

EUGENICS AND SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

Dedicated to Ann

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ABSTRACT

Sexual knowledge, as disseminated by sex educators, is comprised of two component models. The first I call the Model of Innate Sexuality which holds that sexuality is a product of human biology which motivates human action. The second I call the Model of Differential Sexuality which depends upon the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others.

Through a series of discussions with three groups of young white working class women I found that the young women used the Model of Innate Sexuality as a partial explanation for the sexual impositions of young white men. But they used the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others to explain the reaction of "some girls" to those impositions and to explain the sexual impositions of young Black men. These ideas were expressed through the concepts of "slag" and Racist Sexual Knowledge. The second part of the research was motivated by my wish to understand the linkage between the two concepts. I turned my attention to the sex educators on the basis that sex education provides a visible and analytically manageable model of what is held to be legitimate sexual knowledge.

By tracing the historical antecedents of the major sex education organisations I found that the eugenics movement had been highly influential in their formation and that the eugenic ideal of rational selection informs their ethos.

I contend that the Model of Differential Sexuality is a eugenic construct formulated within an evolutionary framework which linked allegedly hereditary properties to the capacity to exercise sexual self-control.

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METHODOLOGY

The methodological proposition of this study is that sexual knowledge consists of socially constructed ideas, social categories and practices. This thesis, therefore, begins from the premise that what we regard as sexuality is the product of how we learn to assign significance and interpretation to our emotional and physical capacities. By this I mean that we learn to use interpretative frameworks to make sense of our emotions and bodies in such a way as to attribute sexual meaning to certain physical and emotional interactions. It is in learning and engaging in this process that we are effectively removed from the choice as to whether or not to be sexual in the social world. Instead the interpretative frameworks that we have learnt pre-define us as sexual. Sexuality is therefore, a conceptual imposition (Smith, 1984) which, as argued in the text, has social effects.

My contention at the start of this research was that underlying this imposition is a model of sexual knowledge which holds that sexuality is a product of biology and is a biological motivational force towards sexual action. I call this the Model of Innate Sexuality.

The Model of Innate Sexuality, I believed, formed the baseline of sex education programmes for young people. Research I had previously undertaken pointed to the strength of the model in determining young women's knowledge of their own bodies. Here I had found that young women knew little about their bodies outside of the framework of human

reproduction and that the reproductive framework consolidated and was consolidated by the knowledge that sexuality, and most particularly heterosexuality, is the product of biology. (Clark 1983).

My decision to undertake further research in this area was founded upon two aims. First, to find a means of deconstructing the imposed model of innate sexuality. Second, to engage in the process of reconstructing alternative model(s) of sexuality based upon self definition and individual control over our bodies and our social lives.

I also wanted to make the process of deconstruction and reconstruction part of the research itself and not something undertaken after the event. I wanted, in other words, young women's participation in this process. My method for this part of the research, therefore, involved participant action research. Through the method of group discussions with young women I aimed to develop a process whereby the following could be achieved:

- i) The young women could individually and collectively arrive at a conscious awareness of what they knew, and had experienced, about sexuality.
- ii) A definition of the models of sexual knowledge that informed their ideas, attitudes and action could be arrived at.
- iii) An understanding, shared with them if possible, of how they came to learn the sexual knowledge that they had identified would be achieved.

In deciding whom I should approach to take part in the study I was influenced in part by my past work with and interest in working class young women. I was also uneasy about other studies that had been conducted with working class young women, which I felt often represented a middle class perspective on working class women's lives. I did not intend to place myself in the position of judging personal and social experiences that were critically outside my own as a white working class woman. I felt it was politically and methodologically important to work with young white working class women and to produce their account and analyses of their ideas and experiences. At the same time the research was a process in which I was an active and conscious participant. I therefore adopted a methodological approach to reflect this. There are other methodological approaches to working with girls and young women; see, for example, the work of McRobbie (1978), Cowie and Lees (1981) Nava (1982), and Lees (1986). However, it was not among my aims to use what the young women who participated in this research said to provide 'data' to challenge the works of these writers. They therefore receive no further attention in this thesis.

I worked with three groups of young women, aged between 16 to 19, over a two year period. Two of the groups were working on an employment and training scheme as cleaners. Their supervisors, Joyce and Val, participated in the discussions. Both supervisors included the discussions in their time tables for the young women. They set aside three, and sometimes four, hours per week for the research. My introduction to the groups had been

agreed to by the Management of the Scheme provided that I would not publish its identity. The third Group met in a youth club. I was introduced to them by Marie, a Youth Leader. The research would not have been possible without the help and co-operation of these women.

I worked with Joyce's group from October 1984 to July 1985 and with Val's group from October 1985 to April 1986. The work with the young women in the youth club was mainly undertaken during the first stage i.e. from October, 1984. My contact here, however, was less regular. I fitted in with whatever other activities these young women had planned week by week.

To work this method successfully I had to establish personal credibility and trust with the young women taking part in the research. I, therefore, took care to assure confidentiality and to facilitate openness in discussion without making the young women feel vulnerable in the process.

The young women were all Liverpool born, all working class and white. The first group were: Jane, Maria, Doreen, Lizzy, Margaret, Karen and Julie. The members of the second group were Ellen, Janice, Tracy, Lilly, Julie Mary, Tricia and Berni. Doreen's period of employment spanned both groups. Joyce was the supervisor of the first group; Val of the second. The young women in the youth club were Sue and Dianne, who were later joined by their friends, Gaynor and Jill. The young women's participation was entirely voluntary and it is they, more than anyone else, who made this research possible.

I used a small cassette player to record the discussions between the young women and myself. The young women quickly became used to the method and seemed quite happy with it. I transcribed the tapes in full, which was a very time consuming process. Sometimes I would find that the young women had recorded little extras for me (clearly done when I was out of the room) such as short songs and 'dirty ditties'. They would then sometimes ring me up at the University to see if I had enjoyed the 'extras'. I had.

I had a lot of fun working with the young women, most particularly those in Joyce's group. We spent a lot of sessions laughing and joking, and sometimes we would go out for a drink together. There were a great many things that we discussed which I have not, for various reasons, included in the findings. Some of these things were personal to the young women, some were personal to me. The latter stages of this part of the research process, however, did become difficult. Here I refer in particular to the discussions, outlined in Chapter Eight, about some young women's beliefs about Black male sexuality. Those discussions became increasingly conflictual. There were many racist and other oppressive opinions voiced by the young women which I could not transcribe let alone reproduce in this thesis. In these discussions between the young women and myself, the concepts of "slag" and of racism were linked, and it was my wish to understand the construction of that linkage that motivated the research outlined in Part Two of this Thesis.

The results of the research with the young women are contained in Part One of this thesis.

Part Two of the Research began with certain conclusions from Part One which motivated enquiry into the origins of sex education and its ethos. Sex education literature seemed, therefore, to offer an appropriate starting point. It provided a visible, manageable and analytically distinct model of what is held to be legitimate sexual knowledge.

Over a six month period I conducted a detailed review of this literature. It became evident that the eugenics movement had played a central role in the development, organisation and transmission of sex education. Two further years of research on the eugenics movement followed. This included a review of its published material, including its journals, minutes of its meetings, rules, constitution, membership lists, tracts etc. I also read widely amongst other sources connected to the subject matter of sexuality, sex education, and the eugenics and associated organisations. I plotted a 'family tree' of the Eugenics movement and organisations connected to it from its origins in the early days of the 20th century to its present form. This was a process which underlined for me the extent of the eugenic influence in many educational, social, political, religious, economic, and other strategic institutions in the 20th century. I also interviewed leading members of organisations associated with the Eugenics Society and visited the offices and libraries of the Eugenics Society itself and the Education Unit of the Family Planning Association.

The analysis and finding of these two and a half years are contained in Part Two of the thesis. It was not possible to include everything that I read and

was told. Instead I have selected sources and references which reflect dominant themes at different points in time in the history of the eugenics movement and of sex education.

The second part of the research was motivated, as stated above, by my wish to understand the construction of the linkage between the concepts of "slag" and of racism. It was from that part of the research process that I recognised that a second model of sexual knowledge had been constructed and was one which had even wider effects and implications for different groups of people. I refer to the second model of sexual knowledge as the Model of Differential Sexuality, which maintains that some people are more sexual because they are less intelligent and less moral. Why, how and by whom it was constructed and disseminated form the major foci of Part Two.

I have not attempted to discuss the experiences of the different groups of people who were and are on the receiving end of the practices which flow from the Model of Differential Sexuality. It would be politically invalid to do so. Nor have I attempted to superimpose the findings of the second part of the research upon my analyses arising from the discussions with the young women. Those analyses represent what I believed to be happening and what I knew at the time they took place. It is, however, the combined findings of Parts One and Two that form the central arguments, analyses and substance of this thesis.

I do not claim that the young women used the eugenic model of sexual

knowledge which maintains that some people are more sexual than others. As I explain in Part Two, the Model of Differential Sexuality has its own peculiar properties which link sexuality to allegedly innate and evolved levels of intelligence and morality. My point is rather to question the construct of the linkage between the concepts of "slag" and racist sexual knowledge and to point to their organised coherence within the Model of Differential Sexuality, which, I claim, forms a component part of the sexual knowledge disseminated by the sex educators.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

There are two central arguments to this thesis. The first argument is that sexual knowledge is a social construct comprised of two component yet analytically distinct models which have been organised into a coherent whole.

The first I call the Model of Innate Sexuality which holds that sexuality is the product of biology. The second I call the Model of Differential Sexuality which depends on the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others.

The second argument concerns the construction and use of the Model of Differential Sexuality and is the subject matter of Part Two of this thesis. Briefly stated, I show in Part Two that the Model of Differential Sexuality was constructed by eugenists during the early part of the twentieth century, was widely disseminated as a component of sexual knowledge by sex educators, and was used to legitimate intervention in the processes of human reproduction among specified groups of people. I also show that the groups of people to whom the Model was, and continues to be applied were and are the target audiences of sex education programmes aimed at promoting 'responsible parenthood'. Among those groups are young Black and white working class people.

Part One of this thesis is more concerned with identifying and assessing the impact of the models of sexual knowledge used by three groups of young white working class women. Through a series of discussions between the young women and myself it is shown that the sexual knowledge they had learnt and understood was based upon, in the first instance, the Model of Innate Sexuality organised in a reproductive framework. By this I mean their sexual knowledge marked a conflation of reproductive activity with sexual activity, menstruation with a reproductive function, and vaginas with penile penetration. This will be explained more fully in the text.

The young women believed that sex should be an expression of love. Their interactions with young men, however, led them to deduce that young men had quite different motivation. According to the young women, young men gain kudos within their peer groups from heterosexual experience and need to test young women's respectability. Young women who 'fail' the test, who show sexual motivation comparable to that of young men, were firmly defined by the young women as "slags", as more sexual than they were. The young women's use of the model of sexual knowledge which hold that some people are more sexual marked, I argue, a strategy of resistance to the sexual impositions of young men and to imposed sexualisation. Both impositions made strategies of resistance necessary. On the one hand, young men continually sexually harassed the young women with the express purpose of heterosexual intercourse. On the other hand, the young women's knowledge of sex and of their own bodies, founded within the Model of Innate Sexuality, pre-defined women as sexual. As I discuss to the text,

however, the young women's use of the labels "slag" and its equivalents not only operated to legitimate male sexual impositions but could trap young women in relationships with violent young men and in relationships based upon rape.

Bringing the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others into yet sharper focus were the views expressed by some of the young women about what they perceived to be the dangerous sexuality of Black men. Not only did the young women believe that Black men are more sexual than whites, but that white women who go out with Black men are also more sexual.

The discussions and analyses of the label "slag" in Chapter One and Racist Sexual Knowledge in Chapter Eight provide two points at which the central argument coheres. I draw attention to these two chapters in highlighting the crux of Part One of the thesis, while specific elements of the main arguments are evidenced and elaborated in Chapters Two to Seven.

Part One also introduces what comes to be the core elements of the investigations in Part Two as is indicated in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter Eight. These are the construction and operation of the Model of Differential Sexuality as a component of sexual knowledge.

A brief summary of each chapter of Part One is outlined below.

Chapter One includes a series of discussions with young women concerning the models of sexual knowledge that they have learnt to operate within. The women identify certain elements of this model. These are explored fully in the text. They include the knowledge that lads want sexual intercourse with girls; that lads want it more than girls; that lads call girls "slags", and that girls know this and therefore share the responsibility for sexual intercourse should it ensue and for subsequently being called "slag". As the text shows the young women were clearly reacting to men's behaviour within the parameters of the knowledge they held. I discovered paradoxically, however, that the same knowledge, while apparently affording a strategy to resist male sexual impositions, can also legitimate those impositions.

The discussions about "slag" illustrate the paradox in operation. The women use the label "slag" to denote sexual availability, to distance themselves from "some girls" who participate in the male model of sexuality, and to resist unwelcome male sexual intrusions. But the label can legitimate those same intrusions because they are explained as a test of the young women's respectability. The most dangerous implication of this is that young women can become entrapped into a relationship with a violent man should she have intercourse with him, as to leave him would earn the label "slag". The chapter concludes with the analysis that the "slag" labelling strategy works within rather than against a model of sexual knowledge which implicitly legitimates sexual violence to women.

Chapter Two discusses how the young women used the label "slag" to distance themselves socially from the behaviour of "some girls" and from other women including prostitutes and strippers. However, when new knowledge concerning male violence to prostitutes and strippers was introduced, the young women's views were challenged and changed. Firstly, they revised their notion that prostitutes limit the incidence of rape. Secondly, the young women perceived a similarity between their own experience of violence from men and that of women working as prostitutes and strippers.

Chapter Three is concerned with how the knowledge that men rape is used to blame the women who have been raped. The discussion shifts from the perspective that rape is a street attack by unknown men, to a consideration of whether or not emotional and physical coercion constitute rape. In conclusion, it is suggested that if women do not have self definition and validation of their own experience of sexual impositions they can get trapped in relationships based upon rape.

In Chapter Four, the focus shifts to encompass the material constraints to the choices young working class women can make about their lives. Many of the young women had been structured to the lower end of the education system and the job market. It is suggested that the young women may have been on the receiving end of ideas that working class equates less intelligent: an equation which, as I later argue, is a core component of the Model of Differential Sexuality.

Chapter Five points to the disparity between the young women's ideals for heterosexual relations, and their experience with men. It becomes evident that the young women wanted relationships based upon friendship, respect, love and self-definition, and not sexual availability and the violence and coercion that characterises the reality they have experienced. The material constraints and the threat of male violence are drawn together in this chapter to point to the very real difficulties facing young working class women in making different choices about their lives.

In Chapter Six, I follow an exploration of the young women's knowledge and, for some, negative feelings about their own bodies and menstruation. Some young women make the observation that their vaginas are there for the purpose of sex. They further observe that they had learnt about their vaginas, about sex and menstruation in the context of reproductive activity. A crucial effect of this knowledge was that the young women believed heterosexual intercourse to be inevitable. The knowledge also provided them with a strong negative model against which some assessed social and sexual relationships other than heterosexual ones.

The chapter also contains an example of the process of deconstructing and reconstructing models of sexual knowledge. The introduction of new knowledge concerning clitoral orgasm helped some of the young women to find alternative definitions and choices about sexuality outside of the reproductive model. They subsequently saw the reproductive model as a narrowly defined male view of sexuality.

The chapter concludes with a discussion concerning imposition and choice in sexuality. The argument is that our capacity to resist sexual imposition is limited by the forms of sexual knowledge and conceptual models that we use.

In Chapter Seven I return to the particular theme of sex education. The young women expressed dissatisfaction with the sex education they had received, partly because it presumed sexual activity. Following a brief discussion on this, the group of young women were asked to assess the contents of a sex education pamphlet which represented an alternative and liberal viewpoint. Both shock and humour accompany the young women's reaction to the contents of the pamphlet. I deduce that the pamphlet's premise and contents offered little help to the young women. The young women's difficulties in dealing with sexual intrusions from young men could not be answered by learning about non-penetrative sexual pleasure. Indeed, the idea that women's bodies were defined as sexual was affirmed rather than challenged by the contents of the pamphlet.

Chapter Eight brings further clarity to the model of sexual knowledge which holds that some people are more sexual than others, a model that has been shown to operate throughout this part of the research in relation to "slags" and other sub-groups. In an analysis of specific racist incidents and attitudes we see how this model is applied to whole social groups, in this case defined by race. The chapter introduces the idea that our sexual knowledge is also Racist Sexual Knowledge. It is argued in this chapter that

racist sexual knowledge further legitimates white male sexual violence to white women by constructing fear of Black men.

Chapter Eight is particularly important in that it clarifies the significance of the construction of the Model of Differential Sexuality. It also motivated the subsequent investigation which comprises Part Two of the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LABELLING STRATEGY

The terms "slag", "slut" and "sweat" were used often by the young women when talking about their own and other young women's interactions with young men. The young women were angry that young men "call" young women whether or not they have "had you":

That's what they're like. They say it even though they haven't.
(Tracy)

Part of the anger was that young men gain kudos within their peer groups from boasting about heterosexual experience, particularly as both the kudos and the experience are gained at the expense of young women.

It makes me sick that lads get called great and clever.
(Jane)

A lad can go with all kinds of girls and get called a man and a stud. But if a girl did it like, went round like a lad she gets called a slag doesn't she. What can we do like.
(Sue)

There was a general consensus that it was unfair that there exists no equivalent term of abuse to define male sexual behaviour and to condemn lads. Young men's sexual behaviour was consistently criticised, most specifically when it showed a lack of respect for young women:

You know if a lad tries it on the first night, you think he's a pervert or he doesn't respect you.
(Margaret)

That lack of respect is premised, said one young women, upon the male belief that women exist for the purpose of heterosexual intercourse:

I think men think of women that they're just objects, that they're just there for the taking you know for intercourse. That's what they think women are for.
(Sue)

To be treated as being "there for the taking" is to be sexualised, to be perceived to be indiscriminately sexually available: to be treated as "slag". Being treated as such was an experience that young women shared, and which they all found "degrading". This degradation was explained by reference to "slag":

Ellen touching my....and my arse, get out of it! It's just dead mad isn't it. It's degrading that, cos they think that you look like one.

But to which Tracy quipped:

What does a slag look like.

The young women used the label "slag" to define others - often described as "some girls". It was by reference to "some girls" that the young women

condemned the form of sexual behaviour considered male and by which they asserted their own rejection of that sort of behaviour. The use of the label may therefore be seen as a rejection of sexualisation, that is, of being sexually used by young men on the terms of and for the purposes of young men; or, as Sue said, of just being there for intercourse:

You know lads, they're very easy going aren't they. They wouldn't think twice if it was a tramp in the street, they'd do it. But they expect girls to be the same, to give in after a certain while. But they're (girls) not. They're not like that - well most of them aren't. And they (lads) expect it because they're willing to do it any time, any place like. But they think the girls are ready for it but they're not. That cracks me up.
(Sue)

The young women were also aware of the consequences for themselves of being "very easy going". To be labelled a "slag" was to risk being viewed as dangerous to and by other young women:

HC Would you knock around with a girl who'd got a name?

Sue and No
Dianne

HC Why not?

Dianne Cos you'd get a name then

Sue You'd get a name for knocking round with her.
They'd think you were as well

But it was more than the spreading of suspicion:

Sue It depends really because some girls who are hanging round with a slag become the same. You pick up your mate's habits. Cos usually....there's a girl we know who hangs round with a girl and she's a slag as well. They're both available all the time. I mean and lads come up to us and say "Have you seen such and such, 'cos we want to walk her down".

The young women knew that the lads' sole interest in these girls was to have sex with them - sex was the function of the "slag" for young men. This was expressed in various ways by all the young women:

Sue Lads of about 16 have go to prove themselves to their mates. Like you know "Oh I've got this, I've got that" you know just prove themselves and all that....

This explanation may have been influenced by the content of a sex education film Sue and Dianne had been shown at school, part of which they had earlier described to me in almost identical terms. It is an explanation which does not touch upon why men gain praise from each other for heterosexual activity, why they should seek to prove themselves so, nor why women should be sexually used to this end. Should a young women have been so used, however, and discussed sexually between young men, the danger to her is of further imposed sexualisation. Sue continued:

•
and then a girl gets called a slag or whatever. She goes through all that doesn't she.

Dianne And then other lads go after her and you don't know

whether they want to see you like or they're just after that one thing.

On another occasion Sue restated this:

If a girl gets called she knows that....it's going to get to them but then all the lads are going to go after her you know to go with her like...just to see what they can get off her.

Rather than wanting to get to know the young woman as a person, young men are interested in her solely for sex. But:

Dianne Lads call girls anyway

Sue Yeh but if you've done it with one lad then I don't think it would get to you. But if you've done it with quite a few then it would probably get to the girl. I wouldn't know myself like.

The young women thus distinguished between being called a "slag" by lads and actually being a "slag". Self-image was important in this distinction. A young woman may "do it" with one lad and not be a "slag", though she may be regarded as "stupid":

Mary Say I got off tonight with a lad and he gave me one I'd still be a sweat

HC Just for once?

- Mary Yeh. The first night
- HC Who would call you that?
- Tracy I wouldn't. I'd call her a stupid girl. If you get off with someone the first night, you're fucking stupid.¹

For the young woman who is sexually active and most particularly whose sexual activity is publicly known, the dangers attached to labels may be more acute:

- Margaret E'y'are like....it was me. He told his mate, like he only told one lad...but you know what girls are like. If you do it with every one you'd get a name...but I made a mistake. I did it too early. I know that now. I made a mistake. If we split up I can never bring myself to do it with any other lad. That'd be wrong. I'd be a slut wouldn't I?
- Chorus No not really. Not as long as you were sure you really loved him.
- Margaret He gets worried 'cos he says to me - 'cos he's had loads of girls like that "You wouldn't try it with other lads?". I wouldn't want to do it with anyone else, you know what I mean. It'd be the same like though wouldn't it. There's nothing else like, you've got to be straight...it'd feel the same wouldn't it.

The rest of the young women did not respond to Margaret's latter point that sex would feel "the same" whoever the lad. But they did launch into a very

1. "Stupid" here refers more to a lack of nous than of intellect.

positive condemnation of young men's double standard about past relationships, declaring that what's good for the lad is also good for them. The major point, however, was that Margaret could be trapped by the threat of the label "slut" in a relationship with a violent young man, as became clear during the course of the research. Within the short time Margaret was in this group, the other young women, as did I, attempted to encourage Margaret to leave this young man but to no avail. There were undoubtedly many other factors contributing to her not leaving him but the threat of being labelled, and the consequences of that, should not be understated.²

When I asked the young women in each of the groups to explain what they meant by "slag" I received a variety of responses, some very elaborate:

A slag is a girl who goes with a lad say the first night or about four nights after, he has intercourse like he has sex with her and then she packs him in or he packs her in, and then she goes with another lad say two weeks later. Say about three nights the week after she's been going with him she lets him have her like. You know something like that. That's what a slag is.
(Sue)

Say she got off tonight and he had her and then she got off with another tomorrow night and he had her, then she'd be called a sweat.
(Tricia)

Women who cop off with different fellas in the clubs even if he's with his girlfriend.
(Jane)

Jane went on to explain that "the lads all talk about what they've all done

2. I remember as a young woman that if a girl did have sex with a lad she could eventually feel 'stuck with him', which was premised on the commitment that having sex implied.

with the sluts" and that this made her feel "embarrassed". She also said that "if one comes making up to a fella when I'm sitting there with him" she felt "ashamed".³

She did not know, however, in response to my question, whether she was "ashamed" for herself or for the woman. One boundary that may be transgressed by the lads and by the woman, however, was that of privacy. All of the young women felt that sex should be a private matter:

I think sex should be between two people and it shouldn't be publicised.
(Margaret)

Bringing sex into the public domain may offend the desire for privacy. It may also be experienced as undermining a young woman's right to decide if and when to become sexually active.⁴

Jane I hate....I think there's too much sex going round. Everyone's gone sex mad haven't they. I'll tell you one thing though, I was talking about this to my mates. I er -maybe it's like when you're getting old and all that you do feel horny when you're with someone or anything - but I've never been frustrated.

Julie What's that, what's 'frustrated'?

Jane Like you need sex, you really want it, you've got to have it, like that kind of thing isn't it? Frustrated - like you need to have it like to settle your mind or

3. "Ashamed" in Liverpool can also mean embarrassed.

4. It is possible to feel 'competed against' is the situation described by Jane.

something. Like I've never felt that. Never ever...Like I'm 18 but I've heard some girls say "I'm awful frustrated".

Jane's statement that she personally and currently neither needs nor wants sex was not unusual. In a discussion with another group which arose from my attempt to undermine the validity of the labels "slag", "slut", "sweat" etc. the young women made it quite clear that it was young men, rather than themselves, who wanted sex.

HC But if a lad can brag about it but the girl is supposed to feel ashamed or get called for it, it doesn't seem very fair does it?

Lilly She shouldn't have gone round letting everybody do it to her anyway.

HC So you think it's her responsibility?

Lilly Yeh

Tracy How can a girl be a sweat if she's not giving. Do you know what I mean?

HC Do you feel then it's up to girls to control it?

Lilly Well if they know they're going to get a bad name...

Tracy And they're not bothered, some girls might not be bothered if they've got a bad name as long as they're happy. But like us, we'd go mad if we got a bad name, well I would anyway.

HC But the way you put it makes it sound as if you think it's up to the girl to control it, that it's her responsibility.

Ellen It is just as much as the lad's. If she doesn't want a bad name, she doesn't go round giving it out.

Tracy You get lads who want it off girls don't you, not girls who want it off lads....

Ellen That's the main thing isn't it...

Tracy It's the lads who want it off the girls isn't it. So you know what you're doing don't you and if you don't want to do it, you won't do it.

According to these young women, young women know that young men "want it", and on the basis of that knowledge young women share the responsibility with the young man should the encounter lead to heterosexual intercourse. But it is, of course, the young woman who is labelled "slag" and held ultimately responsible.

Holding the woman responsible - blaming her - on the grounds that she knows "what men are like" can, as I shall discuss later, be extremely dangerous for women. At the very least it focuses upon the actions of the woman rather than those of the man. The term "slag" and its equivalents function to this end. The young women knew that the producers of the labels are men:

Julie They (lads) give girls a bad name don't they.

Tracy If it wasn't for them shouting their mouth off there wouldn't be any such word as sweat and slag for girls would there.

But they still argued that it was the young woman's responsibility - her own fault - if she was called "slag" because she knew that "lads want it off girls".

I asked the group:

Why do lads want it off girls?

Ellen Yeh, why does a lad when he goes with her like go after it?

Tracy I don't know

(Long pause)

HC Well if lads want it off girls, and I mean nobody seems to know why, why don't girls want it off lads then?

Ellen Lads are more prone to want it than girls. It wouldn't bother me if sex went out of fashion tomorrow.

In another group a similar question had been raised:

Doreen What I'd like to know is why do lads always try it on.

Jane That's just the way they are.

The "way they are" and the 'fact' that "lads want it more" comprise a form of knowledge which functions to legitimate rather than to open up discussion of male behaviours. The young women were offended by young men's attempts to impose sex, but offence was not merely described but explained by reference to "slag".

"Slag" was also used by some to the young women to justify sexual impositions. Tracy had repeated that she felt degraded by such impositions, especially "on the first night":

- Julie You just knock them back and that's it
- Tricia I wouldn't bother to see them again. Shows how much respect they've got for you doesn't it....shit! They're just stupid twats. If any lad did that to me I just wouldn't bother looking at them again.
- Julie They might just be doing that to try you out.

The young women all started shouting at once. Most of the group agreed with Julie. Tricia and I disagreed.

- HC It's like saying they've got the right to
- Ellen No it isn't. If a lad gets off with you the first night, they sense "Oh she's not giving", that's it.
- HC Do you mean to say that it's alright for some lad to test you out to see if you're a nice girl or a slag by trying to get a grip on you?

The group erupted. We were all angry.

- HC What bloody right have they got to test you out?
- Tracy You say "Fuck off, what do you think the score is here!" and he wouldn't try it again. If you like him anyway, you'd see him again.
- Julie He wouldn't even try it again for a couple of weeks.
- Ellen And he'd carry on seeing you 'cos he must have liked you in the first place to get off with you.
- HC But have they got the right to test you out? How do you know what they're like?
- Tricia No they haven't....nobody's got the right to touch my body.

There were mumblings of dissent.

- HC So if a girl does it on the first night, she's a slag but if he tries it on, he's just testing you out? They can't lose and you can't win.
- Ellen Yeh but he's got to know if you're a sweat or whether you're decent like.
- HC So it's like saying it's alright for him 'cos he won't get called but it isn't alright for her 'cos she will get called.
- Ellen Yeh but it's the way of the world isn't it, it's the way things go in life isn't it. That's the way it's gone on and no-one's going to change it.

That "way of the world" depends, in part at least, upon the knowledge that lads "want it more", and that young women must react to young men's behaviour within the parameter of that knowledge. Yet that knowledge is deemed to protect young women:

- Tracy It's the way you've been brought up as well isn't it. That's got a lot to do with it. Like your mum and dad don't say to you: "Oh don't go and do that and you don't do that". But lads, they sort of say what lads do.
- Ellen They (lads) sort of look at what their mates are doing and they think "Oh I'm not going to be the odd one out". It's like when you're in a club, you don't hear a girl saying to a lad "Can I walk you home?". The lads would probably just laugh at you. We've got to have respect for ourselves, girls. I think girls should have respect for ourselves.
- HC Do you think the whole thing is unfair?
- Tracy We know it's unfair but what can we do.

On another occasion, I asked these young women if the threat of getting called "slag" was "a reason not to do it":

Ellen (Laughing) Just imagine if you didn't get called, you'd be in bed every night.

Tracy Well it's not just that. You've got your own pride in yourself haven't you.

Ellen Yeh

All the young women argued that "losing your pride" was a major threat attached to having sex.

Gayner If you're sleeping around, you're losing your pride

Tracy You do it once and that'd be stupid 'cos you've given your pride away haven't you.

For one young woman, sex could involve "sacrificing your body":

And another thing that puts girls off, like you say to yourself if you're going to let a lad, just think you're sacrificing your body, you're giving your body to them. That's what I say to myself; I'll just have to wait for the right person. Just got to wait.
(Sue)

The young women wanted to develop relationships which were based on respect, trust, mutuality, friendship and love, rather than sex. But they experienced considerable difficulty in achieving this:

- Ellen And why is it when you're going with a lad you've got to see them?
- HC How do you mean, "see them"?
- Ellen Kiss them and all that. When you go with a fella you've got to kiss them haven't you. I mean you haven't but you have haven't you.
- HC Do you not like kissing?
- Ellen I don't mind, it doesn't bother me but you don't always want to.
- HC Sometimes it intrudes doesn't it. It's right there (putting my hand up to my face).
- Ellen I hate it but you've got to.
- HC Have you got to?
- Tricia It's an insult if you say no. I hate it though. You know sometimes, that's when I know.
- HC Is that when there is something wrong with the whole thing?
- Tricia Yeh
- HC Yeh I can understand that
- Tricia If I don't want to kiss them I go like that (turning face away). That's when I know I don't want to go with them any more.
- HC Well it is breaking down a lot of...well normally you don't get that close to anybody else do you. You seem to surround yourself and kissing somebody actually breaks that...it steps right inside that little space you've got around yourself.

The young women responded with enthusiastic agreement that kissing could be an intrusion. In another group, earlier in the research process, the same subject had been brought up:

- Jane I like things like going out and having a nice time and all that instead of going home snogging on the couch. I'd rather do that than go snogging on the couch.
- Margaret (Laughing) It's not a snog on the couch with us, it's get down to it with us. Get down to it me!
- Jane Honest to God, I tell you, I have watched, we've had the telly on and he's sort of like getting kind of....and I've watched bleeding 'Quincy' or something.

We all started to laugh on the basis of our shared knowledge of such a situation.

Margaret You know every time we've been arguing and everything and you can hear our telly in the background; everytime he goes to neck me "Well wait till the romantic music comes on": that's how he goes; and me: Get lost".

Jane I've watched bleeding 'Quincy' and he's trying to turn me on and all that.

I don't like saying it though "Oh I want to watch the telly" because I don't like watching the telly but I'd rather sort of watch the telly. I like kissing and that but not as much as I used to. I mean I used to love having a kiss but...I'd kiss anyone at the time. Like I mean there was nothing down for you if I got hold of you but now I hate it....I don't like kissing at all. I'd rather have Harvey as my mate 'cos he's dead sound...he'd be brilliant as a mate. I'd rather have him that way but if I turned round to him and said "I'd rather have you as a friend" I think he'd be hurt by it.

Other young women pointed to a qualitative difference between going out with a young man and being friends with him. Following on from my statement that kissing could be an intrusion into personal space, Ellen asked me:

- Ellen You could be best mates with a lad couldn't you but once you see them, that's it. It (friendship) splits up. Why's that?
- HC Maybe it's expectations you know....
- Julie Say it again
- Ellen You could be best mates...
- Julie Yeh it changes doesn't it.
- Ellen Why's that?
- HC Why do you think it is?
- Ellen You feel more embarrassed don't you.
- HC It's a different sort of relationship isn't it.
- (Chorus) Yeh.
- HC It's like, it's a pity you can't combine the two things more.
- Ellen That's the point. You can only have a good mate or boyfriend.
- HC I think some can but it seems....
- Tricia It's better to have a good mate.
- HC Do you reckon?
- Ellen Yeh.

The young women said that they were able to talk more to their mates than to their boyfriends.

- HC Do you think that when they move from being friend to being boyfriend that changes something?
- Ellen I think they think er "Well I go with her now so I don't have to talk to her anymore". Like say you're best mates with a lad, you're dead good mates, you get on and tell them your problems. Well once you start

seeing them, well they don't want you to tell anybody else what you've been telling them. Like they don't want you to talk to anyone else like you used to talk to him 'cos you're going with him. But no matter who you're going with, you always have a good mate to talk to don't you.

HC Do you wish you could have the two in the same person?

Ellen Yeh, it'd be dead good that wouldn't it. You'd get on dead good wouldn't you. I haven't got the two in the same person.

Tricia But you never get that do you.

HC Don't you think so, Trish, you can't combine friendship with who you're going out with?

Tricia No, but why?

Ellen I used to have a laugh with him and then he just never spoke to me. You don't know what to talk about or nothing. You just stand there.

Tricia You just feel terrible. Like they couldn't care less what they say when you're not going with them but it changes.

Talking, discussing problems and having a laugh were important aspects of friendship. But not only did boyfriends deny this in relationships, they also attempted to close the young women's access to such friendship with others - their "best mates". Unsuccessfully, however - the young women retained their loyalty to their mates:

Ellen I'll tell you what. If I had to choose between him and my mate, it'd be my mate....definitely. I've always said it. And if he came down and said: "I'm going out with my mates", I'd say "Aye, OK, see you

tomorrow".

Tracy I feel the same as Ellen.

In various ways, then, many of the young women felt that relationships with young men involved actual or attempted unwelcome intrusions or impositions: trying it on the first night, kissing, trying to 'turn on' the young woman, getting in the way of friendships. With the exception of friendship - though this may be linked - these involved physical intrusions on the young woman's body. As the relationship continued, so too could the intrusions:

Dianne You know the first lad I went with....a lad had never felt my arse or anything. The first lad who felt my arse was not this one I'm going with, not the one before him but the one before that. That was the first lad to feel my arse. He went to feel and I knocked him back and he went "That's nothing your bum like" and I let him but then he started going for my top half and that. I knocked him back then straight away.

Sue The first time like, I've usually knocked a lad back but it was only a few weeks ago I ever let a lad get my arse. He never went for the top but I wouldn't let him. I wouldn't let them go for my top or anything like that. I don't know, I think it's a bit embarrassing myself.

I asked the young women if they knocked back the young men who "go for" their breasts because "it's a particularly sexual thing to do":

Dianne It is to them. I mean it's nothing really to a girl is it. I mean you don't see a girl go round and grab a lad, the lads grab you. So it's sexual to them isn't it.

These two young women went on to explain that young men "try for" specific parts of young women's bodies:

Sue I mean if a lad thinks he can go so far on a girl he's going to try for the breasts. If she lets him get that, he's going to try for down there. If she knocks him back then he's going to say "You've let me go so far like, what's wrong?". Then you feel all the pressure and that.

The young women pointed out that young men follow a 'route' on young women's bodies for their own purposes of heterosexual intercourse. I asked them if they thought that parts of their bodies had been defined as sexual while other parts, which could be pleasurable, escaped such definition Dianne did not understand my question. Sue explained to her in terms which answered the question:

Sue She's on about, say your breasts and your arse and all that lead to sex, that's what we think they do and they do. But say like he touches the back of your neck like and it gives you a nice feeling but you don't relate that to sex do you.

I asked another 'leading' question:

Do you think you could enjoy your bodies more if there wasn't pressure?

Sue Yeh, you could enjoy your body a lot more if it meant nothing to them. But it does. They feel as though they're getting somewhere, you know what I mean? And that's like the pressure, otherwise you'd laugh at them wouldn't you.

Dianne Yeh. If you knew they weren't getting so much out of it....but they are, they try to get more and you knock them back but they'll just say "You've let me go so far, what's wrong with the rest". It's bad.

The classification of various parts of women's bodies as sexual is part of the process of sexualising women. It is also, and relatedly, a process of depersonification. The young women undoubtedly recognized this and restricted young men's access to their bodies. Their strategies denoted a resistance to being sexually available to young men on the latter's terms for the latter's purposes. But because of young men's actions, the young women could find themselves in 'no-win' situations:

Sueif you don't let a lad get anything they'll think you're cold but if you do they'll think you're leading them on 'cos there's two ways they can take it and either way you can't win.

The 'no-win' situation was not dictated solely by young men's actions. What the young women had been taught about male and female physiology together with social expectations were also important factors:

Sue I don't think there's any need for it. I wish we had nothing at all. So why do girls have to have parts of the body like?

Dianne It'd be the same for us though wouldn't it....if they got put in our position. It's just that we're the ones who have got that part (vagina).

Sue If that wasn't there I think like girls....like we think that three parts of your body lead to sex, like your breasts, your arse and down there. On lads there's nothing like is there. All they've got is that (penis) and you wouldn't touch that, well I wouldn't.

- Dianne Ugh, neither would I!
- Sue Like a lad will try to touch a girl in three places whereas if a girl wants to touch a lad....I've never heard of a girl trying to touch a lad. Like you hear of lads trying to get to grip of a girl. All a girl can do is hold a lad like round his shoulders or arm. And that's why if a lad tries to get anything off you you feel as if you're giving him your body 'cos there's nothing you can do to get theirs is there unless you let them get their way 'cos that way you get their body but like it's all really mixed up like isn't it.

