‘Encountering Each Other’: Love and Emotional Relationships Between Men and Women in Britain, 1950s-1970s

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**Abstract**

This is a study of the influence of psychological concepts on popular understandings of ‘healthy’ emotional life. It examines the rise of a discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ in the 1950s, a psychological concept emphasising emotional control, containment and restraint, and how this was broken down in the 1960s and 1970s by new psychological theories encouraging unrestrained emotional expression and authenticity. It is a story about the rise of a confessional culture which no longer accepted pure release of tension through ‘cathartic’ divulging of secrets or personal thoughts, but encouraged individuals to engage in continual mutual disclosure and intensely honest conversation to reveal more of themselves, whilst also learning about each other. This was the beginnings of the ‘therapeutic culture’ we enjoy (or take issue with) today. It is the story of a period when arguing with one’s spouse or lover no longer signalled a doomed relationship and the depths of unhappiness, but a ‘positive’ occurrence to be embraced as a chance to ‘grow’ as individuals and to achieve intimacy. The argument, indeed, could be presented to the outside world as evidence of a ‘strong’ relationship. This thesis will trace the beginnings of a societal shift towards privileging male emotionality over the ‘stiff upper lip’ which would play out in the succeeding decades. Fundamentally, it identifies the time when expectations of marriage and romantic relationships became infused with the desire for ‘transparency’, a desire which, despite reaching its apotheosis in the 1970s, continues to define the cultural conversation about intimacy today, and which, in its elusiveness, also continues to be an unstable and perhaps ‘unattainable’ ideal.

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**Introduction**

***‘Limitless Love and Truth’***

A family friend described his experience of the early 1970s as: ‘A quest for limitless love and truth’. He referred to his joining of a Scottish commune at the close of the 1960s as a ‘rejection of his parents’ lifestyle’, a lifestyle of ‘duty, conformity and obligation’. A life, he claimed, in which they had ‘never really been themselves’. Although a member of an experiment in ‘alternative living’, an offshoot of the ‘underground’, this man’s account does not stand outside of the changes occurring in mainstream culture during the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, this thesis will show that the ‘quest for love and truth’ defined the period from the late-1950s to the mid-1970s, during which the societal liberation of emotional expression from the ‘culture of restraint’, and the desire for ‘honesty’ and ‘authenticity’, overhauled British attitudes to marriage and romantic relationships between men and women. Yet this study has implications far beyond the field of intimate relationships. Whilst the project began as a study of love and marriage it has become a more expansive story of the changing emotional cultures of Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. The thesis posits the changing models of romantic relationships as just one case study of a broader shift in British culture towards transparency, honesty and authenticity which has yet to be fully understood by historians and which has the potential to transform the way we think about the decades following the Second World War.

**‘Healthy Relationships and Healthy Emotional Life’**

This is a study of the influence of psychological concepts on popular understandings of ‘healthy’ emotional life. It examines the rise of a discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ in the 1950s, a psychological concept emphasising emotional control, containment and restraint, and how this was broken down in the 1960s and 1970s by new psychological theories encouraging unrestrained emotional expression and authenticity. It is a story about the rise of a confessional culture which no longer accepted pure release of tension through ‘cathartic’ divulging of secrets or personal thoughts, but encouraged individuals to engage in continual mutual disclosure and intensely honest conversation to reveal more of themselves, whilst also learning about each other. This was the beginnings of the ‘therapeutic culture’ we enjoy (or take issue with) today. It is the story of a period when arguing with one’s spouse or lover no longer signalled a doomed relationship and the depths of unhappiness, but a ‘positive’ occurrence to be embraced as a chance to ‘grow’ as individuals and to achieve intimacy. The argument, indeed, could be presented to the outside world as evidence of a ‘strong’ relationship. This thesis will trace the beginnings of a societal shift towards privileging male emotionality over the ‘stiff upper lip’ which would play out in the succeeding decades. Fundamentally, it identifies the time when expectations of marriage and romantic relationships became infused with the desire for ‘transparency’, a desire which, despite reaching its apotheosis in the 1970s, continues to define the cultural conversation about intimacy today, and which, in its elusiveness, also continues to be an unstable and perhaps ‘unattainable’ ideal.

This thesis therefore builds on recent work in the history of love and emotion which has focused on the new model of mid-twentieth century marriage containing within it the ‘seeds of its own destruction’, undermined by its inconsistencies and its unattainability at the very moment of its triumph. Claire Langhamer has concluded that ‘Romantic love, particularly when tied to sexual satisfaction and emotional growth, was an unreliable foundation upon which to build life-long commitment. Although it appeared to offer a way of revitalising marriage for the modern age, [it] actually created more fundamental problems for matrimony.’[[1]](#footnote-1) Editors of the recent collection, *Love and Romance in Britain, 1918-1970* (2015), Timothy Jones and Alana Harris, have agreed with Langhamer concluding that: ‘Romance leading to love expressed in mutual companionate marriage may have become the collective emotional standard for much of British society by the 1950s. But clearly it was, in practice, almost impossible to effect.’[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Historiographical Context**

This thesis is working at the interface of three significant and developing historiographies; the history of emotions, recent developments in the history of love and marriage in the twentieth century, and the history of the popularisation of psychology in Britain and America.

The history of emotions has established itself as a major sub-discipline of history in recent years. Whilst British historian Lawrence Stone developed an interest in the history of emotion, particularly love, in the 1970s, it was the collaborative work of husband and wife, Peter and Carol Stearns, in America which put the discipline ‘on the map’.[[3]](#footnote-3) They developed a framework for investigating the history of emotions –‘emotionology’ – which referred to the study of society’s collective emotional standards.[[4]](#footnote-4) Building on Norbert Elias’s work on manners books in Early Modern Europe, the Stearnses claimed that people’s expressive behaviour is circumscribed by the dissemination of standards of appropriate feeling through cultural products such as advice literature. ‘Emotionology’, with its separation of emotional standards and emotional experience, was, they argued, a practical approach to the study of emotions in the past because evidence of a society’s emotional standards was ‘more accessible than emotional experience’, moreover, it was ‘important in its own right.’[[5]](#footnote-5) The Stearnses created a formidable historiography of twentieth-century American emotional culture.[[6]](#footnote-6)

‘Emotionology’ has received criticism for its preoccupation with middle-class advice literature and its lack of attendance to the subjective experience of emotion or the emotions of the working classes. Medievalist, Barbara Rosenwein, was a major proponent of this critique, rejecting its focus on a ‘grand narrative’ of emotions, influenced by ‘social constructivist’ sociological theories. Rosenwein proposed the study of ‘emotional communities’ which would take into account the complexities of context, power and politics influencing emotional life. She argued that:

‘People lived – and live – in “emotional communities”. These are precisely the same as social communities – families, neighbourhoods. People move (and moved) continually from one such community to another – adjusting their emotional displays and their judgements (with greater and lesser degrees of success) to these different environments.’[[7]](#footnote-7)

She suggested that what was required was an appreciation of the multiplicity of emotional models within a given society – that different classes, genders, nationalities, ethnic groups had varying emotional cultures – and that individuals moved between different cultures too: ‘Not only does every society call forth, shape, constrain, and express emotions differently, but even within the same society contradictory values and models find their place.’[[8]](#footnote-8)

Mediating these debates, William Reddy proposed a new framework based on the idea of ‘emotives’ which he used to describe the interactions through which individuals and society shape and express emotions. He referred to these ‘emotives’ – the words to describe emotions – as transformative of the experience.[[9]](#footnote-9) The study of twentieth-century marriage has been informed by the debates generated by the turn towards emotion, yet, as Harris and Jones highlight, it continues to work within the historical narrative of Western love put in place in particular by Stone.[[10]](#footnote-10) The story of the rise of ‘companionate marriage’ dominates the historiography.

Whereas in the past work on the ‘companionate marriage’ had tended to focus on the changing view of marital sex or on the division of domestic labour and power, [[11]](#footnote-11) there has been a recent shift in the historiography towards the privileging of ‘emotion’ in this story. Marcus Collins’s *Modern Love* (2003) explored the discourse of ‘mutuality’ in marriage from its inception with intellectual radicals at the beginning of the century, through to its height of popularity in the 1950s, to its decline in the third quarter of the century when, he argues, it was attacked and debunked by feminism.[[12]](#footnote-12) Collins’s study is primarily concerned with the ‘cultural constructions’ of love, focusing on the changing ideals and standards of emotion in the manner of ‘emotionology’.

Langhamer employed a different framework in her study of the same period, developing a social and cultural history of love based on her research in the Mass-Observation archives. Langhamer describes a shift in attitudes amongst ordinary people following the Second World War, towards love being privileged over all other considerations as the basis for marriage: ‘[Marriage] offered a dynamic emotional connection where personal transformation was a shared project achieved through togetherness’.[[13]](#footnote-13) Yet, she concludes that analysis of the experience of love reveals that contrary to Collins’s conclusion that it was feminism which destroyed ‘companionate marriage’, it was the tensions within the model itself which caused its downfall. Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher have also studied the marital experiences of ordinary men and women leading up to the 1960s in *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution* (2010) which was based on extensive oral history interviews. They argue similarly that, attention to the social history of marriage during this period reveals the tensions between the ideal of ‘companionate marriage’ and the realities of putting it into practice.[[14]](#footnote-14) Whilst these studies have focused primarily on the 1940s and 1950s, this thesis pushes the timeframe of analysis further into the century to consider how the changes in emotional culture during the 1960s played out in ideas about marriage and intimacy, arguing that they only reached their crescendo in the 1970s.

Although this project is informed by the burgeoning field of the history of emotions, it does not align itself with any one approach. Rather, its methodological approach is eclectic, combining insights from different methodologies. It establishes the concept of ‘emotional cultures’ to explore the shifts in dominant ideas and representations of what constituted healthy emotional expression. Despite beginning as a project on ‘love’, this project has transformed into an analysis of not just one emotion - like most of the existing research in this field - but of how ‘emotion’ generally was perceived and explored in popular culture. It does this through analysis of a wide body of source material, not confined to advice literature. Indeed, one of this thesis's main contributions is to combine an examination of the psychological literature with a focus on the popularisation of psychological theories which directly related to thinking about emotional intimacy between men and women.

The history of the popularisation of psychological theories and thinking, and its relation to ideas about selfhood is only in its infancy. Whilst Mathew Thomson has made strides in this area, the field has yet to be clearly established in Britain.[[15]](#footnote-15) This project has thus drawn on insights from scholars working in America where the historiography is more developed. In particular, the work of Jessica Grogan on humanistic psychology and the shaping of the modern self has been key to the shifting route of analysis taken by the thesis.[[16]](#footnote-16) There is much work to be done on the role of popular psychology in the transformation of British culture in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and this thesis is but a starting point for these discussions.

**Aims**

This thesis aims further to challenge the idea of a post-war culture of consensus, conformity and stability. It will demonstrate that ideas about marriage and intimacy in the 1950s were riddled with contradictions. On the one hand, the period witnessed an intense valorisation of the emotional relationship between husband and wife, and an emphasis on marriage and the family being the sites for self-fulfilment and ‘freedom’ following the war. On the other hand, the decade was also the highpoint of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse which stipulated that, in the interests of the individual, the society and the marriage, only certain, milder emotions were permitted to be expressed. This had implications for the extent to which marriage could be an emotional outlet for spouses within a culture which actively encouraged the withholding of information and the denial of expression of true feelings. Thus, bubbling beneath the surface of the ‘emotional marriage’ of the 1950s was a language of emotion control, restraint and concealment which undermined both its authenticity, its ‘honesty’, its claims for ‘freedom’, and ultimately its stability. [[17]](#footnote-17)

Our understanding of the tension between a wariness of powerful emotions in 1950s Britain, and a parallel belief in the importance they should play in the future of society, is only in its infancy. For the American context Beryl Satter has concluded that the 1950s witnessed a tension between a ‘distrust of emotions’, and a fear that a lack of emotional energy produced ‘passive’ individuals, ‘automatons’ who would fall for Communism and threaten the political order. [[18]](#footnote-18) Emotions, claims Satter, were ‘political’ during this period. There was a pervasive belief that the power of ideologies lay in their ‘ability to dominate passive, emotionally immature individuals who craved the vitality and sense of purpose and belonging that Communism appeared to provide.’ [[19]](#footnote-19) The family was constructed as the major site where the correct balance of emotional control and emotional expression could be achieved, producing ideal citizens: ‘Midcentury popular culture viewed mothers who could raise sons with the perfect balance of emotional and rational capabilities as the first line of defence in creating a populace strong enough to withstand Communist seduction.’[[20]](#footnote-20) Chapter One in this thesis will shed light on how the balance between control and expression was also ‘politicised’ in Britain in the post-war period where citizens were encouraged to practice ‘emotional maturity’ in the name of social reconstruction through the creation of stable marriages and families.

A second aim of the thesis is to show that the shift towards ‘emotional liberation’ was not linear or unproblematic, as Langhamer points out.[[21]](#footnote-21) Whilst the discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ and the attendant emphasis on ‘restraint’ began to lose sway with the dawn of the 1960s, there continued to be a multiplicity of discourses about love, marriage and emotions. Indeed, Chapter Five will explore alternative reactions to the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse to that of ‘transparency’, occurring amongst certain quarters of the rock music scene in the late-1960s which, rather than embracing open expression of feelings, rejected emotions altogether. Angus McLaren has argued in relation to notions of ‘sexual revolution’, that what emerged in the 1960s was ‘Not one simple liberation, but the emergence and clash of a variety of new sexual scripts.’[[22]](#footnote-22) With this in mind, the period of the 1950s to the 1970s can also be viewed as experiencing the emergence of a multiplicity of ‘emotional scripts’.

Indeed, this thesis aims to shift the conversation about the 1960s away from the preoccupation with ‘sexual revolution’ and the degree to which Britain became a ‘permissive society’, which have obscured other significant cultural changes of the period. It will argue that scholars have neglected changes in emotional culture which amounted to an ‘emotional revolution’, reaching its fruition in the early years of the 1970s when the emotional landscape looked significantly different to that of the early 1950s. By writing ‘love' back into the period traditionally associated with ‘sexual revolution’ this thesis will demonstrate that the obsession with sex, and the separation of sex from emotion in the current historiography has led to a skewed vision of the 1960s. Indeed, ‘emotion’, until recently, has lost out to ‘sex’ as the most important cultural shift of that period, despite the fact that for many people the emphasis on ‘emotional liberation’ would arguably have had more purchase in their daily lives. Langhamer has also taken the focus on ‘sex’ to task, asserting that: ‘By the 1960s the primacy of love was striking: for many, the decade could more accurately be described as a golden age of romance, than an age of sexual permissiveness.’[[23]](#footnote-23) This thesis will demonstrate that the cultural discussion of emotion in marriage and romantic relationships was as strong as that of the place of sexual activity within them.

Moreover, whilst the final chapter considers the debates within the ‘underground’, the commune movement and feminism on the topic of the new ‘transparency’, this thesis is primarily interested in the mass, and mainstream culture of the period, an antidote to the dominance of studies of the counter-culture which is a feature of the historiography of the 1960s. This is something Thomson has highlighted as the most appropriate way to proceed with the historical analysis of the 1960s:

‘When it comes to our broader understanding of the permissive moment, we need to be wary about assuming that the counter-cultural minority either stood for the whole or represented what was the most significant permissive shift of the era: in both instances, the changing tastes and individualist, de-moralised appetites of a more silent majority may in the long term have been even more significant.’[[24]](#footnote-24)

Thomson’s point will be demonstrated by the discussion of the ‘anti-transparency’ mentality of some facets of the counter-culture where a re-instigation of a ‘taboo on feelings’ at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s was in stark contrast to the changing ‘tastes’ of the majority towards a loosening of emotional control.

With its detailed consideration of the 1970s, the thesis will also attend to the lack of historical analysis of this somewhat ‘forgotten’ decade where studies continue to focus on politics and economics at the expense of our understanding of the cultural and social changes of this important decade. Indeed, following David Frum’s bold assertion that it was ‘the decade that brought you modern life – for better or worse’, this thesis will posit the 1970s as the decade in which the main tenets of our contemporary thinking about intimate relationships were laid down and embedded in popular culture.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Finally, whilst it gives due consideration to both courtship and ideas about ‘falling in love’, this thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of what Szreter and Fisher have termed the process of ‘working at love in marriage’ which has yet to receive the same depth of analysis.[[26]](#footnote-26) Their oral history study was an attempt to privilege the history of ‘the everyday’ – the mundane experiences of ordinary marriage – over the focus on one-off dramatic events. This thesis has a similar motivation. In looking at a varied collection of mainstream, popular, readily accessible sources it is possible to bring the focus back to the ‘majority experience’ of romantic relationships and to consider the everyday advice on everyday experiences, and the everyday attempts to negotiate the difficulties held therein.

**Sources**

This project began with the words of marriage ‘experts’ and counsellors who, in their advice manuals of the late-1950s to the mid-1970s began to forge a new model for relationships between men and women. Certain ideas and words were repeated, reflecting this change: ‘honesty’, ‘authenticity’, ‘truth’, ‘expressiveness’, ‘communication’, ‘disclosure’. With the advice literature as the starting point, the project proceeded to trace where these ideas originated from through a consideration of the psychological literature of the period. It also sought to discover how these psychological insights proceeded to infiltrate popular culture, finding their way into newspapers, women’s magazines and popular novels. Yet those words and ideas were a reaction against other words and ideas which also featured regularly in the advice literature. These were words such as: ‘restraint’, ‘control’, ‘taboo’, ‘inauthenticity’, ‘farce’, and most importantly, a preoccupation with concepts of ‘maturity’ and ‘immaturity’. These ideas were traced back to a cultural emphasis on ‘emotional maturity’ in the 1950s which had yet to be explored in depth by British scholars.

In tracing these ideas across different cultural genres and within different sectors of society, this project has used a similar approach to that of Mathew Thomson in his latest study of childhood. In her review of Thomson’s book, Laura King is positive about the new insights such an approach provides: ‘A combination of approaches and source types can effectively result in innovative histories that are of relevance to a wide audience. This is a very good example of how the tracing of ideas and ways of thinking across different sectors and groups of people can add a lot to our knowledge of modern British history.’[[27]](#footnote-27)

With its multi-source approach, this project also responds to Peter Mandler and Dror Wahrman’s claims that the best cultural history must be that which involves a ‘mix’ of sources and which uses these to draw conclusions about the relationship between cultural norms and social practice.[[28]](#footnote-28) Yet it will also attend to the problems inherent in this mixing of genres: being aware to avoid treating evidence derived from a varied selection of sources as ‘interchangeable’. Moreover, this thesis is informed by Mandler’s assertion that cultural historians must ‘evaluate not only the meanings of a text but also its relations to other texts, its significance in wider discursive fields, its “throw”, its dissemination.’[[29]](#footnote-29) Whilst the thesis is predominantly about the changing ideas, ideals and standards about intimate emotional relationships between men and women, it does make connections between these ideals and the expectations and experiences of ordinary people where possible and appropriate. The main vehicle for doing this has been through the practitioners – psychologists, counsellors and agony aunts – who were interacting with real people.

Although an in-depth review of the benefits and problems associated with each source material is not possible here, it is necessary to provide a short analysis of the approach to each source type. The thesis draws on four main source types: advice literature, psychological literature, The Press and magazines, and novels. These sources were selected as representative of a textual culture of exploring the self. These texts featured writing about the self in different ways and captured the deep, interior conversation about emotion and selfhood which was occurring in Britain in the decades following the Second World War. Of course other sources lend themselves to this end. Indeed, the project initially included research on the material culture of intimacy. It could also have brought in analysis of films covering the topic. However, it became clear that the textual culture of the self provided a coherent source base to explore the circulation of psychological language and the cross-fertilisation of ideas about emotion and selfhood. Moreover, unlike today, this textual culture had wide purchase during the post-war years and played a fundamental role in shaping popular ideas about emotion which requires further examination from historians. Although the focus is on Britain, the project has included some key American texts. Widely available and read, these texts shaped the debates about emotion occurring in Britain during this period.

**Marriage Advice Manuals**

The field of marriage advice literature was expanding during this period, with the cheap paperback allowing for a broader readership of this genre than even ten years previously. As Lesley Hall writes, Eustace Chesser’s manual *Love Without Fear: A Plain Guide to Sex Technique for Every Married Adult* (1941), ‘was not cheap – beyond the pockets of young people.’[[30]](#footnote-30) Yet the following decade would see a proliferation of affordable marriage advice, indeed much of it intended to be purchased precisely by young people to aid them in their preparation for marriage. The thesis has researched a selection of titles produced by the most prominent and popular authors who were well-known to the British public through their presence on television and radio shows, and in The Press. These authors were, as Chapter One demonstrates, involved in the development of marriage guidance in the late-1940s and 1950s, and consisted of psychiatrists, psychologists and medical doctors. Other manuals were selected for their availability as Penguin books and their status as ‘bestsellers’, reissued numerous times across the period. In its analysis of manuals whose authors were active across the entire period, the thesis is able to demonstrate the impact of cultural and social change on the opinions of these individuals, thus these figures appear in sections on both ‘emotional restraint’ and the ‘revolution in feeling’.

Hera Cook has researched the content specifically of ‘sex manuals’ of the period, arguing that whilst this body of sources is not new territory for the historian, it is time to approach them differently. Cook claimed that the existing historiography had made use of advice literature anecdotally, interested mainly in its role in promoting a conservative gender ideology. Her study attempted to investigate ‘the issues that the manual authors were directly addressing’.[[31]](#footnote-31) Marcus Collins also researched marriage manuals for his study of *Modern Love*, and the present study builds on his insights into the content of these books. The thesis uses the manuals not as ‘evidence’ of what people did in marriage, but is concerned with tracing the psychological ideas and the specific language used in these manuals, and their place in a cultural conversation about marriage which was related to other facets of popular culture.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**Psychological Texts**

As historians including Nikolas Rose, Denise Riley and Mathew Thomson have demonstrated, the twentieth century witnessed the growth of popular psychology as psychological theories penetrated mainstream culture and key psychological thinkers became household names.[[33]](#footnote-33) Mathew Thomson has claimed that after 1900 ‘Britons inhabited an increasingly psychological world’ with psychological knowledge permeating into ‘the culture, the social fabric, and the mentality of the era.’[[34]](#footnote-34) He continues that the already established self-help culture was becoming increasingly psychological in tone. Self-improvement literature and manuals emphasised the need for individuals to seek a psychologically healthy life, with ‘everyday phenomena redefined as problems of psychological self-management.’[[35]](#footnote-35) A fundamental aspect of ‘modernity’, Thomson argues that these new psychological models, languages and practices took hold as a response to increasing secularisation on the one hand – ‘the wonder once provided by divine salvation was now to be found in the search for a transcendent level of personal consciousness’. On the other, economic modernisation –more social groups in possession of surplus time and money meant an extension of the culture of worrying about and cultivating the self, facilitating an industry of therapeutic cures, advice manuals and courses.[[36]](#footnote-36) It was no longer only the wealthy who had the luxury of obsessing over the self, as had been the case in the previous century.

The research for this thesis has included analysis of psychological texts selected for their authorship by the key thinkers in their field and their prominence as the major statements on their particular subjects. These texts influenced the types of concepts and language about emotions and intimate relationships which were being used by psychiatrists, counsellors and doctors in popular marriage manuals, from whence they made their way into other facets of popular culture: The agony aunts in the major newspapers who discussed the latest addition to the ‘marriage advice’ shelf, or the bestselling novel whose protagonist discusses their inability to live up to the ‘self-disclosure’ model of human interaction. The research for this thesis has also made significant use of Pelican books which, in their cheap paperback form, helped disseminate these psychological theories to those who sought to ‘sample’ a little of what the discipline of psychology had to offer. These sources help to reveal the dissemination of psychological ideas throughout popular culture and how these were adapted and interpreted. The tracing of these psychological ideas across different sources has attended to the caution from Riley, that historians must consider the variations between the popularised form of a psychological theory and its original form. Consideration of this ‘popularisation’ process allows, claims Riley, for a better understanding of how psychological theories actually informed public debates and in turn contributed to wider social change.[[37]](#footnote-37)

**The Press**

Material from The Press forms one of the major source types used in this thesis. Newspapers and magazines have been analysed with the view that they both reflected and contributed to the construction of marriage and emotional intimacy during this period. In her study of women’s magazines, Margaret Beetham, asserts that this genre of source material must be used not as ‘repositories from which to remove facts’ but as texts in their own right ‘interacting with the culture which produced them and which they produced’[[38]](#footnote-38) Moreover, Adrian Bingham has argued that it is the task of the historian to consider the ‘heterogeneity’ of newspapers, and ‘to trace how these multivocal debates developed around particular themes and interacted with each other.’[[39]](#footnote-39) This should involve the analysis of all types of content, from the agony aunt columns to the adverts, from the news reports to the opinion pieces.

This thesis has employed these methods in its analysis of material derived from a representative sample of both popular and elite newspapers and magazines, including those that were left leaning and those on the right of centre. Seven newspapers were analysed: *Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, The Sun, The Guardian, Observer, The Times.* Alongside these newspapers, research was also conducted on seven magazines: *Picture Post*, *Woman’s Mirror, Woman’s Own,* *Boyfriend*, *Mirabelle*, *Petticoat, New Musical Express*.

For the newspapers, excluding *The Sun*, key word searches were used for the period 1950-1979, yielding over 100, 000 articles. Once these had been sorted, around 1400 articles which were of immediate relevance were used in the research for this thesis. Research for *The Sun* and the magazines (excluding *Picture Post* for which word searches were used), involved selecting four non-consecutive months for each year of the 19 year period. This yielded around 80 articles of relevance which were consulted in the research for this thesis.

Newspapers are a key source for the period of focus for this thesis. As Adrian Bingham has concluded: ‘At mid-century the market was close to saturation point, with over 85 per cent of the population reading a paper every day. Newspapers permeated society to such an extent that they demanded attention. Anyone going about their daily business would have found them impossible to avoid.’[[40]](#footnote-40) The *Daily Mirror* was the most popular daily newspaper in Britain throughout the 1960s, with a solidly working class readership. Indeed, *The* *Mirror* was at the heart of the developing celebrity culture of the 1960s and 1970s. With a peak circulation of 5.25 million copies in 1967, it was only towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, with the arrival of the repackaged *The Sun* in 1978 that the *Mirror’s* supremacy began to be challenged. *The Sun* was a particular story of ‘success’ in the 1970s when, within five years of its relaunch in 1969, it was selling over three million copies and surpassed *The Mirror* as the most popular daily paper. [[41]](#footnote-41)

**Novels**

Since the arrival of the cheap paperback in the inter-war period, and in particular the Penguin series in 1935, novels had risen in importance and influence over popular culture.[[42]](#footnote-42) This thesis has considered a selection of novels from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s which explored the themes of love, marriage and intimate relationships. They range from the realism and politicised novels of Lynne Reid Banks, to the iconic depiction of the rock n’ roll lifestyle, *Groupie*, to the seeming ‘stability’ of the *Mills & Boon* novel. The novels were chosen for having the credentials that they were, easily accessible, popular bestsellers, or noted at the time for their impact and influence on contemporary debates. Malcolm Bradbury’s *The History Man* embodied these credentials and has been used extensively in this thesis for its astute depiction of the conflict between ‘emotional maturity’ and ‘emotional freedom’. The thesis has included novels about love and marriage from both male and female authors to redress much of the current scholarly focus on those penned by women.[[43]](#footnote-43) Novels have been used, not just because they are useful expressions of mainstream culture, but because they also have a history of being one of the main ways in which interior life, especially intimate and emotional relationships, have received sustained examination. As a result they have been hugely influential in shaping emotional cultures.

**Chapter Breakdown**

Chapter One will outline the fundamentals of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse and how it connected to the ‘culture of restraint’. It will explore the origins and facets of this culture, and will consider the proliferation of concern about Britons achieving ‘emotional maturity’ in The Press and in the marital advice literature of the period. It will situate these concerns in the context of the pervasive belief of a ‘marriage crisis’ in the post-war years and the desire to create emotionally stable, long-term marriages. It will demonstrate that ideas about ‘emotional maturity’ were tied to concepts of Britishness and Britain’s distinctiveness on the world stage. The final section of the chapter will detail the shift in thinking towards the close of the 1950s towards viewing an emphasis on emotional restraint as a negative rather than a positive attribute, which was perceived to be holding Britain back from entering ‘emotional modernity’.

Chapters Two, Three and Four form a ‘package’, exploring the rise of the new ‘transparency’ to its peak in the early 1970s. The second chapter explores the influence of three major contributors to the change in attitudes to emotion during the 1960s which began to break down the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse. The first was ‘situational ethics’ and the discussions of a ‘new morality’ based on ‘honesty’, both to the ‘self’ and to the situation. Whilst there has been no shortage of interest in the tenets of the ‘new morality’ and on its influence in creating a ‘permissive society’, for good or bad, the language about ‘honesty’ which was at its heart is often overlooked.[[44]](#footnote-44) This chapter will consider how the conversation about honesty within personal relationships trickled into popular culture and the ways in which the discussion of sexual acts being neither inherently ‘bad’ or ‘good’ also shifted the dominant thinking about emotions. The discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ was founded on the idea that expression of some emotions was ‘good’ whilst the expression of others was ‘bad’. With the move towards notions of ‘personal responsibility’ and the embracing of ‘risk’ and ‘spontaneity’ during the 1960s, the tenets of 1950s ‘emotional maturity’ began to seem oppressive and unconducive to ‘man come of age’.

Fundamental to the discussion of the ‘new morality’ was the idea that it was ‘love’ which justified sexual acts, not man-made laws, epitomised in the trial of D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1960*.* Chapter Two will demonstrate that in the wake of these public discussions, concerns about the ‘capacity to love’ dominated popular culture. These concerns were informed by new psychological theories of ‘attachment’ which claimed that the emotional capabilities of adults were defined by their emotional experiences during childhood and whether they had received sufficient expression of love. John Bowlby’s theory of ‘maternal deprivation’ was popularised in the 1960s, influencing ideas about the purpose of marriage towards a notion that marriage should be a therapeutic relationship designed to relieve the problems the spouses had engendered in their childhoods. This research fills a gap in the existing literature recently identified by Thomson: ‘Though we benefit from several studies of the work and life of psychologist John Bowlby and one important study of the popularisation and influence on policy of his ideas in the context of the Second World War, there has been little attention given to the story of influence after the war or to the nature of what we might call “Bowlbyism”.’[[45]](#footnote-45) Thomson’s book ‘offers the first account of this important subject’ and argues that ‘the diffusion of such psychological theory is a key to understanding much post-war thinking on the landscape of the child in Britain’.[[46]](#footnote-46) Chapter Two will argue that Bowlbyism is also a key to understanding the shifts in thinking about intimate relationships in the 1960s and 1970s, a link which has been neglected by historians.

Following its analysis of ‘Bowlbyism’, Chapter Two will proceed to consider the influence of another new strand of psychological theory which made its way into the language and thinking of the period: humanistic psychology. As Jessica Grogan has claimed, although it has been largely dismissed within the academic circles in which it originated, associated with the excesses of the 1960s and 1970s, the impact of humanistic psychology on popular culture in its native America, as well as in Britain, was significant. Its fundamentals continue to shape our understandings of selfhood, personal growth and personal relationships.[[47]](#footnote-47) Grogan argues that: ‘Although humanistic psychology was firmly rooted in intellectual and academic principles, it had its broadest impact on the wider culture, where it resonated in realms as diverse as executive management, psychedelic drug use, and civil rights.’[[48]](#footnote-48) She claims that contemporary Americans still:

‘Fail to understand the ways in which our twenty-first century experiences, relationships, and choices owe a unique debt to humanistic psychology. Its language has seeped into our relationships, our self-expression, our self-talk. We speak regularly of our “potential” and our need for “growth”. We look for marriages to be growth-fostering, therapeutic. We may even ask of our spouses the very things one could expect of a humanistic psychotherapist (unconditional acceptance, impeccable emotional attunement, and empathy).’[[49]](#footnote-49)

Like the Americans, British historians have also overlooked the influence of humanistic psychology, and particularly its emphasis on encounter therapy and self-disclosure, on popular understandings of marriage, relationships and selfhood in the 1960s and 1970s, and indeed beyond. This chapter will go some way towards redressing this oversight, but further scholarly research into the cross-cultural influence of humanistic psychology would no doubt be enlightening for the historiography of the period.

Chapter Three will explore how one of the main tenets of humanistic psychology – self-disclosure – became central to expectations of what a successful, fulfilling marriage should involve by the 1970s. Self-disclosure and honest, emotionally authentic and expressive communication were what the new ‘transparent’ relationships of the 1970s were founded on and the first part of Chapter Three will consider the advice about creating and sustaining ‘transparency’. The second part of the chapter is an analysis of the transformation of attitudes to marital conflict and the emphasis by the 1970s on using arguments positively to help strengthen the level of ‘transparency’ and thus intimacy between couples. It will explore the content of the advice literature on the topic as well as the discussion of arguments in women’s magazines and The Press. It will additionally consider interviews with married couples on BBC television documentaries. This section will analyse the ways in which couples attempted to engage with this new emphasis on constructive arguing, as well as exploring the feminist backlash, which emphasised the persistent inequalities of marriage and the prevalence of domestic violence across all classes.

Chapter Four explores how the debates outlined in chapters Two and Three converged in the campaign for ‘male emotional liberation’. This chapter will consider the response to the ‘cult of toughness’ and the ‘taboo on tenderness’ for boys and men, from advocates of a revolution in male emotionality. These included marriage counsellors, authors of marital advice, agony aunts including the prominent Marj Proops, schoolteachers, and other social critics and commentators. This campaign to release men from emotional repression was driven by the conviction that men had been the subjects of a rigorous culture of repression with self-control fundamental to the construction of masculinity. From the second half of the 1950s, these ‘pioneers’ for male feeling encouraged a loosening of restraints on men expressing their feelings with the hope that this would lead to happier individuals, and happier marriages and intimate relationships. The shift in attitudes to male expressiveness will be situated alongside the conflict between newer and older understandings of the male self which Frank Mort and Martin Francis have attributed to the final years of the 1950s.[[50]](#footnote-50)

The analysis will turn to the focus on men’s ability to say ‘I Love You’ which preoccupied the ‘pioneers’ in their advice manuals and agony aunt columns. The chapter will examine how these debates about men’s ability to express their feelings saturated popular culture through analysis of popular novels and The Press. It will consider the role of The Press in presenting men talking about their feelings, including a case study of two famous ‘pin ups’ for the new ‘transparent’ relationships: *The Beatles* stars, Paul McCartney and John Lennon. It will conclude with an ‘anti-transparency’ advocate Mick Jagger, who epitomised a new kind of androgynous masculinity and rebelled against the restraint and notions of duty of his parents’ generation, yet in his embracing of ‘play’, rejected the ‘seriousness’ of the societal emphasis on emotionally intense personal relationships.

Mick Jagger’s words in favour of living an emotionally separate existence from his wife pave the way for Chapter Five which considers the dissatisfaction and rejection of the ‘transparency’ model. It begins with an analysis of the growing exploration in popular culture of the unworkability of these ‘transparent’ relationships, where the realities of day-to-day living together proved uncongenial to the intensive ongoing project of mutual disclosure and emotional outpouring promoted by the experts. The chapter moves to consider the feminist backlash which extended the criticism of the workability of ‘transparency’ to a critique of the discourse’s lack of consideration for the wider power inequalities within society which manifested themselves in intimate relationships. The feminist critique of ‘transparency’ argued that it focused too exclusively on ‘the couple’, abstracting them from society. This was something the commune movement would also take to task in the early 1970s with experiments in ‘taking the pressure off the couple’ in the community setting where ‘transparency’ was forged in all relationships, not just those of romantic intimacy between men and women. Chapter Five concludes with a consideration of the ‘play’ discourse which emerged as a different strand of rejection against the persistent emphasis on ‘emotional maturity’.

