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Chapter 2

Embodied Sexualities: Exploring Accounts of Irish Women's Sexual Knowledge and Sexual Experiences, 1920–1970

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Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which sexuality has been understood, embodied and negotiated by a cohort of Irish women through their lives. It is based on qualitative data generated as part of an oral history project on Irish women's experiences of sexuality and reproduction during the period 1920–1970.[1] The interviews, which were conducted with 21 Irish women born between 1914 and 1955,[2] illustrate that social and cultural discourses of sexuality as secretive, dangerous, dutiful and sinful were central to these women's interpretative repertoires around sexuality and gender. However, the data also contains accounts of behaviours, experiences and feelings that challenged or resisted prevailing scripts of sexuality and gender. Drawing on feminist conceptualisations of sexuality and embodiment (Holland et al., 1994; Jackson and Scott, 2010), this chapter demonstrates that the women's sexual subjectivities were forged in the tensions that existed between normative sexual scripts and their embodied experiences of sexual desires and sexual and reproductive practices. While recollections of sexual desire and pleasure did feature in the accounts of some of the women, it was the difficulties experienced around sexuality and reproduction that were spoken about in greatest detail.[3] What emerges clearly from the data is the confusion, anxiety and pain occasioned

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by the negotiation of external demands and internal desires and the contested, unstable nature of both cultural power and female resistance.

Theoretical and Contextual Framework

Social constructionist accounts of sexuality have challenged notions of sexuality as a product of innate drives and replaced them with conceptualisations of sexuality as historically and culturally constructed.[4] This has prompted explorations of the processes through which language and culture provide the raw material of sexual subjectivity and of the frames of reference through which experiences are understood and interpreted.[5] Conceptualisations of sexuality as socially constructed have impacted on feminist theorising, most significantly by challenging essentialist understandings of the body and sexuality as pre-given or pre-determined. In her analysis of feminist theorising of the body, Brooks (1999: 2) associates the early 1990s with an explosion of feminist work on the body, the aim of which was to understand how female bodies are inscribed with and constituted by cultural discourses of what it means to be sexual.[6] This type of feminist scholarship, frequently described as corporeal feminism, promotes an approach that eschews a mind/body split and explores instead how a sense of self is produced through discourse.[7] Canning, writing in 1999, points out that the discursive body featured prominently in the previous decade of gender history, influenced in no small part by the work of Michel Foucault (1981) and by the increasing dominance of post-structuralist and postmodern approaches.[8] Foucault's (1981: 152) understandings of the body as a site where power both operates and is resisted and his conceptualisation of the micro techniques through which power plays out in localised sites have provided feminists with useful insights into the ways in which individual bodies in specific locations are regulated and disciplined.[9]

Some feminists express concern about how a focus on the discursive or symbolic body may limit our potential to understand the embodiedness of the material body. Holland et al. (1994: 21) challenge the conceptual dualism between the material, the biological and the socially constructed female body and argue that, in practice, the social and physical bodies are entwined in complex ways. Examining how young women negotiate sexuality, they argue that

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sexuality is gendered, embodied and social (Holland et al., 1994: 22). Jackson and Scott (2010) provide a similar critique of more abstract, philosophically informed postmodern considerations of sexual subjectivities and the reflexive project of making the sexual self (*see also* Giddens, 1991; 1992). They suggest that such work can take attention away from the very mundane practices, activities and relationships of everyday social life within which embodied sexuality actually occurs. They contend that sexuality is 'not limited to "sex acts" or to sexual identities but involves feelings and relationships, the ways in which we are or are not defined as sexual by others and the ways in which we so define ourselves' (Jackson and Scott, 2010: 2). As such, they call for a multidimensional understanding of the 'sociality of sexuality (structure, practice, meaning, subjectivity)' (Jackson and Scott, 2010: 3).

Their approach is heavily influenced by the work of Gagnon and Simon (1974), and in particular they draw on Gagnon and Simon's concept of 'sexual scripts' (Gagnon and Simon, 1974: 23). Gagnon and Simon suggest that bodies, feelings and acts are not in themselves sexual and only become so when socio-cultural scripts confer sexual significance on them. Three dimensions of scripting have been identified.[10] The first refers to cultural scenarios that indicate what any given culture interprets as sexual, in other words a culturally specific, shared body of knowledge about sexuality. The second dimension focuses on interpersonal scripts, defined by Simon (1996: 41) as 'scripts for behaviour in specific contexts'. These scripts were described by Jackson and Scott (2010) as emerging from and being deployed within everyday encounters, discussions of sex and negotiation of sexual activities. Finally, intrapsychic scripting (Simon, 1996: 44) refers to the individual, reflexive processing of sexual thought and desire and is informed by and informs interpersonal scripts. In this chapter we will draw on these various dimensions of cultural scripts to explore the interviewees' accounts and try to make sense of how they experienced and negotiated their material, biological bodies in the context of prevailing discursive/social constructions of female sexuality.

Identifying sources that offer insights into individual, lived, embodied experiences of sexuality is, as Canning (1999: 501) pointed out, challenging for the researcher. In contrast, a wide range of written sources (religious, medical, legal, scientific, etc.) exists that can facilitate the charting of discursive constructions of the body,

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and indeed of sexuality. The discursive construction of female sexuality in Ireland has been considered in a number of contexts, including: in explorations of constructions of femininity and female sexuality in colonial discourses (Moane, 1996; Thapar-Bjorkert and Ryan, 2002); in discourses of nation-building (Valiulis, 1995; Gray and Ryan, 1997; McAvoy, 1999; Ryan, 2002a, 2002b, 2008; O'Connor, 2003); and in policy-making and governance practices (Smith, 2004; Luddy, 2007; Crowley and Kitchin, 2008). To date, fewer studies have been undertaken that provide data about the ways in which sexuality was experienced, enacted and discussed in concrete social situations. Drawing on qualitative interviews with thirteen women born in Ireland between 1923 and 1940 and the biographies of Irish women who grew up in that period, Lyder (2003) considers girls' pre-courtship experiences of sexual exploration. Hilliard's (2003) interviews with 32 women chart their perceptions of changes in family life in Cork City between 1975 and 2000, and also provide extensive insights into the women's experiences of and attitudes to fertility control, marital sexuality and clerical attitudes towards women. These studies are utilised throughout this essay to provide a contextual background for discussion of the data presented.[11]

Cultural Scenarios: Dominant Discourses and Interpretative Frameworks

Gagnon and Simon's (1974) concept of cultural scenarios calls attention to what any given society interprets as sexual, and in this section of the chapter we will explore what the women's accounts reveal about the shared knowledge of sexuality that prevailed in their youth. In other words, what socio-cultural discourses or resources did the women have to help them make sense of the sexual?

