did not encourage pupils to explore their own values and this ran counter to the lesson-meaning that marital problems were rife and therefore, involved children. If pupils had not the experience of being married, they were likely to have some experience of married family-life. Her rejection of pupils' feelings came from what she considered to be their naive expectations: "At what point do magazines for girls stop in their stories?", she asked the class." "Happy Marriage", a chorus of boys and girls shouted. So Elena went on:

> "What these stories suggest to many girls is that you will be happily married ever after. I have to be blunt about it: You are naive if you think so!"

Here was an explicit acknowledgement that girls, at least in their reading, gave some thought to marriage and need to be protected from their expectations. Elena emphasised her point:

> "I must be honest. I am pitching it at the girls mainly. You are most romantic about marriage, the way you see it in magazines and films."

The meanings on "the hopes and fears" of marriage were said to be located vis-a-viz girls' romance, not boys' who were expected to have mostly prosaic rather than idealist expectations from marriage:

> "While you think about it ladies, you lads, if you <u>give in</u> and get married, are you going to give up your football matches and Mr. Barley his golf? (some laughter in the class as Mr. Barley blushed). Think of your parents. What do they quarrel about?" (my emphasis)

As far as the teacher was concerned, girls were keen to marry out of a misplaced nurture of romance while the boys were wary of falling into the girls' trap. This gender-typed motivation served as the basis for the teacher's humour and implied that females more often than males would generate marital problems. Differences in marital behaviour were protrayed to highlight - in Elena's words - the "trivial aspects of marriage":

> "The wife wants a fitted carpet. The husband wants to enjoy himself and spend money, go to the pictures. They quarrel about it. To think we are expected to stay married for about 50 years now! What a prospect! You don't grow more beautiful. There are more wrinkles on the pillow next to you."

Elena presented a series of common, mundane conflicts between wife and husband based on different gender-interests, the wife being inclined to worry about dinners and housework and the husband thinking more about hobbies and leisure. In all cases, the sexual division in the home appeared to be the natural behaviour of

women and men. But the introduction contained a warning against illusions of constant marital bliss "ever after" which Mr. Sayer's intervention developed:

Mr. Sayer began by explaining how he became a Marriage Guidance Counsellor:

> "Because we are happily married, I find that, because we are two, I can cope more easily with stressful situations in marriage. That is a strength (...) Three out of ten marriages split up."

He contrasted his own "happy marriage" and the frequency of "unhappy ones". Since he did not say whether his marriage corresponded or not to the romantic image that Elena criticised, the notion of marital happiness remained vague. He proceeded with a list of crises in conjugal life. The first year of marriage was critical as the wife and husband had to adjust to each other:

> "Lads tend to be casual about coming for meals at the wrong time, putting their washing in the wrong place. The wife gets upset because the lad is so casual. It is trivial."

So, how to co-operate about housework was "trivial" and yet, dangerous for the marriage. The baby arrived to create a second danger-period:

> "The wife will spend time on the first baby, but what about the second baby, the husband?"

Teachers and pupils laughed loudly at the picture of the husband feeling like a helpless babe. Did Mr. Sayer imply that female domesticity was a form of mothering for the male? Nothing was said about the mother under stress. Then came the third crisis:

> "What happens if Mum or Dad has an affair, goes off and leaves?"

Mr. Sayer paused. There was a tense silence in the class. He briefly continued: "This happens now and then and it is difficult to cope with." He said no more on this and added that the children created the fourth crisis as they left home: "The husband and wife may say: 'We want to look at our marriage. We've stayed together because of the children'." To cope with these problems, he advised spouses to seek help as early as possible from the Marriage Guidance Council or friends.

Mr. Sayer's talk complemented Elena's. Marital happiness seemed to roll and lurch between routinised tensions and major conflicts. The teachers gave a dynamic picture of the wife-husband relation unlike the static emotional state of romance. Marital problems were said to be normal and predictable. This position limited its critique to the psychological inadequacies of women and men and foresaw rows over housework but did not examine its socio-economic functions and low status. This would be beyond the conception of marriage as a private emotional commitment between one female and one male. However, it aimed to curb some gender-antagonisms within existing family-divisions - apart from informing pupils of agencies servicing the family. Among Mr. Sayer's four danger periods, three had to do with children. This conflicted with the previous lessons which conflated parenthood and marriage. But now, the liberal theme construed the parenthood - marriage relation as rather problematic to the welfare of marriage itself. This meaning was dominant in the film.

II. Parenthood as a source of marital conflict

The film called "Children make a difference" (1) was viewed. It showed a series of interviews with married couples with children. The first interview was with John, a student, and Jill, aged nineteen.

They lived in a bedsitter with their baby. The father said that the "baby had become the most important thing in the family". Jill explained one of the new problems: "I wanted to stop the baby from crying. John wanted to let it cry. I asked my mother. She said, 'let it cry!' I was torn. I did not know what to do." So they argued about it. The couple looked slightly confused and trapped in the crowded room, taken over by the cot. With the second couple, poverty was not a source of stress. A drug company manager was married to Penny, a beauty-editor of a London magazine. They employed an au-pair to help with the two children. Penny decided to go back to work:

> "I resented the fact that Paul had a nice time all day while I stayed at home for the children. I am happy now. It's a happy marriage. (...) In the evening I am tired. There's not much time left and I think about the work for the next day. It's not much fun for the husband to have a working wife. I am enjoying myself at work and when I come home, I feel guilty about the children."

The interviewer asked the husband if he felt that his wife should feel guilty of having chosen a career instead of remaining a housewife:

> "No I don't think she should feel guilty. But I understand she does. Normally, a mother should stay at home and look after children." (my emphasis)

The husband seemed ambivalent towards his wife's "abnormal" choice. Both shared the feeling that family-relations would be easier were the woman to accept her "normal" role as a full-time housewife. There was no query about whether the husband felt any guilt about leaving his children all day for job satisfaction. The stereotyping of gender-roles formed the premise of the interviews. The third couple lived in the country; the husband worked as an architect while the

mother looked after the children.

The film extract omitted working-class couples. There was no housewife-mother who went to work out of economic necessity. Surely this economic factor would influence the ways they might feel towards having their children looked after by somebody else and if married, towards their husband. Yet, some signs of the couples' economic situations were suggested visually. Apart from the students, the others belonged to affluent families. But the commentary located parenthood outside class-situations by emphasising the emotional problems common to all parents: for instance, the veiled judgement that women should not choose paid employment without expecting to pay a certain emotional price for it, like guilt. Had a working-class mother been shown in her dual roles as a low paid worker and a housewife, the raw deal imposed by the stress of keeping both jobs with little material support might raise, for the audience, questions critical of this double shift . The suggested middle-class situation looked more materially comfortable, as did gender-inequalities through the ambiguous location of the family-unit with regard to parents' social classes. It tended to reduce family-structures to bio-psychological relations. One might ask for whom the children made a difference? for the husband, the wife or both? Ostensibly, both partners were interviewed but in each case, it was the mother who expressed most resentment and guilt, feelings of loneliness about the new situation. The father appeared as a by-stander although less so with the student. The children made a difference to the husband in so far as the wife was affected. The film showed that parental stress had gender-differentiated implications which contradicted

the recurring meaning that parenthood affected both parents equally.

The final part of the lesson produced some reflection on the institution of marriage, or so it seemed, with question-sheets given out to pupils.

II. Weeding Teenage Marriage out

These work sheets differed markedly from questionnaires used in other lessons. They had no biological input and openly addressed themselves to marriage as a socially changing institution. With the availability of Mr. Barley, a history teacher, I had assumed that the teachers would use the questions to explore with their pupils contemporary marriage patterns as socio-historical phenomena. But pupils had no opportunity to speak their minds since Mr. Sayer took up the sheet and immediately stated his position. With Mr. Barley still silent, no historical and cultural information was provided. The question which attracted most comments was on the reason for getting married:

"I heard today a girl in this school who wanted to get married to leave home. The thing to do is not to get married but to leave home. (laughter in the class) (...) Look at question six: 'Do people get married to have babies?' Yes! Do boys get married to have babies? (great laughter from the group and the teacher) Many lassies do! (pause) 'To be able to make love in privacy?' Society puts a lot of pressure to have sex in on-going relationships. Rightly so, I think. I disagree with sex in a casual relationship."

Mr. Sayer dismissed girls' assumed aspirations to marriage as a laughing matter and to motherhood as a feminine characteristic. Once more, masculine attitudes to these topics seemed unproblematic. Then, he asked pupils to raise their hands if they thought that they would be married within seven years. After some silence, only two hands went up. Mr. Sayer exclaimed:

"what a lot of nonsense! Of course, the majority of you will! I am not saying you should! I'll have a bet with you! When I see one of you lads, pushing your trolley at Sainsbury, I'll be there. I do the shopping while my wife does the washing. I'll ask you: 'Do you remember what you believed when you were in the fifth-form? 'Not married! Look at you now! By the age of twenty-three or twenty-four, most of you will be married."

Each of the teachers, in turn, said that they had married when twenty three/four. Mr. Sayer distinguished the difference between a statistical average age at marriage and the ethical question of whether one should marry or not. Simultaneously, his references to statistical projections set the age of twenty-three/four (2) not only as a predictable but also, as an examplary pattern of behaviour. He stressed that "some people regret having married too young." He established firmly the average age of first marriage to discourage pupils from teenage marriages and condoned heterosexual monogamous relations between unmarried people who "live well together." The weeding out of teenage marriages endorsed the proto-marital model.

Ultimately, the lesson formed an image of "happy marriage" based on pragmatic individual insight into future problems and joint support between wife and husband, as for instance, Mr. Sayer doing the shopping while his wife did the washing. It recommended a rejection of a rigid sexual division of labour in childcare and housework. But the preventive solutions contained an idealist tendency. For instance, Mr. Sayer urged pupils not to leave the parental home straight for the marital abode but to go to college, stay at a hostel, or find work. These solutions were unlikely

to be available to the working-class youth of Sparestown faced with unemployment! But this middle-class perspective was combined with a realistic appraisal of marriage and its tensions. By limiting its critique to the hub of personal relationships, it sustained the assumption that marriage was still "desirable", however "risky" it might be.

The next section examines if these images of marriage were used in other parts of the course. I shall also consider whether gender-behaviour, especially among females, was still seen as a main source of tension, using material on domestic violence, which was a topic that most pupils raised in interviews.

B. THE NORMALISATION OF FAMILY CONFLICTS

I. Childabuse as psychological events

Childabuse was the theme of the fifth-year lesson on "Violence in the family". Elena introduced it to a group of ten girls and ten boys, Mr. Barley standing silently. She drew pupils' attention to two forms of family violence: wives battered and children abused. There were Women's Centres (3) to protect battered wives running away from husbands. She added "we thought that you will find it difficult to understand why there may be violence between husband and wife. It's more difficult to identify with." (4)

Elena gave no explanation as to why this might be so. Perhaps the two images of marriage limited the range of curricular issues since exploring patterns of male violence against wives would come too close to the unveiling of power-structures and would call into question the possibility of an equal partnership in marriage. Once Elena rejected this form of domestic violence for no other apparent

reason than pupils' immaturity, (5) she introduced the lesson's objectives. First of all, pupils must realise, she said, how easily childbattering might occur. Secondly, any sort of person in any social classes, males and females, might batter a child. She stressed this point forcefully:

"Both parents, men and women from any social classes, may harm a kid. It could happen to anybody as the borderline between handling a child roughly and abusing it is so thin."

Thirdly, the explanation of such a wide-spread phenomenum was partly biological and partly psychological:

"Man is an aggressive animal. We are aggressive. So are babies! How do babies' survival instincts work? They cry. They'll make sure that you perform what they need. For survival! They are sweet! O.K! By crying, they'll keep draining you and will go on making demands. At times, it's not rewarding."

Then, she showed a video-tape with personal accounts of people involved in childbattering. They happened to be all mothers. Valerie, a thirty-one year old mother of a four-year old daughter was an ex-student nurse. She was interviewed with her husband on her three attempts to commit suicide and kill the baby. She still suffered from agrophobia and was under the care of a psychoanalyst. Her husband went out to work while she stayed in. There was no question on the type of support which he gave his wife apart from "trust". Valerie movingly explained:

"An absolute well of hate came up verbally and later I started to smack her. I was by myself one evening. She was eighteen months old. She started crying. I threw her onto the bed. She knocked her head. She cried herself to sleep. I desperately wanted to hold her up and comfort her. But I knew I would wake her up and she'd start crying. So, I held the cot and cried. I said to myself: 'That's enough! It must end'."

Like Elena, the commentary stressed that such post-natal depression was only one among many other sources of childabuse. Both mentioned sources of help such as from doctors or post-natal clinics

from neighbours and relatives. There were other illustrations but all on abusive mothers. The males as child-batterers were absent from the personal accounts and there was no portrayal of the marital partnership vis-à-vis a demanding child. This produced some confusion when Elena put on a tape. We heard the screaming voice of a baby for about five minutes. Then Elena asked: "How will you cope with that situation when your baby wakes up at night?"