**Chapter One:**

***‘The Mature Fifties’***

**‘Emotional Maturity’ and ‘The Culture of Restraint’**

**‘Emotional Maturity’ – Containment, Concealment and Restraint**

In 1951 *Picture Post* featured a series with the title ‘Sex and the Citizen’, in which a panel of ‘experts’ attempted to define and advise on love, sex and marriage in a post-war age. The panel included notable academics and psychologists, a gynaecologist and the chairman of the Birmingham Family Planning Association. In one issue the panel was joined by guest speaker Canon Hugh C. Warner, Secretary of the Church’s Council on Sex, Marriage and the Family, who led that week’s discussion on the ‘appropriate’ kind of love for successful marriage. Warner provided a description of the ‘three components’ of ‘mature love’ which he claimed were the underpinning of marriage as defined by the Church. These were Philia (comradeship), Eros (desire), and Agape (he described this as ‘an attitude to the person as a person and not as the source of sensations or anything else’). His description made repeated reference to the idea of ‘maturity’: ‘The element represented by comradeship – where there really is a sharing of interests. We believe that really mature marriage will always have that element within it.’ The discussion was thus directed towards the need for ‘maturity’ when engaging in intimate, personal relationships, with Meyer Fortes, Professor of Anthropology at Cambridge University, agreeing with Warner’s summary, arguing in relation to the sexual side of marriage in particular that a ‘proper’ sexual relationship ‘is only possible within the framework of a fully mature personal relationship, and for that you need mature personalities.’[[51]](#footnote-51)

The panel had hit upon a ‘buzz word’ of the 1950s. The concepts of ‘maturity’, and the idea of ‘mature personalities’ were entrenched in 1950s culture. Their relevance extended beyond the realms of psychology, church teachings, and the discussions of academics as depicted in the *Picture Post* series, becoming popular sayings adopted by journalists, agony aunts, novelists and everyday Britons. The term ‘maturity’ had become so widespread that it did not always require the prefix of ‘emotional’ for people to understand what it referred to. For it was not maturity of body or mind that dominated the debate, it was emotional maturation. ‘Emotional maturity’ was a psychological term referring to the ability to understand everyday emotions and to be able to control and manage them rationally, within a fixed set of rules and emotion norms which had the interests of both the individual and wider society in mind. ‘Emotional maturity’ encouraged individuals to think objectively about their emotions, to recognise when their emotions were about to get out of control and to learn to stop and think things through when those strong emotions threatened to overtake them and lead them to commit irrational acts. The foundation of ‘emotional maturity’ was being able to identify each emotion and to be able to label them appropriately. A ‘mature personality’ was ‘balanced’ emotionally, they would be able to control their expectations of life and react to disappointments with reasoning rather than with infantile emotional outbursts of anger. As an early study of emotional maturity in adolescence claimed: ‘The adolescent who, when faced with a situation for which he possesses no immediate solution , resorts to anger reactions or temper-tantrums is readily recognised as showing regressive tendencies . His conduct is classified as *childish*.’[[52]](#footnote-52)‘Daydreaming’ was consistently referred to as evidence of an ‘emotionally immature’ personality, whether this was daydreaming about a life that was unattainable or about marrying a pop star or a movie star, this too was deemed to be ‘childish’ and countered the emphasis on being realistic, rational and restrained.

The public discussion of emotions connected them explicitly to health and happiness in black and white fashion. Uncontrolled emotion equalled personal distress due to feelings of regret and shame and unhappiness for those around you upon whom your actions impacted. Controlled emotion on the other hand led to a healthy individual who made themselves and their family and friends happy too, it made you both ‘likeable’ and ‘loveable’, and indeed, ‘successful’ in life. Influenced by psychological theories of crowd and mob behaviour, the discourse of emotional maturity emphasised the idea that emotion was like a contagious disease. If an individual acted in an aggressive, irrational way due to uncontrolled feelings of anger this would make the people around them angry and liable to also ‘fly off the handle’. This would have implications in both a home setting where family relationships break down and become strained or for example, a work setting where the morale of workers is dented by disputes and frustration with each other. Uncontrolled emotion had far-reaching implications.

The more ‘psychological’ and ‘technical’ language of ‘emotional maturity’ – particularly the instructions to eliminate/modify the stimulus of strong emotions or to modify the individual’s response to that stimulus – was often avoided in popularised versions of the discourse as a way to make it palatable. Yet the concept still engendered much confusion. Indeed, those offering advice and warnings on the topic regularly took it for granted that everybody understood what it involved. Consequently significant pressure was placed on individuals, especially teenagers and young people, to understand emotional maturation and to assess how close they were to achieving it. One member of the public, identified only as ‘Twenty Three’, demonstrated this confusion in a letter to the *Daily* *Mail*’s agony aunt Ann Temple in 1953. The letter was a request for an explanation of what ‘emotional maturity’ was exactly and quite when they could expect to achieve it: ‘What is the difference between mental and emotional maturity? At what age should one be able to arrive at both these goals?’ Temple’s reply was that mental maturity ‘has the elusiveness of the rainbow.’ Emotional maturity on the other hand received a more elaborate, thoughtful description reflecting its prominence (although whether it made the concept any clearer for the reader is unknown): ‘Emotional maturity should come with the shedding of adolescence, but then some people remain adolescent all their lives. Being emotionally mature means having the reins of one’s life in one’s hands with the ability to guide and control with wisdom, unencumbered by emotional instability.’[[53]](#footnote-53)

Although ‘Twenty Three’ may have been frustrated by Temple’s refusal to give a specific age at which emotional maturity was likely to have been achieved, others were happy to be more specific. Indeed, twenty three was coincidentally the age appropriated by the National Association of Nursery Matrons when they lodged a complaint against the appointment of a twenty one year old to take charge of an Essex day nursery in 1950. The Association declared that: ‘The view of experienced professional women in nursery work is that no one as young as Miss Evans could attain the degree of emotional maturity necessary in a nursery matron.’[[54]](#footnote-54) According to the Association, she had another two years to wait. The dispute explicitly linked ‘emotional maturity’ to fitness for responsibility and positions of authority, and the obligation therein to wider society, and it is this notion of ‘fitness for responsibility’ which provides the answer as to why the concept of ‘emotional maturity’ gained such currency in the 1950s. For although the concept was not unique to the period – it had its origins earlier in the twentieth century and it is still used widely today, (although with a slightly different meaning where the emphasis on obligation has disappeared in favour of personal growth), the 1950s witnessed a public discussion of it that was unique. Usage of the term was widespread in popular culture and saturated the public’s imagination like never before or since. Indeed although historians have considered the role of restraint and self-control in Britain during the post-war years, the discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ has yet to receive the same attention.[[55]](#footnote-55) This is despite the fact that ‘emotional maturity’ had a central place in the debates about reconstruction – the concept came to be viewed as the foundation for forging a new modernity, feeding into the plans for overcoming the war.

The future of Britain’s home life, of its politics, and of its ability to avoid another devastating war, relied on better education in ‘emotional maturity’ as Dr Alfred Torrie, wartime director of Army Psychiatry, declared in 1951. In his speech addressing the conference of the National Marriage Guidance Council in Harrogate, he argued that ‘Britain as a nation was emotionally immature’. He expressed concern that the preoccupation with sex – with preventing it outside marriage and with making it more fulfilling within marriage through helping couples overcome sexual problems – had overshadowed the emotional side of personal relationships: ‘A large number of cases of marital disharmony were due to emotional immaturity and not to sex difficulties.’ Indeed he argued that the nation had become obsessed with other people’s sexual failings due to a lack of sexual education and a lack of ‘psycho-sexual maturity’, laying the blame at ‘certain Sunday newspapers’ in particular. He forcefully argued that teaching ‘emotional maturity’ had a fundamental place in Britain’s post-war plans to bolster marriages: ‘Some sort of education is necessary in order that we should grow up emotionally. We should not act in an ungrown-up, infantile and non-adult way’.

The accusation of ‘emotional immaturity’ was then extended to the rulers of the country when Torrie turned the discussion away from marriage and towards politics:

‘Emotional immaturity is seen best perhaps in the House of Commons. Reading the debates of the last four or five months you would think you were reading a description of life in a nursery school. The emotionally immature person when faced with a problem, kicked the cat, cursed his wife or the Government or Russia, and looked about for a scapegoat. We must start rearming in a different way, rearming for emotional maturity, making sure that the next generation rearms so that if we cannot prevent the next war we shall at least prevent the war after next. We have a chance of producing that kind of balance between the male and the female attitude to life which will do something to stop a man behaving as if he is in a nursery, with his big bangs and atomic bombs, and so on.’[[56]](#footnote-56)

As Torrie’s outburst demonstrated, the state of heightened anxiety about whether Britain was ‘emotionally mature’ or not and the need to educate (rearm) its citizens in how to achieve emotional maturation was a response to various factors leading to questions about the future of British society in the aftermath of the Second World War. These factors included the need for rational ‘straight thinking’ in order for both social and personal reconstruction to take place: in particular the need for emotionally stable marriages and families in the wake of lowering ages of first marriage. ‘Emotional maturity’ also seemed to provide the answer to the rise of mass culture with its prioritising of sex, depictions of passionate uncontrolled love and rebellious youth. Indeed, fears about juvenile delinquency were a major drive in the debates about educating young people in emotion control. What underpinned it all – and what the example of the dispute about the nursery matron above particularly demonstrates – was the 1950s concept of ‘social responsibility’.

The debates about emotional maturity were part of what Abigail Wills has described as the overarching holistic vision of the ‘social body’ which predominated in 1950s Britain. This was the idea that the well-being of the individual was bound to, in many ways subordinate to, the well-being of society.[[57]](#footnote-57) An individual’s emotional life was not their own in the 1950s, it had the pressure of duty and obligation weighted upon it. As Mathew Thomson has described, post-World-War-Two Britain was a society where emotions were tightly controlled and self-introspection discouraged in the interests of reconstruction: ‘The individual’s relationship to the social, the spiritual and the moral was profoundly important if not central, and self-overcoming, rather than an inward-looking search for authenticity, tended to be the ideal.’[[58]](#footnote-58) Indeed, Hera Cook has analysed the records of group-analytic therapy sessions held in both the 1940s and the 1960s, concluding that the participants during the 1940s were part of a generation that ‘believed they should manage their emotions through will-power and avoidance of introspection.’ [[59]](#footnote-59) She identified a belief that the route to overcoming traumatic events in one’s personal life was through actively repressing emotion, reflecting the wider message of the post-war period that restraint and self-discipline were essential to the task of economic and social recovery. One of the most iconic films of the era, *Brief Encounter* (1945) reiterated the message that social obligation must be prioritised over emotion in the immediate aftermath of the war, as Thomas Dixon concludes: ‘Lean’s film restated for a post-war audience a lesson frequently taught during the preceding six years of war, and before: your own emotions, whether terror, grief, desire, or despair, are of secondary concern, should be kept out of sight, and should be overcome by devotion to others.’[[60]](#footnote-60)

Yet the obsession with ‘emotional maturity’ was couched in terms of the broader ‘culture of restraint’ which had a much longer history than the immediate post-war context. The war had undeniably reinforced the message that free and uncontrolled emotion, anger in particular, had the potential for devastation (with implications for the future of mankind). Moreover, it had required both men and women to repress grief in order to continue with every-day wartime living, be it at the battlefront or on the home front. Pat Jalland has explored the impact of the war on approaches to mourning and grief, concluding that the Second World War reduced the gendered differences in response to grief: ‘The wars made emotional restraint the customary code for all, regardless of gender.’ Prior to the 1940s, she argues, there was an assumption that men could better control their emotions at funerals than women. [[61]](#footnote-61) However, although it had brought the need for emotional control to the fore, the war did not represent a truly seismic shift in Britain’s emotional history and historians including Cook have cautioned against overstating its influence. Cook argues that far from generating the adoption of self-control, it reinforced an already well established emotional culture based on restraint and internalised control of emotions: ‘The bombing and other aspects of war were causing many of the participants intense distress but the war does not explain and nor did it create, the participants’ commitment to this approach to the management of emotion. The emotional lifeworlds of the participants were well-established long before World War Two.’[[62]](#footnote-62) Indeed, this culture had its origins in the previous century.

**The Culture of Restraint**

Historians including Mathew Thomson and Frank Mort have demonstrated that post-war Britain was still in many respects a Victorian society. It saw ‘some strong continuities, particularly in the realm of values, from the late 19th century into at least the 1950s.’[[63]](#footnote-63) A reticence about showing emotion was one of those Victorian values.[[64]](#footnote-64) In his recent book on the history of crying, Thomas Dixon refers to the culture of restraint as the ‘age of the stiff upper lip’- an era of nearly 100 years ‘running roughly from the death of Charles Dickens in 1870 to the death of Winston Churchill in 1965, and at its zenith during the First and Second World Wars.’[[65]](#footnote-65) He describes the popularisation of the ‘stiff upper lip’ ideal in Britain in the last third of the nineteenth century at the same time as there was a cultural ‘turning away from sentimentalism towards stoicism and emotional restraint’ and coinciding with the rise of imperialism and jingoism.[[66]](#footnote-66) David Frum in his analysis of the 1970s makes the same point that the shift towards emotional expressiveness, openness and disclosure he identifies in the 1970s represented not a new phenomenon but a ‘rediscovery of feeling’ following decades of repression: ‘The “Oprah-ization” of public life is usually talked of as if it were a brand-new thing. It is in reality the return of something antique. A hundred years ago, middle-class life in Britain and America was bathed in the gush of emotions.’ Like Dixon, he argues that the age of restraint was a reaction against the romanticism and sentimentality of Georgian and high Victorian culture, positing its commencement a little later than Dixon because his book is concerned primarily with America: ‘We think now of the dislike of emotional fuss and show as generically old-fashioned. It is probably truer to say that the laconic style we associate with the World War Two generation came into fashion in the 1920s and went out in the 1970s, to be replaced by a style reminiscent of the moist, voluptuous sentimentality of a hundred years ago.’[[67]](#footnote-67)

The ‘stiff upper lip’ according to Dixon, praised the ‘ability to put on a display of bravery and to hide one’s true feelings in times of trial and suffering.’[[68]](#footnote-68) This was a turn ‘towards the disciplined and restrained…It was not so much a question of eliminating all feeling, as of restricting the domains and the ways in which feelings might be expressed.’[[69]](#footnote-69) Yet Dixon argues that even before the establishment of the ‘stiff upper lip’ ideal in the nation’s consciousness, the importance of emotional control and restraint had long been instilled in the minds of boys and men through the experience of educational institutions, and not just public schools. Moreover, Victorian and Edwardian parenting manuals promoted the idea that children should not express their emotions but ‘suffer in silence’ so that they did not use tears as a manipulative tool.[[70]](#footnote-70) Psychologists were still grappling with the cultural legacy of the Victorian approach to childhood and masculinity a century later, as will be explored in the following chapters.

Yet by the twentieth century the ‘stiff upper lip’ extended to women too. Although Victorian women may have been ‘liable to hysteria and fits of tears’, the rise of the female suffrage campaign provided a very ‘modern’ reason for women to hide their emotions.[[71]](#footnote-71) The campaign sought to counter the repeated argument that women were ‘too emotional’ to participate in professional and political life. A ’newly firm femininity’, Dixon asserts, ‘was just one part of the process through which the “stiff upper lip” mentality was extended beyond a cadre of elite men, to include all classes and both sexes.’[[72]](#footnote-72) By the inter-war period, the ‘modern’ emotionless girl was a cultural stereotype lauded and derided in equal measure. On the one hand, women were required to be ‘emotionless’ to take on traditionally ‘masculine’ roles outside the home and ‘in the office’ where there was no place for ‘hysterics’. Yet on the other hand, ‘cold’ women were criticised for becoming too like men, and ‘men did not like them’.[[73]](#footnote-73) Indeed, throughout the twentieth century advice to women about their emotional lives continued to be contradictory and complex, imbued with double standards and inconsistencies. At a time when society was moving towards greater acceptance of emotional expression, amidst an outright campaign from marital experts for men to ‘overflow’ with emotion, the idea that women were ‘unhealthily’ emotional continued to carry weight, as will be explored later in the thesis.

There was an assumption by many social critics that working class culture was more emotionally expressive than that of the middle classes, summed up in Professor Carstairs’ claim in his 1962 Reith lectures that:

‘Life in working class streets is tougher than in middle-class suburbs. In the former, disputes are more open and more often lead to blows. This is true, too, for expressions of sorrow and gaiety, as well as for anger. In contrast, emotional reserve is cultivated by the middle class and by those who aspire to middle-class status. Their feelings tend to be bottled up and their anger smoulders underground or is turned against themselves.’[[74]](#footnote-74)

However, Cook, like Dixon, has drawn attention to the pervasiveness of the culture of restraint across all classes, situating it in the context of ‘respectability’ and ‘deference’. She claims that the inter-war period witnessed an emphasis on the emotions people felt – not just the ones they expressed – being rational and sensible, and that by the Second World War, all classes were swept up in supporting a culture that valorised emotional restraint and endurance. She argues that the ‘stiff upper lip’ ideal worked for all classes as it underpinned a ‘deferential’ society. It was integral to the idea of respectability which had been central to the forming of middle class identity, and from the late nineteenth century had been assimilated into working class culture too. It also tapped into a tradition of prioritising economic needs over emotional expression amongst the working classes – controlling emotion became a ‘way to get on’ and maintain economic security as uncontrolled behaviour could lead to dismissal from employment. For members of the working classes it was part of ‘accepting the control of them by others’ and of ‘surviving’.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Cook’s research has demonstrated the intense commitment of both working and middle class people to these ideals. The 1940s participants in the group therapy sessions she has analysed experienced deep shame when they did not conform to their aspiration of controlling their emotions, and the fact that they would not reject the beliefs even when undergoing a process of self-analysis reveals the dominance of the ‘culture of restraint’.[[76]](#footnote-76) Indeed, in her memoir, writer and sixties veteran Jenny Diski recalled the pervasiveness of attitudes about respectability in her childhood years: ‘Our parents impressed on its children the need to conform. Working-class or middle-class, respectability, in the sense of not doing anything the neighbours didn’t want you to think they did, was a very high priority.’[[77]](#footnote-77)

‘Emotional maturity’, therefore, had a largely receptive audience already rehearsed in the language of control and restraint. Yet how, as Torrie desired, could a societal education in emotional maturation be instigated? In America this problem was tackled overtly, within the education system itself, through the use of ‘classroom’ or ‘social guidance’ films on the topic, and school and college courses with the title ‘mental hygiene’, for although ‘emotional maturity’ was required for all ages, the main targets of this ‘education’ would inevitably be young people. Ken Smith, author of *Mental Hygiene: Classroom Films 1945-1970* (1999), described these films as ‘a uniquely American experiment in social engineering’.[[78]](#footnote-78) An established part of the school curriculum by the early 1950s, the films covered the period from the late-1940s until the early 1960s when they came to be viewed as outdated and unsophisticated. In just over a decade, thousands of films were produced covering a wide range of topics including advice on dating, manners, the responsibilities of car ownership, and ways to ‘improve your personality’, yet many of the films focused more keenly on emotion management. With titles such as *Act Your Age* (1949), *Control Your Emotions* (1950), *Understand Your Emotions* (1950) and *Emotional Maturity* (1957), they used ‘scare tactics’ to warn teenagers of the terrible consequences of being out of control of one’s emotions and one’s actions. Modern morality plays, the plots usually featured a story of the rise of the ‘good kid’ (emotionally mature) and the fall of the ‘bad kid’ (emotionally immature).

Intended to keep teenagers ‘on the straight and narrow’, social guidance films were a response to the concerns over teenage behaviour which had intensified following the war and throughout the 1950s due to rapid cultural changes.[[79]](#footnote-79) Indeed the 1950s was characterised by a preoccupation with youth and the spectre of juvenile delinquency in both America and Britain.[[80]](#footnote-80) In America, these films presented ‘emotional maturity’ as the route to reformation for juvenile delinquents and the means of turning them into responsible members of society. Once these young men (for it was young men who featured in the films explicitly targeting delinquency) had the tools to identify and understand their feelings of isolation, sullenness and anger (the emotions associated with teenage delinquency), they were able to manage and control them, eliminating the need to give them an outlet in the form of violence, vandalism or truancy. Girls were equally the focus of the films concerned with managing emotions yet the feelings and behaviour associated with being ‘emotionally immature’ were drawn from the world of dating, love and preparation for marriage. Jealousy and lust, flitting from one boy to another, lashing out at love rivals and rejecting parental advice were the main culprits for causing the downfall of ‘immature’ girls.

Education in ‘mental hygiene’ never took off in British schools in the same way as it did in America which goes some way to explaining why the impact of the discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ has been overlooked, regarded as a largely American phenomenon. Yet although the education in ‘emotionally maturity’ may not have been quite so organised, coherent or explicit, it was nevertheless hugely influential, penetrating the minds of young people through the alternative mediums of marriage and relationship advice books, agony aunt columns and teen magazines. Rather than a compulsory education in ‘emotional maturity’, British youth received their education in emotion during their leisure time.

**Marriage Crisis**

The focus on dating and marriage advice as the key site for instilling the message of ‘emotional maturity’ reflected post-war concerns about the stability of marriage. The notion of a ‘marriage crisis’ took hold in the immediate post-war years, the result many believed of an increase in divorce consciousness since 1945.[[81]](#footnote-81) Wartime pressure on marital relationships had paved the way for an expansion in access to divorce. Due to the wider provision of Legal Aid from 1949, the divorce courts had opened their doors to those who previously would have been unable to shoulder the financial costs. Alongside this new accessibility ran ever increasing opposition to the way divorce was handled in Britain. The Divorce Law was based on the principle of ‘matrimonial offence’ which meant that divorce could only be obtained if one of the parties admitted ‘guilt’. In practice this usually meant adultery. The regular use of ‘private investigators’ and ‘set-ups’ when couples resorted to faking adultery was generating a feeling that it had all become somewhat distasteful and dishonest, and that there was a lack of respect for the law. When Mass Observation conducted its ‘Little Kinsey’ survey in 1949 it tested the public appetite for reform, finding that one in three of the people interviewed would prefer the principle of ‘irretrievable breakdown’ of the relationship.[[82]](#footnote-82) Yet, when the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce debated the topic between 1951 and 1955, it concluded that ‘divorce-mindedness’ had swept the nation, identifying ‘a tendency to take the duties and responsibilities of marriage less seriously than formerly.’[[83]](#footnote-83) Marriage as an institution and as a relationship, it claimed, was under serious threat in the 1950s, thus it decided that no changes should be made to the current law.[[84]](#footnote-84)

The anxieties displayed in the Commission’s report exaggerated the notion of imminent collapse. Divorce actually continued to be highly unusual throughout the period, ‘running at an annual rate of around two divorces per thousand people’ after the backlog of cases generated by the war had receded.[[85]](#footnote-85) Social surveys of the period debunked the claims of the Commission that Britain was in the grip of ‘divorce-mindedness’ revealing instead that people continued to think of marriage as a lifelong commitment. In 1959 the Population Investigation Committee in collaboration with Gallup Poll carried out a survey in which they found that: ‘Even in the context of a growing awareness of the possibility of divorce, few of the informants seemed prepared to envisage that they might resort to it. At this stage these people did not typically regard marriage “as a temporary affair with no degree of permanency”.’[[86]](#footnote-86)

In fact marriage had never been so popular or entered into at such young ages. In 1953, thirty percent of the wives in England and Wales married before they were 21.[[87]](#footnote-87) With young people marrying in their late teens and early twenties the gap between childhood and adulthood was being significantly reduced and psychologists feared that although mature in body, people were entering into the demands of marriage still ‘emotionally immature’. Influenced by psychological studies which emphasised the link between ‘immaturity’ and ‘damaged’ violent and delinquent adult lives, ‘experts’ were concerned that young people were taking infantile attitudes into adulthood, jumping from being children one day to part of a married couple the next. It was considered essential that teenagers were educated in ‘emotional maturity’ before they made that leap so that uncontrolled emotion did not compromise their chances of finding fulfilment in marriage, making that marriage last, and giving their own children the chance of an emotionally (muted) stable childhood.

The anxieties about how young people would cope with marriage at younger ages were driven by the realisation that higher expectations of the marriage relationship being personally fulfilling and more emotionally involved (entered into for love), rendered it inherently unstable. It also cast it as something that required the commitment to ‘work at it’ for it ‘was important enough to merit work.’[[88]](#footnote-88) The conviction that marriages required work and that society required marriages to be strong to ensure social stability generated a boom in marriage preparation, marriage counselling and marital advice.

Marcus Collins has described this upsurge in marriage advice as a movement of ‘marriage reform’, defined as: ‘A school of thought in favour of a measured revision of matrimonial law, enlightened sexual attitudes and a radical restructuring of marital roles in the wake of women’s emancipation.’[[89]](#footnote-89) Marriage reformers considered themselves to be the saviours of marriage and the ‘agents of its evolution to a higher and happier state’ and rigorously promoted ‘companionate marriage’ based on equality.[[90]](#footnote-90) They included the founders of the National Marriage Guidance Council (NMGC) in 1946 – A. Herbert Gray, David R. Mace and Edward F. Griffith – as well as their colleagues and fellow Christians Eustace Chesser, Mary MaCaulay, Helena Wright, Marie Stopes and Barbara Cartland.[[91]](#footnote-91) The advice manuals produced by these ‘reformers’ flooded the market and as Collins states, these individuals exercised a ‘virtual monopoly over marriage and sex manuals in the half century following the First World War.’[[92]](#footnote-92)

The manuals promoted the ideal of ‘companionate marriage’ – an exclusive emotional and sexual relationship – which in itself was not ‘new’.[[93]](#footnote-93) What was different, claims Collins, was the insistence on ‘equality’. Collins used the term ‘mutuality’ to separate the twentieth-century model of companionate marriage from its earlier manifestations, concluding that these reformers could not reconcile husbandly authority to ‘loving devotion between spouses’ as had been the case in previous centuries.[[94]](#footnote-94) Thus, the ‘overbearing patriarch’ was replaced by the ‘domesticated husband and father’ in this vision, yet as Collins shows, what was being promoted was ‘equality of status not of function entailing the revision rather than the abolition of the household division of labour’ and Chapter Five of this thesis, will consider the feminist critique of the ‘new transparency’ of the 1970s for its continued failure to address unequal power relations.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The redefinition of marriage promoted by these ‘reformers’ led to queries about the respectability of the NMGC when a Departmental Committee was set up in 1948 to consider providing financial assistance for a nationwide marriage guidance counselling organisation. The debates focussed on one of the aims of the organisation to promote birth control. Indeed, Jane Lewis has claimed that although the aims of marriage guidance were conservative – to strengthen marriage in the service of national stability – its leaders and its subject matter were often ‘much more radical’.[[96]](#footnote-96) However, the NMGC’s claim to be ‘an antidote to rising divorce rates’ was the right card to play in the immediate aftermath of war and the committee recommended the provision of funds to aid the organisation.[[97]](#footnote-97) With this ‘legitimisation’ the advice culture of the ‘marriage reformers’ grew and grew and with it, the advice to practice ‘emotional maturity’.

**Manuals for ‘Maturity’**

Eustace Chesser was a Harley Street psychiatrist and gynaecologist, marriage counsellor and popular authority on love and marriage who featured in radio broadcasts on the topic, as well as in newspapers and women’s magazines throughout the period. He would also go on to become a regular contributor to television documentaries about the future of marriage in the 1960s. He was a campaigner for the removal of the ‘secrecy’ surrounding sex which he argued had done a great deal of harm to mankind and his advice manual *Love Without Fear: A Plain Guide to Sex Technique for Every Married Adult* which was originally published in 1941, was the subject of an obscenity case in 1942. [[98]](#footnote-98) It was re-issued in various revised versions throughout the 1950s. Besides its intention to help bring the subject of marital sex into the light, it was a forceful statement on the type of love required for happy marriage in a post-war age.

Throughout the 1950s Chesser was an outspoken proponent of the need for ‘emotional maturity’ in personal relationships. In 1957 he claimed that there was a clear ‘type’ of person who ended up in the divorce courts: ‘From the psychological point of view, one type predominates. The emotionally immature represent an extremely large proportion.’ He continued his attack on emotional immaturity with the following warning: ‘The key question is of personal emotional fitness for the responsibilities of marriage…If you are incapable of mature love, then you are not fit for marriage – *any* marriage, to anybody.’ [[99]](#footnote-99) He went on to describe the traits of emotional immaturity as ‘an infantile obsession with the self and a propensity to indulge in overblown emotions and fantasies’.[[100]](#footnote-100)

In his ‘Guide to Sexual Behaviour for Young Adults’ published in 1960, Chesser devoted an entire section to the ‘emotional maturity’ problem, even devising a questionnaire which he considered a ’rough guide’ to assessing whether a girl was emotionally mature enough to become a wife. It included such questions as: ‘Do you collect “pin-ups”?’ and ‘Do you often cry?’[[101]](#footnote-101) The concerns surrounding teenage weddings and infantile marriage partners influenced the book’s chapter dedicated to ‘The Teenage Bride’, which reflected the accepted thinking on the topic, that when it came to love and romantic relationships, boys and girls were different ‘in their emotional make-up.’[[102]](#footnote-102) Chesser asserted that, whereas for a man love was ‘a thing apart’, ‘it is a woman’s whole existence.’[[103]](#footnote-103) He made it clear that it was girls and women who were most in need of advice on controlling their desire for love. Although ‘emotional maturity’ was deemed essential for both genders, women were portrayed as naturally more connected to their emotions than men, more able to express them and thus more likely to be swept away by them. Indeed, romance novelist turned author of marriage advice Barbara Cartland argued in 1955 that: ‘Love is a man’s pastime but a woman’s whole life.’[[104]](#footnote-104) In her subsequent manual, *Love, Life and Sex* published two years later, Cartland reiterated the point that women had an innate propensity to be consumed by love: ‘Even in the most perfect examples of masculine love only part of himself is affected, whereas in the case of a woman she loves with complete absoluteness – her body, mind, her spirit.’[[105]](#footnote-105) This powerful desire for love, she claimed, became evident early in young women and was linked in their minds to achieving female adulthood: ‘It is this instinctive desire to develop her womanhood that influences a girl to fall in love with love.’[[106]](#footnote-106) This desire to fall in love with love was portrayed as potentially devastating for young women because teenage courtships were deemed to be based on lust and sex, not love at all: ‘Adolescent love in the great majority of cases can only be a limited relationship. All its heartbreaks and misunderstandings arise from a blindness to this simple truth. Because it is essentially sexual it is less likely to be permanent. It is a kind of play. It is love in the nursery stage – love without responsibility.’[[107]](#footnote-107)The advice focused on making girls aware of their responsibilities when it came to powerful emotions – they had to ‘police’ the emotional content of these young relationships. As Langhamer has shown in her analysis of women’s magazines, ‘the primary responsibility for controlling passion and thereby safeguarding love lay with the woman.’[[108]](#footnote-108)

Yet boys required emotional control in personal relationships too as experts believed they were inherently more likely to behave violently when met with feelings of disappointment, jealousy and anger. Moreover, although not driven by a ‘natural desire for love’, they were driven by lust and sexual desire, and could quite as easily find themselves swept away in relationships that were not ‘mature’. Like women, they were also at the mercy of the booming romance industry which exacerbated the anxiety about ‘emotional maturity’. Chesser noted that: ‘Men, too, are enslaved by the vision of a Fairy Princess [who] will one day deign to marry the poor dreamer [and whom] he will serve with all his being.’[[109]](#footnote-109) Evidence from social surveys supported their conclusion that boys and men enjoyed fantasising about finding an intense, perfect love as much as girls and women. Madeline Kerr had found in her study of a Liverpool slum in the first half of the 1950s, that adolescent boys had a ‘romantic view of marriage’ and held love in such high esteem that they believed they would prize it above all other social considerations when they met the girl of their dreams.’ [[110]](#footnote-110) Manual authors believed that the romance industry’s message that teenagers came of age through passionate love and finding ‘The One’ was a destructive force on society and insisted that quite the opposite emotional route led to adulthood – restraint.

**The Romantic Delusion**

The mid-twentieth century had witnessed a peak in romance culture with the new romantic scripts framing passionate love as something everyone was entitled to and should wait for. These scripts were transmitted through the medium of film by the burgeoning movie industry in Hollywood, through pop songs, but also in romance novels, magazines and newspapers, as well as the blossoming arena of commodity advertising. The crucial role of popular culture in promoting ‘love’ and ‘romance’ in the twentieth century has been widely explored.[[111]](#footnote-111) Recently, Stephen Brooke has argued that cinema and popular music were ‘critical vehicles in the circulation of discourses of love and romance’, with ‘love’ dominating both film scripts and pop song lyrics in the period up to the 1960s.[[112]](#footnote-112) Indeed, one *Daily Mirror* article from the beginning of 1954 declared that a new surge in romantic films would generate a cultural return to ‘sentimentality’ following the gritty realities of war and its aftermath. The article claimed that this ‘love comeback’ would be ‘none of that hexy, sexy love that gets an X-y from the Censor and keeps families away from the cinema. But the good old type of sentimental love that plucked at the heartstrings in “Rebecca”, “Gone With the Wind” and “The Man in Grey”.’ The answer to the question of why romantic pictures had declined in recent years was, according to the article, because ‘so many writers decided to cash in on the post-war demand for the grim and the tough.’ ‘Pioneer of the lovers-comeback movement, Earl St John, production chief at Pinewood’ studios declared he was ‘confident that by the end of the year grim violent realism will be out and sentimental romance in.’[[113]](#footnote-113) Although the romance discourse had never truly gone away, St John was right that sentimental love was back in fashion and as Claire Langhamer argues, by the mid-1950s the ideas of ‘true love’ and ‘love at first sight’ had become common place.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Yet the type of relationships portrayed in romantic films was not the kind of emotional intimacy to provide a long-term stability in the eyes of the relationship experts. These depictions of relationships between men and women which foregrounded the irrationality of love and submission to desire were the antithesis of appropriate post-war loving. Branding the romance industry as merchants of ‘The Romantic Delusion’, Chesser had claimed that:

‘The innumerable books, sermons, and broadcasts which treat the romantic conception of love as the very soul of “high tone” are responsible for the degraded idea of love which is so widely prevalent. They tend to deride the love which is likely to last. They enthrone the temporary kind, which ought never to be termed love but always infatuation.’[[115]](#footnote-115)

Indeed, believing that most people’s idea of ‘being in love’ was derived from romantic stories, Chesser actually campaigned against people ‘in love’ ever getting married. He argued that people in the modern age were regularly ‘marrying someone who does not exist save in their own imagination’.[[116]](#footnote-116) They had become the dupes of Hollywood and romance novelists, engaging themselves to ‘a dream-like creation instead of a real person while in the throes of infatuation.’[[117]](#footnote-117) In 1957 he suggested that ‘almost every adult knows people who have married while they were obviously “in love”, only to become bored with each other after a time; possibly a very short time.’[[118]](#footnote-118) He gave the example of one of his clients, Linda, ‘an intelligent girl of twenty two’ whose ‘idea of love was based on romantic fiction.’ He laboured the point that her early marriage had ended in divorce because she was unable to adapt to the reality that it ‘bore no resemblance to such idyllic descriptions.’[[119]](#footnote-119) The romance literature Linda had read had generated juvenile daydreams in her mind about what the relationship involved, compounding her emotional immaturity and consequently her unfitness for marriage at such a young age.

In order to ensure that his advice about ‘emotionally maturity’ was heeded, Chesser repeated the idea of ‘danger’ to emphasise his point with the explicit intention of making young people scared to fall in love: ‘There are real DANGERS in falling in love! There are dangers, dire dangers, inseparable from the state of infatuation, and they are serious enough to render it extremely undesirable that those “in love” should marry.’[[120]](#footnote-120) The potential ‘danger’ was something Mary Macaulay, co-founder of the Merseyside branch of the NMGC also focused on in her manual *The Art of Marriage* (1952): ‘It is very important for young people to realise what is happening to them so that they may enjoy its ecstasies and yet be aware of its dangers.’ Macaulay reiterated that knowledge and self-control should be enlisted by young people to manage their romantic lives: ‘Once this overwhelming emotion has got a firm hold it is almost impossible to shake off at will: but it can sometimes be avoided if one becomes aware of its approach and feels that for any reason it is more likely to bring sorrow than happiness.’[[121]](#footnote-121)

Yet Chesser did not deny that love was required for a successful marriage, only that it had to be the right kind of love – ‘mature’ love. He placed the love emotion in two different categories. ‘Romantic Love’ and ‘Genuine Love’. Inherent in this distinction was the understanding that the former was temporary, unreal and deceptive – not truly ‘love’ at all and certainly no basis for marriage. The latter by contrast was long-term, a kind of love from which permanent marriage could be forged: ‘The false romantic “love” rarely passes the test of months. The genuine love, which alone is worthy of the name, can stand the test of years.’[[122]](#footnote-122) He continued with the instruction that: ‘You owe it to yourself to give reason and common sense a chance in your love.’[[123]](#footnote-123) Ten years later he succinctly claimed that: ‘People “in love” want to make love together. People who love want to make life together – and living is a full-time job.’[[124]](#footnote-124) In appealing to the ‘individual’ to protect themselves from hurt and unhappiness, Chesser’s advice to allow ‘reason’ to prevail would ensure that marriage and social stability would also be protected from breaking down.