In another group similar beliefs were expressed:

- Tracy Like lads do the work to a girl don't they but girls can't do the work to a lad can they.
- HC But why?
- Tracy 'Cos lads have got something that we haven't got.
- HC Yeh that's different but why should it be that lads do the doing?
- Tracy Oh I wouldn't like to do it to a lad, you know what I mean.

Quite aside from the young women's feelings about 'parts' of young men's bodies - 'parts' which they often referred to with some distaste - socio-sexual 'rules' also determined that young women had the responsibility for controlling sexual interactions but no rights of initiation:

- HC But why has a lad got to try it on?
- Gaynor No they shouldn't have to. We should be able to do exactly the same as they should.
- Jill It's just that way. If you did you'd get called for everthing 'cos all the girls aren't doing the same

thing. They'd just single you out.

A young woman would be called and treated as a "slag". But rather like the way in which the term "slag" can function to justify male sexual impositions, the fact that young women could not "say" if she did want heterosexual functions to the same end:

Gayner A girl won't say anyway so they've got to try it out to find out if they feel the same about you.

It would be facile to deduce from the above that all male sexual 'advances' are unwelcome. Young men, however, clearly have greater 'rights' than do young women - 'rights' which extend beyond those of initiating heterosexual intercourse. For a young woman to suggest sexual activity is to risk being called "slag". More than this, the label can function to legitimate male intrusions upon women's bodies because such intrusions may be explained as a test of respectability. But perhaps the most dangerous implication of the label "slag" for young women is that a sexually active young woman can become trapped in a relationship with a violent young man. To leave that relationship would not only jettison the basis upon which the young woman became sexually active but could lead to a situation in which she was viewed and treated as sexually available to other young men. And that may also mean that she could not be sure whether any young man was interested in her as a person or solely as someone with whom to have sex.

The young women used the label "slag" and its equivalents to denote sexual

availability which they linked with lack of self-respect. But they also used it to resist imposed sexualisation. The young women's use of the label "slag", then, may be understood as a strategy of resistance to male intrusions. But it is a strategy that works within rather than against the model which legitimates male sexual impositions and which foists responsibility on to young women. That is a woman-blaming model.

CHAPTER TWO

"STRIPPING THE MYTHS"

I argued in the preceding chapter that the young women used the label "slag" as a strategy of resistance to imposed sexualisation. That strategy, however, worked within, rather than against, the model which holds women responsible, which blames women, for male intrusions. Yet those intrusions necessitated strategies of resistance. The paradox was that one major strategy of resistance - the use of the label "slag" - may effect a justification of male intrusions and could trap young women in relationships with violent young men. To leave such young men might lead to being labelled "slag", to being isolated from other young women and to being pursued by other young men 'with one thing in mind'. A relationship emanating from such pursuit would not then be based upon respect but upon sexual availability - perceived as the opposite of respect and respectability.

According to the young women, "some girls" - that is young women who "sleep around" - were lacking in self-respect (which explained their sexual behaviour) and were, therefore, undeserving of respect from others:

I don't see why girls like that should get more respect.
(Sue)

Self-respect (or self-pride) was firmly held to equal resistance to sexual

activity outside a relationship based upon mutual respect:

Tracy You've got your self-pride haven't you. Some girls haven't got it, some girls have.

HC For some girls that might be very important for their pride, for other girls something else might be; it's got to be up to yourselves though hasn't it.

Ellen Mm.

Tracy Yeh.

The young women's strategic use of the term "slag" depended upon categorising other women as "slags". Such a division of women serves the interests of men, legitimating their sexual objectification of some women as the sexual property of all men in contrast to their individual ownership of other women (Barrett, 1980: p.45). Foremost among the women categorised as "slags" were women who worked as prostitutes and strippers. In early discussions, the young women rarely referred to prostitution and stripping as work which women do, but as defining the woman so working. In the context of such discussions they also talked about rape.

Jane My boyfriend, he said to me er he goes to this club in the afternoon and they've got a striptease on. Well what I thought a stripper was was someone who stood there, played around, took their clothes off, shook about, then went off. But now they have all kinds of oils and that, you know they throw all over the audience, and the fellas at the front rub them all over. And you can do anything to the girls on the stage.

The rest of the group expressed disbelief, then surprise. Jane went on to explain that her boyfriend "only went for a laugh" and that this did not "bother" her:

Jane I mean a stripper's a stripper....what's she to me....nothing.

The young women agreed among themselves that "strippers do it for the money". Nevertheless, they also labelled the women "sweats". Jane continued:

Some women think of it as an art, kind of thing. Like some women like to dance and to parade like with nothing on don't they. But these ones that let the fellas do all kinds, they're....they're just women that like that kind of thing, that like to be touched and all that.

HC What about the men?

Margaret Well you know what fellas are like. They love showing their bodies off. Any chance they get they do it don't they.

HC But what about the men who are actually watching the strippers?

Jane Half of them are old men....about 50 like.

Julie I think they're (strippers) horrible. I think it's horrible doing things like that.

The young women thought it possible that lack of alternative employment might lead "some women" into this form of work but were insistent that they "wouldn't do that".

Well prostitutes are a bit better than them 'cos they do it in private.

The rest of the group agreed:

Lizzy I think the prostitutes are good - if there weren't prostitutes there would be more rapes.

Margaret I think some men don't rape women for the sex, I think they like the idea of dominance....the violence.

Julie Yeh I was just about to say that.

HC Why do you think they want that sort of feeling though?

Jane I don't know....you try to think....it's just something in their heads isn't it.

Margaret I don't understand why people do it.

Doreen went on to recount a story about the rape of a child. The young women were enraged by this and then started talking about what an "awful experience" rape would be and how difficult it would be to "get over". I talked to the group about Rape Crisis Counselling Centres; some said they had seen the RCC stickers in women's toilets.

HC You know that according the law there's no such thing as rape in marriage?

The young women were both surprised and indignant:

Jane Like if you don't want sex and your husband rapes you, you can't do anything!

Doreen I'd divorce him!

The following week I took an article for the young women (Stripping the Myths, Spare Rib, February, 1984) written by a woman who had worked as a stripper. She pointed out that a stripper did not feel "comfortable" in her work, let alone "happy", that men direct their hatred of women at strippers through physical and verbal abuse - including yelling "slag", that the work often involves feelings of "sheer terror", that most of them are working-class women (Black and white - the Black women being also racially abused), that the choices are between stripping, prostitution or starving, and that it is men who watch and men who make the money - the women being paid very badly - out of stripping.

The young women read the article immediately, expressing both surprise and horror. Their first objection was that the label "slag" was used to define the women:

Marie Why do they call them slags. Fellas go to see them anyway.

Margaret I don't understand men.

Jane It makes me feel differently about strippers now.

HC Does it?

Jane Yeh. 'Cos I mean you would have said to me "What do you think about strippers?" a couple of weeks ago and I'd think "Ooh no, like you know and all this like because they're bad women and all that". You know like I'd say that you'd see them stripping or prostitution or starving....like I mean you've got to do

something like haven't you. And I didn't know you were treated like that, I hadn't a clue you were treated like that. I thought...like you know where they were saying like in you think strippers have a glamorous life....like I thought that.

Maria I thought that too.

HC I think we have said a few things about it before and some of us said that we thought they were like yeh bad women and some of us said that they like showing off their bodies which is the kind of stuff that you see on the telly or read in the papers and you never get the chance do you to see....

Maria No to see the other side.

Lizzy I think that's (the article) dead good that.

These young women learned "the other side" from experiential knowledge - a form of knowledge which 'upset' the stereotypes (re)produced by the media:

Lizzy I think we ought to have a film and on the telly like that about stripping.

They then had a short discussion about the difference between prostitution and stripping and made links on the grounds of treatment by men:

Margaret I've got nothing against prostitutes. They put up with everything.

"Putting up with everything" appeared to underlie the young women's belief that prostitutes "keep rape down":

Lizzy Prostitutes do help prevent rape though don't they.

HC Prostitutes get raped too.

The young women were incredulous, asking "why"? The subject was, however, changed before this could be adequately dealt with. Nevertheless, the issue continued to be discussed by them privately, as became clear when Doreen introduced it to the second group.¹

Many of the second group of young women expressed similar beliefs about prostitution, stripping and rape. They too thought strippers "disgusting" but Doreen intervened:

Doreen She's only doing a job, she's only trying to get money like we do.

Ellen That's why, you know prostitution, I think that should be allowed because you know all the girls might not get raped then, might they if we had prostitution on the streets. Like where all these erm young girls get raped by fellas and beat up, well if they had....like well some of them can't get young girls so if prostitution was allowed on the streets....

Tracy Well what if they've got no money to pay for them.

Ellen Some of them might not take money off them 'cos some of them are....all different like, might be different like, that's why it should be allowed.

1. Doreen's period of employment overlapped the two groups. She was most influential in introducing an 'alternative' view to the later group. I did not, therefore, introduce the Spare Rib article as this would have undermined Doreen.

Val You mean like legalise prostitution?

Ellen Yeh. 'Cos there might be less rapes.

Many of the young women thus supposed that prostitution performed a major function in reducing the incidence of or preventing rape. Such a belief was totally in accord with the notion that "lads want sex more". It was also in accord with the idea that "some girls" - a category into which prostitutes and strippers were fitted - "let them have her" because "she must want it". The young women discussed among themselves which was worse, a prostitute or a stripper:

Janice I'd rather be a tramp with no money and all that than degrade yourself.

Tracy obviously did not agree.

HC Would you disagree with that Tracy?

Tracy I wouldn't disagree but you don't really know what you'd do, do you in that position. You're fighting for your husband and kids like.

The rest of the group continued to argue that it was "better to be a stripper than a prostitute" because "strippers are only showing":

Julie "I mean a stripper is a stripper. She's not doing it, she's only showing. A prostitute has got to do it.

- HC What about getting put in front of a load of men though.....
- Tricia I don't care, I'd rather show. And you could get a dose and all that. And actually having sex, wrecked then isn't it if you're with all different.....but on a stage like stripping off they're (men) used to it aren't they. Their wives do it every day if they're married and all that. It's not as filthy² as a prostitute and then you want to settle down, there's nothing down for you. They'd say "There's nothing down for you girl, you're a prostitute."
- Julie You could get a dirty old man of about 90 after you.

The young women, then, saw a prostitute as a used sexual commodity which ruled out being a wife. Doreen, however, pointed out:

But it's different being a prostitute to being a wife. 'Cos if you're a wife, you love him, you're in love. But if you had it with someone, you don't feel for them do you....all you're bothered about is the money. A prostitute doesn't feel for that man or every other. When she goes home to her husband she feels for him, doesn't she.

- Janice Oh go 'way, have you seen the way they look and that. Now they do look like sluts to what strippers do.
- HC OK what does a prostitute look like. Can you say that a prostitute looks like something.

One of the young women said "Mini-skirts, black tights and all that"; another: "Yeh that's what you look for". They agreed, however, that this was a stereotype and "not really what prostitutes look like". We discussed at length the choices facing many women.

2. Filthy here does not refer to some notion of grime but to having heterosex with a number of men.

- Ellen I blame Maggie Thatcher for everything.
- HC But there's been prostitution for a hell of a long time.
- Ellen Yeh I'm not saying I blame her for it but you know if we had the best person, a better person in control of Britain and all that, them women who've got to go out and sell their body, they might have decent jobs mightn't they. But they've not got them 'cos she's not doing anything about it. She just cares about herself and that.

The young women returned to the idea that prostitution reduces rape, but:

- Doreen Prostitutes get raped don't they

As with the first group these young women were extremely surprised:

- HC Yeh they do. And they get all sorts of violence from men, like men beat them up....
- Tracy The majority of fellas now do hit the girls don't they. They just think they can.
- Janice I think the majority of lads do. They go with a girl for 15 months, they think they can tell you where to go, when to go, what to do.

The young women shifted the focus from the woman to the man - a shift of perspective which stemmed in part from access to alternative viewpoints. The ideological division of women into "slags" and "respectable" was, albeit temporarily, undermined. The young women began to empathise with the women they had deemed 'apart' from themselves. They made the connection on the basis of their shared experience of the threat and actuality of male violence and of being denied the right to a "decent job".

CHAPTER THREE

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RAPE

The subject of rape had been brought up initially by the young women in the context of discussions about prostitution. The idea that prostitutes "help prevent rape" went hand-in-hand with the ideas that prostitutes were "slags" and that "men want sex". The prostitute was viewed as the 'absorber' of male sexuality which, without such 'outlet', would be forced upon other women. The information that "prostitutes get raped" both undermined the assumption that prostitutes are willing sexual commodities and allowed for a shift in the young women's perspective towards male behaviours.

The young women knew that men rape. On the basis of that knowledge, they focused upon the woman's actions and stressed her culpability and responsibility because she knows that men rape:

Ellen Or like when a girl's walking across a field on her own....they're asking for it.

Some of the other young women agreed that "they're asking for it".

HC They're asking for it. Why?

Janice Well if it was after midnight you'd walk around it wouldn't you.

HC But why shouldn't you be able to walk through the

- park without asking for rape? Why should that be asking for it?
- Ellen If your dad, if you get raped in the park and your dad says: "Where did you walk?" and you say "The park", my dad'd go....
- Julie For walking through there.
- Val Yeh but the point is you should be able to walk anywhere without the fear of being raped.
- Julie I know but you just can't do that round here can you.
- HC But you shouldn't be seen to be asking for it should you. I mean if you do that you start blaming the woman saying it's her fault that she got raped.
- Ellen Yeh.
- HC But it's not. It's the man's fault for raping her.
- Julie But she knows that there's a chance of getting raped.
- HC But don't you think there should be that situation that you can walk through the park or anywhere else without the threat of being raped?
- Julie Yeh there should be that situation but you just can't can you. I mean I couldn't anyway.
- HC No, I know what you mean, I agree with you. It's terrifying isn't it. But that doesn't make it our fault if we do choose to walk that way and we get raped, does it.

Assessing the woman's alleged culpability on the grounds of where rape takes place was not unique to the young women. This and other 'considerations' such as the woman's dress, appearance, sexual history, class and race - these latter two being set against the man's race and class - may be used by the various actors in the legal management of rape as indicators of the woman's culpability. Their reproduction within the media may then

form part of a basis upon which those not directly involved in such a process apportion blame upon the woman. But media representations do not necessarily determine that effect; rather they fit with what women know: men make public spaces unsafe for women. Women are blamed for not acting in accordance with that knowledge.

In another group, the discussion took on a different focus. The young women were discussing their possible reactions to a street attack:

- Jane It's not just that you fight against it. It's just that it's instinct; it's human instinct to just turn round and lash out if someone's lashed out at you.
- Lizzy Yeh but you could just freeze couldn't you. Bleeding hell, I froze last night and they were only shouting my name.
- Karen She (Lizzy) freaks out though, you know what I mean.
- Jane Cos I mean if they just jump you, you've got some sort of chance haven't you. But if like they've got a weapon....
- Karen Well they have got a weapon haven't they.
- HC Yeh, they've got a prick. They use that like a weapon.

The young women laughed and agreed.

- HC What do you think rape is then?
- Lizzy Sexually assaulted, battered and all that.
- Doreen To teach you a lesson.

HC Yeh that says it all!

The young women returned to the discussion of how they would react. I gradually realised that we were all talking about rape solely in terms of a violent attack in a public space by a complete stranger. Such attacks do constitute a danger to women and threaten our access to public spaces. But the private sphere of the home can also be dangerous to women if/when men are present:

HC But most rape doesn't take place in the street, most rape takes place in the home by somebody known to the woman. What's the difference between rape like that, some fella like and boyfriend or husband?

Jane But the difference between them is that you know them, you know what they're like, you sort of....oh I don't know, but a complete stranger.....

Lizzy You wouldn't know what was going on.

Jane You wouldn't er....Oh I don't know. I think it is different if a complete stranger rapes you and if a boyfriend raped you.

There was no disagreement in this group that both would be rape. Nevertheless Jane, supported by Lizzy, felt that there would be a qualitative difference in the woman's experience - a difference based upon 'fancying' the boyfriend:

Jane they're both rape but they're different, you'd feel different. If a complete stranger raped you, you'd feel er, I don't know exactly how you'd feel but like erm....oh I don't know.....I can't explain. You'd just

feel.....(long pause).

HC Violated?

Jane Yeh. You'd feel like someone had just used you as like they use the toilet or something, you know. But if someone like your boyfriend raped you, it'd be like....."Oh she's there like so I'll do it". You'd still feel that but it'd be different from a complete stranger doing it. I don't know why, it just would. 'Cos I mean if it's your boyfriend of course you're going to be attracted to him, you're going to sort of like fancy him, if he's your boyfriend. So it wouldn't be so bad but if it was a complete stranger I can imagine that you'd vomit 'cos if they were, if they were horrible and that, even if they were nice, you wouldn't sort of like be.....fancy them would you. But if it was your boyfriend you'd sort of like, you'd fancy them and it wouldn't feel so bad. What do you think Heather?

HC Yeh I can see that there might be a difference in the way you felt but at the same time, how you feel is only one part of it. The other side of it is why he's doing it and there might be more similarities on that side of it. Do you know what I mean Jane?

Jane No not really.

HC Let's say that you say you'd feel differently if a stranger raped you to if a boyfriend raped you. Right that's fair enough, I can't say you won't if that's the way you say you'd feel. But on the other side of it why the stranger did it and why the boyfriend did it might not be so very different.

Jane Yeh, yeh I know what you mean.

Lizzy Yeh, they're doing the same thing aren't they.

HC What do you think they're doing it for?

Lizzy Just the same ends, having it like, you know what I mean.

Jane still felt that different men had different motives:

Jane But it's different men, different things isn't it. Like some men, they like to be dominant, they like to think they can do things like that to women and other men are sort of like, they just want sex and that's the easiest way to get it to force someone to do it. Do you know what I mean? Like some men just like to do it to be dominant and violent. Whereas some men like to do it because they just want to have sex.

The other young women in the group agreed with Jane. They held that there may be differences in both male motives and women's experiences of rape. In this they were undoubtedly correct. They knew that rape can take many forms, including that by a boyfriend. My discussions with another group of young women pointed to the importance of the former's perceptions. In this group some of the young women argued that rape by a boyfriend was impossible.

HC Do you think there are a group of men who rape and a group of men who don't?

Tricia I think nearly every lad would rape. I bet there's loads of girls been forced into sex.

One of the other young women said: "That's not rape".

Tricia I bet there's only about 2 out of every hundred who wouldn't but I reckon nearly every other lad would. Nearly everyone gets forced into sex don't they.

HC Do you call that rape?

Tricia Yeh.

HC Yeh, I would agree with you.

- Julie I don't because if she's being forced into it she's got every chance of really wanting to stop but they don't do they. They must want it but they want the lad to think that he's had to force her.
- HC What does everyone else think, is forced sex rape or is it not forced at all?
- Janice I don't get it.

Tracy's explanation to Janice opened up a heated debate which had the potential to either undermine or validate individual experiences:

- Tracy They're trying to say that sex and rape is the same thing.
- Tricia No that's not what I mean.
- Val But if he wants sex and you say no and he starts, sulks or he's not speaking to you, that type of thing to get you to give in to him. You're giving in to him not because you really want to but because you can't stand the hassle.
- Tricia That's not what I mean. I mean like say you've just seen a lad and all that like and then he starts trying his hand and everything. And you're knocking him back and then he starts going dead determined and in the end....
- Julie Well I doubt if he'd really go ahead if you were telling him. If you were really determined not to have it then you wouldn't have it would you.....
- Janice That's rape then isn't it.
- Tracy I know this lad who's always trying to do that to a girl.
- Janice That is rape.
- HC Have any of you ever been in a situation where somebody's tried to force you into it. Either like Val was saying. Like you know through emotional things.

Or physically like he'd go on and on and you know getting that bit aggressive....

The young women did not understand.....

HC You know like....a lad's trying to get you to have sex with him and you don't want to so there's either the "Ooh why not?" and the sulks and all the rest of it like Val was saying. Or like the persistent you know keep trying, keep trying?

Janice I have

I did not want to put any of the young women 'on the spot' given the strength of the argument that "she must have wanted it". It was important not to create a process in which any of them could be blamed for their experiences. It was, however, also important that there should be an alternative model of knowledge which could allow for the validation of experience and which would challenge the woman-blaming model:

HC Well say like he managed in the end to have sex, would you say you really wanted it.

Janice No. You didn't want it.

While I was asserting that "that would be rape", some of the group continued arguing that it was not rape because a young woman in such a situation "must have wanted it":

Julie Well if you did give in you wanted it more than he wanted it.

- Janice No 'cos I went with him for seven months and I wouldn't give in.
- Tracy You want it 'cos you want to keep him.
- Tricia But if you fucking want it you'd have it wouldn't you.
- Tracy And if you didn't, you wouldn't.....no matter if he forced you into it.

Janice challenged the contradictions inherent in the notion that "she must have wanted it":

- Janice Yeh but you're saying she wanted it but he had to harass her to get it.
- Julie Yeh.
- Janice Yeh, but that's not true.
- Julie You're saying it's not true for you but for me it's true 'cos people have different opinions and that's my opinion.

To have intervened on Janice's behalf would have been to make her vulnerable in the context of this group. It would have been to take away her choices as to what she was prepared to make public knowledge. Therefore, I picked up on an earlier statement to switch the focus away from her.

- HC Say like you're in love with a guy and he wants sex and you don't so he says he's going to pack you in if you won't.
- Tracy He can fuck off then.
- Chorus: Yeh.

- Tracy No matter how much you love him you give it him if you want to and don't if you don't want to.
- HC OK, say there's a girl - not one of you here - who doesn't want to lose him so much that she does give in.
- Lilly That's not right that.
- Val She hasn't got much of a choice has she?
- Lilly Why is it? She has got choice 'cos either way he doesn't want to go with her right....
- Tracy He doesn't love her.
- Lilly That's what he's telling her in other words isn't it. Or "You give in to me" so she's probably thought "Oh fuck it then, I'll give in". That's not rape. It's nothing like rape.

Tracy's subsequent response pointed to just how prevalent coercion is in 'normal' heterosex:

- Tracy Yeh 'cos in that case every lad would be getting dragged into court wouldn't he.
- HC What does consent mean?
- Tricia When you say yeh
- Janice Where you agree to it
- HC Say like you agreed to under conditions that were forced, like emotional or physical coercion...
- Janice It's rape then isn't it
- Julie No. You can't be forced into it.

Some of the young women, then, held that if a young woman was forced into

sex by a boyfriend "she must have wanted it" and even "wanted it more than he did". These are very dangerous concepts for young women. On the one hand, they 'justify' rape. On the other, which perhaps is even more dangerous they are concepts which can trap a young woman in a relationship based on rape.

I have argued that the label "slag" can function to trap young women in relationships with violent young men. A young woman who has been raped by a boyfriend may be similarly trapped. Unless she is able to have some form of validation of her experience, to know that she bears no responsibility for the rape, and is able to name the experience for herself, she may experience considerable difficulty in leaving that relationship. In addition to this, though certainly related to it, she may become vulnerable through attachment of the label "slag" to isolation from other young women and further imposed sexualisation by young men.

Male ownership of women based upon rape has been cited as an historical precedent to current legislation on rape (Brownmiller, 1975; Edwards 1981; Toner, 1982). But it may belong not only to history. Tricia pointed out that "nearly every lad would rape" and "nearly everyone (young women) gets forced into sex". If emotional coercion constitutes such force, then, as Tracy said, "every lad would be getting dragged into court". Given the sheer scale of sexual harassment experienced and voiced by the young women, it is perhaps not surprising that they base their strategies upon their knowledge that men rape and men want sex. Yet that is potentially a trap, as has been

discussed above. One way to avoid the trap, however, is to question the normality of the idea that "lads want sex".

Janice Why do men want sex that bad though?

Tracy Why do lads want sex and girls don't?

Tricia Who gets the most thrill out of it?

Julie Yeh and the girls get called for it.

HC They get called?

Tracy Yeh, slags.

Jancie And you get lads talking about them don't you.

CHAPTER FOUR

MATERIAL CONSTRAINTS

In the preceding chapter I examined some of the ways in which the actions and behaviour of young men intruded upon young women's lives. Such intrusions constrain the choices young women can make for themselves. But it is not only in direct interaction with young men that young women's choices are constrained. The material reality of their lives can be another major constraint and stems from their social position as white working class young women.¹

Independent access to material resources is, for the majority of the population, dependent upon access to paid employment. Educational achievement is an important factor in gaining the latter. There have been a number of published studies concerned with the ways in which the formal education system structures girls into underachievement, and hence away from financial independence. It has also been pointed out that race and class stereotypes intersect with sex stereotypes to the particular disadvantage of Black and white working class girls (Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, 1985). Marks (1979) notes that educational practitioners often operate on the assumption that working class young people are by definition academically less able and less intelligent. Griffin (1985) also points to

1. I stress the young women's race in this context because I do not wish to suggest an equivalence of experience with Black young women who have long been denied access to resources in this society.

oppressive attitudes among teachers whose stereotypical views of Black and white working class pupils informed their practice of structuring them at the bottom end of the educational system. It may be that the young women had also been subjected to such attitudes and practices. Their experiences of the education system had for the most part been that of underdevelopment. Two had been sent to 'special schools' and the majority of the remainder had been allocated to the 'bottom' streams of comprehensive schools. Their position in the sphere of employment reflected this.

Some of the young women felt that their experiences of school had been similar to that of the lads "except that the lads were punished more". But teachers also used means of sex-specific humiliation to punish the girls.

- Lizzy We had this English teacher who made me sit with the lads 'cos he thought I wasn't lady-like enough.
- HC What did he take as being unlady-like?
- Lizzy If you laughed or talked in class.
- HC What did he do to the lads for laughing and talking?
- Lizzy He'd shout at them or tell them to get out....but he never degraded them in the same way.
- Jane We had a science teacher and he used to tell us we were all cabbages.

Having left school, periods of unemployment for many of the young women had been interspersed with periods on 'schemes'. None of these young

women had had access to a "proper job":

- Julie There's nothing down for school leavers - a scheme, 12 months on the dole, a scheme like this and after this there's nothing is there.
- Tracy You come out of school and you could say "Well yes, I'd like to be a shop assistant. I'll go and get a full-time job". People laugh now when you say a full-time job for the kids. They say "a scheme". And Maggie Thatcher is putting that when kids come out of school and if they don't take a scheme they're getting no dole. They have schemes.
- Ellen She's not a fucking woman her, she should be shot.

The majority of the young women had gone from school into a Youth Training Scheme. All but two had worked on Mode B places. That is to say, they had been 'employed' in training workshops - mostly as sewing machinists - attached to community projects or commercial enterprises but with little or no access to permanent employment. They were placed, in other words, in areas of exploitative employment where they had no chance of being 'kept on'. The 'dole' was their next step and this was experienced as particularly "heartbreaking":

- Julie It was heartbreaking for me.
- Margaret I hated the dole.
- Jane When I first went on the dole and I was visiting everyone I hadn't seen for ages it was great then when I'd seen them all it just went dead boring.
- Maria I hated walking up the dole, everyone would be like that looking at you, I don't feel ashamed but....

On another occasion the young women were discussing a news report about a young man who had committed suicide because he was unemployed. They all agreed that they had found unemployment "depressing":

- Jane I'd lie in bed in the morning and I'd say "There's nothing to do. Where's my life going"
- Maria I'd clean the house about five times a day. I was made up (pleased) then 'cos my mum used to come in about two o'clock.
- Doreen There's one thing about it, your ma helps you out, gives you money and buys your clothes and everything
- Margaret Yeh the dole's wicked.
- Jane But you know these people that commit suicide and things like that, you know, Margaret Thatcher like she must be, she musn't have any kind of conscience must she.

These young women were working on another scheme as cleaners in a resource unit for people wishing to retrain or go into self-employment. Such resources, however, were not offered to the young women - they worked their twelve months brushing up, mopping, and cleaning toilets in order to "keep the place clean" for the workers and other users of the centre. They were a source of cheap labour (as some of them told Prince Charles when he visited the centre to the horror of the centre's management team). I intend no disparagement of the job of cleaning which is an occupation demanding many skills (though this is rarely recognised) and, increasingly, specialised machinery and chemicals. These young women were, however, given only the basic equipment with which to work. Their rest room was treated as

public property by many of the white male management team who frequently intruded uninvited upon the young women's space with demands (not requests) that certain tasks be performed after the 'break'. The use of the young women as a source of cheap labour must also be understood as under-cutting other women's source of income.

The young women had been denied recognition of their skills and resources and had been pushed to the bottom of the pile. This was their 'work experience'. Their low wages effected their access to leisure facilities and resources:

- HC What do you do when you're not at work, do you go out much?
- Janice I stay in most nights
- Ellen Stay in. There's nothing to do. I've got no money to go anywhere.
- HC Do you go out much Tracy?
- Tracy Yeh
- HC What sort of things do you do?
- Tracy Bevy (drink)
- HC How do you afford it?
- Tracy (laughing) I don't. I get him to pay
- HC (laughing) That's alright isn't it. It's what they're there for.

The young women and I often talked jokingly about getting lads to pay but

having a boyfriend, or at least one in paid employment, was one means for the young women to gain access to leisure resources. They did not, however, have a solely instrumental attitude toward boyfriends:

- Lizzy He pays. I still offer it (to pay) like. I don't know why...I'd feel ashamed. His mum and dad are loaded though.
- HC Do you go out much Lizzy?
- Lizzy No. I haven't been out for ages 'cos I haven't been seeing him these last couple of weeks but I reckon on going out tonight 'cos I'm knackered.

Lizzy added that she would go out with a mate. Nevertheless going out with a boyfriend could access a young woman to leisure areas which are prohibitively costly for young women alone:

- HC Do you go dancing much?
- Jane Yeh, but I haven't been to clubs for ages. They're too expensive. Like you go to a club and that...you've got to have nice clothes; you can't show up in jeans or anything like that. I mean you've got to have your money to get in and your taxi fare and all this. It's too much. If you're with your boyfriend it's alright. But if you're with your mates it's too much.
- HC Do you get him to pay?
- Jane (laughing) Oh aye yeh. No use going with a lad if he won't pay.

I am not here suggesting a simple causal link between lack of access to resources and going out with lads. But, as Jane pointed out, "if you're with

your mates it's too much".

The young women were very aware of the denial and lack of acknowledgement of their own potential. They had not internalised any false notion that they were lacking in skills and ability. They pointed instead to the Thatcher government as the cause of their situation.

Jane I get annoyed. They always avoid...she will not answer a question...they don't know what poverty is. How long have they been in power. I was thinking, like a good government for them many years instead of a bad government in...what would I be doing now, what would I be like now. I mean if there had have been a better government in I'd have a better job. I know I would.

While many of the young women pinpointed Thatcherite politics as underlying their employment situation, this was overlaid by their recognition of the constraints placed on them as young women:

Jane I like being a girl 'cos I don't know about...I've had it good so far, you know what I mean but sometimes I wish I was a lad. They get more experience than you. They get more of everything don't they.

The rest of the group expressed agreement.

HC Just imagine you were lads, what'd you think you'd be doing?

Amid much laughter, one of the young women said: "I'd have ten babies"; another: "I'd be a father to everyone around the place".

Maria I don't know. I couldn't explain really.

Jane I reckon I'd be working away...I mean I could work away now but my mum and dad don't like it with me being a girl. And also if I was by myself I wouldn't have much of a time of it would I. I mean out in the big wide world by myself; whereas if you're a lad you have, you have got a chance. Nobody would take advantage if you're a lad but if you're a girl they do, they take advantage of you if you're a girl. Imagine if you say you're by yourself, imagine what would happen to me then. You know...you don't know do you.²

Maria Yeh you know with family and all that, they say "he can do it, it's different for him 'cos he's a lad". Yeh that's what your parents say if you stay out a bit late. It's alright for him, he can stay out late, 'cos he's a lad. You know things like that. They've always given you the same answer like.

The young women sometimes talked about the way in which their parents, and particularly their fathers, imposed constraints upon what they could do with their lives. But for some of the young women parental constraint intersected with the young woman's own economic vulnerability.

I had asked the young women whether or not they thought "attitudes were changing":

² Jane did in fact "work away". Towards the end of the time I spent with this group, Jane went to the Channel Islands with a mate, got a job there and stayed the season. The following year she went to work in the Lake district. The last time I saw her she was going grape picking in France.

- Tracy How are attitudes changing when there's school life and you come out of school and there's bugger all for you. They just bring you up the way they want to.
- Ellen If you turn the opposite way to what your parents have done, there's nothing down for you.

I do not know whether Tracy was referring to parents, teachers or just generally to 'adult' society. The point is, however, that it is extremely difficult for a young working-class woman with limited access to resources to make choices which may counter her parents' wishes. That is not to say that relationships with parents were always oppressive to the young women. As Maria and Doreen indicated parents are often important sources of support, and most of the young women had very close and good relationships with their mothers. But the economic support that parents could give was often constrained by the fact that they and/or other members of their families had been structured into unemployment/low waged employment. Government policies based upon 'Victorian ideals' of family-support and self-reliance have denied resources to many working-class families while at the same time structuring young people into dependency upon family-support. For many of the young women, their choices were not only constrained by their own lack of resources but by that of their families. Systematically undermined was the young women's starting point - work, an income, going out etc. - let alone any choices they might make as to their futures. That is not to say that the young women could not and did not make choices for themselves but rather that those choices were constrained by their structural position as young white working-class women.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

I have argued so far that the choices the young women were able to make about their lives were constrained by the fact that they had been denied access to resources and by the attempts of young men to impose heterosex upon them - to sexualise them. The young women were quite aware of the constraints. Their choices, therefore, cannot be viewed as merely negative but as negotiated within the reality of their lives. Part of that negotiation involved continually setting their own experiences against their fantasies and ideals of heterosexual relationships. It also involved facing fears of pain, embarrassment, being talked about, losing respect etc - fears that stemmed sometimes from observing the experiences of other women.

All the young women subscribed to the ideals that sex should be an expression of love and that love should be the basis of marriage. But, as will be shown below, they were also very aware that the actions of young men could make the attainment of such ideals problematic.

The young women believed that for themselves heterosexual intercourse should be an expression of love and not of male heterosexual wants:

Dianne It's showing your love and that mainly isn't it

Sue It shows you love the lad but if it's a quick bang like I

mean that's what a slag is.

They were not prepared to be treated as sexual objects - to be sexualised.

They were very aware that wanting to have heterosexual intercourse rather than wanting to express love often guided young men's actions.

Dianne ...they pack you in after they've had whatever they want...Lads sweet-talk you. They say "Oh go on"

Sue And they lead you on. Do you know what I mean? You don't know whether they mean it and they mean to stick with you or they want to sweet-talk you into it and they're going to fuck you off.

The young women recognised that lads "try to talk you into it". They also picked up 'clues' as to the lads' real intentions:

Sue You might think "This is the person for me, this is the person I want, and this is just right. I feel as though I'm ready". But like usually you know when a lad's going to try, I mean you just start saying 'cos it really puts you off.

Dianne Yeh, they try too much, you know what they're like.

Gayner It puts you off, you get fed-up.

These young women did have fantasies, recognised as such, against which they set the reality.

Sue Do you know what every girl fantasises? That when they do it it's going to be in a big four-poster bed and no clothes on. Dead passionate; but that's not the

way it goes.

As stated earlier, the young women wanted to establish relationships with young men based on respect, trust, mutuality, friendship and love, rather than sex. That is not to say sex would not be part of such a relationship but that it would not determine it.

Trust was very important: a young women needs to trust the young man not to "fuck her off" and also not to "tell his mates afterwards":

Sue You could be really good together, you could be sitting there kissing or something and you could be really overcome - like emotions just take you over. But the worst thing that could happen, the worst thing that puts me off...e'y'are I'll admit it, if I'm seeing a lad and you're getting on dead good together, you feel dead nice and sometimes you think "Oh fucking hell, I wouldn't mind sleeping with him", you know what I mean but it's the thought of them afterwards 'cos I know I'd be sick thinking "Oh my God I bet they go round telling everybody".

Apart from the threat of being "fucked off" and/or talked about by young men, breaking the barriers of privacy was viewed as potentially embarrassing. The young women and I were talking about body image -

HC When we, Paula, Dianne and me, were talking about 12 months ago we were saying that some parts of your body get sexualised and some don't...

Gayner Heather let me say this before I forget. You know your ears and your hair, they have a lot to do with sex. But you know why people don't give a shit about

them - it's 'cos these (breasts) are covered. It's like from day one they've been covered up so the first thing you've got to get over is the embarrassment of like showing yourself 'cos I know I would if I was with a lad. Say like afterwards I'd feel really bad and get embarrassed then.

Dianne Oh yeh, I would....

Jill I wouldn't be able to stay there.

Sue Sandy said to me like "But Sue, I'm always scared in case he looks at my knickers or something". And I don't know. It's not that it's (sex) dirty or nothing, it's just the embarrassment. Like he said to Sandy "Can I see your body?"

Gayner Yeh but I'd feel embarrassed anyway after having sex with a lad 'cos I wouldn't know how to talk to them or anything.

The young women attached great importance to talking as an essence of a relationship. The transgression of boundaries of privacy involved in heterosexual intercourse was perceived as a further threat to that essence.

The young women were also afraid that 'sex' would hurt:

Ellen Me and Tracy are scared

Tracy In case it hurts you

Val Who's told you it hurts?

Ellen Everybody says it hurts, my sister...ah I think I'll just keep myself to myself...haven't you seen it on films and all that

Val Oh don't be soft; films and books can say what they like

Whether or not young women were being "soft", they were expressing a real fear (and one that I remember myself). I talked to them at length about how "everybody is different" and how the hymen may have already been ruptured but their fear continued:

- Ellen I wouldn't like the pain like sex, everybody says that sex just kills you.
- Tracy Yet, it puts you off sex
- Val Well take no notice of them 'cos its different. I mean if you've got a very thin hymen like Heather said, you don't even notice it.
- HC (laughing) It's that exciting!
- Tracy It must be boring if you don't even notice it.
- HC We'll come back to that one Tracy
- Ellen What's your hymen?
- HC It's that piece of tissue that you've got in your vagina
- Tracy And if that breaks when you've had sex, that's what you call your virginity?
- HC Yeh.
- Tracy So if you break that yourself and then you have sex, would it hurt you?
- HC No.
- Janice You know when you've had sex, is the hymen still there?
- HC No, it'll be broken. But it could have been broken anyway.

The young women talked and asked me questions about this on many

occasions.

Tracy Would it hurt having sex?