A girl: "Take turns!"

Elena: "Really! But you'll quarrel about it! It will change your life! Not for a few months but for eighteen years! As soon as you can get rid of them."

Perhaps so! But one would have expected a follow-up seriously raising the feasibility of "taking turns". In a society where gender-roles are differentiated in relation to child-rearing, was the girl's response as idealist as the teacher seemed to imply? Should the pupils accept traditional parental roles? Not quite. Parenthood was certainly said to be a shared responsibility. Yet the course offered little suggestion how this could be achieved apart from the advice to fathers to push their wives out of the house and see their friends now and then in the evening. The condoning of gender-roles limited discussions on male support to the mother.

Childabuse was illustrated in another way, Slides provided by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (N.S.P.C.C.) to Elena showed different forms of abuse: for instance, a ten-month old baby with bruised eyes and a four-year old girl with blisters in the shape of slippers on her back. Pupils seemed awed by the slides; some averted their eyes from the screen. Elena reported that five children died of assault in Sparestown between 1975-1978 and 739 had been abused. Pupils seemed dumbstruck and

did not move when the bell rang for the end of the lesson. She told me, then, that she had hoped to "shock pupils so that if later, they find themselves in such a situation, they should not hide the first incidents but look for help." She wanted to create in pupils a deep horror of childabuse. This emotional form of prevention was consistent with the medical view of family-violence expressed in the course.

II. The pathological model

The lessons singled out a pathological model as the sole explanation for abuse and depression. Yet, there is little doubt that family-violence is a complex "social" and "private" phenomena to which singular causal explanation may not be applied uncritically. (6) The gender-role system and parental social class may be significant contributive factors as well as psychological tendencies among parents. Unlike the first two possible models of explanation, the curricular position explained family-conflicts purely as personal, apolitical events. This privatisation merged ideological and objective meanings. For example, it highlighted the pathology of femininity and not masculinity and women were shown to be both victim and perpetrator of family-tensions. Thus, the lesson on mental illness included a single audio-visual illustration, the story of a married woman at home on librium on the verge of a depression. Also, while the problems of the mother were dramatised throughout the course, those of the housewife tended to be overlooked. However, the health concern suggested problems common to both housewife and mother through the ideological fusion of the roles of the natural mother with those of the housewife. By referring to loneliness and disappointments with domestic life (7) the objective position of the housewife was nonetheless implicitly under scrutiny.

The exposition of crises within a traditional view of family-life produced some incoherence. The liberal theme presented as desirable some independence among females from men in its anti-romance stand, while it encouraged the increased dependence of married women on the goodwill of their husbands. It endorsed an increased emotional dependence of men on their children and yet, it assumed that masculinity would be void of emotional conflicts with regard to male family-roles.

The individualised solutions for improved family-welfare tended to reproduce meanings legitimising present-day family structures conducive to the identified problems of family-life, in particular those of women.

One argument underlying the analysis is that the sexual division of labour in the home, in conjunction with the sexual division of labour in a wage-economy, forms a major perpetrator of conflictual family-situations. I shall substantiate it when examining pupils' own perceptions of family-life. First of all, I shall consider the accounts of the curricular meanings just studied.

C. PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-ROLES IN MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

I. Pupils' interpretations of curricular meanings

Five pupils felt that the lesson on marriage was a "bit boring as they were told things on married couples that you know anyway". Beverley's argument confirmed my earlier suggestion that pupils, although unmarried, had some experience of marriage. Most felt the talk to be useful :

"We were told about the different phases marriages go through by the Marriage Guidance counsellor. We were told what to expect and where and when to get help. It showed how trivial things can ruin a marriage. We should have more of those lessons, you know, about life." (Carole)

Pupils understood that the teachers urged them to be realistic in their expectations from marriage as "after the wedding day, you are not happy all the way. You might always argue" (Annette) and "the marriage has lots of stress and strains" (John). There was a unanimous consensus that marriage was "risky" and yet it was still desirable. When asked if they wished to marry, they answered affirmatively: "If the chance comes, yes!" (Russell); "Luckily, everybody will get married." (Gaynor). They perceived marriage as a paradox of destiny and choice. Supporting the teachers, they thought it best to marry in one's twenties "to live your life a bit, first" (Neill) but felt tolerant of those who married when teenagers contrary to much advice:

"One of my mates, he wants to get married. He's not even left school. He says: 'I just do!' And everyone has to listen, give an ear! He loves her. Some people say: 'I don't blame you.' In the course they say: 'Don't get married before a certain age, or have children before a certain age. It ties you down.' (pause) If you thought like that, you would never get married and have children, would you?" (Adam)

He pointed out the contradiction between the two images of marriage. Were marriage and parenthood such desirable prospects, then, why not take them up as soon as the opportunity seems to arise? Such was the attitude of Carole who was engaged to a seventeen-year old boy and planned to marry him as soon as she left school: "He is the right person for me. I'm lucky." She presented her decision as the recognition of a life-chance to be grasped. Warning against teenager marriage became irrelevant as fate had a hand in love. Also, "people marry early because of sex really!" (Mark)

Marriage legitimised sex with impunity:

> "Mums and Dads often are more concerned about the girls to get them out of trouble. A girl might think her mother is always worried in case she gets into trouble. Get pregnant. So, she wants to get married." (Carole)

Pupils did not ban teenage marriages since these symbolised love and sex. There were no gender-differences in attitudes on this, perhaps because romantic feelings were also felt by boys contrary to the gender-stereotyping of romance subscribed to by the teachers. (This remark will be developed briefly later in this section).

Pupils felt that the lesson had been disturbing and understood that childbattering was a common family phenomenum since a cycle of stress might lead to assault:

> "Now, you say on abusive people: 'All should be locked away! and that.' But it's a very easy thing to happen, even to kill a child, it can happen to anybody. The mum should have enough sense to leave it for a bit. It's upsetting, it screams, it's very frustrating." (David)

Pupils understood that childrearing could be an unsatisfactory task and thought that childabuse could be caused by anybody but mothers were more likely to be the culprits since "fathers don't spend so much time with the children." (Jackie). Boys tended to see feminine instability as a source of abuse. Russell thought that "the woman might be funny in the head and get depressed." Steve noticed that the woman "is the one who loses her temper more often than a man" and Gordon felt that, at times, women could not control children whereas "he could handle them" like his sister's baby. This masculine view of women as the weaker sex tended to obliterate the verbal mentions of equal sex-ratio among abusive parents. If so , this lesson reinforced the gender-typing of women for the boys but also, gained

some of their understanding of the stress which occurs in motherhood. The girls emphasised the problems of childrearing and tended to implicate men as well: "Men have been at work all day, they take it out on the child because it's the most helpless thing" (Karen). Some girls and no boys mentioned dissatisfaction with marriage together with financial and housing problems as factors contributing to female stress. The girls seemed to see women as victims of uncontrollable situations after childbirth. This suggests that each sex made sense of the lesson's ambiguity on women's role in childbattering within their specific gender conception of femininity and domestic life. Therefore, it is necessary to look at their accounts of marriage separately.

II. Boys' interpretations of gender-roles

I asked fifth-years to imagine and write an account of their future lives once they had left the school. (8) The boys' essays evoked the desirability of marriage from the masculine standpoint of gaining access to children. Patrick wrote about his difficulties to become at last a successful engineering designer and added:

> "I settled down at the construction firm of 'Wimpy', where I could draw to my heart's content. At the age of thirty in 1999, I married and later had two children, two boys, I certainly was not free now, and that was a fact. The boys grew very fast and in almost no time at all I was not the tallest in the family."

He went on describing the progress of his business and the future of his children with no single mention of his wife. Mike described similar life-patterns. In the course of his success-story, as an engineer, he briefly noted: "When I was about 27 I got married, I am now too old, I have two kids, one at college and the other one owns my firm." He made no comment on his wife. The boys' fictions gave no indication about the wife other than being the

producer of male heirs - none of them mentioned daughters. There was no suggestion that marriage might mean an emotional commitment between husband and wife. Their essays might reflect the absence of male romance in widely read popular magazines for males. Unfamiliar with romance as a literary genre, the boys would find it difficult to write about a female soulmate cajoling them along the wedding path.

The interviews gave some glimpse of the boys' own emotional expectations of their relationships with a wife. When I asked what type of girl he would like to marry, Gordon replied:

> "I'd like an attractive one but really also sensible. I am not just interested in the body aspect. I want a girl who thinks the same as me. Not just like some one who likes rock n'roll and you hate the stuff. I want to get on with her but not a big fat one! (laughter)"

Gordon would be prepared to overlook what supposely men go for in a woman, that is her physical looks, as long as the wife-to-be came close to his notion of being "sensible". Other boys expressed their wish to live with a woman who would be "attractive", "not always going out at night" and "gentle". Unlike the girls talking to me about future husbands, they never mentioned the way they would like or not like their spouse to treat them. The woman to love was not somebody actively involved in a dynamic relationship with them. I asked Russell what he meant by a girl having a "nice personality". So he said: "Not a slob. You get some girls in the school who work badder than the boys and they cheek the teachers. I don't want her to do this, really slobbish." A demure, sweet girl appeared to remain the boys' vague proto-type of a wife which Jim's wish encapsulated: "I'd like somebody not too (pause). In everything quietish, but not too quiet. Pretty. A good personality. Easy to get on

with. Not big-headed or anything, you know, nice!" This masculine ideal included qualities which are traditionally attributed to the patient housewife and mother, gently servicing her family without making much demand on the family-man. The boys confirmed this image when they keenly commented on whether or not the girls should pay for their expenses when out for the evening with them. The definition of gender-roles was at stake on the pub counter. Preoccupied with the cost of drinking out with the girls, they preferred the "girls to chip in occasionally but if it's an expensive place, you expect them to pay (laughter)" (David). They liked girlfriends who moderated the male financial burden with a feminine realistic appraisal of what the boys could afford - like the wife who ought to get a job if her husband cannot afford all the bills:

> "Everybody pays for their fair share. The girls give money to the boys. They would feel embarrassed to order drinks! But I would not mind if the girls went to the counter. But not with a girlfriend! I expect to pay for a girlfriend and I would pay. From things I have heard, I think they pay their fair share, now, after going out with the lad for quite a while." (Daran).

Proto-marital conventions made a distinction between paying for just female friends or girlfriends. The former were expected to pay more often than the latter. Their occasional contribution would be welcome to the male purse and thus, not contradict too often the masculine interests symbolised in the male paying for the dependant girlfriend. "A girlfriend looks up to you if you pay for her" (Neill). "With your girlfriend, you have to pay to show you are a gentleman."(Ian) Girlfriends were expected to appreciate masculine superiority made concrete in its purchasing power at the pub or on the bus. The boys used the arguments whatever the type of expenses occurred but they

were more forceful about their gentleman's role in the pub situation. This might be due to the symbolic status accrued by young people with the legal access to pubs and thus, to the status of adults. By excluding the girls from paying, the boys controlled their symbolic access to such status while the girl remained feminine, but still a child. According to Gordon, the pub was an arena of competition among males:

> "I would probably get the drinks myself and get the money from her. I don't see many girls at the bar (laughter). Someone else might pick up your girlfriend if she's gone to the bar."

His girlfriend, like a possession, had to be protected from predators. Perhaps, also masculine romance had to show that male love for a woman would be worth some cash, and therefore, be suggestive of his breadwinning ability and his willingness to expend it on a wife when a husband. This mundane cash-transaction offered the boys the opportunity to test the girlfriends' collusion with masculine requirements:

John: "You are asking her to go out and she's not really that set on going out that night, she's not going to be very pleased if she has to pay for it herself. She might be doing something that she's not really dead keen on doing. And she's going to pay for it, it would be costing her a bomb, if I took her to a football match or something, somewhere she is not really keen on but she'd go because I wanted to go, it would not be very nice for her to pay for it."

Y.R: "Now imagine you are both going to a place where <u>you</u> don't enjoy going, but she's enjoying going there, would you expect her to pay for you because you don't enjoy it?"

John: "I might do, I don't really know."

John perceived male expenses as a compensation for imposing his choice of entertainment. He did not seem to have encountered the situation where the girlfriend would take the initiative for going out to a place of her choice in conflict with his liking and interest. I asked him what he might think of a girlfriend who regularly insisted on paying:

"She'd be going out for an argument. I would probably say: 'It's O.K. You can pay if you want to but remember, I'll pay for you anytime you haven't got any money. (pause) She's not as easy going (pause). It shows that she's willing to go though and do what I want to do."

There was a rupture in John's last comment. Any girlfriend's self-assertion was a source of concern to him on which he could not elaborate unless the conflict ended with her finally wishing to fulfill his desires. He "would probably respect her more", so he said, for having wanted to be independent but expected failure in her attempt to exercise her will. Other boys had similar attitudes. The girlfriends' independence appeared to be both a concern and an attraction if crowned with the male victory over the rebellious weaker sex (9). In masculine romance, gender-roles might be enacted as an implicit way of working out the image of the ideally attractive "domestic comforters" (10) well before becoming a husband. But the boys' feelings about the anonymous wife have to be understood alongside their commitment to earning a family-wage.