General Secretary and Director of the NMGC, David Mace, also made it clear in his 1952 manual that courtships were not just the affairs of individuals but also of society: ‘A potential marriage means a potential family, and society must be interested in that.’[[125]](#footnote-125) He too derided the societal obsession with passionate love, arguing that that ‘falling in love’ was merely a fashionable phrase, and a concept which had been attached to the experience of lust and physical desire for another person: ‘In recent years few misconceptions about the relations between men and women have produced more unhappiness than the belief that the test of a couple’s suitability for marriage is the intensity of the passions which they arouse in one another.’[[126]](#footnote-126) He continued that the current boom in romance was a ‘reaction from the coldly utilitarian standards of the past’, and that it was ‘natural enough that there should have been a period in which romantic love was given exaggerated importance as a prerequisite for marriage.’ However, he urged his readers to realise that ‘no purpose is served by reacting against one extreme and then swinging to the other.’[[127]](#footnote-127)

Both Mace and Chesser referred to the ‘emotionally immature’ concept of the soulmate as being misleading and potentially devastating: Mace branded it ‘an illusion’:

‘Sometimes people have tried out marriage with a second partner before it has dawned on them that the soul-mate idea is an illusion, and that success in marriage is rather a question of finding a generally suitable partner and then settling down to the process of mutual adaptation. They would have saved themselves a great deal of trouble, their discarded mates a great deal of misery, and society a great deal of dislocation, if they had grasped this fact clearly in the beginning. What we know about marriage today suggests that most of us could succeed equally with any number of possible partners.’[[128]](#footnote-128)

Approving of Mace’s pragmatic view of spouse-selection, Chesser wrote in 1960 that: ‘It is not true that out of all the boys you will meet there is only one whom you can love. There are, in fact, plenty of alternatives for every boy and girl.’[[129]](#footnote-129) What these authors of pre-marital advice emphasised was that ‘compatibility’ and ‘suitability’ were to be prioritised over passionate, transcendent love.

Newspaper and magazine agony aunts were also vehicles for information on how to achieve ‘emotional maturity’ and regularly engaged with the ‘problems’ generated by the ‘Romantic Delusion’. For example, in the spring of 1956, Mary Brown, agony aunt in the *Daily Mirror* received a letter from Jim, a thoughtful, puzzled, nineteen year old serviceman desperately seeking advice on how to negotiate the competing discourses of romance on the one hand and ‘emotional maturity’, restraint and pragmatism on the other. Jim wrote:

‘Recently you quoted the principal of a marriage bureau as saying that people ‘grow into’ love. I thought love just happened, like an earthquake. I thought I loved my girlfriend when we met. Now I’m not so sure. I listen to my mates but they’re not much help. I go to the pictures and read books and I’m no wiser. So would you please tell me what love is? How many loves can you have? And can people ‘grow into’ love?’

Mary’s reply contained the example of a friend who had submitted to the dangerous powers of ‘falling in love’ as depicted by the romance industry, only this love was directed towards a married man. Inevitably the friend ended up heartbroken and alone. Whilst she did not condemn the friend, acknowledging that she had lost all control over her actions as a result of ‘being in love’, she sought to demonstrate that the changes brought about through passionate love unrestrained by pragmatism, could be devastating for the individual and her family:

‘It’s funny how the most difficult questions always come from young people. Some men see love as a perpetual physical chase. Some girls dream of a fairy-tale lover who is a cross between Jeff Chandler and Tony Curtis. Jim thinks emotional love should happen like an earthquake. Sometimes it does – and in the process may change you as it did a friend of mine. Till she fell in love she was honest, considerate, kind. The man was married. They had to meet in secret. She left her ailing mother alone and became a scheming liar. If he had asked her to commit a crime she would have done it so completely was she under his spell. Yet I could not condemn her. Love for her was a violent tornado in which she was caught up and carried away.’[[130]](#footnote-130)

Examples from agony aunt columns demonstrate the reach of romance discourses and the fact that they had the potential to cause great confusion when in competition with the discourse of restraint. Young people struggled to reconcile the advice to be cautious when choosing a marriage partner and that marriage was hard work, with the sentimental depictions on screen, on the radio or on the page: ‘What I want to know is – when you love someone can you still get mad with him sometimes? Shouldn’t love be all honey and roses like you read in all the stories?’[[131]](#footnote-131) The influence of romance discourses upon behaviour and subjectivity has been the focus of considerable debate, with recent work concluding that other factors tempered this influence with realism.[[132]](#footnote-132) Brooke concludes that although ‘popular culture undoubtedly informed everyday experiences of love and romance, affording aural and visual landscapes of idealisation…this did not displace emotional realism and material pragmatism…The consumers of discourses of love and romance in film and music never seem to have imbibed uncritically the romantic ideals proffered them on the screen or in songs, even if they did not reject them completely.’ [[133]](#footnote-133)

However, contemporary critics were less positive about the relationship between popular depictions of love and romance and ‘real life’. The relationship experts whose manuals rallied against the ‘romantic delusion’ were part of a wider critique of popular culture that focused on its dangerous potential as a promoter of escapism. Writing in 1948, Pearl Jephcott claimed that the romantic messages girls received through watching films and reading love stories were ‘dope’ denying these girls the chance to understand what love truly was, something only an education in the ‘higher’ culture of ‘great people’ could provide. Moreover, Jephcott argued that depictions of love in popular culture were encouraging diminished emotional restraint:

‘If nothing awakens them to the potentialities of ‘great’ love (as distinct from crooner-style romance) they cannot be expected to exercise the self-discipline and the fearlessness without which it cannot develop…They have to be made aware of the magnitude and the scale on which ‘love’ may operate. For that they must begin to make contact with the real as opposed to the Hollywood exponents, which means that they must become acquainted with what “great” people, the poets, the scientists, the painters and the saints have to teach. ’[[134]](#footnote-134)

These critics were the latest in a long line of thinkers who had worried about the influence of popular culture on the minds of the masses, originating with the late-Victorian cultural critic Matthew Arnold.[[135]](#footnote-135) In the thirties, Q. D. Leavis had argued against the declining standards of literature with the rise of a popular reading market.[[136]](#footnote-136) The Frankfurt School had produced Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Entertainment* (1944)whose chapter on ‘The Culture Industry’ argued that popular culture was akin to a factory reeling out standardised goods which served the purpose of pacifying the masses. Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) picked up the thread, becoming the classic statement on the devastating influence of modern mass culture on ‘traditional’ working class culture in the post-war era. In Hoggart’s view romance as portrayed in films, novels and pop songs was an empty, corrupting influence on the vigour of working class people. The idea that ‘love conquers all’ was a ‘sedative’ fed to the masses as a means to dull their senses, their aspirations and their ability to be connected to the outside world:

‘The sedative is provided in two connected forms. First, though it may sometimes seem as though one is doing nothing with one’s life, one can at least (you’re free, aren’t you?) pretend and dream and go on making wishes. Second, if one sometimes has the beginnings of a feeling of inadequacy, one may stifle it by remembering that love conquers and excuses and makes up for all…One may find oneself often unable to cope with that outside world. But there is always love, a warm burrow, as a remover of worry; love borne on an ingratiating treacle of melody. ‘Snug as a bug in a rug’, people used to say; now the songs speak of ‘little nests’, and their tone has enormous undertones of submerged self-pity.’[[137]](#footnote-137)

Hoggart went so far as to say that the romantic delusion and the prime place of ‘love’ in post-war popular culture had become a substitute for religion: ‘[Love] may not be merely linked with religion (as in the older songs) but made a substitute for religion. Love can be the end of everything.’[[138]](#footnote-138)

There was a strong conviction during this period that popular culture threatened ‘emotional maturity’. In his study of intellectuals and popular culture in America during the post-war era, Daniel Horowitz quotes cultural critic Gilbert Seldes as despairing of mass culture’s ‘contagious infection and its power to go steadily to lower levels of general intelligence and emotional maturity.’[[139]](#footnote-139) Indeed, writing in 1963, Mr Leonard Richards, new president of the institute of Handicraft Teachers in England, declared the necessity of ‘emotional maturity’ to coping with the sudden increase in leisure time many Britons would experience as the result of the new automation age. In an article for the *Daily Mail* titled, ‘Danger of Time on Your Hands’, Richards expressed the concern that all the extra leisure time meant that people would be the receivers of even more popular entertainment, reduced to sitting in front of the television wasting time rather than pursuing more ‘fulfilling’ activities: ‘Versatility and emotional maturity are essential qualities in using the greater freedom of the future to become better balanced men and women, rather than people who are just killing time.’[[140]](#footnote-140) Again, the connection between being a ‘balanced’ individual and ‘emotional maturity’ was made clear. The speed and intensity of modern mass entertainment was viewed as a threatening influence on the ‘balanced personality’ as it prioritised immediate emotional response over caution, thoughtfulness and restraint.

**Holding Back to Avoid Emotional Pain**

Whilst much of the concern about the romantic delusion focused on its power over teenagers and young people on the cusp of courtship and marriage, the discourse of emotional maturity had as much resonance in the public discussions of married life. When it came to already married couples, ‘emotional maturity’ essentially meant holding back so as to avoid ‘hurting’ both yourself and the other person. Too much emotional expression, it was believed, had the potential to destroy a marriage with the implications that would have for social instability. Malcolm Bradbury mocked the fashion for 1950s ‘maturity’ in his 1975 novel *The History Man* which followed the lives of fashionable couple The Kirks and their attempts to embrace the 1970s notion of ‘personal growth’. Susceptible to the latest trends, academic Howard moves from an obsession with being ‘mature’ in the 1950s to an obsession with liberation and personal fulfilment by the late-1960s. Referring to their life in the 1950s, Bradbury set the scene thus: ‘Howard talked often at this time of “maturity” – “maturity”, he explained later, when he preferred other words, happened to be a key concept of the apolitical fifties – and spoke of it as a moral value he prized above all others. He was given to explaining their lives as very serious and mature, largely because they worried a lot about upsetting each other.’[[141]](#footnote-141) As Bradbury made clear, the notion of ‘maturity’ existed in a time before personal politics, a time before the breaking down of the old moral order. A decade later and ‘the word ‘mature’ had gone, outdated because of its heavy, Victorian plush, moral associations.’[[142]](#footnote-142) In the 1950s however, dispensers of relationship advice sought to ensure that couples did ‘worry a lot about upsetting each other’ and encouraged them to hold back on what they revealed to their marriage partner so as to avoid dangerous or uncomfortable emotional responses. The kinds of emotions they should express in front of each other were tightly circumscribed in the advice of the period.

Yet the advice that there were some things you should mention to your marriage partner and others that you shouldn’t was entrenched in the advice culture long before the 1950s as Deborah Cohen has shown. Referring to the popular 1930s agony aunt Leonora Eyles, Cohen writes: ‘Above all, she laid down the rules about when to talk – and when to remain silent.’[[143]](#footnote-143) In particular, confessing to affairs or to pre-marital relationships was not encouraged. This persisted well into the 1950s.

In the summer of 1955, Mary Brown advised one of the *Daily Mirror’s* readers, a woman in her mid-twenties writing from the West Country, on whether she should confess her pre-marital sexual experience to her fiancé. The title of the article was ‘When a Secret Haunts a New Love, Should a Girl Tell?’ and the letter Brown referred to contained the following confession:

‘When I was eighteen I fell madly in love. And because I thought we were going to be married I let him love me completely for a little time. One day he told me he was already married and it has taken me eight years to win back my self-respect and any trust in men. I am now engaged to be married to a wonderful man who means everything to me. When he proposed I tried to tell him about myself but he said: “Your life before we met was your own.” But sometimes I wonder if Jack – my future husband – really understood what I was trying to say. I feel I should tell him the whole story. My mother says “No.” What do you think?’

Brown replied with the following:

‘I too say “No”. For years Pauline has carried round an unnecessary guilt complex. She now wants to offload it on someone else’s shoulders. She believes that what she wants to do is “the right thing” – but is it? Words are terribly powerful and when we talk under the stress of deep emotion we all become poets. Jack is evidently a man of wisdom and understanding. He knows that certain words can work spells – for good or ill – and he does not want to hear what Pauline wants to tell him. If Pauline wants to do the “the right thing” she will defer to Jack’s expressed desire to be left in ignorance. She broke the rules, admitted she was very young and trusting. But when we break the rules, no matter how understandable the excuse, we must be ready to pay the price. Pauline’s price is to go on carrying her secret in her own heart.’[[144]](#footnote-144)

Jack was the epitome of the ‘emotionally mature’ man in this account. Wise enough to foresee that learning about his future wife’s past had the potential to be emotionally explosive and destructive to their union, he wished to be collusive with her in allowing her to retain her secret and keeping such emotions under wraps. Yet Pauline felt the need to purge herself of such a painful secret, driving her to write a letter to a stranger. This was the legacy of the shift in the 1930s, identified by Cohen, towards a new version of privacy which moved away from the Victorian notion that transgressions were of communal interest and had to be hidden by ‘family secrets’, to the idea that love affairs were a legitimate area of ‘individual privacy’.[[145]](#footnote-145) In enshrining this new understanding of privacy, agony aunts helped fuel demand for their services. Likewise, psychiatrists and marriage counsellors served a similar purpose. People did not have to keep things ‘bottled up’ if they could not tell their husbands or wives, they could confess it all to an agony aunt, a doctor or counsellor, or to the *Daily Mirror* whose confessional headlines and pages of ‘readers’ confessions’ attracted droves of readers, as Cohen argues: ‘As the secrets of the past were redefined as private matters, the need for confessional channels only increased: they were the means by which taints and wrongdoing would be rendered nobody’s business and everyone’s reading pleasure.’[[146]](#footnote-146) This was the beginnings of a confessional culture, built at this time on the idea of ‘purging’ rather than ‘personal growth’, as it became later in the 1970s. As this thesis will show, by the 1970s, the emphasis shifted from ‘confession’ to ‘conversation’. It was no longer enough to ‘purge and run’, you had to stick around in the counsellor’s office and pursue a process of personal growth through talking openly and honestly and experiencing the pain of discovering yourself.

In the 1950s however, the focus was simply on confession, not talking or working through problems. The aim was to avoid too much emotional distress and pain, both to the marriage partner and for the individual, at the expense of honesty and authenticity: ‘Confessing all to the *Mirror*, or to a doctor, psychologist, or priest could help to purge your conscience. But telling your husband about an abortion you had before you married served no purpose. It could inflict pain and raise unsavoury questions better avoided.’[[147]](#footnote-147) Marriage advice manuals served the purpose of offering the same advice as agony aunts and psychiatrists but without the need to go out of one’s way to ‘expose’ oneself or confess to a stranger. They dispensed the same advice and rules, operating within the same newly developing confessional culture. Thus, although tentative steps were being made towards an acceptance of the dangers of bottling up secrets, rationality and social obligation ruled the day. Individuals were required to restrain themselves and repress passionate emotions in order to be ‘responsible’ members of society.

**‘Are We Scared of Love?’**

By the late 1950s and early 1960s however, there was growing disillusion with the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse. The attitude that all this emotional restraint was actually hindering a truly ‘mature’ approach to the whole business of love and sex underpinned one *Daily Mirror* article from the spring of 1956 which argued forcefully that England’s penchant for emotional control meant that it was still at the ‘school boy’ stage of maturity when it came to sex. It argued that the English needed to loosen up emotionally and physically, ditch the ‘stiff upper lip’ and take a hint from how the Italians did it, without embarrassment and with lots of feeling:

‘A nation’s approach to spring depends largely on its state of sexual and emotional maturity. History, national habits, national customs all help to fix that level of maturity. And there are all sorts of give-away clues to tell you just how adult a nation is in its love-life. A Frenchman for instance speaks of a woman’s beautiful BODY. An Englishman says that a girl has a rather nice FIGURE. The way they address their girlfriends is another giveaway…In ITALY a girl would be swept off her feet with extravagant superlatives, like darlingest, treasurest, joyest. The Italians find nothing embarrassing about the emotions, for they are mature and uninhibited. In FRANCE she would be teased with light flippant confections like “Cherie”. The French cannot treat love seriously, for although they are sexually mature they are not emotionally mature. In AMERICA she would be called baby, sweetie-pie. All these expressions indicate that Americans are immature – so immature that they are still at the baby stage when love means food. And England? Darling. Love and ducks are the best a girl could hope for. England is at the schoolboy stage, where it finds the whole question of sex acutely embarrassing and would rather play tennis.’

The article continued that even the nation’s pin-ups revealed the national ‘maturity levels’: ‘Italy, the mature nation, prefers the fully developed, uninhibited type. Our perfect woman is “the nice girl” type. The Audrey Hepburn, The Petula Clark. The girl next door- the anyone-for-ping-pong, tea-on-the-vicarage-lawn figure. But nothing to do with sex.’[[148]](#footnote-148)

An article in *Woman’s Mirror* in the Autumn of 1960 expressed similar discontent about the state of Britain’s love life. It ran the title, ‘Are We Scared of Love?’ and claimed that: ‘The unspoken word, the blushing silence – these are the outward symptoms of this shamefaced muddle that is Love Among the British.’[[149]](#footnote-149) The Victorian notion that Britain’s stiff upper lip was a signifier of its strength as a nation was losing its relevance, becoming associated instead with holding the nation back from embracing a more ‘modern’ approach to personal life and personal happiness. There was a concern by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s that British love was ‘in crisis’. The language was no longer about marriage being in jeopardy but about whether Britons could freely express emotion. The high expectations of marriage being an emotional relationship where the couple expressed their love for each other were not being met. Many commentators began to question whether a fulfilling emotional relationship could occur under the conditions of emotional control, concealment and restraint. The mid-century model of marriage was based on the idea that couples would be emotional companions for each other, yet in the cultural constructions of such marriages, only milder emotions were permitted an outlet. Couples were expected to hold back on all those other emotions which go hand in hand with the experience of loving, such as jealousy, anger, resentment and even hatred. Yet it became clear how unsatisfying this model was as it was confusing, contradictory and unattainable. Critics argued that it was one-dimensional and inauthentic, underpinned by secrets, lies and bottled-up despair. The beginnings of breaking down decades of entrenched emotion control to allow for more honest, authentic emotional relationships were occurring as early as the late 1950s, reaching full flowering by the early 1970s. By the close of the sixties commentators heralded a new era of expressiveness. There was an optimism that the stiff upper lip and restraint culture were a thing of the past and that the British were on the way to becoming emotionally liberated. As one article from *The Guardian* in 1969claimed,Britons ‘today’ were no longer riddled with ‘guilt or sadism, or excessive reticence, or a stiff-upper-lip, or preferring hot water bottles to the real thing’.[[150]](#footnote-150) The following chapters will explore the cultural shifts which led to such a statement.

**Chapter Two**

***‘Lift Your Head and Let Your Feelings Out Instead’***

**‘The Rediscovery of Feeling’: Honesty, Authenticity and Growth**

**From Containment to Spontaneity and Risk**

Elaine Tyler May described the post-war era in America as one of ‘containment’ when Americans set their sights on a vision of the ‘sheltered, secure, and personally liberating family’.[[151]](#footnote-151) She claimed that the therapeutic approach which gained momentum in these years advocated ‘coping strategies’ and was geared toward helping people feel better about their place in the world rather than changing things. The family and the home were the sites in which individuals were expected to put the coping strategies into practice.[[152]](#footnote-152) The ‘emotional maturity’ discourse was part of that vision of ‘stability’ and containment. Yet, as May concludes: ‘Containment proved to be an elusive goal. It held sway until the 1960s, when it collapsed in disarray.’[[153]](#footnote-153) The belief that the 1950s model of family ‘containment’ was the route to freedom and personal fulfilment was exposed as not so liberating after all, riddled as it was with restraint, restriction, inauthenticity and farce. Psychologists demonstrated the pervasive lack of authentic emotional expression in family life due to the dangerous ‘taboo on feeling’ which was contributing to ‘unhealthy personality development’. In the 1960s the security and containment associated with the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse would be replaced by a new emphasis on risk and (emotional) spontaneity which came to be seen as ultimately more fulfilling and conducive to personal growth. As May wrote: ‘By the late 1960s, many among this new “uncontained” generation had rejected the rigid institutional boundaries of their elders. They substituted risk for security as they carried sex, consumerism, and political activity outside the established institutions.’[[154]](#footnote-154) Yet despite their assault on the 1950s model, ‘the baby boomers did not abandon the therapeutic methods and personal values that had motivated their parents.’[[155]](#footnote-155) They rejected 1950s containment as the means, but retained individual freedom and fulfilment as the ends, ‘carrying forward the quest for liberation through politics as well as their personal lives.’[[156]](#footnote-156)

Chapters Two, Three and Four will explore the ‘assault on containment’ in the British context, and how the culture of restraint and the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse were unravelled by a new focus on honesty, authenticity and transparency in intimate relationships. This chapter will consider three major drivers of this shift towards a privileging of emotional expression and self-authenticity. The first is the ‘new morality’ and its emphasis on ‘honesty’. The second and third are developments in psychology which fuelled a shift in societal attitudes towards the expression of emotion and a changing concept of selfhood. The first of these psychological theories was Bowlbyism and attachment theory, the second was humanistic psychology.[[157]](#footnote-157) What united all three of these influences was the belief in the positivity of human nature, a step away from the negative belief that man required ‘controlling’, the insistence on ‘freedom’ from societal repression and the conviction that the existing order encouraged a great deal of ‘farce’ in society which needed to be resigned to a bygone age.

Chapter Three will then explore the influence of these theories, in particular the promotion of self-disclosure in humanistic psychology, on the advice and cultural conversation about love, marriage and intimate relationships. It will demonstrate the effect the cultural changes described in the present chapter had on attitudes to making relationships work and the new role of intense, ‘encounter’ style communication between spouses which created an entirely new approach to marital conflict. Chapter Four will pick up the threads of this analysis through the lens of ‘male emotional liberation’ and the societal attempt to encourage men to ‘feel again’ and importantly, to tell their wives and girlfriends how they felt.

**‘A Question of Helping People be Honest with Themselves and With One Another’:**

**Honesty and the New Morality**

The ‘emotional maturity’ discourse was seriously undermined by the debates about situational ethics and the associated valorisation of ‘honesty’ in popular culture in the early part of the 1960s. The Wolfenden Report of 1957, which had suggested that homosexual behaviour between consenting adults in private should no longer be considered a crime, had opened the debate about an individual’s right to freedom in matters of private morality. By the beginning of the sixties, stimulated by the trial of D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1960, a public discussion about sexual morality had taken hold in Britain which pitted ‘traditional morality’ against the Lawrentian model of sexuality which held the premise that sexual relations were validated only by love, rather than man-made laws. Professor Carstairs contributed to the debate in 1962 with his questioning of the pursuit of chastity in his BBC Reith lecture: ‘But *is* chastity the supreme moral virtue? In our religious traditions the essence of morality has sometimes appeared to consist of sexual restraint. But this was not emphasised in Christ’s own teaching. For him the cardinal virtue was *charity*, that is consideration of and concern for other people.’ [[158]](#footnote-158) In 1963 a controversial book was published which would herald the new age of ‘honesty’ in thinking about relationships. Dr John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich and prominent witness for the defence in the Chatterley trial, wrote *Honest to God* to explain this ‘new morality’ and to introduce the idea of situational ethics to the British public. The book contained the now infamous description: ‘Nothing can of itself always be labelled as “wrong”. One cannot, for instance, start from the position “sex relations before marriage” or “divorce” are wrong or sinful in themselves. They are not intrinsically so, for the only intrinsic evil is lack of love.’[[159]](#footnote-159) The argument put forward by Robinson was that the old emphasis on acts being inherently ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ absolved man of responsibility for his actions. Influenced by the thinking of German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his theory of ‘man come of age’, Robinson called for a revision of the ‘image of God’ as a supernatural Person, arguing that in order for Christianity to survive in the modern age, ‘it must be made relevant to secular man’. Robinson favoured Bonhoeffer’s idea of ‘mature man’, explaining in the *Observer* newspaper’s feature on *Honest to God* that: ‘Till now man has felt the need for a God as a child feels the need for a father. But now man is discovering that he can manage quite happily by himself.’[[160]](#footnote-160) He referred to Bonhoeffer’s idea that man was exiting the ‘religious phase’ associated with childishness and entering the period of ‘maturity’ where he took responsibility for his actions.

The ‘new morality’ was infused with the notions of ‘freedom’ from repression and a new ‘responsibility’ for one’s private life: ‘The heart of the sexual revolution in our time is that potentially now we have within our grasp a freedom over sex, as over the rest of nature, undreamed of before. But with it has come also the possibility of a vastly enriched area of human responsibility.’[[161]](#footnote-161) Writing in response to Robinson’s work, Daniel Jenkins, chaplain of the University of Sussex, declared optimistically that: **‘**Men can now live without “the religious presupposition” in Bonhoeffer’s phrase: without the burden of guilt and without “the feeling of absolute dependence”, but with the freedom and responsibility of men who have found their true nature.’[[162]](#footnote-162)

The theme of responsibility was tied to a positive view of mankind which would overtake the negative approach of the era of restraint which viewed human nature as inherently destructive. The shift towards a more positive attitude to human nature was a major theme of the 1960s and 1970s driven in particular by developments in the field of psychology, and the link between the new morality and new psychological thinking was made explicit by another article in the *Observer* in 1965. The article was part of a series with the title ‘Living with Sex’ in which various public figures were interviewed on the topic of sex and morals. The second article in the series involved interviews with John Robinson and the psychoanalyst, Robert Shields, with the intention of revealing that the ‘Christian Moralist and the Freudian Analyst’ no longer represented polar opposites in their attitude to sexual morals and that ‘honesty’ and the freedom to make one’s own decisions on one’s private life were the underpinnings of both approaches to human existence. The article sought to underline the pervasiveness and inclusiveness of the ‘new morality’ and consisted of both Robinson and Shields outlining their opposition to the old, ‘traditional morality’.

Shields asserted that: ‘The traditional moralist and the psychoanalyst agree at many points. Both regard marriage as the ideal setting for personal happiness and sexual fulfilment. Both consider that when sex is viewed as a separate biological function unrelated to love it is destructive of self.’ Yet that was the limit to their collusiveness: ‘The moralists and the psychoanalysts part company at the point of value-judgements. Many moralists feel there is virtue in conforming to a certain code of behaviour which should be acceptable to all. The psycho-analyst, by contrast, is not directly concerned with “good” or “bad” actions: his business is the growth of the personality and the struggle towards emotional health.’[[163]](#footnote-163)

Echoing Robinson’s words in *Honest to God*, Shields dismissed the ‘old morality’ referring to its redundancy in a time when psychological insights could provide a more appropriate, forgiving and honest approach to people’s behaviour:

‘The findings of dynamic psychology force us to the conclusion that it is both misleading and unjust to judge a man by his actions alone – a conclusion which even criminal law is beginning to accept. While old-fashioned moralists condemn all pre-marital intercourse as sinful and so lay a heavy guilt on the young couple who “give way to passion”, psychologists are alert to the positive factors that may exist behind the act: the yearning for acceptance, the joyous yielding to a sudden upsurge of affection, the need to make love real, the courage to brave what is feared, the wish to prove one is normal, the willingness to share a mutual responsibility.’[[164]](#footnote-164)

Shields argued that restraint revealed emotional incapacity and an unhealthy personality, rather than an honourable adherence to morality and old-fashioned notions of purity: ‘A well-preserved virginity maysignify a limited capacity for love.’ He believed that a true interest in emotional health meant being willing to accept experimentation and the consequential ‘occasional errors in judgement’ as opposed to the prevention of experimentation and the obsession with restriction, exuding the acceptance of ‘risk’ which underpinned the ‘new morality’: ‘Late-adolescent experiment and even the occasional extra-marital union, on the path to some personal solution, does not inevitably lead to a dissolute life nor destroy the wish for a lifelong partnership.’ Allowing individuals responsibility for their own sexual and emotional lives was a necessary move forward in sixties Britain, and would not, Shields claimed, lead to the breakdown of society due to widespread promiscuity and irresponsibility: ‘In my experience, despite the sex-for-its-own-sake propaganda of much advertising and popular culture, and despite the comparative freedom they enjoy, adolescents from reasonably stable and loving homes naturally link physical intimacy with some degree of affection [and] act with surprising responsibility towards each other.’[[165]](#footnote-165)

Shields made reference to the idea that ‘maturity’ meant the freedom to be responsible for one’s emotional life away from specific ‘rules’ about what was appropriate or inappropriate for society’s needs: ‘In my view, what a mature couple may do together is their own affair since only they can guess at the full significance of their action and its bearing on the total situation, and it is they who have to accept responsibility for its repercussions.’[[166]](#footnote-166) In 1965, Shields added to the growing questioning of the existing divorce laws, making the argument that the emotional health and potential for personal growth of scores of individuals was still being sacrificed to the culture of restraint which required the adherence to ‘an external code’: ‘The rigid adherence to an external code and the determination to preserve the form of marriage once the spirit has gone may inhibit growth in children and adults alike and encourage a deadening rectitude.’[[167]](#footnote-167)

Both Shields and Robinson emphasised that what was required was an education in appreciating ‘honesty’ – honesty to others as well as self-honesty, and importantly, ‘honesty to the relationship’. That is to say, individuals should ask themselves the question of whether their physical and emotional expression is true to that particular relationship. Is it an honest expression of feeling or a farce? Robinson claimed in his interview that: ‘If we could base our thinking about chastity on what sexual expression is honest to the relationship we might get the matter into a genuinely personal perspective.’ He argued that sex before, within, and outside marriage ‘is surely primarily a question of helping people to be honest with themselves and with one another.’[[168]](#footnote-168) Indeed, the very title of Robinson’s book emphasised the idea that embracing honesty was a necessary progression from the existing situation, associated with man achieving true ‘maturity’.

The debates about pre-marital and extra-marital sexuality extended to far apart corners of popular culture in the 1960s, embedding the necessity for honesty in one’s personal relationships and in one’s behaviour, in the nation’s consciousness, and undermining the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse for its restriction on being ‘honest’ about all one’s feelings. In the wake of the Chatterley trial popular romance writer Patricia Robins penned a sequel to Lawrence’s novel titled *Lady Chatterley’s Daughter* which told the story of Connie and Oliver’s daughter ‘Clare’ and her struggle to embrace a more honest, unrepressed attitude to her emotional and sexual life. The novel was serialised by the *Sunday Pictorial* which was read by six million readers according to the paperback’s front cover and Hera Cook has claimed that it ‘clearly touched a chord with readers’.[[169]](#footnote-169) The novel outlined and promoted a Lawrentian model of sexuality based on ‘honesty to situation’ rather than adherence to social rules:

‘It was not that Connie didn’t admire virginity nor believe that it should be respected deeply. But she had decided long ago that the most important thing in life was to be true to oneself. And if you wanted a man who wanted you, you were a hypocrite if you fobbed him off because of man-made laws. She realised she and Oliver had a set of morals which were different from the conventional ones. They believed it was far more honest for a girl to go to bed with a boy she loved and who loved her than to stick to her virginity and then to sell it to some young man with money or a title.’[[170]](#footnote-170)

In the same year that Robins’s novel was published, Lynne Reid Banks’s critically acclaimed novel *The L Shaped Room* explored the consequences of pre-marital sexuality. The protagonist Jane who is pregnant and unmarried experiences a very painful guilt about her sexual experience. Yet her ‘sin’ was not that of the ‘old morality’, it was not ‘inherently wrong’ to have experienced sex before marriage, her guilt is derived purely from the lack of love present in the relationship: ‘The ugly truth about the sin I’d committed, the blasphemy of creating a life by accident, without understanding the true pleasure and beauty of love.’[[171]](#footnote-171) Even that bastion of tradition regularly portrayed as a ‘safe retreat’ from the more explicit sexuality displayed elsewhere in popular culture, *Mills & Boon*, embraced the ‘new morality’, questioning the use of man-made laws which stood in the way of love.[[172]](#footnote-172)

In *Song in My Heart* (1961), regular *Mills & Boon* author Rachel Lindsay explored the themes of adultery and divorce when her heroine Sara falls in love with an unhappily married man. Lindsay drew on the Lawrentian discourse to depict the heights of emotional pleasure involved in extra-marital love as well as the lows of pain it induced as a result of restrictions of man-made morality: ‘It was incredible to think that in this day and age a loveless marriage, a marriage which no longer held any meaning could keep them apart.’[[173]](#footnote-173) Later in the decade Margaret Rome engaged with the debates about pre-marital sexuality when her heroine’s sister becomes pregnant out of marriage emphasising, like Banks, that sexual expression which is ‘honest’ to the love of a relationship should not be condemned: ‘There was nothing sordid about it. We were young and in love.’[[174]](#footnote-174)

In 1972, Faith Spicer, doctor, Justice of the Peace, and medical director of the London Youth Advisory Centre who ‘had unrivalled experience in counselling the young as whole persons’, wrote a book with the title *Sex and the Love Relationship* in which she reflected on the changes brought to thinking about relationships by the ‘new morality’. What Spicer said on the topic will be explored at various points in the thesis, but of significance here is the analysis made by John Robinson in the Foreword to Spicer’s book, in which he claimed that: ‘The measure of the change is the measure to which sex is potentially becoming more human, more completely an area of free, responsible, personal choice.’ The influence of humanistic psychology, and its emphasis on ‘human potential’, upon Robinson’s words in the early seventies is clear: ‘One says “potentially” because in most of us the human potential is very far from realised and our society is very far from mature. But this freedom *over* sex, as over the rest of nature, so that we can make it responsibly our own, is a profound human revolution.’[[175]](#footnote-175) The ‘revolution’, argued Robinson, had demanded a new set of values, but these were not ‘prescribed answers to be accepted on somebody’s say-so but of probing questions and personal exploration.’ These questions included: ‘What does it really mean to love and be loved, to be truly a person in a relationship, to be *both* free *and* responsible?’ Robinson recommended Spicer’s book for showing that: ‘There are no blanket solutions, no tabulated rights and wrongs – nor ever will be, even when the present shake-up is over…With all its casualties, there is now going on a genuine search for a new and more relevant morality, which authenticates itself from within.’[[176]](#footnote-176)

In the wake of these developments in thinking about morality and honesty, the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse, which was based on the idea that there was a hierarchy of emotions and that some emotions were inherently ‘good’ whilst others were inherently ‘bad’, looked increasingly out of date and out of touch. ‘Pioneers’ for the ‘rediscovery of feeling’ and the unlocking of British emotional life sought to show that *all* emotions were valid and should be experienced regardless of man-mad restrictions. As J. H. Wallis, claimed in 1969: **‘**We should discard the idea that any feeling can be wrong in itself. Then we can begin to discover what our true feelings are.’[[177]](#footnote-177)

Moreover, all the emphasis on ‘love’ being the justifier of sexuality fed into an increasing focus in the field of psychology on man’s ‘capacity to love’, the findings of which would have a significant influence on popular culture. The period was dominated by public discussion on the topic of the appropriate conditions for developing an ability to love in childhood and on the ways in which emotionally neglected and restrained adults could overcome their inability to express their feelings in intimate relationships. Indeed, Spicer made the link between the new morality, with its emphasis on honesty and individual responsibility, and the psychological theories of early emotional development explicit in the early 1970s:

‘I hope we are more honest, more compassionate. I hope, by learning why people behave as they do, we will learn how to help them, and how to prevent the early damage that may be responsible for their actions, so that if we can know more of what children need for healthy growth, we can at last have a society in which we know whom to protect, and in what way to protect them, so that the rest can feel free to trust their own judgement, and find their own way to a real and lasting love-relationship.’[[178]](#footnote-178)

Robinson declared in 1965 that: ‘The liberation of sex, so that what we do – and say – about it rests on genuine freedom rather than fear, is far from complete. But it is in sight.’[[179]](#footnote-179) The liberation of emotion, so that what was expressed – and what was said - rested on genuine freedom rather than fear, is a story running alongside that of the ‘sexual revolution’ and the ‘permissive society’ which has yet to be fully told. The following sections and chapters will shed light on this concomitant ‘emotional revolution’.