HC A lot would depend upon if you felt comfortable, if you really wanted to have sex. I think if you didn't and you just did it anyway, not wanting to, you know for any reason, then you might tense up. And when you tense up, you tense up there as well and it might hurt you. But in any case, you're best not doing it unless you want to.

Tracy On your first time did it hurt you?

HC It felt very uncomfortable. It wasn't so much pain, it just didn't feel comfortable.

Tracy Some girls say they cried.

HC That could be an emotional thing or they didn't want to do it or they did want to do it. I mean you cry 'cos you're happy, you cry 'cos you're upset, you cry 'cos you're hurt. You can cry for a whole load of reasons. Crying can be something that shows something good or bad. You might be so pleased about something that you cry.

Tracy Not really...Oh yeh! I cried when our Carol had a girl because she wanted a girl.

Given all the fears that young women expressed about heterosexual intercourse, it was not surprising that they wanted to be able to trust the young man.

All the young women had said that they wanted to get married in the future and that love should be the basis of marriage. Bearing in mind their earlier statements about the differences between going out with a young man and being friends with him, I asked one group of young women what they thought

love was:

- Berni Well love is when you want to be with them all the time, like stick by you all the time.
- Ellen I wouldn't have that!
- HC But could you love a lad if he just stopped talking to you like Ellen was saying?
- Tracy You talk to your mate not your fella
- HC Well does love have a friendship basis?
- Ellen No 'cos you've got your mate for friendship but a fella? I don't know. It's awkward to explain.
- Julie But you've got to be friends with them to love them.
- Ellen It's different though, like you love your mate, you love your mother, you love your fella; it's three different ones. It's just too mad to explain.
- HC I know it's difficult to explain...well last week some of you said that you had a fella as a mate but then if you started going with him, that changes.
- Julie But when you're going with them, you just go all shy like. You feel ashamed.
- HC So if that's generally true, what's marriage about then?
- Julie Love and having a family and that.
- HC What sort of love?
- Julie I don't know. I can't explain it.
- HC Would it be based on friendship?
- Ellen I think love does generally go by friendship. To love a person you've got to get on with them, haven't you.

The young women emphasised the importance of "getting on" - being

friends with a potential marriage partner:

I'd like to live with someone before I married him. I'd like that better than getting married...just to find out if you liked each other sort of thing, if you could get on together.
(Maria)

and (in response to a question)

My ideal fella? Treat me good, not hit me, not tell me what to do and where to go. He go out with his mates and me go out with mine, talk dead cracker (good) and I mean really cracker.
(Ellen)

Friendship, signified by talking, implies caring for the person. This was an area of difficulty as far as young men were concerned. If the young women could not be sure of a young man's friendship (and they could get this from their mates) then it was not surprising that 'respect' - the opposite of the terms "slag" and its equivalents - should have been so prominent in their discussions of young women's interactions with young men. Respect from young men meant 'waiting', lack of respect meant 'trying it on'. Young women's self-respect meant 'knocking him back'; lack of self-respect meant 'letting him have her'. Heterosexual intercourse was perceived as a potential obstacle to the development of friendship. To put this simply, if a young woman "let" a young man "have her" too soon, before they had got to know each other, sex rather than respect/friendship/love would form the basis of their relationship. The relationship would not be based, on caring for the young woman as a whole person but only upon her sexual availability

on his terms. And the young women certainly did not want a relationship, including a marital relationship, that was based upon sex.

- Tracy My mum said that years ago marriage was like they'd marry you 'cos they loved you and they wanted to. And they married you like to support you and all that. But now they just marry you for the fucking hole...they live with you for the hole.
- Tricia But don't they...lads nowadays if they've got a girl who's giving they stay with her.
- Julie Sweats have always got fellas.
- Tracy Sweats are better thought of.

They most particularly did not want a relationship based upon their sexual availability on male terms.

I have argued that lack of access to resources acts as a constraint upon young women's choices. When the young women talked about marriage, they sometimes focused on the material things they hoped they would have.

- HC Do you see marriage as something in your future for definite?
- Ellen For me, yeh.
- HC You definitely want to get married?
- Ellen Yeh...no...I don't know. I don't want to leave my ma and my da but I mean when they go who am I supposed to stay with then.
- Val Well what do you want out of life for yourself then Ellen?

- Ellen A few bob, a nice house, a car and a good job
- HC What sort of job do you want Ellen?
- Ellen A big posh one, office work and all that
- Tricia What you've got no hope for in the world
- Tracy The next thing for me is working away first.

In response to one of the other young women's questions:

- Tracy I don't know what I want in life but I want to work away next year definitely. I don't know after that really...I want a good marriage...I do want to get married.
- HC Why do you all want to get married?
- Tracy I don't want to end up like every other girl in Liverpool...having babies. The majority of lads nowadays won't get married.

The young women did not perceive single motherhood as some form of social stigma, nor did they view single mothers as 'sexual beings'. Tracy emphasised:

No-one's a slag for getting pregnant, no-one!

But, as the young women knew, single mothers are often pushed into poverty because they are amongst the group most denied resources.

Some of the young women stated that denial of resources threatened the

economic security of women and children within the family unit:

Tracy But half the point is nowadays, lads with dole living with a girl and kids fuck off with their dole and go out and get rotten or stoned or whatever. So marriage is just a load of shit really.

Small wonder then that the young women wanted to insure their own futures:

Ellen If I get married I'd make sure that I had a few bob behind me.

When the young women discussed their wants for the future, an 'ideal' marriage was often central

What I want, this is my future, to get married at say 25 or 26, a big white wedding for my ma and da to be proud of me. For him to work and me to work. Have a nice little house, a boss (good) house and all that. And to come home of a night and him to come in a little later on and say "Hya love" and all this. Go out at weekends, get on alright together and have a few bob behind me...not minted (wealthy). I don't want to be minted. Just have a few bob. That's what I want.

(Ellen)

I see myself with a couple of bob, dead well off - not that I am now. This is how I see myself - with two kids, to start off with, with a nice house, not wanting anything but I suppose I'll always want something 'cos everybody does.

(Jane)

What they hoped of marriage, however, sometimes went hand-in-hand with doubts:

Julie Marriage is different now to when our parents...'cos all the married couples around our way that are in their twenties, all the fellas are going out and copping off.

Tracy I don't think it's worth getting married.

The young women thus oscillated between wanting to get married and seeing marriage as "a load of shit".

To argue that denial of access to resources constrains young women's choices is not to suggest that that denial determines young women's decisions to marry, that marriage is perceived as an economic necessity. Indeed, such a suggestion was quickly and firmly squashed by one of the young women. I had asked Jane if she believed that lack of alternatives pushed young women into relationships "with marriage in mind". She told me off in no uncertain terms, and rightly so, for my question had assumed that young women were passive:

Jane Well Heather, I think most people just want to do it. I mean I don't think anybody is pushed into anything 'cos everybody's got their own brains.

I apologised and asked:

What do you think they want out of it?

Jane I don't know 'cos I've never had the feeling to want to get married.

HC Do you want to get married sometime?

- Jane When I'm older yeh, I suppose so.
- HC What do you think women look for in marriage?
- Doreen Children.
- Joyce Oh no, I don't think that's the basis now. It used to be once but...
- HC Well for yourselves then?
- Jane What do I want out of marriage? I want someone (long pause) you can't say can you.
- Joyce Security?
- Jane Yeh I want someone I can always rely on.
- Maria Friend
- Jane Someone who's always going to love me. Someone I'm always going to love.
- Maria Always mind you?
- Jane Yeh OK it might wear out at the end but you can't have that. If you've loved him for them years then that's good enough. 'Cos I don't want to go through life not being loved 'cos er I don't know. I just don't. That's about it really.

Jane went on to explain that she felt that the basis of marriage should be mutual love

- HC If they loved you and you loved them, do you see that as a reason for getting marriage?
- Jane Well yeh; that is the reason isn't it.

I asked Jane if from her own observations she believed mutual love lasted.

Jane Well some people mistake love for infatuation or whatever it is and they're the ones who will break up. But people who really do love each other then they'll go on...I mean look at Joyce, she still loves her husband and he still loves her. But these people who break up, I think they've mistaken infatuation for love.

For Jane then love was distinct from infatuation. She went on to explain that love was about "feeling content and happy with someone", while infatuation - "feeling all starry-eyed and turned on" could not last. But, as Jane recognised, infatuation may be a route into marriage for young women. She thought the breaking up of marriages might be a consequence of this.

HC Do you think that marriage is a sort of inevitable thing for women?

Jane Yeh, sort of, yeh 'cos everybody does it, everybody gets married

Maria Everybody does it don't they

Jane Erm...well it's inevitable 'cos everybody falls in love. Well not everybody but the majority of people fall in love don't they.

Jane thought "that falling in love" was more like love than infatuation. But real love involved friendship. This, however, could be problematic in heterosexual relationships. From their own experiences, the young women knew that men often want sex rather more than friendship from women. Infatuation could obscure this for a young woman who is "all starry-eyed" and she could become trapped in a marriage in which she is expected to be sexually available to her husband whether or not she wants to be; that is to

say, sexually available on her husband's terms. She may indeed become trapped with a man who is prepared to use violence to assert his wants. This is not to suggest some form of female complicity - conscious or unconscious - in entering a relationship with a violent man. As Joyce warned the young women who stated they would "live with him first to see what he was like":

A lot of men change when you sign that piece of paper (marriage certificate).

Within the ethos of western marriage is the notion that men "have certain prerogatives and rights that supercede those of women" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Many men believe that they have exclusive rights to women's domestic and sexual 'services' within a marital relationship. Accounts of battery inflicted by men upon women in the home point to the man's sexual jealousy which is principally precipitated by the women's refusal of his demands for heterosexual. On the one hand, this points to the man's belief that he has right of access to the woman's body. On the other hand, he may believe that a refusal of a demand for heterosexual signals the woman's sexual infidelity - if she won't do it with me she must be doing it with someone else. This may be a rationale for his anger at the woman's denial of what he deems to be the basis of the relationship - her sexual availability and the servicing of his wants. Such a man may not confine his demands to access to his wife; women working in refuges have pointed out that the man who batters is often also the man who sexually assaults his daughter(s).

Jane I could really kill arrogant men. One of my mates

like her dad is dead arrogant and he thinks - you know these men who think they're above women, that they're (women) just there for them (men) - well he's one of those men. Like we were about 13/14 and he'd be coming in, you know doing dir...not dirty things to us but grabbing hold of us and looking us up and down and going "Do this do that". You know what I mean (HC: Yeh) and we were sitting there like that going "Oh no, he's had a couple like, there's nothing down for us". And it'd be "I love you" and getting kissed all over and that. I can't stand that. I can't stand young men doing that to me never mind old men. And he'd go out with his mates, get rotten drunk, pissed and all that and he'd come in at about 11 o'clock and expect a meal. You know, his wife to cook a meal and if that wasn't there, there'd be bloody murder. I just cannot stand that in men.

HC How many men do you think are like that Jane?

Jane A load!

Battery can take on physical, mental and emotional forms of assault, degradation and humiliation. The patterns may be established in pre-marital relationships, as may be seen from the foregoing accounts of the young women's interactions with young men. Young men may continually attempt to intrude upon the physical integrity of young women with the purpose of heterosexual intercourse, and in so doing cause the young woman to feel ashamed, embarrassed and degraded. Yet the use of the label "slag" to explain male intrusions traps a young woman in a relationship with a violent young man. The idea that "he might be testing you out" is particularly pertinent here for it is a test of exclusive right of access premised upon a physical intrusion.

The young women were aware of the threat of violence from men. Jane

believed that "a load" of men thought women are "just there for them", that many men are "arrogant". Ellen's description of her "ideal fella" as one who would "Treat me good, not hit me, not tell me what to do and where to go" begs the question of why these should be ideal rather than normal qualities. Tracy and Janice pointed out that "The majority of fellas do hit the girls" and "They just think they can".

The young women recognised that attempts by boyfriends to coerce them into heterosex were not expressions of love. Yet they also believed that the woman is responsible for controlling these interactions. Their initial focus upon the actions of the woman rather than those of the man can also apportion blame on the woman who is battered rather than the man who batters. She may be blamed, for example, for staying within that relationship. As we were to discuss, however, leaving a marriage can be extremely difficult for a woman.

Jane Well I don't think you could really love someone if they sort of like....if you didn't have sex with them they batter you. I think you should leave them, even if you did love them you should leave them.

HC But then that's not always so easy is it. Where do you go, what if you've got kids, what if you haven't got a job?

Jane But I would never face that 'cos I've got a big family and I could always go to someone.

HC Say you didn't?

Jane If I had no-one....(long pause).

HC This faces a lot of women this problem.

- Jane I don't know what I'd do....couldn't you go to the.....what is it?
- Karen Hostel.
- HC Well Women's Aid takes a lot of women and children but there's only so many of them and they're often overcrowded....3 or 4 families to a room.
- Jane Can't you get money off the social and let them pay your flat and all that?
- HC They often won't. They can say "Oh you've got a perfectly good home" and you say "He's battering me" but they might not believe you. And if you've been through all that, that's the last thing you want to hear. And then you could move away to get away from him 'cos if you've got a flat in the same town he might come knocking on your door. So you move to another town and the social there says "Oh you belong to that social". And this way time goes on by and you're still not getting any money, so how'd you live? And on top of that is the whole stuff about what you're taught is natural and how far you can actually get out of that.
- Jane I don't know what I'd do. You don't do you. What would you do?
- HC Oh, I would have left but I don't think it's an easy choice.

The fact that women sometimes have to endure years of battery before being able to escape violent men points to the difficulties women face in "leaving violent men" (Schechter, 1982; Binney, 1981; Dobash and Dobash, op. cit., Martin, 1981). These difficulties may stem in part from the woman's material situation. And as Ann Smith says of the so-called caring agencies "...women are given help to stay in a violent relationship more often than they are given help to leave one" (Smith, 1984, p. 27).

Joyce remarked about women having to make 'excuses' and then, laughing:

Joyce I just say I don't want it. I don't get bothered with it anyway so I'm alright.

Lizzy Bleeding excuses so they don't sit there, like you said before, coaxing you to do it so you make an excuse. You say "I've got a headache" and that's it like. They just call it (battery) a 'family affair'.

A relationship in which the man demands heterosex through physical and/or emotional coercion is not a relationship in which the woman can feel "content and happy". It is not a relationship based upon mutual love but one based upon the woman's sexual availability. Yet heterosexual availability is an institutionalised function of wifhood as is exemplified by the lack of legal recognition of rape in marriage.

The young women rarely discussed sex, except male sexual violence, as a practice within the context of their own married futures. They talked much more about their intentions to retain their social and financial independence within their marital relationships. The young women's own experiences of the loneliness and depression emanating from unemployment doubtless contributed to their assertions that they would want to go out to work. None of the young women wanted to "be at home all day":

Doreen I wouldn't want to be at home all day. It's boring.

Maria I mean you'd be doing the same things day in and day out....get up, do the cleaning, peel the spuds, things like that.

They were not prepared to forego their social contacts either, though sometimes they had doubts:

- HC Do you think marriage'd restrict your freedom?
- Chorus No.
- Tricia I don't know what you're all saying no for 'cos you don't know do you.
- Tracy Nobody'll restrict mine!
- Ellen They'd just have to live with it.
- HC What happens if you can't get a job and his is the only money coming into the house?
- Tracy Well the woman gets the money anyway.
- HC How?
- Tracy He gives you housekeeping
- Val If you're lucky!
- Tracy I could say here and now that I wouldn't have him going out with his mates on a Friday and Saturday night, couldn't I. But when you're married you might want him to go out.
- HC You might go down to your mate's house....
- Tracy Fuck off, he'd not stop me going to my mate's.
- Ellen If I ever get married I'm going to put one thing straight - if you want to go out you go out and if I want to then I go out.
- Tricia Everybody says that but no-one knows.
- Julie It all depends.
- Tricia (to Ellen) If he said to you "I don't want you to go out", who would you rather please, him or your mate?
- Ellen Myself!

The young women did not, then, want relationships which involved curtailment of self-determination: their own or the young man's. While they saw marriage as part of their future lives, they also wanted, as Jane put it, "a life outside of the house". Going out to work was one means of achieving this; seeing mates was another.

Perhaps because of this, the young women kept apart 'going out with a boyfriend' and 'going out with a mate'. I had asked if they would ever consider going out in a group which included both 'singles' and 'couples':

- Lizzy They (mates) wouldn't go out like if you were going with your fella. It doesn't work out like that. If you're going with your fella and you're going to go out with someone else, it's always another couple you go with.
- HC Well don't you think then that if you're on your own there's a way in which you could be excluded from social gatherings and that?
- Jane No. It's just like you find other people on their own and you go out with them.
- HC Say all your mates are courting?
- Lizzy You go out with them on your own, you don't go with....
- Jane They don't go out with their boyfriends all the time because there's going to be a night when they want to go out with their mates.
- Lizzy Yeh, the thing is that it's not that we wouldn't go out with them, it's just that they wouldn't....you'd feel like a bleeding gooseberry.
- Jane I think sitting in a threesome is the worst situation you can ever get.

- HC Well there must be something about couples that shuts out other people.
- Jane If my mate was in the pub with her fella I'd go over and have a gab but I wouldn't stay like.
- Julie What you're talking about is mixing your mates with your fella?
- Jane Maybe I would do it yeh, I would do it but I've never come across the situation.
- HC Do you think that being in a couple can cut you off from other people and cut them off from you?
- Jane Yeh, I know what you mean 'cos say like I'm at Stella's and her fella comes round then I'll immediately say "I'll go home" because I think they want to talk and that. Sometimes like me and Stella have been having a gab and all that and he comes round and I've got to go. But they wouldn't tell me to go home or anything. If she wants me to stay I'll stay but I'd say "I'll get off" in case she does want me to go.
- HC The thing is though that women do get isolated in the home.
- Jane But they let it happen.
- HC Do you think that a level of that situation might be established when you're courting?
- Jane Yeh but you don't lose all your mates when you're courting....there's always someone who's different.

The retention of friendship with their mates was very important to the young women. As explained earlier they were aware that young men sometimes resented such friendship. Lack of loyalty to mates, however, was a source of anger for the young women:

- HC Does courting disturb your friendship with your

mates?

Margaret It depends....it doesn't with you; you still like being with your mates.

Jane If you sort of drop your mates, they're going to drop you, won't want to know you. But if you sort of like say well, if they say "Are you coming out such and such...." and you keep on saying "Yeh, yeh" you keep your mates. Like one of my mates, she always used to say "I'd never ever...." and the minute she courted, now this might seem like trying to dramatise but it's not. She actually said to us "I would never give my friends up for a fella". But the minute she started courting, she dropped us like hot bricks and you know none of us want to know her now. Now say like she's been courting for a long time and they're engaged now and all that and she sort of like wants to mingle a bit more, she's sort of had her fill 'cos she's given all her time. And she's been knocking round to each one of us and no-one wants to know her 'cos she always, the minute he does something she just drops you. A friendship goes two ways not when she wants it so nobody wants to know any more.

Yet it remains difficult for a young woman to sustain an active social life without a boyfriend. It is difficult because of lack of money and because of the threat of male sexual impositions. A young woman on her own, in a setting in which men are present, knows that she is not safe from such a threat. As Jane had said:

.....Imagine if you say you're by yourself, imagine what would happen to me then. You know....you don't know do you.

CHAPTER SIX

THE REPRODUCTIVE FRAMEWORK

The young women had told me that young men follow a 'route' on their bodies with the purpose of heterosexual intercourse. That 'route' was, in order, "your arse, your breasts, and down there". I have argued that the classification of various parts of women's bodies as sexual is part of the processes of sexualisation and depersonification of women.

The young women also operated a sexual classification system in relation to their own bodies. They restricted young men's access to their bodies but felt that these attempted intrusions were sometimes weird. This was because the young women did not sexualise at all, or to the same degree, the same parts of their bodies as young men did. The discussions described in this chapter show some of the reasons for, and some of the consequences of, the ways in which young women classified the parts of their bodies and the ways in which we began to question this.

The discussions began when I asked the young women to define sex. At first they were unsure how to do so, so I asked them about sex education in school.

Julie All you got was the penis going in the vagina.

HC Would you call that sex?

- Julie Yeh, I'd call that sex but I wouldn't call....do you mean that getting your tits groped is sex 'cos I wouldn't call that sex.
- HC What would you call it?
- Julie Grope, just getting fucking felt.
- HC I wonder why they want to grope your breasts; I mean what's so funny about your breasts.
- Julie I know. What do they get out of it. It's weird isn't it.
- Tricia Isn't it funny that there are parts of your body that you don't touch, don't want touched or that you've been brought up not to touch.
- Tracy It is, isn't it.
- HC Which bits of the body are you supposed not to touch?
- Tricia Your breasts, down there.
- HC Do you not mind your bum?
- Julie No.
- Lilly & Janice I do.
- Julie Your bum's nothing to your fanny and your tits.
- HC Well why not your tits?
- Julie They're not there to be touched.
- HC Well neither's your bum, your hands, your legs.
- Julie Yeh but your hands everybody can see can't they.
- HC What about your stomach or your back, they're not on display.
- Julie Who'd want to touch them!
- HC I think it's because some parts of your body are associated with sex.

The young women expressed general agreement with this last statement.

The young women, then, did not rank their own bodies in the male order of "your arse, your breasts and down there". Nevertheless, they did have to take the male order into account because they knew what this order meant. If young women do not "knock back" young men at the first (bum) or second (breasts) stage of the process, young men "think they're getting somewhere" and inflict increasing pressure on young women for heterosexual intercourse. I argue that this undermines the self-definition and bodily integrity of young women. It is a physical intrusion upon young women's bodies and it predetermines heterosexual interaction on male terms. It also forces young women to act upon those terms which gives legitimation to a male classification of women's bodies.

It is not, however, only in direct interaction with young men that this undermining may take place. According to Tricia, "there are parts of the body that you don't touch, don't want touched or that you've been brought up not to touch". Many of the young women felt that areas of their bodies were out of bounds for themselves. This was particularly the case with "down there" which was even regarded with distaste by some young women.

During a discussion about the various forms of contraception, Tricia stated that putting in and taking out the cap would be "disgusting".

HC What would be disgusting about it, Trish?

Tricia Opening your legs and sticking your hand up.

This led to squeals of laughter mixed with horror, and rumblings of the word "dirty". This was not the first time the idea of dirty had been associated with the vagina and I decided to try to undermine this association. This often led to great hilarity:

- HC Do you think there's something dirty about your vagina then?
- Ellen I think down there's dirtier than up here (breasts).
- HC What do you mean by 'dirty' though?
- Ellen If someone said to me "what's dirtier, down there or up there" I'd say "down there".
- HC What is it you think is dirty? It's like....there's something dirty about your vagina?
- Ellen Well you don't see girls every day in the paper showing there do you.
- HC But what's dirty about it Ellen?
- Ellen I just don't like it.

Throughout this conversation, Mary had been muttering to herself. I attempted to elicit her opinion:

- HC Do you think it's dirty, Mary?

This led to howls of laughter. A 'dirty Mary' is a vagina which is 'dirty' and, by association a "loose woman" (it is, however, not so offensive a term as 'slag'). Unfortunately, this name was attached to Mary for the next half-hour. She, however, took it in good part. It was some time during this session before the subject could be approached again. This time, however,

one of the young women introduced it by asking me about my feelings:

Tricia Do you think it's dirty, Heather?

HC No.

Tricia Why not?

HC Because it's part of my body.

Tracy You can't help but touch your breasts sometimes but not down there.

HC Well you probably wouldn't want to be touching yourself all the time but you might want to have a look to see if everything's alright er or if you use tampons there's always the problem that bits of the cotton will come off and stay inside your vagina....

Ellen But you don't see them on page three, you know in the likes of the Sun. But the day'll come when they'll show everything.

HC But it's just the idea that there's something wrong with you; like if you think that something's dirty about your own body, it's like thinking there's something wrong with you. You know what I mean? And it's part of your body. Why the hell, why should you feel as though it's dirty?

Mary You're going to be touching yourself though aren't you to see....

HC No, you don't have to, but that's not the same as saying "ooh I couldn't" is it.

Julie I don't like it down there. I feel more ashamed.

As I pointed out earlier, the term 'ashamed' can also mean 'embarrassed'. I asked the rest of the group whether they felt the same.

Tricia Not ashamed....

Mary I'd be ashamed touching my own body. Imagine

sitting there in the house going like that (imitation of examination).

- HC How do you mean, Mary?
- Mary My ma comes in: "What are you doing".
- Ellen Ooh yeh, imagine touching your box. It's horrible, I hate it. I wish I never had one.

This particular group of young women quite often used 'container' type words to describe their vaginas. In all the groups, the lack of words to describe our own bodies was commented upon.

- HC But it's part of your body. Do you think lads think their body is horrible?
- Tricia No I think lads show off their bodies more than what girls do. I think girls are more thingio, scared.....er.....of their bodies than what lads are.

In another group, the supervisor had said much the same thing.

Yeh we're still quite frightened of our own....ashamed....well I don't know if it's ashamed, maybe it is ashamed of our own bodies. (Joyce).

As Janice said:

It's not something you usually talk about.

The young women did not believe that young men experience the same difficulties. Following Tricia's statement that girls are more scared of their

bodies than lads, I asked:

HC Why should that be? Why should it be that girls think that it's dirty and you don't want to touch it or you're a bit iffy about it, and lads don't feel like that?

Ellen The thing is, lads are more....open than girls. They just do it like and other lads say "Don't you do anything like that" and they get loads of stick. Whereas if I said to her "Don't you do anything like that?", she'd think "eeeh".

I was bemused and asked:

Anything like what?

Ellen Playing with yourself and all this.

I wanted to undermine the association between self-examination and masturbation - "playing with yourself":

HC Yeh but nobody's talking about playing with yourself, I'm talking about having a look, see what you look like.

Ellen If I said to her I was having to look at my box last night, she'd go "you fucking dirty cow" wouldn't she.

Tricia You know what, I don't see why we should be ashamed, it's part of your body.

HC Yeh.

Mary Yeh, but what do you learn by having a look?

The young woman had, by this time, become very animated with the subject. They were both fascinated and amused. One mentioned that she had seen

pictures and, therefore, knew what she looked like.

Ellen I know what I've got down there.

HC How do you know? Have you had a look?

This led to howls of laughter.

HC It doesn't mean that yours is going to be exactly the same though.

Tricia If I've got a cock, God help me.

Amid the hilarity that this produced, Ellen repeated that she had seen pictures. I repeated that "we're all different".

Ellen E'y'are figure this out, Heather, figure this out. How come everybody's got eyes, nose and face there there and yet we're all different?

HC Well we are aren't we, 'cos of genes.

Ellen Oh, I know all that, I know about the genes.....

Julie What's that?

Ellen That's the way you get to look the way you are.

Julie Is it?

HC Well I think it's mostly that, the way you look. Not the way you think or anything, but the way you look.

Ellen It means everyone is different.

The idea that we all, as women, look the same "down there" undermines our bodily integrity. It is a part of the process of reducing women to a common

element - vagina.

These young women were distanced or alienated from their vaginas. Talking about this subject was a breach of taboo, which undoubtedly lay behind much of the laughter. They were, however, much more open about their breasts.

Ellen I'll tell you what I do. Sometimes when I'm in the bath I feel if I've got lumps there (breasts).

HC Oh you should do yeh. You've got to feel all round here (demonstrating) and make sure you've got no lumps.

Tricia Oh, I never do that.

Val You should do it regularly.

Mary How would you know?

HC You'd feel it, you'd feel something distinct....

Ellen Yeh, if one's got something the other hasn't.

Mary I've got little tits.

Ellen How come some people have got big breasts, some have got little and some have got none?

HC Well breasts are made up of glands and fat.

Ellen Well I don't know where I was when they were handing them out.

HC I was behind the door.

Ellen I never made it to the door.

It was at this point that the young women turned the conversation to the difficulties they had with boyfriends and 'talking'. Later, however, one of the young women reintroduced the subject of self examination and asked

how to do it.

HC I meant like you get a mirror and you get privacy. Obviously, you're not going to do it in the middle of the living room when everybody's watching the telly are you (laughter). You get a mirror and just have a look.

Our mutual persistence with this subject was almost entirely determined by the fact that it made us all laugh. I could not help but imagine how I would have reacted in the young women's situation. Like them, I would have encouraged the researcher to persevere in order, in part, to take a rise out of her and the situation. Humour, however, can allow many 'forbidden' topics to be discussed.

Mary Have a look at what?

HC See what you look like.

Mary What do you mean "get a mirror?"

Julie You look at yourself when you're combing your hair don't you.

To howls of laughter, I explained:

I'm talking about looking at your vagina.

Julie You can't get a mirror up your vagina.

The young women were almost helpless with laughter. I fuelled this with my next statement.

HC No but you can hold it, open your legs and have a look.

There was a chorus of 'eeeh' and 'ugh'.

HC 'Cos once you know what it looks like, you might stop thinking it's dirty, mightn't you.

Mary Ooh no, that is dirty.

HC What's dirty about it, Mary?

Mary Eeh, looking at what you've got.

HC Do you look at your breasts?

Ellen Oh you can't miss them.

Mary There's nothing there.

HC No, but you look no matter what size they are....

Ellen Oh, I don't care what anybody says, you do look at your breasts. When I get undressed, I go "God blimey, you're coming on lovely now."

The young women shrieked, as they did with the following:

HC But you must have noticed things changing with your bodies. You must have noticed starting to grow pubic hair.....(howls). Do you know what your armpits look like?

Ellen Oh yeh, I shave them.

HC So you look at your breasts, your armpits, your face and you hair....

Ellen But not down there.

Mary I'm going red already.

HC But the idea that it's dirty....

- Ellen Imagine my going home and getting a mirror and going like that and my ma coming in "What are you doing?"
- HC Who uses tampons here?
- Ellen I'm scared, I'm scared of losing it.

I totally misunderstood Ellen's statement which led to more howls:

- HC But you keep the string outside to pull it out.
- Ellen I meant my virginity.

As I noted earlier some of the young women had expressed fears of the pain involved in "losing their virginity" - by which they meant the rupture of the hymen.

- HC You're a virgin until you have sexual intercourse. The hymen has nothing much to do with it. You might not have a hymen.
- Tricia Yeh, that's a load of shit that. It breaks the skin but you could have broken it years ago when you were riding a bike.

I wanted to reassure the young women who might never have ridden a bike!

- HC You might never have had one.
- Ellen Oh I want to know.
- HC So why don't you have a look. Maybe you should have a look and see if you've got one.

Despite their squeals of laughter, the young women pressed me to explain how "you could see it" and "what else you can see down there". They listened partly with fascination but also, apparently, thinking that I was very 'rude'.

Ellen Well you know what, Heather, if I'd known that I would have looked years ago.

Ellen's statement was 'tongue-in-cheek'. Tricia, however, sounded more serious:

Tricia I didn't know you could see it though. Mr. Bibby (Tricia's teacher) never told us that.

Val Mr. Bibby probably wouldn't have liked to.

HC You get a mirror and a really good light....

Julie (laughing) a spot light!

HC Yeh, why not. There's nothing wrong with you. It's all part and parcel of your body.

Tricia
(to HC) Have you? Have you ever had a look at yourself down there?

HC Yeh, of course I have.

Mary I wouldn't do that.

Ellen Ooh I am.

HC Have a look. See what you look like.

Mary Oh it'd be dead mad.

HC No but listen. If you know what you look like, then maybe you get a bit more positive about how you feel about your body. Do you know what I mean? If you don't know what it looks like, or you only ever see it in pictures that you think are dirty or you only refer

to it with words which are used in a really bad way, then it's no wonder that you start feeling bad about it, 'cos you don't know.

Amid all the talking and laughing that followed this, Ellen broke through what had earlier been a barrier:

Ellen When you're about 13 or 14 and you see hairs growing down there, you think you're a fucking man or something.

The other young women howled but Ellen persisted:

Ellen No. I did get a fright when they first started growing. I'd never seen anything so fucking stupid in my life. Why have you got hair down there?

HC I don't know.

Val It's for protection

Tricia Maybe it's to keep it warm.

The tape and I were exhausted by this time. The young women, however, kept me there talking long after I had switched the recorder off. Ellen asked me questions which ranged from how the pyramids were built (which I could not answer) to what did Marx say. When I explained this (to the best of my ability), Tricia asked:

Don't you get rape then in a communist society?

"Periods"

The young women had been denied knowledge of and about their own bodies. That denial, I believed, was linked to the negative feelings some of them felt about the vaginas. They had similar feelings about their 'periods'.

Very few young women used tampons. The very idea of inserting a tampon had led to howls of disgust in one group because it would involve touching "down there". I asked how they felt about towels.

- Lilly Disgusting.
- Julie Horrible aren't they.
- HC What's horrible about them?
- Julie The fucking blood.....and I mean it's not blood from your finger is it. I mean it's not like clean blood is it. It's from there.

Julie's belief that menstrual blood is not "clean blood" may have been linked to the notion that "down there" is not clean. That linkage, however, does not necessarily follow. Some young women had no such negative feelings about menstruation; others who did felt that it undermined their confidence for other reasons:

- Jane Some people take things like that to heart don't they. But I wouldn't even think about it.
- Karen Think about what Jane?
- Jane That your body's dirty when you're on a period, things like that. I wouldn't let anybody talk me into things

like that

Karen No you are. Your fucking body stinks...you think that you are

Jane No, if you stink when you're on a period, Karen, it's probably your fault 'cos you don't clean yourself.

(Exchanges between the young women like these were common and contained no malice).

Karen No you know when you're on, you just feel dead dirty.

Julie No you don't. I don't even know when I'm on.

Joyce understood the range of feelings being expressed:

Joyce I don't think I'm dirty but I do, you know. I always have that feeling that I...you know, the smell of blood.

Karen Yeh, that's what I'm on about

Joyce I always think to myself "Do I smell?". I wonder if anyone can smell me even though I wash myself and everything else. You know, you always have a feeling you can smell blood.

Lizzy Some people who come on and that, they hide themselves away 'cos they're on. You say to them "Are you coming out for a drink?" and they say "Ooh no, I'm not going out today". Yeh I've heard loads say that "I'm on, I'm not going to the pub".

Karen 'Cos you think you're going to leak on the bottom of your pants.

Jane It's lack of confidence. If I go out and I've got a towel on, then I know I'm not going to leak at the back. But Karen, she's got no confidence to go out and think "Well I know I'm not going to leak at the back". They're frightened in case anybody knows that

they're on. If somebody asked me if I was on a period, I wouldn't give a shite. If a lad come up to me and said "Are you on a period?", I'd say, "And what like!"

Jane's mention of a lad asking about menstruation pointed to what appeared to be a fairly common practice among young men and boys (Clark, 1983). Young women often commented upon the insulting remarks young men made about menstruation. The remarks were experienced as a further male intrusion, though the extent to which they directly effected the young women's feelings about menstruation is a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless, as Jane recognised, fears about menstruation may be linked to fears about "anybody knowing". Women are enjoined to privacy about menstruation, as a number of other writers have stated (Greer, 1971; Clark, op. cit). Weideger argues:

When we are taught that something has to be hidden, we naturally believe that it contains an element that is not acceptable to other people. (Weideger, 1978; p. 3).

When we discussed menstruation, none of us felt embarrassed. It was not a taboo subject between women. Much of our discussion instead was about why we feel embarrassed in relation to men. I asked the young women if they minded buying their own menstrual wear. They did not. I asked about male counter assistants:

Jane A little bit....if he's a young man and he's standing there and you're throwing towels on the counter, I think I'd feel a little bit embarrassed.

Lizzy I bet he'd feel more embarrassed though

Jane Yeh

HC What about if he was an older man?

Jane I think I'd still feel it

I asked the young women if they could work out why they might feel like this.

Jane I think it's because....e'y'are if you fell over in front of an elderly man, you'd laugh. You wouldn't feel at all....whereas if you fell over in front of a young fella....

Lizzy A nice fella...if it was an older...you'd think "Who's the fucking hell he's laughing at". But if it was a nice...you'd just feel ashamed wouldn't you.

Jane Yeh, that's it

Lizzy Not exactly 'cos you fancied him, but you think he's nice so if you fell over in front of him, you'd feel last wouldn't you

HC What if he was serving behind the counter in the chemist?

Lizzy A nice fella? I wouldn't go

Karen I wouldn't either

Jane mused over her own contradictory feelings:

Jane And yet if a fella knew I was on my period, it wouldn't bother me in the least

She decided she would try to resolve them:

I don't know. You've challenged me now. I'll have to find a chemist where there's a nice fella to see if I can go in and get them.

Joyce believed that the feelings expressed by this group were common:

Joyce I bet if they did have men serving, the sales of towels wouldn't half go down.

It may be that feelings of embarrassment surrounding menstruation are overlain with feelings about sexuality, and that the presence of a young man who was potentially 'fanciabile' brings those to the fore. But it would be a mistake to overgeneralise this. It may equally be that the young women wanted to 'close down' any potentially intrusive route for young men. One young woman drew an analogy which had a more direct sexual connotation. Another disagreed.

Maria It's the same for lads buying Durex....if there's a girl behind the counter

Jane No, I don't think that's the same

HC That's to do with sex isn't it

Jane Yeh, it's different isn't it. (pause). Yeh, you see, men don't really know much about periods do they, most men. They don't know what we know about it. And they might have a little fantasy of their own like. You see, you're buying a towel and all kinds of things are going through their heads: "She's bleeding to death, here, now". And you're thinking that they think things like that. Oh I don't know, it's weird.

Men may have their own fantasies about menstruation which may, in turn,

impinge upon women's feelings. Jane had resolved to counter that. Some young women, had, however, apparently accepted that there was something wrong with menstruation. For some it was a matter of not feeling clean; for others, the association between menstrual blood and "down there" may have been more significant. Dealing with menstruation caused further problems, most particularly for those young women who felt that "down there" was "dirty". The ways in which each young women felt about menstruation varied. What they had in common, however, was their knowledge that menstruation existed for the purpose of reproduction.

Lizzy Like I didn't know what it (menstruation) was till like Jane....what did you say it was, like a bed for a baby?

Jane It's like er the placenta isn't it, you know the placenta. And the egg and the sperm go into the placenta and that's where the baby goes.

This explanation so confused me that I had to refer to a number of books before I felt confident enough to reply to the young women's requests for further information. Some were very much in need of information:

Jane The period is the egg isn't it?

HC The egg has already gone when you have your period.
The egg comes away before your period.

Chorus What egg?