As discussed by Kiely in chapter 12, 'Lessons in Sexual Citizenship: The Politics of Irish School-based Sexuality Education', the narratives clearly indicate that during their adolescence the women were denied explicit information about sexual matters. A lack of concrete knowledge about menstruation, copulation, conception and pregnancy was reported by all but two of the 21 women interviewed. Hilliard's work (2003: 31–5) and Lyder's work (2003: 77–9) reveal a similar lack of knowledge about sexual matters.[12] The absence of a vocabulary with which to speak about sexual matters

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was mentioned in many of the interviews. Alice,[13] a working-class woman born in the early 1930s, commented that 'there wasn't even a word for sex', while Hannah, a woman of similar age to Alice, noted that 'you couldn't mention sex' and that 'there was a big mystery about all of it'.[14] Mothers and other female relatives and neighbours conspired to exclude young women from conversations and experiences that might provide information about sexual or reproductive issues. Joan, who was born in 1932, recalled that: 'If our mothers or grandmothers were talking about somebody who was about to produce a baby or whatever, we were put out straight away and told to go and play.' Nuala, again of similar age, eloquently described the impact that the absence of clear information about sexual matters had on her early understandings of sexuality.

> My mother was a very direct woman but one of the things my mother was not very good at, was talking about sexuality ... I was never really told anything, nothing from the nuns, nothing, occasional inferences that were actually more confusing than anything and I can tell you that was fairly common. I suppose the way I can best summarise it, what I learnt, I learnt from a *negative* perspective rather than a positive one, in the sense that, I pieced together from people, *not talking* about what *actually happened* but talking about the[15] *implications* or the dangers of the whatever it was, you know.

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

Despite the lack of empirical information, inferences to sexual and reproductive issues were commonplace and most of the respondents recalled ways in which risk or danger was alluded to by mothers, teachers and clerics. For many of the narrators the vague warnings to 'mind themselves', issued primarily by mothers, served only to generate confusion. Anne recalled her mother's caution about engagement with boys: '"you are grown up now and don't let the boys interfere with you." I didn't know what she meant but I couldn't ask.' Rose's reaction to her mother's instruction in the late 1950s revealed a similar naïvety: 'All she ever said was mind yourself and we were on the bike and we thought it was mind yourself in case you'd fall off, that is true.' Lyder (2003: 79) found

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similar evidence of obtuse warnings and noted the anxiety that the lack of clarity caused for some of her interviewees. Implicit in the maternal warnings was the attribution of responsibility for sexual control to young women, who were admonished to conceal and indeed control the sexual allure or sexual dimensions of their own bodies. Rose recalled a clerical warning against looking in the mirror too many times as this gave rise to vanity, while Ellie remembered being taught at school in the 1960s that 'you weren't to wear a dress that would expose your cleavage' and that:

> ... you had to make sure you were clean and that touching certain parts of your body was a sin and I'll never forget – I was very naïve – I was in the bathroom and looking at my body, I was examining myself and wondering what were they talking about! Nothing was set out, but you learnt what was allowed and not acceptable.

Discourses promoting the need for modesty and highlighting the risk associated with the sexualised female body were paralleled by a vociferous religious discourse of extra-marital sexual activity as sinful. Inglis (1997) has noted that in Ireland, up until the last three decades of the twentieth century, sexuality was deployed through a thematic of sin. All of the narrators had clear memories of the clerical pronouncements disseminated through the mass, the mission, the confessional and the school, with a view to regulating practices, and indeed thoughts, of a sexual nature. References to 'company keeping', 'occasions of sin', 'close dancing', 'passionate kissing', 'impure thoughts' and 'immoral thoughts' punctuate the women's descriptions of clerical pronouncements on sexual matters. The confessional, as noted by Inglis (1997: 11), was a key site for the deployment of clerical power and almost all of the narrators recounted stories that highlighted the interrogatory nature of clerical questioning about sexual behaviour.

The revelation of sexual misconduct in the semi-public forum of the confessional was a source of anxiety, not primarily because of the sinfulness of the behaviour itself but because of the loss of social standing that would follow public revelation of it. Joan specifically highlights this dimension of confession:

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> They [priests] would say, "were you kissing? or were you doing this, were they touching you? …what kind of kiss?" The priest would ask you in the confessional so you'd be ashamed of your life, like, telling your confession to the priest because there'd be a crowd outside ... if the least thing was wrong, they would embarrass you in front of people.

The clerical castigation of extra-marital sexual activity as sinful was reinforced by a parental discourse, which further depicted such practices as dangerous and a potential source of family shame and individual ruin. Madge, referring to her adolescence in the 1940s, emphasised the importance of paternal and, in particular, maternal surveillance: 'Most of my friends that time feared their mothers. Mother was the one you feared, more than God.' Significantly, all of the respondents recalled being aware of stories about young women who became pregnant outside of marriage and disappeared from the community. Indeed, they could all identify the mother-and-baby home in their region. As Nancy noted: 'If a girl got into trouble, they were taken away to a home. You were put away and nobody knew about it.'

The culture of clerical regulation of sexual practices was not limited to the unmarried. Catholic dictates relating to the use of contraception within marriage and to the practice of churching were hugely significant in influencing sexual and gender scripts available to married women.[16] Sheila highlighted the strength of clerical discourses around contraception: 'It was a mortal sin if you avoided having children, you were condemned. Everybody told us that.' As discussed later in the chapter, fertility control was a key area of anxiety and stress for women, while churching was experienced as a demeaning practice.

These memories described by the narrators indicate that as young women they were exposed to a culturally specific, shared body of knowledge about sexuality. The prevailing set of discourses imbued sexuality and the female body with meaning, and this social construction of sexual meaning underpinned a range of material practices that were central to the social management of female sexuality. As Holland et al. (1994: 22) observed: 'The material body and its social construction are entwined in complex and contradictory ways which are extremely difficult to disentangle in practice.' However, Gagnon and Simon's (1974) exhortation to examine the

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interpersonal scripts that emerge from and are deployed within everyday encounters, discussions of sex and negotiation of sexual activities provides the opportunity to explore the extent to which the women internalised, accepted and acted upon prevailing constructions of sexuality.