**‘Pioneers’ of Emotional Liberation**

Thomas Dixon has argued for the use of the word ‘pioneers’ to describe those individuals campaigning for a change in Britain’s emotional culture from the 1960s onwards. It provides a useful means to think about the key figures who will feature in the following chapters. Whilst exploring the development of ideas about emotionality and the new ‘transparency’ amongst these ‘pioneers’ however, this thesis also seeks to demonstrate their influence over popular culture and their role in actively changing popular attitudes to intimate relationships in the 1960s and 1970s. The following section will consider some of these ‘pioneers’ beyond the sphere of relationship advice to continue ‘setting the scene’ of a society in the early sixties which was undergoing a rethinking of its approach to emotions.

Dixon concludes that from the late-1950s and throughout the 1960s, reformers of British emotional life attempted to pull apart the entrenched discourse of the ‘stiff upper lip’.[[180]](#footnote-180) With his focus on ‘crying’, he is preoccupied with the pioneers of a ‘tentative return to public expressions of grief’ in the late 1950s and 1960s who sought to achieve a public acknowledgment of grief’s existence, and aimed to ‘get the nation talking and weeping about disease, death and loss again’.[[181]](#footnote-181) He posits Geoffrey Gorer’s book *Death, Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (1965) as a milestone in the history of British attitudes to grief and an important moment of change in the way emotions were perceived. The book was based on a detailed survey of social attitudes and concluded that Britain was in denial about death with the consequence that it was considered ‘unhealthy’ and ‘demoralising’ to give in to grief. Gorer was highly critical of the status quo, and his ‘use of anthropological, sociological and psychoanalytical ideas to argue for a radical rethink of emotions and their expression in relation to death signalled an influential new approach.’[[182]](#footnote-182)

Gorer promoted the idea that: ‘Grief and dejection had to be faced up to and experienced. To do otherwise was to store up physical and emotional illness for the future.’[[183]](#footnote-183) Three years before Gorer published his book, Professor Carstairs had also emphasised the link between bottled up emotion and ‘illness’ in his lecture on adolescence: ‘A good deal of nagging ill-health may be caused by feelings, which persist but are disavowed and denied expression.’[[184]](#footnote-184) Indeed Freudian and therapeutic models of the mind were increasing in popularity and influence during the early 1960s and as Dixon shows were clearly in evidence in the shift in thinking about experiencing grief.[[185]](#footnote-185)

Gorer was ‘not yet in a majority in 1965’ but his work would be influential in the move in public opinion away from denial and towards expression of grief, and in the broader transition from restricting emotions to expressing them freely.[[186]](#footnote-186) Whilst Dixon has conducted extensive research on the individuals seeking to change attitudes to grief and weeping, there was also a vast ‘army’ of reformers attempting to liberate the entire gamut of emotions which has received rather less scholarly attention. The following section considers the ‘pioneers’ attempting to break down emotional restraint in its broadest sense through an ‘education’ in appreciating all feelings.

**An Education in Feeling**

Pioneers for the promotion of emotional expression in everyday life were particularly concerned about the influence of education in instilling attitudes of restraint and campaigned for educational change in the 1960s. Former Professor of Education and Director of the Institute of Education in the University of Birmingham from 1946-1964, M. V. C. Jeffreys, published numerous articles, broadcasts and books on the topics of education and changing society throughout the 1950s and 60s. In his *Personal Values in the Modern World*, a Pelican Original published in 1966, he included a section on education which called for a more ‘holistic’ view of educating an individual which would consider both the ‘Education of Feeling’ and the ‘Education of Thinking’. He claimed that modern society would make ‘a great mistake to think of the education of feeling as a distinct area or department of education which can be promoted or neglected independently of the rest of the educational process. A human being is, or ought to be, a whole organism; and what affects one part affects the rest also.’ He continued that ‘It is the business of education to foster the growth of balanced, whole persons. If education is deficient on the side of feeling, it is bound to be defective on the intellectual side; the resulting intellectual life will tend to be arid – it will, so to speak, lack body.’[[187]](#footnote-187) Repression of emotion, in Jeffrey’s view, had implications for the future of society and its potential future political leaders: ‘Some of the most highly educated and gifted individuals may be cut off from participating in the emotional life of the people, and thus unfitted to be leaders. For it is quite certain that no one can be a public leader who cannot enter into the feelings of the people at large.’[[188]](#footnote-188)

Jeffreys reiterated the increasingly fashionable idea that emotions, (and an individual’s ability to understand and express them freely), were fundamental to self-knowledge and personal growth, and that emotional expression would underpin modern life. He also emphasised the role of ‘authenticity’ in achieving true ‘wholeness of personality’: ‘For the health and wholeness of personality it is as important that people should feel their own feelings as think their own thoughts. That is to say, wholeness of personality involves authenticity, integrity, and depth of feeling.’[[189]](#footnote-189) An individual’s emotional life needed to be genuine and the main reason for ‘a failure of genuine, deep feeling’, was ‘emotional inhibition, especially by fear.’[[190]](#footnote-190) Repression of emotion in childhood, Jeffreys claimed, would lead to adults whose personalities were not ‘whole’ and whose emotional incapacity would hold them back in their adult lives. Indeed, G. M. Carstairs had argued that the emotional lives of children was something 1960s society needed to attend to as a matter of course following the optimistic belief that childhood poverty was a thing of the past: ‘We have made progress in reducing the amount of severe poverty in our society: our next task is to try to ensure that children are not deprived of the emotional sustenance which they need in order to develop into well-balanced beings.’[[191]](#footnote-191)

The affluence of the late 1950s and 1960s turned the attention of social commentators to the ‘interiority’ of citizens rather than their material circumstances which had dominated the debates of previous generations. Carstairs stated that ‘there are some attributes of personality which also require to be developed, and which would enhance us all, and yet we have never yet been able to make their development possible for the majority in our society.’ These included, ‘spontaneous emotional responsiveness to people and to ideas’.[[192]](#footnote-192) Unlike Leonard Richards whose anxiety about the new machine age and the likelihood that people would descend into ‘emotionally immature’ puppets of the entertainment industry was detailed in Chapter One, Carstairs writing a year earlier had a more optimistic take on what the extra leisure time could be used for, reflecting the more ‘positive’ approach to human nature: ‘Machines will relieve us of the drudgery of calculation and free us to devote more time to other studies’ [including] developing a clearer understanding of our own personalities and our deeper motivations.’[[193]](#footnote-193)

As Carstairs’s claim demonstrates, psychological knowledge would come to be viewed as the underpinning for the journey towards ‘personal growth’ which characterised the late 1960s and 1970s in particular, as will be explored later. In 1974, humanistic psychologist, Sidney Jourard optimistically suggested that what Carstairs had sought a decade earlier had come into fruition. With the increase in leisure time, he believed personal growth was becoming a ‘pastime’, a ‘hobby’. He listed it alongside other ‘avocational pursuits’ that individuals engaged in in order to contribute to a ‘healthy personality’ in the new era of psychologically informed individuals, including Sports, Hobbies and Arts, Being with People, Meditation and Studying.[[194]](#footnote-194) Jeffreys also emphasised the importance of personal growth in the 1960s, exploring the idea that only through experience can an individual change and only through changing do they really ‘find’ themselves in his book *Personal Values*: ‘Since experience is the food of growth, it can almost be said that the more he changes the more he is himself.’[[195]](#footnote-195) In the minds of the ‘pioneers’, ‘emotional maturity’ with its intention to prevent people from experiencing certain emotions and thus from developing as individuals, prohibited true personal growth and had to be dispensed with.

Thus, psychology was fundamental to the revolution in British emotionality, with the 1960s witnessing what Dixon has referred to as ‘the passing of an age of emotional restraint and the birth of one of psychological introspection and therapeutic self-involvement.’[[196]](#footnote-196) Carstairs’s lecture acknowledged the beginnings of a psychological turn claiming that the British were ‘a people becoming more psychologically perceptive.’[[197]](#footnote-197) He argued for the wider dissemination of psychological knowledge to enable ordinary people to ‘understand themselves’ which he believed would become the prerogative of all men and women in future years. He envisioned an ‘education in feeling’ that went beyond merely updating the education system – this would be a societal education disseminated through popular culture. Centre stage in the psychological revolution was the ‘expert’. Counselling was encouraged by Carstairs, both in individual and group form, and the role of the mass media was highlighted:

‘Insight into the workings of one’s own mind can best be acquired through experience in groups, or in an individual relationship discussed personally with one’s teacher…It cultivates self-awareness which will, I believe, become part of the intellectual equipment of every well-educated man and women. But I do not regard this cultivation of greater insight as the prerogative only of university graduates of the future. I believe that its influence will spread throughout society, through newspapers, broadcasting, and whatever new mass media the future may discover. The new psychological sophistication, if it can be achieved, would be shown not by the use of neo-Freudian jargon, but by the recognition in every-day speech and behaviour, of clues to people’s unconscious as well as to their conscious motivation.’[[198]](#footnote-198)

Hera Cook’s study of group therapy conveys the relative success of Carstairs’s ambition. She concludes that one of the differences between the participants in the 1940s and those twenty years later, was the influence of psychological theories emphasising the importance of emotional experience in childhood:

‘In the 1940s, very few of the group participants displayed any awareness of psychoanalytic concepts such as the subconscious or trauma. Childhood was not seen as relevant to adult distress, and the participants felt they should be able to “get over” traumatic events by avoiding introspection. In other words, the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis were absent from their lifeworld.’[[199]](#footnote-199)

She argues that what is clear is that there was ‘little permeation of this language’ in the 1940s. The evidence from the transcripts of these therapy sessions in the 1960s, reveal, Cook claims, that there was a shift in culture, influenced by the development of ‘neo-Freudian approaches focused more directly upon emotion as a positive force’ towards an appreciation that introspection and analysis of one’s childhood would reveal insights into the adult life of the individual.[[200]](#footnote-200)

**New Psychologies:**

**‘Bowlbyism’ and the Psychology of Childhood**

The influence of ‘Bowlbyism’, and ‘attachment theory’ on the shift in thinking about romantic relationships was significant. The following section traces the influence of Bowlby’s ideas throughout popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s, finishing with a consideration of their influence on the relationship advice of the period. The line of analysis will be taken up in Chapter Four which will consider the marriage expert’s views on the damaging effects of the ‘cult of toughness’ and the ‘taboo on tenderness’ in the childhood of boys.

First published as a Pelican Original in 1953, British psychologist John Bowlby’s *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, based on his WHO report, pioneered ‘attachment theory’ which was an offshoot of traditional Freudian psychoanalysis. Attachment theory promoted the mother-child bond as fundamental to a child’s emotional development. The book was hugely successful andreceived two yearly reprints and a second edition in 1965, followed by subsequent reprints throughout the 1970s. It is estimated that its English popular edition sold over 400, 000 copies alone.[[201]](#footnote-201) As Mathew Thomson has demonstrated, its influence was at its peak in the sixties, coming into conflict by the turn of the decade with second wave feminism, the rise in women’s work, nursery and playgroup movements and radical community politics. Thomson describes, a ‘significant faltering of confidence in the landscape of the family home as the locus of childcare’ by the mid-1970s which substantially undermined Bowlbyism.’[[202]](#footnote-202) Although the theory of ‘maternal deprivation’ would meet with criticism, the message that a child’s emotional experiences affected their emotional capabilities as an adult persisted and it was this aspect that the pioneers for the ‘rediscovery of feeling’ used to underpin the turn towards more open and emotionally transparent relationships.

Bowlby claimed that: ‘There is plenty of reason to think that emotional experiences at certain early and special stages of mental life may have very vital and long-lasting effects.’[[203]](#footnote-203) Although Bowlby was predominantly concerned with the emotional attachment to the mother and the devastating consequences on the child’s development when this was absent, the idea that a lack of emotional expression in early life (both received and given) would lead to adults who were emotionally withdrawn and incapable of conducting emotionally open relationships was a message that penetrated popular culture throughout the sixties on an extensive scale. The belief that childhood experience had a significant bearing on adult happiness was everywhere and the emotional lives of children became a major area of concern for psychologists, sociologists, social critics and policy makers.

Bowlby believed that the cycle of unhappiness which saw deprived children growing up to become parents of equally deprived children needed to be broken. As he put it ‘deprived and unhappy children grow up to make bad parents’.[[204]](#footnote-204) Bowlby believed the way forward was through reinstating feeling and privileging being emotionally demonstrative over the older theories of childcare that recommended withholding affection to avoid ‘spoiling’ the child. Such theories had argued that responding to a child’s tears would lead them to become manipulative and demanding, later becoming a ‘needy’ adult. Bowlby decried these older models arguing instead that mothers should be emotionally available and emotionally forthcoming. It was unattached children who had never been picked up and comforted that would turn into ‘needy’ adults. Bowlby’s hugely influential theory would ultimately shift the content of popular childcare advice by the 1970s.[[205]](#footnote-205) Yet it also penetrated beyond the sphere of childcare and child psychology, forming the backbone of the broader attempt to get ‘tenderness’ reinstated as a necessary and healthy aspect of modern life from the late-1950s and throughout the 1960s. By the 1970s, the rudiments of ‘attachment theory’ and the idea that one’s childhood experiences influenced one’s later emotional life had become part of everyday language.

**Bowlbyism and the Campaign for ‘Tenderness’**

In 1964, David Holbrook, poet, author, teacher and ardent promoter of a new focus in education towards ‘feeling and creativity’, published *The Quest for Love*, a book described by its *Guardian* reviewer as ‘a tract for tenderness’. The reviewer described Holbrook’s topic as ‘urgently fashionable’, and indeed the book aimed to use the new societal obsession with ‘the capacity to love’ to bring insights into the study of literature.[[206]](#footnote-206) Specifically, Holbrook drew on the fresh psychological research into the connection between the growth of a sense of reality and the discovery of the capacity to love to analyse how this manifested in great works of literature including Chaucer, Shakespeare and D. H. Lawrence. Indeed, the entire first chapter was dedicated to outlining recent psychoanalytical theories of love and the origins of consciousness, including those of Bowlby, Melanie Klein and D. W. Winnicott. Holbrook outlined the destructive ‘taboo on tenderness’ instilled by the culture of restraint, arguing that the ‘shame’ of displaying feelings was the predominant message in modern Britain: ‘Culture and academic education manifest at all levels today in various ways a disregard for, or an actual inhibition on, deep and committed feelings.’[[207]](#footnote-207) He drew on Bowlbyism to argue that childhood repression of emotion and the withholding of love by generations of parents leading to emotionless adults had become an institutionalised ‘norm’, until recent years unquestioned by the majority: ‘The adult whose feelings are inhibited is the child of a not-good-enough environment. Our intellectual world has tended to elevate this latter kind of deficiency to a norm.’[[208]](#footnote-208)

Holbrook declared that what had ‘gone wrong’ in the raising of generations of babies was a wider loss of reality due to the restriction on tenderness between all individuals: ‘We may deduce that something has gone wrong in our society with love and care in the raising of babies, and that this is an index of a larger failure in “touch”, love, tenderness and satisfaction between man and woman, the adult parents – and in our relationship with reality altogether.’[[209]](#footnote-209) He scathingly wrote of works of fiction such as those of Ian Fleming that they were ‘destructive expressions’ focusing on ‘cool seduction’ and ‘blasé killing’, revealing the absence of connection to reality in the authors and the readers. He described the readers as a ‘large minority of those who suffer the same predicament – a taboo on tender feeling, and a dissociation from reality, caused by an inhibition in love in their nursing mothers’.[[210]](#footnote-210) His book was intended to contribute to the ‘revolution in feeling’ and the loosening of restraints on man. Its aim, as defined on the cover, was to ‘make a protest against the modern fashion for the expression of futility and destructive attitudes to human nature’, it aimed to ‘press the urgent need for a radical change towards more positive and optimistic attitudes to culture and human nature.’

In 1974 Rosemary Haughtons’s essay from 1970 titled simply *Love* was reprinted as a Pelican paperback. Haughton was recognised as one of the leading thinkers in the Catholic Church in England in the early seventies. A mother of ten, she authored books on the topic of the Church and Humanity and made regular radio and television appearances in religious discussions. Her essay dealt with ‘love’ in various manifestations, in child-rearing, in adult relationships, in the community, before confronting the question of what exactly love is and how to define it. Running throughout her analysis in all these areas was the influence of Bowlbyism.

Haughton asserted that the experience of ‘deep feeling’ had been cast aside in modern culture to the extent that ‘love’ had come to mean ‘almost exclusively the exchange of (usually sexual) pleasure’.[[211]](#footnote-211) She stated that following the war, ‘the futility of deep feeling was accepted, and the pursuit of pleasure was seen as reasonable in a basically hopeless and ridiculous situation.’[[212]](#footnote-212) Yet Haughton was keen to emphasise that the predominant culture was a middle class one and that what she termed ‘love-relations’ continued to subsist in working class communities. She suggested that there was a difference between the children raised in middle and working class homes. According to Haughton, in the homes of the working class, babies: ‘had a good chance of being loved. They were picked up when they cried if only because in a cramped house the noise is intolerable.’ Middle class babies on the other hand: ‘almost all suffered to some degree from the influence of Doctor Truby King, whose teaching on child-care has caused more suffering to both mothers and children than many a monster of sadism.’[[213]](#footnote-213) Haughton argued that the middle class obsession with controlled feeling was the continued legacy of these emotionless childhoods: ‘It would be very odd if this treatment left no mark on the children. If a child’s earliest experiences in relation to his mother are of loneliness and frustration, this makes a close and comfortable relationship difficult.’[[214]](#footnote-214) At the turn of the seventies, argued Haughton, adults struggling with their inability to love were thrown by the new privileging of emotion in contemporary relationships, the fallout of the age of restraint was causing considerable distress.

Yet the notion that the experience of emotional tenderness between mother and child (or lack of it) impacted upon an individual’s capacity to love in adulthood did not go far enough for some, who argued that the damage was being caused from the very moment of birth. Bowlby’s reaction to the way mothers and babies were treated after childbirth in hospitals was the beginning of a longer societal shift towards bringing back ‘tenderness’ to the experience of giving birth, reaching its zenith in the ‘natural birth’ movement. Bowlby wrote: ‘Let the reader reflect for a moment on the astonishing practice which has been followed in maternity wards – of separating mothers and babies immediately after birth – and ask himself whether this is the way to promote a close mother-child relationship.’ He described the system as ‘this madness of Western society’.[[215]](#footnote-215) Although feminism was unreservedly anti-Bowlbyism, similar sentiments to his views on modern childbirth were expressed by feminists during the 1970s about the ‘factory like’ system of giving birth where the emotional needs of mother and child were side-lined in favour of cold efficiency. Although they came from very different ideological standpoints, the opinion that the emotional experiences of women and babies during and after birth were valid and required an outlet that only a more ‘tender’ approach from the hospital system could give, was symptomatic of the dramatic change in thinking about emotions during this period.

Journalist and author of the 1976 book *Naturebirth: Preparing for Natural Birth in an Age of Technology*, Danae Brook declared in *Spare Rib* in 1974 that : ‘Millions of babies are born every day in hospitals that put efficiency before tenderness’. Her article titled ‘Natural Childbirth’ encompassed an interview with Dr Frederik Leboyer about his book *Childbirth Without Violence* (1975) which was ‘one of the first to draw attention to the lack of consideration given to the senses of a newborn baby’.[[216]](#footnote-216) Danae quoted Leboyer’s statement that he was ‘interested in the significance and origin of suffering, not in the medical sense of “foetal suffering”, but emotional pain. If we realise and accept that a newborn baby is a person with deep feelings and deep sensitivity, and that what she is going to experience will leave a mark that will last through life, then the implications are many.’[[217]](#footnote-217) Danae referred to the growing interest in psychological treatments which involved taking patients back to their birth experience to unearth deep seated emotional problems, arguing that ‘Reik, Reich, Freud and now Laing have stressed how unlikely it is that a human being can throw off the impressions of their initial entry into the world.’[[218]](#footnote-218)

Thus the article explored the idea that not only did the emotional life of the child impact on emotional capacity later in life, as Bowlby had demonstrated, but that so too did the emotional experience of being born and the emotional reception of the newborn baby. Leboyer argued that:

‘Those who through psychoanalysis have been going back to birth, reactivating and reliving their own fear, despair and mental pain can understand this…What is forgetting? Simply repressing. The more painful birth was, the more difficult for the adult to bring it to consciousness. In fact everything is recorded, nothing is forgotten. It keeps expressing, always, always, always. In our behaviour, our emotions, our relations with other people.’[[219]](#footnote-219)

The message of the ‘natural birth’ movement was that whether the baby’s emotional needs were met sufficiently – through physical and emotional connection with the mother moments after a ‘gentle’ birth without unnecessary intervention – or disregarded totally through immediate separation and the terrifying hubbub of the delivery room, bright lights and cold unnecessary medical instruments – would have lasting impact on the emotional development of that individual.

Moreover, like Bowlby, the article drew on the idea that emotions suppressed at the time of childbirth could have destructive consequences for the mother-child bond. The argument against the use of routine sedation during childbirth was that it denied women the emotional experience of birth whilst sentient, instead those feelings became confined to the unconscious, destined to lead to emotional difficulties at a later date: ‘It is thought that one of the reasons for post-puerperal depression and baby-battering may be that in a heavily doped labour a woman suppresses the enormous sensations of birth, but those unconscious feelings eventually rise to the surface, so that terror and pain which have not been recognised consciously take the form of brutal resentment at the being which caused it all – the baby.’[[220]](#footnote-220) The belief that feelings, even ‘negative’ feelings such as fear and pain, were better experienced and ‘let out’ rather than denied and concealed, was at the core of thinking about natural birthing, an idea which would be taken up in the relationship advice literature where ‘emotional pain’ underwent a transformation from being something to be feared and avoided to something positive, indicative of personal growth and truth.

**Bowlbyism and Marriage**

Authors of relationship advice were explicitly influenced by these debates about the legacy of one’s early emotional experiences, as J. H. Wallis’ study of ‘love’ from 1969 made clear. In *Thinking About Love*, Wallis drew on Bowlbyism to demonstrate that the ability to love was not innate but learned during childhood through the receiving of appropriate emotional care:

‘It has been said that no one has been completely unloved, since no baby could survive without being cherished and cared-for. It is certainly true that an infant depends completely on its mother’s care and could not live without it. In those rare instances when a baby is totally rejected by its mother, someone else must be found to take her place or it will die. But some infants survive physically, but are loved so little or so grudgingly that a vital part of them seems to wither and they may find it difficult as adults to love or to be lovable. Love has to be learnt. We are not born with it, any more than we can develop it later in the abstract at an evening class or college. It grows and develops only through our relationship with other people.’[[221]](#footnote-221)

Indeed, Bowlby had included a section in his book on ‘Unhappy Marriage, Desertion, Separation, and Divorce’ in which he referred to two American studies on marriage from the 1930s which had concluded that ‘the three things of greatest importance for married happiness were: the married happiness of the couple’s parents; happiness of childhood; no conflict with the mother.’ Bowlby continued that the studies reached the verdict that: ‘the love-life of the grown person is conditioned by his love relationships during childhood’ and Bowlby used this to strengthen his own argument on maternal deprivation.[[222]](#footnote-222) Marital experts jumped on the notion that emotionally deprived and unhappy children would not only grow up to be ‘bad parents’ but that they would also grow up to be ‘bad’ lovers and ‘bad’ marriage partners. Spicer devoted her first chapter of *Sex and the Love Relationship* to the ‘The Childhood Pattern’ which outlined the understanding that happiness in marriage was dependent on childhood experiences of love and affection:

‘Not all marriages are happy. In order to discover why this is so, it is not enough to talk about “guilty partners”, “her fault”, or “his fault”, nor to think in terms of “trying harder”, “accepting your duty” and similar precepts. It has been almost universally accepted in modern societies that the ability to relate well to another person is something learnt in infancy.’[[223]](#footnote-223)

The relationship experts encouraged individuals to seek to understand the emotional legacies of childhood that were unique to them. The process of personal growth meant coming to terms with one’s emotional hang-ups and recognising the impact that they had in their present lives, particularly the impact they had on their personal relationships. This was something Wallis encouraged at the close of the sixties: ‘If we can understand these influences we can be more objective and tolerant of our partner’s differences, for then we shall not grope our way through marriage emotionally-blindfolded. We shall be all the readier to build a unique relationship based on love that is freer and more adaptable, and for us both, more rewarding. We learn the meaning of love in our infancy and childhood and then we learn it again in our marriage.’[[224]](#footnote-224)

There was an assumption that entire generations had had some degree of emotional deprivation in childhood and adolescence as a result of the prevalent culture of emotional restraint and concealment, the discourse of ‘emotional maturity’ and the general societal ‘taboo on tenderness’. Relationship experts believed that most people coming out of the era of restraint would struggle to achieve the emotionally open adult relationships they promoted as the model for future happiness. However, they also portrayed the process of coming to terms with this deprivation and understanding the impact of their repression through self-analysis as a fundamental step towards achieving the emotional liberation required for this new form of relationship. Self-analysis and self-honesty which led to personal growth were presented as the key to unlocking happiness and to bolstering marriage in sixties and seventies Britain.

The role of marriage as a site for ‘healing’ the ‘wounds of childhood’ was something the psychiatrist and Catholic theologian Jack Dominian sought to promote in the early 1970s. Dominian was a prominent figure who had published widely on the challenge that modern psychiatry and psychology presented to traditional Christian thinking in the 1960s. He had served as medical advisor to the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and since 1965 had been head of the Department of Psychological Medicine at the Central Middlesex Hospital where ‘he had been struck by the number of dissolved and unhappy marriages among his patients. Wanting to understand more, in 1971 he founded the Marriage Research Centre to conduct research and offer marriage advice.’[[225]](#footnote-225) He would later be appointed MBE for his services to marriage counselling.

In 1974 The Mothers’ Union published a pamphlet by Dominian with the title *The Marriage Relationship Today* in which he described the changes marriage was going through as a result of the shift towards the privileging of personal growth and openness:

‘Spouses have no longer to perceive their relationship solely in terms of authoritarianism and the limitation of role fulfilment, something unique is happening to the husband-wife relationship. The way is opening to an openness, closeness and intimacy which means that the encounter between the spouses is no longer held at a distance, dictated by traditional norms of what the relationship should be like. Instead the couple are confronted with the fullness of their needs, both emotional and physical. There is an intimacy which brings them close to the very core of their personality and this is both the opportunity, the corner-stone of success, and the stumbling block of failure.’[[226]](#footnote-226)

Dominian foresaw that the new ‘psychological expectations’ of marriage not only heralded a bright future of potential greater happiness, it also left marriage open to instability. He believed that an increase in marital breakdown was an inevitable consequence of a period in history when people were adjusting to a new order of things, not knowing quite how these new marriages should work or what was expected of them in order to realise both their own and their partner’s psychological fulfilment:

‘We are at an early stage of comprehending these needs but it is my personal opinion that one of the most constructive ways of looking at marital breakdown today is to see it metaphorically as the grinding of the gears, as humanity changes from one gear to another, from one level of expectation to another, from seeing marriage as the meeting of material and social security to seeing marriage as the instrument of personal growth and healing.’[[227]](#footnote-227)

Indeed, Dominian argued that there were two important functions of marriage in the seventies – growth and healing. The marital relationship was to have the purpose of fostering the growth of both parties in a way that their ‘public life’ simply could not fulfil. He claimed that growth was not a solitary pursuit but a process involving a ‘significant other’ to ‘assist with the emergence of ourselves.’[[228]](#footnote-228) In line with his contemporaries, Dominian claimed that this was achieved only through open and honest communication within a transparent relationship: ‘For this to take place there needs to be sensitive, emphatic, open constant communication.’[[229]](#footnote-229)

Yet Dominian claimed that ‘this inner world is not orientated simply to growth’. The close marriage relationship was also to be the means to be healed of the emotional wounds individuals had sustained in their childhood and youth: ‘We reach marriage on an average with twenty years or more of personal experiences which have left us both enriched and wounded. Our principal wounds will certainly be emotional.’[[230]](#footnote-230) Echoing Wallis’ sentiments, Dominian also argued that the marital relationship was influenced by the relationships the individuals had with their parents as children: ‘Marriage is the second one-to-one relationship of importance. The first is that between ourselves and our parents. In a space of two decades we gradually grew up, separating stage by stage, losing our emotional dependence, acquiring a sense of our independent identity; in brief, feeling a person in our right who has the capacity to love and be loved.’[[231]](#footnote-231)

According to Dominian, when the emotional relationship between a child and their parents went ‘wrong’, the wounds would manifest when the individual next found themselves in a similar situation, usually their first adult intimate relationship. He described how in the past these emotional problems had been dealt with through control and restraint, however, the new psychological age meant that ‘healing’ rather than repression, was becoming the dominant method for overcoming the emotional legacies of childhood, ‘and perhaps no type of relationship other than the open, intimate close one of contemporary marriage lends itself better to healing.’[[232]](#footnote-232)

The marital relationship, Dominion claimed, was to function in a similar way to the relationship between a psychiatrist or a counsellor and their patient, with each partner taking their turn ‘on the couch’. Marriage was to be one long therapy session with the ultimate aim of allowing both partners to overcome their childhood deprivation. All those restrictions which had been the parlance of ‘emotional maturity’ and emotion control had to be swept away to allow for this new function of marriage to take place, as Dominian claimed: ‘The person must really be encouraged to feel what is really present rather than what they should be feeling ‘appropriately’ in that situation.’[[233]](#footnote-233) In his 1968 Pelican Original, *Marital Breakdown*, Dominian emphasised the need for ‘spontaneity to achieve these ends.’[[234]](#footnote-234)

Yet Dominian, like Bowlby and Carstairs before him, also referred to the need to break the cycle of ‘deprivation’ in the first place so that some of the wounds of childhood could be avoided. In *Marital Breakdown* he stated that: ‘Society has to take short- and long-term measures to safeguard marriage. The former involve recognising warning signals and providing effective pre- and post-marital counselling. The latter concerns the correct upbringing of children, a difficult and challenging task, and one that is likely to prove in the long run the best safeguard against marital breakdown.’[[235]](#footnote-235) His words in 1974 echoed those of Carstairs a decade earlier: ‘We are already familiar with the great strides made towards the improvement of the physical health and education of children in the last hundred years. Undoubtedly the next step is to concentrate on raising the quality of the emotional life.’[[236]](#footnote-236) This would be achieved through a better psychological understanding of childhood.

‘Deprivation’ in childhood, argued Dominian was the root of unstable marriage. In the vein of Bowlby’s theory of deprivation, Dominian explained that ‘physical closeness and emotional reassurance were essential ingredients for emotional survival and growth’ and that when those were not provided, for example if the child is separated from the parents or the parents are emotionally withdrawn, then the process was interrupted leading to ‘deprivation’. The influence of deprivation on marriage could be a varied one: ‘The stability of the marriage will depend on the intensity of this feeling [emotional deprivation] and on the capacity of the partners to adjust to these traits in each other…deprivation can make its impact immediately in the marriage or influence it after some years.’[[237]](#footnote-237)

Dominion’s conclusions suggested that psychological insights into childhood and personality development were crucial to understanding marriage, and that inevitably, society would have to deal with the turmoil of this relationship until a more widespread knowledge of child psychology was established and put into practice in the homes of the nation. Inadvertently, his ideas about healing were paving the way for the increased acceptance that marriage was not ‘permanent’ which would characterise the latter part of the seventies and beyond. For if marriage had the purpose of healing the deprivations of the first important relationship in a person’s life – the parent/child relationship – the next logical line of thought would be that the problems and ‘deprivations’ of a failed first marriage could be ‘healed’ by another significant relationship – a second marriage.

Dominian’s views on marriage in the early 1970s demonstrate the influence of Bowlbyism, but also that more than one psychological theory was converging in discussions of intimate relationships. A different strand of psychological theory – humanistic psychology – with its insistence on growth, authenticity and honest communication, was fundamental to the changing ideas about emotional intimacy. The following section will outline in more detail the tenets of this theory and its cultural influence in Britain.

**New Psychologies**

**Human Liberation, Growth and Anti-Rationalism: The Influence of Humanistic Psychology**

Writing of America, David Frum has boldly declared that by the 1970s ‘virtually everyone in the country accepted the premise that it was dangerous to keep feelings bottled up’. Quoting the 1977 Star Wars film in which the spirit of wise old Obi-Wan Kenobi whispered to the young Skywalker, “Trust your feelings, Luke”, Frum argues that ‘it was in their feelings that the Americans of the 1970s put their trust’ with ‘the mood’ of the decade celebrating ‘the emotive and intuitive’ and denigrating ‘the rational and the intellectual.’[[238]](#footnote-238) Indeed, he identifies a societal ‘condemnation of rationalism’ coinciding with the breakdown of trust in the experts of the 1940s and 1950s who had promised a new ‘predictable’, ‘less volatile’ post-war world created through science and rationalism. ‘It was against the background of the previous generation’s faith in central planning and control’, he argues, ‘that the 1970s rebellion against rationality has to be understood. Consciously created order looked beautiful in the plans and blueprints; in life it was brutal, alienating, and inhuman.’[[239]](#footnote-239) He quotes the authors of *How to Be Your Own Best Friend* (1971): ‘People often talk about wanting to be spontaneous, to live out their feelings. They have locked themselves into intellectual boxes, where they hardly know what they feel any more. They become desperate to experience plain, simple emotion. They think if they could throw away their minds, they would be free.’[[240]](#footnote-240) Frum makes the point that the shift in thinking about emotional honesty in the 1970s laid the foundations for America’s emotional culture today: ‘The gurus of the 1970s taught, and we today still seem to believe, that to delve honestly into one’s feelings requires one to shut down the analytical lobes of the mind.’[[241]](#footnote-241) The lasting legacy of the shift in thinking about emotional openness is something Jessica Grogan has also explored in her account of the relationship between humanistic psychology and popular culture in America, arguing that it has yet to receive due credit for its reshaping of American life.

The privileging of human subjectivity, spontaneity and growth over cold rationalism was at the heart of humanistic psychology. Open, honest communication was viewed by humanistic psychologists as the solution to an increasingly impersonal and lonely world driven by technology and computerisation. Its offshoot, encounter therapy, was described by Carl Rogers as ‘a growing counter-force to the dehumanisation of our culture’ in which the person has an image of himself as ‘a mechanically filed and stimulated object, dealt with by utterly uncaring machines and bureaucrats.’[[242]](#footnote-242) Humanistic psychology had its origins in the 1950s, emerging formally as a movement in the 1960s and reaching its apotheosis in the first part of the 1970s when it had its biggest influence on mainstream culture, before eventually ‘burning out’ by the close of the decade.[[243]](#footnote-243) Beginning in the 1950s, the ‘fathers’ of humanistic psychology, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers began to react against the model of ‘the man in the grey flannel suit’, representative of the ‘conformity’ of the decade. Coinciding with a rash of books displaying this disillusion with man’s loss of creativity and agency– the most prominent being David Reisman’s *The Lonely Crowd* (1950)and William H Whyte’s *The Organisational Man* (1956) – Maslow’s theory of self-actualisation and Rogers’ model of person-centred therapy’ sought to rally against the type of psychology prevalent in the 1950s which they construed as ‘too negatively oriented, sickness-focused, problem-centred’, the greatest ambition of most psychologists being to ‘rehabilitate fallen individuals to better conform to social expectations.’[[244]](#footnote-244) Resisting ‘dull conformity’, humanistic psychology focused on human liberation, psychological health and growth through experience and spontaneity, proposing a new theory that all individuals inherently strive to achieve their full potential. They followed Rousseau’s positivity about man’s natural state, embracing the romanticist idea that people are good. They dismissed the prevalent idea that ‘pathology, or even evil, naturally arose from individuals’, viewing it instead as a ‘product of an unhealthy environment.’[[245]](#footnote-245) Humanistic psychologists believed psychology had moved too far towards scientism and the medical model. They sought to return human subjectivity and complexity to the discipline, taking it back to its philosophical and theological roots. In the ‘age of the expert’ and the ‘tyranny of science’, these pioneers of growth sought to entrust individuals with their own plight for self-fulfilment.