Their essays exposed deep fears about their position in the labour-market. Their fictional life, once a school-leaver, started with an anxious search for a job and/or an apprenticeship. They told of spells of employment and unemployment:

"Eventually a job was given me as a loading and unloading man for a large warehouse driving a fork-lift truck. 28 years I stayed at that job and then the place went bankrupt and this time it would be harder getting a job because now I was 44 and nowadays firms were looking for young people." (Adrian)

Adrian continued with his struggle to remain employed as an unskilled manual labourer until he was a "lonely old-age pensioner". None of the boys who wrote about unemployment or remaining in alienating jobs all their working lives mentioned either any sentimental relationship or marriage. Without any job-security and satisfaction,

they imagined that they would be unable to forge any committed personal relationship as Peter, for example, who saw himself as an unskilled factory floor worker:

"At least when I was in school I was with people enjoying life. But now, it's a different story. The best time of my life was when I went to Spain with a few mates. But me going to Spain now is a joke. My life is not worth living for. It has been really dull (.....) All my dole money went to the flat."

His mates and brothers being in jobs and married, Peter stayed in his flat all day long as "an outcast". These boys gave a grim and despairing picture of the life of the casual labourer robbed of a family, so they feared, because of endemic unemployment and work-alienation. Marriage symbolised the confirmation of male earning power. But it also produced further struggles to keep improving the family-wage. It justified the males' incentives to expand their business or "invest in a place of my own" - this was Mathew's fantasy once a married father still employed as a motor-mechanic. On the whole, these working class boys wrote about working class jobs.

The boys interviewed did not expect the married woman to earn her living in paid employment. This was manifest when I asked if they would worry about marrying a girl who would have been on the dole for at least six months. Some boys stressed that unemployment had similar meanings for all the unemployed: "If you get a job it's only luck, if you've got qualifications or not, as far as boys and girls are concerned. It can be depressing so, perhaps, it would matter in a way." (Mark). To be unemployed was not necessarily a sign of personal failure in the present economic conjecture. Unemployment was a matter of opportunities and chance, irrespective of qualification and gender. Yet, beneath this realistic but

fatalistic appraisal of limited job opportunities there loomed the notion that "for a woman, it doesn't matter much. What matters is if you like the person or not" (David). For him, a woman's place was in the home, so there would be no need to worry about female unemployment. The ideological invisibility of married women's paid work was sustained by the boys' objective observation on the unskilled character of much female labour which Russell evoked:

> "I don't think it matters if she (fiancée) hasn't got a job. A lot of people do find jobs, especially girls who work in shops, so I don't think I would really bother. Jobs do crop up. They do get a job occasionally. I don't think it really matters. If she thinks she can sit at home, do the work at home or something like that, it's up to her really to find out."

Russell felt that female unemployment was a question of self-determination and the availability of traditional female casual jobs. The boys' lack of concern for married women's employment in contrast with the deep anxiety about their own prospects made sense within their traditional conception of the family-structure.

Contrary to Mr. Sayer's assumption, they all wished to have children: "I think I do want to get married. I want to have kids, that's why I want to get married." (Gordon) Gaining access to children formed the major motivation for marriage evidenced in the interviews. However, five boys were not interested in or concerned by the two lessons on child-development (11). These were more useful to the girls "who will probably spend a lot of their time with their kids" (Ian). But the others thought them useful for boys:

> "While listening to it, they can appreciate what girls have to go through and when they get married, it may help to appreciate the problems they may have." (David)

David felt that child-development related to men in so far as it might help them to understand their wives' problems. A few boys wished to be actively involved as fathers in childrearing:

"I did not know about babies, how much they cost you. Yes, it was useful to the boys. You might remember talking to the child, encourage him to speak. Boys should know that a man has as much to do with a baby, in a way, as a woman, especially if she goes to work." (Daran)

John dissented from the view that "the man looks after the child one night and the woman the other night", . . Gordon noted that "the only time the man sees the baby it's at the weekend" and saw his contribution to childcare as exceptional:

Gordon: "It seems a bit funny changing nappies all day. It's always (laughing)the woman who is doing it."

Y.R: "Are you saying you'll never change a nappy?"

Gordon: "Oh, yes! I'll do it. But I'm not staying at home all day looking after the kids and vacuuming the floor!"

Gordon felt it unmanly to be a full-time housewife. Adam objected to going back home for more work:

"I reckon that if the man goes out to work (laughter), he should do nothing when he gets home. Half the boys think that! But Mrs. Firestone did not agree." (laughter)

Elena Firestone did not alter Adam's opinion. Attitudinal divergences between boys rested on the amount of childcare to be offered in a crisis-situation. Their attitude depended on the threshold beyond which their masculine identity would be threatened by taking up activities unusual for men - as with Gordon's self-image vulnerable to a vacuum-cleaner. Also, they were aware that working time and tiredness would affect their family activities. While these two factors created a limited range of individual variation, they produced a liberal consensus on the family-man's principal role at home as a by-stander morally prepared to intervene

in the female routinised activities but at his own bidding. The boys who were unequivocally hostile to changes in the definition of domestic roles tended to be all those who were soon to leave school at sixteen, prepared to look for any casual job like Adam: "If I get a job - anything - If I don't like it, I'll try something else." In contrast to this group, the boys who supported the reformist meanings with less overt hesitation belonged to either the academic group of pupils who would take "A" levels or those who hopefully headed for an apprenticeship after schooling. This would confirm the earlier suggestion that boys perceived their family roles in relation to their feasible positions in the labour-force.

The boys' ambivalence towards marriage reflected an awareness of structural relations between the family-unit and the wage-economy. This knowledge which contradicted the ideological curricular separation of family life from capitalist social relations turned into a poignant story in Alan's essay. With his last days at work before retiring after forty-nine years of toil and boredom, he recalled his past life since the day he left school:

> "I lost everything when I left school. 'The best years of your life ahead of you', they said. That lie, I hate it. So, I enjoyed myself in the evening but, that factory, that bloody factory. I was part of the machinery. The pay was good though, that's how I could afford to go out."

After this description of alienation from, presumably, an unskilled manual job, - he did not even say what he had to do - he carried on:

> "I was the last of my age group (that I knew) to get married. The girl was younger than me and looked up to me, believed in me. That sort of marriage was doomed to failure. All right for the first two years then it became the same as the factory. 'How are you, dear?' That word 'dear'. So affectionate for so long then if you stop to consider it for one minute you will realize what it really means. 'Dear' just another word misused. A sloppy sickly word I just could not approve of."

> "Within five years we were divorced. I blamed me. I wasn't

much of a husband I preferred to be free and easy. I would be affectionate one day then the next aggravated by that factory."

Trapped between the vacuity of romance and work, the man became - in Alan's words - "an outcast". He felt that his wife's feminine qualities were remote from his masculine values and experiences at work and outside home. The work alienation which affected his emotional stability threatened his marriage. The factory-floor social relations impinged on those of the kitchen-floor!

The boys' objective position in the gender and class-hierarchies gave them experiences, knowledge and expectations of marriage and family-roles. With these, they interpreted the extent to which they could agree with or redefine, in their own terms, the liberal theme of a greater male involvement in domesticity. They believed in the curricular emphasis on the emotional bond between fathers and children which confirmed their commitment to parenthood within marriage rather than to concrete domestic tasks. The culture of masculinity and working-class experience made legitimate, if at times problematic, gender-differentiated roles. Yet, marriage based on relations of domination and subordination could still seem a worth-while adventure.

III. Girls' interpretations of gender-roles

Much confusion and conflict besieged the girls on the issue of marriage. Contrary to the teachers' assumption, most girls did not tumble down the trap of romance, head first, without some kicking about in the dignified attempt to transform their fall into a controlled jump!

As for the boys, marriage meant having children which made it desirable. This view was implied in Kaye's decision not to marry since she did not want any children:

"I just don't. It's not that I don't like children. I do like children but, well, it keeps the population down anyway. I wouldn't be good at it."

Wanting children was not a straightforward desire. The girls seemed to have given much thought about having children or not and discussed these options with friends and/or parents. The girls who occasionally questioned motherhood saw themselves as apart from those girls who "marry early as an excuse" (Philippa's expression) to get away from paid work or further education:

"There are girls who want to get married, settled down and that's it! But not all of the girls. There are girls who are not bothered about the future. Perhaps it's something to do with the old days. Now, girls can get an education. They want to get married but not yet, in a long time." (Beverley)

From their awareness of two groups of female school-leavers, the girls saw the decision to marry as an individual choice and a matter of socialisation. They had a few ideas about the kind of person they wished to wed, in particular the girls with academic aspirations and/or parents in white collar occupations. Unlike the boys, these few girls felt the need to state that they wished to be treated with respect by their marital partners:

"I want him to be friendly, understanding, share some interests with me as well as having different interests. He must not treat me like a lump of dish-rag!" (Mandy)

"He must respect me for what I am. He must accept my personality and respect my points of view and everything. He doesn't need to be fantastically good-looking as long as he respects me for what I am and I enjoy his company." (Alison)

Perhaps, this reflected some awareness of sexism from boys and above all, the fear of not achieving some degree of personal autonomy from husbands. This first group of girls seemed far more self-assertive about the conduct of the marital relation than the girls with little prospect in paid work. The latter said they would be happy with "a nice boy". They implied that this meant somebody

"to talk to" (Louise). Claire modelled her own variation on the same theme:

> "Well, I'd like him to be tall, blond, but he must have a nice personality. His personality first! like laughing, jolly, have a conversation with me and me friends, talking to me friends and me. I wouldn't expect him to tie me or anything like that but (pause) I don't really know. It depends on him."

The girls outlined the communicative qualities of the husband which were concomitant with problems of isolation and dependance for the wife. These concerns were shared by the two groups of girls. But girls who were academically orientated appeared to be more practised in the exercise of some control over the proto-marital relationship. For instance, they mentioned self-respect in addition to fairness to boyfriends when they offered to pay for their outing expenses. By contrast, Louise and Isobel from the remedial set did not contemplate the possibility of paying for their drinks or go to the bar to order them: "I'd be afraid of getting a bad name." Louise gave no further explanation. Neither did Isobel who laughed off the idea. It would be again misleading to put too much weight on the differences in attitudes among the girls as against their common experiences from gender-roles. When I asked Alison if she would pay for a round of drinks, she said:

> Alison: "Yes! I'll put my money forward but if they don't want it, I'll keep it! But I would if it is in a round."
>
> Y.R: "Would you go to the bar?"
>
> Alison: "My boyfriend doesn't like me going to the bar. No, I usually give him the money before we go out. He tends to be a bit embarrassed to think the girls pay as much as the boys. He doesn't like people looking when I am giving money out of my purse.(pause) A lad likes to think he is paying for both parties especially when he is working."

Alison paid for her share of expenses with her boyfriend without any public recognition of her economic independence from him. She

felt that she had to endorse what was a masculine custom and therefore, from the masculine standpoint, a right. Girls could not be seen to be economically supportive of the lads. They gradually learnt to see their feelings and judgements secondary to the safeguard of masculine expectations. The fear of the boy's reaction, were they to depart from gender-conventions, urged them to respond to the boy's expectation of feminine behaviour. Liz observed:

> "Some of the boys can get funny if you don't let them pay. They don't want your money. If you like, perhaps they can say 'I spent so much on my girlfriend tonight,' and they perhaps expect something in return. Perhaps they want to pay and us get involved emotionally or something in return. I don't know. But some of them can get funny."

Liz described a transaction which seems to me close to prostitution. To her, boys insisted on paying for girlfriends as a sign of their superiority and control over the girl as well as a potential claim for the girl's emotional and sexual services. She saw that boys were threatened if the girl changed the assumed role of feminine subordination. Alison and Liz revealed gender power-relations in the pub which were close to those analysed in the boys' accounts. Also, they suggested that the boy's reaction might actively prevent them from repeating their "misconduct". As Liz said: "When they say 'I don't want to pay', you don't really know how to react, you don't really know what to say to stress: 'Why can't I pay?'" Moving away from patterns of subordination and dominance was experienced as being so confusing for female and male partners that even the more self-assertive girls were unaware that their aspirations for independence might be potentially incompatible with marrying "for security" (Mandy) or "to have somebody to lean on" (Annette). Love and marriage wrapped up in hope remained the

magical solution to gender-conflicts. They did not totally believe that romantic expectations were "naive" since these blended with some realism. Kaye noted: "I want to be in love but it is not a fantasy. I know it's hardwork when you are married (pause) With the boys, I don't know if they feel the same about love". Kaye felt defensive about her aspiration for romance but, like the teachers, she hesitated to attribute the same feelings to the boys. A few girls observed that social pressures were put on girls to hope for the "right type" to come along and marry:

> "The pressure on the woman is to stay at home, nice and clean, until some Romeo comes and swishes her off her feet, marries and gives her the kid! Whereas for men (pause), I should think (pause) to their mates, lots of them if they hadn't slept around and had not had sexual intercourse, they could look a bit sissy." (Mandy)

Here, Mandy encapsulated the asymmetrical positions of femininity and masculinity, the girls getting prepared for domesticity with Romeo and the boys, like Don Juan, collecting sexual experiences before the bridal kidnap.