Interpersonal scripts: Negotiating Sexual Discussion and Behaviour

In their discussion of interpersonal scripting, Gagnon and Simon (1974: 23) emphasise that cultural scripts, while providing an interpretative framework within which individuals make sense of sexuality, are not fixed or limited. Each person engages with such scripts from their unique biographical position and in their everyday social interactions and relations they construct their individual, personal sense of their own sexual body and sexual self. In the following section we will consider the ways in which individual women engaged with cultural scripts in their own lives. Drawing on the conception of the body as a site for the effects of power and as a site for the exercise of power (Foucault, 1981: 152), we shall consider the ways in which women negotiated the power relations that surrounded sexuality.

Sexual Knowledge

The very limited nature of the information women had regarding conception, sexual practices and giving birth was highlighted in their narratives. Young women did, however, seek out information from a myriad of sources and in a variety of contexts. Helen recalled her efforts to gain information about sexual issues through newspaper reports in the early 1950s: 'If the paper was hidden from me, I knew there was something on it then that wasn't suitable for my eyes. I used to root it out and read about it, but didn't understand anything about it.' For most women what information they received came from older cousins, friends or work colleagues; acquaintances who had been to England were also a good source of information. One woman recalled getting a book from her cousin that explained menstruation, sexual intercourse and reproduction and another was conscious that 'books would have been circulating'. Overall, though, the narratives

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suggest that prior to their marriages most of the women were unclear about how sexual intercourse, or indeed conception, occurred.

This lack of information had quite profoundly negative implications for some. Joan's level of knowledge about reproduction was so limited that when she became pregnant at the age of 28 and experienced morning sickness, she did not realise she was pregnant:

> When I got married and when I got pregnant, I was three months pregnant and I said to this woman, "it must have been the turnips I ate" and I didn't know, she knew, I never knew what was going to happen at 28 years [of age]. You had terrible concepts about going into hospital and the fear of the unknown.

Like most of the narrators, Joan attributed her mother's reluctance to discuss the body and sexuality to embarrassment and noted that the deference to parents in that era precluded questioning by young people:

> Your mother would be too embarrassed to discuss it and you wouldn't ask, you weren't frightened of them, you just didn't ask ... It was tough-going 'cause I had no one to ask and even after getting married had no one to ask, you didn't have anyone to share your problems.

Robinson et al. (2004: 419), in their study of attitudes to and experiences of sexuality among English women between the wars, found a similar reluctance among families to discuss or provide information about sexuality. They argue that maintaining 'a reserve, or even coyness with respect to sexual talk and practice' was seen as a sign of respectability. In this way the potential of home and family to provide a resource for women in relation to sexuality and reproduction was constrained.

Two narrators did identify key adult figures in their lives who not only provided them with information about sexuality but did so in a way that challenged prevailing cultural portrayals of it as shameful and dangerous. While on a social work course in London in the mid-1950s, Nuala was provided with a lot of information by the mother of a classmate. This woman was Irish, but had been living in London for many years and working as a journalist: 'She told me

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a lot of things that I didn't know ... and was very open and ... I think I learned more from her, albeit that she was an Irish woman, but she was a liberated Irish woman.' Ellie, who was born in the early 1950s, explained that her attitude to sexuality was strongly influenced by her father, despite the fact that he was absent during most of her childhood and adolescence because he worked in England:

> … he was always proud that I was a girl, you know, taking awful good care of me and I remember it was to do with menstruation … I saw the blood and I nearly died … and I came home and I told my mother and my mother was making it an awful big secret, I'll always remember that … and my father was in the kitchen and he asked what all the fussing was about and I heard him say, "but isn't that beautiful", he said, "she's growing to be a young woman" … and I was boosted by that … And that was good because otherwise, coming from my mother, it would have been awful because my mother would have been very negative by the way, a very negative person … My father took me aside after that, and he explained a few things to me and you know that really normalised it for me. That was unusual now, remember … but you remember he had been in England.

The positive impact of Ellie's father's attitude towards menstruation was undermined by another encounter that damaged Ellie's confidence in her body. Her uncle's reaction to her pubescent body provides a striking example of patriarchal power and of the male appropriation of the right to define what constitutes a suitable female body: 'I had hairy legs and my uncle said to my mother that I should have stockings on those hairy legs and I was awfully self-conscious about it and I thought it was an awful thing, and I mean they probably weren't that bad at all.'

The extracts above highlight how denial of information about the workings of the body and the ascription of negative meaning to physical changes in the developing female body constitute practices of power through which feminity and female sexuality are constructed (Holland et al., 1994: 24). The reaction of Ellie's uncle incited her to lose confidence in and become embarrassed by her body, which was subsequently subjected to regulation through concealment under tights. The ways in which such practices can

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inscribe a particular model of femininity and sexuality on the female body become apparent in the following section.

Negotiating Embodied Sexuality

There is much evidence in the women's accounts to suggest that the cultural valorisation of modesty and the incitement to conceal the body and diminish its sexual attractiveness impacted on the ways in which they perceived and managed their emerging sexuality. So, too, did the attribution of responsibility to women in relation to upholding standards of sexual propriety. Deirdre, who was born in a middle-class family in Limerick in 1923, explained that she was advised by her mother to 'keep her dignity', while the nuns teaching her recommended that she remain 'Mary like'. These instructions resulted in Deirdre developing what she described as 'an artificial preciousness about modesty and virginity' and 'a scared ignorance' about sexual matters. This ignorance made her very wary of engaging in relationships and when she did so, her keen sense that 'the girl was the one who had to draw the line' hindered her engagement in and enjoyment of sexual practices. Ellie, who was born almost thirty years later, acknowledged that she too was keenly conscious of the responsibility of women to resist male sexual advances. She pointed out that the discourses around sexuality to which she was exposed in her youth resulted in her perceiving that '… women were the sex object' and had to take responsibility for rebuffing male sexual advances. Ellie emphasised in her account how strongly she was aware of the perception that 'the girl was the sinner, the man was following his natural tendencies'.[17] Nancy, commenting on extra-marital pregnancy, also acknowledged the double standard in terms of the treatment of women who were found to have transgressed: 'And I mean, the fellow could be local and all, but the girl had to go way, the girl had to go away, that was very sad, I think.'