‘Freedom’, fundamental to the healthy personality, was to be achieved through ‘spontaneity of feeling’, as Jourard summarised: ‘People see themselves as feeling ‘free’ when they perceive themselves as fundamentally good. The man who regards himself as good does not have to watch his own behaviour carefully in order to make certain that no evil or dangerous behaviour will emerge. Instead he can permit himself to be spontaneous. Spontaneity in expression and behaviour is one of the forms in which the feeling of freedom manifests itself.’[[246]](#footnote-246)

Although the kinds of questions asked by humanistic psychology – How can individuals maintain their agency and find meaning in their lives? –were not new, a product of modern society, they were being asked at a particularly poignant moment in history when they would be met by a highly receptive audience. As Grogan argues, ‘humanistic psychologists were responding directly to deep cultural needs’ in the 1950s and 1960s. The war had left the population feeling unsettled whilst technological change was causing increasing alienation and the decline of traditional roles had led to confusion and anxiety. Humanistic psychology was particularly attractive, claims Grogan, because it was positive and optimistic about social change for the collective whilst placing the individual as fundamental to this process, not a casualty of wider influences. Thus, the 1960s and 1970s would see a move away from the tradition of reducing humans to ‘a set of stimuli and responses’ towards a new psychology of ‘people at their best’, ‘a utopian vision of a healed culture’ which celebrated the value and uniqueness of the individual and heralded a new world in which everyone had the right to fulfil themselves.[[247]](#footnote-247)

Humanistic psychologists celebrated what they perceived to be a new era of the ‘self’ in the 1960s. It was clear, they believed, from the similarity of the rhetoric being used in psychology, the student movement and civil rights, as well as the scale on which this language of selfhood was adopted, that this was a significant moment in the transformation of the ‘modern self’. By the seventies, the ‘goal’ of life was recognised by many as being able to live more ‘authentically’, concerned with honouring the ‘real self’ as opposed to living a restrained, ‘false’ life conforming to strict social rules. Rogers described this new approach to living thus: ‘When material needs are largely satisfied, as they tend to be for many people in this affluent society, individuals are turning to the psychological world, groping for a greater degree of authenticity and fulfilment…the goal of living life more fully, of developing one’s possibilities in all their richness and complexity appears to be one of the major satisfactions towards which man is turning.’[[248]](#footnote-248) Yet, as Grogan points out, although the scale of the discussion was new in the second half of the sixties, the themes were not, with deep roots going back to the previous decade and beyond.[[249]](#footnote-249)

**The ‘Authentic Self’**

There had been a strong preoccupation within psychological and sociological literature with the ‘authentic self’, and whether face-to-face interaction could allow for it to be exposed, since the 1950s. Sociologist Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959) defined the debate with its theory of ‘best-outcome formula’ which he argued led people to present themselves to others in society in a way that would give the most beneficial impression of them and to fit into what they believed were appropriate social norms. Thus, he argued, social encounters were dramatic performances and the version of the ‘self’ an individual revealed to others was but a carefully curated ‘character performance’. Goffman highlighted the ‘façade’ of 1950s society where ‘transparency’ was sacrificed to privacy, restraint and inauthenticity: ‘We lead an outdoor life. We specialise in fixed settings, in keeping strangers out, and in giving the performer some privacy in which to prepare for the show.’[[250]](#footnote-250) Indeed, Goffman used the example of the secrecy and holding back which he argued was actively being encouraged to occur in marriage by the ‘experts’ of the fifties as evidence of the lack of ‘frankness’ in modern society: ‘Marriage counsellors are increasingly agreed that an individual ought not to feel obliged to tell his or her spouse about previous ‘affairs’, as this might only lead to needless strain.’[[251]](#footnote-251)

David Riesman, whose re-issue of the hugely successful *The Lonely Crowd* came out in 1961, added to the body of literature and the sway of thinking on the topic of ‘authenticity’. Riesman, in line with the thinking of others such as Erich Fromm who had argued in *The Sane Society* (1955) that public selves were estranged from private selves, asserted that most people were adept at hiding their real selves. He claimed that they were deliberately misrepresenting themselves to the people around them, causing a deep sense of alienation in modern society.[[252]](#footnote-252) Thus, American psychologist Barry Alan Farber concludes that: ‘Genuineness, self-awareness, a need to be truly known by others – all were qualities seen to be essentially absent in the lives of post-World War II men and women.’ He continues that commentators were beginning to question the belief, identified by Goffman, that being ‘civilised’ meant not ‘stealing or actively pursuing information that is not freely given to us’.[[253]](#footnote-253) What was required was a cultural shift in the portrayal of self-disclosure.

**Self-Disclosure and Growth**

American psychologist Sidney Jourard is credited with initiating modern research into the problems of self-disclosure with his book *The Transparent Self* (1964). Jouard argued that mental illness was the direct result of the absence of self-disclosure for it was through self-disclosure that an individual comes to know themselves: ‘When we succeed in hiding our being from others, we tend to lose touch with our real selves’[[254]](#footnote-254) ‘Opening up’ through disclosure had two primary and related functions in Jourard’s mind: to better connect to others and to better understand the self. Self-disclosure created both intimacy and identity.[[255]](#footnote-255) He despaired of the inauthenticity of the relationships he saw around him, writing about husbands and wives being ‘strangers to an incredible degree’, of children who ‘do not know their parents’, fathers who ‘do not know what their children think’ and the general lack of mutual disclosure within the family.[[256]](#footnote-256) He echoed Fromm *et al* with his assertion that: ‘Man, perhaps alone of all living forms, is capable of *being* one thing and *seeming* from his actions and talk to be something else.’[[257]](#footnote-257) He highlighted the contradiction that a society which was, among other things dedicated to the ‘pursuit of truth’, allowed for the disclosure of the biggest truth, the truth of one’s being, to be penalised. Jourard continued the criticism of restraint as a recipe for alienation, writing in 1974 that: ‘Falsifying emotion can be a pernicious influence upon your life. Let the other people in your life know your authentic feelings toward them, especially those with whom you have a personal relationship. To be emotionally dishonest is to set the stage for estrangement from others and for self-alienation.’[[258]](#footnote-258)

Jourard recognised that the courage required to be self-disclosing was immense, for it often elicited feelings of shame when an individual revealed that they had deviated from the code of ‘what we should be like’ which was handed down by religion and moralism: ‘Impossible concepts of how man ought to be, often handed down from the pulpit, make man so ashamed of his true being that he feels obliged to seem different. Yet when a man does not acknowledge to himself who, what, and how he is, he is out of touch with reality, and he will sicken and die’.[[259]](#footnote-259) A move towards privileging self-disclosure, argued Jourard, was the means towards man truly ‘coming of age’: ‘Disclosure of man to man, honest, direct, uncontrived, is the necessary condition for reducing the mystery that one man is to another, It is the empirical index of the I-Thou relationship, which I, agreeing with Buber (1937), see as the index of man functioning at his highest and truly *human* level.’[[260]](#footnote-260)

Thus, Jourard believed that ‘healthy’ individuals were those who could disclose themselves, moreover a ‘healthy’ approach to openness was required for good marital adjustment: ‘I think it is almost self-evident that you cannot love another person, that is, behave toward him so as to foster his happiness and growth, unless you know what he needs. And you cannot know what he needs unless he tells you.’[[261]](#footnote-261) Self-disclosure, claimed Jourard, required an environment of reciprocity, love and trust: ‘If I love someone, not only do I strive to know him, so that I can devote myself more effectively to his well-being. I also display my love by letting him know me. At the same time, by doing so, I permit him to love me.’[[262]](#footnote-262) *The Transparent Self* featured a chapter on ‘Openness in Marriage’ in which Jourard argued that ‘one of the enemies of a healthy relationship between two spouses is ‘a felt necessity to play formal roles in that relationship’. The chapter highlighted the ‘façade’ behind which many couples chose to hide and the inauthenticity of a relationship in which individuals choose to adhere to prescribed roles at the expense of honesty. It meant, he argued, that ‘many couples are terrified at growth, change in either themselves or in their spouses.’[[263]](#footnote-263)

Indeed, in his later book *Disclosing Man to Himself* (1968), Jourard focused on the role of self-disclosure in ‘growing’ and the capacity for the marriage relationship to foster personal growth in its participants. In a section titled ‘Growth and Your Experience of Me’ he demonstrated the importance of verbal communication to change, asserting that the type of fruitful, open communication required for change depended on honesty between spouses as well as the ‘self-honesty’ of the individuals involved. Spouses had the ability to help each other grow if they could free themselves from the fixed idea of who the other person is:

‘You can help me grow, or you can obstruct my growth. If you have a *fixed* idea of who I am, and what my possibilities of change are, then anything that comes out of me beyond your concept, you will disconfirm. In fact, you may be terrified of any surprises, any changes in my behaviour, because these changes may threaten your concept of me; my changes may, if disclosed to you, shatter your concept of me and challenge you to grow. You may be afraid to. In your fear, you may do everything in your power to get me to un-change and to reappear to you as the person you once knew…But if you suspend any preconceptions you may have of me and my being, and invite me simply to be and to disclose this being to you, you create an ambience, an area of “low pressure” where I can let my being happen and be disclosed, to you and to me simultaneously – to me from the inside, and to you who receive the outside layer of my being.’[[264]](#footnote-264)

Jourard defined growth of the self as ‘a change in the way of experiencing the world and one’s own being.’[[265]](#footnote-265) He urged his readers that although growing could be a frightening experience, the achievement of a more authentic identity was also exhilarating precisely because of the excitement and uncertainty that almost always are involved. This, he set in stark contrast to the mundanity, boredom and stasis experienced in a marriage where neither partner is granted the space to change:

‘There are relationships which continue on the unspoken condition that neither partner will grow. Thus, a man and woman marry. Each holds a concept of the other that each has deliberately constructed in the mind of the other. At the time of the marriage his concept of her personality was inaccurate and incomplete. She did not know him as he “really” was. However, he believed she had all the traits of an ideal wife. If either behaved contrary to expectations, then the other would be disappointed, would feel let down and deceived: “You are not the person I married or the kind of person I want to stay married to.” In order to stay married, each partner will strive to remain unchanged. Such a marriage prevents growth.’[[266]](#footnote-266)

**‘Pairing’: A New Approach to Courtship**

Like the proponents of ‘emotional maturity’ in the 1950s, campaigners for personal growth through the breaking down of emotional restraint also warned against the dangers of marrying in haste following a short courtship. They held the same fears that individuals would ‘marry someone who did not exist except in their imagination’. Yet rather than addressing the issue from the standpoint that overblown emotions were to be avoided, that restraint should be practised and pragmatic decisions about spouses made, the proponents of the ‘authentic self’ were concerned that individuals were not being emotionally spontaneous enough or exposing enough of themselves in the early days to give a true sense of who they were. They campaigned for longer courtships to allow for deeper, emotionally forthcoming communication and unrestrained self-disclosure. In light of the changing attitudes towards pre-marital sex, proponents of a new approach to courtship and a lengthier ‘getting to know you’ period argued that if couples could explore each other sexually before marriage, they should also be able to do so verbally. The restraint practised by previous generations was, argued Jourard, often simply the deception of ‘false selves’ rather than an appropriate way to avoid an unhappy marriage. Restraint encouraged deceit and paved the road for unsuitable matches:

‘Optimally, in anything so intimate as marriage, the couple should explore each other, perhaps for a long time before they become legally committed to one another. This is unromantic, however, and seldom done; the longer-range consequence is either divorce or a long life of boredom or martyrdom. And so a courtship, instead of being a period of mutual disclosure and study, becomes a period of mutual deception, and the construction of false public selves. Many a person has experienced tragic disillusionment with his spouse once the ceremony has been completed and the marriage begun. Even more tragic, however, is a longer-run consequence – that of striving to conform with a false public self that has been constructed during the courtship.’[[267]](#footnote-267)

According to Jourard, those couples who had ‘pleased’ the 1950s marriage advisers and practised restraint to avoid marrying a ‘Prince Charming’ in favour of a more reliable, stable mate, inevitably married someone they did not know anyway, because they had chosen to spend their life with a ‘social role’ rather than an authentic person.

In 1970 psychologist Dr George R. Bach and his colleague Ronald M Deutsch published a book announcing a ‘new approach to dating’. The technique was called ‘pairing’ and it was, they claimed, ‘based on the recognition and expression of authentic feelings’.[[268]](#footnote-268) The ‘chief aim’ of the pairing system was to ‘break down the illusions, in favour of authenticity, trust, and openness.’[[269]](#footnote-269) The authors declared that they had ‘no patience with the tactics, games, manipulations, and seductive tricks of either romantic tradition or of the current singles magazines. They are barriers to intimacy. They alienate those who use them.’[[270]](#footnote-270) The cover of the book confidently proclaimed: ‘Practice the art of pairing and reward yourself with genuine, lasting intimacy in all your relationships.’ The book was hugely successful and the *The Sun* newspaper ran a series titled ‘How to Pick a Mate’ in the November of that year which condensed the book’s message into manageable daily chapters.

The series asserted that ‘courting is not the way to real intimacy’ and quoted at length Bach’s theory of pairing.[[271]](#footnote-271) To understand ‘pairing’, Bach claimed that it was necessary to understand the old-style attitudes of courting and loving. These, Bach continued, were based on façade and pretence: ‘When a man courts a woman he puts on his best face. He neither shows his true self nor discovers what the woman is really like. He dare not step out of character in case he loses her. So is it surprising that courting partners are as much strangers when they love as when they meet, and stay strangers during an affair or marriage? Intimacy, for them, is impossible.’[[272]](#footnote-272) The ‘sex-obsessed world of the Seventies’, argued Bach, was no place for old-fashioned courtship where couples built up false images of each other in their minds. ‘Pairing’ offered a whole new approach. It differed from the old style of courtship which was ‘one plus one equals one’, known as ‘we’. In the ‘we’ scenario, argued Bach, individuals were limited in their self-expression by the preoccupation with ‘what the other will think’. Bach professed that: ‘The courting couple will stick fearfully to their theme: “We are *right* for each other, so we automatically please and fulfil one another. Real conflict must be hidden at any price, as it will show we’re not pre-destined lovers.” This is destructive.’[[273]](#footnote-273) The ‘pairing’ relationship was based on the equation: ‘One plus one equals three. The man, the woman, and their relationship.’ There was no emphasis on being of the same mind, no need for the old manipulation of oneself and the other person, rather there was room for the individuals to grow: ‘The pairer does not feel static, but free to change and grow. His horizons become enlarged by love, not narrowed. The courter doesn’t dare change – he would make himself and his partner anxious if he did.’[[274]](#footnote-274)

Bach declared that what he saw around him was a situation in which the majority of people did not experience true intimacy: ‘Many who are devoted to one person they see regularly, sleep or live with, experience this nagging, frustrated hunger for real deep intimacy.’[[275]](#footnote-275) He reassured the readers that the feeling was not something to be dismissed as ‘immature’ or ‘unrealistic’: ‘This yearning for intimacy – even where love has led to marriage –is adult and real and necessary.’

In *The Intimate Enemy* published two years previously, Bach had referred to the legacy of the old-style courtship on couples unable to be transparent with each other because they were holding on to an image of their courtship selves: ‘Some of the most intelligent people cannot face the task of hammering out a realistic, joint post-courtship image until they have lived through years or even decades of despair.’[[276]](#footnote-276) He gave the example of a Dr Bond, a highly successful psychiatrist and his wife who after twenty one years of ‘generally frustrating’ married life had decided to do something to change their relationship. The stimulus for this interest in change was, claimed Bach, a visit from their nineteen year old daughter and her boyfriend:

‘They were touched to see a young couple in love. And they were particularly impressed by how freely and realistically the young people talked about what they thought of – and expected from – each other. The parents contrasted this with their own inhibited courtship ways and began to wonder how the false impressions that were born at the time had managed to endure.’[[277]](#footnote-277)

The couple’s revelation brought them to Bach’s Institute of Group Therapy in Beverly Hills California to embark upon journeys of growth and discovery together.

In *Pairing*, Bach argued that the ‘intimate revolution’ which had begun to take hold in recent years was a response to the denial of ‘true intimacy’ that the older system of restraint had fostered: ‘A new generation has sensed that the old ways – which we call the courting system – cheat them of intimacy. They are rebelling against that system and have begun an Intimate Revolution, to overthrow the romantic establishment.’[[278]](#footnote-278) Yet, in his article for *The Sun*, Bach claimed that some of this rejection of the restraint culture still failed to provide emotional transparency: ‘Signs of the Intimate Revolution are everywhere, with the emphasis on public nudity, free-and-easy sex, partner swapping and orgies. [Yet] the Intimate Revolution has so far produced only tantalising glimpses of true happiness.’ Bach packaged his theory of ‘pairing’ as *the* answer to the yearning for deeper intimacy in modern life, writing in his book that: ‘The palace and the old laws are burning. We propose here a new, free, and realistic rule of love, one that we have seen bring fulfilment to those who long for it.’[[279]](#footnote-279) Pairing was achievable, realistic and life-enriching. As the seventies wore on, these critiques of the old courting system helped increase the age of marriage, the length of time between meeting and marrying someone, and the popularity of cohabitation or ‘trial marriage’.

The new approach to courting was thus based on the idea of ‘encountering each other’ before ‘settling down with each other’, proposing that if marriage was to serve as a therapeutic relationship, then it was necessary to adopt the tenets of encounter therapy in order to create an atmosphere of transparency and growth.

**Encounter Therapy**

The belief that self-disclosure and strong emotional expression were the keys to realising the authentic self and achieving personal growth underpinned the Encounter Group movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s which sought to aid individuals in their quest to ‘open up’ and achieve better relationships with those around them. As Farber has argued, encounter groups were the epitome of the ‘let it all hang out’ mood of the time: ‘The popularity of encounter groups exemplified a tell-all philosophy, an ethos of “if you think it or feel it, say it.”’[[280]](#footnote-280) The ‘father’ of the movement, Carl Rogers, described their purpose as one of helping to break down the barriers people erect around themselves so that they can, for the first time, react with one another openly and freely.[[281]](#footnote-281) Jourard promoted them as providing ‘a person with the opportunity to explore his possibilities for experiencing and expressing his genuine feelings.’[[282]](#footnote-282)

Encounter therapy consisted of a small group of individuals meeting regularly or for a sustained one-off session over a period of days, to be guided through the processes of self-disclosure, inter-personal confrontation and emotional expression by a trained leader. Yet following from Rogers’ theory of person-centred therapy, encounter groups moved away from the idea of the psychotherapist as ‘expert’ with the leaders participating in the group experience as opposed to standing on the side-lines. The encounter group was intended to be an intense, anxiety driven experience through which the members would ‘gradually, tentatively, and fearfully explore their feelings and attitudes towards one another and towards themselves’.[[283]](#footnote-283) Rogers described how it would become increasingly evident as the group encounter progressed that what the individuals had at first presented to each other were ‘facades, masks’, with the ‘contrast between the outer shell and the inner person more and more apparent as the hours go by.’ He continued that: ‘Genuine communication’ builds up within the group and the person who has been thoroughly walled off from others comes out with some small segment of his actual feelings.’[[284]](#footnote-284)

Thus, encounter groups fostered the idea that what was required in the seventies was individuals who were ‘personally authentic’ and emotionally spontaneous. The leader of one of the 5,000 encounter groups in New York City in 1970 expressed this need for self-honesty in an interview with *New York* magazine: ‘We’re all so locked up in ourselves, we’ve got so many defences going that we’ve forgotten how to feel. We’re physically tight and so emotionally tight that we don’t dare let go for fear of finding out what we really feel. The point is to get rid of those blocks, both emotional and physical, so we can start growing as human beings again.’[[285]](#footnote-285) The role of the encounter group was to allow participants to begin the process of opening up to themselves and to others in a situation that was away from their day-to-day lives. They would master the ability to communicate openly and honestly to their fellow participants, getting ‘a taste’ of what true openness and liberation felt like, and would then be able to achieve the same authentic intimacy with their loved ones back home or with their colleagues at work. As Rogers wrote:

‘Participants feel a closeness and intimacy which they have not felt even with their spouses or members of their own family, because they have revealed themselves here more deeply and more fully than to those in their own family circle. In such a group the individual comes to know himself and each of the others more completely than is possible in the usual social or working relationships. He becomes deeply acquainted with the other members and with his own inner self, the self that otherwise tends to be hidden behind his façade. Hence he relates better to others, both in the group and later in the everyday situation.’[[286]](#footnote-286)

Rogers described the transformative effects of encounter therapy on personal relationships, both marital and familial:

‘I have known individuals for whom the encounter experience has meant an almost miraculous change in the depth of their communication with spouse and children. Sometimes for the first time real feelings are shared. They are able to share their growing insights, take the risk of expressing their real feelings, both loving and negative, as soon as they themselves have become aware of them. A great deal of sleep is lost in the process, but the growth in relationship is extraordinary.[[287]](#footnote-287)’

Rogers’ intention with encounter therapy was to overhaul modern society through creating honest, open and authentic communication between individuals in all areas of life be it family relationships, business relationships or even the relationships involved in the school classroom. He claimed he had ‘seen teachers who have transformed their classrooms, following an encounter experience, into a personal, caring, trusting, learning group, where students participate fully and openly.’[[288]](#footnote-288) The ‘serious young founder’ of the East London Encounter Centre, Carolyn Spicer, told the *Observer* in April 1972 that what society required was ‘unconditional positive regard’: ‘She talks a great deal about one-to-one relationships, empathy and something called “unconditional positive regard” which turned out to be another word for warmth.’[[289]](#footnote-289) Openness, honesty, emotionality and ‘warmth’ would replace the ‘restrained’ relationships of the 1950s in this 1970s vision of a better, harmonious future for humankind. Encounter groups were an explicit ‘attempt to meet and overcome the isolation and alienation of the individual in contemporary life’, a place where the alienated individual can ‘come in meaningful touch with another being.’ Rogers predicted that ‘encountering’ would become the norm for human behaviour and that the future would see a ‘more formless spread of the encounter group spirit and climate. [Where] there is no organised encounter group. There is simply freedom of expression – of feelings and thoughts – on any personally relevant issue.’[[290]](#footnote-290)

Whilst encounter therapy had broad aims for the future of all human interaction, Rogers also accepted the influence it could have on the marital relationship in particular: ‘One of the narrower but highly significant possibilities is the chance given by intensive group experience of exploring new solutions to the problem of the man-woman relationship. New answers may be developed as men and women, both before and after marriage, explore, as deeply as they are able, their own interpersonal relationships and what they wish to make of them, in the close *experience* of a group.’[[291]](#footnote-291)

Yet Rogers made clear that the effects on marriages of encounter therapy were not always what ‘society’ deemed positive: ‘There have been situations where one spouse, gaining greatly in insight and openness, has gone home after an encounter group and so frightened and threatened the other with his or her spontaneity that the communication gap has become temporarily – in some cases permanently – increased.’[[292]](#footnote-292)

He asserted that personal relationships should be participated in fully and openly, and that in most marriages this failed to happen. Often, when couples were able to begin participating in this way, the relationship became unviable and it was a better turn of events for those individuals to accept that it was preferable to live authentically alone than in a ‘façade’ of marital stability where neither person was truly ‘living’: ‘Sometimes couples face, in a group, the buried differences between them, and frequently reach a real reconciliation; at other times they realise openly that there is a gap they cannot bridge. It is fair to say that I have often seen tremendous changes in the relationships of persons – mostly constructive, but sometimes negative from a social, though not necessarily a personal, point of view.’[[293]](#footnote-293) The idea of ‘social responsibility’ was at odds with the pursuit of personal authenticity and whilst the motives of encounter therapy were not to endorse selfishness, they *were* to prioritise self-honesty which focused on the individual’s journey towards personal growth rather than the stability and sustainability of the marriage.

As Jessica Grogan has argued is the case for the United States, so too has the influence of encounter group therapy on British culture been generally neglected by scholars. Whilst organised group therapy was better established in America, it did became a significant movement in Britain and its formula of stripping back the façade to let a person’s emotions tumble out in order to ‘open them up’ to authentic intimacy penetrated popular culture.[[294]](#footnote-294) The activities of its largest centres were frequently documented in the broadsheets as the following example from the *Observer* demonstrates. Californian psychotherapist and ‘television star’, Dr Irene Kassola visited London in the late summer of 1972 to direct a workshop at Quaesitor, the London Encounter Group centre. Kassola had her own television show in America which aired a weekly on-camera session of group psychotherapy which had proved hugely popular with American television audiences. Her workshop in London would be aired by the same station, and the *Observer* newspaper chose to interview Kassola about what her show usually revealed and what was likely to feature in the program based on the London workshop:

‘Dr Kassorla bounces with proselytising zeal. You can believe her when she says that not only do her patients argue about sex, break down, even shout and cry on the show, but that she does too. “It’s the same old problems with all of us – loving, rejection and fear of dying.”’[[295]](#footnote-295)

However, it was not just the ‘intellectualising’, left-leaning newspapers which showed an interest in this new form of therapy. The prevalence of the tenets of ‘encountering’ in popular culture were such that the *Daily Mail* could compare a well-loved television programme with the group therapy format safe in the knowledge that its readers would understand the reference:

‘What makes *This Is Your Life* so popular is that it selects all the most comforting ingredients of an Encounter Group and lets us watch. A person is selected – yesterday it was Patricia Phoenix, the loveable Elsie, star of Coronation Street. And then the idea is to promote feelings in him or her by presenting the past that will be touching.’[[296]](#footnote-296)

The article, on the ‘Entertainment’ page was simply a round-up of the previous night’s television, yet it conveyed the essence of encounter therapy referring to Rogers’ notion of the ‘façade’ that individuals hide behind, the ‘outward self’ in its description of Phoenix as able to be a friend to everyone: ‘Patricia Phoenix was a hard nut to crack, being an actress who can easily kiss a hundred sincere friends and then fling out her arms and kiss another hundred even more sincere ones without turning a hair.’ The article then described her ‘opening up’ experience and the breaking down of her restraint when she wept: ‘But bring on her old auntie from Canada and even Patricia Phoenix can’t help bursting, very touchingly, into floods of tears.’ The final line – ‘The audience can share in another cathartic release next week’ – revealed the idea that the viewers were likened to participants in an encounter group and that they achieved a vicarious cathartic experience from watching the show. Whilst the article mocks in its tone, it demonstrates the wide-reach of the discourses of encounter therapy and that the language and concepts associated with it were in common usage.

Hera Cook’s study has demonstrated that the tenets of humanistic psychology were changing the way individuals thought about their experience of ‘self’ by the 1960s. She writes that amongst the participants in the 1960s, ‘notions of a desired new way of being began to emerge.’ These involved the ‘malleability of the self and its availability for introspection and consideration that were radically different to the beliefs concerning the need for control of the emotions and avoidance of introspection’ which the participants in the 1940s held. By the 1960s: ‘Participants had moved from an almost complete acceptance of a negative need for control to a cautious but optimistic willingness to consider the possibility of change. This approach to change can be linked to the concept of self-actualisation, which was central to humanistic psychology.’[[297]](#footnote-297) The following chapter will consider how the cornerstone of humanistic psychology – ‘self-disclosure’ – became embedded in attitudes to marriage and intimate relationships in the 1970s.

**Chapter Three**

***‘Encountering Each Other’***

**‘The New Transparency’: Communication, Openness and Self-Disclosure**

**Self-Disclosure and the ‘Bridge of Communication’ in Marriage**

In his study of sex and marriage in the late 1960s, social anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer found that ‘bad communication’ topped the list of causes people linked to marital breakdown.[[298]](#footnote-298) One of his respondents, a thirty one year old ‘wife of a maintenance electrician’ elaborated that breakdown was the inevitable result of a ‘lack of understanding between one another inasmuch as you don’t talk things out.’[[299]](#footnote-299) The following decade would embrace the new ‘transparent’ model of romantic relationships with a proliferation of advice for couples on how to create the ‘verbal bridge’ across which intimacy and deeper understanding would flow.

Writing in 1974, marriage counsellors and former directors of the NMGC, David and Vera Mace, described verbal communication as the ‘master key’ when it came to creating a successful marriage.[[300]](#footnote-300) Explicitly influenced by the discourses emanating from humanistic psychology, they had founded the ‘Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment’ in America’ in 1973 which sought to educate married couples in what they defined as a ‘primary coping system, a tool-kit for couples to use as they carry out the adventure of “growing a marriage”. The three essential components of this tool-kit were: A commitment to Growth, An Effectively Functioning Communication System and The Ability to Make Creative Use of Conflict.[[301]](#footnote-301) The following chapter will explore how this ‘tool kit’ became the dominant model for thinking about intimate relationships in the 1970s.

In their book, *We Can Have Better Marriages If We Really Want Them* published in Britain in 1975, the Maces asserted that the marriage relationship was not close enough or intense enough in the 1970s. They argued that contrary to the views of some sociologists that traditional marriage was failing in the modern world because the closeness of the bond ‘stifles the growth and individuality of the partners’, it was only through actually ‘getting closer’ and communicating on a deeper level, that marital relationships and the institution itself could be revitalised. Their motto was ‘relationship-in-depth can only be achieved and can only be sustained, through communication-in-depth.’[[302]](#footnote-302)

Far from stifling growth, the Maces believed that the marital relationship was the perfect site to further the pursuit of personal growth and self-realisation because it was so loaded with emotion. Following from humanistic psychology, self-knowledge and the expression of emotion were, for the Maces, inextricably intertwined. Moreover, they argued that some degree of self-awareness was essential to achieve the high level of emotional communication required for happy marriage, recommending that prospective marriage partners take heed: ‘In order to communicate effectively a husband or wife must achieve as much self-awareness as possible. It is baffling not to understand one’s emotions. Growing in self-awareness and in the capacity to relate to the partner are processes that complement and reinforce one another.’[[303]](#footnote-303) Indeed in his 1974 manual *Getting Ready for Marriage*, David Mace dedicated an entire chapter to ‘knowing yourself’ and then sharing that ‘self’ with your prospective marriage partner. Preparation for marriage, in his view, should involve three important steps:

‘First, I am going to ask you to look at yourself – who you are, how you came to be what you are, where you stand now and what you are asking of life. Second, I shall invite you both to share with each other what you have come to know and understand about yourselves. Third, I shall suggest that you discuss what it might mean to you as a couple to spend the rest of your lives together in the most intimate, and the most demanding, of all human relationships.’[[304]](#footnote-304)

Yet, although self-awareness was a necessary precursor to this deeper version of the marital relationship, the process of emotional outpouring during marriage, be it in arguments or just intimate conversation, would enable the individuals to further their self-knowledge in a way that nothing else could, providing the ultimate goal of personal growth. Successful marriages would be forged out of the new desire for persistent personal growth and fulfilment that characterised late sixties and seventies Britain in the wake of the developments discussed in Chapter Two. A lot was riding on this relationship that ‘goes much deeper than conventional social relationships’, argued Mace.[[305]](#footnote-305) It would be the testing ground for the changes in emotional culture and understandings of the self that would also impact upon expectations of how other relationships should be conducted, including friendships and familial relationships.[[306]](#footnote-306)

**A Culture of Confession**

Deborah Cohen has shown that the 1970s were a pivotal decade in which communication, honesty and authenticity appeared to be the key to better personal relationships. Her study of privacy and ‘family secrets’ has revealed that ‘openness fundamentally pervaded social relationships in the 1970s’.[[307]](#footnote-307) Although her focus is on the family, she uses the example of adultery and the increasing likelihood of confessing an affair to one’s partner during the decade of 1968-78 as evidence for this new culture of openness.[[308]](#footnote-308)

In his book *Self-Disclosure in Psychotherapy* (2006), Barry Alan Farber argues that the move towards greater openness and the embracing of a culture of confession can be explained by important changes in the 1960s:

‘The politics and sensibilities of the 1960s – civil rights, women’s rights, sexual openness, the dawning of multiculturalism – offered, and at times demanded, new ways of accepting and understanding others. Along with this focus came an emphasis on learning about and sharing more of ourselves with others. Moreover, the “others” in this equation were not restricted to family, lovers, or best-friends but, in fact, extended to acquaintances as well as strangers – indeed, the universe of others. The boundaries between private and public knowledge began to collapse.’[[309]](#footnote-309)

The obsession, Farber claims, was also fuelled by the proliferation of celebrities’ public disclosures, with most people coming round to the idea that good mental health required ‘excruciating’ public confessions.[[310]](#footnote-310) By the 1960s and 1970s there was a societal valorisation of the intensely personal confession, with celebrities and the wider public alike encouraged to ‘let it all hang out’. Singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and Donovan experienced considerable success in this period epitomising the era’s interest in personal stories. ‘Confessional poetry’ such as that penned by Sylvia Plath, was a burgeoning field and was ‘consistent with this ethos’ of ‘telling all’, although as Farber points out was less influential than popular music.[[311]](#footnote-311) The confession novel genre boomed in the late sixties in ‘the brief, if lucrative vogue for Confessions of a…pulp’, satirised in the early seventies in the popular series ‘Confessions of a Window Cleaner’.[[312]](#footnote-312)

However, the encouragement to talk about one’s problems and to ‘confess’ one’s secrets was far from being a totally new phenomenon in the 1970s. Psychologists, marriage counsellors and agony aunts had been attempting to instigate a confessional culture since at least the 1940s. Cohen has explored the relationship between the rise of a confessional culture in Britain and the demise of the ‘family secret’.[[313]](#footnote-313) She concludes that beginning as early as the 1930s and reaching its zenith in the 1970s, family secrets came to be viewed as an obstacle in the path of progress towards a more enlightened society. Her examination of agony aunt columns from the 1930s and 1940s revealed their role as a vehicle for ordinary Britons to rid themselves of secrets. They led the path for a ‘better life’ through confession. Cohen argues that this new culture of men and women (for both were encouraged to confess their secrets) benefitting from talking openly with strangers about their family and relationship problems was endorsed by the government when the Home Office awarded the grants to marriage counselling after the Second World War, discussed in Chapter One.[[314]](#footnote-314)

Cohen argues that in the early years, marriage counselling revealed that people were seriously ‘bottled up’ at home and that the role of counselling was purely one of ‘catharsis’ – the process of emotional release following the outpouring of one’s troubles. This mode of confessing served merely as an outlet for unhappily married spouses. Individuals would purge themselves on one off occasions rather than attend a series of counselling sessions. Much like the letter to an agony aunt, this was immediate relief from a single confession of unhappiness. So purgative ‘confession’ rather than ‘discussion’ became the function of counselling and agony aunt columns throughout the 1950s.[[315]](#footnote-315) Moreover, there was far less emphasis on discussing problems and emotions with marriage partners independently of the counselling situation, or of ‘happy’ couples using verbal communication as a means to achieve ‘personal growth’ and a deeper connection with the other person.

Thus, the early marriage guidance counsellors and the agony aunts had sought to encourage talking but had settled for catharsis as society appeared unready to completely compromise their privacy and still held on to the notion of British restraint. As Cohen concludes, the experiment in marriage counselling of the 1940s and 50s ‘made clear how much could not be discussed at home. Problems festered for years, and silence or sniping substituted for communication. Unhappy husbands and wives could not talk to each other and there was very little a counsellor could do – other than listen.’[[316]](#footnote-316) Cohen concludes that what was required was a fundamental overhaul of British emotional culture. By the 1960s with the increasing belief that ‘emotional tension’ was a destructive force in society and significant social and cultural change, Britons were better placed to embrace a more ‘open’ approach to emotional life. The 1970s would usher in this age of ‘openness’ and represent a turning point in the meaning of privacy.