The girls' ambivalence towards romance, which was apparent in the interviews contrasted sharply with the essays. Twenty-two girls wrote essays on the life of a married woman. They talked about children with much detail and, at times, about childbirth, health and work or grand-children. Most girls wrote about daughters and some, about their close relationship with them (12). One told of marital breakdowns. Happiness flowered in the lucky girls' hearts once chosen by "Romeo". A few essays lavishly described courtship, engagement and white weddings. Their authors appeared familiar with romantic fiction. Ambivalences vanished at the onset of mutual love. This is not surprising since to express tales of woe would contradict the very source of pleasure from this type of

story, that is the absence of gender-conflicts. But the essays gave some indications as to whom the girls could allow themselves to dream about as a husband. Seven heroes out of the thirteen completed stories belonged to the same class as their brides but with a slightly higher status: secretaries married the solicitor's main clerk and not the solicitor. The other essays did not mention the husbands' work. Perhaps, working-class feminine romance operated with some kind of inner rationality. Only girls with exceptional personal attributes - beauty or intelligence - could marry into the middle-class like the girl who became a doctor's wife after training as a pharmacist.

The girls certainly expected to marry someone with an income. (13) This was why, in the interviews, they acknowledged their hesitation to marry a man on the dole. They would not morally condemn him but be cautious: "I'll think twice if he's not trying to get a job" (Jane). Their position was to postpone the wedding until he had a "steady job" (Cathy). A few girls added that they would carry on working after marriage as long as he had no job but, Joanna noticed, marital conflicts could come from the reversal of breadwinning roles:

> "If I had a good job, probably I wouldn't be worried (pause). Again, I might be the dominant one of the household, the main wage-earner. It might cause problems with him, don't you think? (laughter)"

The girls, like Joanna here, tended to accept a subordinate role even when aware of a power-conflict, not because they felt powerless but because they themselves preferred to marry a "dominant" male - perhaps, the father figure hiding behind the youthful hero of romance! Liz, were she to marry, conjured up a man like her elder brother who was strong and also "gentle and soft with girls". Philippa remarked about her fiancé's hypothetical unemployment:

Philippa: "It wouldn't bother me to be the breadwinner. But I like a man to be more dominant than you are. You feel protected, I think. My Dad is definitely dominant. Yes, I think you would feel protected."

Y.R: "Would you like to have your say with him?"

Philippa: "I'd like to have a say, but not too much, you know. Not sort of I'm more dominant than he is. Because I think children want to respect their Dad. I always thought my Dad was sort of, the King and my Mum was lower down and I always used to cheek my Mum and not my Dad. If I had a weak Dad, I'd be roaming about everywhere."

Philippa wished her husband to be the main breadwinner in order to keep control over her frightening unfeminine independence. As in romance, his power became the attribute of masculinity, that of a king and, therefore, was desirable.

Girls, like boys, expected to sow their wild oats before the marital harvest:

"You should enjoy life before you get married. So when you get married, there is no qualm about it. You did have a social life" (Mandy).

The length of the growing season depended on the market-value of the girls' labour. So, not surprisingly, they focussed their essays on the search for jobs:

"I must have gone to at least 30 interviews until finally I got a job, working in a shop, I enjoyed that most, I got £19.30 a week and it lasted me well." (Shirley)

Unemployment was an urgent concern:

"I worried a lot, because I wanted a job more than anything because I just couldn't stand the thought of sitting at home all day in with nothing to do and very little money to spend and I could imagine the arguments that would go on at home because I'd be under there feet all the time."(Ann)

To achieve their ambition of independence from the parental home, the fictional girl school-leavers set themselves a limited range of jobs to go for, either full or part-time, in sex-segregated occupations like hairdressing, clerical work and shops - only two

girls wrote about more ambitious schemes such as becoming an air hostess or a business woman. But, they did not express the boys' pessimism over work-conditions. All except for one described the satisfaction of being at work:

> "It wasn't until the following year that I had fulfilled my ambition of working with computers in a bank. Within 4 months I had settled in and had met a lot of pleasant and understanding people. I never thought the world would be like this. It was around this time that I felt I was at the peak of my career." (Delphine)

Perhaps, the insistence on work-satisfaction exposed a hope for humane social relations at work. (14) This conception of employment would minimise feelings of disappointment and boredom in comparison to long-term struggles foreseen in marriage and motherhood. Like the boys', the girls' essays reflected their gender-specific relation to employment and marriage. So, while the boys' writings focussed on the whole of their working life-span, the girls' fictions referred to temporary jobs in fragmented periods of employment leading from secondary school to domesticity. None wrote about manual labour or husbands' factory-life. (15) This may evoke a rejection of manual labour and the difficulty of conciliating female employment with femininity and domesticity. Some did not say whether the married woman went out to work or not. The others mentioned part-time work except for four. Two married women fulfilled their ambition (one as a dress-designer, the other as a hairdresser) in a joint business partnership with their husbands who happened to be in the same career. Only through this convenient ploy could the married woman combine success at work and at marriage. The girls' dependence on the husband was also the implicit theme of the other two stories which told of celibate women who had suffered from depression and loneliness. They had worked full-time as secretaries and had been

'fools' (Nicola) to choose a career independent of that of the boyfriend

The girls whom I interviewed indicated that they exercised some control over the relative weight which they wished to give to their roles as wage-earner and/or housewife-mother. There were four strategies: delay marriage and have a career until then; have a family and go back to full-time work (the dual-phase working life); do part-time work only; be a full-time housewife as long as married to a good wage-earner. The resolution of conflicting roles tended to occur through class and educational factors, the girls with middle-class aspirations feeling more conflicts towards marriage than the girls with little employment prospects. But this division among the girls must not be overstressed. Annette, a close friend of Karen who wished to "have an interesting career" stated:

> "After school, I want to meet my boy first! I am not really career-minded."

Both decided to stay on at the school after taking the same six C.S.E.'s and two 'O' level exams. Annette and Karen's home background and educational achievements were similar and yet, they modelled their life's pattern differently before marriage. The girls were not just interested in the wife's employment supplementing the family-wage. Jackie said that "When a wife can get money for herself it makes you feel independent." Karen commented:

> "Her life (married woman) isn't just home. She's got a wider outlook. Then, she should have a life at work and a life at home as her husband would. There's no reason why she shouldn't have things outside the home with nothing to do with the family."

The girls were afraid of being trapped in the home. Being a housewife tended to lose its "raison d'être" when she stopped being involved with small children. A few girls turned to paid employment for an

income, a break from housework and some autonomy. The need for the girls to express themselves away from the family once a wife did not seem to be so much expected by the boys. However, before leaving school, the girls had already decided that full-time employment could not be reconciled with childcare. In this, girls' and boys' definitions of female family-roles mirrored each other.

Joanna illustrated the father-child bond with an anecdote about her uncle who changed his job in order to have more time and see the baby . She concluded:

> "Though they work in the days, most men can make up with the children at the weekends and that. I know they can't make up thoroughly because the mothers have them five days a week and weekends but I think they should have the same relationship with the children as the mother."

Joanna expected the mother to have the main nurturient role and the father to compensate for his absence one way or another.

Cathy described forcefully his home tasks:

> "The husband should take the share of the work when back home. Give the feed in turns at night. He should change the nappies, feed it. He should be taught about children everything the woman does."

All the girls expected definite help from the father on a regular basis and their demands varied from help at the weekend to every evening. Female expectations of their husbands' domestic contribution were probably legitimised by the curricular emphasis on bonding. But these expectations were idealist with regard to female and male collaboration in childcare given some of the boys' attitudes. When I asked Kaye to explain how the employed father could spend as much time with the child as the mother, she recognised that she "was a bit confused about this" and yet, the "father should be there as well." How this may be worked out in daily practice could not be

concretely envisaged within the assumed family-structures, hence Kaye's confusion. She solved her problem by declaring that, in any case, she had decided not to have any children. Liz who was accepted as a technician apprentice in a car-firm wondered how to combine childcare with a career:

"I want to be close to my children and bring them up the way I want them to be brought up. Not by some nursery! But I have been considering lately, like I am going to be an engineer, my apprenticeship won't finish until I'm perhaps twenty or twenty-one, then I'll get married perhaps after two years of being in a drawing office, because I don't want to leave and have kids, so I've got to lead my potential life and get moved up, you know, climb up the ladder, so I've considered adopting kids rather than having to bring them up myself when they are young."

Y.R: "What about the father of your children helping you?"

Liz: "That's all difficult to get sorted out. You don't really get men's jobs part-time."

Liz felt an acute sense of urgency. Her strategy arose out of the respective position of females and males in the labour-force which confirmed to her the ideological necessity for a woman to give up work, look after her children and not use nurseries.

Marriage meant for the girls an individualised process of accommodation to paid employment and family-life to be engaged in after the age of sixteen. By contrast, their expectations from their husband's behaviour towards themselves were certainly less well worked out. They acquiesced to the subordination of femininity to masculinity and yet, some felt strongly ambivalent towards it. They claimed help from the husband-father through the fear of depression and not because doing housework has never been the natural attribute of females. Without the welfare of children and mothers in mind, their demands on the active contribution of men to domestic work would be illegitimate and unreasonable.

CONCLUSION: MARRIAGE, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.

The chapter has demonstrated a strong consensus on marriage between teachers and pupils and not the least that marriage remained an individual choice. Girls and boys deployed movements of self-accommodation within the culture of femininity and masculinity to their foreseeable working conditions as paid and/or unpaid workers when married. From this dual position, they understood the two curricular images of marriage. The course's instrumental rationality towards marriage was also echoed in the process of selecting the type of spouse pupils wished to marry. But, contrary to the curricular warnings, it endorsed their support for romance and, with some pupils, for early marriage. The curricular view of bio-psychological dys-functions in marriage tended to transform gender-antagonisms into a question of communication and emotional equilibrium between wife and husband seen as equal partners. By contrast, the pupils' accounts indicated that power-relations between females and males were part of their respective strategies. Yet the course did not mention gender-inequalities. Masculine behaviour was not shown to be specifically problematic to the marital relationship, except in trivial domestic quarrels. Absent, too, was male romance and male hope to be in a dominant position over the beloved one! Certainly, the reformist meanings aimed to improve the welfare of all, especially of children and mothers. In this sense, the liberal theme echoed feminine interests and offered the girls some legitimisation of their expectations from family-men. Yet, its focus on the emotional insecurity and dependance of some mothers (symbolised in feminine romance)

irrespective of the material basis of femininity produced among pupils, the unintended view of women rather than men as the possible abusive parent.

A slip by an anonymous pen in the essays condensed the chapter's evidence on girls' ambivalence towards married life and should have the final word:

> "He asked me to marry him: I ~~agreed~~ excepted and we were married the following month!" (16)

FOOTNOTES:

1. p. 211 Children make a difference, a B.B.C. film, Man Alive series.

2. p. 215 According to the Marriage Guidance Council's statistic sheet (1978) in 1975, the average age of first marriage was 24.9 years for bachelors and 22.7 for females.

3. p. 216 Elena briefly mentioned Pizzy's book Scream quietly or the neighbours will hear (1974) about her woman's refuge.

4. p. 216 One may question Elena's assumption since wife-battering is such a wide social phenomena. See, for instance, the select committee report Violence in Marriage (1975) and Dobash (1980).

5. p. 217 Notice again the teacher's control strategy over the syllabus based on the division in status between adults and youth and, therefore, on legitimate knowledge and experience.

6. p. 219 The local branch of the officer of the N.S.P.C.C. who helped Elena with resources and information made this point to me in an interview (see the appendix p. 287) and illustrated it with N.S.P.C.C. documents on Sparestown and four other large cities.

7. p. 219 The Sociology of the Family documents the isolation of private homes and the loneliness of housewives. See, for example, Willmott and Young (1960), Oakley (1974,1976) Hobson (1978) and, in the Sociology of Medicine, see Brown and Harris (1978). Roberts is correct to call for feminist research which would assess the significance of gender in people's susceptibility to depression. (1981,p.21

8. p. 223 See the appendix, p. 286.

9. p. 227 Gender-relations dramatised by Shakespeare in the Taming of the Shrew may still be rehearsed by contemporary Petruchios. The possibility of a gentle Bianca's awakening after the wedding day into an insubordinate wife and, the attraction to and fear of a Katherina's independence seemed part of the boys' conflicting feelings about the anonymous wife.

10. p.227 Willis' phrase, (1977, p.43).

11. p. 229 I was unable to attend these lessons which, according to Elena, stressed the importance of play and emotional security in children's development.

12. p.236 Several essays were about the contentment derived by mothers and grandmothers from daughters' happy lives after reporting on their own hardships. These stories may express a wish for self-fulfillment through the next generation when the first is confronted with grim prospects.

13. p.237 Cinderella's economic incentive to marry was strong. See Connell et al, 1981, p.165.