For Nuala, the cultural imperative to conceal and desexualise the body and the understanding of sexuality as a negative and dangerous force was challenged when she moved to London in the mid-1950s at the age of twenty. She was attending college and sharing accommodation in a London hostel with young Italian women, and they possessed a very different understanding of femininity and sexuality:

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> It was totally different. What was riveting about them [the Italian women] was, you know, as far as they were concerned, sexuality was something brilliant ... it was *absolutely wonderful*, and you as a woman would benefit greatly … you know, you exploited your sexuality – they didn't use those kind of words – and you put all this effort into enhancing your femininity in order to acquire all of these *wonderful* men, and they thought men were really wonderful. [Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

Nuala's description of the Italian women's enthusiastic attitude towards sexuality and their enjoyment of their femininity and sexual allure is in marked contrast with the sense of negativity and prohibition that had shaped her perceptions of sexuality in Ireland. Furthermore, her amazement at the effort the Italian women put into the enhancement of their physical appearance suggests that such practices of self-beautification conflicted with the cultural practices of female self-presentation in Ireland**:**

> I was fascinated, at *how long* the Italian girls took getting ready before they went out on a date. [Laughter] It was hilarious, and they were *super-looking* girls, but they spent *all day nearly*. I mean, they curled their hair ... they *both* spent absolutely *hours, hours and hours* getting ready, you know, and everything had to be perfect.

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

Nuala's experience provides an example of what Robinson et al. (2007: 418), drawing on Nast (1998), refer to as the naturalisation of heterosexuality through space. National, regional and indeed family spaces construct and reproduce norms of sexuality, and shifting between such spaces can serve to highlight differences in the prevailing paradigm of what is considered acceptable and normal sexual, and indeed gender, behaviour. This understanding of the spatial dimension of sexuality will be drawn on later to make sense of perceptions of the sexual behaviour of Irish women who emigrated to England.

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Negotiating Sexual Desire and Sexual Behaviour

Despite the negativity of the dominant sexual scripts described by the narrators, their stories also articulate discourses of sexual desire, curiosity and pleasure. Alice described the attraction she and her peers had to the local young men: 'we used to be coming down from the park and we used to admire the guys'. All of the women recounted stories of courtships, which in many cases were conducted without the knowledge of parents. However, while the narrators clearly resisted many clerical and parental dictates around sexual practices, many of them emphasised that sexual expression was often accompanied by anxiety. Limited information about sexual and reproductive matters, the absence of reliable contraception, clerical dictates against its use and a generalised sense of fear about sexual activity becoming public knowledge, all impacted on decisions about engagement in sexual activity and hampered sexual enjoyment. As Molly observed: 'Fear used to keep us on the straight and narrow and I don't think that's healthy. You would be going out with a lad for weeks before you'd even let him kiss you.' The keen awareness that had been instilled in the narrators of the fate that would befall anyone who got pregnant outside of marriage was a particularly strong disincentive to pre-marital sexual intercourse. Dolores recalled, with sorrow, the consequences of extra-marital pregnancy for a woman who was on her midwifery course in Dublin in the early 1950s: 'That was the end of her course … She defied everything, you know. She was always defying the rules … yeah, that was her. So what happened to her after, I don't know.'[18]

Even engagement in restrained sexual practices, such as kissing, was not unproblematic. Ellie recalled that when she was dropped home by the young man who had been approved by her uncles and her mother to take her to her first dance, she '… wouldn't even let him kiss me'. At a subsequent dance she recalled that 'the guy kissed me and I thought I was pregnant! I was as innocent, I am not joking you. Somebody must have said, you know how they instil fear in you and we all got that. I enjoyed the kiss!' This tension between pleasure and fear featured in many accounts of sexual behaviour, with sexual expression frequently being tempered with anxiety. Two months before her wedding, in the late 1950s, Patricia confessed to a visiting priest during the parish mission that she was 'passionate kissing' with her boyfriend. The priest refused to give her absolution unless

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she promised to terminate the relationship: 'I came out of confession without absolution and came home in floods of tears'. Patricia's father, upon hearing the story, declared her to be 'a bloody fool' for confessing such information and took her to the local priest, who gave her absolution without dispute. Patricia's account is instructive in that it reveals the mechanisms of power that translated the private sexual behaviour of a young woman into a clerical and parental matter. It also provides insights into the willingness of some parents to challenge clerical power.

While Patricia was distressed over the refusal of absolution, most of the women indicated that fear of sinning was not a strong deterrent to engaging in a certain amount of sexual activity with boyfriends. Concern about sinfulness did appear to dominate in one area of sexual conduct, however, namely the prevention of pregnancy within marriage, and it proved a significant factor in women's decision-making about birth control. Abstinence from sexual relations appears to have been a common form of birth control, but one older interviewee indicated that abstinence was not an unproblematic option. Sheila, who married in the early 1930s at the age of eighteen, highlighted how for herself and her contemporaries, religious, legal and patriarchal forces combined to limit the control they had over their sexual lives:

> … it was a *mortal sin* if you avoided a family, you were *condemned, absolutely* … they [women of her generation] knew nothing about contraception, what to do or what not to do, they just had them [children], you had to have them, if you avoided, you were nearly *excommunicated* from the Church at that time, *you just had to*, there was no two ways about it, even if you didn't want to, you had to, … *you had to obey your husband* ... that was one of the vows you took at marriage, you see.[19]

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

The imperative to obey one's husband was also alluded to by some respondents in Hilliard's study (2003: 36), who reported the reluctance of certain husbands to co-operate with the period of abstinence required when using the Billings, or 'safe period', method of contraception.[20] As one would expect, the behaviour of husbands

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appears to have varied in this regard. While acknowledging the strain abstinence or use of the 'safe period' could put on a marriage, Alice noted that in her experience husbands were accepting of the situation: 'Nobody's husband wandered off anywhere. They never went with anybody else. They were the same as ourselves.'

What the women's accounts of birth control also reveal is changing practices regarding fertility control. The majority of the younger women interviewed, whose children were born between the early and mid-1960s, indicated that they were actively seeking to limit their families and that in some cases, surprisingly, it was their mothers or mothers-in-law who advised and encouraged them to do so. As Alice remarked: 'I remember my mother-in-law telling me to abstain and I remember my mother would say, "you've enough now".' It would appear that at least some of the older generation of women, who had experienced the hardship associated with lack of fertility control and the rearing of large families, did not desire the same conditions for the next generation of women.