**Honesty in Relationships**

Reflecting this cultural shift towards openness in the 1970s, the Maces heralded honesty as the first ‘aspect of marital communication which couples should be helped to understand.’ They continued that: ‘People cannot truly share life without knowing each other, and they cannot know each other unless their thoughts are open to each other to a degree that happens in few other human relationships.’ The debates about the ‘farcical’ nature of life under ‘emotional repression’ had made their way into the advice culture with the Maces urging their readers that: ‘To be secretive or reserved or defensive toward each other in marriage is inevitably to condemn the relationship to superficiality.’[[317]](#footnote-317) ‘Superficial’ communication, the kind practiced in marriages for ‘centuries, was a ticking bomb:

‘In many marriages communication is so superficial and so little is known by each about the real interests of the other that a great deal of conversation virtually falls on deaf ears. This leads to chronic boredom. Couples who practice honest sharing of their thoughts and feelings are able to focus their communication on matters that are of genuine interest to each other, and therefore continue to enjoy each other’s company.’[[318]](#footnote-318)

The Maces were building on a turn in the advice literature during the previous decade towards the promotion of more honest, open and deeply intensive marital communication. J. H. Wallis had been a key figure in this shift, inspired by his interest in humanistic psychology. Indeed, the influence of humanistic psychology on attitudes to marriage was spurred forward by this key ‘pioneer’. When Wallis took over as Counselling Officer for the NMGC in 1955 he had pushed for a change in the attitudes of the NMGC towards its counselling practices, in favour of the ‘person centred’ therapy developed by Rogers. Wallis posited the place of the marriage counsellor as ‘fulfilling the role usually played by the spouse in a happy marriage: ‘Accepting the client, understanding him as he was and helping him to understand himself.’[[319]](#footnote-319) Moreover he influenced a change in the content and aim of much of the advice literature in the 1960s towards aiding couples in developing an understanding of themselves so that they were in a better position to take control of their own emotional lives, reflecting the language of the ‘new morality’. Wallis also used the particular language of humanistic psychology as the following extract from his 1963 marriage manual *Thinking About Marriage* demonstrates:

‘It is very easy to think that married life should be learnt from a book and carried out according to correct rules. This technical attitude can easily rob life of spontaneity and relish. We get so used to the idea that everything is scientific and has to be managed by rules that we may easily forget how to love and how to laugh and how to be happy and express our feelings fully and spontaneously.’[[320]](#footnote-320)

Wallis praised ‘frankness’ describing it as the only way to overcome relationship difficulties for it generated mutual respect and self-understanding: ‘This frank discussion of difficulties is by no means easy for everyone and the more difficult it is the greater the reward for learning to do it. What is likely to come out of such a discussion? It is probable that each of them will discover things about the other and about themselves that they did not know before.’ He continued that couples should start out incorporating emotional discussion into their relationship from the very beginning if possible. Marriage, especially when children arrive, contained immense pressures, and openness was the only way to manage them: If they have already got into a way of talking together about their feelings they will the more easily understand what is happening.’[[321]](#footnote-321)

Reflecting this shift, a 1968 book written by a pastor on the topic of how to make a successful marriage made marital communication a central feature. Based on letters he had sent to his daughter in the lead up to her marriage, *Letters to Karen* by Charlie W. Shedd was a less formal marriage advice manual written by a man whose qualifications were not in psychiatry but in the experience of listening to and advising his congregation on their marital woes:

‘I am a pastor. As such, I have discussed matrimonial matters with countless couples. I have also spent many hours with wives alone and husbands by themselves. This is nothing unusual these days. Most of my clergymen friends are caught up in the marriage entanglements of their people. Accordingly, these letters left my mailbox with a father’s prayer that they might be useful to one woman and her husband.’[[322]](#footnote-322)

The new ‘transparency’, identified by Cohen, was a major preoccupation for Shedd. He advised his daughter to ‘work for an atmosphere where you can tell the whole truth. This creation of true person-to-person transparency is another of the big things marriage is about.’[[323]](#footnote-323) Shedd opened his chapter on the ‘Bridge of Communication’ with the following warning that ‘transparency’ was not easy to come by:

‘My dear Karen…Are you good at talking things over? Can you discuss your feelings together? Are there certain subjects you must tiptoe around? How good are you at communicating your inmost thoughts with each other? Most of the couples I marry assure me that this is one of their strongest points. But up against their claim put these echoes of common complaints heard often in our work with couples who have been married several years:

‘You know how you feel when the phone rings and nobody answers? That’s how I feel!’

‘Now please don’t tell my husband I said that, will you? Don’t you dare say anything about this to my wife!’ What do you mean, discuss it? My wife is a sphinx!’

‘He never answers. He only grunts!’

‘With us, it’s like being married to strangers!’[[324]](#footnote-324)

Indeed, the kind of marital communication promoted by these authors of marital advice involved ‘letting down defences and making yourself vulnerable’[[325]](#footnote-325) and they were conscious that this level of emotional communication ‘doesn’t come naturally because in our general social life in the community we are taught to be on our guard, to hide our deeper feelings, to protect ourselves. Many couples carry these patterns over into marriage, and it is little wonder that they never achieve real intimacy or companionship.’[[326]](#footnote-326)

**Growing Pains**

Achieving a ‘modern’ relationship based on open communication and honesty was acknowledged to be very difficult in the aftermath of many decades of restraint, a topic which will be explored in further detail in Chapter Five. Much of the advice literature however, directly engaged with the problems of adopting these more honest marriages, encouraging couples to persevere. Wallis, writing in 1969 appreciated that: ‘No one (least of all a counsellor) should underestimate the difficulty of showing one’s true self to another person. Why cannot we be what we are? Why is it difficult? I believe this is because we are not confident of being accepted if we really show what we are like. We have to recognise the difficulty people find in talking frankly about themselves.’[[327]](#footnote-327) Not only was it considered a difficult thing to reveal one’s true self, but the painful emotions invoked during honest discussion were a difficult thing to confront: ‘We should not expect such discussion with our husband or wife to be easy or free from anxiety. This is not a Board meeting but an exchange of deepest feelings.’[[328]](#footnote-328) Yet, generating and experiencing painful emotions was portrayed as all part of a positive project towards a more open relationship between partners and a more open relationship each individual has with themselves: ‘These discussions will invoke difficult emotions but they are a good. It may be that we get angry or hurt, or resentful of what sounds like (or is) criticism. These are some of the growing-pains of a marriage that is developing towards greater understanding. The rewards are very great in the growing understanding that can be developed, the increasing depth of intimacy between the marriage partners.’[[329]](#footnote-329)

Wallis emphasised the message of pain and hurt being important steps in the path towards personal and relationship growth: ‘Every deep relationship is based on free expression and exchange of feeling. This can be delightful and it can be painful. Those who love each other can hurt each other. Any true friendship or loving relationship involves a risk of hurting and being hurt. Love cannot live in emotional cotton wool.’[[330]](#footnote-330) Indeed, Shedd also underlined the prospect of pain as a positive rather than a negative experience:

‘Breaking up the protective crusts we have built around us may be slow business. Sometimes it is painful. Because this is true, there will be times of inner resistance from each side. But don’t let these continue too long. It is good constantly to measure your progress and make certain that your opening to each other is moving in the direction of increasing revelation…You had better believe it – a man will do almost anything for a woman with whom he can learn to share his real self.’[[331]](#footnote-331)

This move towards the valorisation of emotional pain and its association with personal growth and relationship improvement ran counter to what Joanna Bourke has described as a shift in how physical pain was interpreted in the second half of the twentieth century. In her book *The Story of Pain: From Prayer to Painkillers* (2014), Bourke reveals a transition in thinking about physical pain from the spiritual interpretations of pain and the biblical models of suffering of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries to the aim of treating, avoiding or eliminating pain through the use of painkillers characteristic of the twentieth century.[[332]](#footnote-332) Bourke shows the pervasiveness of the belief that suffering pain fulfilled a ‘higher purpose’ prior to the twentieth century.

Advice on pain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries claimed that people in pain were ‘Suffering *for a reason* (namely, the corrupted nature of humanity in addition to their own personal sinfulness) and that the recitation of scriptures and the emulation of Christ’s suffering would purify them in anticipation of the Next World.’[[333]](#footnote-333) Yet secularisation led to a decreasing belief in the idea that ‘pain moved people towards more virtuous behaviour’ and the consequent progression towards doing everything to avoid and remove painful experiences. [[334]](#footnote-334) Just at the point when emotional pain was being held up as the answer to relationship problems, Bourke identifies a growth in the 1970s in enterprises dedicated to relieving physical pain through the development of painkillers. Indeed, in venerating emotional pain these relationship experts were inadvertently drawing on earlier, historical models of thinking about pain which viewed it as ‘character building’, only by the 1960s and 1970s it was about ‘personal growth’ and improving one’s self-knowledge. There were even similarities in the focus upon the benefits to the individual of ‘the struggle’ pain elicited: ‘Exhortations about how adults and children *ought* to bear painful states – embrace it as a gift, use it as a mechanism for spiritual renewal, ensure that one’s position in *this* world was internalised and endure it – stressed that this was not supposed to be easy.’[[335]](#footnote-335) So despite the hardships, the advice literature cast ‘the struggle’ to be more open as part of the essential process of personal growth and well worth the emotional pain caused, something that will be explored in greater detail in the section on ‘arguments’.

In the midst of the openness revolution, an entire fleet of relationship experts was on hand to help couples old and new negotiate the difficulties these more expressive and honest relationships were throwing up. As the Maces emphasised in their 1975 manual, the expert had an important role to play in any individual’s search for a deeper relationship, underlining the ‘cutting edge’ nature of this kind of approach to intimate relationships and the more general topic of expressing emotions: ‘The subject is a vast one, and as yet very little understood outside a small circle of specialists. Yet we have here a vast untapped resource of knowledge and skill which could shift the balance in many a marriage from constant irritation and misery to growth and fulfilment.’[[336]](#footnote-336) The Maces argued that it was ‘unfortunate in the extreme’ that the written material on human communication had up until that point been ‘highly technical, and therefore not available to most people…because ordinary men and women need this information very much.’[[337]](#footnote-337) The optimism, characteristic of the period, that psychology could solve society’s problems is clear. Armed with a little psychological knowledge – a basic understanding of human emotions – ordinary Britons could go forth and make themselves fulfilled and happy in love.

Yet the discourse of ‘psychology is the answer to societies’ problems’ had become so entrenched by the 1970s that it had entered into satire. For example, such positivity about the ease of people’s engagement with psychological theories and the total optimism about the future is mocked in Bradbury’s novel *The History Man*, published the same year as the Maces’ advice manual. Whilst describing his latest book, a study of the decline of privacy, sociologist Howard speaks of the pervasive belief in psychological and sociological expertise: ‘You see, sociological and psychological understanding is now giving us a total view of man, and democratic society is giving us total access to everything. There’s nothing that’s not confrontable. There are no concealments any longer, no mysterious dark places of the soul.’[[338]](#footnote-338)

Indeed the novel engages explicitly with the ‘new honesty’, with the Kirk’s embracing full throttle the fashionable new theories of personal growth. Personal growth was aligned with the new, middle class fashions for dinner parties, cheese and wine: ‘The little Northern Kirks came to be down in Watermouth, buying wine and cheese and bread, and giving parties; and of course, growing some more – for the Kirks, whatever else they have done, have always gone right on growing.’[[339]](#footnote-339) Their move to Watermouth, the forward thinking university town, was taken in 1967, ‘a year before self-revolutions like the Kirks turned into a public matter.’[[340]](#footnote-340) The couple embody the advice to be reflective and introspective and are always questioning and analysing their relationship, something Drusilla Beyfus identified as a new trend in marriage in her 1968 Penguin *The English Marriage*, ‘a portrayal of some of the more contemporary aspects of marriage’ based on interviews with husbands and wives across the social scale. Beyfus concluded that:

‘Amongst younger husbands and wives I found an increased awareness of themselves in relation to the state of being married. Older married couples tended to accept matrimony as part of the air they breathed, not to think about it particularly. The young people adopted a more introspective approach in which they analysed their own reactions, emotions and feelings towards the marital tie.’[[341]](#footnote-341)

In Bradbury’s novel, thinking about their marriage in the early days, Howard concludes that they were ‘trapping each other in fixed personality roles. We couldn’t permit personal adventure, personal growth. We couldn’t let any new possibilities develop, could we, kid? And that’s how people murder each other. We weren’t adult.’[[342]](#footnote-342) The novel continues that ‘The Kirks’ marriage had become a prison, its function to check growth, not open it.’[[343]](#footnote-343) The problem is identified as a lack of verbal communication and the fact that they were holding on to a notion of ‘privacy’: ‘The Kirks, then, were hardly Kirks; they were very private people, with almost no friends, innocent and silent with each other. They did not discuss problems, mainly because they did not see themselves as the sort of people who had problems; problems were things less mature people had.’[[344]](#footnote-344) Then, by their mid-twenties, as the marriage became more established and as cultural ideas about what that relationship should involve adapted, they changed their approach: ‘They confessed things to each other, in extreme bouts of frankness, and embarked on ambitious new schemes of sexuality. In bed they lay endlessly talking about themselves, till three and four in the morning.’[[345]](#footnote-345) The Kirks even take the quest for ‘openness’ to its extreme of encouraging and accepting each other’s extra-marital affairs.

Adultery as a prime vehicle for personal growth was a theme that underpinned the 1973 book *The Mistress* written by Wendy James, Deputy Features Editor of *Woman’s Own* and writer and broadcaster, Susan Jane Kedgley. The book was marketed with the tagline: ‘For the first time: an exposition of the mistress in today’s society’ and was based on interviews with thirty-five mistresses and ten men. One woman described having an affair with her husband’s friend in terms of the space it gave her to realise her “self”’: ‘The gain was not in monetary terms, but in realisation of self, and that’s something money can’t buy- unless of course you have intensive psychiatric treatment. And where’s the pleasure in that?’[[346]](#footnote-346) Talking after their lovemaking was an important facet of this developing self-realisation: ‘He was very good about letting me talk after we’d made love – something I’d never known before. And this was the time we became friends. We laughed together, enjoyed each other.’[[347]](#footnote-347) The elusive ‘J’ behind *The Sensuous Woman* (1971) had informed her readers that the bedroom was the perfect site for open, honest talking and that physical intimacy had an important role in opening each other up to verbal intimacy: ‘The bedroom is also a good location for you both to talk to each other without inhibition about worries and dreams. The special intimate and relaxed atmosphere following lovemaking is an ideal time to coax him into opening up to you verbally.’[[348]](#footnote-348)

The unmarried women interviewed for the book portrayed their relationships with married men as a key site for learning about themselves prior to marriage if that was something they decided to pursue further down the line: ‘The relationship with my present lover has been really important to me. I have learnt a lot through it.’[[349]](#footnote-349) This interviewee was sure that her pre-marital relationships with married men, shorn of the spectre of commitment in the form of engagement and marriage were contributing to her personal growth: ‘At the moment I’m too much in the process of growth to even consider getting married…I’m not prepared to take the risk until I’m a fully developed person.’[[350]](#footnote-350) She was discovering herself. Yet she was also discovering why marriages appeared to fail, concluding in the case of her latest adulterous affair that the man was seeking someone to ‘communicate’ with as his wife and himself ‘have no mental communication at all.’[[351]](#footnote-351)

Believing their adoption of the new ‘openness’ to be complete, epitomised in their embracing of mutual adultery, the Kirks see themselves as in a good position to offer advice to other couples who haven’t reached the same enlightenment. When it becomes clear that his friend Henry’s marriage is on the rocks, Howard sees the opportunity to pass on his advice about why their relationship is failing: ‘What you’re doing is trapping each other in fixed personality roles. You can’t grow, you can’t expand, you can’t let each other develop.’[[352]](#footnote-352) One of the ways the advice literature addressed this problem of an absence of ‘expanding’ and ‘developing’ in unhappy marriages was through the medium of ‘conflict’ which was a radical path only possible in an age which had embraced the positivity of ‘risk’ and ‘pain’.

**‘*Their own strong feelings become better recognised by themselves and by each other*’:**

**A New Approach to Marital Conflict**

A manifesto for ‘genuine intimacy’ which echoed that of the Maces was put forward by Dr George R Bach and Peter Wyden, authors of the bestselling guide to marital conflict, *The Intimate Enemy: How to Fight Fair in Love and Marriage* (1968), in which arguing was to be the foundation for lasting relationships in the 1970s.[[353]](#footnote-353) The manifesto was composed of three points. The first was ‘Transparency’: ‘Intimacy can be achieved only if the partners have adequate *information.* It cannot be achieved without a determination to be transparent, to share one’s private world of thoughts and feelings with the partner. Intimates never assume where they stand. They let each other know’. The second was ‘Growth’: ‘Intimates accept that their relationship is never static.’ The third, with which they were primarily preoccupied, was ‘Conflict’: ‘Anger and aggression invariably accompany this continuing refitting process; this helps resolve crises because authentic anger brings out truth.’[[354]](#footnote-354) Based on observations made at the Institute of Group Therapy in Beverly Hills, California, Bach declared that: ‘Verbal conflict between intimates is not only acceptable, especially between husbands and wives; it is constructive and highly desirable. We have discovered that couples who fight together are couples who stay together – provided they know how to fight properly.’[[355]](#footnote-355)

The emphasis on self-disclosure and open communication within marriage as a channel for growth had a dramatic impact on understandings of marital conflict. The period witnessed a reframing of attitudes to arguments within relationships from being something to avoid, evidence of relationship breakdown, to something positive and beneficial, to be embraced and encouraged. Wallis was adamant that ‘true love is not incompatible with quarrelling’ and asserted in 1964 that: ‘Quarrelling is an important part of marriage. It is one of the ways we come to understand our strong inner and mixed feelings and learn the most important art of settling differences.’[[356]](#footnote-356) Thus he declared: ‘Sometimes a marriage counsellor has to help a couple to quarrel, however odd that sounds.’[[357]](#footnote-357) Arguments were the best way, explained psychologists, marital experts and agony aunts, to expose the ‘real self’ and to achieve longed for transparency. They were the path to a deeper, more authentic intimacy if only couples could shake off the decades of advice which had portrayed conflict as damaging and dangerous, to be repressed and hidden.

Proponents of arguing declared that the preoccupation with controlling negative emotions which had been fundamental to the ‘culture of restraint’ and ‘emotional maturity’ had stood in the way of personal growth. It had, they claimed, limited the ‘personal journey’ towards the authentic self of entire generations of married people. Associating conflict with ‘emotional immaturity’ had required the suppression of fighting within marriage leading to ‘inauthentic’ intimacy where feelings bubbled under the surface and ‘closeness’ was a ‘farce’. In his book *Marital Love and Hate* (1972), American psychologist, Israel Charny, announced the pressing need for ‘a theory of marriage that acknowledges once and for all that marital fighting is inevitable, necessary and desirable – not simply an inevitable product of emotional immaturity or disturbance.’ He continued that ‘to suppress fighting has marriage-shattering consequences.’[[358]](#footnote-358)

The re-evaluation of marital conflict was influenced by the developments in the field of ‘conflict theory’. Harold Raush, author of *Communication, Conflict and Marriage* (1974),stated that ‘until fairly recent times sociologists and psychologists considered conflict to be dysfunctional.’[[359]](#footnote-359) Yet since the late-1950s there had been the beginnings of a reconsideration of ‘conflict theory’, stimulated by the work of American sociologist Lewis Coser. Coser argued for the positive benefits of conflict in society, believing that conflict in a group had ‘adhesive’ qualities. Indeed, Coser, presumed that in a close relationship hostilities and differences are inevitable.[[360]](#footnote-360) He claimed that the absence of conflict in a relationship did not indicate its stability, rather its instability, concluding that hostile feelings were more likely to be expressed if an individual felt secure. As Rausch put it: ‘If Bob and Sue are insecure, they may suppress the hostile feelings and avoid overt conflicts, but then resentments can build up and poison the relationship.’ He concluded, following Coser, that: ‘The suppression of interpersonal differences and of the feelings attached to them means that less of each person’s self gets communicated, and this can lead to erosion of trust.’[[361]](#footnote-361) Thus, in this new interpretation, frequent arguments should actually be the evidence of a strong marriage.

Charny’s book, which was intended to be read by professional psychologists as well as the wider public, proposed an alternative approach to ‘marital maturity’ informed by Coser’s theory of conflict.[[362]](#footnote-362) Rather than ‘maturity’ being associated with ‘holding back’ in the interests of peace and to prevent inflicting or experiencing pain, Charny argued that maturity in marriage meant ‘loving *and* hating’. Those emotions previously felt to be destructive to marital bliss were, in this new vision, to be actively incorporated into the relationship: ‘There must always be a fairly high level of tension, dissension, anger, conflict, also irrationality, and unfairness between couples.’[[363]](#footnote-363)

**Anger**

As Martin Francis has shown, during the 1940s ‘academic studies on both sides of the Atlantic were in agreement that unrestrained anger was a sign of trouble not a healthy emotion’.[[364]](#footnote-364) However by the 1960s psychologists had begun to conclude that conflict was in fact essential to a healthy personality and argued for the acceptance of anger, hostility and rage as natural and positive emotions which should not be curbed: ‘The problem with anger is to learn to accept it as natural in oneself and to express it in non-destructive ways.’[[365]](#footnote-365) Jourard argued that the feelings of fear and anger which were stimulated during marital conflict could ‘enrich life and foster growth.’[[366]](#footnote-366) Bach and Wyden whose motto was ‘a fight a day keeps the doctor away’ dispensed this message to the public in the late sixties: ‘Anger is part of the personality, like the sex drive. It can be displaced, channelled, modified, or repressed. But it cannot go away. This is why our efforts are designed to make people face it and decontaminate it as sensibly as human fallibility permits.’[[367]](#footnote-367) Bach and Wyden took much time over analysing the portrayal of ‘anger’ in sixties society, describing it as a ‘taboo’ due to the legacy of the psychological discourse of ‘emotional maturity’:

‘It isn’t “gentlemanly”. It isn’t “feminine”. It isn’t “nice”. It isn’t “mature”. Control of anger, rather than its expression, is considered “mature”. Hostility feelings toward an intimate are not only considered the antithesis of love; often such “hate” emotions are considered “sick”, requiring psychiatric care. If an angry partner is not seriously enough afflicted to be led away to the head doctor, he is considered at least temporarily irrational. After all, everybody “knows” that what is said in anger cannot be taken seriously; a “mature” partner discounts it as the gibberish of an emotionally upset person.’[[368]](#footnote-368)

Writing in 1963, Wallis had expressed similar sentiments about the origin of the ‘guilt’ complex surrounding the expression of anger placing the blamed at the door of the repressive, emotionally contained family of the fifties as well as the religious and moral conditioning of the period:

‘Sometimes people have grown up in families where it was considered a shameful thing to quarrel or to get angry, where it had to be disguised as best one could, bottled up, frozen beneath an icy politeness and restraint. Where this has been coupled with exacting religious and moral standards and therefore with all the more guilt and anger, we may grow up not merely ashamed of strong feelings but afraid of them. This can lead to that unhappy way of taking anger inside and putting up the shutter.’[[369]](#footnote-369)

Hera Cook in her analysis of group therapy sessions concluded in relation to those conducted in the 1940s that: ‘Anger was not usually an acceptable emotion within these lifeworlds and the participants avoided expressing disagreements or complaining. Such inhibitions were part of deferential relations and made it difficult for participants to communicate their needs and desires or to resist unreasonable behaviour.’[[370]](#footnote-370)

Charny, like Bach and Wyden, focused on changing the perception of not just ‘anger’ but also ‘hate’ in modern society towards the view that it did not necessarily mean the absence of love and that it could be good and beneficial in personal relationships.[[371]](#footnote-371) By the 1970s, the message to ‘embrace your anger and hatred’ towards your partner had penetrated popular culture on a mass scale. The *Daily Mirror* ran a series in the autumn of 1971 with the title *Marriage Survival Kit* which provided advice about ‘Marriage in the Seventies’. On the second day it focused on ‘Picking up the Pieces’ featuring ‘prescriptions’ from the ‘marriage menders’ – a marriage guidance counsellor, a Roman Catholic priest, a doctor and a probation officer – on ‘how to put a broken marriage back together’. The marriage guidance counsellor was clear that: ‘People should try not to feel guilty about bad feelings towards their partner. A Christian upbringing often makes a person feel they have to be good but if they would only say to their partner: “I loathe your guts” when they feel like exploding, it would get it off their chest. Anger isn’t always destructive. It can act as a release valve that could lead to the saving of a marriage.’[[372]](#footnote-372)

**Catharsis**

Since the 1950s there had been increasing support for the idea that arguments could be beneficial moments for tension release in relationships. German psychologist Erich Fromm, whose philosophical statement on *The Art of Loving* published in 1956 was hugely popular in Britain, claimed that arguments generated a feeling of ‘catharsis’: ‘[A] frequent error must be mentioned. The illusion that love means necessarily the absence of conflict. Just as it is customary for people to believe that pain and sadness should be avoided under all circumstances, they believe that love means the absence of conflict. Real conflicts between two people are not destructive. They lead to clarification, they produce catharsis from which both persons emerge with more knowledge and more strength.’[[373]](#footnote-373)

Indeed, Mace asserted in his 1952 manual, *Marriage: Art of Lasting Happiness* that arguments should function as the means for ‘emotional release’ – important in relieving the tensions of married life – and should actually be incorporated into the programme couples undertook to keep their relationship happy: ‘So long as they are rightly handled, quarrels do no harm, and may in fact do a great deal of good. On the other hand, serious harm may result if married people bottle up their antipathies and resentments and try to conceal them from each other.’[[374]](#footnote-374) Assuming that ‘happy marriage’ consisted of two personalities, he proposed, quarrelling was a primary mode for the development of these individual selves – after all arguments demanded the ‘assertion and yielding of independence.’[[375]](#footnote-375) During arguments a couple discovered more about each other, they exposed themselves and tested boundaries. Yet he ordered that couples adhere to the basic etiquette he prescribed, that husbands and wives should never be allowed to ‘lose face’, to allow regular quarrels to help rather than hinder the very function of a marriage as a relationship in which ‘two people can know everything about each other and yet love and respect each other just the same.’[[376]](#footnote-376) In the 1950s, Mace stated that a degree of emotion management *was* still required, with specific circumstances identified as uncongenial to the kind of argument that was productive and beneficial to the relationship. For example when couples were tired, hungry or anxious. In these circumstances, Mace advised: ‘It is best to break off hostilities promptly and refuse to discuss the matter further.’[[377]](#footnote-377) As will be explored later, the lack of spontaneity in some of the early advice on arguing, with its belief in controlling when arguments should take place, would come to be seen by some commentators as restrictive of true transparency.

The couple who failed to communicate through arguing and allowed tensions to smoulder was a regular topic in the national press during the 1960s. With ‘real life’ stories focusing on the unhappiness caused to the individuals concerned and depictions of ‘empty marriages’ ending up in the divorce courts, newspapers dispensed a warning that ‘not talking’ simply had no place in the new expressive age. One such article from the *Daily Mirror* in 1960 titled ‘7 Year Silence at Home’ focused on a middle aged couple’s marital breakdown and the wife’s subsequent application for divorce due to ‘cruelty’. In a dramatic example of a lack of communication, the Lushers had apparently lived for seven years without speaking to each other following an incident in which Mr Lusher had returned home for lunch forty minutes late after playing a round of golf and had received a severe telling off from his wife. His response had been to ‘retire into his shell’ and sulk rather than indulge the argument, and the couple ended up ceasing all communication. The pair never resolved the issue leading to a build-up of resentment and tension. Mrs Lusher was quoted as saying: ‘I just let it go on and on and did nothing to help him out of it. I expect I could have ended it at any time.’ The case was presented as a simple failure to confront each other and work the disagreement out through open expression of their feelings and the necessary release of tension provided by an argument. At a time before the irretrievable breakdown of a relationship was a lawful reason for divorce, the judge dismissed Mrs Lusher’s petition and the couple was sent off to learn the art of ‘cathartic’ verbal communication in marriage.[[378]](#footnote-378)

In another case of marital breakdown, it was the husband’s lack of interest in verbal communication and the wife’s desperate attempts to stimulate it that became the focus. Doris Gardner was interviewed in 1967 by reporter Desmond Wilcox as part of the BBC television series ‘Man Alive’: Marriage Under Stress’. This was a series of three programmes aired on the relatively new BBC2 channel, focusing on the effects of specific stresses on marriage including the arrival of children, the breakdown of the romantic relationship and divorce. Having being married for 24 years, Doris had come to the decision to leave her husband. The report focused on the lack of ‘togetherness’ in this marriage, declaring that it was not a problem of sexual incompatibility or ill treatment but an inability to verbally communicate that was the destructive force in this case. Indeed Doris demonstrated her keen awareness of the discourse of constructive arguing in marriage when she stated that she’d even prefer it to be the case that her husband had committed adultery because at least then, ‘you could have a damn good row, a damn good fight, I mean a verbal fight and let all the emotions out before moving forward.’ An argument was, in Doris’s view, the ticket to relieving the build-up of tension that had led to her unhappiness and yet her husband was not even capable of that.[[379]](#footnote-379)

Young couples starting out on married life in the 1960s were perhaps better placed to interact with the new emphasis on constructive, tension-relieving arguing because they were only just settling into the patterns of an adult relationship and had not been exposed to the same discourses of restraint in their formative years, as couples reaching middle and old age in the same period. In an article on Teenage Marriages from *Woman’s Mirror* in April 1961 the couples interviewed used constructive arguing as a way to demonstrate their mature approach to marriage. One couple, Michael and Alice Bandey of Wansworth London were both 17. They had been married a year and had a young son. They told the interviewer that arguments had actually held their marriage together when money was short and they were cooped up in a small flat. Alice said: ‘We had shocking rows at first. We were so hard up we couldn’t afford to go out and being cooped up in a tiny room made us get on each other’s nerves.’ She continued: ‘We used to throw things at each other when we got mad – bags of flour and rice and saucepans – and immediately felt better.’ Both verbal and physical release of tension were used by this couple to cope with the intensity of marriage. They reflected that it was this emotional release – this use of arguments as relieving of the tensions that come from the daily struggles of living intimately with someone – that had actually created the strength and stability of their partnership.[[380]](#footnote-380)

The radical new belief that the sign of a strong marriage was whether couples argued or not became pervasive in the sixties. In her 1966 novel *Casualties of Peace*, Edna O’Brien conveyed this shift when her protagonist Willa is stunned that her friend is leaving her marriage. When describing the facets of their relationship which she believes were evidence of its longevity, arguing is deemed to be highly significant: ‘Willa stared at her. Didn’t believe it. They got on fine. The way they joked, played cards, went for drives, argued.’[[381]](#footnote-381) Indeed, for those couples who believed they did not have personal grievances that could stimulate a productive tension-relieving argument, agony aunts such as Marjorie Proops were on hand to provide pre-formed topics to raise each other’s tempers over the dinner table. The topics Proops suggested to ‘really get people talking’ in July 1965 included money, the fashion for topless dresses, the role of the mistress in modern society and desertion. Such topics, Proops believed, would turn the conversation towards more personal complaints within the relationship under the guise of being general ethical discussions, yet even when the argument was not about the couple’s relationship, it could serve as a means to developing a better understanding of each other’s personalities which would ultimately make the marriage more open and fulfilling.[[382]](#footnote-382)

**From Catharsis to ‘Conversation’**

Indeed, as the period wore on there was a growing sense that just letting one’s feelings and grievances out providing cathartic relief from the tensions of sharing a life with someone did not go far enough towards actually achieving transparency. Again, ‘conversation’ rather than ‘confession’ was the aim. By the mid-sixties some authors were calling for a more honest, unrestrained and spontaneous form of marital arguing which would go further than just relieving tensions or aiding individuals to learn about each other’s personalities. This model of arguing focused on the ‘individual’ first and the stability of the marital relationship second. The aim here was not to save marriages from breakdown and the divorce courts but to maximise individual fulfilment and growth. Advice in this frame reflected the ‘non-directive’ approach to marriage counselling which the NMGC had shifted towards after the appointment of Wallis as Counselling Officer in 1955. Wallis, critical of Mace’s insistence in the fifties that arguments should follow certain rules, dismissed the imposition of new behaviours onto married couples claiming the primary objective of marital advice should be that the *individual* gains ‘insight’ and ‘self-understanding’. He suggested that in order for arguments to serve a wider purpose than mere ‘catharsis’, to achieve progression and growth in the relationship, is was necessary for a ‘no holds barred’ approach in which pain was an inevitable reality but a forger of change. Arguments should occur, believed Wallis, when the participants felt the emotions of anger, not at a pre-planned later moment when the ‘timing was right’. This held too much to the ‘restraint’ mode of thinking. Wallis argued that growth arguments were messier affairs.

In his 1963 marriage manual *Thinking About Marriage*, Wallis stressed the fundamental, positive role played by arguing and testing boundaries in relationships, yet he demanded ‘unbridled exploration of the depths of each other’s psyches’ for which the total absence of emotion control was a necessity. He claimed that despite being ‘painful and humiliating’ it was profitable to the relationship:

‘Their own strong feelings become better recognised by themselves and by each other. This means a real gain in intimacy, in knowing each other more fully. This is the way to prevent skeletons getting into the marriage cupboard. Some married people find it very difficult to express their strongest feelings to each other, whether of anger or of love. It may take either (or both) of them time to achieve this frankness towards each other.’[[383]](#footnote-383)

This focus on the necessary ‘pain’ of a truly honest and emotionally involved romantic relationship was something Wallis chose to develop in his later book *Thinking About Love*, in which he claimed that:

‘Every deep relationship is based on a free expression and exchange of feeling. This can be delightful and it can be painful. Those who love each other can hurt each other, both when they mean to and when they do not mean to. Any true friendship or loving relationship involves a risk of hurting and being hurt. Love cannot live in emotional cotton wool.’[[384]](#footnote-384)

Wallis believed that the fear of ‘losing face’ actually reduced the potential for developing the ‘real self’ within the marital relationship. Instead of retreating to bed when tired and an argument is brewing, as Mace had advised, individual happiness and self-knowledge required that feelings should be experienced when they arrived, however painful or ‘shameful’. This was something Coser had also stipulated when he claimed that the relatively free expression of hostile feelings as they came up could be positively functional for the relationship.[[385]](#footnote-385) This was, of course, also the thesis of Bach and Wyden.

In Wallis’s view, marriage should be spontaneous and individual, and prescribed rules for emotional expression during quarrelling could inhibit this. The emphasis on ‘emotional spontaneity’ separated this model of arguing from that of the 1950s – spontaneity became integral to the 1960s ideal.

**Growth through Pain**

The positive view of fighting within marriage was thus part of the wider shift in thinking about embracing emotional pain detailed in the first part of this chapter. Grogan has shown how Carl Rogers noted from the early 1960s that his clients began to find themselves more open to pain as they got ‘healthier’. He concluded that the healthy individual ‘had a fuller sense of being, an engagement with the *process* of existence, and an acceptance of life’s fluid nature.’[[386]](#footnote-386) Proponents of marital conflict were influenced by this new way of thinking about healthy personality and the place of emotional pain in achieving this goal.

Bach and Wyden asserted that: ‘We believe that there can be no mature intimate relationship without aggressive levelling; that is, “having it out”, speaking up, asking the partner “what’s eating him” and negotiating for realistic settlements of differences. This does cause stress, but our successful trainees learn to accept one of the realities of the human condition: the pain of conflict is the price of true and enduring love.’[[387]](#footnote-387) Indeed, Charny argued that marriage and family life was far from being a ‘haven’ of happiness, rather it was a hotbed of pain and that this should be viewed not as a negative or destructive force, but as its primary role and the means to achieve growth. He claimed that: ‘The goal of family life is to foster and enjoy growth through vaccinations of pain.’ It was important, he asserted, for individuals to view ‘family hell as part of the process of potential growth.’[[388]](#footnote-388) Far from being a site for emotional restraint, the family required expression of feelings to hold it together: ‘One of the saddest, most wasteful, and ultimately destructive qualities of so many families’ lives is their very flattening of life through the avoidance of feelings.’[[389]](#footnote-389) Charny was of the opinion that the relationship between spouses, and between parent and child should be seen as ‘learning’ experiences, where individuals learn how to reconcile differences and to deal with volatile emotions such as anger.