All the young women had received some information at school about menstruation. It had been imparted in subjects such as biology, religion, social studies and childcare, or in occasional classes. Few,

however, had received information in a way they could both understand and relate to their own bodies. This may, in part, have been the result of the medico-scientific language which is considered the only 'polite' form of discourse. Indeed, in my own attempts to clarify my knowledge I found some of the texts mystifying. The young women had experienced similar difficulties:

- Ellen You know, that you've got to have them to get pregnant and all that. And we had films. Oh and they said it like that, they put it in all big words, how girls grow up and how boys grow up.
- Tricia You know what they told us periods were for? Well when you're about 13 your body starts changing and the waste or something inside you.

It may not only have been the "big words" that acted as a barrier to learning. Knowledge about menstruation is imparted within a reproductive framework. The young women knew little else about menstrual processes of their bodies, other than that the function of menstruation was reproduction. But when I attempted to stand outside that framework and talk instead about the menstrual cycle, I experienced some difficulty:

- Jane What do you mean Heather, it's part of your menstrual cycle?
- HC I put it that way because then you can think about what's happening with your own body, and not just in terms of reproduction.
- Jane Yeh, but that's what it's for. If you don't have periods you can't get pregnant.

The young women had been taught that the function of menstruation is reproduction. They had also been taught that reproductive activity - coition - equalled sex. Some believed too that their vaginas were "there for" this purpose. Indeed for many young women, that belief appeared to underlie their feelings of alientation from "down there":

Ellen I wouldn't look down there, no way.

HC Why not?

Ellen That's just there for a purpose.

The supposed linkage between their vaginas and sex also underlay their belief that "touching down there" was akin to masturbation. And masturbation was regarded as "dirty" or "disgusting":

Lilly I think it's disgusting doing that to yourself.

Tricia Well what about lads wanking themselves?

Lilly That's their business.

Tricia I do think it's more disgusting for a girl.

Why it should be "more disgusting for a girl" may have been linked to the belief held by these young women that vaginas have more significance than penises:

Tracy I think a girl's is more than a lad's.

I do not really know what Tracy meant. What was clear, however, was that

because their vaginas were "there for" the purpose of coition, coition was inevitable.

- Tracy If you were about 27 and you were still a virgin, you'd go out and lose it wouldn't you.
- Ellen Yeh, your mind'd be thinking.
- HC But that might not be the right thing for you, might it?
- Tracy What would be the right thing for you then?
- HC Whatever you wanted to do for yourself.
- Val That might not be important to you, you see.
- Tracy Yeh, but if you'd never had it like, you might not know whether it was important to you.
- Vål No, but some people, it's still not important to them.
- Ellen Well it must have been put there for a purpose mustn't it; as I say, it must have been put there for a purpose....

I have argued above that young women's means of resistance to young men's sexual impositions may have been constricted by the knowledge they had of their own bodies. That made possible "slag" as a strategy of resistance which could nevertheless trap young women in dangerous situations. The reproductive model can also close down the choices young women make. The young women were not, however, passive victims. They made choices about how they used the knowledge they had. Different young women made different choices. One group discussion on the subject of lesbianism pointed to the strength of the reproductive model. It also brought out the extent to which some young women were prepared to manipulate the model in order to

place the lesbian into the same category as "slag";

Ellen No girl on this earth can die without having it. Every girl will have it some day in their life, I don't care what anybody says.

Tricia What about nuns and lesbians?

Ellen Nuns? Oh they're fingering one another.

Tracy was horrified:

Tracy Oh go 'way. Fuck off! There's a sin on your soul for saying that.

Ellen Well lezzers are.

Tracy I think lesbians are disgusting

HC How are you defining lesbianism, why is everything defined as so sexual. And there's a lot of women, Tracy, who define their lesbianism not just in terms of having a sexual relationship with another woman but not having sexual relationships with men, and putting all their attention into things to do with women.

Tracy was both interested and thoughtful and did not repeat her earlier statement. The other young women shouted down Tracy's attempt to elicit more information from me.

Tracy No shut up everyone, listen to this.

Lilly How can you have sexual relationships between women. I mean sex is having the thing put up you isn't it.

Tracy (to HC) No go on. What are you saying to me?

- HC I was saying that being a lesbian doesn't necessarily mean just having a sexual relationship with a woman....
- Tricia Sex is intercourse. A man and a woman....two women, they're not having sex are they.
- Val It is sex, you're talking about intercourse.
- Tricia Yeh, but sexual intercourse is making love, so two women can't make love.

It was the association between heterosexual intercourse and 'love' - making love - that provided a route for anti-lesbianism here. By definition, a relationship between two women would then be based upon sex rather than love. Only in heterosexual relationships could sex be translated into an expression of love.

Val disagreed with Tricia's assessment:

- Val They can
- Tricia Sex is a willy put up you
- Ellen Why do men want men and women want women?

The group, with the exception of Tracy, carried on shouting that sex was intercourse was making love, and that all else was perverse.

- HC Why is that everything is so sexualised?
- Ellen 'Cos if someone says to me "She's a les", you know she must be giving her mate one; like if someone says "She's a scrubber" she must be getting banged by everyone.

Some of these young women had then brought into play the model "sex equals an expression of love equals making love", which, together with the reproductive model of sexuality which equates coition and sex, functioned to deny any legitimation to relationships between women. "Giving her mate one" was perceived as both sexless and loveless. The inherent contradiction of the argument of some of these young women appeared to matter less to them than attacking lesbianism. They both categorised lesbianism as sexual and denied that lesbians can have sexual relationships. This was achieved by bringing in 'love' as the determinant. If it were possible to make sense of much of the above, it might be argued that there was some level of differentiation going on between what was perceived as male sexuality and what was perceived as female sexuality: between more instrumental sexuality and more love-oriented sexuality. If that was the case, then the association, implied by Ellen, between "slag" and lesbianism would be based upon viewing both as somehow more male behaviour than female. To some extent, Ellen's subsequent statement concurred with this:

- Ellen I'd sooner have a queer than a les.
- Tracy Why!
- Ellen 'Cos queers are good to get on with.
- Tracy So are lezzers.
- Ellen Yeh, but when you're talking to a queer, you've got no fear have you.
- Tricia Eh! A queer'd give a girl one any day.

Whatever the reasons for these young women's views, and most particularly

Ellen's, their impact upon any young lesbian with whom they had contact could be nothing but detrimental. Only one of this group - Tracy -was prepared to acknowledge that the model attached to lesbianism lacked validity. Despite the inherent contradictions of the argument used by the rest of the group, they applied a sexualised definition to lesbianism. This, I argue, was made possible by the same model of sexuality which created the "slag" category. This is not inevitable; it is possible to adhere to the reproductive model and not attack other women in the same way. That was their choice but choices can change.

My discussions with another group of young women had suggested how a piece of knowledge previously denied (to them) can both provide a means for young women to take greater control over their interactions with young men and remove some of the grounds upon which more oppressive views, such as those quoted above, are formulated. These outcomes were the product of a particular process in which the young women and I became involved, rather than conscious intention on my part.

The young women had complained that their sex education in school had been inadequate. They asked many questions which led me to believe that they had been taught very little about their bodies except in the context of reproduction. Having attempted and failed to make clear why I had talked about menstrual cycles in a framework other than that of reproduction I asked:

- HC Did anybody ever tell you about your clitoris?
- Chorus No.
- Julie What's a clitoris?
- HC It's like a smallish fleshy bit, a bit like a small lump...
- Joyce That hangs down.
- HC That we've got. Well we might all have it in slightly different places and you know you've got outer lips and inner lips....
- Jane I just thought it was spare tissue.
- Joyce The bit that got left over when you were born.

I explained that the clitoris was the site of female orgasm.

- Jane I thought that was where you weed from; I didn't know there were any nerves in it or anything.
- HC If you have a sexual relationship....

Jane was still trying to fit this new piece of information with what she had been taught.

- Jane I thought your sex organs were up here (pointing to her womb area)
- HC That's your reproductive organs. That's the sort of thing I was talking about before, when you learn about your bodies only in the context of reproduction.
- Joyce We didn't get taught about that at all. I don't think even our Jane (her daughter) did.
- HC That's where a woman's sexual pleasure is but you never get taught that. You only ever hear about the vagina.

- Joyce They teach you about sex like on an assembly line. That's all you get and the rest you've got to learn from your own experiences.
- HC But then it makes you think that sex equals penetration by the penis doesn't it.
- Joyce True, yeh.

This last point was not lost.

- Jane What's that, what was that you said?
- HC If you're told this is what it's about: you've got a vagina, then there's a penis and your sex organs are up here....
- Joyce Yeh you think it's got to enter before you can have your pleasure.
- HC So you only ever think of sex as penis entering vagina but there's a lot of sexual activities that needn't have anything like that because it need not have anything to do with the vagina. Orgasms do not occur in the vagina.
- Jane I didn't know....I didn't know anything like that at all. They must have told us a lot of crap. It was pathetic what they told us and he was a doctor.
- Joyce Yeh, but he was only telling you the clinical way.

Although the rest of the group had said nothing up to this point, they were all wide-eyed with amazement and totally attentive.

- HC The thing about all this is that it makes heterosex - you know sex between a man and a woman - seem normal.
- Jane That's all I've ever been told Heather. I mean what you've told me today, I've never ever heard that before, ever.

Lizzy Like every time we got told about sex it was always that.

Joyce's subsequent question posed a challenge to the hegemony of heterosexuality:

Joyce Always involved a man?

Lizzy's answer further reinforced the challenge to the reproductive model:

Lizzy Yeh, always....and now comes along the kids. That's how it was, there was always a baby at the end of it.

The young women all agreed that they had been taught in the same way.

HC If you think that penis enters vagina equals sex - do you know what masturbation is? (they all nodded) - how do you think a woman could masturbate?

There was a long pause.

Julie I don't know, just by putting their fingers up themselves?

Jane I thought it was that.

Maria I don't even know what it is.

Jane I don't think any of us have really masturbated. I don't know.

The young women became a little embarrassed at this point. I reassured

them that I was not going to ask them if they had masturbated.

- Jane I've never really sort of like wanted to. I've never really had the urge to.
- HC Well obviously you do it through er manipulating the clitoris.
- Jane Well say like you're having sex with a man and you have an orgasm, how can you have an orgasm when he's not even touching your clitoris?
- HC Because he might. Some of it will depend on how you're made and like we're all different. He might touch the clitoris with part of the penis and that might depend as well on the position you have intercourse in. Or you might - some women have like a hood over the clitoris which is attached to the inside lips - the labia minora - and the movement of the penis might pull on that so you get some indirect stimulation. But when you read surveys on this you find a lot of women don't have orgasms through intercourse.
- Joyce I'd say a lot more have orgasms just by hand than by penetration.
- HC Yeh it's not really to do with penetration.

The young women asked me to say it all again. I explained that if we are only taught about sex in the context of reproduction, we make the equation "sex = penetration of the vagina by the penis". I added that this made heterosexuality the norm and then only in very narrowly defined terms. I argued that our whole bodies would be viewed in more sensual terms, if we stood outside this reproductive model.

Early in the research process with this group, the discussion had been about Dale Spender's Invisible Women (1982a) the content of which I had described

to the young women. During this later session on 'sex', they made immediate connections. Following on from my statement that orgasm was "not really to do with penetration", Lizzy asked:

But why do you get taught all that when it's not true?

Jane Well it comes back to what you've said before, Heather, about the books and all that being more male. Like we weren't told that. What were told is a very male view isn't it.

HC Of course it is....why do you think that's male?

Jane Because the penis entering the vagina, that's his orgasms, that's his organs. I mean it's got nothing to do with ours, 'cos it doesn't go anywhere near the clitoris does it. So it's got to be a very male view 'cos it's about his sex organs and not ours.

HC Yeh, that's probably why a lot of women, though not all women, don't like sexual intercourse 'cos it does nothing for them.

Joyce And they fake, you find they fake a lot of orgasms because they don't want to be told that they're er frigid.

Joyce had pointed here to the way in which "frigid" may be used to insult a woman who does not enjoy heterosexual intercourse, which forces her to pretend that she does. This is one means whereby heterosex takes away women's power of self-definition.

Jane Well what can we do then if that does nothing for you, what do you do then?

Joyce Well that is why a lot of sex is to do with the play beforehand.

HC But that shouldn't be called...that shouldn't then be down-graded. You know, they call it fore-play before the 'real thing'. And you get all these bloody sex

manuals that tell how to turn on the...

- Joyce Women!
- HC Yeh and they call it fore-play as though that's not the real thing.
- Lizzy The male thing. Because like e'y'are say like you're having it and that and it's not bleeding doing nothing for you 'cos it's not going anywhere near where it should be going is it and it's the fella's isn't it
- Joyce It always seems to be the fella that enjoys it to that degree when it comes to actual intercourse itself.
- Julie What's oral sex?
- Joyce When the man puts his penis in your mouth and you suck it off.
- HC Or when you stimulate a woman's clitoris with your tongue and/or lips
- Jane And what's all these other types of sex? I know that and oral sex.
- HC Well you might use your hands to stimulate the other person....
- Joyce The rest is just different positions of having it.
- HC But that's because we look at sex in such a narrow way...
- Joyce It's taught in a narrow way though isn't it, Heather. When you're in school it's taught as a clinical thing.

At this point I decided to question the allegedly necessary association between sex and genitals.

- HC But we always centre sex around the genitals. There might be a quick rub over your breasts in move 1 to 10, you know. They start off up here (neck) work their way down or start at your toes and work they way up. I mean it's like sex in ten moves isn't it.

The young women nodded in agreement throughout; the description fitted their experiences of lads following a 'route'. I continued:

If you think that sex is something more than a genital thing, to do with like the vagina or the penis or whatever, then you can think that sex is more to do with like senses or sensuality. Like you know, you might get a lot more pleasure from having your back stroked than having someone thrust a penis inside you.

The young women howled with laughter.

Lizzy The way she puts that!

Joyce Ooh I love having my back scratched, oh yeh.

HC Or you might prefer having a real nice cuddle, or someone stroking your head, or your breasts or your arms or your back. We have a very narrow view I think.

Joyce People sometimes find it embarrassing to talk about this. I used to be like that.

HC But it is important to know your own body.

Lizzy decided that the subject of self examination was pertinent.

Lizzy Nobody tells you that. 'Cos 'e'y'are I have, that time I sat on a fork I had to. If I had to I would, but otherwise I wouldn't have. 'Cos till you said, Heather, that everybody's different, when you see a woman with nothing on, you just think "Oh my body's the same as hers".

The young women returned to the subject of male views of the world and sex during the following session. They pointed out that not only were women's bodies defined by men which denied women knowledge of their own bodies,

but lads were told "all about their fiddly bits":

Jane It's probably the way the truth always gets wiped out, like most of the time doesn't it. Like you know when you told us about you know your clitoris and all that, I just can't believe that we were never told it at school. I just can't believe it. I mean and I'm 18 now and I didn't even know it. I mean they tell lads all about their fiddly bits and what have you, they tell them what theirs is all about but they don't tell us.

Jane was angry. She continued:

I think it's disgusting never being told and I blame my mum and dad too because they were too....I mean I don't blame them because...oh I don't know. I just don't, but I do a little bit because they've never been open with us.

HC Maybe your mother doesn't know, Jane.

Jane Maybe she doesn't, yeh maybe she doesn't....but if she does know I think it's wrong to hide it away from your kids. By God, when my daughter's turned 14, she's going to know the lot, I'm going to tell her everything. And my son, if I had lads, I'm going to tell them as well.

Jane's anger spilled over to her lack of instruction from her mother about menstruation. She continued:

I think it's terrible, you know, hiding from it and all that. I mean when I started my period the only thing my mother said to me was erm, I think I had used tissue, you know to put there. I knew you used towels like but I didn't know how you got them or anything. And I mustn't have flushed the toilet 'cos I was dead sick one day and my mum just came in with a packet of towels and she said "You don't use tissue, Jane, you use towels. I'll leave them in your top drawer

every month". And that was the first and last thing she said to me.

HC Did you not tell her you'd started your periods?

Jane No. 'Cos I was frightened because my mum had never told me about it.

Lizzy I got my mate to tell my mum; I just couldn't get it out. I stood there for ages going "mum" and when she turned round....

Jane I wasn't scared, I was just, it was....just I just never talked to my mum about things like that and it just didn't seem right. Whereas now like it's different but at the time like, you're changing aren't you and you get funny moods and all that. You just....you feel weird about it. I used to feel weird about it and telling my mum made me feel even weirder so I didn't tell her.

HC Maybe your mum felt weird talking to you about it?

Jane Yeh...yeh. No but I think she shouldn't have done. I think she should have been open with all of us. Then again it's the way she's been brought up and the way she's lived. I mean I can't totally blame her.

Jane's anger appeared to be shifting back and forth toward her mother. I pointed out that her mother may also have been denied knowledge.

HC She might not know, Jane....because like if nobody's told you in the first place and if there isn't somebody you could ask, you can go through your whole life not knowing about your own body. And it's made worse by the fact that it's only ever talked about in medical books by men and then in the sort of language....

Jane That you can't really understand.

Lizzy I was amazed. I didn't know.

Jane I always thought they were up inside you, I did.

Lizzy You would though wouldn't you, with a fella going in there.

Jane That's obviously what you think isn't it.

Lizzy Yeh.

The young women, then, deduced for themselves that men, their actions, their knowledge, and their language denied women knowledge of our own bodies outside of the heterosexual/reproductive framework. They also decided on the basis of an alternative form of knowledge that what they had been taught was "male". And it was their own analysis of what I would call the 'heterosexual imperative' that consolidated the shift.

I had attempted to explain to these young women that I did not believe sexuality to have some objective existence. I argued that what we experience as sexual feelings are constructed. I found this very difficult to express and the young women had some difficulty understanding it. My motive was to reassert that sexual activity should be about choice and not imposition. Yet sexuality was already imposed on us through our knowledge and the conceptual models we use. The introduction of knowledge about the clitoris undermined though it could not completely dissolve that imposition. But it did provide a starting point in the process of deconstructing the basis of imposed sexuality. What the young women did with that was to question the conflation of reproductive activity and sexuality, and point to its male base. The most important thing was that they now had at their disposal a means to resist male sexual impositions and assert their own right to self

determination and self-definition. And this had the potential of giving the women greater control over their own lives.

Lizzy You don't usually get lads coming up to you and stroking your back or arms or whatever. So say I was sitting there and I was with my fella and he starts stroking my back and I thought "Oh what's this getting on to?" I think that; it's because we don't usually sit down and he starts doing that unless he's after something.

She added:

Well I feel I haven't got to have sex now...'cos he's doing that.

Maria It's unusual when you talk about things like this. You get totally different points of view, don't you

Lizzy It's not just you know....people think....you ask someone what sex is and they'd say a man and woman doing it wouldn't they. But it's not like is it. I mean that's all I thought sex was till you come along. There's a lot more to it. It's not just like what a man and a woman do or nothing. There should be another word, not just 'sex' 'cos sex is a load of things isn't it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

'ALTERNATIVE' SEX EDUCATION?

It was not possible to recreate the conditions for the process described in the previous chapter with the other group of young women. As I shall discuss in Chapter 8, other factors mitigated against the development of the sort of relationship between the young women and myself necessary to make this possible. Nevertheless, the information about the clitoris was not lost:

- Julie I thought when you come, it come out the vagina.
- Tracy When you feel like you want sex.
- Julie Well you'd think that if you both come together it'd be great but if it's not your vagina (pause)
- HC Then you have to start thinking what sex means.
- Tracy It's supposed to mean that you love somebody.
- Julie Yeh and it's the penis going in the vagina.
- HC So what happened to the rest of your body?
- Janice Not a lot!

On another occasion Tricia asked me about female orgasm:

- Tricia Does a woman have to have an orgasm to get pregnant?
- HC No.
- Tricia Fucking hell!

Prior to such discussions, many young women did not know women could have orgasms. There was some confusion between 'getting wet' and having an orgasm. 'Love' was associated with heterosexual intercourse more than was 'orgasm'. Yet, in some discussions, love and sex were disassociated. On the one hand, the young women had been taught that heterosexual intercourse was an expression of love; on the other hand, the attempts by young men to impose heterosex upon them was experienced as quite distinct from love and as a barrier to its development if the young woman gave in too soon. It seemed then that the young women were not only held to be responsible for control over sexual interactions but also for love and its development. And love consolidated the inevitability of (hetero) sex.

Some young women blamed sex education in schools for increasing the pressure upon young women to become heterosexually active.

Ellen Do you agree with all kids at school getting taught about sex and all that....?

Tracy Cos you sort of feel you've got to live up to it when you get out of school and you've got to have it....don't they.

Ellen Yeh. I think some teachers are to blame for learning kids all that 'cos they put two and two together, don't they.

I wanted to be absolutely clear before answering Ellen's original question that we were not operating within a 'moralist' framework. By this I mean

the framework used by members of the 'Moral Right' which holds that pre-marital and non-heterosexual sexual activities are morally wrong and that contemporary sex education encourages both.

HC They do what, sorry Ellen?

Ellen Like erm kids get taught all that don't they. They go out and they say to their mates "Oh I've done this at school today" and then they'll say "Oh I'll do that". I think they should have a certain age limit that they start learning it.

HC Are you saying that sex education in school encourages kids to do it?

Ellen Well not encourages them but puts ideas into their heads. I mean if someone says to you "I'm thinking of saving up for this, it'll only cost me that" like, it puts ideas into your head doesn't it. You think "If she can do it, I can do it". It's the same difference isn't it.

I did not agree with Ellen's argument. I believed it very close to the arguments used by the Moral Right. I did, however, think that sex education consolidates the idea that sexual activity is inevitable by the use of the reproductive framework.

HC They do tend to put it across in school as something you're bound to do. Do you know what I mean? What were you saying before, Tracy?

Tracy I agree with Ellen.....that you've.....

Ellen They make it like.....

Tracy That you've got to do it when you're courting like.

HC Yeh I think they put a lot of pressure on. I'm not sure how much of it is the school's fault. I mean schools aren't something separate from the rest of society, they're part of it. They don't put it across as

something you might choose to do or not choose do they; they just put it across as something you're....

Tracy You've got to do.

HC Yeh. That's what I think is wrong myself. What if they said to you "This is what your body's capable of doing?"

Ellen But they'd think "Oh my body's capable of it now". They'd put it a more goody-goody way.

HC It's interesting that, what you and Tracy are saying about sex education in schools making it sound as though you have to. They do do that though and I think it's because they keep going on about "Oh, it's natural".

Ellen Alright, they say it's only what, nature don't they. They say "Oh flipping hell it's nature" don't they like....

Tracy If it's nature why do they call you a slag and all that....

Ellen But if I went up to my mum and said "Ma, I'm having a bit and all that" she wouldn't say it was nature, she'd boot me up and down the kitchen.....

Tracy You would wouldn't you....you're her daughter aren't you.

Ellen You know what I mean. You can't win can you.

These young women went on to point out that they wouldn't do it anyway because of their pride.

I decided to ask these young women for their assessment of an 'alternative' sex education pamphlet: "Please Yourself. Sex for Girls" produced by a group of socialist feminists (Coventry Women's Education Group, undated). I took them each a copy to keep. Val explained to the young women that the

pamphlet was about "how to have sexual pleasure without intercourse". They started to read immediately.

Tracy How could you have an orgasm if you weren't having sex?

Val Read it.

Lilly What's an orgasm?

HC It says on page 11, it explains it better than I could.

Ellen Can you have an orgasm like before you have your periods?

HC Yeh.

Tracy How can you? You must have to do something to yourself to get an orgasm mustn't you.

HC It's to do with your clitoris....

Lilly Have you seen this! Look at this! It says "and explore yourself". What does that mean? Play with yourself?

HC It means have a look.

Tracy Ugh! "Touching yourself while thinking or reading about sex", Ugh!

Lilly Pervies!

The young women were shocked. This feeling apparently increased as they read on. They came to a recommendation to use KY jelly, spit or cream to facilitate masturbation.

Ellen What's K.Y., Heather?

HC It's a lubricating.....

Ellen Use spit on your finger.

Val You don't stick it up you.

The young women carried on reading, and comparing where they were up to in the pamphlet. They also read extracts aloud to each other, seemingly unable to believe their own eyes.

Tracy "K.Y. jelly" from the chemist. Is that what it's for?

HC It's a lubricant.

Val Like vasolene, to make it easy. Like some women are too dry....

Tracy So they'd know at the chemist's?

Val It could be used for anything....it could be used for intercourse, it could be used for you masturbating yourself, it could be used for inserting tampons.

Tracy I couldn't. I couldn't go in and ask for it.

Val You just pick it up off the counter and give it the girl.

Tracy's subsequent comment illustrated the young women's feelings about the recommendations of this pamphlet:

Tracy Ah. She'd look at you and think "You slag"!

Val She wouldn't know what it was for!

Ellen Well if you come in to me and asked for that, I'd well rip you to pieces.

Lilly You'd think it dirty wouldn't you.

Tracy Yeh.

Ellen How does a girl masturbate herself; finger herself?

Val Read it.

HC Rubbing the clitoris.

Tracy Eeh, dirty bastards!

This was too much for the young women:

Ellen Ooooooh, eeeeh.

'Oooooh's and 'Eeeehs' continued. Both Val and I were experiencing some difficulty by this time containing our laughter.

Val
(to HC) Wait till they get to the vibrators!

Tracy I don't believe in this 'cos this is telling girls to masturbate themselves. Do you believe in girls' masturbating themselves?

Val If they want to. They might get more pleasure out of that than having intercourse with a bloke. Everybody's different.

HC I think what it is trying to say to girls is get to know your own body.....

Lilly had by this time reached: "You may also get pleasure from touching the anus....." (ibid, p. 10).

Lilly What's the anus? Is that your arse?

HC Yeh.

The stifled laughter that Val and I were experiencing was beginning to erupt - the group was so shocked.

Lilly What do you want to touch your arse for!

Val People like different things don't they.

Ellen Eeeeeeeh!

As Val had foreseen, the 'information' about vibrators set the young women squealing.

Tracy Have you ever used a vibrator?
(to Val)

Val I'm not telling you if I have!

Tracy I reckon she has....oooh.

Ellen Fancy going in for a vibrator!

Lilly "Can I have an electric carrot please"!

Tracy Oh my God, wouldn't that be shameful! What's a vibrator like, what does it look like?

Ellen There's one in that film "Ten till Midnight".

Tracy No what are they like?

HC They're usually long and thin things and you put a battery in them and they go whizzzzzz.

Tracy And they go up you?

HC Well you could stick them up you if you wanted to but the purpose in terms of what they're saying is to put it against you.....

Tracy Eeeeeeh. I don't believe women do that!

The young women had difficulty in accepting female masturbation as a practice as anything but 'dirty'. The idea of using a vibrator represented to them a violation of womanhood.

The young women continued reading about masturbation.

Ellen What does this mean: "You may want to tense your legs up, or hold your breath, or you may find you breathe fast"? What's that?

Tracy was helpless with laughter:

Tracy Your fanny!

Val You're getting very excited so you might breathe very fast.

Ellen Oh.

Val fuelled the young women's horror:

Val Some people shout out you know, other people.....

Ellen I bet Val shouts.

Val Jeronemo!

Tracy had read that vibrators could be purchased by mail order and were

advertised in 'Spare Rib'.

Tracy Spare Rib?
 HC That's that magazine.....
 Tracy Oh I thought it meant use a spare rib, like a meat bone.

The young women read on until Tracy found a description of orgasm and "some of the things you might feel" (ibid, p. 11).

Tracy "Moaning, shouting and laughing" Oh fucking hell, how shameful! Fancy having sex and shouting!

Tracy's shock was matched by Ellen who had found a section on 'oral sex'.

HC What's wrong with oral sex.
 Ellen Eeeeh.
 Tracy It says here "Sexual relationships may be with boys or with other girls" so that's trying to say to girls they can masturbate their mate and their mate can masturbate them.
 HC Yeh.
 Ellen Lesbians?
 Tracy That's what it is? Lesbians do that?
 HC That might be one thing. But what they're trying to say is that you don't need sexual intercourse - like a penis being inserted into your vagina - and that that has very little to do with sexual pleasure.
 Tracy Mm.

It was clear that, apart from a good laugh, this pamphlet had very little to offer the young women. Their difficulties in relation to young men did not appear to stem from their ability or otherwise to experience sexual pleasure. They stemmed more from the sexual and other intrusions young men imposed upon them. Insofar as sexual intrusions were concerned, the idea that their bodies pre-defined them as sexual was affirmed rather than challenged by the content of the pamphlet. While it attempted to remove the notion that penetration was essential to female sexual pleasure, it did nothing to deconstruct the basis of the penetrative imperative, and nothing to question sexuality as an essence of human beings. It also reasserted a sexualised definition of lesbianism; that is to say, it placed lesbianism within a sexual framework and one which the young women thought 'dirty'.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RACIST SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

The foregoing chapters have discussed the constraints placed upon young women's lives. One major set of constraints stemmed from young men's sexual intrusions; another from the knowledge the young women had about their own bodies, which, in turn, provided some legitimation for the former.

I argued earlier that the belief that (hetero)sexuality is given by biology formed part of the baseline of the young women's sexual knowledge. Their strategies to resist white male sexual intrusions were constrained by that knowledge. The young women "knocked back" young white men but explained the interaction by the use of the term "slag". The young women in one group, however, reacted quite differently to the sexual intrusions of young Black men. Their actions were based upon the knowledge that Black men posed specific sexual dangers to white women. That also formed part of the baseline of their sexual knowledge.

The young women's articulations of racist sexual knowledge within the research process arose initially from a confrontation between one of the group and a young Black man within the workplace. The young man 'called' the young woman; she reacted immediately with a racist assault. The young man complained to the white male management committee of the unit who, in turn, severely reprimanded the young woman. During this process, she

complained that she had been sexually assaulted. This was not taken seriously by the management committee. The entire group of young women were incensed but turned their anger upon the young Black men rather than upon the white managers. From there, the process was one of an increasing confrontation between the young women and the young men. The young women continued to racially harass the young men; the young men continued to sexually harass the young women.

The above is an outline of the interchange between the young women and men following the original incident and was reported to me by the young women and their supervisor. While the racial harassment apparently arose as a result of sexual harassment, by no means can the latter explain the former. The young women had at their disposal a readily available form of sexual knowledge, which was based upon the premises of the "myth of the Black rapist" (Davis, 1981: 172 ff). They used this to make sense of their experiences with the young Black men, and they used it to counter-attack those young men. But while young women discussed the interaction using predominantly overtly racist sexual knowledge about Black men, an inseparable process was occurring which was not immediately discernable to me: the young women experienced the sexual harassment as an assault upon their white womanhood. And it was their image of themselves as white in opposition to Black that created the basis of bonding with young white men. That bonding had the effect of providing an indirect legitimation of white male sexual impositions.

I have edited the following extracts of the discussions between the young women and myself to remove the more overtly offensive terms used by the young women to define Black men and women. This editing does not remove the racism which is evident in the concepts but it marks an attempt to avoid gratuitous repetition of words which assault. Racism is not about beliefs and attitudes but institutionalised practices (Protasia Torkington, 1988 - private communication). The construction of racist knowledge cannot be understood outside of the context of practice. The young women did not create the racist knowledge they articulated. Rather, it provided a conceptual framework which they actively used.

The young women were explaining to me their reasons for using a racist assault against the Black young man:

Julie But he called her a slut

Tricia He called her a slut and a scrubber and all that

Julie He shouldn't have done

HC He shouldn't have called you but nevertheless it's also wrong to call racist names

Tricia I said "What right has he got to call me that?" so Eddy (the young men's supervisor) said "He was only messing" you know. "What if a white lad had called me, would he have been messing?" and he (Eddy) went "No". "So what gives you the right to say we're only messing then?" And he went to me "Cos we don't bring colour into it, there's enough trouble in this world without colour"

HC Well you should tell him that you don't want sex brought into it either like meaning you being girls and them being lads. But it doesn't mean that one issue

should be set against the other

Janice Well he shouldn't have said that first should he

HC No he shouldn't have done but this is about lads not race

.....¹

HC What if a white lad called you that?

Tricia A white lad? I would have gone "Fuck off will you!"

HC So why didn't you say that to him?

Janice The colour just scares you.

Julie Yeh, I wonder why.

Tricia Yeh, that's the only thing that terrifies me

.....

HC Why are you frightened?

Tricia I just am. I'm terrified of them

Tracy E'y'are, that lad who called Janice a slag, well he hurt her....

Tricia I think they're more dangerous than white lads

Tracy ...so the only words she could say to him well "you knob" or "you prick"...

Julie Well that's the first thing that comes into your mind when somebody says something to you (by 'that' she meant a racist assault).

HC Well don't you think that's something to do with the fact that there's no equivalent term to call lads, like if they call you a slag.

Janice Well I could have called him a prick or something but he wouldn't have been arsed.

Tracy They just don't know what they're on about. They just think they're better than what a white lad is.

1..... in this chapter indicates editing out of the young women's tirades of racist abuse.

The use of the term 'they' was an indication of the separation the young women believed existed objectively between white and Black. Also coming into play here was a bonding on a racist basis with young white men. This bonding was based upon two related beliefs. The first was that Black male sexuality poses a danger to white women. The second was that white male sexuality is then by definition less dangerous. I decided to attempt to undermine the 'us' and 'them' distinction on the basis of shared sex:

HC Well what about Black girls. What do you think Black girls have to put up with?

In retrospect I believe my question was wrongly formulated. It failed to question the myth of Black male dangerous sexuality and could have been interpreted as implying that Black women were also endangered by Black men (and, by definition, not by white men) and hence legitimating the myth. In the event, this interpretation was not taken up. The young women were aware that Black women were harassed by white men:

Tricia Ah, I feel sorry for half of them.

Janice I know. They take loads off white lads don't they.

The racist sexual knowledge to which these young women subscribed condones Black girls' getting "loads off white lads".

Julie Sometimes they cause trouble as well.

- HC Well sometimes you cause trouble don't you.
- Ellen We don't walk round like we owned the place.
- HC And do Black girls?
- Tricia No. Neither do Black girls really.
- Lilly When they're all together though.
- HC Well when you're all together don't you walk round feeling all big and that.

There was a general concensus from the young women that they did.

.....

Before the next session with these young women I asked Merseyside Community Relations Council whether it had any suitable anti-racist material I could use with the young women. The only material which was then available and vaguely suitable was a slide film produced by a Christian organisation. I borrowed this and showed it to the young women. Afterwards Doreen, who had promised in private her support, tried to set up a constructive discussion but was silenced when Julie stated she supported the National Front. I was enraged and showed it. This had effects - Julie looked taken aback, Ellen temporarily shifted her beliefs onto her father, and the other young women distanced themselves from Julie. When we returned to the rest-room the young women were friendlier toward me than had recently been the case. It was not until several sessions later that the young women reintroduced the subject of racism by which time some of the group appeared a little less comfortable with racist beliefs:

Tricia You don't know what it (racism) is really. I suppose if you haven't been brought up with them (Black people) you haven't seen them. Then the first time you see them you're either 8 or 9, you're just scared aren't you.

The focus on Tricia's statement on racism here was entirely dependent upon the physical presence of Black people and not upon the role of white culture in constructing racist sexual knowledge.

HC But you do see images of Black people before that age don't you and usually they're very negative images like on the telly or in school books.

Tracy Yeh, there's Black people in them aren't there.

At this point Julie and Ellen arrived and the discussion was quickly dropped. Several sessions later, however, during a time of increasing confrontation between the young women and the young men and in the context of discussing male sexual violence, Val reintroduced racist sexual knowledge. We were discussing an episode of Brookside in which one of the women characters had been sexually assaulted:

Tracy She's all against fellas trying to touch women up, mind she had a bad life with her husband.

HC Are you against fellas trying to touch women up?

Tracy Yeh!

HC Well you haven't had a bad life with a husband.

Tracy What?

- HC It's not necessarily coming down to the fact that she had a bad life with her husband; she might just be against it.
- Tracy I think those fellas have got a cheek haven't they.
- Ellen Yeh I mean my body's not there to be manhandled is it. No woman's body is like.
- Tracy Unless they want to be.
- Val Well Lilly got very upset a couple of weeks ago didn't you Lil, that Black fella hitting you on the bum.
- Lilly Oh him, the bastard!
- Val And he couldn't understand why she was so upset. He said "I only touched her on the bum" and I said "I know but some people don't like it".
- HC Your bum's not there to be....
- Ellen Especially by a Black lad.
- HC It doesn't matter whether the fella's Black or white.
- Chorus It does, it does!
- HC Why does it matter?!

Ellen's reply exemplified the way in which racist sexual knowledge can completely contradict young women's assertions of their right to bodily integrity vis-a-vis young white men. The contradiction arose from bonding with young white men:

- Ellen Put it this way, if someone said to me "Would you rather be touched by a Black lad or a white lad?" I'd say "the fucking white lad".
- HC Why don't you say "neither".
- Ellen If I had to pick.

HC You don't have to pick and you should never be in that situation; that situation doesn't exist.

Tracy It might do one day.

Ellen I mean what do they get out of it?

Tracy (to HC) Would you be touched by a Black man?

HC I don't want to be touched by any man in that way. I don't see that race has anything to do with it.

Tracy You're against Blacks anyway right and then one or some are trying to touch you up along the corridor, it makes you more against them.

HC But how many times to you get that kind of thing with white lads?

Tracy Maybe yeh but as I've said like if you're prejudiced.

Ellen Me and her got touched by a gang of them. Bleeding hell I wouldn't mind if it was my arse but it wasn't; it was down there.

HC That is wrong but race has got nothing to do with it.

Tracy If you're prejudiced it doesn't make you change yourself does it.

HC You can make changes though can't you.

Tracy How can you. If you just don't like Blacks you just don't like them. You might be able to talk to them and then all of a sudden one asks you out and then you don't like them do you. Like you can't, well I can't, go home with a Black bloke. It's degrading.

HC What's so degrading about it Tracy?

Tracy It's shame on your head.

HC Why?

Ellen I mean you're not going to get a white lad after are you. It's going to be all Black lads.

Ellen, like Tracy, emphasised that her father "would go mad" if she went

home with a Black lad. On the one hand, this points to the power of the father in the family to control the sexual activities on the daughter. On the other hand, this cannot be divorced from the interests of white men to promulgate the myths of Black male sexuality which legitimate their sexual impositions on Black women and white women (Davis, *ibid*). At the same time, it is possible that these fathers actually believed the myths.