14. p.239 See Hunt (1980) on women's work-alienation.

15. p.239 The absence of stories in girls' popular magazines on working-class married women's lives as affected by paid employment would concur with this omission.

16. p.244 Word-obliteration and spelling are those of the original text.

CHAPTER 7

THE FORMATION OF GENDERED CITIZENS.

The aim of this study was to explore how Sex Education could contribute to the education into adult roles of girls and boys. This chapter provides a summary of the main cultural and ideological themes concerning sexuality and domesticity. Part A focussed on the ideas which were shared by teachers and pupils about personal relationships while Part B underlines how the curricular production was legitimised. Finally, Part C briefly outlines some areas for further research.

A. THE CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL INSTANCE OF SEX EDUCATION

I. The ruling ideas of the ideology of personal relationships

The ideological themes in the Sex Education lessons attempted to make sense of sexual-and gender-divisions by supporting the domination of male and heterosexual groups. The "naturalness" of such divisions constituted the parameter within which competing ideas could be produced in a negotiated form such as the re-definition of masculine roles and female sexuality. Whether produced by teachers or pupils, reformist and liberal meanings were always defined within the terms of the traditional theme. Entrenched bio-essentialist views conflated phenomena which objectively belonged to different categories of events. Thus, marriage was presented as a natural state as if it were a stage inherent to the biological development of individuals in the same way as puberty. The reproductive biological factor confirmed the "naturalness" of marriage, its desirability and thus, that of heterosexuality. Heterosexual monogamy was assumed to be the backbone of family relations and young people's sexual activities were presented within a proto-marital model. This normalisation produced a single image of desirable sexual and gender behaviour at specific moments of pupils' lives which appeared, by and large, fundamentally unproblematic. When they were not seen as pathological, conflicts tended to be trivialised as between husband and wife, classified usually on a linear, evolutionary model and, consequently, appeared to be unconnected with each other. This dislocation was compounded by another dominant idea. Serious problems in personal relationships came from individuals' inadequacies or else they were unavoidable as with the depressed housewife-mother,

the aggressive babe, the fretful adolescent or the unthoughtful male. Each of these experiences appeared isolated from each other since their socio-cultural factors were largely ignored. The demands of privatised childcare and family-life were discussed with no recognition of external causes of stress. But family-members are also individual wage-labourers. The isolation of these two sources of conflicts within the dominant bio-psychological theme allowed little insight into the conflicting demands of each. Where these were recognised, the preferred solution was to create enough motivation in individuals for them either to accept conflicting situations or to work out some changes in their family - but not work - relations. The privatisation of conflicts anchored the view that all individuals shared the same interests whatever their social position, be it parents and children, teachers and pupils or medical practitioners and patients. It posited the same model of individualist and humanist rationality for all social actors irrespective of their gender and class positions. Problems would be overcome through rational self-improvement with the help of an army of professional experts. Self-determination was mostly restricted to the identification of symptoms except for one case: the husband-father was given a collaborative role in ante-natal care by the medical practitioners vis-à-vis the pregnant woman.

By insisting on the dominance of stereotyped ideas on sexuality and gender, I in no way imply that this ideology constituted a monolithic and consistent view. On the contrary, I have repeatedly underlined its contradictions and inconsistencies.

II. Ideological ambiguities and contradictions

The traditional theme associated sexuality with reproduction in marital relations with the father earning the family-wage and the mother looking after the children and conveyed negative assumptions on non-reproductive sexuality. The liberal theme was reformist and provided some critique of traditional roles and values. The first theme was dominant in topics related to marriage and responsibility and also, in audio-visual resources, while the liberal one was produced mostly by teachers' words. The interplay of themes produced many inconsistencies and some incoherence between the two images of marriage. The privatisation of sexuality alongside its apparent "natural" character contradicted the reformist intentions to challenge pupils' gender-typing of sexual intercourse. The call for understanding and consideration of others contradicted the claim that the course was morally neutral, while its behaviourist tendency was at odds with the idea of individuals' freedom in all matters. This contradiction was structured along lines of gender. Female behaviour was a constant object of medical surveillance while males' behaviour tended to be a secondary preoccupation since their biology and psychology were portrayed as essentially unproblematic. Their crisis appeared to be short-term and often precipitated by females. This imbalance in the ideological themes contradicted the assumption that Sex Education addressed itself to both sexes equally. It is one example among many others (see p.138 and p.174) which shows that the course produced gender-specific meanings contrary to the illusion that sexual socialisation for both sexes shared the same concerns and meanings.

The course focussed on family rather than sexual relations because of its marginalisation of eroticism (see, for example, p.136) mostly dictated by the view on youth's sexual experience as childish and immature and the regulation of their sexual activities into proto-marital norms. The interpretation of female sexuality subordinated it to a masculine representation of sex while legitimising young people's, in particular girls', aspirations to sexual fulfillment.

III. Ideological and institutional processes of production

Mapping out ideological meanings does not suffice to understand an ideology. It is necessary to examine the manner of its production, (Lovell, 1980, p.51). I have already noted general ideological processes such as classification, distortions and contraditions. Now I must add the selection of situations to be represented in the classroom. Thus, the Health Education teacher who frequently referred to her experience as a mother never mentioned the fact that she was divorced and cohabiting. In the Sex Education curriculum, the selection of personal experiences was not random; neither was the selection of topics nor that of visual resources. These processes specific to schooling were articulated on the commonsense dualisms between the private and the public, and between subjectivity and science. Both led to the omission of ideologically problematic situations inherent in sexual and gender socialisations such as homosexuality or abortion (see p.185) and those related to structural relations between family-divisions and capitalist work-situations (see p.213). Direct relevance to "common experience" focussed the lessons on problems which, according to adults, most

pupils were likely to face. This professional principle of selection produced an emphasis on crisis situations while statistical averages like the high rate of teenage marriages leading to divorce became behavioural norms.

The Headteacher and Deputy-heads saw topics directly dealing with sexuality as potentially controversial among parents and yet, their concern with unintended pregnancies necessitated the inclusion of sexuality in the course. This ambivalence in recognising publicly the sexual activity of young people meant that the Health Education team-leader had to walk a tight-rope when she was talking about sexuality: Too open an acknowledgement of sexual expression by youth could be construed as unprofessional by her senior colleagues; too much a silence on sexuality might deflect the preventive impact. Such conflicting demands affected the forms of curricular meanings. The taken-for-granted truths and the negotiated meanings which expressed deliberative statements could belong to traditional or liberal themes depending on their ideological position in each lesson. For instance, negotiated meanings on romance were formulated in the traditional theme on marriage and its pitfalls, whereas it was the object of unquestioned truths in the liberal theme on birth control which urged boys, out of love, to take some responsibility for contraception. The fluctuating movements between forms and meanings allowed the teacher to express her reformist position forcefully. The ideological struggle between dominant and negotiated meanings was sustained by the necessity to maintain control over pupils. The team-leader's style of teaching was, by and large, consistent with the authoritarian form of control prevailing in the school. Her

classroom strategies aimed to establish both control and consensus among pupils without jeopardising her professional credibility. She used gender-dynamics and humour to this end. For instance, the gender-meanings of laughter on sexuality deflated potential opposition to the teacher's authority and expertise. It could defuse pupils' embarrassment but facilitated boys' rather than girls' participation. This, in turn, reflected the ideological subservience of females to males encouraged by the traditional theme. Moving the audience into feelings of vital urgency and acquiescence to medical expertise was the method of persuasion used in the film on the embryo and the lesson on women's depression. Here again, this strategy tended to reduce tensions between teacher and pupils who were both moved into an homogeneous audience for a time and reduced the represented situations to their bio-psychological factors. The teacher's accountability to divided audiences (parents', colleagues' and pupils', see p. 81 and p.132) and the undercurrent of struggle for control waged in the classroom (see p. 95-6) structured the specific interplay between ideological themes. The liberal theme tended to be neutralised through, for instance, displacements of meanings or distancing mechanisms (see p. 140-1) while it created among pupils the persistent impression of listening to a liberal account.

IV. Pupils' interpretations

Pupils felt embarrassed when their sexual feelings were exposed to the critical ears of the teacher and peers (see, for example, p.106). Girls, more so than boys, talked about the inhibitive presence of the opposite sex although they were interested in their responses. Thus, teacher-controlled discussions in mixed situations limited the

range of suitable topics from the pupils' standpoint. They rejected those topics publicly associated with eroticism and shared the teachers' ideological conception of sexuality. Yet, they occasionally questioned the dualism between experience and knowledge (see p.144) although most often, they conflated the two since sexuality signified to them stock ideas and values on masculinity and femininity. However, behind their agreement with the abstract, unitary notion of heterosexuality, the reality of gender-divisions differed with each sex.

The boys tended to seize upon the curricular acknowledgement of the human capacity for orgasm to turn it into a legitimation of sexual expressions. In this, they wished to include girls as well but felt divided by their own gender-interest in sustaining the maintenance of sexual double standards. Girls' virginity was valued by some boys with reference to future wives but not necessarily in terms of girlfriends'. The girls' understanding of the same liberal theme did not dispel their strong negative feelings on sexuality although they were inclined to advocate the abolition of sexual double standards. For both sexes, their peers constituted a most important source of control and conformism to the ideals of masculinity and femininity. Aware of more permissive sexual mores, girls and boys negotiated their sexual and gender conflicts within proto-marital relationships which established public styles of committed and stable relations between partners who put up the appearance of the possible intention to marry each other. This offered them a spectrum of permissible sexual expressions in which they could accommodate the adults' condemnation of casual sexual relations. It also gave them the opportunity to test their own

feelings and expectations on marriage and the opposite sex. Girls, in particular, welcomed in proto-marital relationships a definite legitimation of sexuality outside marriage. In this way, romance could become propitious to sex. The boys seemed to acquiesce to this regulation of masculine behaviour by girls as sex might be in the offing without the rigmarole of courtship.

Boys and girls agreed with the two images of marriage. Paradoxically, this shared understanding between teacher and pupils was also a source of a significant disagreement on early marriages which, to pupils, tended to symbolise one possibility of conciliating conflicting expectations. The boys seeked to maintain a controlling position in their routinised dealings with girls whose feminine qualities they would test since they aspired to the love of a wife acquiescent to her subordinate domestic and motherly role. Yet, the liberal theme on male domestic work found some support among a few boys whose employment future seemed more secure than the others'. Perhaps, these boys felt that they might have some control over their working situation and felt less threatened in their self-identity by feminine concerns. The girls' accounts showed them struggling to exercise some control over their lives too. The course had taken as innate among girls a wish to have children one day. Yet, there was much ambivalence among a few about becoming mothers and facing the burden of motherhood and domesticity. But, for most, mothering counterbalanced their unromantic expectations from domesticity with the added incentive of gaining financial support from the family-man. Their adjustment to marriage was reinforced by an element of feminine romance which built on the hope that the understanding lover would not turn into a possessive home-jailor. The perceived antagonisms between

femininity and motherhood on the one side and the demands of waged labour on the other induced the girls to adopt work-strategies which revealed their partial understanding of the articulation of femininity and masculinity with capitalist conditions of employment. The realisation of the difficulties in adjusting childcare to employment turned their demands from husbands - fathers into a matter of sympathy rather than practical involvement. Like the boys, their gender-experience of the selected situations closely echoed curricular themes.

There was a greater awareness of sexual divisions among pupils with a less insecure employment future. It was these pupils who felt that sex equality had not been achieved in society yet, while the others tended to deny the right to women to achieve equal opportunities mostly on physiological grounds. However, pupils who were aware of sexism remained committed to the models of masculinity and femininity (1) while there was much more confusion and ambivalences among girls than boys. This may suggest that their gender-location in the labour-force and the marriage market was more contradictory than the boys'.

In the curricular production and pupils' interpretation, there were processual similarities which indicated that they belonged to the same cultural-ideological instance which forged a spontaneous consent between both parties.

B. THE APPEAL OF SEX EDUCATION

I. Sources of validation in the course

The validation of the ideological themes came from the juxtaposition of ideological views with objective propositions. Thus, the

blurred demarcation-line between false claims and scientific insights was one condition of persuasiveness with pupils who undeniably knew that objective knowledge was transmitted to them regarding biological and psychological observations. It was surely the case that the lessons gave much objective information as, for example, on pregnancy or sexuality even if ideological falsities merged with it. The psychological and reductionist model of explanation on depression offered pupils a recognition of the real symptoms of depression and the plight of some young mothers; Mr. Sayer's account of "natural" marriage was based on empirical evidence which pupils could identify and recognise. Their everyday knowledge of family-life gave credence to the teachers' analysis of family-conflicts, while commonsense notions (2) of alienation in employment tended to confirm the privatisation of personal relationships. Noticeably, misunderstandings between teachers and pupils ensued when curricular meanings tended to be less familiar, as with childabuse and the sexological observations on female sexuality. But the pragmatic rationale of the course appealed to pupils who glimpsed the possibility of control over familiar sources of distress. Paradoxically, the noted essentialist determinism had a strong reassuring appeal too since it masked conflicts and apparently offered tangible medical solutions. When there was no cure, nature took over. This was, in a sense, also appealing; anger and frustration with the "ill-adapted" individuals could become defused since they were somehow victims of their constitution. If the husband preferred football to changing nappies, it was not really his fault!