Charny campaigned for a ‘more honest theory of man’s family-life troubles’ which would change people’s reaction to the struggle. If it was accepted that family and married life was all about conflict, then that conflict could be put to beneficial use in the individual’s plight for growth and change: ‘Might we someday learn to teach children, and all of us, that family life is inextricably a world of conflict; and that successful family living means a never-ending sequence of learning through struggle.’ Since that was the case, he claimed, ‘why not have some fun in the struggle?’[[390]](#footnote-390) Whilst Charny acknowledged that ‘this notion of the inevitability of profound difficulty in marriage is reasonably new’, he asserted that it was rapidly gaining support from psychologists, quoting Gibson Winter of the University of Chicago: ‘Most families need more honest conflict and less suppression of feeling. We cannot find personal intimacy without conflict. Intimacy and conflict are inseparable in human life.’[[391]](#footnote-391) Indeed, psychologist of self-disclosure, Jourard, linked personal growth with the experience of conflict, proclaiming that personal relationships were a major site for learning and changing because they were suffused with struggle, and that from this would come deeper intimacy between individuals:

‘Growth in personality occurs as a consequence of meeting conflicts and impasses head on, and reconciling them. Interpersonal conflicts and impasses constitute problems which require solution so that a satisfying relationship may be maintained. With no conflicts, with no impasses, there would be no instigation to change – one would, in short, not learn… In interpersonal relationships, it is only when there is open conflict between the participants that an occasion is provided for growth. Interpersonal relationships, besides being a rich source of satisfactions for the participants, also provide a rich source of problems.’[[392]](#footnote-392)

Bach also associated the pain involved in marital conflict with the forging of essential change: ‘Intimacy passes through several phases. It is helpful for intimates to realise that quarrels frequently are symptoms of the emergence of a new phase; that continual, truthful confrontations about current feelings will help them through the inevitable transitions; and that the accompanying fights are anything but signs of breakup.’[[393]](#footnote-393) He viewed the bad handling of arguments as a destabilising force in modern society for it bolstered a stagnant life of ‘façade’ devoid of true inter-personal communication: : ‘We believe that the inability to manage personal conflicts is at the root of the crisis that threatens the structure of the family. Communications between children and parents are breaking down. Couples continue to live together physically and legally, yet emotionally apart.’[[394]](#footnote-394) Indeed, Bach and the other proponents of positive conflict sought to rally against what the English psychiatrist H. V. Dicks termed the ‘Collusive Marriage’. In his study *Marital Tensions* published in 1967, Dicks defined these ‘peaceful seeming’ marriages as:

‘…having the aim of keeping all “bad” feelings out of the marriage. Here the partners have to do a lot of unconscious work “to let the sleeping dogs lie”, to deny and keep inner realities out of sight. There develops what might be called a collusive resistance to change, a smooth façade of “happiness”. Such marriages are often the envy of neighbours: placid, reasonable and considerate. The partners may communicate mainly at superficial, safe uncontroversial levels. When it occurs, the breakthrough of the repressed is, in such brittle unions, often a rather tragically destructive event.’[[395]](#footnote-395)

The promotion of positive marital conflict was portrayed as the antidote to such vacant stasis. It would, Bach claimed, make for ‘game-free living’[[396]](#footnote-396). Referring to the success of Dr Eric Berne’s book *Games People Play* (1964), he stated that the success of the book only revealed the reality that ‘living rooms and bedrooms are full of partners who are too weak or frightened or not sufficiently knowledgeable to tolerate authentic encounters with their supposed intimates.’[[397]](#footnote-397) Authenticity inevitably meant change and change, with all its associated pain, needed to be repackaged as a positive as opposed to a negative trait in marriage.

**‘Here We Go Again’ Quarrels and ‘Growth Fights’**

Appreciating its benefits, dispensers of relationship advice sought to aid couples in the practicalities of moving beyond just ‘catharsis’ towards ‘growth’. Angela Wilson declared in her *Cosmopolitan’s Handbook: Living Together (Married or Not)* published in 1974, that in order to do this, couples needed to dig deeper to understand the true grievances beneath the surface grumblings of everyday disputes:

‘Do most of your arguments reach a point where one or the other of you says, “Here we go again?” The phrase ‘here we go again’ usually indicates the stage of an argument where additional information or more specific complaints are required. All too often, though, it is the point where most of us cut off communication, crawl under the electric blanket, turn the temperature dial up to nine, and go to sleep:

HER: “Mickey, will you turn off that television? I can’t hear myself think!”

HIM: “Here we go, again!”’[[398]](#footnote-398)

For Wilson, arguments were *the* means to bringing out the fundamental problems in relationships and dealing with them openly. She asserted that couples should take control of the ‘here we go again’ arguments and use them positively to expose more of themselves to their partner and to expose more of their partner to themselves, otherwise the tensions would simply build up again to be cathartically released through the same argument over and over again: ‘If all your arguments end up this way, you are not solving your problems, but are compounding your collection of hostile feelings and frustrations as well. Next time you hear either of you saying ‘here we go again’, remember it’s a *signal*. Nothing is going to be resolved until you get yourselves past this point and determine *why* That Same Ole Thing is annoying you, and why you have never resolved it before.’[[399]](#footnote-399)

There was, she emphasised, no room for change or progression when arguments were ‘stuck’ at this level of communication. Growing from ‘here we go again’ arguments was impossible, stagnation was the only outcome:

‘It’s true, of course, that bad habits are the hardest to break, but resolving them as soon as you have identified them is the only way your relationship can progress. No couple can fight over toothpaste flavours for twenty years – something more important (i.e., “You never buy things I like, you only think of yourself” has to be involved).’[[400]](#footnote-400)

Indeed, Fromm had argued that the reason, completely justified, as to why people perceived conflict to be a negative influence on relationships was that:

‘The “conflicts” of most people are actually attempts to avoid the *real* conflicts. They are disagreements on minor or superficial matters which by their very nature do not lend themselves to clarification or solution. Real conflicts between two people, those which do not serve to cover up or to project, but which are experienced on the deep level of inner reality to which they belong are not destructive.’[[401]](#footnote-401)

In the *Intimate Enemy* Bach included a chapter titled ‘Fighting over “Trivia”’ in which he suggested that fighting over the small things had its ‘pay-offs’ in the cathartic sense – when couples were able to ‘make up and the mood changes from “stay away” to “come close”’. However, a more intense and ‘serious’ investigation of the underlying issues paid greater dividends for the relationship in the long-term. Bach described the ‘trivial’ fights as ‘emotional shorthand that intimates develop in the course of thrashing out an enduring relationship’ and that it was the task of ‘growing’ couples to take the time to figure out the ‘longhand’ version- the ‘underlying conflict’[[402]](#footnote-402). The book gave examples of couples’ fights about trivial topics and revised versions using a more intrusive, transparent approach. The intention was that readers would learn to recognise the difference, aiding them in their own journeys towards more honest arguing.[[403]](#footnote-403) For Bach, both cathartic and growth arguments were essential in relationships for they served different purposes.

Wilson, on the other hand privileged growth fights over the trivial. She identified an important difference between cathartic arguing and the deeper, more transparent ‘growth’ arguing. When couples argued merely to release tension they were, she claimed, ‘adversaries’ with each individual aiming to ‘win’. Usually, these arguments ended with couples feeling further apart: ‘Do you usually lose or win arguments? Trick question. The only thing to be won or lost in an argument with a loved one is the quality of your relationship. Nobody should keep score. No one should vote.’ Wilson urged her readers to remember that: ‘You are not adversaries, but members of the same team. If you cannot both feel better at the end of a fight than you did when you began, you have both lost.’[[404]](#footnote-404) Indeed, the ongoing and deep sadness that trivial, ‘here we go again fights’ could instil in relationships devoid of growth was something Fay Weldon explored in her 1971 novel, *Down Among The Women*: ‘Thus they take up the pattern of the row as they left it off, fifteen years ago. Nothing much had changed, except they are both older, and each year that passes makes the strife sadder.’[[405]](#footnote-405)

Wilson endorsed the idea that arguing should be ‘therapeutic’ and that couples should act as ‘therapists’ to each other, encouraging the other person’s journey towards personal growth. The idea that ultimately ‘growth fights’ brought couples closer together was something Bach had also promoted. He claimed that like the ‘here we go again’ arguments identified by Wilson, growth fights could also continue for many years, yet they actually reduced the feelings of ‘bitterness’ rather than fuelled them. Both Bach and Wilson believed that growth fights involved pain, yet they were more likely to stimulate ‘closeness’ at their conclusion than the surface fighting that failed to deal with the real issues: ‘A growth fight may continue through various stages for many years before the partners come to terms. It is sure to produce moments of discomfort for both, but it will yield less bitterness than the partners would face if the issues were hidden and/or the spouses were unable to communicate what really bothers them.’[[406]](#footnote-406)

It is this model of arguing that is parodied in *The History Man* in which it is presented as the reserve of members of educated circles obsessed with thinking and talking about ‘the self’. Howard and Barbara embark upon an attempt to re-model their marriage from what they perceive to be a 1950s framework which was trapping them in fixed personality roles and ‘wouldn’t permit personal adventure, personal growth’ to a 1970s model which was less obsessed with emotional maturity and more concerned with liberation of the self:

‘They quarrelled quite often; but these were no longer the mean little quarrels that their mean little selves, the selves of the old dispensation, before their consciousness revolution, had indulged in before, quarrels so low-keyed as to be almost invisible, while remaining deeply felt and unresolved. ‘It was a politics of growth.’ Says Howard, ‘an elaborate dialectic of self-statement.’[[407]](#footnote-407)

The description of arguing in the novel reflects the intensity promoted by Wallis and others, explicitly setting it in opposition to the more gentle ‘tension-relieving’ model of marital dispute:

‘The way Howard explained this, to himself and to a few others, was that they had moved away from the usual model of marriage, which is usually taken as an ultimate consensus, wherein conflict is generated but ultimately reconciled with the famous kiss, to a conflict model, in which interests were starkly defined, and ultimate resolution must depend on defeat of one of the parties.’[[408]](#footnote-408)

Portrayed as a clumsy attempt to embrace the new intellectual buzz words of ‘liberation’ and ‘emancipation’, the Kirk’s newfound ownership of their marriage and their attempts to re-model it to suit them through taking on board the new psychologically informed advice nevertheless reflected a certain mood amongst educated groups in 1960s and 1970s Britain. Similar sentiments were displayed in novels throughout the period. For example, in Margaret Drabble’s 1963 novel *A Summer Bird-Cage*, the protagonist Sarah, an Oxford graduate, reflects that marriage on these new terms was something to look into: ‘To force marriage into a mould of one’s own, while still preserving the name of marriage – it seemed an enterprise worth consideration.’[[409]](#footnote-409) Yet the desire for this form of ‘enlightened’ marriage and marital arguing was not reserved to ‘pretentious’ academic experiments like that of the Kirks.

Interviews with celebrities as well as ordinary men and women in the press and on television revealed the pervasiveness of the idea that regular intensive arguing within the ‘conversation’ framework strengthened marriage. *Woman’s Own* magazineran a series in 1968 with the title ‘Kelly Looks at Life’, in which actress Barbara Kelly reflected on life and marriage to her co-star Bernard Braden for the enjoyment and hopefully the education of her readers. The couple had starred in popular television show *An Evening at Home with Bernard Braden and Barbara Kelly* in the early 1950s and were seen as having a sturdy marriage. In the October of 1968 Kelly reflected on the important role of arguments in their relationship:

‘Oh YES, Bernie and I argue, it gives spice to our marriage! When I first married, I was terribly acquiescent. It was a great surprise to Bernie when, after 5 years, I disagreed with him. Soon after, we started to have periodic battles – and they are still going on! But it was quite some time before I could persuade him to have a proper fight…Now he can throw everything as hard as I can and it does us both a lot of good. Just in case you think Bernie and I must live in a battle ground, it isn’t that way at all. In fact, I believe that the reason we’re still happily married and still tolerate working together after 26 years is because we know to air our differences and never get complacent with each other.’[[410]](#footnote-410)

She continued that:

‘Arguments helps the mind to stay alert, and I don’t mean reasoned discussion, but a ding dong battle. Does it worry the children? Not if they realise it’s just mum and dad taking out their frustrations so that they are healthily dispersed. It is far, far better to do this than live in a house full of unspoken tension.’[[411]](#footnote-411)

Kelly embraced the emphasis on honest and open communication, appreciating the advice of the marriage experts that arguing was a fundamental aspect of that: ‘Not to let the truth out at the right moment would be less than honest and less than helpful. Oh yes, it might lead to a good old argument, but at the end of it you’ll know you have been totally frank with each other.’ She was keen to show that when honesty and ‘frankness’ were accepted, as they were in her marriage, then the hurtful words of truth expressed during an argument would not undermine the relationship but would strengthen it. She claimed that neither she or her husband ‘clung on’ to the painful things declared during their rows allowing them to cause resentment, rather, those words were encouraged to ‘fade away’ and a deeper connection reached between the couple knowing there was nothing hidden between them:

‘And afterwards, when the feathers have settled and the wounding words have faded away like smoke rings how wonderful it is to grin and kiss each other and know that your relationship is just that bit more secure because you’ve had the courage to say what you wanted to say. Because there’s one thing that people who never quarrel and never even argue miss. And that’s the tremendous joy and thrill of making up.’[[412]](#footnote-412)

In another interview for the documentary ‘Man Alive’, Kenneth Makinson whose eighteen year marriage had broken down resulting in his wife leaving him, described his conviction that more deep and meaningful arguments that went beyond merely the ‘small things’ would have helped sustain the couple’s relationship. Kenneth described the lack of communication between the couple, the fact that neither of them were confident in talking about their emotions, that although they did row it was always about the immediate things, actions like coming home late, never he claimed, ‘about the real cause behind it, about why he *had* come home late.’ Purely ‘tension-relieving’ arguments were evidently not enough in Kenneth’s view. Upon reflection it seemed he would have liked something more like the ‘politics of growth’ described in *The History Man* yet such arguments were based on an assumption that people had the capacity for and appropriate language to describe their emotions. As the case of the Makinsons makes clear, the realities of engaging with the new discourse on self-reflexivity within relationships, and the arguments that were supposed to aid this, could be a struggle for many couples.[[413]](#footnote-413)

Gendered and class socialisations, as well as age, had big roles to play in the extent to which individuals were able take part in this new drive for deep and meaningful arguments. As with the Makinsons, couples who had been married for many years struggled to break their established routines. Marriages that had been entered into for less than emotional reasons – because the individuals were simply ‘fond’ of each other – could prove to be deeply unsatisfying when compared to the new model of communicative marital relationships being promoted nearly twenty years later. Kenneth’s testimony reveals the pervasiveness of the new psychological discourses of self-expression and disclosure. In his interview he showed awareness of the call for couples to speak openly to each other, to say ‘I love you’, but despite his engagement with this new language of emotionality the capacity to put it into practice had not quite been achieved. Moreover, it required both parties to want to engage in this kind of project in the first place. As Bradbury mocks in *The History Man*, real marriages and relationships could not be so easily saved by a psychological theory. In particular, working class couples like the Makinsons could find this a struggle at a time when the confessional culture we have now was only in its infancy.

**Violence**

Indeed, the ‘joy’ of making up expressed by Kelly did not follow a bout of intensive arguing for every couple and ‘growth’ fights were not a legitimate aim for some couples whose volatile relationship simply would not stand the strain. The campaigners for beneficial marital conflict pressed the optimistic idea that open communication between spouses in the form of arguing prevented physical fights and would help stop domestic violence. Bach wrote that: ‘Among true intimates, there is no excuse for it because force is proof of a communications breakdown. Violence between spouses is a rare and freakish occurrence when communications between the parties are in reasonably good working order.’[[414]](#footnote-414) Indeed, Bach believed that embracing conflict could have wider implications for a more peaceful society:

‘It is a somewhat revolutionary notion, but we believe that it can serve not only to enrich the lives of husbands, wives, and lovers; it could become the first step towards controlling the violent feelings that lead to assassinations and to aggressions between entire peoples. A Utopian dream? Perhaps. But we submit that humanity cannot cope with hostilities between nations until it learns to hammer out liveable settlements for hostilities between loved ones.’[[415]](#footnote-415)

The potential for violence to result from the repression of emotions and the avoidance of authentic communication had been brought to particular light during the sixties with the devastating actions of high profile ‘loners’ such as President Kennedy’s assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. Psychiatrists had described Oswald as a ‘withdrawn and evasive boy who intensely disliked talking about himself and his feelings.’[[416]](#footnote-416) Bach and the proponents of self-disclosure believed that ‘opening up’, feeling that the authentic self was recognised and understood by others, would help alleviate the tensions and sense of alienation that could lead people to commit violent acts.

Yet, although in 1968 Bach was proclaiming the wonderful potential for arguing to reduce the likelihood of domestic violence, the encouragement for couples to embrace marital conflict was actually predicated on the belief that the fears of previous generations of women that to start an argument would result in a black eye, were largely a thing of the past. The post-war period had encouraged a mood of optimism within British culture that the unequal relationships of the past had been transformed in an age of affluence, when couples could choose to marry for ‘emotional’ rather than pragmatic reasons. Sociologists promoted a positivity that intimate relationships had undergone (or were undergoing) a transformation into something more ‘symmetrical’.[[417]](#footnote-417) Social surveys had investigated the shift, with Gorer reflecting in the late sixties that the influence of a more ‘symmetrical’ model was a reduction in violence: ‘Drunkenness is far less of a menace, and the wives have far less fear of their husbands having a bad temper, of domestic quarrels and fights’.[[418]](#footnote-418) Previously, there had been an assumption on the part of marital experts and sociologists, that many (mainly working class) marriages were unequal relationships in which women were at the mercy of the particular ‘character’ and ‘temper’ of their husbands, meaning that attempts to instigate arguing as a means to strengthen the marital bond were incomprehensible and simply not viable. By the sixties and seventies, the possible ‘dangers’ of actively encouraging marital conflict were dismissed by many of the ‘experts’ as no longer relevant in ‘this day and age’.[[419]](#footnote-419)

However, the feminist movement would bring the pervasiveness of domestic violence in to view again in the 1970s, proclaiming that widespread abuse was in fact not confined to the pre-affluent past and critiquing the ‘symmetrical’ model and ‘companionate marriage’.[[420]](#footnote-420) Erin Pizzey’s Penguin Special *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear* (1974), exposed to a mass readership the harsh realities that for many women marital arguments were not ‘enjoyable’ sources of deeper intimacy, disclosure and personal growth.[[421]](#footnote-421) Pizzey revealed that at the same time that arguments were being taken seriously, re-evaluated and re-formed by psychologists and marital experts, the law, the National Health Service and the social services still trivialised domestic violence and its consequences as mere ‘domestic tiffs’.[[422]](#footnote-422) Pizzey even identified an attitude towards violence that ran dangerously counter to that promoted by Bach and his colleagues. Violence according to one Family Service Unit worker was something a woman should feel lucky to be on the receiving end of because it was proof that her husband ‘still cared about her and was trying to communicate with her.’[[423]](#footnote-423) Throughout the seventies *Spare Rib* regularly featured articles on the problem of domestic violence. In 1975 an article by a collection of women including Lynne Segal, described a situation in which ‘help for battered wives was extremely limited’. The authors argued that: ‘Women’s powerlessness and dependent position in relation to men, particularly when isolated at home is a social fact’, and that ‘women’s suffering in their families and marriages is not reducible to the psychotic behaviour of a few men.’ They continued that: ‘Although battering could be seen as a clear physical expression of the oppression if women, it is officially individualised and called either the husband’s problem or the wife’s.’[[424]](#footnote-424) The gulf between the changing attitude towards marital conflict in the advice culture dispensed through bestselling books, the press and magazines and what was happening ‘on the ground’ or indeed ‘behind closed doors’ for many women was problematic for observers like Pizzey and Segal.

The feminist critique of the ‘transparency’ campaign will be explored further later in the thesis, what is relevant here is that beyond the ‘ideal’ of beneficial, honest arguing lay the reality that verbal and physical fights were often inextricably bound to each other. The Bandeys’s reference to throwing household objects at each other during arguments, (detailed above), demonstrated the inevitability that for some people arguing would be taken further than pure verbal communication. The kind of intense arguing encouraged by the experts with its attendant potential for emotional pain, *could* help couples develop a more authentic intimacy but it could also descend into physical aggression when too many painful ‘truths’ were spoken, indicative of the instability and unattainability of the ‘transparency’ discourse which will be considered in Chapter Five.

**Chapter Four**

***‘Although he can hug like a gorilla he is only capable of speaking in monosyllables’:***

**The Campaign for Men’s Emotional Liberation**

**The ‘Cult of Toughness’**

The attempt by ‘pioneering’ relationship experts to break down the ‘taboo on tenderness’, although concerned with society as a whole, had a particular focus on the emotional capabilities of boys and men, subjects as they were of the restrictive ‘cult of toughness’. Drawing on Bowlbyism and attachment theory, dispensers of relationship advice were concerned that the general lack of emotion expressed towards and expected from boys in childhood posed a real problem for their development into men who would go on to become lovers and husbands. From the end of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s and 1970s, there was a sustained attempt from ‘pioneers of feeling’ to achieve male emotional liberation.

The ‘cult of toughness’ was underpinned by the culture of restraint and the ‘stiff upper lip’ discourse. It presented ideal masculinity as unemotional and reserved rather than demonstrative and ‘talkative’. As Chesser summarised:

‘Human nature has not changed. What has changed is the type of ideal man and woman held up for admiration. The hero of films and fiction today is the hard-boiled man of action who wastes no time on words. He is described in such expressions as ‘nerves of steel’, ‘will of iron’, ‘rock-like determination’. To be ruthless is held to be the mark of masculinity. Such a man will take a pride in showing no emotion. Neither fear nor grief – and very seldom pleasure – shows on his face. Whatever disaster overtakes him he keeps a stiff upper lip. He makes love violently, but although he can hug like a gorilla he is only capable of speaking in monosyllables.’[[425]](#footnote-425)

The critique of the taboo on male emotionality, was taken up by humanistic psychology which viewed the problem as one of ‘rigid role definitions’ for boys and girls, men and women, which led to the development of ‘unhealthy personalities’ through repression of emotion:

‘Men of our culture especially appear to be subject to a “tenderness” taboo. [They] are expected to appear stronger, more competent, and more in control of their emotions than are women. The inhibition of weeping which characterises the average male in our society seems to be but part of a more generalised suppression of many other kinds of feelings, including tenderness and sentimentality. Such suppression can have unhealthy consequences for the body and can also render men’s relationships with others empty and lifeless.’[[426]](#footnote-426)

The debates about male emotionality shifted the way ordinary men and women perceived men’s engagement with feelings as demonstrated by Hera Cook’s recent consideration of group therapy. Cook describes a session from 1960 which involved three men discussing the topic of love. She concludes that the men were ‘ambivalent about having intense feelings not just showing them.’ However, she compares the case to a session held in 1968, by which time the campaign for men’s emotional liberation was well underway, finding that the participants were more confident about confronting men’s inability to express their feelings. In this later session a man was challenged when he associated ‘lack of demonstrativeness, [with] being sincere about feeling.’[[427]](#footnote-427) Cook states that the participants: ‘…rejected Mr Pale’s description of his relationship with his wife in contained, rational, unsentimental terms, such as “cool, sensible and good’ as ‘insulting’ to her.’[[428]](#footnote-428)

The attempt to relieve men of the burden of ‘the cult of toughness’ was not an easy or a fluid one in the early days when even some proponents of a new male emotionality still held on to the vestiges of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse. The curious contradiction contained in Chesser’s manuals of the later 1950s and early 1960s depicts this moment of tension. On the one hand Chesser continued to be a harbinger of ‘emotional maturity’ promoting a wariness of strong emotion, yet on the other he detailed the problems of denying men the opportunity to both express and experience emotions, inherently (and ironically) acknowledging the dangers of repressing and concealing emotion. His 1960 book *You Must Have Love* featured a chapter aimed at boys titled ‘The Fear of Tenderness’ which addressed the problem of the ‘cult of toughness’ in which he actively sought to encourage a loosening of emotional restraints imposed upon men. Yet this was placed alongside the chapter aimed at girls on the topic of ‘The Teenage Bride’, the first matter for discussion being ‘emotional maturity’ which sought to teach girls how to contain and restrict their emotional lives. Chesser’s gendered advice reflected the instability of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse by the beginning of the 1960s and the encroaching ‘rediscovery of feeling’ which was beginning to seriously undermine the ‘culture of restraint’. Thus, despite upholding the old order, Chesser also had a foot in a very ‘different camp’, finding himself in the vanguard of those pioneers seeking to revolutionise male emotionality.

The tensions between restraint and expressiveness depicted in the advice literature in the second half of the 1950s were part of the broader tension between two ways of inhabiting subjectivity – the ‘new reflexive self’ was jostling next to and doing battle with the older forms of identity stressing adherence to a set of socially prescribed norms of conduct. According to Martin Francis and Frank Mort this tension was being dramatically played out in the sphere of masculinity with the period witnessing the emergence of competing versions of the masculine self – that based on a notion of ‘character’ associated with codes of manliness which stressed ‘self-control’ and a more introspective, reflexive masculinity.[[429]](#footnote-429)

In the aftermath of the war, codes of manliness had emphasised self-possession and self-restraint, part of the longer legacy of the ‘stiff upper lip’ detailed in Chapter One, as well as a response to the immediate context of the apparent wartime blurring of gender roles and increasing visibility of homosexuality.[[430]](#footnote-430) Self-controlled normative masculinity stood in opposition to the lack of restraint in behaviour and appearance which were considered the identifiable traits of the homosexual.[[431]](#footnote-431) The Victorian notion of ‘character’ infused this model of restrained masculinity, with its emphasis on an identity which was formed in the public arena and through adherence to a prescribed set of norms. Yet by the second half of the 1950s, the notion of ‘character’ was encountering a serious challenge from the increasing emphasis on self-introspection and self-expression, and the loosening of the ‘culture of restraint’. As Abigail Wills has argued, ‘martial’ masculinity declined and there was a move towards a softer youthful masculinity in the late-1950s, stimulated by the phasing out of National Service between 1957 and 1963.[[432]](#footnote-432) Whilst codes of masculine self-control continued throughout the decade, Francis has shown that Britons were clearly negotiating other versions of a more ‘relaxed’ masculine selfhood.[[433]](#footnote-433)

Mort has invoked the tension between older and newer versions of the masculine self to explain the common generational struggles between fathers and sons in this period. Reflecting on his own biography, he concluded that although he happily embraced the newer forms of individuality and self-expression, his father continued to live ‘according to the rule’ and persisted with his adherence to emotional restraint. This, Mort argued, destroyed the possibility of them developing a meaningful relationship.[[434]](#footnote-434) However, Michael Roper has challenged the assertion that the late 1950s was the point of change for the ‘modern’ masculine self, positing a much longer history of men’s engagement with popular psychology conducted in the spirit of self-examination reaching back to the inter-war period. He argues that the emergence of the ‘reflexive self’ was a far more drawn out process than is usually taken into account. Indeed, he builds on the theses of Anthony Giddens and Charles Taylor that the transformation of selfhood was something that took centuries rather than a few years to manifest.[[435]](#footnote-435) Thomas Dixon on the other hand has argued that it was not until the early years of the 1970s that ‘British masculinity changed’.[[436]](#footnote-436)

The following section demonstrates that from the late-1950s onwards there was undoubtedly a transition in thinking about men and emotions which proposed a very different type of masculinity to that of Victorian ‘character’ and the ‘stiff upper lip’. Beginning in the hands of society’s ‘experts’, a new expressive masculinity was being promoted as the route to becoming a ‘modern man’, spreading during the 1960s and 1970s throughout popular culture.

**The Taboo on Male Feeling**

Campaigners for the new expressive masculinity were united in their claims that the problem of repression would have to be tackled at its root. They blamed boarding and public schools for educating boys in how to contain and conceal their emotions: ‘No worse preparation for a future love relationship could be devised than the English boarding school. [A boy] is subjected to a severe hardening process which forces him to repress his emotions and adopt an attitude of amused disdain towards sentimentality.’[[437]](#footnote-437) Indeed, Dominian referred to the damage done to the development of children’s personalities by boarding schools as they fostered the ‘hidden deprivation’ that came with emotionally unavailable, withdrawn parents.[[438]](#footnote-438) Chesser argued that the attitude that emotions were ‘silly’ was not confined to boys of privilege, but was extended from the public schools to the wider public: ‘Although only a minority of the population goes to a public school, the standard set makes itself felt right through the community. Contempt for sentimentality is almost universal. Whether a boy wears an Eton tie or drainpipe trousers, he regards any show of feeling as a weakness.’[[439]](#footnote-439) Indeed, writing in 1966, Jeffreys, whose critique of the education system was described in Chapter Two, extended the criticism from boarding and public schools to grammar schools which were also, in his view, responsible for the lack of ‘education in feeling’: ‘There is little doubt that the rather narrowly academic channel of the grammar school and the university still achieves intellectual distinction at the price of neglecting the education of feeling.’[[440]](#footnote-440)

Writing ‘from the inside’, school teacher, principal and founder of a new co-educational boarding school, Kenneth C. Barnes published a popular courtship manual designed specifically for young men which was informed by his considerable experience working within the education system. *He and She* (1958) was intended to help break down some of the ‘distance in feeling’ he perceived between the sexes. He expressed anger at the ‘taboo on tenderness’ which sprung from the tradition ‘that boys and men should not express deep and tender feelings in their everyday life, that to do so would be sissy and argued that young men and women should come together as human beings, to talk honestly, to understand one another and to allow the full development of their personalities.’[[441]](#footnote-441) Barnes believed that ‘women could do more to improve the man-dominated and destructive civilisation’ which was the result of a way of thinking which heralded lack of feeling as the pinnacle of strength.[[442]](#footnote-442)

Both Chesser and Barnes identified ‘manly restraint’ derived from the ‘cult of toughness’ as a destructive force in personal relationships. The contempt for sentimentality meant talking openly between boys and girls, and men and women, was held in low esteem. This, they argued, led to a lack of tenderness – ‘this virtual absence of conversation cuts out tender endearments’[[443]](#footnote-443) – and widespread dissatisfaction for women, in addition to hindering personality development on both sides. Because tenderness was withheld in childhood, men were disadvantaged for life, destined for limited and unfulfilling marriages because they could not express affection or any other emotions satisfactorily. Schools, were just one area where the ‘cult of toughness’ restricted boys’ lives. The problem, they argued, began at home with the mothers of boys.

Influenced by Bowlbyism, authors of marital advice blamed generations of mothers who had put into practice theories of childcare which emphasised ‘training’ and the creation of ‘independence’ from the mother through the absence of closeness and demonstrations of affection. Whilst the ‘stiff upper lip’ discourse was in its prime, childcare advice had upheld the notion that if a baby or child was showered with affection and was allowed to feel the ‘centre of their mother’s world’, they would grow up to be ‘spoiled’ and unable to cope with the harshness of life. In the case of boys, they would grow up to be weak, effeminate and ‘unmanly’. As Chesser summarised: ‘Boys are taught from childhood that it is disgraceful to behave like a girl. Any sign of softness is rebuked. A boy who displays too much affection even for his mother is regarded as “namby-pamby”.’[[444]](#footnote-444)

In her 1961 marriage manual *Husbands and Wives*, Barbara Cartland dispatched a Bowlby-esque warning that mothers had the role of laying down the foundations of men’s future emotional capabilities in marriage. She argued that women were currently failing in that role and that a shift in the nation’s attitudes to childcare, motherly love and masculinity was required in order to create more stable, happy and fulfilling marriages in the future:

‘I blame the husbands’ mothers for much of the reserve and the inability to say nice things which is characteristic of the British lover. They let their children get into the habit of not kissing them goodbye when they leave the house and again when they return. They allow letters to be written home starting “Dear Mother”. “I’m not a shop!” I said to my two boys when they first went to a preparatory school. “We’ll get ragged by the other boys”, they answered. “Very well”, I said. “We’ll have a code. Three dots at the end of the letters means ‘I love you’. Five dashes: ‘I miss you very much.’ In a very short while the code was forgotten and my sons wrote to “My Darling Mummy” as they have done ever since. Being able to say “I love you” is important all through life. A boy must start with his mother. Emotionally buttoned-up children mean emotionally buttoned-up husbands. Thousands of broken marriages lie at the maternal doorstep of those who thought that being affectionate was unmanly or soft. How many wives are never told how much they mean, how much they would be missed, because their husbands never learnt when they were young to put their feelings into words?’[[445]](#footnote-445)

This was a message that persisted throughout the decade. In the *Woman’s Own* series ‘Kelly Looks at Life’ from 1968 was an article with the title, ‘Men: Will They Ever Understand Us?’, in which actress Barbara Kelly described the damaging problem of a lack of marital communication due to men’s childhood emotional repression, referring to a friend’s experience of breaking down the ‘cult of toughness’ at a personal level:

‘A friend of mine went through a very sticky marriage patch. She kept telling me she “couldn’t get through to her husband”. Finally, she told him she was going to leave him. “And then”, she said, “Something I never expected happened. The face of this strong and reserved man suddenly crumpled and he was sobbing helplessly. I just took him in my arms, he didn’t have to say any words, I wanted to console him. I was able to give to him at last and out of that unexpected outbreak we built a much happier marriage.”’ [[446]](#footnote-446)

Kelly reflected on why her dear friend had gone through that difficult time in the first place:

‘It’s the old hangover from the stiff upper lip, the attitude ingrained into little boys from the time they can toddle that men don’t make a fuss and men don’t cry. So, while still very young, they learn to control and suppress their feelings instead of letting them out naturally. If I had my way I would let a boy cry just as much as a girl. If your little boy falls and cuts himself, let him yell! It’ll probably make him a better husband.’[[447]](#footnote-447)

Chesser had also demonstrated the legacy of these ‘emotionless’ childhoods through examples of couples he had met during his work as a marriage counsellor. One couple had struggled to cope in the early stages of their relationship with the consequences of the man’s affectionless upbringing:

‘Sally and Bill were two young people, happily married. Like so many young men of his generation Bill had been brought up by parents who believed it was their first duty to train him to be independent. They read the latest books on child-training. The fashion then was to feed a child by the clock and avoid ostentatious display of affection. Caresses were shunned. Despite this diet for emotional slimming, Bill had a strong imagination and he was very emotional. He fell head over heels in love with Sally, but it was a long time before he could manage to tell her so. Even then he could not manage to put his real feelings into words.’[[448]](#footnote-448)

For Bill, his relationship with Sally opened up a world of tenderness that he had been denied growing up. Chesser described how it had taken a long time for him to reach this point and it only came when they had planned to have sexual intercourse in a hotel room one evening but realised that they were not ready to go through with it before they were married: ‘He could not take what she was suddenly reluctant to give. As she lay in his arms he was overwhelmed by a tenderness he had never known before. He had been deprived of it in childhood and now it flooded him with all the thrilling wonder of a new emotion.’[[449]](#footnote-449) Chesser portrayed romantic relationships as a space where men of the ‘emotional maturity’ generation could discover a whole world of emotion of which they had previously had little experience. It could be liberating for them on an individual level allowing them to discover new sides to their personality, but it also laid the foundations for a stable marriage through the ‘oneness’ that came with honesty and openness:

‘To lie so close together, cheek to cheek in perfect harmony, released all those longings that had been repressed. He was able to tell her how deeply he loved her that it did not matter that she did not want the final surrender. This was enough – her total trust in him. The strange, almost mystical oneness which they had attained.’[[450]](#footnote-450)

Chesser highlighted the significant moment of transformation in Bill and Sally’s relationship as the point when they became able to talk openly with each other about their mutual emotions: ‘The words poured out in a torrent, although until then he would have been incapable of such passionate fluency. It was what in her heart she had longed to hear.’

Chesser included other stories which focussed on the transformation of relationships and the resulting happiness of the individuals when the man began to express his emotions, yet he emphasised, like Barnes, that this was not a revolution in feeling which required only men to change and shake off their emotional repression. Women had a role to play too. As Cartland had argued for mothers, Chesser also suggested for girlfriends and wives – women needed to shake off the imprint of the societal taboo on both showing affection towards, and expecting affection from, the male members of society. He encouraged women to act towards the man in the way she wanted him to behave:

‘Tenderness and understanding evoke tenderness and understanding. This approach worked for Linda. In the end she was completely successful. Jeremy’s attitude softened and for the first time he was able to tell her how much he loved her. He was more romantic at heart than she had expected. He had obviously been afraid of showing his feelings.’[[451]](#footnote-451)

Yet this idea that men and women should be a ‘team’ in their attempt to achieve tenderness and relinquish the man of his emotional repression was radical in a culture that enjoyed joking about husbands and wives being ‘at odds with each other’ or ‘from different worlds’, and where women’s need to manipulate their ‘silent’ husbands into doing what they wanted was a source of comedy. Even some of the marital advice continued to work within this framework. In November 1968, *Woman’s Own* magazine featured an article with the title ‘Why Doesn’t My Husband Talk to Me?’ with the tagline: ‘It’s a question most wives ask themselves at one time of another. Here Dr Joyce Brothers discusses how the lack of communication can be overcome’.[[452]](#footnote-452) Dr Brothers was an American psychologist and major television personality who is credited as having made psychology accessible through her television and radio shows dealing with relationship advice and her column in *Good Housekeeping*. She was a forerunner in media psychology and the ‘go-to’ person for relationship problems in America at this time. Her article in British magazine *Woman’s Own* depicted similar concerns to her counterparts across the pond.