Underlying the belief that it is "degrading" for a white women to "go out with" a Black man are the twin, and inseparable, myths that Black male sexual behaviour is immoral - as is then by definition that of Black women - and that white women should aspire to the historically constructed 'ideals' of white middle class female morality. The idea that the white woman who has a relationship with a Black man is immoral or 'promiscuous' has a long history and underlies the definition of these women as "prostitutes", "whores" or "slags". And this, according to the schema of "slag", would debar the development of non-sexualised relationships with white young men. The young women's acquired racist sexual knowledge informed their view too that a relationship with a Black young man would by definition be a sexualised relationship. But, and again as Davis (*ibid*: 178ff) makes clear, this legitimates white male sexual violence against Black women:

HC

It's a sexual assault if he called you a slag and that should have been treated seriously like your racial assault on him was. But where does all this leave

Black women?

After a long silence Ellen exploded:

You're trying to make us change; you're trying to put words in our mouths but I don't like Blacks.

HC I'm not trying to change you, only you can do that. And I'm not trying to put words in your mouth; I'm asking you to think.

.....

HC Hey listen what I'm saying is that if some fella, Black or white, insults you or what I would call a sexual assault, if he calls you 'slag' or 'slut' or 'whore' or whatever, that's a sexual assault....

Chorus It is yeh.

HC ...right and it should be dealt with seriously. The fact that Janice racially assaulted the fella should also be dealt with but what was wrong in that situation in the end was that she wasn't taken seriously when the two things should have been taken seriously.

Ellen But who comes out better in the end; him!

HC Because he's a man and she's a woman; that's the difference.

Janice, at least, seemed broadly in agreement with this.

The young women believed that if a white young woman went out with a Black young man, it was not only "shame on her head" but "degrading white lads":

Ellen I think if a white girl goes with a Black lad, they're degrading white lads. That means letting them down doesn't it.

This belief was seemingly confirmed for the young women by a young white man who interrupted one of our discussions. He had apparently come to tell the young women with whom he was 'mates' that he had had a "nightmare" in which his girlfriend had "gone off with" a Black lad. His interjection consolidated the young women's racist views. After he had left, the young women returned to their anger at being called by a Black young man. The young women were angered by having sexualised labels attached to themselves. As was becoming increasingly clear, however, their anger in this instance was race-specific in terms of their own identity:

HC But if you had a bad experience of white lads somewhere, would you go round saying all white lads are like that?

Chorus No.

Tracy The point is they come in here, try to give you loads of stick. You say one thing back and you're a slag.

HC But don't you get treated in the same way by white lads?

Chorus Yeh

Ellen I'd sooner hear it coming out of a white one than a Black one. A Black one calling me a slag!

HC Why!

Ellen Eeh, they go round calling them Black girls a slag don't they.

The young women thus believed the 'calling' was an assault upon their white womanhood and that that was distinct from Black womanhood, a distinction which was determined by myths of Black sexuality.

As I felt I was making little headway with this group I contacted a woman from Liverpool Black Sisters who offered to come with me to meet and talk to the young women. We also agreed that nothing should be said to the group in advance. She talked with the young women at length about the impact of racism on Black women's (and men's) lives, including sexual harassment of Black women by white men.

The next time I saw the group was also the last. They were furious with me for "setting them up". The issues of racism had been a constant source of confrontation and had for a long time threatened the continuation of the research. The talk had also consolidated divisions within the group. With the exception of Ellen (Julie had by this time left the group), the young women generally agreed that they had learnt something from the talk though most of them told me this in private.

Tracy I think it must be hard for Black people.

HC What makes it hard?

Tracy White people.

HC Well you're white, I'm white, we're all white in this room.

Ellen Ah it's just life isn't it. Nobody's going to change it so...

- Tracy I understood what she was saying and all that. But nobody can change things can you.
- HC Oh I don't know...I mean...
- Ellen You can't Heather!
- HC Hang on, you say like you can't change but you're all different aren't you and you talk to each other about your experiences and you can listen to that and think. And you learn from somebody else's experiences and you can change. There's no doubt about it, you can change. I dare say you've changed loads over the past twelve months; I have. We change all the time.
- Ellen All I'm saying is she can't change me.
- Tracy She was alright, maybe the majority of them are alright.
- Berni I thought it was good.

The young women's supervisor decided at this point to reintroduce the topic of the actions of the Black young men, asking if this was why they were "prejudiced":

- Tracy No. I'm scared of them.
- HC What's the fear about?
- Tracy You think they're going to get you.
- HC In what way "get you"?
- Tracy Rape you. If a white lad looks at you like that...
- Ellen You'd just say "Who are you looking at!"
- Tracy You think of girls who have been with Black lads and they say they're very fond of it and all that.
- Mary They stare at you.

- HC So? I'm staring at you now.
- Mary Yeh, but you're white aren't you.
- Tracy It's...fear.
- HC Is it a sexual fear then Tracy?
- Tracy Yeh.
- Ellen Black is kinky, black is supposed to be kinky isn't it. It scares you so Black people scare you...not all Black people. If a Black lad looks at me, my insides just collapse 'cos you think imagine him getting hold of you.
- HC So it comes down basically for you as a sexual fear; so how do Black women fit into this?
- Tracy They don't. I can't see any difference between us and Black women.
- HC So where do you think the fear comes from about Black men?
- Ellen We've heard. And you hear about Black men battering and raping white women.
- HC I could tell you loads about women being battered and raped by white men.
- Ellen Well it wouldn't be so bad like a white man but a Black man...
- HC What would be the difference!
- Ellen He'd be Black wouldn't he.
- Val But rape's rape isn't it whether he's Black or white.
- Ellen Still Black isn't he. If someone said to me now "Would you rather be raped by him or him?" and he's Black, I'd say the other
- HC Why don't you say "neither"!
- Val Being raped's a terrible ordeal to go through so I don't think it'd make any difference whether they were Black or white.

HC You see I think that one of the things at the bottom of racism is to do with sex but it's a lie. It's something that has been said for years and years by some, that Black men are er more sexually aggressive than white men...

Ellen Yeh we've been told if you go to bed with a Black man you don't want to go to bed with a white one ever again.

HC But it's all a lie, it's all been made up. It's a myth, it isn't a fact.

There was a long silence. I decided on the spot to try a very simplistic marxist-type analysis of the roots of racism:

HC Let's say for instance that you were, let's say you were really rich (laughter from all the young women) and erm you had a great big piece of land and you wanted to do something with it. But you weren't prepared to pay for that work so you go along and you sort of dupe and force and lie and steal your way into this group of people and then you explain yourself by pretending that they're less human and you treat them really badly. Now other people are going to say to you "What are you doing that for. It's wrong. You can't treat other people like that". So one of the things you could do is make up a few lies about them, make them sound less civilized, less human, than you. Do you know what I mean? (nods). You could build up a whole load of stories. You could pick a couple of examples where somebody might have behaved in that way to make it look as though it's true. So you build up a massive great lie and a whole load of stories to actually justify treating those people in the way that you do.

Tracy Is that how it all started?

HC Well sort of, yeh.

I was and am not happy with this oversimplified analogy for many reasons,

but most particularly because it suggests that Black men and women were passive victims of such practices and it ignores the many struggles. It was, however, the best I could do at the time to try to get these young women to think about why lies are constructed and how they become legitimated as 'truth'.

Ellen We're supposed to believe that Black people...

HC That's what you're supposed to believe yeh, but who controls your education.

There was another pause

HC Last century they used to believe that if women used their brains, they wouldn't have their periods and they wouldn't be able to have children.

Ellen But we use our brains every day.

HC Yeh, but that's what they used to teach. Do you think that if you use your brain you wouldn't be able to have kids?

Ellen Well you've got to use your brain to have kids haven't you.

HC Well yeh they forget that. The ones who made up this knowledge about women were men and their interest was to keep women in the home, you know having kids and serving men. But people believed in this 'cos that is what...

Ellen They were taught?

HC Yeh.

Ellen So it's the same sort of thing, lies?

HC There's an awful lot of lies around.

The young women said they did not want to discuss racism anymore. We also agreed that having worked together for seven months, this was a logical point at which to end the meetings.

The sexual knowledge articulated by the young women had two central components. The first was that sexuality is given by human biology. I refer to this knowledge as the Model of Innate Sexuality. The second was that some people are more sexual than others. I refer to the organised form of this knowledge as the Model of Differential Sexuality.

The young women clearly applied a model of knowledge which holds that some people are more sexual than others in their categorisation of groups of women as "slags"; that is, as "more sexual". The discussions outlined in this chapter, however, make clear that that model of knowledge also incorporates racist sexual knowledge.

Part two of this thesis explores the construction of the Model of Differential Sexuality.

PART II

INTRODUCTION

Having reached the end of two years research with the young women, my intention was to explore the origins of the introduction of sex education in schools during the twentieth century. The purpose behind this was to clarify its ethos and to consider ways in which what is held to be legitimate sexual knowledge can be challenged and changed. I did not and do not presume that sex education has some determinate effect. That is to say, the relationship between teaching and learning is far more complicated than simple 'tap on the knee' type analyses would suggest: young people do not simply assimilate knowledge. Rather, learning is a complex process involving also rejection and negotiation and is conditioned by a wide range of perceptual, material and social factors which may affect the extent to which any form of knowledge is acceptable to the individual. Sex education provides, rather, a visible and manageable (for the purposes of analysis) model of what is held to be legitimate sexual knowledge. I believed and continue to believe that a radically different model of sex education in schools could provide young women and young men with a means of deconstructing sexual myths and sexual stereotypes for themselves.

Part I of this thesis has, to some extent, comprised a living model of a process of deconstruction. The process started from my premise that a central component of the content of contemporary sex education comprises

a Model of Innate Sexuality. That is to say, that there exists some form of biologically given sexuality which motivates human action.

The knowledge that sexuality is a product of human biology is visible in the young women's discussions about the alleged functions of women's bodies. The knowledge that vaginas are "there for" sex and that the function of menstruation is reproduction compounds and is compounded by the conflation of reproductive activity and sexual activity. I have noted that the Model of Innate Sexuality is organised in a reproductive framework. The social relations of sexuality attached to this framework-that men initiate and women react - were also deemed by the young women to be, in part, a product of male and female biology. Men were perceived as having higher levels of biologically given sexual motivation than were women. Yet, at the same time, women who allegedly display sexual motivation comparable to that of men were deemed to want sex even more than do men. Women so defined were firmly categorised as "slag".

The concept of "slag" is then firmly linked to the Model of Innate Sexuality. But it is also the property of a second model of sexual knowledge which holds that some people are more sexual than others. My contention is that this model has been organised to comprise what I call the Model of Differential Sexuality. The knowledge that some women - "slags" - are more sexual than others comprises one element of the Model. But bringing the Model of Differential Sexuality into sharp focus was the knowledge expressed by some of the young women that Black people, and most

particularly Black men, are more sexual than whites.

The two models of sexual knowledge are analytically distinct, yet are merged to form one body of sexual knowledge. "Slag" forms but one point of cohesion of the two models.

The content of contemporary sex education in schools is comprised predominantly of the Model of Innate Sexuality. Young people are taught the mechanics of (hetero)sexual intercourse within a reproductive framework. The foregoing discussions with the young women have brought out the extent to which the application of the Model of Innate Sexuality functions to assert the inevitability of sexual expression.

The organising principle, however, of sex education in the twentieth century and its ethos is based upon the Model of Differential Sexuality. By this I mean that particular social groups are specified as more sexual than others. As I shall show below, different groups of people have been specified at different points in time to be "more sexual" than others. Those groups have included: people living in poverty, Black people, and single mothers and their children.

In examining the history of the introduction of sex education in the twentieth century it will be shown that a biological definition was applied to these social groups. How that definition informed the context, content and targeting of sex education will also be discussed. It will be argued that the

strategic purpose of sex education has been and is the achievement of control over the sexuality of the specified groups **for the purpose of regulating their rates of reproduction.**

Among the pioneers of sex education in schools during the early part of the twentieth century were members of the eugenics movement. As I shall explain in the text, eugenists saw in sex education a means of instilling the "eugenic ideal" into the minds of the young. The "eugenic ideal" may be broadly understood as the production of a fit race through eugenically responsible parenthood, which entailed the prevention of eugenically irresponsible parenthood.

The knowledge that some people are more sexual predated the emergence of the eugenics movement. For example, it was already deemed to be a property of Black people (Jordan, 1982) and of working class people living in urban squalor (Mort, 1987). The peculiarity of the eugenic construct - the Model of Differential Sexuality - was that eugenists organised the knowledge that some people are more sexual within an evolutionary framework which linked allegedly hereditary properties with the capacity to exercise sexual self-control. Those properties were intelligence and morality which were claimed to be innate. To state it simply, the Model of Differential Sexuality holds that some people are more sexual because they lack the evolved innate intellectual and moral capacities to exercise sexual self-control. One implication of this is that people who are defined as less intelligent are also defined as more sexual and less moral - a stereotype which, as I have argued in Part One, is attached to Black and white working

class young women.

Eugenists used the Model of Differential Sexuality to argue the case for both sex education and more direct forms of fertility control. They also disseminated the Model of Differential Sexuality to a wide range of lay and professional audiences.

Eugenists were also involved in other organisations concerned with the production and dissemination of sexual knowledge and with fertility control. Those organisations also used the Model of Differential Sexuality to target specific groups, and to explain to wider audiences why those groups were in need of moral instruction and/or fertility control. In other words, they made the Model of Differential Sexuality part of the sexual knowledge they disseminated.

Those organisations included the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease (renamed in 1924 the British Social Hygiene Council) and the birth control movement, out of which was to grow the Family Planning Association which is now a major sex education body. The relationship between these and other organisations and the eugenics movement will form part of the argument below. The purpose of this is to make clear the ways in which the "eugenic ideal" permeated the ethos of a number of organisations. It will be established that the eugenics movement played a leading role in the development of past and present organisations concerned with sex education and/or fertility control. It will also be argued that the

"eugenic ideal" continues to play a part in informing the ethos of those organisations.

Of paramount importance in understanding the mechanism whereby the eugenics movement successfully implanted the Model of Differential Sexuality was its assertion that intelligence is determined by heredity. Eugenists played the leading role in the development of intelligence quota (I.Q.) testing. By linking sexuality to presumed levels of intelligence, eugenists declared that those defined as less intelligent were less able to control their sexuality. This will be explored below, as will some of the effects on people defined as less intelligent/more sexual who were also categorised by the eugenics movement as "unfit to parent". Eugenists saw sex education as but one strategy of control and advocated that if particular groups of people did not control, that is reduce, their reproductive rates, control should be imposed upon them. Both strategies were named "negative eugenics". Negative eugenics may be understood as the means to prevent the birth of the allegedly "unfit" by preventing parenthood among those deemed "unfit to parent". The corollary of negative eugenics is positive eugenics: the strategy and means of increasing the birthrate among those sectors of the population deemed most "fit to parent". The relationship between positive and negative eugenics will be discussed in the text.

What follows does not claim to be an exhaustive history of sex education, nor of the organisations involved in its construction and reproduction. It seeks rather to substantiate the claim that the Model of Differential

Sexuality continues to inform sex education. In order to do this, Part Two will comprise a partial history of the eugenics movement: "partial" because it will concentrate upon the relationships between relevant organisations and the part played by the eugenics movement in the topic under discussion.

Eugenists also concurred with the Social Darwinist variant of the theory of sexual selection. According to this theory, the differences between male and female characteristics were the product of evolutionary processes. For example, Galton, the founder of British eugenics, argued that "coyness and caprice" were the "heritage" of the female sex and were essential preconditions to species survival because they led to "competition among males....in which the strongest male conquers". (Galton, 1883, p. 39). Galton, however, used this theory merely to provide an analogy to substantiate his assertion that there existed between people evolved innate differences of character which could be explained by heredity. There was nothing peculiarly eugenic about the theory of sexual selection and, though commented upon, was of less concern to eugenists than were their expressed intentions to persuade the professional and lay populace of the need for eugenic reform and to instil the eugenic ideal of rational selection into the ethos of other organisations and into the public mind. I, therefore, do not accord the theory of sexual selection any further attention in this thesis.

Part Two of this thesis is organised as outlined below.

Chapter Nine shows the impact of evolutionary thought within the political

context of concern that sectors of the working class posed a threat to white British imperialism. It was believed that those sectors of the working class - the poor or the "residuum" - were reproducing themselves at such a rate as to accelerate what was perceived to be race degeneration. I show how these concerns and political processes culminated in the emergence of a movement which promised a solution to this threat. This was the eugenics movement.

The chapter makes clear the way in which Model of Differential Sexuality was constructed by eugenicists and used to legitimate measures aimed at controlling the fertility rates of the poor. It also argues that one strategy of the eugenics movement was to introduce the eugenic ethos into other professions and organisations, particularly those concerned with education and fertility control. Another strategy was to instil the eugenic ideal into the minds of the young. Eugenicists sought to do this through the introduction of sex education into the formal educational structure aimed at promoting eugenically responsible parenthood and preventing eugenically irresponsible parenthood.

The origins of the eugenics movement and the methods by which it sought to both control fertility and gain public consensus for imposing control form the basis of this chapter.

In Chapter Ten I trace the history of the establishment of eugenic sex education. I point to the ways in which the Model of Differential Sexuality

was applied to various groups of people, including the poor of Britain and the Black Peoples of the Empire. The Model of Differential Sexuality was used to blame those groups for the spread of venereal diseases which were perceived as a threat to race regeneration and to white British imperialism.

The chapter outlines the relationship between the eugenics movement and other major sex education bodies. It is noted that the most important sex education body of the era, the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease (NCCVD) was initiated by eugenists in collaboration with prominent medical men and that the NCCVD spread the eugenic message through its massive sex education programme.

In Chapter Eleven I explore the link between the birth control movement and the eugenics movement. It is argued that although these two developed from separate origins they became increasingly linked. Eugenists became involved in the birth control movement on the grounds that birth control provided a means to control the fertility of those they defined as unfit to parent. At the same time the birth control movement sought the active support of the eugenics movement and actively used the Model of Differential Sexuality to include the use of birth control as evidence of the capacity to exercise sexual self-control. The non-use of birth control was linked by members of both movements to lack of intelligence. It is also possible to detect in the latter part of this chapter a shift away from overtly imperialist concerns towards an anxiety that sectors of the working class, defined as "problem families", were constituting a burden on public

funds.

Chapter Twelve shows how eugenicists and other professionals identified large families among the poor as "problem families". In conjunction with the Family Planning Association the Eugenics Society initiated and financed a programme during the 1950s of imposing birth control upon mothers of those defined as "problem families". That programme was, and is, known as Domiciliary Family Planning. It is noted that the families targeted were from social classes IV and V and/or were of "immigrant origin". This programme was clearly defined by eugenicists themselves as a strategy of negative eugenics, that is to say a strategy of controlling the fertility rates of those they deemed unfit to parent. I point out the practical operation of the Model of Differential Sexuality and the extent to which the eugenic ethos has permeated professional organisations.

In Chapter Thirteen the eugenic involvement in other organisations broadly concerned with fertility control is discussed. The Simon Population Trust, The British Pregnancy Advisory Service, The Birth Control Trust, The Abortion Law Reform Association, and the Brook Advisory Service are each identified as having some form of link with the eugenics movement. The major focus of the chapter, however, is upon the part played by the Abortion Law Reform Association in institutionalising a eugenic perspective towards and a eugenic solution to physical and mental handicap.

In Chapter Fourteen I return to a discussion of eugenic sex education. I

argue that the categories constructed by the eugenics movement in its early years have been carried forward into the contemporary discussion about the causes and effects of so called "teenage pregnancy". The historical shift from sex education as a preventive of promiscuity and venereal disease to sex education as a means to promote responsible parenthood is discussed. I argue that despite that shift and the apparent liberalisation of attitudes toward sexual activity among young people, the primary aim behind sex education is to control the fertility of specified groups of people. Sex educationalists have defined girls and young women from Black and white working class families as an "at risk" group who reproduce a cycle of deprivation, sited in the "problem family". My contention is that this marks merely a reworking of the category "unfit" and the application of the Model of Differential Sexuality in the contemporary context.

There follows a summary and conclusion of the link between Parts One and Two of the Thesis and the main arguments that are presented in both.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ORIGINS, AIMS AND METHODS OF THE EUGENICS MOVEMENT

(i) The Political, Imperialist and Intellectual Background

Lucy Bland (1982) has outlined some of the political processes and systems of thought that converged with the development of sex education during the early part of this century. She argues, first, that the prevalent evolutionary thinking gave sex its reason-for-being in terms of procreation and evolution and, second, that 'normal' and 'healthy' womanhood was conflated with love, sex, and motherhood. Sex was functional to the evolutionary imperatives of procreation. Love, which for women was also tied to the maternal instinct, was explained as a peculiarly human product of evolution. Sex and motherhood were perceived as expressions of love. In this way, says Bland, the Edwardian era witnessed a shift from the asexual ideal of femininity to one of sexualised motherhood.

The political context in which this shift took place was one of a fear of imperial decline. The poor physical condition of sectors of the working class - as evidenced by high levels of infant mortality and the low standard of physical fitness among the recruits for the Boer War - heightened anxiety among the middle class who viewed them as an indices of both urban and national degeneration. At the same time, further anxiety was attached to a differential decline in the birthrate - the middle classes were having fewer

children than sectors of the working class. That differential was held to be a causal factor in national or race deterioration and a threat to the future of Britain's imperialist power. Not only were the "lower echelons" threatening to outnumber, so it was claimed, the "more productive" sectors of society, but they were perceived as a drain upon the economic resources of the latter and hence indirectly constituted a disincentive toward the latter's procreation.

By the application of Charles Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, Social Darwinists argued that the poor had failed to adapt to the environment - the index of 'fitness' - and that by their very numbers they posed a threat to future progress, to race regeneration, and to the future of the white British imperialist race. Social reform in this era became increasingly directed towards 'maternalism', making women - particularly working class women - responsible for the ill-health/health of their children in the interests of race and empire. This has been discussed by Davin (1978), Dyehouse (1976; 1977) and Lewis (1980). Working class women and children undoubtedly received some benefit from social reforms enacted as part of the drive towards race regeneration; for example, the provision of free meals for 'needy' children. But the benefits were, for many women, offset by the increased scrutiny of and intrusion into their homes by middle class professionals or their representatives. These were often middle class 'ladies' who had nothing better to do with their time and for whom such activities constituted a vocation.

Bland notes that the era witnessed the rise of the philosophy of self-regulation as part of a holistic strategy for improving health. The individual was enjoined to self-control, self-regulation in all areas: physical, mental, moral and sexual. Ill-health and health became overlain with concepts of vice and virtue. Health/virtue, in turn, came to be held to be synonymous with 'hygiene'. This, Bland says, is evidence of the influence of a variant of Social Darwinism - eugenics. Bland, however, confines the influence of eugenics to such concepts. As I shall contend below, eugenicists played a far more significant role than has been previously acknowledged in this context. Eugenists were, among other things, pioneers of sex education in schools.

Bland's work in elucidating the political processes and systems of thought obtaining in the Edwardian era is extremely useful. Her analysis of the consequences for women of this drive towards national efficiency in the interests of race and Empire suffers, however, from a lack of acknowledgement that the consequences were different for different groups of women. Bland states:

Sex education developed in such a way that it became organised to guide the girl and young woman towards motherhood and away from promiscuity. (Bland, *ibid.* p. 373).

One significant difference is that many women were and are denied motherhood. That denial did not originate in the Edwardian era - the Poor Laws, for example, operated so that many families who had been pauperised were sexually segregated in the workhouse (Olive Keidan, 1988 - private

communication). The political processes and systems of thought that converged in the Edwardian era did, however, provide the conditions of the emergence of a movement whose adherents sought to ensure the survival of the "fittest" through active and conscious human intervention in the processes of evolution. This was the eugenics movement whose founder, Francis Galton, claimed:

Man is gifted with pity and other kindly feelings; he has also the power of preventing many kinds of suffering. I conceive it to fall well within his province to replace Natural Selection by other processes that are more merciful and not less effective. This is precisely the aim of eugenics. (Galton, 1908 cited in *Eugenics Review*, Vol. 50: April 1958, p. 23.)

(ii) The Origins of Eugenics and its Principal Ideas

Galton first coined the word 'eugenics' in 1883. He defined it as:

the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however a remote a degree to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they would otherwise have had. (Galton, 1883, p. 17).

According to Galton, physical, mental and moral 'qualities' were hereditary. The alleged correlation between these 'qualities' was inherent in eugenic thinking from its inception. Galton argued that within each race and class there were superior and inferior 'moieties'. Most 'superior' of all were the members of the white British intelligentsia and professional classes, whose

qualities were claimed to be the product of higher evolution. Eugenics was a science which enhanced and promoted the interests of the white professional middle class (MacKenzie, 1976). It still is. It was, and is, a way of thinking that equates social status with genetic worth.

Eugenics was, for Galton, the science of applied biometry - the application of precise statistical techniques to human beings in order to measure the intensity of resemblance between members of the same biological family. Indeed, Galton was the major founder of that science, and had tremendous influence upon the development of statistics and related subjects, including IQ and psychological testing and psychometry. As MacKenzie notes, the science of the eugenicists made a considerable impact on the scientific and intellectual development of twentieth century Britain (ibid. p. 500).

Galton's chosen moment to present his new creed to the professional establishment undoubtedly influenced its reception, for it was the immediate aftermath of the Boer War. According to one of the Eugenics Society's own biographers, G. R. Searle, Galton first presented his ideas to the Anthropological Institute in 1901, and at

a carefully stage-managed meeting of the Sociological Society on 16 May 1904, with Karl Pearson in the chair, Galton unfolded his eugenic message before a very distinguished audience (Searle, 1976; p. 9)

Eugenics developed from that moment into a "political movement, with a variety of institutions of its own for undertaking research and influencing

public opinion" (ibid, p. 9, emphases mine).

Giving intellectual credence to the new science was Darwin's theory that 'man' was part of the organic world and subject to the same influences of evolution and decay. Also of great influence were discoveries in the field of genetics and heredity - how parents allegedly pass on genetic qualities to their children. But giving eugenics political credence was its promise to provide not only a scientific explanation of social merit but a solution to the pressing social problem - race deterioration. In short, it was to provide the solution to the poor or the residuum - the 'unfit' - who were held to threaten the stability of the nation, the race and the Empire.

There was no one eugenics movement. Splits occurred between the adherents of different theories of heredity, on the basis of the theories themselves and the practices which flowed from them. Searle (op. cit.) discusses the various factions within the early eugenics movement. Briefly, the major split was between the Galton Laboratory, set up by Galton and of which Pearson was the director, and the Eugenics Education Society. Pearson and his colleagues held that applied biometry provided the eugenic route to race progress. The Eugenics Education Society, on the other hand, derived its impetus more from Mendelian genetics - a theory which was highly influential in discovering the mechanism of human genetic inheritance. Despite this major difference, both factions were committed to intervene in the evolutionary processes to bring about race regeneration. In this they differed significantly from the laissez-faire school of Social

Darwinism, which held that the elimination of the unfit could be achieved through political inaction. Against this Galton argued "What Nature does blindly, slowly and ruthlessly, man may do providently, quickly and kindly" (Galton, 1909; cited in Mackenzie, op. cit. p. 503).

iii) Membership and Aims of the early Eugenics Movement

The calibre of the membership of the early eugenics movement was significant. Almost the entire biological establishment joined, followed closely by doctors. University lecturers and professors from other disciplines joined with the scientists and, outside London, the movement revolved around the universities. In the winter of 1907/8 the Eugenics Education Society (E.E.S.) was formed, the above groups comprising almost its entire membership. The E.E.S. (renamed in 1926 the Eugenics Society) had as its aims:

To study the influences that may modify inborn human qualities; to formulate and support policies for developing these qualities to the utmost advantage; to promote research on eugenic problems; to foster a responsible attitude to parenthood; to guide public opinion in these matters.
(restated in Eugenics Review. Statement of Aims, April 1958, 50, 1, p. 23).

Both the Galton Laboratory and the E.E.S. were committed to the replacement of natural selection by 'rational selection'. Pearson's proclamations about the innate superiority of the white middle class and race were overtly and covertly reflected in the utterances of members of

the E.E.S., and later by the movements which they helped to establish, or within which they had direct influence.

In 1905, Pearson stated overtly what was often implicit in other eugenic writings - that the white races are innately superior to the Black, that evolutionary progress depended upon the conquest by the 'superior' races of the 'inferior' races in the struggle for resources, and that in colonised lands the white colonisers should "completely drive out the inferior race" (Pearson, 1905, p. 23). According to Pearson, the death and suffering this entailed were unfortunate but necessary in order to ensure that the mentally and physically 'fittest' were the global parents of future generations. The immediate context of this statement was South Africa which Pearson compared to America and Australia to 'substantiate' the point that progress depended upon the domination by the 'superior', even if that entailed genocide of 'indigenous' peoples. While the members of the E.E.S. rarely made such overtly expansionist claims, their primary focus upon the population(s) of Britain must be understood within the context of imperialism. The eugenists of the day held that Black peoples were 'inferior' per se. But of more concern to them were the peoples of other imperialist nations who posed competition to Britain's imperialist domination and to the economy upon which that was based. Eugenists were concerned that the 'fitness' of the British race would be outstripped by that of other Western industrialised nations whose industrial base and expansionist aims would threaten British imperialism. The E.E.S.'s efforts towards race regeneration in this period cannot be separated from imperialism. Thus the relationship

between the various groups of people categorised as "fit" and "unfit" to parent is inextricably linked to imperialism both historically and contemporarily.

One of the principal aims of the E.E.S. was to guide public opinion. The E.E.S. was, as stated, an action group. It sought to bring about judicial support for its policies of race improvement. To achieve legislative legitimation, eugenists recognised that consensus was essential in a democratic society. Indeed, for some eugenists - notable among whom was the Dean of St. Pauls, the Reverend Inge - such a necessity pointed to the disadvantages of democracy. But the inculcation of a eugenic conscience among the public remained a central aim. Major Leonard Darwin, son of Charles Darwin and president of the E.E.S. from 1911 to 1929, stated in 1916:

The main aim of the Eugenics Education Society is unquestionably to persuade the public of the necessity of Eugenic Reform. (Darwin, 1916-1917, p. 93)

Indeed, it was asserted in the Editorial of the first volume of Eugenics Review that:

The idea of Eugenics must be instilled into the conscience of civilisation like a new religion.... (Eugenics Review, Editorial, Vol. 1, 1909-1910, p. 4)

Eugenists adopted three major strategies to achieve this aim. The first took

the form of propaganda lectures which were disseminated to a very wide range of lay and professional audiences. The propaganda lectures are reproduced in the Society's former journal: Eugenics Review. The second was to make eugenics part of the ethos of other organisations of which individual eugenicists were members, often in a professional capacity. The third was to educate the young in the principles of eugenic sex hygiene. By this eugenicists meant that not only should young people be instructed in the mechanics of human reproduction, but also in the principles of responsible parenthood. Sex education in schools was to provide the platform for such instruction. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

The central idea of eugenics was, and is, selective breeding. Positive eugenics, as described by Dr. C. W. Saleeby, was "the encouragement of parenthood on the part of the worthy"; and negative eugenics was "its discouragement on the part of the unworthy" (Eugenics Review, Editorial Vol. 1, p. 8). This, claimed the early eugenicists, distanced them from the 'better dead' school and from those who advocated the use of the 'lethal chamber' to get rid of the unfit. Indeed, in response to critics, it was stated in the first issue of the Review that:

The whole theory of eugenics rested on its distinction between the right to live (which we questioned in no case at any age from the moment of conception onwards), and the right to become a parent. (Ibid. p. 10).

The right or not to become a parent stood (and stands) at the heart of the

eugenics movement. Worthiness was held to be synonymous with physical, mental and moral fitness, unworthiness with alleged genetically inherited physical, mental and/or moral unfitness. The index of fitness was adaptation to the environment. Through a conflation of the biological and the social, eugenicists held that those who could economically sustain themselves and their families, and educate their children, were fit to parent. Working class people who had been pauperised were deemed unfit, as were those who were classified as suffering some physical, sensory or intellectual/mental "defect". Indeed, the inbuilt correlation between physical, mental and moral qualities led many eugenicists to deduce that physical 'defects' and pauperism signalled moral and intellectual 'defects', which in turn were evidenced by procreation among people suffering from such 'defects'. To state this simply, parentage among the groups designated as 'unfit' proved their 'unfitness' because they were then deemed to lack the moral and intellectual/mental will not to parent - theirs was eugenically irresponsible parenthood.

This correlation was taken further by the classification of social phenomena as biological: vagrancy, inebriety, criminality, prostitution, illegitimacy, social dependency were added to blindness, deafness, mutism, epilepsy as indices of 'unfitness' to parent. All became increasingly linked in the concept of 'feeble-mindedness', which was perceived as a major threat to race progress. People with a variety of socially induced handicaps were increasingly defined as 'feeble-minded'. And it was to prevent the procreation of the 'feeble-minded' that the E.E.S. was to direct much of its

efforts in the period 1908-1913. To this end, they had to persuade public opinion of the necessity of negative eugenic measures in order to achieve negative eugenic reform. The part played by eugenists, as outlined below, in the formulation and implementation of the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913 illustrates this.

In 1904 a Royal Commission was set up to investigate the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded. The Commission reported in 1908. The Commissioners asserted that feeble-mindedness was an hereditary condition, that feeble-minded persons had higher levels of fertility, and that they should be segregated from the rest of the population.

The impetus to set up the Commission came largely from the Prison and Poor Law Authorities. But not only was the E.E.S. centrally involved in the fight for legislative implementation of the Commission's recommendations, members of the E.E.S. were also influential in the formulation of those recommendations in their professional capacities. Dr. A. F. Tredgold, a neurologist, was a medical expert to the commission; Dr. Mott, a pathologist and the director of the Pathological Laboratory of the London County Asylums, and Sir James Crichton-Brown, Lord Chancellor's Visitor in Lunacy, and the president of the E.E.S. from 1908 to 1909, were among leading eugenists who gave expert evidence to the commission.

The Commission recommended more stringent procedures for identifying the 'feeble-minded' and otherwise 'mentally deficient' populations: these

included the assessment of women in rescue homes and single mothers in the workhouses. The Commission called for legislative action to effect the segregation of the 'feeble-minded' in single sex institutions (sometimes referred to as 'colonies').

The E.E.S. joined forces with other organisations, most particularly the National Association for the Feeble-Minded, led by the eugenicist, Miss A. H. P. Kirby. In 1909 Tredgold stressed to the National Association for the Feeble-Minded that:

National progress can only take place when means to improve the fit are accompanied by methods to prevent the increase of the unfit. (Tredgold, 1909, p. 102.)

The Secretary of this Association, Miss A. H. P. Kirby also declared that:

Pauperism, vagrancy, inebriety, immorality, unemployment, even physical unfitness, are closely connected with the problem of mental unsoundness. (Kirby, 1909-10, p. 85)

The two bodies fought together to gain legislative implementation of the Commission's recommendations. They found parliamentary support, notably from Winston Churchill who, as Home Secretary, circulated copies of Tredgold's paper: "The Feeble-Minded - A Social Danger" to his cabinet colleagues (noted in Searle, *ibid*). After increasing pressure, the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913 finally came into being.

The implementation of the Act was hailed as a victory for eugenic ideals.

Miss Kirby announced:

It is, perhaps, the only piece of English Law extant, in which the influence of heredity has been treated as a practical factor in determining its provisions. (Eugenics Review. Notes and Comments, Vol 6, 1914-1915, p. 52).

Both Tredgold and Kirby were members of the E.E.S. and both were recognised experts in their own professional field of mental health. Undoubtedly this latter gave legitimation to the ideas that feeble-mindedness, together with other forms of mental deficiency, were hereditary, and that they were linked to such phenomena as pauperism, vagrancy, inebriety, immorality, unemployment and physical unfitness.

Eugenists were concerned with both the economic and the 'racial' costs attached to maintaining the pauperised. They deemed those costs to be inter-related: the costs to the fitter depressed their birth-ratio. The poor were blamed for the lower birth rate among the fit as well as the higher birth rate among the unfit. Negative eugenic measures, of which the Mental Deficiency Act was one, assumed greater strategic importance than the direct pursuit of positive eugenics.

Among the groups consistently targeted for negative eugenic measures were single mothers who had no other recourse than the workhouse maternity wards. Havelock Ellis, sexologist and eugenicist, stated in 1911:

Illegitimacy is frequently the result of feeble-mindedness, since feeble-minded women are peculiarly unable to resist temptation. (Ellis, 1911, p. 37)

Single mothers, whose childbearing was allegedly a result of feeble-mindedness, presented, according to Ellis and other eugenicists, a "perpetual danger to society", a "great burden on the rates" and "depreciation of the quality of the race" (ibid, p. 38). Ellis went on to claim, and in this he was far from alone, that single mothers "form the reservoir from which the predatory classes are recruited" (ibid, p. 39). According to this line of thinking, single mothers produced children who were intellectually and morally predisposed to pauperism, criminality and prostitution; children who, Ellis said:

in their turn tend to produce a new feeble-minded generation, more especially since the men who are attracted to these feeble-minded women are themselves....feeble-minded or otherwise mentally defective. (Ibid, p. 38).

Other eugenicists prominent in their fields of 'expertise' made similar claims to those of Ellis. Sir Arthur Clay, commenting upon the workings of the Poor Law, claimed that "a large proportion" of single mothers who gave birth in the workhouse were feeble-minded. Clay believed the workhouse maternity wards to be 'dysgenic'⁽¹⁾ because, he claimed, they provided "favourable and hygienic conditions for the birth of... children" and thereby the "checks" of "natural law" were not only nullified, but the children received "a survival advantage over children born of the independent

(1) 'Dysgenic' is opposite in meaning to 'eugenic'.

parent". Clay expressed his hope that the regulations attached to the Mental Deficiency Act would rectify the situation (Clay, 1915-1916, p. 119). Sidney Webb, who allied the Fabian Society to the eugenics movement, attacked the Poor Law partly on the same basis:

To the feeble-minded woman, or to the woman who is mentally and morally degenerate without being actually imbecile, the Poor Law offers free and unconditional medical assistance at the time of her confinement.... (Webb, 1909, p. 233).

Webb further asserted:

....we must take steps to prevent the continued procreation of feeble-minded and degenerate stocks at the public expense. (Ibid, p. 238).

The application of the label 'feeble-minded' to the single mother could lead to not only her incarceration in an institution but that of her child(ren). 'Feeble-mindedness' was taken as an hereditary 'condition' which would reappear in the offspring. Sexual segregation was perceived as one means, the only means available at the time, of preventing the reproduction of the single mother and her child, the pauperised and those 'suffering' from a range of other hereditary 'defects'. Behind this reasoning lay concern about the differential decline in the birth-rate: the working class were alleged to be outnumbering the middle and upper classes.