It is noteworthy, however, that all of the women who were practicing fertility control – primarily through abstinence, *coitus interruptus* (described by the women as 'withdrawal') and the use of the Billings or safe period/rhythm method – continued to attend confession and to face the censure of priests, who castigated such behaviour. Hilliard (2003: 38) found similar behaviour among her respondents. Awareness that their actions constituted sin in the eyes of the Church was a significant source of stress among the women interviewed for this study. As Noreen noted: 'In the early days of my marriage, I didn't know about the Billings method, contraception was withdrawal, but that was a sin then.' A priest 'blew the ears off' Joan in the mid-1960s when she confessed to avoidance of pregnancy. Even Rose, who had lost two children and was under medical advice to avoid further pregnancies, was told by her confessor in the late 1960s that it was her duty to have children. Following a third pregnancy and the loss of another baby at an advanced stage, Rose and her husband considered using the contraceptive pill. She consulted a different priest before taking it and was assured by him that he would give her absolution, on medical grounds. A priest who was willing to give absolution to women taking the pill was also identified by a number of the interviewees from Cork City. Respondents in Hilliard's study (2003: 38) recalled similar variation in the attitudes and practices of priests. Commenting on a priest

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who was less censorious than his colleagues, Christine noted: 'If you went in and said that you were on the pill, he'd say that God would love you anyway. So everybody went to him, including myself. You'd queue there for hours just for the sake of that.' Only two of the 21 women interviewed indicated that they had taken the pill and a similarly low rate of usage was found in Hilliard's study (2003: 35), in which only one of the 32 women interviewed reported taking it.

The publication of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*[21] in 1968, which staunchly reiterated Catholic opposition to any form of artificial birth control, was a source of distress and disappointment to some women, who had been hoping for a change in Catholic teaching on the topic of contraception. Christine described her neighbour's reaction to the encyclical: 'I remember when the Pope spoke out against the pill, meeting a neighbour and she was crying 'cause she had been on the pill and whatever the Pope had said, she was damned. She wasn't going to be able to take it again and she had a lot of children.' Alice also highlighted how difficult a decision it could be to oppose the Church on the issue of artificial birth control:

> I remember going with a friend to the (Cork) family planning clinic when it started and I suppose it was after my third child.[22] I got all the information on the Billings method and she got the pill. We walked home and she threw the pills over the hedge, she wouldn't take it.

The lack of access to fertility control and the sanctions around its use undoubtedly hindered sexual pleasure. Molly, who was advised after her first pregnancy not to become pregnant again for health reasons, was obliged to use abstinence as her primary form of contraception: 'I had no safe period 'cause I used to get my period every three months and nobody would advise me, you couldn't ask anyway, so we just abstained. Several times I thought I was pregnant and I wasn't. It was terrible.' Anne had similar memories of the fear occasioned by the unreliability of the safe period method she was using: 'when I was a young married woman, you would be waiting to know if you were pregnant, the fear of it was with you the whole time. I used to have the calendar on the wall marked, like the Billings method.' Anne's description of how reliance on the

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'safe period' method hampered sexual pleasure for herself and her husband is underpinned by a discourse of sexual desire: 'it was very hard on everyone, it was very hard for ourselves, you couldn't be together, we were young and in love and wanted to be together and couldn't.' Dolores, who worked as a district nurse in a Cork town in the mid-1950s, also described the stress imposed on women by lack of contraception. She regularly visited married women who were struggling to raise families in poor conditions and recalled that the women used to tell her: '"I'm only going from month to month", that was their saying … That was a great worry of theirs.' She also noted that the conditions in which many women lived would have mitigated against privacy and that, combined with the fear of pregnancy, would have inhibited sexual enjoyment: 'More poverty then and sure they'd no privacy anyway, so they wouldn't have any pleasure out of it [sex].'

The pregnant body, which was a definitive physical manifestation of sexual activity, was subjected to strict regulation and the women recalled many specific instances in which their pregnant bodies were disciplined. Vera, who was born in the late 1930s, noted: 'I don't ever remember seeing any obviously pregnant woman, they kept it very quiet and private.' Similarly, Dolores, referring to her pregnancies in the 1950s, explained '… being pregnant, you didn't get the pleasure that they're getting out of it now, d'you know'. Many women noted the association between pregnancy, sexuality and shame. The pregnant body was a physical testament to sexual activity and as such was constructed as shameful. As Betty observed: 'sex was always taboo. I can remember my mother saying to me, when I was expecting my first child and I was married, my coat blew open and she told me to cover myself up.' Others, like Hannah, highlighted the tension they experienced between their joy and excitement at being pregnant and the need to conceal, rather than celebrate, their condition:

> I remember I was married a few years before I had mine and I was so excited about being pregnant. I went home to tell my mother and she said, "we won't say anything about it to your father today. I'll catch him at a good time to tell him". It was like shame. I had a single brother at home and my mother used to say, "Don't come up now while he's there", and we didn't go up.

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The construction of the pregnant body as offensive to the public gaze impacted on pregnant women in very concrete ways and most recalled consciously excluding themselves from public spaces and ensuring that when they did venture out, they wore a loose-fitting coat that covered their body. Alice's account clearly reveals these strategies of self-management of the body:

> I remember in the sixties when I was pregnant with Christine, I kept it quiet all through that summer. I remember going into a shop and an elderly woman asking me if I went into town like that. I was supposed to wear a coat. I remember I had a royal blue coat and I had to wear that coat all the time, you couldn't go out with your bump, you had to hide it.

Churching was a practice that required women who had given birth to receive a blessing from a priest before they could attend mass again, and it represented another form of body regulation. The woman had to attend the church at a prescribed time and kneel in front of the priest, holding a lighted candle while he said prayers over her. The practice was recalled with displeasure and sometimes anger by many of the narrators, but none reported that they refused to subject themselves to the practice. As Alice explained: 'You couldn't go out until you were churched … A week later, when you came out of hospital, you had to go to church straight away, then you were all right. You were unclean until then. It was terrible.'

The social symbolism attributed to the pregnant body and the practices of power that surrounded it can be read as efforts to discipline the female body and to disembody and conceal the reality of female sexual activity. The women's accounts of pregnancy and churching also indicate a high degree of compliance with existing customs and practices and the strong role that older generations of women had in the surveillance of younger pregnant women.