A major appeal lay with the liberalism of the course and its production of two themes. Pupils and teachers felt that this constituted a balanced and rational approach as opposed to a moralising and religious teaching on sexuality. This mobilised their consent on preventive and reformist advice. But for teachers, another source of legitimacy came from official publications on Sex Education with similar traditional and liberal outlooks.

II. Sources of validation outside the course

The Health Education teachers were advised by the local Medical Area Health Education Officer whose resources they used. The Health Education Officer and the L.E.A. adviser for Health Education told me (3) that prevention had to be part of the responsible behaviour of individuals who were all accountable to the community for irresponsible behaviour such as alcohol or unwanted pregnancies. Relevant information and the implementation of health-conscious attitudes were, hopefully, to lead to an improvement in preventive care. They also asserted that Sex Education was necessary for all children and yet, it did not constitute the main focus of a health education programme for adolescents. So, like the teachers of Fieldclose school, they tended to disown the significance of sexual socialisation in Health Education in spite of their explicit concern with youth's sexuality.

The team-leader also knew of the D.E.S. report, A Handbook of Health Education in Schools (1977) and welcomed its liberalism. Like other D.E.S. and D.H.S.S. policy-making documents on personal relationships at the time, the Handbook portrayed the same reification of

sexual and gender-divisions as in the Fieldclose school course alongside liberal and traditional themes (4). This suggests that the ideology of personal relationships was not specific to the course studied and to Sparestown L.E.A. Perhaps it was characteristic of other Sex Education courses for school-leavers which aimed to negotiate changing sexual mores and family-structures within the dominant conceptualisations of sexuality and gender.

The other report quoted by both Health Education and senior teachers was the L.E.A. document concerned with the transition from school to paid employment (5). To engender in future workers an awareness of the discipline and problems of employment, it sketched out a programme of self-development while omitting qualities conducive to collective political action. The qualities judged to be desirable in future workers were remarkably similar to those fostered in future family-members with an emphasis on self-discipline, individual responsibility and flexibility. These were the "absolute" values expressed by the Head as necessary for work and domesticity. There was probably a close normative integration between the preparation for work in the Careers course and the preparation for family-life in the Health Education course (6). If so, the reproduction of particular sets of social inequalities - age, class and gender - would greatly overlap with each other as

shown in the hierarchy of the school, the organisation of the curriculum and routinised classroom interaction dominated by gender-dynamics.

These observations indicate that ideological processes at work in the specific context of Sex Education lessons could be found in other areas of school-life and educational policies on personal relationships originating outside the school. This points to the diffuse boundaries of the ideology of personal relationships but this very characteristic constituted another source of validation for teachers and pupils.

This study has demonstrated that this ideology took the appearance of an apolitical interpretation of sexual and gender-divisions by sealing social conflicts out of experience and knowledge. This depolitisation was itself a condition of the effectiveness of its political implication. However, this is not an argument for ideological determinism of the individual subject, teacher or pupil. Rather, its point is to identify the space within which the individual acts and is self-determining.

III. Schooling and self-determination

The divided school with its proliferation of pedagogical practices and interests gave the team-leader much control over the organisation of relevant knowledge and visual materials. Her self-determination as a teacher was undeniable. Thus, she could have used the principle of relevance or test of experience to select other topics and develop other strategies, provided that classroom events still seemed to form acquiescent and obedient members of the school and of society. As the study has shown, the structurally determined degree of openness in interpretation and actions that she exercised

allowed the formulation of the liberal theme in negotiation with the dominant theme and not in opposition to it. Probably, the liberal theme could not become systematically subversive of the dominant ide ology without the teacher losing all control over the curricular production.

There were unstabilising factors which contributed to a certain amount of self-determination among boys and girls too, because of their positions as pupils and working-class youth. At times, they paid little attention to overfamiliar topics and tended to forget the biological input. Curricular meanings did not always match their experience and knowledge, such as their views on teenage marriage and teenagers. Ideological themes which tended to portray adults' views of the world paid scant attention to the specificity of youth culture. For instance, Elena understood pupils' confused responses as a sign of their sexual immaturity (see p.100). But the study showed that this confusion also came from pupils' divided interests based on their peers' accomodative enactment of masculine and feminine norms. Pupils tended to resist the advice which appeared to conflict with their legitimate gender-interests as with romance and male bonding. A preventive use of female contraceptives provided little solution to the feminine dilemma of being either less fearful of pregnancy or "unprepared", "trusting" and "testing" the males' feelings. Similarly, to encourage boys to approve of girls using the Pill is to deprive them of some control over the girls. It is doubtful that the number of unintended pregnancies or divorces in the future lives of pupils would be lessened since pupils' rationality has been shown to be gender-specific, ridden

with contradictory motivations and diverse in its application, hence the number of strategies open to them. This also means that, contrary to the ideological themes, pupils did not experience sexual and gender socialisations as a harmonious single process and that sexuality played different roles in feminine and masculine identities.

Sexuality was problematic to the socialisation of young women into domestic roles and so was masculinity to the socialisation of young men into the partnership model of marriage. While the experience of a contradictory social world certainly mobilised their consent, it also tended to turn the interplay of the two themes into a double-edged instrument of control. On the one hand, it confirmed the social order for which pupils were prepared. But, on the other hand, its appeal to specific forms of individualist rationality and experience legitimised pupils' self-autonomy. The collusion of the negotiated ideas with the dominant ones might weaken the impact of its reformism since pupils could seize upon legitimised sexual divisions to uphold conservative attitudes and beliefs some of which, paradoxically, the course aimed to erase. This observation suggests that pupils' resistance to some curricular meanings was neither subversive nor conservative. Their resistance could be either, depending on how each individual interpreted its articulation with the dominant culture. It was this structural relation which determined whether the marginalisation of liberal meanings was acquiesced to by some girls or boys, and not others. Given the real choices that each faced in sexual, gender and work relations, however structurally determined these were, it would be misleading to reduce their self-

determination to a mere "illusion". This finding of the study is a correction to a suggestion I made in the first chapter after I argued that comprehensive schooling would attempt to channel pupils into appropriate occupational and sexual/familial structures. I wondered how this would be worked out in Sex Education and suggested that it may create the illusion among pupils that this allocation was freely chosen. The study has shown that their working-class future was certainly far from being under their full control - this I have underlined all along - and that it was not entirely determined either. While the degree of its openness was structurally limited, its reality was not an illusion nor were the choices faced by individuals. The course contributed to this restricted openness with its objective information and appeal to school-leavers' control over their life-chances. Pupils' accounts with their blend of fatalism and grim self-determination questioned the misleading polarisation of determinism and choice and instead, expressed the contradictory relation between individual freedom and social structures.

C. FURTHER RESEARCH

I have just suggested how structural determination, in opposition to determinism, itself produced some relative autonomy for its agents. But this dynamically productive character of schooling is under-researched in the field of Sex Education. A longitudinal study of the Fieldclose course or a comparative analysis of Sex Education in different schools could outline the factors of change and continuity in sex educators' self-determination. Also, the pervasiveness of the ideology of personal relationships needs to be understood in terms of structural relationships between Sex Education, Health

Education and Personal Development courses on the one hand and vocational courses on the other. My observation of Careers lessons suggest that a comparative study of these forms of "preparation for life" using participant observation methods would be useful in order to see how they overlap. I have argued that Sex Education systematically tended to obliterate political issues related to its curriculum. This is not uncharacteristic of schooling and this study calls for similar in-depth analyses of how objective and ideological concepts, ideas and values come to be selected and organised in particular school subjects once teachers are acquainted with the exam-syllabus.

The relationships between any Sex Education programme and sexual practices are so complex that it is beyond the scope of our contemporary knowledge of sexuality to assess, for certain, direct casual links between the two. But the limits of our uncertainties, for instance on the relation between inadequate contraceptive knowledge among teenagers and unintended pregnancies, could probably be defined with extensive evaluation of Sex Education. Until now, school Sex Education seems to have had little effect on contraceptive practices among teenagers in the U.K. and U.S.A. (7). Much research is needed to assess more appropriate sites for particular types of Sex Education programmes - for example, an evaluation of young people's sexual attitudes and expectations might be hindered by the coercive character of much schooling and facilitated by the informal organisation of some Youth clubs.

This study advances possible reasons for the partial, long-term ineffectiveness of school Sex Education by pointing out the deep

sexual - and gender - contradictions experienced by girls and boys. This finding could be tested with a comparative study of Sex Education courses whose orientation closely corresponds to the ideology of personal relationships, and programmes which overtly question sexual and gender inequalities. The second courses would offer positive images of women and explore the problems specifically experienced by each sex under the yokes of masculinity and femininity. A re-evaluation of gender-identities and roles would imply an assessment of academic/non-academic and manual/mental divisions since these tend to be correlated with sexist attitudes. Hopefully, Sex Education programmes inspired by such concerns (8) could challenge fatalistic attitudes towards gender roles, marriage and parenthood as well as the illusion that we have all the same amount of control over our lives. Such an explicitly political Sex Education would not be the only bid for control over school Sex Education. Right-wing pressure groups have correctly acknowledged its potential political character. For instance, the secretary for the Responsible Society has been campaigning for a

> "great big re-think about the whole idea of sex education in schools. There is never a mention of love and marriage, the general message is have sex at any age. If you catch V.D. then it is just bad luck. They are saying anything goes - even perversion - as long as you don't get pregnant". (9)

This group opposes the liberal reformism present in some schools' Sex Education programmes and sees it as a threat to marriage. Its views are similar to those of Dr. Rhodes Boyson who believed in the contribution of Sex Education to the increased rate of unintended pregnancies in the 1970's. As Junior Education Minister, under the Thatcher Government, he has made

moral issues central to debates on social policies (10). Just as he has blamed the educational system for the economic recession, so too are bad parents and teachers to be blamed for sexual permissiveness (11). Suggestions for the renewal of traditional Christian ethics and the consolidation of parental control over young people were made by the Family Policy Group (12). The D.E.S. recommendation (13) that schools should offer "moral education, health education (including Sex Education) and preparation for parenthood and family life" to every child aims according to David (1983), to consolidate the sexual divisions of labour. She quotes Patrick Jenkin, Tory Secretary of State for Social Services :

> "There is now an elaborate machinery to ensure (that women have) equal opportunity, equal pay and equal rights; but I think we ought to stop and ask - where does this leave the family? ... The pressure on young wives to go out to work devalues mothering itself ... Parenthood is a very skilled task indeed and it must be our aim to restore it to the place of honour it deserves". (p.41).

For Jenkin, the woman's place is the home. David argues that

> "the new right is deliberately and consciously trying to re-create a particular sexuality for women, and one which not only entails economic dependence upon men". (p.41).

She concludes :

> "its moralist stance and its efforts to reconstruct a sexual morality that confines women to the patriarchal family and controls girls who do not keep to its sexual code of conduct". (p.42).

Her analysis supports the main political argument of the thesis : the socialisation of women's sexuality and gender-roles constitutes one of the major concerns of school Sex Education. With its Parsonian conceptualisation of gender-roles in the family and at work, it aims to adjust the growing autonomy (mostly sexual and cultural) of females to a

more traditional position. This finding does not necessarily lead to pessimism from a feminist standpoint because of the noted progressive factors in school Sex Education such as its partial objectivity, the exposure of sexual double standards, however limited this may be, and the acknowledgement of youth's sexual activities.

Also, if conscious sexual learning takes place from puberty onwards, then, youth will have a say in their sexual orientation. This is all the more likely as the study suggests that sexual socialisation cannot be reduced to gender-socialisation. The moral reconstruction of the family around the return of women to the home goes against significant changes in family-structures (14). The Study Commission on the Family (15) reports that the unit of two natural parents and legitimate children has become an increasingly unrealistic idea of the typical British family. David makes the same observation:

> "The most significant trend, then, in Britain, as in the U.S.A., is the number of one-parent families containing mothers alone with their children produced either by divorce and by women deciding not to marry as a result of conception." (1983, p.39)

If schools ignore this reality for young people, they run the risk of losing some control over them and this observation mitigates pessimism.

CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

The thesis has developed from a materialist conception of sexual - and gender - socialisation which took into account biological and socio-cultural factors. It followed a method of inquiry which examined the structural constraints as well as the everyday interactions in the school in the attempt to sketch teachers' and

pupils' experience of Sex Education in all its main phases and to understand the processes at work which determine educational continuity and change. Ideological processes were conceived as lived social relations in the school or outside, and not as reflections of the concrete in individuals' consciousness. The analysis has shown that school Sex Education tended to converge with already ascribed gender - and class - identities and was engaged in the formation of gendered citizens who would actively consent to their future roles. Thus, the study has tackled a fundamental problem of schooling, that is the necessity for the educational system to confront within its site social changes which directly affect pupils, by regulating changing values as new conditions demand, such as a greater technological control over fertility or more permissive sexual mores for females.