The alleged association between feeble-mindedness or moral degeneracy and inability to resist temptation may be understood as a claim that feeble-

mindedness is equated with 'more sexual'. The label feeble-minded was attached to sectors of the poor, including single working class mothers and their children. It follows that those sectors were deemed to be 'more sexual'. Their poverty was explained by their levels of fertility which were explained by their lack of intelligence. They were, it was implied, unable to control their sexual impulses.

This linkage of sexuality and intelligence was most clearly set out by one Professor R.J.A. Berry, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S.E., Director of Medical Services, Stoke Park Colony (for the 'mentally deficient'). Addressing the Eugenics Society in association with the Psychology and Education Sectors of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in September 1930, at a time when the Eugenics Society was campaigning for the sterilisation of the 'mentally defective', Berry set out the alleged relationship between sexual instincts and mental capacities. He claimed:

Mental deficiency is....neither a disease nor a curable disease. It is just an arrest in the normal growth and development of the brain, with a corresponding and consequent lack of intelligence and mentation, and a bodily and sexual development closely approximating the normal (Berry, 1930, p. 171).

'Mental deficiency' then, according to Berry, incurred an arrest of the part of the brain governing intelligence and mentation. He went on:

It is.....now fairly well established that those brain cells....which preside over the purely animal functions of the human body, such as self-preservation and sex, are often and naturally quite well developed, whereas the pyramidal cells of the controlling

supragranular cortex are the very ones which are most lacking. (Ibid, p. 173).

By these latter, Berry meant the brain cells which are allegedly used in 'normal' reaction to the environment. The crux of the argument is that those categorised as 'mentally deficient' lack the intellect to control or restrain their sexuality.

This formed one of the baselines of the sexual knowledge disseminated by eugenisists. On the one hand sex was given by biology. On the other hand, the normal brain controlled the biologically given sex drive. The part of the brain controlling this was that controlling intelligence and mentation. The lower the level of intelligence, the less control the individual had over the sexual impulses. Hence, 'less intelligent' equals 'more sexual'.

The impact of this equation must be understood within the context of evolution. Eugenisists claimed that intelligence was both an hereditary and an evolved property. The more highly evolved the individual, the greater was that individual's intelligence. Hence the degree of control exercised over sexuality was an innate property given by heredity and evolution.

The above represents the cohesion of two models of sexual knowledge. The first is the Model of Innate Sexuality: the knowledge that sexuality is given by biology. The second is the Model of Differential Sexuality: the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others. Behind the

construction of this latter model within the evolutionary framework lay a concern with the differential decline in the birth rate.

(iv) Eugenic Use of the Model of Differential Sexuality

I have stated above that intelligence was perceived as a property of heredity and evolution. Sex as an expression of love was also increasingly claimed, in the Edwardian era, to be a product of evolution. Just as the ability to control sexual impulses was alleged to be related to the level of evolutionary development, so too was the extent to which sex was an expression of love. This added a moral dimension to the Model of Differential Sexuality, which was in accord with Galton's assertion that both intellectual and moral capacities are hereditary. Immorality - defined as the separation of sex from love - was linked to lack of intelligence.

The Model of Differential Sexuality means, in eugenic terms, that some people are more sexual than others and are also less moral than others. Both are products of low intelligence which is claimed to be an evolved and innate property. Therefore, in the interests of race and nation, the sexuality of the less intelligent had to be controlled in order to control their reproductive rates. It was this that motivated the introduction of eugenic sex education, and this that underlay the ethos and practice of the eugenics movement.

Eugenists applied the Model of Differential Sexuality to various sectors of

the white working class population, including the pauperised and single mothers and their children. This had a real impact upon the lives of those people. They were liable to be incarcerated in institutions, where many still remain. But eugenisists did not only target white working class people, they also targeted Black people.

The belief that Black people(s) are 'more sexual' predated the emergence of eugenics (Jordan, 1982). Eugenists, and other evolutionists, gave further 'legitimation' to that belief. The presence of Black people in Britain was of particular concern to many eugenists who believed that 'miscegnation' posed a threat to British characteristics, hence to the Empire. For example, in 1920 the Reverend James Hamilton addressed the Liverpool Heredity Society (formerly the Liverpool Eugenics Education Society) on the subject of patriotism and eugenics. He claimed that "British imperial power" was "at bottom the product of national characteristics inevitably produced by the working of the laws of heredity". The "blood of the British people", therefore, must not be "polluted" by "foreign and undesirable blood" if British power and influence was to be maintained throughout the world:

If, for example, the policy be continued of keeping an open door for every foreigner, and especially allowing such alien and inferior breeds as Negroes, Chinese and Japanese to enter, marry, and settle down in great numbers, while young people of pure British blood emigrate to other lands, this country will in a few generations have so much foreign and undesirable blood in the national veins as cannot fail to have a deleterious effect on the national character, and, as a consequence, on all those national ideals, endeavours, and achievements which we value so highly in the present day. (Hamilton, cited in Eugenics Review. 'Office News' Vol. 12, 1920-1921).

It is worth noting that the president of this Society was Sir James Barr, who was also president of the British Medical Association. Also a member of that society was Dr. E. W. Hope - Medical Officer of Health, Liverpool. The alleged 'deleterious' effects of 'miscegnation' remained a constant theme of eugenics. It was blamed for the spread of venereal diseases to the white population, and for criminality and prostitution, of which more will be said later. Speeches, such as the one noted above, undoubtedly reaffirmed the nationalism found in all sectors of the white British population -a nationalism which formed a basis of inter-class bonding and which mitigated against the development of international socialism (Protasia Torkington, private communication, 1988). It was to that nationalism that eugenicists appealed in their lectures to lay audiences such as the Workers' Education Association, working men's clubs, Labour Party wards, Women's Franchise Societies, Women's Co-operative Societies, Rotary Clubs, Women's Institutes, Scouts and Guides, Boys and Girls' Clubs, etc. By the early 1930s they were delivering hundreds of lectures to lay audiences each year.

(v) Eugenic Concerns with Intelligence and Fertility

The twin themes of intelligence and fertility continued to concern the eugenics movement. During the period 1927 to 1934, the Eugenics Society vigorously worked for the implementation of legislation allowing voluntary sterilisation. The work culminated in the Brock Report in 1934 which recommended the legalisation of eugenic sterilisation on a voluntary basis, that is either with the consent of the individual concerned or, if that

individual was deemed incompetent to consent, with that of the parent, spouse, or guardian. To the dismay of the Eugenics Society, which had formed a sub-committee of the Council of the Eugenics Society called the Committee for Legalizing Eugenic Sterilization which had drafted several bills on the subject, Brock's recommendations were set aside in the light of events in Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, the Committee continued until 1939, when war intervened. In 1952, Dr. C. P. Blacker recommended to a members' meeting of the Eugenics Society that the issue be revived (Blacker, 1952). In 1961, Blacker declared that sterilisation would be "especially valuable" for:

those who have had as many children as they want but who are unfitted by limitation of intelligence and defects of character to use any of the available methods of birth control (Blacker, 1961, p. 147).

As I shall discuss in later chapters, the Eugenics Society devised other means as well as this to limit the fertility of those parents deemed to fit this definition.

In 1937, Raymond B. Cattell, architect of the 16PF personality test, argued that negative eugenic measures were necessary to halt the decline in the nation's level of intelligence. This decline, he argued, was mainly due to the high fertility rates among those of lower intelligence, especially to be found among the poor and unemployed - the "sub-cultural" population. Among the negative eugenic solutions which Cattell proposed were:

to demand abstention from reproduction by those not earning or incapable of earning, and to insist on segregation for those persistently failing to comply (or for those having illegitimate children without planning for their satisfactory upbringing) (Cattell, 1937, p.117).

According to Cattell then, birth control was to be made a condition of receipt of "public assistance": that is to say, it was to be made compulsory. Compulsion was also to be applied to the parents of children under 'special education' provision:

Every pair of parents which has already produced two or more children for special defective schools should be required by law to attend a birth control clinic. Thus, contraception should be extended as far down the scale of intelligence as possible....and sterilization or segregation invoked only where it persistently fails (ibid, p. 129).

Cattell's recommendations were endorsed by Lord Horder, President of the Eugenics Society from 1935 to 1948, President of the Family Planning Association, 1931 to 1956, and Chairman of the Joint Committee on Voluntary Sterilization which was housed by the Eugenics Society and into which the Society's Committee for Legalizing Eugenic Sterilization merged.

In 1946, Cyril Burt, a founder of IQ testing and of the 11+, member of the Council of the Eugenics Society and of the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease, educational psychologist and student of Karl Pearson, also argued that the national IQ - **by which he meant mental age** - was in decline. Burt, too, argued that this alleged decline was the result of fertility levels

among the "poorest social classes":

the children from the poorest social classes not only have an intelligence that is nearly two years below that of children from the better classes, but are drawn from families that are nearly twice as large (Burt, 1946, p. 15).

Burt went on to argue that intelligence regresses from the 3rd and 4th child in the family and rapidly thereafter - in other words, the more children parents in the "poorest social classes" had, the less intelligent those children. This, claimed Burt, lowered the level of national intelligence and posed a problem to British culture, British civilisation.

During the 1940s the Eugenics Society undertook extensive work and research into the "problem family", which they defined on the criteria of size and social class position. These families were subjected from the early 1950s onwards to 'special provision' in the form of 'domiciliary family planning'. More will be said of this in Chapter 12.

(vi) Proposals for Negative Eugenic Measures and Introduction of the Eugenic Message into the Formal Educational Structure.

The negative eugenic measures proposed by eugenicists included sexual segregation, sterilisation and birth control. They claimed that their advocacy of the latter two methods depended upon voluntary uptake. Havelock Ellis was amongst those who favoured the use of sterilisation and

birth control.

Ellis advocated 'voluntary' sterilisation of 'mental defectives' as a condition of release from institutions into the community, and of "defective paupers of the second, third or later generations" as a condition for receipt of Poor Law Relief (Ellis, 1909-1910; 1911). The Eugenics Society did not succeed in implementing legislation providing for the sterilisation of the 'unfit'. They were, however, able to report in 1948 the following extract from the British Medical Journal (June 28, 1947) which outlined the response of that journal to "a query about the sterilization of an 18 year-old epileptic girl who is lacking in moral sense and has been the victim of a sexual assault":

It is impossible to answer this question with authority. It is constantly asked, and the answer is always that the law governing the sterilisation of women is obscure. The fact remains that no medical practitioner has ever been sued for performing sterilisation of a mentally defective (or indeed of any other) woman, and the risk of legal consequences in this case is therefore slight. (British Medicine Journal, 1947, cited in Eugenics Review, from the Press Cuttings, Vol. 34, 19471-948, p. 122).

Negative eugenic measures aimed at reducing or preventing the propagation of the allegedly 'unfit' through such measures as outlined above formed but one plank of the eugenic platform. Educating the public and other-than-eugenist professional policy makers and practitioners was another. The introduction of what the eugenists called the 'eugenic ideal' into the formal education structure was a third means of securing a national eugenic conscience:

...by implanting the eugenic ideal in the minds of children today, you will be taking a definite step towards ensuring the racial progress of our nation in the future (Darwin, 1913. pp. 8-9)

Darwin's statement was made at the Eugenics Education Conference in 1913. Over 900 head-teachers applied for tickets to the conference which had as its theme: "the possibility of introducing eugenics among the moral lessons learnt at school". Darwin proposed that not only should sex hygiene be taught in schools - a view which was shared by the membership of the E.E.S. and certain others - but that it "ought to be taught in connection with the eugenic ideal" (ibid. p. 3). The questions posed by Darwin to the assembled head-teachers were not about the desirability of inculcating the eugenic ideal, but whether and how this could be practically achieved. His view was that educating the educators was an essential first step. On this point there was no objection from the assembly. What did cause some concern was instruction in sex-hygiene, which was clearly perceived as the most appropriate foundation for the teaching of eugenics. The National Union of Teachers was represented by its ex-President, Mr. W. A. Nicholls, who claimed that his association was in full sympathy with the eugenic ideal. He and others, such as Miss Tuke, Principal of Bedford College, University of London, called for the introduction of eugenics into teacher training colleges. A deputation from the Conference approached the Board of Education in April 1913. The representative of the Board promised to give the proposal full consideration.

Eugenic involvement in sex education is more fully discussed in Chapter 10.

vii) Crypto - Eugenics

It was stated earlier that one strategy of the eugenics movement was to make eugenics part of the ethos of other organisations. During the latter half of the twentieth century, this has become the major strategy of the eugenics movement. It came to be called crypto-eugenics which means hidden eugenics.

The move towards crypto-eugenics as the strategy of the Eugenics Society first came during the mid-1940s in the aftermath of the holocaust. The Eugenics Society in Britain desperately attempted to distance itself from Nazi doctrine and practice. Blacker asserted that it was "both unjust and deplorable that the word eugenics should be connected with Nazi racialist practices" (Blacker, 1982a, p. 30). Nevertheless the connection was felt and the Eugenics Society's membership fell. In 1957, Blacker presented a memorandum entitled "The Eugenics Society's Future" to a special meeting of the Council of the Eugenics Society. He discussed three possible policies for the future:

that the Society should pursue eugenic ends by less obvious means, that is by a policy of crypto-eugenics, which was apparently proving successful with the US Eugenics Society;

that the Society should concentrate on the eugenic aspects of current problems and should campaign for the control of immigration, and for a reduction in the total population of Great Britain;

that the Society should change its constitution and adapt itself to a diminishing membership and the possession of substantial resources by becoming a Trust, Council or Foundation, which would be able to do most of what the Society was already doing but more effectively (Schenk and Parks, 1968, p. 154)

In the 1944-45 Annual Report of the Eugenics Society, it had been recommended

that such propaganda as the Society undertakes after the war should not be under the direction of a propaganda secretary. In addition to such propaganda as is directed to the periphery of the body politic, the Society should use its influence at the centre by close liaison with cognate organisations (ibid, p. 155).

In 1960 these two sets of recommendations were formalised. It was agreed that

The Society should make use of one of the organisations specialising in public opinion surveys to obtain some concrete information about what the educated public thinks about eugenics, and that until such information is available the Society should curtail its missionary work and specifically postpone the broadsheet programme.

It was also generally agreed that

The Society's activities in crypto-eugenics should be pursued vigorously, and specifically and that Society should increase its monetary support of the FPA the IPPF and should make contact with the Society for the Study of Human Biology, which already has a strong and active membership, to find out if any relevant projects are contemplated with which the Eugenics Society would assist (ibid, p. 155)

I shall discuss the relationship between the Eugenics Society and the Family Planning Association (FPA) in Chapter Eleven. The point to make here is that the FPA was a major, perhaps the major, organisation through which crypto-eugenics was pursued.

This chapter has dealt with the origins, principals and methods of the Eugenics Society and has highlighted the political context at the time of the emergence of eugenic ideas. As I have explained, there were significant influences. Principally these included the fear of imperial decline and of race degeneration, the differential decline in the birthrate by social class, and the impact of Darwinian theories upon political and scientific thought.

From Galton's definition of the term eugenics in 1883 as "the science of improving stock" I have traced how eugenists in the 20th century created the science and political movement of eugenics which promoted the interests of the white professional middle class. In their work in applied biometry, statistics, genetics, I.Q. tests, biology, research, and legislation, the professional membership of the early eugenics movement equated social status with genetic worth. Scientists, politicians, educationalists, medical practitioners and other professional groupings were significantly represented in the early eugenics movement.

Eugenists were concerned about the differential birth rate amongst the "lower classes" who were variously categorised and defined as "unfit".

These categories included working class people who had been pauperised, and people suffering from some physical, sensory, intellectual or mental

"defect". In explaining the differential birth rate, the eugenists employed a Model of Differential Sexuality. They argued that some people are innately more sexual than others. They also argued that low intelligence was linked to higher fertility rates, and that the numerical presence of the "unfit" was a function of their low intellect and lack of mental will not to parent.

The right to parent lay at the heart of eugenic aims and methods. The early eugenists aimed to ensure that those groups defined as "unfit" were denied that right. They adopted a dual approach to achieve their aims. They proposed negative eugenic measures to prevent parenting by those defined as "unfit"; these included sexual segregation, sterilisation and birth control. They also aimed to disseminate what they claimed as the "eugenic ideal" into the public conscience and into the ethos of other organisations.

Precisely how they set about this, and how they refined, developed and succeeded in their aims is detailed in the following Chapters.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EUGENIC SEX EDUCATION

The Eugenic Education Society (E.E.S.) had, from its inception, been an advocate of sex education - education in sex hygiene - in schools. Indeed the original Society was formed by a break-away group from the Moral Education League. Eugenists believed firmly that instruction in sex hygiene was an important precondition to placing "sound eugenic ideals...before the rising generation (Esther Loundes Newbold, Eugenics Review, Discussion Vol. 2, 1910-1911 pp. 79-80). On the one hand, eugenists believed that instruction in sex hygiene would mitigate against what Dr. E. Lyttleton, Headmaster of Eton, defined as increasing "immorality among school children" (who, he implied, were working-class) and the related "decline of the feeling of parental responsibility" (Lyttleton, 1913, p. 35). On the other hand, they believed that it could inculcate a sense of parental responsibility in the interests of the nation. For girls of the 'fitter' moieties this could involve, said Miss Faithfull, Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, education for motherhood.

...it is possible to educate girls to realise the supreme dignity of motherhood, the value of leading healthy lives, the duty of preparing themselves for the care of a household and children and the tasks of citizenship. In this way they may be taught respect for the body by cleanliness, right feeding, open-air and exercise, the danger to the nation of self-indulgence and luxury, the importance of wholesome thoughts and interests to the health of the mind and the value of high ideals and aspirations to keep pure the life of the spirit. (Faithfull, 1913, p. 22)

Miss Faithfull believed, however, that the instruction of sex hygiene was more the task of the mother and the home. In contrast, Lyttleton obviously believed the many working class parents were unfitted for such a task - a belief based upon his familiarity with working class people: he knew "a man in close contact with the working classes" (Lyttleton, op. cit. p. 35). Miss Faithfull believed it necessary, however,

to teach her girls the control of their affections in relation to school friends and teachers, and the reasons for the importance of reserve in the expression of emotions (Faithfull, op. cit., p. 21).

Such affections, said Miss Faithfull, could cause "disturbance of the nervous system" (Faithfull, op. cit. pp. 21-22). It was, therefore, proper for headmistresses to explain why reserve and self-restraint were necessary. In other words, if the girls were to become mothers for the nation, they could not become lesbians.

Miss Faithfull's anxieties about the effects of lesbianism were mirrored in the 1921 Parliamentary debate around the proposed insertion of a clause covering "Acts of indecency by females" into the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (Lords). The learned gentlemen debators not only defined lesbianism as an "objectionable" and "sexual vice" but as "an evil which is capable of sapping the highest and the best in civilisation". Lesbianism, they said, if allowed to become prevalent, would bring about the "downfall" of the nation and the Empire. The lesbian, it was claimed, was a "mental case" and a "pervert" who threatened "the fundamental institutions of society":

In the first place it stops child-birth , because it is a well-known fact that any woman who indulges in this vice will have nothing whatsoever to do with the opposite sex. It debauches young girls and it produces neurasthenia and insanity....a vice that must tend to cause our race to decline. (Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 1921. Vol. 45, 1799-1806).

Lesbians were, it was noted, along with "nymphomaniacs", well-represented in the asylums.

In the event, legislation against lesbianism was not passed. It was held that being childless (!) lesbians were "self-exterminating" and that legislation would bring lesbianism to the attention of the "innocent".

How Miss Faithfull managed to discourage "her girls" without actually putting ideas into their heads is open to speculation. Perhaps this underlay her opposition to sex education in schools.

Fostering a responsible attitude to parenthood was a central aim of the eugenic advocates of sex education. Part of the "responsible attitude" involved choosing one's marriage partner with care:

Would there be any harm when speaking to the elder children, in making them directly realise the eugenic ideal by telling them they ought to desire that their children grow up to become good and healthy citizens, and this not only for the sake of the whole family, but also for the sake of the nation to which they belong? Again is there any evil in pointing out that there is no better guide in choosing a mate for life than to note the character of the home in which he or she has been brought up? (Darwin 1913-1914, p. 7).

Children, then, were to be taught eugenic considerations of fitness and unfitness in order to judge the eugenic worth of prospective partners. In a somewhat indirect way, children were also to be taught the indices of lack of eugenic worth - poverty and other 'heredity defects', within a framework of nationalism.

Eugenists often clothed their arguments for sex education in schools in a language which merged the concepts of religious morality with those of evolutionary imperatives. Responsible parenthood, they argued, was the moral obligation of the individual in the evolutionary interests of race and nation (see Mort, 1987 for a discussion of this). Race regeneration, sometimes termed the purification of the race, was the aim. Sexual immorality, or promiscuity, was held to be the cause of the spread of venereal disease. Venereal disease threatened race regeneration and was the index of immorality.

During the First World War, the E.E.S. was invited to give verbal evidence before the Education Reform Committee. The Executive Council drew up a memorandum in which the relationship between sex hygiene and eugenics was stated clearly. The memorandum declared that the two subjects "are essentially different" but "tied together":

In the first place, the mechanism of sex is the link which connects one generation with another, thus making possible the continuity of the stream of life; and sex is, therefore, an essential feature of the most powerful medium for improving or impairing the quality of future generations. An understanding of

the mechanism of sex and sex hygiene is, consequently, an inherent part of the study of eugenics in its higher branches. (Eugenics Education Society. Memorandum. Teaching in Schools, Training Colleges and Colleges - From the point of view of the Eugenist. Eugenics Review. Vol. 9 1917-1918 p. 128)

The memorandum went on to point that it was necessary "to purify" the sexual knowledge of the poor "by the indirect efforts of training in elementary biology, zoology, botany, nature study etc" (ibid, p. 129). It also made clear that parenthood should be discouraged among the "unfit" and that those pupils with unfavourable hereditary qualities should be inculcated with a sense of moral duty to the nation which involved sacrifice. In other words, they should be taught that it would be immoral to have children. Such a message would not be received by this latter group alone; it would also be imparted to the children deemed fit to parent.

The Eugenics Education Society continued to campaign for the formal introduction of sex education into the school curriculum though this was, in fact, not to come until 1942. Until that date, it was discretionary. But many educationalists were in favour of its introduction and the general consensus appears to have been that the training college was the most effective starting point. This was part of the strategy of educating the educators.

The Society was invited to make representations at major Annual Conferences of Educational Associations. In 1920, Professor R. Douglas Laurie, the Professor of Zoology at Aberystwyth University, delivered two

lectures: Eugenic Instruction in the School; and Eugenic Instruction in Training Colleges.

In his first paper, Laurie said:

Eugenics is.....largely concerned with the encouragement of marriage among the fit and the discouragement of marriage among the unfit. (Laurie, 1920, p. 32)

Laurie advocated the teaching of biology in schools: "Biology is the foundational subject upon which eugenics rests". He said also that geography could be useful as an aid to understanding the effects of mixed race marriages. Laurie criticised those who were opposed to sex education in schools, claiming that parents were often unsuited to the task because many suffered from venereal disease. This emphasis upon rates of venereal disease mirrored contemporary anxiety. It was held both as an index of the nation's moral decline and a powerful dysgenic mechanism, bringing about its own problems of sterility and deformation of future generations. Laurie considered it to be a proper sphere of concern for eugenicists. And like some other eugenicists, though not all, he linked it to the problem of 'feeble-mindedness'. It was this that formed the crux of his argument for sex education in schools:

Someone may say that we have gone a long way very well so far without sex education and eugenic instruction in the schools. One replies that the ever-increasing complexity of the method of living requires adjustments of our educational system in accordance therewith. Besides one may well ask in return

whether it is altogether satisfactory that 10 per cent of the population of our large town is syphilitic, and that there are, say, 30 per cent of the people suffering from gonorrhoea, and that half of the blind children own their blindness to venereal disease in their parents. Is it satisfactory that while it is known that feeble-mindedness is inherited and that the feeble-minded are more prolific than the normal, and that feeble-mindedness has a close association with prostitution, pauperism and criminality, we do not insist upon having effective machinery for preventing the feeble-minded from reproducing their kind? Have we really got along as we might have done had we helped to mould public opinion by introducing the eugenic ideal, based upon knowledge, to the minds of those who were growing up to be the citizens destined to form the public opinion of the next generation? (Laurie, *ibid*, pp. 36-37).

Prostitution was held to be a major transmitter of venereal disease. Venereal disease was viewed as a threat to the imperial race. Prostitution was also believed to be directly linked with feeble-mindedness. It might be deduced from this that, in Laurie's view, feeble-mindedness and venereal disease were directly linked. Mitigating against that equation, however, was the link made between venereal disease and sterility. If feeble-mindedness were indeed directly linked to venereal disease, it follows that feeble-mindedness would also be linked to sterility. Yet Laurie claimed the opposite; feeble-mindedness, in his schema, was equated with a prolific birthrate.

Such a consideration did not deflect Laurie's eugenic colleague, Dr. W. A. Potts, from associating venereal disease with mental defect:

The curse of venereal disease can never be properly tackled till the mentally defective are eliminated first; it is they who spread such disease broadcast, because they neither take any measures

to prevent infection, nor recognise the necessity of treatment and especially of continuing treatment till the disease is cured (Potts, 1924, p. 131)

Potts also claimed in this paper, which was delivered at a Conference on the Desirability of Securing Increased Institutional Accommodation for Defectives, that "the problem of mental defect is linked up with that of Illegitimacy and Delinquency" (ibid, p. 131).

The E.E.S. was not the only body in the early 20th century calling for the introduction of sex education in schools. The National Council of Public Morals (NCPM), "a highly influential morality group" believed sex education to be the answer to the "national moral decline" (Bland, 1982, p. 378). The NCPM comprised a coalition of purity leaders, eugenists, and experts on VD (Bristow, 1977) who were particularly concerned with the collapse of domestic values (Soloway, 1982). The Council, which was descended from the National Social Purity Crusade, spoke in the language of 'racial hygiene', advocating 'Victorian morality' (Bristow, ibid). It was also the NCPM which published Havelock Ellis's tract: The Problem of Race-Regeneration, quoted above. In his preface to that tract, the Secretary of the NCPM, James Marchant, formerly of the National Vigilance Association, made clear the NCPM's adherence to the philosophy and practice of race regeneration, referring to "the uncontrolled multiplication of the degenerate, who threaten to swamp in a few generations the purer elements of our race" (Marchant in Ellis, 1911, p. 7).

According to Marchant and the NCPM, lying behind race degeneration were the "divorce of religion from morals and education", "the lowering of the ideal of marriage", "the commercial employment of married women, resulting, to a serious extent, in the neglect and disruption of family life and the displacement and unemployment of men" and "the economic, social and selfish influences which involve late marriages and an ever-falling birth-rate" (ibid. p. 6).

Like the E.E.S., the NCPM, in which many eminent eugenisists were prominent, called for selective breeding and, to this end, the introduction of sex education. Marchant announced optimistically:

The regenerated race is coming to birth; the larger and nobler civilisation is upon us. It is already seen that it is criminal to live at the expense of the future, that children must be wisely and diligently educated for parenthood, that vice must be sapped at its foundations, that it is much more radically necessary to improve the condition of the race through parentage than through change of environment, that the emphasis must shift from rescue to prevention.
(ibid. p. 8)

Such optimism, however, did not prevent the NCPM from setting up the National Birth-Rate Commission in 1913 to examine the fall in the birth-rate, or more correctly, as Soloway (ibid) points out, the differential decline in the birth-rate. Many eminent eugenisists were invited to sit upon that Commission.

The NCPM was just one of the 'purity' organisations which had some form

of alliance with the E.E.S. Others included the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene - an amalgamation of the British branch of the International Abolitionist Federation and the Ladies National Association for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice and for the Promotion of Social Purity - whose Honorary Secretary was the eugenicist, Dr. Helen Wright. In 1915/1916, The Association and the Society formed a joint committee to arrange a special course of lectures for women elementary school teachers (Eugenics Review. Notes and Notices Vol. 7. 1915-1916, p. 311).

The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, (NUSEC) formerly the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, in which the eugenicist Eleanor Rathbone was active, also collaborated with the E.E.S. In 1919, 32 members of NUSEC attended, under the auspices of that organisation, the Society's summer school on Civics and Eugenics. "Close co-operation" between the two bodies was achieved (Eugenics Review. Office News, Vol. 11. 1919-1920, pp. 251-252).

The major sex education body of the era was the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease, (NCCVD) set up in 1914 as a response to increasing rates of venereal disease, and sanctioned by government with funding. The NCCVD was the first semi-official sex education body. It comprised an alliance of medical men and moralists. Not only, however, did the NCCVD have a large eugenic contingent; it was formed as the result of a direct initiative on the part of Major Leonard Darwin and other prominent eugenicists.

In 1911, at the E.E.S.'s Council Meetings, the question of combating venereal disease was discussed. A medical committee was formed with Dr. Douglas White as its secretary. One of the moving forces behind the setting up of this committee was Mrs. Gotto, (Mrs. Neville-Rolfe from 1917). Mrs. Gotto had also been a moving force behind the setting up of the Eugenics Education Society and later of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother, of which she was Deputy Chairman from 1918 to 1925. Major Leonard Darwin and Dr. White approached Sir Thomas Barlow, President of the College of Physicians; Sir Rickman Godless, President of the College of Surgeons; and Sir Henry Morris, President of the Royal Society of Medicine. Sir Henry Morris was particularly motivated and determined to "push the matter forward with great energy" (Darwin, 1916/1917, p. 214). In 1912, the E.E.S. was invited by Sir Henry Morris to sit upon a committee appointed by the Royal Society of Medicine. In 1913, in response to agitation arising from the International Medical Congress of 1913, the government set up a Royal Commission to investigate venereal disease. The joint committee of the Royal Society of Medicine and the E.E.S. determined that unless there existed a body concerned primarily with venereal disease, the findings of the Royal Commission would fall flat. At a council meeting of the E.E.S. in 1914, the desirability of setting up a National Committee was discussed. It was also decided that the premises of the E.E.S. could be used to accommodate a National Committee. Sir Thomas Barlow and other medical men who had not served on the Commission took the matter in hand, and in 1914, the NCCVD was inaugurated. Sir Thomas Barlow was its chairman; Mrs. Gotto and Dr. Douglas White its secretaries; Major Darwin its

treasurer, and the offices of the E.E.S. its location. Dr. Douglas White, to whom the phrase "cleansing the portals of life" belongs (Bland, 1985), reported the Medical Congress, noted above, in Eugenics Review (White, 1913/1914). It is in White's report that the twin themes of self-regulation, the basis of the NCCVD's strategy of prevention, and self-blame, are most clearly articulated:

If people cannot be taught continence, they can at least be taught to go and get diseases cured. The lesson of self-interest is readily learned. If they must fall into the ditch, let us see to it that they do so open-eyed; then it would be their own fault... (ibid, p. 270, emphases mine).

The "youthful clandestine prostitute" - the amateur - was held largely responsible for the spread of venereal diseases (Bland, 1982; 1985). The prostitute was also held by some delegates to belong to the class of the feeble-minded. Indeed, insofar as the sterilising effects of venereal disease were concerned, it was stated by Darwin that if confined to prostitutes, those effects would be eugenic:

Looking to the population as a whole, these diseases seem to affect the thoughtless and the immoral to a somewhat greater extent than the prudent and the wise; whilst their sterilising effects on prostitutes, especially in view of the very high proportion of the feeble-minded in their ranks, probably have eugenic results. (Darwin: 1917-1918, p. 125)

There was, according to Scoggins (1977) some opposition within the E.E.S. to becoming involved in the campaign around venereal disease. The setting up

of the NCCVD, says Scoggins, as a separate but cognate body represented a compromise solution.

Darwin believed the campaign to be of prime importance to eugenics not least because it would distinguish the genetically unfit from those whose ailments were the result of congenital syphilis. Darwin claimed that among the manifestations of the latter were "lunacy, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, blindness, deafness etc" (Darwin, *ibid*, p. 126). Taking deafness as an example, Darwin claimed:

If we could altogether destroy the spirochaete, or extirpate the disease entirely in some other way, and thus stamp out the resulting deafness in the next generation, we should then in future more readily realise the necessity for endeavouring to eradicate true inherited deafness by the discouragement of parenthood amongst congenitally deaf patients.⁽¹⁾ (Darwin, *ibid*, p. 126).

Darwin also saw the Campaign as a means of encouraging people to think about passing on deficiencies through parenthood:

Another beneficial effect of the campaign against venereal disease will be the habit of mind thus engendered of considering the responsibilities incurred by parents with regard to the defects likely to be transmitted to their offspring....We have, therefore, good reason to hope that definite eugenic advantages will result from this movement. (Darwin, *ibid*. pp. 126-127)

(1) Darwin's concern to prevent parenthood "amongst congenitally deaf" adults was shared by other members of the Eugenics Society. For example, MacLeod Yearsley argued in 1914/1915 that deaf people should be taught oral communication and lip reading, and that signing should be discouraged on the grounds that this "must lead inevitably to the intermarriage of deaf persons" (Yearsley. 1914/1915, p. 120).

In 1920/21 Darwin was able to assert confidently that the NCCVD "has always inculcated the idea that it is a crime to bring a congenitally diseased child into the world" (Darwin, 1920/21, p. 49).

The NCCVD's strategy for combating the alleged increase in the incidence of venereal disease was moral self-regulation combined with medical cure. The NCCVD was opposed to self-administered medical preventatives, arguing that these would encourage the spread of vice. Doubtlessly, however, the medical side of the coalition also wanted to protect its own sphere of expertise, which could have been undermined by self-administered prophylaxis (Bland, 1985). Self-regulation, however, was recommended as being in the interests of race and nation.

Sir Malcolm Morris, K.C.V.O., F.R.C.S.E., member of the Executive Committee of the NCCVD, addressing the Second Annual Meeting, 1917, stated the policy of the NCCVD:

As regards prophylaxis, we advocate the provision of facilities for the earliest possible treatment, but we do not approve of artificial prophylaxis. We are decidedly opposed to it now and, I hope, for all time.

What we do advocate is moral prophylaxis in every possible form - religious, educational, and social. It is only, we believe, by strengthening the nation to fight the evil by such influences, and not by lowering the moral standard, that ultimate success can be achieved.

(Morris, 1917, p. 22)

The President of the NCCVD, and eugenist, Lord Sydenham of Combe

stated:

It is not only a healthier people that we hope for, but a purer people, and purity is the greatest of all safeguards. (Sydenham, 1917, p. 8)

The Lord Rhondda, President of the Local Government Board, pointed to "foreign sources" of the disease and called for greater facilities for treatment in seaport towns. He congratulated the NCCVD for its work for the Empire:

You have done a very great work already, but it remains for you to continue to educate, to keep up the necessary "atmosphere". It is no good our winning the war unless we have a healthy race afterwards to maintain the Empire. The future of our great Empire depends on the virility of the race...
(Rhondda, 1917 p. 12)

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor M. Muspratt, added "fallen women" to the "foreign sources" of dissemination of the disease and pointed to the work being done in Liverpool in providing medical facilities for "fallen women" in rescue homes and on leaving prison.

The NCCVD worked with many other professional organisations, including the Association of County Medical Officers, in the educational campaign and in setting up branches of the NCCVD in various parts of the country. Collaboration between the NCCVD and the Association of County Medical Officers was deemed necessary to ensure "the policy of education would be under the supervision of the same authority that was responsible for the

provision of the necessary facilities for treatment" (ibid. p. 25).

Medical Officers of Health thus came to sit upon the executive committees of the NCCVD. Indeed, Neville Chamberlain, who was to become Minister of Health, was active in the Birmingham branches of both the NCCVD and the Eugenics Education Society, being President of the former.

The NCCVD carried out both a massive public sex education campaign and one aimed at educating the educators in the principles of sex hygiene. The former it achieved through public lectures and fear-raising film shows; the latter through direct collaboration with professional bodies and running conferences for professionals. In 1924, it changed its name to the British Social Hygiene Council and expanded its aims to those of strengthening the family, promoting an equal standard of sexual conduct for men and women and improving the race through educational and social measures. Its influence was massive. By 1931, the Council had arranged 24,000 meetings attended by 5 million people, 3,000 conferences and seven hundred courses of lectures for parents, youth leaders and teachers - educating the educators of sex hygiene (Bristow, op. cit.).

The British Social Hygiene Council had branches throughout the Empire. The soldiers of the Empire were also lectured on the dangers of venereal disease. It was often claimed that lack of recreational facilities led to the incidence of venereal disease among the troops. Not so, however, for the 'indigeneous' peoples of the Empire. Ignorance or lack of intelligence was

posited as a major contributory factor of the spread of venereal diseases. For example, it was claimed at the 1927 Imperial Social Hygiene Congress of the British Social Hygiene Council that for the "ignorant masses" of India "fear of contracting venereal disease was about the only deterrent" (Health and Empire, Vol. 2, No. 4, December, 1927). At the Imperial Conference of 1926, it was stated that the "ignorance" of the people of Sierra Leone lay behind both their non-attendance for treatment and the spread of the disease (Health and Empire, Vol. 1, No. 3, September, 1926). Indeed, the films deemed appropriate for the "highly intelligent" members of the Government service and Mercantile Marine were deemed inappropriate for the indigeneous people(s). Mrs. Neville-Rolfe, however, believed some materials could be shown if adapted to 'native settings' - i.e. if photographs of Black people were substituted for photographs of white people. It should also be noted that many of the films used by the NCCVD were aimed at instructing the educators in the principles of heredity (Health and Empire, 1926, op. cit.).

One of the major concerns of the British Social Hygiene Council was the alleged "threat" posed to the military and Mercantile Marine by prostitutes in the seaports of the Empire. In Britain, Black seamen as well as prostitutes were held responsible. In 1935, it was stated by the British Social Hygiene Council in its Annual Report that "difficult social hygiene problems" were "arising from the increasing number of Indian and Colonial seamen leaving their ships while in the Home ports and becoming permanent residents in the port areas". The Report goes on to specify the "social

hygiene problems":

Many such men are in receipt of public assistance, many suffer from venereal disease. The absence of women of their own race is resulting in extensive promiscuity with white women and in Cardiff and Liverpool a number of half-caste children and adolescents are creating special problems (British Social Hygiene Council, 20th Annual Report, 1935)

The collective view of the major sex education body of the time, which comprised professional practitioners, and advisers to policy makers, including representatives from the fields of mental hygiene, education, health etc, was that Black people and "promiscuous" white women (deemed promiscuous by virtue of having sexual relationships with Black men) were responsible for the spread of venereal disease, and that their children created "special problems".