Sexuality, Subversion and Emotion

The material above reveals that in both marital and extra-marital situations engaging in sexual activity and exercising fertility control could constitute subversive practices because they challenged religious, social and, in some cases, legal dictates. Such practices involved an emotional strain for many women, however, a reality

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that was also attested to by the women interviewed by Hilliard (2003: 31), who identified that fear inhibited questioning and dissent. The narrators' accounts reveal a keen consciousness of the power and status differentials that existed between women and the clergy, and indeed of the subordinate status of women in Irish society at the time. Sheila, born in 1914, had clear memories of the clerical attitude towards women, describing it as 'very, very, stern then, very, very, stern, yeah, very stern.' Other narrators expressed the view that the Church was disdainful of women. Joan, who was born in a rural area in 1932, described the Church's attitude to women as 'very haughty and taughty, the Church was the Church and women were only women, like, you know, they kind of looked down on the woman of the house … they looked down on you, the priests did … They were cruel, like, they really were.'

Ellie, who was born twenty years later in the early 1950s, provided an insightful analysis of the gender hierarchy within which female sexuality was constrained: 'At that stage, women were less than men, priests were the highest authority at the time, after that it was the people who got married because they were linked to a man and that made it valid, but the woman was still very inferior in that situation.' Even Pauline, born in 1955 and the youngest woman interviewed, remembered priests having a condemnatory attitude towards women: 'very strict, very strict … years ago [if] you went to a priest with a problem, he would say it was your fault'. These descriptions of priests as harsh and contemptuous provide insights into the narrators' emotional encodement of the religious discourses around sexuality. They also suggest the way in which gendered power and status differentials were experienced by women. Hilliard's (2003: 32) interviews with older married women in 2000 revealed similar perceptions of the power of the priest, and she asserts that women in the era under study experienced a habitus informed by an institutional discourse of control and submission.

Nuala's experiences as a social worker on a project for unmarried mothers in London during the late 1960s and early 1970s provide further insights into the emotional impact on women of clerical and social dictates regarding sexual propriety. Although she worked with women from many Catholic countries, including Spain and Italy, Nuala noted that it was the Irish women who expressed the greatest sense of shame about their situation:

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> … lots of Irish women, the biggest numbers we had were the Irish and Spanish, both Catholic countries and they [Irish women] were the most difficult to deal with, you know, because they had all the … they had all the baggage. A huge amount of it. And the *contortions* that a number of Irish girls went through … the sense of being … of having misbehaved, was a very strong reflection of Irish attitudes then and that was the sixties into seventies … they had an awful lot of guilt about it, dreadful stress, you know … And the ones who considered termination went through agony.

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

The data discussed above suggests that it was difficult for women living in Ireland to experience sexuality as a celebratory, pleasurable, vital dimension of their lives. The remainder of the chapter will explore the ways in which the narrators made sense of their sexual desires and actions retrospectively and consider how cultural context and individual biography impacted on this process.

Intrapsychic Scripts: Reflecting on the Social Shaping of the Material Body

Intrapsychic scripting (Simon, 1996: 44) refers to the individual, reflexive processing of sexual thought and desire, which is informed by and informs interpersonal scripts. This section thus considers the women's conscious reflections on the ways in which social forces and discourses shaped their biological bodies, their practices in managing their sexuality and their resistance to or critique of prescribed ideals of femininity and sexuality.

A common theme in the women's reflections was a reframing of their youthful sexual activities as natural and 'innocent'. Many strongly rejected the clerical definitions of their sexual behaviour and fertility practices as sinful. Christine articulated a discourse of sexual desire, which she framed as normal, while simultaneously rejecting the clerical edicts of the day as unrealistic:

> If you were company keeping, totally wrong, totally wrong. If you done anything that wasn't right, you were for it. It had to be kind of just to their specification and just so, you lived

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> the life of a saint, a saint, like, which normally that wouldn't happen if you were going out with someone … you daren't do this and you daren't do that and it was always a mortal sin and now like the biggest of things aren't mortal sins like, but that is the way it was.

Joan expressed her resentment of the clerical attitude to sexuality and acknowledged that while some of her contemporaries challenged it, fear always surrounded and restrained any sexual experimentation in which she engaged:

> The more they got on to people about it, the more people do it, you know, they weren't going to stop because [of] the priest … but at the same time, you had the dread … the dread was there … and you often after would resent it, because you have said to yourself, like, well what did you do wrong that warranted all of that? You didn't really, you wouldn't be after doing … God knows compared to today's living, like, you know, ours was completely different, totally kind of innocent in ways, you know, 'tisn't that we mightn't have committed the sins alright! [Laughs]

Joan's narrative also reflected regret for her lack of courage in seeking out more information about bodily and sexual matters and her subsequent efforts to make sense of how such a silence was maintained:

> … you just didn't ask those questions, you know, which is a pity. When you look back through the years now and you say, like, "oh we didn't ask the things". Why didn't we, like, you know? But we didn't at the time … when you look back now, you say it's a pity that people were afraid to ask questions, you know they were afraid to query the things, the facts of life, you didn't know them.

Similar expressions of hurt and anger were expressed by respondents in Hilliard's study (2003: 40–41). The other issue that prompted the women in this research to express strong resentment was the practice of churching. Dolores castigated the Church's attitude to women's fertility and sexuality, which demanded that married

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women be fecund while simultaneously defining their post-partum bodies as polluted:

> It should never have been there … It was a ridiculous thing. It wasn't a blessing, it was a cleansing … We were unclean because we had a baby and then you were told to go out and multiply. I used *to dread it* … we felt we had done something wrong. We felt we were guilty, guilty! It was nearly as bad as having a baby out of marriage.