The thesis has led to a political understanding of school Sex Education and the objective limits of its intervention in favour of greater equality between females and males. Were school Sex Education to contribute to, for instance, the active involvement of males in pregnancy and everyday childcare through the effective implementation of new gender-definitions among future parents, this could, in no way, be construed ipso facto as a liberalising step for women as the masculinisation of hitherto feminine concerns may still uphold relations of domination. Also, if Sex Education policies take at all seriously the question of self-determination towards adult roles, they have to question the homogeneity often wrongly assumed in masculinity and femininity and the relevance of these concepts to comprehensive schooling.

School Sex Education can only be understood as one condition in the cultural reproduction of sexual and gender inequalities. Its partial ineffectiveness testified to the fact that it was not a functional necessity! In Gramsci's terms, this ideology was "non-organic" (16) to the sex and class-struggles as it was not an historically necessary ideology to the reproduction of sexual - and gender-roles and class relations - hence, perhaps, its oppenness to some change. Although it is more determined than determining, school Sex Education has, nonetheless, some contribution to make to the reproduction of sexual divisions as it is a non-negligible form of secondary sexual socialisation. However, whatever its forms, it would be as pointless for any Sex Education programme to try to fix for ever sexual relations and ideas and values attached to them as to fix the historically shifting relations between Nature and Culture. Human sexuality poses the problem of personal freedom and social determination.

FOOTNOTES:

1. p. 257 See, for example, Liz's comment on her engineering apprenticeship : "It will be hard for me as a girl because of the lads on the shopfloor (...) But I want to keep my femininity even if I get my finger-nails dirty".

2. p. 258 I give to "common sense" its Gramscian usage - see Gramsci, 1971, p.323 - which does not reduce familiar beliefs and ideas to ideological constructs but recognises in these the possibility of objective knowledge.

3. p. 259 See appendix p. 287.

4. p. 260 See footnote 29, p.49.

5. p. 260 See chapter 2, p. 77.

6. p. 260 I observed six Careers lessons for fifth-years and noted ideological similarities with the Health Education course : for example, the assimilation of the sexual division of labour with gender-motivations, the obliteration of pupils' work-experience through the definitions of curricular topics, the reduction of the notion of power to individuals' attributes and the assumption of organically complementary interests between social groups like workers and employers. These views echo those of the Labour government during the Great Debate (1976-77) on schools' contribution to industry. They are also likely to be found in the social life skills courses developed by the Manpower Services Commission, and its ideology of a mismatch between youth's culture and the jobs supposedly available to those with "social skills". (See, for example, DAVIES (1979)).

7. p. 265 See, for example, Reid (1982). His research survey indicates that school sex education has a favourable influence on the biological knowledge of young people who also tend to become more tolerant towards other people's sexual behaviours. But how long these benign effects may last is unknown. Nor do we know how they relate to pedagogies. In this study, the teachers' words seemed to have a greater impact than audio-visual aids.

8. p. 266 See, for example, Rocheron and Whyld (1983) for the outlines of a feminist programme.

9. p. 266 The Daily Express, 23.5.82. On the Responsible Society's criticisms and programme, see their publication Sex Education in Schools (1982). In addition to the complaint from a Tory M.P., the Responsible Society successfully put pressures on ministers to ban from schools teaching materials on contraception for less able children produced by the Brook Advisory Centres. See The Daily Telegraph, 23.6.81 and The Daily Star, 24.6.81. The view held by a few amongst Tory ministers that the State should use any legal means to strengthen the moral authority of parents is similar to that of Mrs. Victoria Gillick. She

claims against the D.H.S.S. that their guidelines to doctors on contraceptive facilities to under-age girls is unlawful. At the time of writing, the Court of Appeal's judgement on Gillick's lawsuit against the D.H.S.S. is still impending (The Observer, 4.3.84, p.43).

10. p. 267 For the development of this argument in relation to Sex Education, see David (1983).

11. p. 267 The Guardian, 20.3.82, p.26. Boyson's views on sexuality and social order strangely echo Reich's conception of sexuality under capitalism : formed by the authoritarian principle of reality and a negative sexual morality, our psycho-sexual structure incorporates a submission to patriarchal authority and compulsive conservatism!

12. p. 267 The Guardian, 17.2.83, p.1.

13. p. 267 A Framework for the School Curriculum (1980, p.7).

14. p. 268 For example, 11% of all families with dependent children were one-parent families in 1976, Social Trends, (1980, No..10, p.81) and one in four marriages occurring in the 1970's will end in divorce within 25 years (op. cit., p.85).

15. p. 268 Quoted by Family Planning Today, first quarter 1982, p.2.

16. p. 270 Gramsci (1971, p.377).

APPENDIX

D O I N G T H E S T U D Y

In the first stage of the research from the time I decided to study school Sex Education to my access to Fieldclose a year later, in November 1978, my chief task was to narrow down the object of the study and select appropriate methods. In a pilot-study, I conducted structured taped-interviews with the headteachers of twelve secondary schools in various L.E.A.'s and observed one Health Education course in a comprehensive school over ten weeks with two groups of children. I tested different interview types (structured/unstructured; with individuals or groups). Meanwhile, I studied the available literature on Sex Education and examined State policies in D.E.S. and D.H.S.S. reports since the Norwood Report (1943) on the education of adolescents and their gender and sexual roles. This alerted me to the historical antecedents of contemporary ideologies on domesticity and sexuality. It informed the position which I sketched out in the first chapter that sexual socialisation should be examined from a materialist perspective and I developed an interest in analysing ideologies in the social situations in which they are lived and not just in the writings of professional bodies. I then conducted semi-structured interviews with senior staff of comprehensive schools in Sparestown on the establishment of Personal Relationships/ Health Education/Sex Education courses for school-leavers (1).

This preliminary research gave overwhelming evidence that school Sex Education was undergoing profound changes in its organisation and objectives. An Edwardian conception of school Sex Education seemed to be competing with a more progressive perspective which was under-researched. I decided to concentrate on the latter because of a feminist commitment to a progressive form of school Sex Education.

I was interested in areas of schooling where there might be room for negotiating gender-and sexual-typing. The pilot-study also led me to limit the main fieldwork to one school. I realised that curricular innovation for those involved might be a matter of a subjective assessment of the social relations in which the innovation took place. Only an in-depth study of a course which teachers felt was innovatory could allow me to analyse participants' accounts in relation to school social relations. The pilot-interviews exposed the teachers' tendency for quick rationalisations when talking about non-reproductive sexuality. I also felt that they attributed different meanings to my questions which I could not explore in one-off interviews and which were perhaps tied up to their position in the school. Such patterns indicated that implicit processes at work in Sex Education could be approached only from an in-depth study.

I selected Fieldclose school for a variety of reasons. It was an established comprehensive without the problems of a new school. It was not an Educational Priority School with the attendant problems of those with a significant number of children from ethnic minorities. The formal organisation of Sex Education was not unlike that of similar courses in other L.E.A. schools. Elena was an experienced Health Education and Sex Education teacher; she was known to her colleagues in charge of such courses as a pioneer in the field. This was confirmed by the L.E.A. advisor for Health Education and the Medical Area Health Education officer. After an informal interview, Elena agreed to co-operate with the study, feeling that her course would somehow benefit from it. Following her support and the L.E.A. permission to research school Sex

Education (2), the Headteacher of Fieldclose granted me access to the school in November 1978.

The pilot-study showed the necessity of using several methods for collecting mainly qualitative data given the exploratory nature of the study and difficulties which I had encountered when using more structured methods (surveys; interviews). Participant observation of lessons seemed the most appropriate method to examine curricular meanings with regard to classroom relations and those of the school at large. But my interpretation of classroom events had to be assessed with data obtained from other methods and for this, I relied on interviews with staff and pupils, and essays from pupils (3).

I attended the Health Education lessons over five months until the fifth years' timetables were disrupted by examinations and the course stopped. My first task was to select the teaching groups which I wanted to observe. Since I was under the false impression that Health Education and Careers were closely linked to each other, I initially intended to evaluate this claim by observing the same pupils attending each course in turn. With the help of tutors, I selected the fourth and fifth year groups which had the greatest number of common pupils for Health Education and Careers. When possible, I attended the same lesson on sexuality with different groups of the same year. For instance, I saw Elena give the lesson on sexual intercourse twice. I attended all the lessons on the fourth year syllabus at least once and six out of ten lessons in the fifth year course. I also attended a few lessons which had nothing to do with sexuality (those on drugs, bereavement and alcohol), and I attended three further ones taken by team members other than Elena. When selecting the school, I

assumed that each lesson was followed by smaller group discussions separately led by the team-leader and another team member, since I had encountered this pattern in a number of schools and it had been described to me by the Head and Elena. However, this seldom took place. When it did (twice), I followed the group which was not taken by Elena. Asked to explain why the discussions rarely took place in smaller groups, Elena and the team members said that this arrangement had always been flexible and depended on the spur of the moment. I noticed no desire from the team-members to lead a discussion and felt that my presence urged Elena to protect them from me. As a result, my intervention led the study to become an examination of Sex Education lessons by one teacher, something which I had not initially planned (4).

The Head allocated me to a House (Grove) which I was told, was the normal procedure for the appointment of staff apart from senior teachers. The house-head showed himself to be as co-operative as predicted by the Head. He, in turn, entrusted me to the care of a female fifth-year form-teacher who was "sympathetic towards research students". This turned out to be the case and I attended her tutorials. Thus, the House-system structured my activities when I was not attending any lesson. This restricted my access to other parts of the school during non-teaching time. For instance, when I entered other Houses, I felt that I was trespassing unless I had a particular errand to accomplish but it highlighted the divisive organisation of the school. In order to move out of Grove House and assess the claim made by the team and pupils that Health Education differed from other subjects, I attended, over four weeks, the lessons on the timetables of three fifth-years (one girl

and two boys) whom I got to know by attending their tutorials and who had volunteered to take me around the school. This proved a most useful exercise. It allowed me to get acquainted with more teachers whom I could contact outside their lessons or in their own Houses. It also facilitated informal contacts with fifth-years.

Most often with staff and pupils, I assumed the roles of the participant observer watching what was happening, asking questions, and listening. But this role covers a variety of interviewing styles depending on the situation at hand (5). The staff, including the Head, were co-operative but non-committal - I leave aside my relationship with Elena which I discuss later. They were wary of me as an "outsider" doing research on an area of schooling in which they had little interest. Very rarely did they enquire about the study. At times, I felt that I was treated as a student teacher in need of initiation about the complexity of teaching. The observational period took place during the "winter of discontent" (6) when various strikes made school life difficult and teachers generally were defensive about State education and demoralised. The wider political scene might have increased Fieldclose staff's cautiousness towards another piece of research on teaching. This induced me to push forward my own experience as a secondary school teacher (French and Humanities) and helped me to overcome initial suspicion. I took care to ask as many questions on boys as well as on girls. At the start of the research, I had decided not to declare my interest in feminism on the assumption that such an intervention would silence potential informants. I kept to this decision once I became aware of the

masculine culture of the establishment which I had not anticipated to be so dominant in a mixed school. I established an easier rapport with female than male staff apart from a few male teachers with a progressive professional image who probably responded to my own liberalism implicit in my questions and comments. Senior male staff tended to express paternalistic attitudes towards me (7). The junior male staff were inclined to be less co-operative and let me understand that they were always busy. Once I found myself in one inner sanctum of male territory, the small staffroom of the Handicrafts subjects. The few male teachers present counter-attacked my intrusion with overt bantering and hostility. My unequal relationship to the male staff perhaps reflected that of women to men in the school. The female staff were more interested in the study. For instance, they would call my attention to something which they thought might be relevant to my work. As a result of these gender-dynamics, I tended to turn to male staff as second best informants (when there were no women available) in informal situations but turned to them once I had gathered a certain amount of observations on a specific question. This applied in particular to male senior members of staff. The atmosphere of a taped interview, with a set of well prepared questions, tended to undermine the unequal power relations in which I found myself as a woman doing a study on a low status and apparently feminine subject. In no way with either female and male staff did I feel confident to question them on their conceptions of sexuality and the roles they played in their dealings with girls and boys. The staff were not forthcoming on questions of gender socialisation either. Had I been given permission to do research on gender socialisation

this problem would probably not have occurred to the same extent. In order to move the focus away from Health Education onto gender-relations, I resorted to hypothetical, naive and open-ended questions which led me to collect more data on various aspects of school-life than I had initially intended, but it was most useful, however, to locate the course within the school.