In 1942, the bulk of the work of the Council (renamed the British Social Biology Council) was transferred to the Central Council for Health Education, founded in 1927 by the Society for Medical Officers of Health. This was to become the Health Education Council. That point marked the government's recognition of the need for sex education in schools, according to a prolific contributor to Eugenics Review on the subject of sex education, Cyril Bibby (Bibby 1946).

The British Social Biology Council continued its work, stressing the need for biology as the basis of sex education in schools and promoting eugenics. The

Council to this day publishes its own journal Biology and Human Affairs which is aimed at the teaching profession.

Cyril Bibby, described by Dallas as the "doyen" of sex educators (Dallas, 1972) has been a major contributor to sex education materials for teachers and youth workers. His works are, in fact, included among the recommended readings by Liverpool Education Authority for teachers (Liverpool Education Committee, 1974, Teachers Advisory Committee Report) and for pupils of both the primary and secondary stages. Dallas's book, Sex Education in School and Society (op. cit., 1979), is also recommended for adult reading.

In his books, Bibby made few direct references to eugenics. Yet in a review of his book Sex Education, it was claimed in Eugenics Review:

There are several references in the Society's statement of Aims and Objects to the need for a widespread eugenic conscience, but nothing on how it should be fostered throughout the community. Mr. Bibby, although he hardly touches on this question directly, leaves one in no doubt as to the reply. The eugenic conscience is not a ready-made moral touchstone that can be offered complete to the unprepared adult, as a kind of wedding present; it is an attitude towards the social aspects of sexual relationships that must be implanted in infancy and allowed to take root, slowly and firmly, with the maturation of the personality through childhood and adolescence to young manhood and womanhood. That is the ideal and we do not know a better guide to its attainment than Mr. Bibby's book.

(Eugenics Review, Book Reviews, Vol. 37 No. 1, April, 1945).

Bibby, in this work, advocated some limited instruction in biology lessons on

factors of heredity but not "eugenic propaganda":

It is not necessary (nor is it desirable in the school) to utilise such knowledge in order to carry out eugenic propaganda. The mere knowledge of the facts will lead any inquisitive class...to make all sorts of suggestions about the desirability of medical examination before marriage, the undesirability of close inbreeding and so on. (Bibby, 1957, p. 68)

Instruction in the factors of heredity was in accord with the theoretical grounding of the Eugenics Society in Mendelism and with its objectives. It was then perhaps not so surprising that the reviewer should be so enthusiastic about Bibby's work. But this was not only because of the credence he gave to the Society's underlying theoretical perspective, but because Bibby's advocacy of less overt means of spreading the eugenic ideal fitted with the Society's current strategy of pursuing eugenics by less obvious means, by "crypto-eugenics".

Bibby's work also used the Model of Differential Sexuality within a framework which linked sexual love with evolution:

Sexual love, in the sense in which we use the phrase today, is a product of civilisation. Just as the primitive appetite for food, expressing itself in its crudest form as the mere gulping down of newly killed prey, has evolved over the ages into the refined palate of the gourmet, so the primitive lust for sexual intercourse has blossomed into the fine flower of love. Civilised man has built sex into a much finer thing, involving all sorts of intellectual and emotional elements. (Bibby, op. cit., p.16)

Bibby compared the sexual habits of civilised man with the "sordidness of

sexual relations" of the Manus of New Guinea, 'studied' by Mead. He asked "But of how many homes in Great Britain is it not also nearly true?" (op. cit., p. 17).

Dorothy Dallas, Lecturer in Education, King's College, London, clearly believes in white middle class superiority of intellect, moral character, and child-raising abilities. She comments upon two projects in the broad area of sex education. The first is concerned with introducing "such girls" as may want to become pregnant at 14 to work in playgroups. Here Dallas refers to girls who may have been "unwanted" themselves and whose parents have been "unaware of the needs of children for understanding and genuine friendship". This project, says Dallas, enables the girls to learn skills otherwise unavailable to them. It is quite clear that Dallas believes working class girls are in need of such instruction:

Thus skills which the middle classes learn by imitation or improvement of parental roles and constant reference to books are gained through experience by girls who are unlikely to acquire them in any other way (Dallas, 1972, pp. 25-26).

The association claimed by sex educators between race and class on the one hand, and "unwanted" pregnancy on the other hand, will be discussed later.

The second project to which Dallas refers is one aimed at instilling 'moral education' into young people. Here again, it is young people, other than those who are middle class, who are deemed to be in need of such

instruction:

Much of this is what the middle class child may get from its parents and one of the most important aspects of this project is that it succeeds in providing education for those most in need of moral education, i.e. those pupils who are conditioned to believe that anything goes as long as you don't get caught, that work is something to be skived, that property is something to be knocked off and that bashing the underdog is the only thing that makes life tolerable. The project provides learning by experience in some very abstract concepts - the only way in which those of average intelligence and below are likely to learn such things. It makes a pleasant change in English education to see the non-academic child being cared for, as well as the top 20 per cent (Dallas, *ibid.*, p. 48)

As Pauline Marks (1979) pointed out, being working class is taken as an index of being 'non-academic', i.e. less intelligent. Griffin (1985) notes that Black girls and white working-class girls are deemed by educational practitioners to be less moral as well as less intelligent than their middle class peers. Chapter fourteen returns to this argument.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE BIRTH CONTROL MOVEMENT AND EUGENIC PERSPECTIVES

The campaign for birth control predated the emergence of the eugenics movement. The former may be traced back to Malthus's theory of population and to the trial of Bradlaugh and Bessant in 1877 and the subsequent establishment of the Malthusian League (Soloway, 1982).

Malthus argued that population increased in geometric progression while food production increased in arithmetic progression. This meant that population increase progressively outstrips food production. The excess of population over food production meant that the only checks against social misery were wars, famine and diseases. Malthus advocated sexual abstinence on the part of the working class as a means of redressing the balance between population and resources. In this way, Malthus blamed the working class for poverty and social misery.

The neo-Malthusians of the Malthusian League concurred with the theory but not the proposed solution of Malthus. The League believed that "sexual abstinence" would cause other problems such as prostitution, venereal disease and the "curse of celibacy" (Soloway, 1982). Celibacy, declared the neo-Malthusians, led to nervous disorders in both men and women, and to higher death rates. Combining the language of political economy with assertions as to the health-giving properties of family-life, the neo-

Malthusians countered the arguments of the moralists who equated birth control with licentious sexuality, promiscuity, and immorality. The neo-Malthusians asserted that these, to the contrary, were the result of economically-motivated delayed marriages.

Members of the newly created eugenics movement debated the possible impact of Malthusian methods of population limitation. Some argued that birth control could provide a means of preventing the propagation of the unfit. It could provide, they claimed, a tool for negative eugenics. Others countered this by arguing that birth control would be used by the more intelligent and more prudent and would therefore lead to a reduction in the numbers of the fit. There was an argument which held that birth control would be a further factor in encouraging the differential decline in the birth rate. A third group objected on moral-religious grounds.

The Malthusian League, on the other hand, were ambiguous in their support of the eugenics cause, agreeing with the principle of negative eugenics but disagreeing with that of positive eugenics:

the question of restricting the birth of the unfit has always been a cardinal doctrine of Neo-Malthusianism.

The positive eugenic creed of encouraging the propagation of the stronger and weeding out the unfit through intensified struggle, has been consistently opposed by the League as being absolutely futile and unscientific in connection with modern civilisation. (Malthusian League. 31st Annual Report. Cited in Eugenics Review. Editorial, Vol. 1, 1909-1910)

The Editorial of the Eugenics Review called this opposition to positive eugenics "a confusion of ideals":

Positive and negative eugenics are not opposed but mutually complementary and indispensable.
(ibid. pp. 146-147)

As is stated above, some members of the E.E.S. believed that birth control would further encourage a differential decline in the birth rate. It was noted that the greatest decline was occurring among members of the white middle classes. Major Leonard Darwin was among those opposed to artificial means of birth control on the grounds that the more intelligent and prudent sectors of society would be those who employed them. Darwin in fact managed to neutralise the issue within the E.E.S. until the 1920s - that is to say, the Society did not formerly accept birth control until that time.

Nevertheless, there were outspoken proponents of birth control as a eugenic instrument within the E.E.S. - some of whom were to be highly influential in gaining acceptance for birth control by other bodies and professional organisations. As I shall argue below, eugenicists were to make a major - perhaps the major - contribution to the formal organisation of the birth control movement, integrating the various organisations into a coherent whole, and to its legal and social acceptance. In arguing this, I do not claim that eugenic interest alone determined the course of the movement. Nor do I claim that eugenics found no opposition within the movement, or indeed within any of the bodies, professional organisations and associations

mentioned above and below. But what is undeniable is that individuals and organisations other than eugenic consciously allied themselves with eugenicists in order to gain acceptance for birth control. This may go some way to explaining why contraception may be voluntary provision for some women but was and is imposed upon other women. For part of the guiding ethos of the birth control movement - focused in this country until the mid-1970s in the Family Planning Association - was that birth control provided "a most valuable eugenic instrument, perhaps the most valuable" (Dr. Charles Killock Millard, Vice-President of the Malthusian League, Medical Officer of Health for Leicester, and founder and Hon. Sec. of the Voluntary Euthanasia Legislation Society, in an address to the Eugenics Education Society, 1920 cited in Eugenics Review, Vol. 12, 1920-1921, p. 294).

Both the neo-Malthusians and the eugenicists were aware that women of the privileged classes had greater access to birth control than did working class women. This in itself was held to be a factor bringing about a differential birth-rate. At the same meeting at which Millard made his address Alice Drysdale Vickery, who succeeded her husband Charles Robert Drysdale as President of the Malthusian League, connected the "birth and survival of the unfit" with the dysgenic effects of denying birth control knowledge to "women of the poorer classes" (ibid, p. 297). Dr. Binnie Dunlop, Treasurer of the Malthusian League, also sought at this meeting to ally the two causes by pointing out that "a very low birth rate among the poor would enable the fitter classes to contribute the larger proportion of children to the population". Thus, said Binnie, "poverty would be eliminated and race

improvement established by the poor having one or two children, and the better off classes two, three or four" (ibid, p. 296).

Early proponents of birth control within the E. E. S. included the Bishop of Birmingham - Henry Russel Wakefield, and the Reverend Inge - both dignitaries of the church and of the National Birth Rate Commissions set up by the NCPM and both influential in changing ecclesiastical attitudes towards birth control (Leathhard, 1980). The medical men James Barr and Dr. Killock Millard contributed to the move towards acceptance by the medical profession (Leathhard, ibid). The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship was the first feminist organisation, led by the eugenicists Eva Hubback, Eleanor Rathbone and (Lady) Mary Stocks, to ally itself to the birth control movement.

Eugenicists were influential in gaining support for the cause of birth control within other organisations. At the same time, the pro-birth control lobby sought the active support of the E. E. S.

Havelock Ellis was among the first of the eugenicists to openly advocate birth control within the Society as "an invaluable instrument, not merely for immediate social betterment, but for the elevation of the race" (Ellis, 1917, p. 77). Ellis addressed the concerns of the "thoughtful eugenicists" who refrained from emphasising the potential of birth control:

they recognise that the prevention of conception, by itself...has

no necessary improving effect on the race, and may even act in the reverse direction....A merely random restriction of the fertility of the stock, without reference to the racial qualities of the stock, cannot possibly improve the stock's quality. In actual practice, moreover, as carried on at present, Neo-Malthusian methods may even be dysgenic rather than eugenic, for they tend to be adopted by the superior stocks, while the inferior stocks, ignorant and reckless, are left to propagate freely (Ellis, *ibid*, p. 77).

Ellis went on to point out that the financial burden imposed by the "inferior stocks" upon the diminishing number of the "superior stocks" would constitute a further disincentive to the latter's reproduction. Nevertheless, Ellis asserted:

birth control remains the only instrument by which () eugenic selection can be rendered practicable (*ibid*, p. 77).

To this end, he advocated the "spread of knowledge of contraceptive measures among those classes whose fatal fertility it is necessary to arrest", combined with the dissemination of the laws of heredity and the inculcation "of a high sense of personal responsibility". This would further, argued Ellis, make it possible to identify the "incapable group" upon whom "pressure" could be brought to bear:

This pressure may in the mildest degree consist of such elementary social inducements as the group may be amenable to, proceeding to sterilisation when these inducements fail, and in the ultimate and extreme degree to complete segregation. It is along lines such as these, and not by any fatuous and futile methods of imposing compulsion on the community at large, that we may reasonably expect eugenic progress.
(Ellis, *ibid*, p.81)

Dr. C. V. Drysdale, President of the Malthusian League and member of the E. E. S., argued for birth control as a means of combining humanitarianism with race improvement:

The power to cut off human fertility at will gives us the key to the greatest of all human problems - how to reconcile humanitarianism with race-improvement (Drysdale: 1922/1923, p. 109)

Drysdale claimed that "the appeals to charity and the burdens of taxation have militated against the propagation of the finer types". He advocated the continuation of "help to the weak and the poor through public and private charity" and spoke against allowing "natural elimination" to take its course on the lives of the "weak and the poor" "but only on condition that they abstain from propagation unless and until they become self-supporting" (ibid, p. 109).

Drysdale advocated the spread of birth control knowledge. Its principles included early marriages based upon love to prevent prostitution and venereal diseases; opposition to socialism; segregation or sterilisation of the "mentally deficient", and that the medical profession should combine with the hypocritical oath a Darwinian Oath - that they would save the lives of the "unfit" on condition of a promise not to parent:

success in the environment is the true test of fitness and all those who fail either through disease, accident, or inability to gain a livelihood are the unfit whose lives may be preserved but only at the price of renouncing the right to perpetuate their type (ibid, p. 110).

There were differences among the pro-birth control eugenicists. For example, Drysdale was opposed to financial incentives to parenthood. Eleanor Rathbone, a socialist, on the other hand, called for family endowments as a means of reducing the birth rate among the poorest sectors of the working class:

those who live in overcrowded and sordid dwellings tend to lose heart and hope; they depend more on sexual satisfaction and plan less for the future than the more happily placed (Rathbone: 1924, p. 273).

According to Rathbone, family endowments would make "it more possible for families to obtain accommodation proportionate to their size" which may "then be expected to reduce the birth rate among the slum dwellers" (ibid, p. 273). As a feminist, Rathbone had no desire to inflict large families upon "women of the artisan and middle classes" though she did suggest that such endowments may lead to "slightly larger families" among these classes. It may be argued that Rathbone was using the rhetoric and concepts of eugenics to gain financial advantages for working class women; yet whether or not that were the case she participated in the drive towards race improvement with all that that involved. Moreover, she actively reproduced the Model of Differential Sexuality:

there is little doubt that in the wage-earning classes it tends to be the more self-controlled, far-sighted, able and ambitious parents who restrict their families and those who display the opposite of all these qualities who breed most freely (ibid, p. 272).

The turning point for the birth control movement came in March, 1921 when Marie Stopes opened the first birth control clinic in this country in a working class district of London. Stope's organisation was called the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress. Stopes was a pioneer of sex education and birth control (Leathard, *ibid*). It has been claimed that Stopes wanted "to help working class women living in poverty" (Spender, 1982b, p. 407) and to save other women from marital misery and frustration through lack of sexual knowledge (Leathard, *ibid*). But Stopes was a member of the E.E.S.; her concern for women did not include women deemed 'unfit'. In 1920, Stopes wrote:

society allows the diseased, the racially negligent, the thriftless, the careless, the feeble-minded, the very lowest and worst members of the community, to produce innumerable tens of thousands of stunted, warped and inferior infants. If they live, a large proportion of these are doomed from their very physical inheritance to be at the best but only partly self-supporting, and thus to drain the resources of those classes above them which have a sense of responsibility. The better classes, freed from the cost of the institutions, hospitals, prisons and so on, principally filled by the inferior stock, would be able to afford to enlarge their own families, and at the same time not only to save human misery but to multiply a hundredfold the contribution in human life to the riches of the State (Stopes, 1920, Quoted in Hall, 1978).

Stopes was an advocate of compulsory sterilisation of the "unfit", among whom she numbered the children of mixed race parentage (Hall, *ibid*). Supporting Stopes' Clinic were many prominent eugenicists including James Barr, Julian Huxley and Professor Alexander Carr-Saunders, first holder of the Charles Booth Chair of Social Sciences, University of Liverpool, one time Director of the L.S.E., Chairman of the Statistics Committee of the Royal Commission on Population, 1944-49, pioneer of the establishment of

demography as a university discipline, and President of the Eugenics Society from 1949 to 1953.

In November, 1921 the Malthusian League opened a clinic in Walworth, London. The clinic remained for only a short time under the auspices of the Malthusian League. Financial difficulties and internal conflicts led to its closure after only one year of operation. When it reopened in 1923, it had been taken over by a new organisation: the Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics (SPBCC). During the 1920s this Society opened three more clinics in London and seven in other parts of the country. By 1931, there were sixteen affiliated clinics.

Among the eugenists active in the SPBCC were Sir Humphrey Rolleston, physician-in-ordinary to George V, Regius Professor of Physic, University of Cambridge, and President of the Eugenics Society, from 1933 to 1935; Janet Chance, Frida Laski, (Lady) Mary Stocks and John Maynard Keynes.

In 1932, the SPBCC published a report on its ten years' work from 1921 to 1931. The Report was prefaced by Julian Huxley, who was to become President of the Eugenics Society from 1959 to 1962 and who was one time Director-General of UNESCO. In his preface, Huxley outlined the importance of birth control. Its "power to relieve suffering and misery", the "social justice" of making birth control knowledge available to all classes constituted, said Huxley, the main strength and support of and to the birth control movement. Other aspects, however, were equally important. Among these were the prevention of "destitution and degradation":

We spend vast amounts of time, money and energy in relieving distress once it has come into being, but give very little thought to organising its prevention. The restriction of family size among poor people will have a preventative effect in reducing crime, pauperism, drunkenness and overcrowding....(Huxley, 1932, p. viii)

Huxley later turned his attention to eugenics proper:

As is well known, most industrial countries show a differential birth rate between different economic and social classes, the professional classes, for instance, having a very low birth rate, while unskilled labour has a very high one....most of us will agree with Professor Carr-Saunders that this state of affairs cannot by any possibility be eugenic, and is in all probability to some extent dysgenic....ignorance, superstition, timidity and poverty are the chief factors responsible for the differential birth rate (ibid, pp. ix-x).

Huxley went on to advocate that birth control should be recognised as "an essential social service, an integral part of the system of public health". This would lead the "eugenic issue" to "emerge in a much more definite and clear-cut form":

It is the general opinion of those who have worked at birth control clinics serving crowded slum or industrial areas that a certain proportion of the population is, through laziness, stupidity, or shiftlessness, really "unteachable" (ibid, p. x).

Huxley then defined the reasons for being "unteachable" and, echoing Ellis, suggested that birth control could identify the genetically "unteachable" so that they could be exposed to other eugenics methods:

...."unteachable" largely because of deficient heredity: ...a considerable proportion of them are constituted by inferior stock, which like dregs, have silted down to the bottom of society. Accordingly, the more adequately birth control knowledge is made available to all classes, and the more thoroughly social conditions are ameliorated, the more sharply will the real genetic "unteachables" stand out from the rest of the population, and the more sharply will they be delimited as a proper target for eugenic measures (Huxley, *ibid*, p. x).

The Eugenics Society was, as earlier stated, involved in a campaign for gaining legislation for voluntary sterilisation: Huxley was among the most outspoken advocates of that campaign.

In 1924, a resolution was passed at the National Conference of Labour Women demanding an end to the Ministry of Health's opposition to birth control instruction in welfare centres. Out of this developed the third birth control organisation - the Workers Birth Control Group. The women involved, who included Mrs. L'Estrange Malone, Dora Russell, Frida Laski and Stella Browne, stressed that their concern lay with the welfare of working class women who, unlike middle class women, were denied birth control knowledge. Nevertheless, they formed an alliance with Stopes' Society and with the New Generation League (the renamed Malthusian League). And, of course, eugenists were numbered in their ranks.

The Labour Women also sought the support of the Labour Party for birth control provision. In the period leading up to the 1929 General Election, they intensified their campaign to this end. Edith How-Martyn opened the Birth Control International Information Centre. The BCIIC's major concern

was to spread birth control information internationally. Edith How-Martyn, a eugenicist, was its Director; other involved eugenicists included Janet Chance and Frida Laski. Margaret Sanger, whose eugenic beliefs and utterances are discussed by Davis (1981), was its President. The women involved in the BCIIC made contact throughout the world and attracted international interest in birth control. In 1933, the BCIIC organised a conference on "Birth Control In Asia" at which Lord Horder presided. The BCIIC were, in fact, one of the early international birth control lobbies which were to develop later during the century into the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The birth control organisations noted above each had eugenicists at the helm and/or in otherwise prominent positions. The Eugenics Society itself, however, was to bring a yet more direct influence to bear upon the birth control movement in the form of a systematic collection of clinic data and research into contraceptive measures. This was the brief of the Birth Control Investigation Committee - initiated by Mrs. Spring Rice in 1926, and set up with the support of the Eugenics Society in 1927. The Chairman of the BCIC was Sir Humphry Rolleston. Other eugenicists including Julian Huxley, Lord Brain, Lord Adrian, Alexander Carr-Saunders, Sir Arthur Ellis and C. P. Blacker were involved.

In July 1930 the organisation which was eventually to become the Family Planning Organisation, the National Birth Control Council was formed to amalgamate the five birth control bodies. These were: The Society for

Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress (Stopes withdrew her Society in 1933 on the grounds that she was "the Admiral, not a cabin boy, in this movement", Parkes and King, 1974, p. 181); the Workers Birth Control Group and the Birth Control Investigation Committee (which amalgamated in the period November 1930 to July 1931); the Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics and the Birth Control International Information Centre (which merged fully in 1938). Manoeuvring this amalgamation was the eugenicist Sir Arthur Ellis. In 1931, the National Birth Control Council became the National Birth Control Association. In 1939, amid a depopulation scare, it changed its name again to the Family Planning Association (FPA).

Not only was eugenics central to the ethos of the newly formed body, eugenicists remained and remain central to its organisation. For example, the first chair of the NBCC was Lady Denman; the first President was Lord Horder. Horder was succeeded in 1956 by the eugenicist Lord Brain who remained president of the FPA until 1966. A later eugenicist president was Lord Platt. Other eugenicists who are or have been centrally involved in the Family Planning Association include C.P. Blacker, Mrs. Eva Hubback, Dr. Elliot Slater, Lady Helen Brook, Sir Peter Medawar, Professor Sir Alan Parkes, Dr. Helena Wright, Mrs. Mary Peberdy, Vera Houghton and Linton Snaithe as well, of course, as individuals identified above. Indeed, according to the 53rd Annual Report of the Family Planning Association, several individuals who are or were involved in the Eugenics Society were also Vice-Presidents of the FPA in 1984.

Perhaps the best known 'personality' of the Family Planning Association was Mrs. Margaret Pyke. She was the first paid employee of the newly formed body, became chairman of the FPA, was executive chairman of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and was a member of the Council of the Eugenics Society. In 1963, Margaret Pyke delivered the annual Galton Lecture to the Eugenics Society. The subject of her lecture was "Family Planning: An Assessment". It is worth quoting extracts of her lecture at length for it makes clear the FPA's continued association with the Eugenics Society which had not only housed and financed much of the work of the FPA, but whose ethos continued to inform that of the FPA:

The connection between the Eugenics Society and the family planning movement, both in this country and internationally, has been a close one. Under the powerful impulse of Dr. Blacker the Society started both the Population Investigation Committee and the Birth Control Investigation Committee. It has provided free offices for the FPA and the IPPF and has also given them most generous and repeated financial help. This seems to me entirely right - not only because I have been on the receiving end of this generosity, but because the use made of birth control must be of primary importance to eugenics. Differences of intelligence are inherited - and it is a fact that children who belong to small families do better in intelligence tests than the children of larger families. A possible explanation is that the less intelligent parents find it more difficult to practice birth control....

The first impact of birth control clinics was eugenic....

...FPA clinics do not now reach the patients who are probably most in need of our help. These are the families who are so often in trouble or difficulty of one sort or another. They not only suffer sadly themselves, but become a sore burden on every local authority and social agency with which they are concerned. Whatever the trouble may be, there is often one common factor - too many children. Over the past few years the Eugenics Society has been financing an attempt by the FPA to deal with this problem....The cost of some of these problem families to the

community must be enormous.

If, in one year, even ten fewer children had to be taken into care the cost of the scheme would be recovered (Pyke, 1963, p. 78).

The scheme to which Pyke referred was domiciliary family planning. This will be more fully explored in Chapter 12. In that lecture, Pyke also asked: "Ought we to press for all our work to be included in the National Health Service?" The provision of free contraception by the N.H.S. was, in fact, an aim of the F.P.A. which was to be realised during the 1970s. Following the takeover of its clinical functions by the NHS in the early 1970s, the FPA became primarily a sex education body, the strategy of which was educate the educators. Chapter 14 will return to this.

It may be perceived from the above that members of the birth control and eugenic movements shifted the Model of Differential Sexuality to include the use of birth control as evidence of the capacity to exercise sexual self-control. The non-use of birth control was explained as both cause and effect of lack of intelligence which was taken as a class-related phenomenon. This particular form of the Model of Differential Sexuality was used by professionals to impose birth control on those defined as "problem families", as is discussed in Chapter 12. It became the model used by contemporary sex educators, as is discussed in Chapter 14.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE EUGENIC IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM FAMILY AND DOMICILIARY FAMILY PLANNING AS A NEGATIVE EUGENIC SOLUTION

In 1947 the Eugenics Society established a committee on "Problem Families". This was not a new term; it had been in operation since the early 1800s (Olive Keidan, 1987: private communication). Eugenists, however, brought to the term "problem families" the knowledge that large families among the poor were, potentially at least, "problem families" and that "low intelligence" was the cause. "Low intelligence", it was argued, determined both the incidence of sexual intercourse and the non-use of contraception. These arguments will be clarified below.

According to Blacker, "problem families" posed specific social problems and "high fertility is the cause of many, perhaps of most" of these problems (Blacker 1946/47, p. 122). In asserting this, Blacker drew upon reports which detailed the alleged characteristics of the problem family. The reports were authored by Medical Officers of Health, many of whom were members of the Eugenics Society. Blacker's statement as to how certain families came under the scrutiny of the Medical Officers of Health reveals that large families among the poor constituted the major target group. Following on from his statement that "high fertility is the cause", he explained that:

Problem families are selected as such largely as a result of this feature (Blacker, *ibid*, p. 122).

The large family was evaluated as a "problem family" if it contained or had experienced any or all of the following characteristics: "juvenile delinquents", "lousy, scabietic, dirty or neglected children", dependence upon public funds, children taken into care, high levels of miscarriage, stillbirth and infant mortality, "mental defect and retardation, mental disorder, epilepsy, inebriety, prostitution, unemployability and crime or recidivism" (*ibid*, p. 123).

Blacker claimed that the condition of children pointed to the "eugenic value" of their parents:

We estimate the eugenic value of parents indirectly by the way they discharge their responsibilities as parents; and we assess it directly by the qualities of their children (*ibid*. p. 126).

The parents of children, said Blacker, who "through fecklessness and stupidity, misbeget a sequence of unwanted children who are then so ill-treated or neglected that they have to be removed from their parents home....are the best available examples of the eugenically undesirable type" (*ibid*. p. 126).

Blacker thus compounded the alleged association between large families and social problems. The incidence of any of the above characteristics within a

large family was taken as an index of the parents' eugenic undesirability, that is, their lack of fitness to parent. At the same time, pre-defined social and biological phenomena were taken as evidence of lack of eugenic value within specified groups of people. Large families came under the scrutiny of the various agencies whose brief it was to ascertain which was a "problem family". The large family was then perceived at least as a potential problem family, and its members as potential social problems. Moreover, the large family whose members included a child with a mental handicap or with epilepsy, or whose mother had suffered a number of miscarriages, stillbirths or infant deaths, or whose parents were unable to obtain adequately waged employment and so on was deemed a problem per se. The whole family then was under suspicion of being dirty, criminal, drunkard, prostituting etc. because of their numbers.

It is not clear (to me) from Blacker's review whether he attributed causation of social problems to heredity or to environment. From the inception of the eugenics movement, environment had never been disclaimed as a determining factor. Environment, however, when acknowledged - eugenicists had claimed that other organisations pinpointed environment and that their brief was to keep heredity in the limelight - was usually taken as moulding what nature (heredity) had given. In the early years eugenicists wrote and spoke in the sort of purple prose which explicitly stressed the innate superiority of the professional white middle class. In the 1940s and later, this was toned down in the sense that 'culture' was accorded a little more attention. Given, however, that culture is a human construct, it would still

be possible to ascribe culture to biology or heredity. But in whatever way the debate between culture/heredity, nature/nurture, biology/environment was solved, the impact upon the people under suspicion of being 'unfit' remains the same.

Blacker 'solved' the slippage between the supposed biological and the social by reference to levels of fertility. And, as already stated, the control of fertility marked the practical means for the rational selection of those who should be born.

"Eugenically undesirable types", as assessed by the various 'expert' professional groups, prominent among whom were Medical Officers of Health, Head Teachers of Schools, School Medical Officers, School Nurses, School Attendance Officers, and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Inspectors, on the initial basis of family size among the poorer sectors of the working class, constituted the first target group for 'domiciliary family planning'.

John Peel (then of the University of Hull) and Faith Schenk - both eugenists - described the Domiciliary service as a "New Dimension in Negative Eugenics". They claimed, as the background to this initiative, that:

The correlation between high fertility and "problem" families has been a persistent feature of public health statistics during the past thirty years....it is apparent that excessive childbearing is

an aggravating feature in the lives of many of those families which make the most extensive demands on the health and welfare services of local authorities and on the financial resources of central government agencies. Any reduction in the fertility of these families would therefore reduce the burden on social funds and on the personnel of the social services (Peel & Schenk, 1965, p. 67).

Peel and Schenk noted that two pilot projects had been undertaken with the co-operation of medical personnel by Mrs. Mary Peberdy in Newcastle and Dr. Dorothy Morgan in Southampton. Both Mrs. Peberdy and Dr. Morgan were eugenicists. Peel and Schenk also noted that apart from a grant of £1,000 from the Oliver Bird Trust, the projects were financed entirely by the Eugenics Society and its subsidiary, the Marie Stopes Memorial Foundation.

The women who were targeted for 'Domiciliary Birth Control', said Peel and Schenk, were the wives of semi-skilled and unskilled workers (those in social classes IV and V) who had experienced at least four pregnancies in the previous eight years. Doctors, health visitors and social workers referred the 'problem families', who were initially visited by a doctor with FPA training and followed up by a nurse or the Medical Officer.

Peel and Schenk note the characteristics of the families referred:

the general social and demographic characteristics of the families referred conform closely to the stereotype of the problem family: husband, often of immigrant origin, in casual or low-grade employment; wife in late twenties having experienced a succession of pregnancies; and living conditions inadequate to

the needs of a large and growing family....

Only 32 per cent of the husbands were born in the UK and all belonged predominantly to Social Classes IV and V; in a majority of cases the wife was also an immigrant (ibid, p. 68).

The largest 'immigrant' group targeted for this invasion of privacy were people from the Caribbean, followed by people from Ireland, Cyprus, Africa, South America, Mauritius, Poland and Italy. Peel and Schenk estimated the cost of the scheme as £8 per year per family.

In 1964, the Eugenics Society discussed domiciliary birth control at its annual symposium, the title of which was "Biological Aspects of Social Problems". The papers were edited into book form by Professor J. E. Meade, (then) Professor of Political Economy, University of Cambridge and by Professor Sir Alan S. Parkes, (then) Mary Marshall Professor of the Physiology of Reproduction, University of Cambridge. The Chairmen of the workshops were Sir James Gray, President of the Eugenics Society from 1962 to 1965, Sir Sydney Caine, Professor L. S. Penrose and Sir Julian Huxley. Huxley chaired the workshop on "Aspects of Fertility Control".

Mary Peberdy and Dorothy Morgan discussed domiciliary birth control projects. Peberdy noted that out of the 150 couples in her project, 29 women had been sterilised - 18 by tubal tie, and 11 by hysterectomy "performed for gynaecological reasons". Peberdy pointed out that the polythene coil had now become accepted as an intra-uterine contraceptive device and:

...it would seem that a form of contraception which would induce temporary sterility free from patient responsibility would have considerable potentialities in the case of highly fertile women in this section of the community (Peberdy, 1965, p. 198).

Morgan's contribution to the symposium started from the premise that in today's "affluent society" "the existence of 'problem parents' is more evident than in previous generations":

A proportion of the population of our towns and cities have failed to adapt themselves to the social and moral establishment, and have become an increasing burden and responsibility to the Statutory and Local Authorities (Morgan, 1965, p. 199).

Morgan pointed out that the families targeted for domiciliary birth control services lived either in Rehabilitation Centres, as a result of eviction by Councils or private landlords, or in "substandard accommodation". She claimed that she received a cool and suspicious reception into the homes. She put this down to the fact that

...these homes in the vast majority of cases are untidy and ill-kept, and the children inadequately clothed and shod (ibid, p. 200).

Morgan also noted that the form of birth control most commonly accepted by the parents was the contraceptive pill "because it calls for the least effort". Before the advent of the contraceptive pill, "only mechanical forms of contraception could be offered":

...I taught my patients of very low intelligence - some registered mental defectives - to use the cap just as you would teach a child to brush his teeth....(ibid. p. 201)

Having associated difficulties in using birth control with levels of intelligence, Morgan went on to imply a connection between the latter and sexual activity:

The fecundity rates of these patients is high - sexual intercourse four to five times a week, and in some cases this is due in part at least to their insecurity (ibid, p. 201).

This insecurity, said Morgan, emanated from the father's workmates playing tricks upon him because of his "low intelligence". "Low intelligence" was proved by his occupational status:

Not one of my 'problem fathers' is in a skilled occupation: all work, when employed, as casual or unskilled workers (ibid, p. 201).

Having claimed that men who are of "low intelligence" seek to prove themselves by having sex, Morgan makes the same claim of the mothers:

The mothers, too, are often being reminded of their inadequacies; so it is hardly surprising that they frequently participate in an act at which they do not feel inadequate (Ibid, pp. 201-202).

According to this line of reasoning, couples who are economically secure are

more intelligent and "make love". But people who are poor, made homeless, etc., have sex. Moreover, allegedly conditioning both their socio-economic condition of life and their sex life is their lack of intelligence. Indeed this, allied to sex as a substitute for achievement, is taken as a cause of their socio-economic situation. They are, Morgan alleged, made poor, homeless etc., because of their "ineptitude": that is, because they became parents.

P. Sargant Florence, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham, defined large families as those consisting of five children or more. Nevertheless, he noted, it was not only large families who were targeted for the service but those "likely to become so". Sargant Florence urged that a similar system of birth control be set up in "developing countries" (Sargant Florence, 1965, pp. 176-184).

The Family Planning Information Service (FPIS), set up in 1977 with government funding to co-ordinate the work of the FPA and the Health Education Council, also notes the FPA's involvement in 'domiciliary family planning services' from the late 1950s to the takeover of the FPA's clinical services by the National Health Service in 1975. The FPIS does not, however, note the involvement of the Eugenics Society in initiating that service.

Domiciliary family planning services began in this country in the late '50s in order to assist 'hard to reach' women - those who would not or could not attend clinics to control their fertility. In practice, usually women of the lower socio-economic groups were visited by family planning personnel.....The clientele in

many instances had large existing families (FPIS Fact sheet K.4. July 1986 - emphases mine).

The FPIS Factsheet goes on to note that in addition to "the range of contraceptives offered", pregnancy testing, abortion or sterilisation with referral were also provided.

Domiciliary family planning is an example of one practical operation of the Model of Differential Sexuality. The families targeted were defined as "problem families" on the basis of, on the one hand, their social class or race and, on the other, their size. Their size was explained as an effect of their lack of sexual self-control which was linked back to their levels of intelligence and socio-economic status. In this, the FPA and many other professional organisations collaborated in a eugenically inspired project aimed at reducing the numbers of the poor and the demand upon public funds. The active involvement of the FPA and other organisations in this project shows that the eugenic ethos has permeated the professional organisations involved in the planning and provision of domiciliary services.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

OTHER ROUTES FOR NEGATIVE EUGENICS

It has been argued above that eugenicists defined large families among the poor as actual or potential "problem families". It has also been argued that domiciliary family planning was conceived of and put into operation as a strategy of negative eugenics aimed at reducing the numbers of the poor and the demand upon public funds. In this chapter, I will focus upon other eugenic initiatives and/or involvement in organisations which sought other means of reducing demand upon public funds.

(i) Sterilisation

It has already been noted that many eugenicists involved in the family planning movement were also involved in campaigns for sterilisation. As with their involvement with family planning, eugenicists set about initiating practical mechanisms to achieve their aims. Part of this involved bringing rational organisation to the family planning movement, birth control being perceived as one means by which eugenic ideals could be practically achieved. But it also involved setting up a mechanism for promoting sterilisation as a means of birth control.

In 1961, the eugenicist Lord Simon of Wythenshawe set up the Simon Population Trust. Dr. C. P. Blacker became its Chairman of Trustees and

initiated the Simon Population Trust Project. The Project is discussed in the FPA's journal, Family Planning by the Honorary Director of the Trust and former editor of I.P.P.F. News, Dr. L. N. Jackson, member of the Eugenics Society. The aim of the Project, said Jackson:

is to provide an agency the function of which is to build a bridge, via the family doctor, between persons who, for what seem to them to be good and sufficient reasons, wish to undergo sterilisation, and surgeons willing, in appropriate circumstances, to sterilise them (Jackson, 1966, p. 75).

Blacker had, therefore, succeeded in setting up a practical mechanism for legal sterilisation which was not discordant with the aims of the Trust:

to promote a better understanding of the problems of world population and to encourage such research as may contribute to the adjustment of population to resources (cited in Family Planning, Vol. 15, No. 2, July 1966 emphasizes mine).

(ii) Abortion

The Simon Population Trust is not the only body initiated by eugenists. Francois Lafitte, author of the Lafitte Report: Family Planning in the Sixties, and a eugenist, set up and chaired the British Pregnancy Advisory Service in the 1960s. The Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA) which developed out of the Workers Birth Control Group in 1936, had the eugenist Janet Chance as one of its co-founders and its Chairman. Other prominent eugenists involved in the early group were Frida Laski, Eleanor Rathbone

and Eva Hubback, with whom Dora Russell and Stella Browne worked. The Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA) was founded at the offices of Clinton Chance, husband of Janet Chance. Clinton Chance was a prominent eugenicist, noted by Blacker at the Eugenics Society Jubilee Dinner in 1957 as one of the "triumvirate" who "sustained" the Eugenics Society during the 1939-45 war. Another member of that "triumvirate" was Lord Horder. (Blacker cited in Eugenics Review, Vol. 50, No. 1, April, 1958, p. 20).