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

Rejection and resentment of the prevailing cultural scripts regarding sexuality and acknowledgment of the ways in which fear made resistance difficult were the sentiments expressed most often by the women. However, two of the narrators provided quite distinctly different accounts of how they interpreted cultural scripts and everyday interpersonal experiences. Ellie acknowledged that she rejected Catholicism at an early age because of its teachings regarding sexuality and gender: 'Religion was against sex because it seemed to be a dirty thing altogether and the priests were so pure standing up there and the rest of us were lesser humans, particularly women, and actually, I turned against religion very early on because of that.' She also noted that her attitude to sexuality was not negatively impacted by the cultural scripts of her childhood and adolescence: 'I have no hang-ups now about sexuality, oddly enough, and I should have, considering the guarded way I was brought up.' Ellie recalled becoming conscious of the gendered power relations that framed courtship practices and how objectified she felt by them: 'I *hated the dances*, I really did ... I felt it was so demeaning, I always had that sense, it was like women being demeaned. .. I had a *very strong* sense of that from *a very young age*.' Her narrative reveals a strong tension between her framing of sexuality as something natural and pleasurable and her rejection of what she perceived to be the sexually predatory nature of men and the unequal position of women in sexual and, particularly, marital relationships during her youth in the early 1960s:

> E: I'm quite a bit anti-marriage, you can see where it's coming from, you know, because that would only still use

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> women, you know, chattels, the word chattels, they were used. I saw that very early on, God knows but it wasn't a difficult thing to perceive … I remember thinking to myself, in frustration, well, men … they were looking at you like … something to be …
>
> I: A kind of sex object?
>
> E: Yeah, I got an awful lot of that.

Ellie described how she formed a brief relationship with a man she met when working away from home at the age of seventeen, only to discover subsequently that he was married. She noted that this experience compounded her negative view of men: 'I wouldn't have, deep down, I wouldn't have an awful lot of respect for men. And I've to work at it. I really have to work at it. Because, you can see why … I remember with him now, I mean, he was only after one thing ....'

When she moved to London in the late 1960s to train as a nurse, Ellie became conscious of a difference in the sexual climates that prevailed in Ireland and in England at that time. She perceived that in Ireland, despite her experience with the married man: 'It wasn't a free-for-all, like. I mean, if I was out with somebody … they wouldn't expect sex, d'you know what I mean, it wasn't part of the social thing at the time, you know. Unless you were a real lower class.'[23] In contrast, she described the English scene as much more liberal and commented negatively on the sexual behaviour of Irish women in London: 'The Irish were wicked. They were terrible. They were so suppressed, you see, I think they went mad.' Ellie disassociated herself from this behaviour, which she perceived as sexually promiscuous, and recalled that she 'went the opposite way round, I kept my snobbery! [Laughs] All my empty snobbery … that they were less than me, more inferior, you know.' Evident in this account is an 'othering' of sexually active women, with the collectivist stereotype of social class being used to demarcate sexual behaviour. It would appear that in Ellie's case, her rejection of gendered power differentials, her negative understanding of male sexuality and her socialisation into norms of respectability that castigated extra-marital female sexual expression influenced her reaction to the sexual opportunities London presented.

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Nuala emigrated to London in the mid-1950s and in common with Ellie she had an awareness of the gender inequities that could underpin sexual relations. In describing the attitude of her Italian roommates to relationships with men, she noted that in 'their whole kind of image of their relationships … they had a very *feminine*, definitely as opposed to a *feminist* approach'. Notwithstanding this awareness, she described how living in London facilitated her development of a much more positive attitude to sexuality:

> The whole ... the *positive* side of sexuality, you know, certainly was *blooming* in London ... so, you know, the whole thing changed dramatically, you know, a process of changing. It just changes the way one develops in the social context one has.

[Italics indicate the emphasis put on certain words by the narrator.]

In Nuala's case, London provided a space that disrupted the idealised, asexual feminity into which she had been socialised in Ireland and thereby afforded opportunities for a rethinking and revising of attitudes and beliefs about sexuality. In contrast, for Ellie it appeared to reinforce her prevailing belief that an unmarried woman with an active sexual life fell short of the ideals of approriate female behaviour. A comparison of Ellie's and Nuala's experiences highlights the possibility for women to challenge and reject beliefs and practices into which they were socialised, while also demonstrating the enduring impact of cultural scenarios on sexual subjectivities and sexual agency.

Conclusion

The conceptual matrix of cultural, interpersonal and intrapsychic scripts (Gagnon and Simon, 1974) provides a useful way of exploring both the discursive/corporeal body and the empirical/material body and, indeed, of highlighting the multiple dimensions (structure, practice, meaning, subjectivity) of the 'sociality of sexuality'(Jackson and Scott, 2010: 3). The attribution of meanings to sexuality through the discursive construction of the female body as a desexualised yet fecund entity, and of sexuality as a dangerous and shameful force, are clearly manifest in the narrators' accounts. So too are the myriad regulatory and disciplinary practices that

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operated at the level of mundane, everyday interactions to incite compliance with this prescribed ideal. The structural inequalities that shaped women's lives are also evident, in particular the institutional power of the Catholic Church and its gendered, patriarchal practices that constrained women.

The key insights from this chapter come from consideration of the subjectivities of the women. Their accounts of sexuality support the contention of Robinson et al. (2004: 417) that heterosexuality is 'an embodied, spatially located emotional experience'. The data reveals that women displayed agency in their engagement with the discursive, material and structural factors that shaped the sexual climate in the period under discussion. Unmarried women engaged in various forms of sexual expression during courtship, while married women practiced fertility control and resented the concealment of their pregnant bodies and the churching of their post-partum bodies. Such behaviour did not, in most cases, constitute a conscious, concerted or collective challenge to prevailing norms, and yet this behaviour had an emotional cost. Accounts of the fear and anxiety that accompanied most sexual experiences and resentment about the restrictions that limited enjoyment of their sexual and fecund bodies are central to the women's retrospective reflections. Furthermore, their narratives keenly emphasise how difficult it was for women to assert a sexual persona that did not comply with prevailing norms and practices. Holland et al. (1994: 22) contend that 'When women are able to take control of their sexuality in an active femininity, they can bring the social shaping of their material bodies into consciousness, and govern their own sensuality'. Becoming conscious of the social shaping of the body, and resisting the elements of its construction that are not desired, was profoundly challenging and, as this chapter has shown, was not easily achieved.

Notes

[1] The research was funded by an award from the Royal Irish Academy/British Council Research Network Scheme. The interviews were conducted with women in counties Cork and Tipperary in 1998/99. For more details of the sample and research process, see Leane et al. (2002). My colleague Helen Duggan (R.I.P.), who specialised in research with older people and was a skilled qualitative researcher, conducted seven of the oral history interviews. The empirical accounts collected in the interviews are not

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objective accounts, but rather constitute personal memories and interpretations of the past reconstructed through the prism of the present. All remembering has a social dimension, however, and the accounts provided by the women contain both individual stories and information about collective cultural attitudes and practices of the time. For a discussion of memory in oral history and life-story research, see Green (2004), Summerfield (2000) and Beiner (2004). For a discussion of memory in the context of life history accounts of sexuality, see Robinson et al. (2007: 457–8).