With Elena, I formed a warm, friendly relationship. Being females sharing an interest in school sex education and, more generally, teaching, created a relationship based on mutual respect. This engendered exchanges in which I was able to pursue more contentious questions. Often, the interviews turned into dialogues, that is a conversation between two equals, and at times a debate in which I would argue for my own feminist position (8). Transcripts of taped interviews conducted in Elena's home showed these different styles of interaction in which I could combine critical detachment with some involvement in the situation. The former was facilitated by Elena's willingness to assess her performance as a teacher and our political divergences. Elena did not identify herself as a feminist although she had some vague sympathy for the Women's Movement. In the interviews in her home, Elena was more critical of schooling in general and, of traditional gender and sexual roles in particular, than when she was interviewed in the school. Differences in interview situations tended to accentuate inconsistencies and contraditions in the data collected from her. These made me look for explanatory factors in her position within the school and the Health Education lessons as well as in ideological structures permeating the home and the school. My disagreement with some of Elena's views supported my inclination to

select for analysis the classroom events which I found problematic and which I could sometimes discuss later with Elena. However, I felt that our relationship had little impact on the pupil-teacher relations observed and curricular meanings being produced because of the highly-structured character of the course, Elena's authoritarian teaching style and professional confidence in her experience and judgement.

My informal contact with fifth-year pupils were limited to occasional exchanges in the corridors, grounds and classrooms after lessons. They were structured by my allocation to one House and the research design which did not encompass much fieldwork outside school and teaching-hours. I established some familiarity with the twenty-five pupils whose tutorials I attended and timetables I followed over four weeks. They treated me with a mixture of formality and informality especially when we were out of the earshot of teachers. My status as a research student intrigued them: A few tested it by giving me the opportunity to break the school rules, such as smoking and eating, to see on which side I was. As with the staff, I presented myself as an ex-teacher now doing a study of Health Education. Doing research was a source of puzzlement,especially whenever they learnt that I was unwaged. The other oddity in my roles as an "outsider", that is being French, allowed me to explain my interest in many aspects of schooling. In some lessons, where the teacher had difficulty in maintaining discipline, my presence tended to increase existing tensions. For instance, a few boys ostensibly commented on what I should write down. In most lessons, I felt that my silent presence at the back of the room had

little impact on classroom relations. In Health Education, I attended the lessons of two fourth-year and two fifth-year groups. I became familiar to them and created little restlessness. Elena occasionally recalled our discussions and treated me like a colleague. I had feared that, because of my teacher-status, pupils would not volunteer to be interviewed, but they did willingly. When the Head accepted my plan to interview forty to forty-five fifth-years at the end of the Health Education programme, he stipulated that the interviews should take place during pupils' private study. I conveyed this to a few pupils and gradually the word spread that I wanted to interview fifth-year volunteers on Health Education. Pupils came to me in Grove House to fix a suitable time. In March and April, I conducted forty-two taped-recorded interviews in the small room made available to me by the House-head. I rejected eight, either because they were too badly recorded for transcription or because they were from pupils who belonged to ethnic minorities (9). The seventeen interviews with girls and seventeen with boys lasted, on average, one hour and ten minutes each, that is a double period. I wished to interview volunteers on a self-selecting basis because, if otherwise, the interviews could reinforce the compulsory character of schooling and put more pressure on pupils who were already facing exam-work. Motivations for volunteering varied from "I had nothing else to do", "It's a break from lessons", to "My friend said it was interesting" or "My mate says it's about sex!" Curiosity, the possibility of talking about sexuality apart from Health Education and a break from routine made pupils volunteer. This sample represented a cross section of academic achievement with most interviewees taking five

to six subjects at C.S.E. level linked with a couple of 'O' levels. Three pupils were not entered for any exam while a few took six to eight 'O' levels. I used a semi-structured questionnaire which spanned their general attitudes towards the Health Education course, its objectives and classroom relations together with general sexual attitudes and gender-typing. The quality of interviews varied with pupils' verbal skills, confidence and the subject being explored. With pupils reluctant to approach more personal topics, I focussed the questions on schooling which was much less threatening than sexuality and less confusing than potential domestic roles. I realised that a few pupils would be on the brink of a crisis when they left school in a few weeks' time. When I was aware of somebody's strong vulnerability to a particular question, I often did not pursue it as I would not exploit the unequal power-relations of the interview-situation to extract better data. There were similar silences, embarrassment and reluctance to speak in the interviews as found in the Health Education classes and a similar reticence with me as with the teacher. My questions tended to elicit monosyllabic responses on issues (10) where gender mattered.

Pupils were active female and male participants and, unambiguously and correctly, attributed to me a feminine identity. For instance, when I asked Adam whether he supported a wife taking a full-time job, he retorted: "What would <u>you</u> do? Would you take away a job from a man? Leave him on the dole and get the money for yourself?" I said that I would with no hesitation! He was shocked, muttered "It's wrong!" and looked at me with total condemnation. While I explained that women had as much right to work as men, he stopped me by saying that "doing what you are doing isn't a man's job

anyway." He pointed at the tape-recorder and burst into laughter. The joke that as a researcher I could compete with "real" men for jobs diffused the tension and suggested to me that I should stop probing his attitude with further direct questions. This manifestation of gender-conflicts between interviewer and interviewee was exceptional in its openness but not untypical of the problems that we encountered as male and female participants and the ways in which I tried to respond to them. Had I taken a so-called neutral stand, I would have colluded with Adam's views on female employment. The best way to circumscribe this dilemma and still get some data on boys' gender-position, was to keep referring to the teacher's words and interpretations of these. Another way to de-personalise the interaction was to use hypothetical questions of the type "What would you do in the pub with a girlfriend or if she is on the dole?" I had not planned any of these questions on teenage gender-relations outside school. They arose out of my difficulty of getting inside the masculine culture but in fact, proved to be most helpful since, often, the boys became less defensive on concrete situations with which they were familiar. Also, as in the observed lessons, they used laughter like Adam, to establish some control over our exchanges. In addition to this function, laughter would help them to gloss over their double standards (11) perhaps when they were wanting to be truthful to their ideas and values and yet, not to be offensive to me as a female. Had they been interviewed by a male or in a group, they would have had less need to edulcorate some of their sexist attitudes (12). Sharing the language of masculinity with other interview-participants would have allowed a few boys to express their disagreements with the liberal theme on gender with which I was probably identified because of my

association with Elena and, at times, my questions.

I encountered a contradiction between my feminist's and researcher's interests when interviewing girls too. The awareness of their low image of female sexuality urged me not to dwell on their negative sexual feelings so as not to confirm them. However, being inside the culture of femininity made me sensitive to the girls' contradictions and ambivalences towards relations of subordination. It was easier to establish a more relaxed atmosphere with them than with the boys. However, as with the boys, my identification with the reformist theme toned down, for some, the expression of their acquiescence to a status-quo in female and male relations. This came to light with Liz. After the one and a half hour interview, Liz decided not to do any exam-revision and spend the rest of the afternoon talking to me. The tide had turned! She questioned me on my views of the world. She was strongly critical of the Conservative Party and conformist attitudes among her peer-group. She advocated greater sexual freedom for women but when she discovered that I supported the Women's Movement, she justified a patriarchal system which she also resented. Also, she revealed anti-socialist views. Her arguments (13) came, then, as a complete surprise to me. This demanded some reflection. When I had a more formal control over our interactions, Liz had responded by expressing ideas close to Elena's whom she admired and supposedly, mine. When we moved away from the interviewee - interviewer roles (I did not record the conversation), Liz responded to my declared socialist and feminist ideas with conservative arguments. In other words, the styles of our exchange elicited certain sets of ideas and not others. This

guarded me against attributing a feminist design to informants who were critical of contemporary sexual and gender-relations in the interviews without further validation (14).

After interviewing about twenty pupils, I decided that I needed another source of data on gender-identities and on whose collecting stage I would have little impact. I also felt that this complementary data should not be closely related to the Health Education course but to pupils' peer-group culture. Essay writing seemed a suitable tool, especially as I had little time left before a number of fifth years would leave school. The request for essays read as follows:

> Imagine you are nearing the end of your life and that something makes you think back to the time when you left school with certain fears and hopes. Could you write an account of your life over the next thirty to fifty years stage by stage since that day?

Three English teachers (three females and one male) gave this text to one C.S.E. group, one 'O' level and one remedial group in the fifth years. I had asked them to tell their class that this exercise was part of my research and was not compulsory. After two weeks, thirty-two essays were returned by mid April 1979. I rejected those from the remedial group (thirteen) when I realised that contrary to my advice, the teacher had given strict guidelines as to what pupils should write. I have no evidence on how the eight male writers felt about the essays. A few girls came to me to explain that they had completed the essays since they were for my work. The higher return from females (twenty-four) suggests that even in a situation when I was not directly involved personally, as a female researcher I elicited more data from girls than boys

although I had had no greater contact with them. The boys' essays brought to the fore themes on work which I had not broached in the interviews. It is difficult to assess how close to pupils' expectations of their life after schooling their fictional accounts were. The formulation of the essay set it within the conventions of autobiographical writing which might have discouraged boys from indulging themselves in what they felt was a feminine genre, while it encouraged the girls to enjoy their familiarity with romance as a way of fantasizing about their future. This can only be a speculation since I have no other data on why girls rather than boys returned the essays.

During the observational period, I conducted a few informal interviews with people outside the school whose influence on the course Elena acknowledged. These included the Medical Area Health Education Officer (15), the officer from the local branch of the N.S.P.C.C. and the L.E.A. adviser responsible for Health Education. The first two were most helpful and gave me access to relevant documents. The adviser had been a member of the research team which produced the Schools Council Health Education Project 13-18. He advised me to change my field of research. "There is nothing there to research", he said. His response was somewhat baffling.

My intervention in Fieldclose probably increased staff' and pupils' awareness of the new course and facilitated its establishment in the core-curriculum. It confirmed Elena's resolution to tackle more contentious issues in the following years. But a few weeks after I had finished the main fieldwork, a sudden management decision led to her dramatic resignation from teaching altogether. Consistent with L.E.A. policy, a new senior teacher post was created to integrate Careers and Health Education and develop Personal Relationships/life

skills courses. Elena was not consulted and Mr. Sayer was appointed. Demoralised, not wanting to work under what she felt was going to be a "conservative educational philosophy", she accepted the unsolicited offer of a job in a pharmaceutical firm. This development shows how quickly the situation which I researched changed (16) and suggests that the study might have been a remote contributory factor (17).

This account leaves aside the alley-ways of exploration along which I strolled on the way to this point (18). The research processes have merged with research methods and, in particular, theoretical views with empirical observations. Even in an ethnographic study, these processes can be mostly controlled by the researcher, feminist or not.

FOOTNOTES

1. p. 274 I surveyed thirteen out of the sixteen non-denominational mixed state schools in Sparestown.

2. p. 276 At the onset of the pilot-study, I wrote to Sparestown L.E.A. and had permission to do research in all its schools provided the Heads gave their consent.

3. p. 276 I also designed a structured questionnaire which was administered to all the fifth-years in May 1979. It aimed to collect quantitative data on the popularity of topics in Health Education, on boys' and girls' opinions about being taught in mixed groups and some of their attitudes to gender-roles. 106 pupils returned the questionnaires which I then realised were too long and had too many open-ended questions. Even if it had been better designed, this method was still not the best tool to get data on sensitive issues. I have not used the data thus collected although it seems to confirm the immense popularity of the course. I was able to identify the questionnaires of seven girls and nine boys whom I interviewed. Their responses from the two types of data were consistent with each other.

4. p. 277 See Geer (1964) on long-term effects of early field work as participant observer on a study.

5. p. 278 See, for example, Benney and Hughes (1977) on interviews as a negotiable social encounter.

6. p. 278 In winter 1978-79, there was much social unrest which affected schools. For instance, the lorry-drivers' strike caused a shortage of oil which affected the heating of schools; attacks against State Education by right-wing educationalists who blamed schools for the economic recession were renewed by the teaching unions and non-teaching unions' strikes for better pay for those working in schools.

7. p. 279 The Head and male Deputy were reported to have been surprised that I could give them such a "tough interview" at the end of the fieldwork. On the liabilities of sex-role relationships for female researchers, see, for example, Easterday et al (1982).

8. p. 280 On a feminist view of reciprocity in interviews and ethical problems related to being a feminist interviewer, see Oakley (1981).

9. p. 282 I did not want to refuse an interview with these pupils as such a rejection might have been construed as racialist. I could not use their interviews either because cultural differences were not the object of the study.

10. p. 283 See, for example, p. 198.

11. p. 284 See, for example, p. 230.

12. p. 284 I doubt that the boys interviewed by Willis (1977) would have been so forthcoming in their low opinions of the female sex had they been interviewed by a female with whom they were on friendly terms. If so, this shows how the sex of the interviewer affects certain types of data.

13. p. 285 She argued that sex and class inequalities existed but came from people's laziness, lack of intelligence and ambitions.

14. p. 286 See, for instance, Becker (1970) on general problems of reliability and validity in qualitative methodology and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) on how a reflexive methodology may circumscribe them.

15. p. 287 The Medical Area Health Education Officer kept in touch with me to get some feedback from the study.

16. p. 288 For a discussion of the significance of 'institutional time' in a case study, see Ball (1983, p. 79-83).

17. p. 288 Perhaps my work contributed to Elena's disillusion with the turn of events.

18. p. 288 My experience supports Bell and Encel's argument that, compared to textbooks on methodology, doing research is "infinitely more complex, messy, various and much more interesting" (1978, p. 4); quoted by Oakley (1981, p. 54).

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