During the 1960s, James Campbell was chairman of the ALRA. In 1967, Campbell wrote in a letter to Eugenics Review that "immigrants" to the UK should be subjected to a "compulsory medical examination....in their country of origin and also at point of entry into these islands in order to raise the standard of public health in Britain". Not content with associating "immigrants" with public ill-health, Campbell added: "Even exotic infections freely enter the United Kingdom along with other diseases" (Eugenics Review, Letters, Vol. 59 No.2. June 1967, p. 148).

Other notables of the Eugenics Society and of the family planning movement were and are also involved in the ALRA: Vera Houghton, who along with C. P. Blacker was part of the British contingent in the foundation of the International Planned Parenthood Federation; Glanville Williams (whose works are compulsory reading for law students), Julian Huxley, and Madeleine Simms, best known for her assessment of the Lane report on abortion and for her work on teenage pregnancy. Simms, in fact, held a Research Fellowship of the Research Committee of the Eugenics Society in

the early 1970s (Eugenics Society, Annual Report 1973).

An article by Simms, "Abortion and Public Opinion" published in Family Planning points not only to the ALRA's commitment to the eugenic cause but suggests that public opinion is also in accord with that cause. Simms writes about a National Opinion Poll commissioned by the ALRA into public attitudes about abortion. The timing of the Poll itself pointed to the continued concern of eugenicists to eliminate what they regarded as 'defects':

in 1962 at the height of the thalidomide tragedy National Opinion Polls asked (whether or not abortion should be permitted where the child may be born deformed). Then no less than 72.9 per cent of the public favoured abortion on eugenic grounds (Simms, 1965, p. 51 emphases mine).

Simms does not outline just how the NOP phrased the question that led to such a massive public concurrence with eugenic principles. She does, however, note that there were class differences in people's response to proposed abortion reform. Simms adds to those class differences an educational dimension. Noting that 87 per cent of the AB class favoured reform, but only 60 per cent of the DE class, Simms implies that educational experience is important in accounting for this difference:

This suggests that the well-to-do and the educated favour reform more enthusiastically than do the lowest reaches of the working classes (ibid, p. 52).

In April 1966, the FPA organised a one-day conference on abortion at which

a resolution was passed which called for legal termination of pregnancy on eugenic grounds, among others, which should also be part of gynaecological practice under the National Health Service (FPA, 1966, p. 108).

In May 1966, David Steel agreed to sponsor, at the request of the ALRA, an abortion law reform Bill. In October 1967, the Bill in the form of an Abortion Act was given Royal Assent. The Act institutionalised at legal, medical and social levels the attachment of the notion 'problem to be solved' to physical and mental handicap. Under the terms of the 1967 Abortion Act, legal termination may be carried out provided two registered medical practitioners agree that:

the continuation of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman, or of injury to her physical or mental health, or that of any existing children, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated; or

there is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer such physical or mental subnormalities as to be severely handicapped.

Pre-natal testing for such conditions as Down's Syndrome and Spina Bifida are currently undertaken either at the mother's request or on the advice of a medical practitioner. But certain groups of women are more likely to be advised to undergo tests. Older women, Black women and mothers of handicapped children are foremost among these groups of women. The point of pre-natal testing is not only the identification of foetal abnormality but to provide the medical reason for abortion.

The importance of the above is two-fold. Firstly, it permits medical intervention in the pregnancy of specified groups of women. Secondly, it permits medical intervention in the birth of handicapped children: an intervention aimed at prevention. Both may be defined as strategies of negative eugenics. On the one hand, having a handicapped child has been defined as a characteristic of the "problem family" who are a burden on public funding. On the other, preventing the birth of handicapped children has long been an aim of eugenists. In 1931, Dr. Binnie Dunlop, a central figure in the birth control movement and a eugenist, wrote:

Vastly fewer dysgenic individuals would be born if women could easily have unwanted pregnancies terminated. (Eugenics Review, Correspondence, vol. 22, 1930-1931. p. 227).

Binnie added that families in the financially poorest third of the nation should not be allowed to have more than two children, and that those who reached this limit but opposed contraception should be sterilised (ibid, p. 227).

I have stated above that the 1967 Abortion Act institutionalised the attachment of the notion 'problem to be solved' to physical and mental handicap. This, however, has been obscured by the concept of choice: 'Woman's right to choose'. This was a concept formulated by the ALRA and taken up by the feminist movement.

In 1975, the ALRA launched the 'Woman's Right to Choose Campaign' which

aimed at securing abortion on request up to 12 weeks. In that same year, James White's Bill aimed at restricting abortion passed its second reading in the Commons. Sally Hesmondhalgh, who was appointed as a part-time campaign organiser in 1975, notes that the ALRA "(f)aced with the powerful Catholic and SPUC lobbies" "decided to enlist the support of the feminist movement". Hesmondhalgh was given the addresses of "every women's group in the country" by workers at the Women's Liberation Workshop. The ALRA mailed each of those groups, and called a meeting at the London School of Economics. This meeting led to the formation of the National Abortion Campaign. The ALRA and the National Abortion Campaign worked again together to oppose Corrie's 1980 attempt to restrict abortion (Hesmondhalgh, 1986, pp. 4-5).

Abortion may be a choice available to some women along with often dangerous forms of contraception and sterilisation. It is also an operation that is imposed upon other women both in this country and internationally (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 1985; Berer, 1984). In this, the FPA, the IPPF, and NHS doctors have participated. The takeover by the NHS of the FPA's clinical functions in 1975 saw the more complete transfer of the ethos of imposing 'rational selection' upon the Black population (Brent Community Health Council, 1981) and upon sectors of the white working class population. The recent debate about abortion, which was conspicuously discussed in the same breath as handicap, indicates that the provision is a mechanism of eugenic rational selection.

(iii) "Multi-racial" Family Planning Programmes and the Differential Birth Rate

The FPA believes contraception to be one means of reducing demands on services. In July 1965, Mrs. Heywood, Secretary of the Acton and Ealing Branch of the FPA, stated that "family planning was clearly one of the solutions" to the "problems of housing and educating the increasing Indian population of Southall" (Heywood, 1965, p. 34). Not only did the FPA set up a "Multi-racial clinic", and not only did the FPA seek to 'educate' the women with the use of film produced by the IPPF, but they felt that they would have to persuade the women to attend the clinic because the women "were mainly peasant women who could not read, only spoke Punjabi and were unfamiliar with the concept of family planning" (ibid, p. 34). Why the first two 'characteristics' should be deemed related to the third is unexplained.

The FPIS provides figures on both international and national population growth. Insofar as international population growth is concerned, the FPIS stresses that "(t)he need for family planning is evident". The reason why they argue that there is this 'need' is that on current trends, 60 per cent of the world's population will live in South Asia and Africa. The FPIS note that many women in "developing countries" said that they had had 'unwanted' pregnancies. (FPIS, Factsheet, B.2. 1986). There may be cultural differences between the ways in which women view unplanned pregnancies (see Bryan et al, op. cit.) but this does not concern the FPIS. What obviously does concern that body is the differential birth rate between the 1st world

and the 3rd world, between races and between classes.

The FPIS's concern with the differential birth rate is most clearly outlined in their Factsheet regarding birth statistics in Britain based upon social class and "ethnicity", but here the differential is a cause of optimism. The factsheet notes that births to "social class I and II now outnumber those in social class IV/V by roughly 3 to 2. Those groups previously assumed to be poor family planners are clearly making effective use of contraception to achieve ideal family size". (FPIS Factsheet, 12, 1986). It may be deduced from this that the notion of "ideal" is attached to a differential birth rate as a consequence of which the professional middle classes will outnumber the working classes.

I have noted so far several organisations within which the eugenic ethos forms part of the guiding organisational policy and practice. To those must be added the Birth Control Trust, of which Simms is a trustee. Bernard Benjamin, current president of the Eugenics Society, is a member of the consultative panel. Benjamin was also once Chief Statistician at the (now) Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

(iv) Brook Advisory Centres

In 1965 it was noted in Eugenics Review:

At the present stage, the Eugenics Society subsidizes research, promotes education through the written word, supplemented by lectures and symposia; and leads the way in certain aspects of social progress. Examples are the stimulation of domiciliary birth control work for problem families, and in personal advice and service to young people in danger of swelling further the nation's crop of illegitimate children (Eugenics Review, Notes of the Quarter, Vol. 57, No. 1, March 1965, pp. 1-2).

The second example here refers to the Brook Advisory Centres set up in 1963, with the financial backing of the Eugenics Society through its subsidiary the Marie Stopes Memorial Foundation, by the eugenicist Helen Brook, upon whose board Margaret Pyke also served.

The Review continues:

These latter tasks are direct practical eugenics, and the Society's instrument is its subsidiary, the Marie Stopes Memorial Foundation and its centre or clinic. They are more valuable activities than the formation of pressure groups (ibid, p. 2).

As I will show in the following chapter, the discourse of the "problem family" and the discourse of "teenage pregnancy" have been cohered in professional discussions about the causes of teenage pregnancy in such a way as to suggest that those causes are sited within the "problem family".

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SEX EDUCATION FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD: THE REWORKING OF EUGENIC
CATEGORIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

It has been noted above that officially sanctioned sex education remained largely in the hands of the British Social Hygiene Council (BSHC) until 1942. From its inception (as the National Campaign for Combating Venereal Disease, NCCVD), the Council directed its educational programme to the prevention of the spread of venereal disease through moral self-regulation, and the preservation and strengthening of family life for those deemed fit to parent. As part of and informing its campaign, the British Social Hygiene Council disseminated the knowledge that certain groups of people presented "social hygiene problems", amongst which was the spread of venereal disease. Identified as allegedly personifying the "problems" were women working as prostitutes, Black seamen in British ports, the white women with whom they had relationships and the children of those relationships. Black men were, it was alleged, passing on venereal disease to white women who were themselves categorised as 'promiscuous' and whose daughters would become 'prostitutes'. In other parts of the Empire, however, the white British seamen and other white troops were held to be endangered by women working as prostitutes in the port areas. Insofar as Black peoples of the Empire were concerned, the spread of venereal disease was perceived to be an effect of 'ignorance' or 'lack of intelligence'.

I have outlined the relationship between the NCCVD/BSHC and the Eugenics (Education) Society. Members of the Eugenics Society were prominently represented in the Campaign and also helped to initiate the formation of the NCCVD in conjunction with high-ranking medical men. Through the Campaign, eugenicists saw a further means of disseminating the 'eugenic ideal' - for example, through instruction to the professionals in the principles of heredity, and education of the populace about the danger of passing on 'congenital deficiencies' through parenthood. Eugenists also believed that the Campaign would distinguish the allegedly genetically diseased from those whose 'condition' was the effect of venereally diseased parentage. Foremost among the groups specified for this attention were deaf and/or blind people. Eugenists promoted the knowledge that parenthood among those they had defined as 'unfit' was an index of the latter's 'mental deficiency' or 'feeble-mindedness'. They also alleged that these characteristics were the property of those whom they held responsible for the spread of venereal disease. Correlated with feeble-mindedness or lack of intelligence in eugenic theory was moral character. Eugenists, such as Burt, were instrumental in the construction of IQ testing, while eugenicist mental health professionals correlated intellectual capacities with the capacity for sexual self-control. Stated quite simply, those who were designated as having lower IQ's were also defined as 'more sexual'.

The aims of eugenics, as has been argued in the foregoing chapters, were and are to promote parenthood among those deemed 'fit' and to discourage or prevent it among those deemed 'unfit'. This, and its underlying body of

knowledge, including the Model of Differential Sexuality, became part of the ethos of many professional bodies and movements, among which were the NCCVD/BSHC and the family planning/birth control movement - including the Family Planning Association, the International Planned Parenthood Federation¹, and related bodies. Moreover individual members of the Eugenics (Education) Society were influential within other professional societies in their professional capacities: medical officers of health, doctors, psychologists, university academics, teachers, clergy, etc.

In sex education, eugenists saw a means of training the young in eugenic ideals. In 1942, the bulk of the anti-venereal work of the BSHC, together with its funding and some personnel, was transferred to the Central Council for Health Education. This transfer marked the government's recognition of the need for sex education in schools. Under the auspices of the Central Council for Health Education, sex education retained the twin aims of promoting family life and preventing the spread of venereal disease.

Stress was placed upon the prevention of pre-marital intercourse which, especially for young women, was held as an indicator of immorality or 'promiscuity' while both were held to be causal factors in the spread of venereal disease. Implicit in the equation made between promiscuity and

¹ The International Planned Parenthood Federation is among the list of members of the Eugenics Society recorded in 1971.

pre-marital intercourse was the notion that 'love' was absent from the sexual relationship. Love was perceived to be a product of evolution, therefore the 'promiscuous' young woman was perceived to be at a lower level of evolution than the 'respectable' woman. Hence, she could be defined as not only 'promiscuous' but of lower intelligence, which in turn was viewed as the cause of her promiscuity.

In the 1920s Cyril Burt conducted a study into the causes of sex delinquency in girls for the Archbishops' Advisory Board for Preventative and Rescue Work. Taking young women working as prostitutes as his reference group, Burt considered the psychological factors which, he claimed, contributed to female sexual delinquency. Burt claimed that "primitive instincts" were over-developed in the girls, by which he meant the pursuit of "animal pleasures" (Burt, 1929, p. 14). He attributed to the girls a wide range of psycho-emotional problems and claimed that they had little or no capacity for "unselfish affection" and that "love for them means sexual excitement" (p. 15). According to Burt, "of all the factors making for sex delinquency in girls an over-sexed constitution is at once the commonest and most direct" (ibid, p. 12). This might be due to heredity or to the material conditions of the home. But other members of the family often showed "neurotic or psychopathic symptoms". Burt made very clear his belief that sex delinquency was a class-related phenomenon. He claimed that the girls affected were generally those trained for domestic service. Nevertheless, he believed that "the emotional or moral atmosphere of the home seems far more important than its economic or material conditions" (ibid, p. 7). Burt

went on then to explain that "bad homes" affected the child's moral welfare.

Burt claimed that prostitutes could not be cured but prostitution could be prevented. Prevention should take the form of moral training within the school, especially for girls "whose temperament and circumstances are likely to subject (them) to grave risks in the future" (ibid, p. 20). By this Burt meant "moral training" for girls who were likely to become domestic servants, i.e. working class girls.

The alleged association between 'promiscuity' and psychological problems survived the Central Council for Health Education's takeover of sex education. In 1970, for example, in the Health Education Journal, the Editorial claimed that the prevention of promiscuity "lies in the field of emotional development" (Health Education Journal: Editorial, vol. 29, no. 4, Dec., 1970, p. 108). Here the editor approvingly quotes the work of Wittkower and Cowan, carried out in 1946, which claimed that the promiscuous personality was characterised by a divorce between affection and sexuality (Wittkower and Cowan, 1946, cited in Health Education Journal, op. cit., p. 108). Promiscuity, said the editor, is "the main behaviour factor in the spread of venereal diseases". The way to prevent both lay in "education in personal relationships and the human emotions, a sense of civic responsibility, and attention to the welfare of isolates" (ibid., p. 108). Among the "isolates" figured, it was stated, "the immigrant".

The discourse of "moral training" had by the 1970s become the discourse of

"education in personal relationships and the human emotions" and "a sense of civic responsibility". The words differ but the meaning remains essentially the same. If moral training and education in personal relationships could prevent "promiscuity", it follows that those labelled "promiscuous" were lacking in such training and education, the blame for which could be placed firmly within the family. In this way, family life among the poorer sectors of the working class became increasingly pathologised as 'deficient' for which corrective education was needed. This remains one of the concepts behind contemporary sex education.

In 1943, the Board of Education issued a pamphlet which reviewed current sex education in schools and youth clubs. This pointed to the need not only for "instruction in the physiology of sex" but also "instruction and advice directed to the understanding and control of sexual impulse and emotion, and the moral and social problems arising from it" (Board of Education, Educational Pamphlet, No. 119, 1943, p. 5). The Board then both endorsed the idea that sexual impulse had some objective existence and that, uncontrolled, it created moral and social problems.

According to the Board, the conditions of war gave new importance to the question of sex education:

The stress of war and the social dislocation arising from it have given a new importance to the question of sex education (ibid, p. 3).

Young people, it was stated, should not be left in "dangerous ignorance" nor with a degraded or distorted view of sex and of their responsibility. The Board went on to note the dangers associated with "growing laxity": young girls making "indiscriminate associations" and "an increasing incidence among them of venereal disease" (ibid, p. 4). To counter this "growing laxity" - which the Board implied was a problem of young women - it was recommended that young people be taught the importance of self-control in the interests of the individual and the wider community. To this end, the Board recommended for younger age groups the use of biology courses which "offer a more adequate foundation for sex instruction" and, for older pupils, "consideration of the issues of social and personal conduct involved" (ibid, p. 13). Biological instruction in teacher-training colleges was suggested, and Local Education Authorities were advised to seek the help of the Central Council for Health Education.

Between 1959 and 1963, the Central Council for Health Education issued two reports which reasserted the need for sex education based upon moral self-regulation. In 1959, the Crowther Report (15-18) claimed that changing standards of behaviour and "public indecision over moral issues" led to "personal bewilderment and disaster" among young people. The "disaster" pinpointed by this report was that:

one girl in fifty might expect to give birth to a child conceived before she was 17 (Crowther Report, cited in Department of Education and Science, 1977, p. 110).

In 1963 the Newsom Report, *Half our Future*, discussing the educational needs of less academic young people which by definition meant working class young people, called for education in chastity:

We are agreed that boys and girls should be offered firm guidance on sexual morality based on chastity before marriage and fidelity within it (Newsom, cited in Department of Education and Science, *ibid*, p. 110).

Sex education based upon the principles of chastity and self-control during this period was viewed as a facet of health education. Concern, however, about the continued incidence of "illegitimate conceptions" and venereal disease among young people was expressed during the 1960s. Adding fuel to this was the public and heated debate surrounding the Abortion Bill. In 1965 a major survey, conducted for the Central Council for Health Education and undertaken by Michael Schofield, noted that sex education in schools was both uneven and inadequate to the needs of young people. Rather than recognise human factors, said this report, sex education was founded too much upon biological and physiological 'facts' combined with, especially for girls, moral exhortations (Schofield, 1965).

Schofield was ambiguous as to whether or not pre-marital intercourse was class-related. He suggested, however, that working class young people start their sexual careers earlier than do middle class young people. He also suggested that the levels of parental supervision and teenager-parent relationship correlate with the age of first sexual experimentation: the least

supervised and the poorer the relationship, the earlier the first sexual experience. The implication of this is that working class parents are less careful of their children than are middle class parents. Looking at "experienced girls", Schofield asserted that they were more likely to have attended secondary modern or comprehensive schools, less likely to have taken GCEs and more likely to have rejected family influences. He also claimed that girls who were "early starters" were less "romantic" than other girls. By "romantic", Schofield meant "less interested in sex and more interested in love" (ibid, p. 73). Schofield, however, found that "promiscuity" was not a common feature among the young people he studied, but where it did exist it was primarily among the "early starters".

Schofield's report is generally regarded as 'liberal'. It has been widely quoted for its recognition that lack of adequate sex education, including instruction in the methods of contraception for young people, posed a problem. In July, 1966, Sir Theodore Fox, Director of the FPA, addressed the European regional conference of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The subject of his address was "Responsible Parenthood". Drawing upon the work of Schofield, among others, Fox declared the necessary demise of sex education which equated venereal disease and 'illegitimacy' with immorality:

...we must fight the idea that God regards venereal disease or an illegitimate child as a proper penalty for boys and girls who stray from the straight and narrow path. These are disasters to be prevented or mitigated - disasters to individuals and to the society of which they, and we, are part (Fox, 1966, p. 73).

Fox advocated a liberalisation of attitudes toward pre-marital intercourse among young people, arguing that "the community should withdraw its general ban" but on two conditions:

They must have enough knowledge to know - and if possible understand - what they are doing to each other and to themselves. And they must always use effective contraceptives (ibid, p. 73).

Fox called for a programme of educating the educators. The function of the educators was to help young people develop a sense of sexual responsibility and responsible parenthood. This he defined as planned parenthood:

...our ideal, both now and later, must be Responsible Parenthood. And this, after all, is no more than an extension of the ideal of Planned Parenthood (ibid, p. 74).

During 1967, the Family Planning Association pioneered sex education programmes for use with secondary school teachers and health visitors. In 1968, however, the new Director of the FPA, Caspar Brook, criticised the educational campaign on the grounds that 'unwanted' pregnancies still proliferated. Under his lead, the FPA launched in 1969 the "Every Child a Wanted Child" campaign.

In 1968, the Government formed the Health Education Council (HEC), which took over the functions of the Central Council for Health Education and the promotional activities of Government health departments. Both the

FPA and the HEC worked in co-operation with local authorities and with each other, for example, jointly producing the Pregnant Man poster in 1970. While these two bodies continued to work in conjunction, by the early 1970s sex education had emerged as an increasingly important subject in its own right, and in the 1980's it increasingly continues to be a controversial one. A recent study of sex education was funded by the FPA and the HEC through the FPIS and undertaken by Isobel Allen (Allen, 1987). Part of the political context in which the study took place included one in which groups and individuals, unnamed by Allen, had attacked sex education on the grounds that "it has ill effects on the behaviour of young people" (ibid, p. 1) and that parents, if given the choice, would withdraw their children from sex education classes. Allen draws out quite opposite conclusions; she finds, for example, that 96% of her sample group of 212 parents wanted their children to receive sex education in schools, while 27% preferred that it be the sole responsibility of schools. Of the 209 teenagers interviewed, 95% thought the school to be an appropriate site for sex education. Foremost among the groups which have criticised contemporary sex education on the grounds that it promotes "promiscuity" has been Family and Youth Concern (formerly the Responsible Society). I intend, at a later date, to provide a critical account of the aims and methods of this organisation. It would, therefore, at this stage be inappropriate to look at Allen's work in isolation.

In 1972, the FPA set up its Education Unit to develop, co-ordinate and extend its educational work. The strategy adopted was one of "training the trainers" with the aim of promoting "favourable attitudes and behaviour

towards voluntary fertility control" (FPA NEC 28/72; quoted in Leathard, 1980, p. 152). Under the auspices of that Unit the FPA run "courses in personal relationships and sexuality for groups of professionals, including teachers, social workers, nurses and health visitors" (FPA Annual Report, 1984-1985).

Training those directly involved in the sex education of young people is now one of the major functions of the FPA. As far as young people are concerned, prevention of "teenage pregnancy" remains one of the central aims of sex education programmes. Rather than rely upon moral exhortations and the prevention of pre-marital intercourse, the FPA, in collaboration with other organisations, seeks means to promote "responsible behaviour" among young people, including those who are sexually active. One facet of "responsible behaviour" is the use of effective contraception to prevent "unwanted" pregnancy.

"Teenage pregnancies" continue to concern the FPA and other professional organisations. The 1970s and 1980s have witnessed the production of a substantial amount of research into the subject of "teenage pregnancy", much of which focuses upon who gets pregnant - often euphemised as "the antecedents of teenage pregnancy". The Family Planning Information Service, state:

Targeting the population most at risk of teenage pregnancy is vital to both prevention and to improving uptake of medical care in the pre and post natal periods. Official figures show that

teenage mothers are most likely to come from lower socio-economic groups (FPIS Factsheet, FI, 1986).

The Factsheet goes on to note that research has also shown that "teenage mothers were more likely to come from broken homes and also to be low achievers...". Among the "social and psychological consequences" of "teenage pregnancy" are that "children of teenage mothers are more likely to suffer behaviour problems, to be low achievers and to show poor verbal, intellectual and motor performance" (FPIS, *ibid.*).

The terms in which the organisations directly or indirectly involved in sex education discuss "unwanted" pregnancies among young women point to the continued use of the socio-economic and psychological explanatory framework as is indicated in the quotation above. Implicit in this is that "teenage pregnancy" - largely the property of working class girls from "broken homes" - i.e. single parented homes - is a causal factor in the cycle of deprivation. The girl is presumed to be the 'product' of a deprived background, which she then passes on to her daughter. The discourse has changed from 'unfit' to 'at risk' but the concepts, presented in a cultural rather than biological framework, remain essentially the same. It is the family that is perceived as a problem.

Sir Keith Joseph, who as Secretary for State for Social Services in 1972 showed considerable support, including financial, for the FPA's Education Unit, claimed in 1974 that single mothers from social classes 4 and 5 were

reproducing a cycle of deprivation. He added that they were least fitted to bring children into the world. On the basis of this, he was widely criticised as eugenicist. Yet that approximates the message, though stated usually in rather less overt terms, of the FPIS Factsheet and of other research findings in the whole area of so-called "teenage" or "schoolgirl" pregnancy.

Schoolgirls who become pregnant have been the subject of much professional debate in recent years. Studies have been published in the Health Education Journal, by the Birth Control Trust, and in the Galton Foundation's Journal of Biosocial Science as well as in medical journals. It is usual to find that these studies uncritically reproduce each other's findings and generally concur in their specification of eugenic antecedents. An example is Wilson's (1980) study of 44 pregnant schoolgirls in Aberdeen, published in the Journal of Biosocial Science and widely quoted: for example by Bury on behalf of the Birth Control Trust (Bury, 1984).

Wilson's study was itself based, in part, upon a piece of work done by Sue Teper, a member of the Council of the Eugenics Society (Eugenics Society, Annual Report, 1980). In her summary, Wilson claims that girls who became pregnant during adolescence:

were more likely to have been academic under-achievers at age 11, to have made an appearance in a juvenile court, and to have been referred to a child guidance or psychiatric clinic at an early age....they are more likely to have five or more siblings, to be illegitimate and to have mothers who were themselves teenagers at the time of their daughter's birth (Wilson, op. cit., p. 141).

Wilson goes on to refer to the findings of a large number of studies, with which she generally concurs, which link teenage pregnancy with large families and "low social class" together with a range of other 'social problem' indicators. Yet, as Reid points out:

The vast majority of girls who possess all of the characteristics listed do not become pregnant; while some pregnancies occur among girls who possess none of these (Reid, 1982, p. 7).

That young women should have access to contraception is not the point at issue here. The issue is that the sex educators assume that these young women are sexually active and that they need education in responsible parenthood. This is based upon the eugenic construction of the problem family and the Model of Differential Sexuality. The young woman's pregnancy is perceived as an effect of a cultural cycle of deprivation sited within the family and her non-use of contraception.

The "problem family" or pathological family model is not confined in the professionals' discourses to "large families" of "low social class" (Wilson, *op. cit.*) among the white population. Black families, particularly Afro-Caribbean families, are specifically targeted. Penelope Eden, described as "now completing an MA in health education before starting as a lecturer at Bath College of Higher Education", declares that young teenage mothers:

are often under-achievers at school from the lower socio-economic groups, and include large numbers from the West Indian cultures (Eden: 1985, p. 98).

Eden says, with some disapproval:

Some girls may even get themselves pregnant (sic) deliberately to get away from school! (ibid, p. 99).

She continues:

This latter statement may well hold good among West Indian cultures when a girl may have a baby in an attempt to show her parents that she is an adult and cannot be 'pushed around'. In our multi-cultural society the ethnic minorities further complicate the issues with their widely divergent beliefs and customs (ibid, p. 99).

Eden is far from alone in her identification of "West Indian culture" as somehow upsetting white British customs and culture. Pauline Crabbe, representing with Ruth Coles the Brook Advisory Centre at the seventh International Planned Parenthood Federation's Biomedical Workshop in 1977, claimed that young "West Indian" men have "a strong distaste for contraception". Black girls, said Crabbe, "are influenced by their mothers' and grandmothers' belief in the intrinsic value of a child" (Crabbe, 1978, p.173). Crabbe went on to say:

For West Indians there is still some memory of slavery when the very personal power that no one could take from you lay in your sexuality; for the women the ability to conceive and bear a child and for the man to know that he had fathered a child was of immense importance even if he had no legal responsibility for his children (ibid, p. 173).

Crabbe argued that this alleged historical fact is inscribed on the psyche of "West Indian" men and women and acts as an instinctual conditioning motivator of their sexuality or sexual practices. Crabbe further discussed how Black girls must be educated for "freedom" from Black man and from having children:

Contraceptive education for this group must be based on the need to help black adolescent girls to value their freedom and to show their men the benefits of partnership before they accept responsibility for parenthood (ibid, p. 173).

Race and socio-economic variables are, then, claimed by many of the professionals to be the antecedents to teenage pregnancy. To these are sometimes added emotional and psychological 'problems'.

David Gough, a "Consultant Psychiatrist to a mother and baby home for young unmarried mothers", claimed in 1966 that:

this problem of school-girl motherhood does not occur in truly happy families (Gough, 1966, p. 44).

Gough argued that among the "multitude of causative factors" leading to the pregnancy there "is one common feature....and that is the extreme craving to be loved" (ibid, p. 43) and of the young mothers, he said:

They have all shown in a variety of ways that they felt deprived of love and attention somewhere within their immediate family (ibid, p. 43).

This claim, which is reiterated by other professionals (e.g. Crabbe, op. cit.), further reinforced the idea that the family of a pregnant young woman is somehow responsible for that pregnancy. Given that such pregnancies are held to occur more often in Black and white working class families, the claim further reinforced the pathologisation of these families. Here, the suggestion was one of an ongoing cycle of emotional deprivation, for Gough claimed:

Many girls are, alas, re-enacting the unhappy circumstances of their own births and childhoods (Gough, op. cit., p. 44).

Crabbe claimed that in the 'deliberately pregnant' group:

The babies born to mothers in this group are at immediate risk (Crabbe, op. cit., p. 175).

She went on to assert that the mother may soon resent rather than love the child, and that:

...these babies are in danger of inadequate care, of battering or of rejection (ibid, p. 175).

The cultural cycle of deprivation, including emotional deprivation, is, according to these studies, reproduced.

The above represents just a small proportion of a very large number of

published commentaries on the subject of "teenage pregnancy", but they typify the professional approach. Implicit in these and other studies are the ideas that teenage pregnancy is a problem per se and that it is both cause and effect of cultural and/or emotional deprivation sited in or resulting from the "problem family".

The alleged link between class and promiscuity was carried forward in the post-1942 period. Promiscuity among young working class people was blamed for the spread of venereal disease. Young working class people were in need of moral training geared towards the prevention of pre-marital intercourse. During the 1960s, this was restated as a need for education in personal relationships.

The mid-1960s also saw what has been described as a liberalisation of attitudes. There was a move away from the prevention of pre-marital sexual intercourse in favour of the prevention of "teenage pregnancy". In 1972 this move was consolidated when the FPA set up its educational unit, the aim of which is to promote the use of contraception in order to realise the ideal of planned parenthood.

The FPA's educational unit is involved in educating the sex educators and in the production of sex education materials for use with young people. Typical of such materials is its video "Danny's Big Night". The target audience and the characters portrayed in this video are young Black and white working class people living in an inner-city area. The principle

message of the video is that girls who carry contraceptives for male use, condoms, are not necessarily "slags".

The strategy of the FPA is to promote the use of contraception among young Black and white working class people. This strategy is based upon the identification of Black and white working class girls as an "at risk" category. The premises upon which this identification is made by the FPA and other commentators and sex educators reproduce eugenically defined social variables based upon race and class.

The Model of Differential Sexuality is used to target young Black and white working class people. Moreover, the target itself has become the content of sex education materials such as the video "Danny's Big Night". The reasoning behind this conflation of target and content is that it makes the material more relevant and the message more accessible to the target audience. Behind this message is the primary aim of the sex educators to prevent single motherhood among specified groups of young women: young women who, it is alleged, reproduce a cycle of deprivation which is sited in "problem families".

The category of "at risk" is merely a reworked version of "unfit".

CONCLUSIONS

In Part One I concluded that the young women's sex education had largely comprised knowledge of the physiology of sex imparted within a reproductive framework. Their knowledge of sex and of the functions of their own bodies led some to deduce that sex, and most particularly heterosex, was both normal and inevitable. Their belief that sex is inevitable because it is a product of human biology meant that the young women were unable to reject male sexual impositions totally because their knowledge of their own bodies involved them in some level of complicity. Their knowledge predefined them as sexual. At the same time the social relations attached to the reproductive framework: that men initiate and women react, were also perceived to be, in part, a product of biological differences between the sexes.

The young women were highly critical of white male sexual practices but could not explain them in terms other than those of their experience and of the reproductive framework they had been taught. Their experience showed them that lads gain kudos from heterosexual experience. What they had learned was that lads have higher levels of sexual motivation than do girls. The Model of Innate Sexuality had not provided the young women with the means to resist male sexual impositions but had, instead, implicated young women in those impositions and provided a partial explanation for the actions of young men. However, when the reproductive framework for this Model was questioned, some young women did analyse the framework and

concluded that it was one which enhanced the sexual interests of men.

The young women were constantly involved in a process of negotiation between their experience of white men and the sexual knowledge they had been taught. They had been taught that men "try it on" and that women are responsible for controlling the sexual behaviour of men. Their experiences with white lads confirmed their acquired knowledge that men "try it on". The young women were left with the knowledge that they were responsible for controlling sexual interactions. The corollary to this was that a young woman who "let him have her" was responsible for that and therefore "must have wanted it even more than he did". She was more sexual than others, she was a "slag".

The young women used the label and concept of "slag" to resist imposed sexualisation. At the same time, however, they used it to explain the sexual impositions of young white men. Their strategies of resistance were thereby undermined because "slag" could function to justify those impositions and to trap young women in relationships with violent young men and in relationships based upon rape.

The label and concept of "slag" is part of a wider form of cultural knowledge which holds that some people are more sexual than others. It is a form of knowledge which is open to individual variation and manipulation. As may be perceived from the discussions between the young women and myself, different usages were made of the label by different young women at

different points in time. This, however, does not detract from the fact that the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others is an accessible form of sexual knowledge which can be used to solve the problems caused by the Model of Innate Sexuality. Bringing the operation of the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others into sharper focus, however, was what some of the young women said about the dangerous sexuality of Black men.

The young women involved in the conflict with a group of young Black men were those who had most vociferously blamed women for sexual interactions with young white men. Their major focus at that point had been upon women's reactions to white male sexual impositions. Yet in a situation of conflict with young Black men, they focussed upon the race of the young men and applied the knowledge that Black people are more sexual than whites. Their strategies is this instance appeared to me to be aimed at protecting their own white womanhood and future non-sexualised relationships with young white men. The young women stated that white women who go out with Black men were "slags". At the same time, the young women's Racist Sexual Knowledge created a bond between them and young white men and provided a legitimation for white male sexual intrusions upon Black and white women. White male sexuality was perceived as less dangerous, and therefore more acceptable, than Black male sexuality. The constructed fear of Black men had, in other words, undermined the young women's strategies of resistance to white male sexual impositions.

I cannot conclude from the above that the models of sexual knowledge used by the young women included the eugenic Model of Differential Sexuality. I would not personally be prepared to make such a connection. It would in any case conflict with my methodological approach to the research, which was not to gather data as proof of any particular theory but to find means of deconstructing sexual knowledge towards reconstructing alternatives based upon self-definition. At the beginning of the research process I did not expect to find that that would involve the deconstruction of Racist Sexual Knowledge. But the young women made that knowledge part of an agenda which I could not ignore and which led me to investigate the linkage between the concepts of "slag" and Racist Sexual Knowledge. In so doing, I found that the eugenics movement had organised these two concepts, along with others applied to different groups of people, within one model of sexual knowledge, which I call the Model of Differential Sexuality.

I have argued that eugenists sought to instil the eugenic ideal into the public conscience. One way of achieving this was through sex education. Biologically grounded instruction in the physiology of sex and its alleged social and moral implications were stressed by eugenists and other professionals as a means of eliminating "social problems" and social "defects". These terms were used to refer to conditions and to the people and families deemed to personify them: for example, venereal diseases, prostitution, single motherhood, illegitimacy, mixed race parentage, poverty, alcoholism, criminality, unemployability, physical, sensory and mental handicaps etc. By teaching young people that sex entailed moral and social responsibilities for both individuals and the wider society or race,

eugenists hoped to achieve the aims of negative and positive eugenics: the discouragement of parenthood among the "unfit" and its encouragement among the "fit".

Underlying the aims of eugenics, and giving them initial political credence, were concerns about the maintenance of Empire. But going hand-in-hand with this, and gaining its own prominence, were fears expressed by the white professional middle class about the economic and allegedly related social costs involved in sustaining the people whom they had classified as "social problems". These were people to be found in and resulting from "problem families".

I have argued that sex education was developed as a means to control the fertility of the "social problem" group. Behind this was the knowledge that the "social problem" group was of lower intelligence and morality and consequently less able or willing to exercise sexual self-control. That knowledge comprises the Model of Differential Sexuality.

As I have argued throughout Part Two the Model of Differential Sexuality has been used by sex educators, birth controllers and other professionals to target both Black and white working class people for sex education and fertility control programmes. It was also used to explain to lay and professional audiences why these social groups were to be targeted. In this way, the Model of Differential Sexuality has become a component part of the sexual knowledge disseminated by sex educators. The eugenic ethos, as I

have shown, continues to inform the ethos of many professional organisations concerned broadly with sex education and/or fertility control.

The young women undoubtedly received the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others from a variety of sources; that is to say, not necessarily through formal sex education. That knowledge is bigger than formal sex education; it is, I suggest, part of British cultural heritage which was consolidated in an era of nationalist concern for the future of white British imperialism. Eugenists did not create the knowledge that some people are more sexual than others; rather they organised and cohered it within an evolutionary framework which linked it to the knowledge that intelligence is innate and hereditary. They then disseminated that widely to lay and professional audiences in order to instil the eugenic ideal into the public conscience.

It is my contention that eugenists achieved considerable success in their aims. It is also my contention that the consequences and implications of this are far wider than those I have outlined in this thesis. Recent debates about abortion, about the sterilisation of mentally handicapped young women, and about genetic engineering are specific examples in which the eugenic ethos is prevalent.

Also relevant are the exclusion of different groups of people from access to material resources and the stress upon reducing the demand on public expenditure.

I do not claim the two last examples are determined by the eugenic ideal, nor by the operation of the Model of Differential Sexuality. I do, however, assert that this Model provides a means for understanding different forms of discrimination which are currently operated against different groups of people. It is also a model which is relevant to the contemporary debate about sex education, not only because of the rise of the New Right but because of the stress upon AIDS and ignorance. These are some of the many connections and reflections arising from my research.

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