[2] Ten of the oral histories were collected through individual interviews, with the remaining eleven being collected through two group interviews of five and six women, respectively. Each study participant received a transcribed copy of the interview proceedings and a subsequent follow-up interview was held with nine of the ten individual participants and with the two groups involved in the research. Nineteen of the women were married or widowed at the time of interview; two had remained single throughout their lives. All but one of the married women had children; neither of the single women had a child. The women were drawn from urban and rural backgrounds in Cork and Tipperary, with the majority from working-class backgrounds and three from more prosperous farming families.

[3] The narrators discussed sexual actitity in a very general way, with none providing detailed information on their sexual practices. This is unsurprising and is consistent with the experience of Meah et al. (2008), who interviewed women in England about sexuality in the period between the two world wars. As Meah et al. (2008: 459) observe: 'If sex was absent from public discourses of heterosexuality, could interviewees realistically recall and describe it in the present?'

[4] Social constructionist theorising of sexuality rejects the view of sexuality as natural or innate and highlights instead its construction at a cultural and historic level. Researchers using this approach seek to identify how processes of representation and regulation imbue bodies, actions and feelings with sexual meaning. For a discussion of the emergence of social constructionist approach, *see* Jackson and Scott (2010: 11–23).

[5] For an analysis of discursive constructions of sexuality in Irish society, *see* Inglis (1997).

[6] The work of Elizabeth Grosz (1994) exemplifies this trend in feminist theorising. For a discussion of feminist work reflecting the essentialist perspective, *see* Brook (1999: 6–8).

[7] For a discussion of corporeality, *see* Brook (1999: 2–4).

[8] The shift from modernist to postmodernist paradigms of understanding reflects a move away from a modernist belief that the truth, or reality of all things, could be named or defined, and a move towards a more fluid understanding of the world as consisting of multiple truths or realities and shifting meanings. In the context of sexuality, it has seen a move away from efforts to categorise sexuality into narrow, predefined typologies and

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towards an understanding of sexuality that takes into account both collective and individual experiences. For a discussion of postmodernism and sexuality, see Simon (2003). For a discussion of the impact of postmodernist ideas on feminism, *see* Nicholson (1990) and McLaughlin (1997).

[9] For a discussion of feminist appropriations of Foucault's ideas about the operation of power on the body, *see* Sawicki (1991).

[10] For a more detailed discussion of these, *see* Jackson and Scott (2010: 15–16).

[11] This chapter focuses exclusively on Irish sexual attitudes, practices and behaviours, but it is acknowledged that Irish experiences of the regulation of sexuality share many parallels with practices in other Western countries. *See* Inglis (2005) for a discussion of Irish sexual prudery in the context of international material and *see* Robinson et al. (2007), Meah et al. (2008) and Hockey et al. (2009) for insights into experiences of and attitudes to sexuality in England between the world wars.

[12] Similar exclusion of young women from information about sexual knowledge was found in life history interviews with English women who reached adulthood in the period between the wars. *See* Robinson et al. (2007: 425) and Meah et al. (2008: 459).

[13] Pseudonyms have been assigned to the participants.

[14] Many of the participants identified the late 1960s as the time when issues around sexuality began to be raised in public forums, primarily through the efforts of the women's movement and the media.

[15] Life history interviews with English women who reached adulthood in the period between the wars revealed a similar finding. *See* Robinson et al. (2007: 425)

[16] Churching refers to a practice whereby a woman attended a church after giving birth and a priest made the sign of the cross on her and recited some prayers. Opinion varies as to whether the rite of churching constituted a blessing and a thanksgiving for the safe arrival of the baby or a purification of the post-partum woman. Undoubtedly, the women in the study on which this chapter is based understood it as a purification ritual. *See* Pope (nd).

[17] Catholic discourses in Ireland between 1920 and 1940 contain many examples of the construction of female sexuality as passive and reactive, while male sexuality is portrayed as a vital, active force. S*ee* Leane (1999).

[18] A narrator in the research conducted by Meah et al. (2008) recounted a similar incident, where an unmarried nursing colleague became pregnant in the early 1950s. In that instance, however, the narrator noted that while the woman was not 'shunned', her situation was unusual for the time (Meah et al., 2008: 459).

[19] It is noteworthy that Sheila's account shifts between the use of the generic 'they' to the more personalised 'you', but at no point does she speak in the first person. Errante (2004) describes this pattern of narration as a 'verbal hiding' strategy. Such strategies, she suggests, are 'patterns of

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communication that try to diminish the speakers' actual sense of vulnerability regarding a particular topic of speech' (Errante, 2004: 423). The increase in volume and the emphasis Sheila placed on certain words within the account also indicate the strength of emotion and depth of feeling associated with the topic.

[20] The Billings method was a form of natural family planning developed by Dr John Billings in 1953. It involves women relying on bodily signs, such as vaginal secretions, to determine the days in each cycle during which they were fertile. This method is compliant with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

[21] The publication of *Humanae Vitae* followed much speculation as to whether or not the Catholic Church would allow some form of contraceptive use. When the contraceptive pill was made available in 1960, this led to some within the Church seeking re-consideration of the Church's position. In 1963 a commission of six European non-theologians was established by Pope John XXIII to consider the issue of birth and population control. This commission met intermittently in 1963 and 1964, was subsequently enlarged to 58 members, including married people, laywomen, theologians and bishops, and it reported its findings in 1965. The final majority report of the commission, in 1966, proposed that some form of contraception be approved for married couples. A minority report opposing this view was issued by some members. The support of contraception in the majority report had raised expectations of a change in Church teaching, but the publication of *Humanae Vitae* reiterated very clearly Church opposition to any form of artificial contraception. For further details, *see* *Humanae Vitae* (nd).

[22] The Cork Family Planning Clinic was established in 1975. *See* Cork Family Planning Clinic (nd).

[23] Skeggs has argued that the working class and, in particular, working-class women have always been classified in relation to an ideal of respectability and that working-class people themselves have also engaged in this process of self-classification. *See* Skeggs (1997: 1–8).

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