She began with an anecdote which echoed Chesser’s comparison between men and gorillas:

‘The other evening a friend burst into the house with fire in her eyes…”I always thought the difference between men and apes was that men could talk!” she said. “Well I’m not saying I married an ape, but I might as well have for all the communication I get out of him.”’ ‘I wonder how many times I’ve heard the same complaint from other wives!’ [[453]](#footnote-453)

She continued, that:

‘The trouble (if you can call it that) lies in the simple fact that a husband is a man and a wife is a woman! The root of the problem lies in the very different way men and women deal with emotion. Most men in this country have been taught to control, disguise, even deny their feelings. Women are under no such taboo: they can cry if they feel like it or be openly affectionate without being laughed at. As a result, they are able to deal with emotion much more openly, honestly and usually more effectively than men. What has this got to do with marital conversation? Just this: the things a wife most wants to talk about to her husband – rough spots in their relationship perhaps, problems in bringing up the children, her anxieties about his health, her hopes for the future, even just personal chit chat about friends and neighbours – are all loaded with emotional overtones. From these, like a horse that senses danger, the man shies violently away, seeking protection wherever he can find it, behind his newspaper or in activities that require his frequent presence elsewhere.’[[454]](#footnote-454)

Brothers outlined some of the reasons why there was a lack of marital communication in most relationships. Firstly, she claimed, it was a natural consequence of living with someone for many years. As time went by, there was less need for communication when couples had ‘learnt all about each other’ in the early years of marriage. Secondly, the ‘male ego’ had a significant bearing: ‘A man’s sense of his own worth is bound up with his ability to control the topics at home if nowhere else. If he can’t he is likely to feel henpecked and retreat into a sulky silence…It is a wise woman who accepts the fact that her needs in this respect, are less urgent than his.’ Thirdly, the man did not view his home as a site for endless, open communication when ‘he has been talking all day at work’. Rather, Brothers argued, it rightly was viewed as a site for relaxation and peace, although she acknowledged the frustration this caused: ‘What that can do to a woman who has been waiting eight solid hours for a little conversation that doesn’t consist of baby talk, is brutal.’[[455]](#footnote-455)

Unlike the British psychologists, Brothers’s article suggested a resignation about the status quo rather than proposing a radical overhaul of the existing emotional culture. Although she also viewed the fact that men were not emotional enough as a problem in personal relationships, she presented the differences between the sexes as somewhat unchangeable – a ‘fact of life’: ‘It’s not fair and it’s only natural for a woman to resent it for who else does she have to talk to? But it is a fact of life we all have to face.’ [[456]](#footnote-456) This diverged from the advice emanating from many of the British writers who were suggesting that the gap in how men and women express emotions could and should be closed.

Brothers stated that undeniably, ‘many a marriage would be a lot happier if a husband could bring himself to talk to his wife more’ and offers a list of eight suggestions on how to help develop better marital communication. The focus was on the wife adapting, deceiving and working around her husband’s ‘ego’. She argued that ‘although there isn’t much she can do about his dislike for deeply personal communication’, she could, for example, try to enter *his* emotional world because at the end of the day he is ‘incapable of entering into a woman’s world.’ She continued that: You’ll have to be subtle about it though – and let him think *he* chose the topic.’ Another suggestion made by Brothers was to initiate a few arguments: ‘Men complain that women always want to be agreed with. (The pot calls the kettle black!) Don’t fall into that trap but remember that disagreement makes for very much livelier conversation.’ At the end of the day though, Brothers was sceptical about how much significant change could be achieved, advising women that the best thing they could do was to: ‘Face up to it – women are just more talkative than men. It’s part of our basic psychological make-up. Husbands are never going to be as communicative as we would like. But there’s still room for improvement!’[[457]](#footnote-457)

Brothers proposed a ‘one-sided’ approach to improving marital communication which laid all the effort and responsibility on the woman and treated the man as someone to be ‘tiptoed around’ and deceived. Such an approach was incongruous with achieving a more honest, open and transparent relationship and was far removed from the kind of advice dispensed by British marriage advisors who were promoting a more radical liberation of male feeling than the limited ‘male ego-massaging’ advice dispensed by Brothers.

Rather than the woman ‘deceiving’ the man into communicating by allowing him to believe it was ‘all on his terms and his idea’, Chesser emphasised the more honest approach of a mutual agreement to ‘take things slowly’ in a joint effort towards change. Reflecting on the damage done by the ‘cult of toughness’, Chesser argued that it was inevitable that men would need time to overcome their self-consciousness and that wives should respect this. Through showing respect and tenderness, the wife would receive respect and tenderness in return. He argued that body language and physical demonstrations could help pave the way: ‘showing feelings through physical gestures will make way for verbal communication.’[[458]](#footnote-458) Material culture had a role to play in Chesser’s vision for breaking down the ‘taboo on tenderness’ with gifts and love letters actively encouraged. He reflected that alongside the taboo on talking there existed a taboo on men showing outward signs of affection through objects which was as negative and destructive as that on expressing emotions:

‘“Last week one of our chaps carrying a bunch of flowers passed a crowd of us. We followed him down the street calling after him till his face was as red as a lobster. I bet he won’t dare do that again”…The wretched youngster was ragged unmercifully because he had the nice thought of taking flowers to his girlfriend. Why should it arouse such derision? For some reason it is considered “soppy” and “unmanly” and these were unforgiveable faults. If he had boasted of having seduced the girl he might have earned the admiration of this particular group. But to be seen carrying flowers for his girl was felt to be somehow “cissy”.’[[459]](#footnote-459)

Although sociologists at the time speculated that men were increasingly less likely to dismiss certain public behaviours for fear of being condemned by other men, (such as helping with the shopping), actions which had an association with the ‘romantic gesture’ could still lead to considerable embarrassment.[[460]](#footnote-460) In his study of working class Glasgow T Brennan concluded that: ‘Men would feel ridiculous if they had to carry home a bunch of flowers.’[[461]](#footnote-461) Class was an important dimension to whether these behaviours were carried out in public. The more anonymous residential areas of the middle classes allowed for more freedom to bring home a bunch of flowers, unlike the close-knit working class communities where a man would be witnessed by people he knew and socialised with.

The shame associated with being caught with a bunch for flowers was expressed in Bill Naughton’s novel *Alfie*, where it is the motivations behind the reason for buying flowers that are deemed embarrassing. Alfie’s attempts to hide his present are contrasted with the openness of ‘these civil servant types’:

‘Course I’m keeping the roses well out of sight. I mean somebody has only to spot you walking into a block of flats on a Sunday afternoon with a bunch of flowers and not only do you look a right lemon, but unless they’re dead dim they must know for certain what you’re after. And you don’t want your private intentions open to everybody along the street. I mean, I’ve often seen one of these civil servant types with his bowler hat and umbrella, taking his old woman a bunch of flowers home of a Friday, and I’ve spotted from the look in his eyes what’s on his mind.’[[462]](#footnote-462)

However, unlike Chesser in 1960, by 1969 Wallis was certain that the only form of communication acceptable for achieving true transparency in this age of ‘authenticity’ was verbal, and he dismissed the role of material culture in relationships as having been relevant in a different age when verbal communication was impossible:

‘People used to speak of the messengers of love, though that sounds sentimental today. What was meant was usually a gift or a token of some kind like a Valentine or an invitation. But the messages of love are not conveyed so clearly by external objects or things that we can buy or plan.’[[463]](#footnote-463)

By the turn of the 1970s, insinuated Wallis, people had the capacity to ‘talk love’, they did not need to ‘show love’ through gifts.

Yet although Chesser had promoted the use of objects in communicating affection, he did prioritise talking as the ultimate goal and the main route to closeness and liberation. Indeed he repeated the idea that the kind of connection between two people that was achieved through open verbal communication had greater potential for fulfilment than physical connection: ‘If they are unafraid of sentiment, they can experience a communion with each other which, whilst it includes the physical, far transcends it.’[[464]](#footnote-464) Yet he feared that the consequences of a societal repression of male emotionality was that boys believed that girls were only of use for sex, and that girls were adopting this message too, thinking of ‘sex as fun’ when deep down they yearned for tenderness: ‘The fear of being sentimental is one of the main reasons why love affairs so often go wrong. If sentiment is dismissed as silly nonsense, little is left but sex in the raw. This is not what the majority of girls want. Unfortunately, however, it is all that many boys today seem able to give.’[[465]](#footnote-465) He continued that: ‘shorn of all trimmings, all finesse, love is reduced to simple, physical terms. On that basis it is not worth much. Yet it is what the modern ‘cult of toughness’ could easily lead to unless checked.’[[466]](#footnote-466)

**‘I Love You’ – Why Can’t Englishmen Say It?**

In the attempt to counteract the ‘cult of toughness’, marital ‘experts’ on the cusp of the sixties focused on the most crucial three little words to both pre-marital and marital communication – ‘I love you’. As Chesser claimed in 1960: ‘I love you are words of magic power and they unlock the heart. They cannot be too often repeated. Yet, owing to a faulty upbringing, which discourages outbursts of emotion, few men can bring themselves to talk of love without self-consciousness.’[[467]](#footnote-467) Whilst Chesser argued that the phrase should always be said with true conviction and feeling behind it, part of the progress towards greater marital communication, the fine line between saying ‘I love you’ and really meaning it and saying it as a ‘token gesture’ was difficult for the ‘experts’ to negotiate. British men’s ability to say this important and transformative phrase saturated the agony aunt columns and feature pages of the national press, becoming a fashionable topic for discussion and analysis. However, the increased visibility and usage of the phrase, had the potential to undermine its power and sincerity, as will be seen later.

*Daily Mirror* Agony Aunt Mary Brown’s, ‘Page for Men That All Women Want to Read’, featured a list of hints on ‘How to Keep Your Wife Happy’ in the November of 1958. She framed it as a corrective to the abundance of quizzes and advice pages dedicated to ‘keeping your husband happy’. Her article promoted saying ‘I love you’ as the most crucial thing a husband must do, and encouraged men to try talking more openly with their wives about their hopes and dreams:

‘LOVE her. Show that you love her. Tell her you love her—often, and in the daytime. Bring home an occasional present, no matter how small. She will be thrilled because you remembered her —and she did not have to ask for it. Share her thoughts and yours. Share your hopes, your worries, your successes, your failures. Share your money fairly. Share in the care and upbringing of your children. Share your wife's interest in the home. Above all make her feel she is vital to your happiness and well-being.’[[468]](#footnote-468)

Focusing on men’s emotional openness was new territory in the late-fifties. A decade earlier, Brown had authored a quiz with the title ‘Am I a Good Husband’ which contained a very different set of advice and expectations.[[469]](#footnote-469) Saying ‘I love you’ to one’s wife did not feature, nor did the practice of speaking openly about one’s thoughts. Moreover, the word ‘share’ did not appear. Rather, the advice was explicitly practical and pragmatic. As the 1940s were drawing to an end, the advice about how a man should behave in his marriage was concerned with ‘what he wore around the house’ – whether he ‘dressed smartly for his wife’, whether he ‘handed over his wages at the end of the month’ and whether he ‘stared at other women when they went out together’.[[470]](#footnote-470) As the 1960s and 1970s rolled in however, the message to say ‘I love you’ would become *de rigour*, with even the teenage magazines imparting the seriousness of the lack of male expressiveness. In 1968, *Mirabelle* included a photo story in its May issue with the title ‘Tell Me You Love Me!’ The story depicted boys not saying ‘I love you’ to their girlfriends and how distressing it was for the girl’s emotional health, as well as the damaging consequences it had on their relationships.[[471]](#footnote-471) Indeed, this type of feature became standard for girls’ magazines. *Valentine* in October 1974 also had a picture story with the title, ‘Why Won’t You Say You Love Me?’[[472]](#footnote-472)

Marje Proops followed Mary Brown’s 1958 hints for marital happiness a few days later with her article ‘I Love You: Why Can’t Englishmen Say It?’, which she claimed was generated by ‘a week of disturbed sleep’ haunted by Lawrence Olivier’s powerful delivery of the phrase in the television production of Ibsen’s play *John Gabriel Borkman* which had aired the previous week.[[473]](#footnote-473) What had concerned Proops was that: ‘He wasn't saying it to a woman. The great love he bore was for a scam of iron ore in some old mountain.’ This, she argued, epitomised the state of men’s emotional repression in modern Britain and it was a worrying thing. She situated the problem in relation to the ability of men of other nations to express their emotions, suggesting that English society was being held back by an unnecessary adherence to emotional restraint which was an undermining force in personal relationships, contributing to their fragility and dissatisfaction:

‘Those three little words that are about the most difficult in the world for an Englishman to utter. Frenchmen have no trouble at all in pronouncing “Je t'adore.” Italians will say “Ti amo” at the drop of a hat. Germans can make “Ich libe dich” sound delicious. Russians murmur- “Ya lyublu tebya.” But try to wring “I love you” out of most Englishmen, and what do you get?—“Don't be soft, mate. Let's have supper.”’[[474]](#footnote-474)

Comparing the varying emotional standards of different nations as a means to highlight Britain’s ‘archaic’ emotional culture had become commonplace in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In its article asking ‘Are We Scared of Love’ from the autumn of 1960, *Woman’s Mirror* confidently declared that: ‘The British male can’t make love.’ [[475]](#footnote-475) It compared British men to the more ‘successful lovers’ – the Latins, French and Americans, declaring that: ‘The Italian is warmer emotionally than us, whilst the Latin has more chivalry than the British male.’ The article highlighted ‘shyness’ as ‘probably the British male’s worst fault and misfortune as a lover’, continuing that ‘it makes him unable to abandon himself. Even in great stress of emotion his natural tendency is to keep something back, for fear of making a “damn fool” of himself. He is terrified of giving himself away.’ In line with Chesser’s encouragement that women should help men to become more expressive, the article concluded that: ‘It is the women’s job to make her husband realise that in love that is exactly what he must do, give himself away.’[[476]](#footnote-476)

Writing in 1957, Kenneth Walker had also expressed the opinion that British men would do well to look to their French counterparts for advice on how to sustain their marriages over the years, especially at that point when ‘familiarity breeds contempt’ and the marriage is in danger of becoming a mere ‘habit’. Men should ‘rouse’ themselves to invest emotionally in creating a happy, fulfilling marriage he asserted:

‘Balzac was a keen observer of married life and he wrote that it was much easier to be a lover than a husband, for whereas the former was only required to make an occasional pretty speech, the husband had to make one every day. [He continued] British husbands should take a hint from this Frenchman, and even though they fail to attain so high a standard as a daily pretty speech to their wives, they should at least manage a weekly one. It will be deeply appreciated and will pay good dividends in the home.’[[477]](#footnote-477)

The idea that Frenchmen were superior lovers to Englishmen was explored in an article by the hugely popular and influential *Daily Mirror* journalist, Audrey Whiting in the spring of 1964. The title of the piece was, ‘A French Woman Lawyer Looks at Our Love Life: The Trouble With Cold English Wives is Husbands’, and it began with Whiting detailing the stereotype that the English were generally considered a ‘cold people’, asserting that it was not just the men who suffered from emotional restraint: ‘Englishwomen are cold. Everybody knows that – at least, everybody on the continent. The French, the Spaniards, the Italians, all shrug their shoulders and in the various languages say “Englishwomen are cold”.’[[478]](#footnote-478) Whilst, she claimed, the blame was usually given to the ‘cold English climate’, a French lawyer was proposing an alternative theory, that ‘Englishwomen are cold because their husbands are cold.’ The lawyer was Mme Laure Biardeau-Beraud, a distinguished figure at the French bar who had recently addressed the Union of Professional Women in France on the topic. In her address, she had declared that ‘Englishwomen are only rarely given the chance to develop emotionally and sexually because Englishmen fail to encourage them to blossom as they should.’ Whiting wrote that upon reading of this lawyer’s speech in a French newspaper, she had ‘felt that this Frenchwoman was on the ball. Maybe her indictment of British manhood instead of the normal indictment of British women—was right.’ She decided to go and talk to her.

Their interview began with Biardeau-Beraud asserting that: ‘“Quite clearly”, she said, “the blame lies with Englishmen”.’ She continued that: ‘In my experience, one of the commonest complaints by English wives is: ‘My husband never tells me that he loves me. He never gives me a surprise kiss or a hug.’ In contrast to Chesser’s point that women had to help men lose their emotional inhibitions, Biardeau-Beraud reflected what she claimed was the ‘French way’, in which the responsibility for women’s experience of love lay with the man: ‘How can you expect a woman to know what love means and to be able to give love in return if the man at her side is either not prepared or is unable to give love himself?’ She pointed out some of the reasons why English men were emotionally cold, and why English marriages suffered from an emotional void, blaming, for instance, what she called ‘the voluntary separation of the sexes in England from their youth onwards.’ Another feature of some English marriages which physically compounded the lack of emotional relationship, she argued, was the single bed – ‘a further barrier between husband and wife.’ Indeed, Biardeau-Beraud compared what she described as the ‘unity of French married couples with what she found in England’, to which Whiting’s response was, ‘I had to admit that once again she had a point.’ Throughout the article, Whiting was in agreement with this French critique of English men’s emotional capacities concluding that the future of marital stability in England was in the hands of its men.

Chesser also evoked this change in thinking from viewing Britain’s stiff upper lip as a cultural advantage over other nations to denouncing it as a hindrance to emotional modernity, declaring that: ‘It is often said that Frenchmen and Italians are better lovers than Englishmen. There is no natural reason why this should be. Such differences as exist are due to the absurd convention that has grown up that a man should not be demonstrative.’[[479]](#footnote-479) There was a subtly competitive edge to the writing about British men’s incompetence as lovers. The often ‘jokey’ tone in some of the writing about the stereotype of British emotional coldness regularly failed to mask the fear that Britain was becoming a ‘laughing stock’ to other nations as a result of its ‘backwards’ attitude to emotional expression. Indeed, Martin Francis has argued that there was an attempt to loosen the connection between British national identity and notions of self-restraint from the mid-1950s onwards.[[480]](#footnote-480) The attempt to liberate men from emotional repression was thus motivated by various, interweaving factors – the worry that Britain would need to drag itself into emotional modernity and keep its status on the world stage, the intention to help strengthen marriage and limit the degree of marital breakdown thus contributing to societal stability, as well as a serious concern over men’s psychological and emotional health influenced by the popularity of neo-Freudian theories of emotion including Bowlbyism.

Proops made a comedy of men’s unresponsiveness and reluctance to talk of their love to their wives in 1958: ‘No matter how often you say, “do you love me?" he'll come back with some remark like, “I married you, didn't I?” Certainly he loves you, but it's easier to get iron ore out of a mountain than to make him say so.’ She joked that:

‘When I think of all the millions of women longing to hear some man say “I love you” it makes me wish Sir Laurence Olivier would organise evening classes. He would be doing a great service for womankind if he could get British boy friends and spouses to say “I love you” with vibrant passion and conviction. If only he could teach them to roll it off their tongues so that when the women in their lives say “Darling, do you love me?” they would reply “I love you better than any old iron ore in any old mountain.” If Sir Laurence could do that he would deserve to be given an Earldom. But I don’t think he would get very far. Not with men who would rather discuss the weather, the price of beer, cricket scores and what won the 2:30 than bring themselves to mutter “I love you.”’[[481]](#footnote-481)

Yet beneath the sniggers, Proops was genuinely concerned that men should be able to express their feelings and say ‘I love you’ without the shame and embarrassment that it appeared to engender in late-1950s Britain. Dixon has claimed for the later period that Proops became a radical pioneer using her agony aunt column to conduct a powerful and relentless campaign for male emotional liberation: ‘The need for men to express their feelings through tears rather than bottling them up was a recurring theme in Proops’s answers to letters in the 1970s and 1980s.’[[482]](#footnote-482) Dixon quotes one such letter from 1971, in which a young wife explains her fear that her husband’s tears following their first big row indicated he could be ‘effeminate’. Proops replied that ‘strong men shed tears’, and that it was ‘those silly mothers who tell their sons ‘it’s unmanly to cry’ who should take the blame for perpetuating the notion that boys and men should be tearless and emotionless.[[483]](#footnote-483) Joined by another *Daily Mirror* agony aunt, Bel Mooney, in the late 1970s, they attempted to promote a more emotional masculinity alongside a more intellectual femininity. Mooney wrote in 1979 that ‘Bringing up boys to believe there is something wrong with showing emotion is as bad as telling girls that education is a waste of time.’[[484]](#footnote-484) Indeed Dixon describes their attempt to help men embrace their emotions as ‘men’s liberation’. With the *Mirror* enjoying a circulation of over 10-12 million readers by this point, the campaign was reaching a mass audience and was thus hugely significant in breaking down the ‘stiff upper lip’ culture.[[485]](#footnote-485)

However, Dixon’s focus primarily on men expressing their emotions through tears has overlooked the fact that ‘pioneers of a new mode of masculinity’, including Proops herself, had been exerting their influence over a mass audience from as early as the 1950s, and that his conclusion that it was from the 1970s and 1980s that ‘men were increasingly, and repeatedly, encouraged to get in touch with their feelings’ neglects a longer history of the campaign for men’s emotional liberation. Dixon posits ‘1973’ as marking the ‘start of an era of greater male emotionality – the tentative forerunner of more recent developments.’[[486]](#footnote-486) The reason for this, he claims, was the sight of two footballers, Bob Stokoe and Ian Porterfield, crying during the Sunderland cup run. Indeed, he quotes Proops as celebrating this moment of triumph over the ‘stiff upper lip’: ‘I admire a man who can burst into tears, who clobbers the stiff upper lip image of the British male at a stroke by letting the tears flow, unashamedly, unchecked. And remains undeniably manly.’[[487]](#footnote-487) What Dixon’s timeline fails to take into account is that this significant moment for male expressiveness was the product of the campaign against the ‘taboo on tenderness’ and the ‘cult of toughness’ of the previous decade. Indeed, the work of ‘pioneers’ in the sixties to encourage a societal conversation about men’s emotional expressiveness in the privacy of their intimate personal relationships with their wives and girlfriends paved the way for male emotional expression to filter out into public view through the tears of celebrities in the 1970s and 1980s. The ‘birth of the new man of the seventies’ was influenced directly by the debates about male expressiveness in marriage, combined with the wider societal discussions on the need to shake off repression and embrace honesty.

The conversation about male emotional liberation and the need to say ‘I love you’ in the press, in advice literature and social commentary had seeped into the period’s consciousness and reached far-apart corners of its popular culture. Novels of the period revelled in exploring this explosive subject matter. Lynne Reid Banks engaged with the idea of British male emotionality in her second novel *An End to Running* (1962), in which the protagonist Martha refers to her lover Aaron as atypical of his peers as he is willing to demonstrate his feeling for her: ‘He often touched me casually, squeezing my hand or hugging me in a moment of exuberance; till now this unself-conscious sensuality and warmth had seemed a merely pleasant contrast to the average Englishmen who never indulges in casual gestures of affection for fear of compromising himself.’[[488]](#footnote-488) Yet whilst Aaron was considered an unusually sensual man in his actions, he lacked the ability to be emotionally open in their relationship, leaving Martha frustrated. Banks returned to the topic of male expressiveness over a decade later in her conclusion to the *L Shaped Room* trilogy, *Two is Lonely* (1974), with a more extensive depiction of the problem of communication in intimate personal relationships reflecting the upsurge of interest in men’s emotional capabilities during the previous decade.

*Two is Lonely* continued the story of single mother Jane and her attempts to form a fulfilling relationship with a man eight years after moving to the L Shaped Room. In the novel, Jane holds verbal communication as the marker of a successful, emotionally satisfying relationship, assessing the degree to which it could be achieved with each potential romantic partner. Its absence concerns her more than any other aspect. Her new relationship with the kind but reserved Andy is plagued by her fears that they cannot communicate properly, that he will not speak his emotions to her. Andy embodies the regime of the ‘stiff upper lip’ and the novel focuses on Jane’s attempts to break this down in order to create a deeper kind of relationship based on honesty and open, explorative communication:

‘I thought that if he relaxed physically, if he were not always so *stiff*, I might get that mouth of his open and some words out of it which would let me know what the hell was going on in his head. How can one love a man who never reaches out to you, never offers you any part of himself or, for that matter, invites you to give any of yourself to him?’[[489]](#footnote-489)

The novel captures the new expectations, ushered in by the campaign for male expressiveness that men should be more emotionally free and able to talk competently within romantic relationships. The couple engage in philosophical discussions of the nature of communication between men and women, and its possible future. Andy says one day:

‘“Did you ever read that novel about future mutant humans who could read each other’s thoughts and send mental pictures to each other? It struck me *that’s* what one needs to create a proper love-relationship, nothing less than that – direct, mind-to-mind communication. Instead of filtering it all through mere *words*…Words are like condoms in that connection. The communication penetrates, but it can’t produce a true conception in the other person. That can only happen through some kind of spiritual meeting which takes ages to develop, and I sometimes think words are actually a barrier to that kind of coming together.”

I [Jane] was silent. There was truth in it. “But I want to talk,” I said at last. “Feelings, moods, impulses can be transmitted in the way you mean. But there are the facts. Since we can’t read each other’s thoughts, and frankly I prefer it that way, there’s only one other method.”’[[490]](#footnote-490)

Banks’s characters were weighed down by the knowledge that open verbal communication did not yield all the answers and had its limitations in terms of how far a connection achieved through honest disclosure could really be a spiritual connection with another human being. However there is the acceptance on Jane’s part that it did ultimately lead to a more meaningful and fulfilling relationship. She is increasingly frustrated that all Andy’s philosophising merely shields the fact that he is uncomfortable with the new expectations that he should be able to express his emotions and talk openly. Jane declares: ‘We’re two separate people. Words are the only bridge, and you won’t use it.’[[491]](#footnote-491) She reflects that Andy’s unwillingness to open up to her comes from his desire to be independent in life: ‘He sought to be independent even of shared thoughts.’ But she sees it as ‘avoiding reality’ when that reality could be a messy, painful one generated by the new ‘transparent’ style of relationship: ‘His unwillingness to communicate in words was nothing but an evasion; a desire for ‘perfection or nothing’.[[492]](#footnote-492) She confronts him about his silence and emotional restraint: ‘How can you be so self-contained? I’m not like that, I can’t love anyone like that. Not having to say things – that’s god-like. It’s a life-companion I want, not a communicated soul-process!’[[493]](#footnote-493) Eventually, after much pressing from Jane, Andy is able to shed his self-restraint and express his feelings for Jane vocally rather than physically, telling her repeatedly ‘I love you’. She rejoices that the ‘word-bridge had been slung across the abyss’ between them and their relationship could develop into something deeper.[[494]](#footnote-494)

Novels written by men and portraying a man’s take on love and marriage also revealed the reach of the conversation about male emotionality as well as the complexities of how the new expressive masculinity was being interpreted. In his seminal novel *Alfie* (1966), Bill Naughton presented a vision of a man seemingly at odds with the new emphasis on the softer masculinity with his lead character embodying the anti-emotional, permissive, jokey, ‘playboy’ model. Alfie was portrayed as adhering to the old model of emotional restraint, despite lacking the attendant sexual restraint. His relationship with those three important words – ‘I love you’ – was exactly that which the agony aunts deplored. When Gilda asks him, “Do you love me, Alfie?” he replies with the stereotypically evasive response: ‘What can I say, when you ask? You shouldn’t ask you know. I’ll always tell you when I feel like it.’[[495]](#footnote-495) Alfie embodies the fear of Chesser and other relationship experts that ‘I love you’ would be used as a ‘token’ response, said without true, honest feeling behind it. He explains later in the novel that he has said the phrase just for the sake of appearance: ‘She’s told me time and time again she loves me, loves me for myself, whatever that might mean. But I ain’t ever told her I love her except at those times when you’ve got to say something just for appearance’s sake.’[[496]](#footnote-496) Throughout the novel Alfie is dismissive of love and any outward expression of emotion: ‘“Don’t talk to me about love,” I said. “I don’t know what love is, the way you birds keep rabbiting about it. Love, love, love – if somebody hadn’t told you about it you wouldn’t know what the bleedin’ hell it meant.”’[[497]](#footnote-497)

Alfie makes a particular joke of the new emphasis on talking openly with each other mocking one woman he has a relationship with, Jean, for her desire to get him to open up and communicate with her: ‘I did a spell with one little bird who was kind of romantic or something, always reading those soppy women’s picture books. Her name was Jean, but I used to call her “Tellmesummink”.’[[498]](#footnote-498) He describes for the reader his horror when in the intimate moments after they have slept together Jean seeks to initiate some verbal communication between them. Jean seeks to move Alfie beyond the expected niceties to opening up about himself and exposing his thoughts to another person:

‘We’re in bed, see, after having it off, and I’ve said all the right things, or at least most of ‘em, and then I’m ready for two or three minutes kip at a time. When this Tellmesummink says, “Tell me summink?” “What – that I love you?” I says. “Nah, not just that”, it says. “What, that you’re beautiful?” I says. “Nah, not just that either”, it says. “You mean that you’ve got lovely hair – nice eyes –” “No, nothing like that”, it says. “I only want you to tell me summink.”

She continues to press Alfie to open up verbally – ‘You just talk and tell me summink, I just want you to talk and tell me summink’ – pushing him to his ‘wits’ end’.[[499]](#footnote-499)

Talking openly and exposing yourself to a woman, is to Alfie, the worst thing a man could do. He is determined to stay independent, asserting that: ‘I ain’t got a need for nobody.’[[500]](#footnote-500) Advising his friend Harry, he argues that the close, open relationship between husband and wife that was being promoted all around them as the route to personal happiness and self-realisation had no value, and that being on your own was the only way to be true to yourself:

‘Because once you see this truth – that man and wife ain’t one but two, you’ll organise your little life something lovely. You’ll know the truth, see, and you’ll be happy in the truth, mate, because you’ll soon be out of here once you learn to live for your bleeding self like I do.’[[501]](#footnote-501)

Resisting the discourse that through open communication between spouses or lovers, self-knowledge and growth could be achieved, Alfie asserts that: ‘I always say nobody understands you like yourself.’[[502]](#footnote-502)

Throughout the novel, Alfie presents himself as anti all the therapeutic, psychological analysis of life and relationships that he believes has been destructive rather than positive for British society. He argues that: ‘A man should never allow too much from outside to get inside his nut. It don’t do him no good.’[[503]](#footnote-503) Yet despite his outward resistance, Alfie is ironically the epitome of the self-introspective man as the novel is framed around his self-analysis and internal dialogue. Despite his attempts to present himself to the world as carefree, cold and one-dimensional, in many ways he is a very philosophical man and although he works hard to rally against the new kind of softer, emotional masculinity, he is actually powerfully influenced by it. He is constantly analysing his actions and those of others, his feelings about things, what kind of life would suit him and his awareness of his own personality. The novel is a journey towards self-knowledge and Alfie is a questioning man: ‘What funny things human beings are. I go through life with that question on my mind: what’s the bleeding answer?’[[504]](#footnote-504) Through his experience of becoming a father and of losing access to his son when Gilda marries another man, Alfie begins to open up to, and analyse his own emotions on a deeper level admitting to himself that he is an emotional being internally, although he continues to project the outward image that he is entirely unemotional. Thus, the archetypal ‘lad’ of the sixties who has entered into popular memory as the epitome of the ‘bachelor’ unencumbered by feelings could not escape the shift in masculinity towards a more introspective, self-analytical, emotional model.

Writing in 1972, writer and editorial director of Victor Gollancz publishers, Giles Gordon published his novel, *About a Marriage*,which explored the confused and complex emotions of a young husband. As Penguin marketed it, the novel was the ‘story of a young man in a permissive age, trying to justify his belief in marriage – an everyday occurrence, endlessly fascinating, and endlessly changeable. Now, in Giles Gordon’s novel, comes a fresh masculine viewpoint which makes an original contribution to an explosive subject.’ [[505]](#footnote-505) In the novel, Edward describes the point in a long-term marital relationship when the special ‘three little words’ almost lose their meaning. The novel reflects what, by the 1970s, was an increasing tiredness with the advice to say ‘I love you’ and a feeling that all the focus on it had reached a point where it actually undermined those words and potentially hindered true honesty between spouses:

‘It is difficult to say I love you – difficult to say, not to mean it, whatever the meaning is – because it has been said, to you by me, so many times in the last eight years, eighty if we had had them together. It is easier to say I love you to someone else. Ann, I love you. It is easier to say that to someone to whom you haven’t said it before, at least not often. For the first time, to start again. To say the words, then try to discover their meaning, the meaning between the two of you, the particular meaning for the two of you.’[[506]](#footnote-506)

In the sequel *100 Scenes from Married Life* published in 1976, Edward again refers to the problem of saying ‘I love you’ after many years of marriage and the feeling that saying it too often had led to a point of saturation where the meaning was lost: ‘I love her, thought her husband. I can’t keep saying it to her but I do.’[[507]](#footnote-507)

Gordon’s novels show a moment of questioning of why that phrase was promoted as holding such pivotal importance in a relationship and a recognition that it was often a ‘token’, obligatory saying and thus had lost its meaning and power. Indeed, although recognised as having played a key role in the beginning of the breaking down of the ‘taboo on tenderness’ for men – a way to get them talking – by the 1970s there was an awareness that its use was often incongruous with the intensely honest, transparent and open form of communication being promoted by experts such as Wallis and the Maces. Indeed, its use as an obligatory part of communicating in relationships ran counter to the increasing emphasis on spontaneity, self-honesty and saying what you feel rather than what you think you should feel, (or what you think you should say). Unless it was truly meant, it came to be realised that it was better not said at all. The ‘quick fix’ attitude that saying the phrase would solve the problem of the lack of marital communication which some of the advice from the 1950s had exhibited came in for serious criticism by the 1970s.

Indeed, on the cusp of the seventies, journalist Angela Lambert penned an article for *The Sun* titled ‘What Do Men Really Think of Love?’ which deplored the games played in relationships between men and women.[[508]](#footnote-508) Lambert, who later became a successful novelist, wrote widely for newspapers, women’s magazines and television news throughout the 1960s and 1970s and was an influential female figure in the early days of the Independent Television News. She was, like Proops, a forceful female journalist writing for the tabloids. In her article for *The Sun* she argued that it was time women heard from men themselves what they felt about love and relationships rather than telling them how to feel or what to say: ‘Why is it, that although falling in love is a two-way thing, involving both a him and a her, women know only their side of the business? How *do* men feel about love? Do they take it more seriously? Do they long for it to happen?’ Lambert acknowledged the legacy of male restraint stating: ‘If you ask an Englishman about love he’s liable to become embarrassed. He shifts uneasily, and if pressed, mutters something like, “Very nice if it happens I suppose, but life’s not all champagne and roses.”’[[509]](#footnote-509)

Yet the thrust of her article was the concern that ‘modern woman may frighten away too many men’ by their ‘cool’ and ‘disinterested’ behaviour, indicating something of a reversal of the complaints made a decade earlier about men being too ‘cold’. Lambert claimed:

‘Because we’ve never been able to find out how men look at the whole love thing, we tend to play it as a kind of game. We don’t want to risk our pride until we’re sure he’s interested too. It makes us stick to rules like No Nice Girl Makes the First Move, and Never Let Him Know You’re Keen. Have you ever stopped to think how bewildering this must be for men? What on earth must he think? Is this the way men want it, or have we become so cool that men are terrified to approach us?’[[510]](#footnote-510)

Lambert argued that the consequences of the distance between the sexes, of the lack of honesty and openness which had been the culture for generations, meant that ‘playing games’ and sticking to ‘rules’ of behaviour rendered romantic relationships inauthentic. She asserted that the time for games had passed. A new age was on the horizon where men were opening themselves up to admitting their emotional selves and that behaving as a ‘cool woman’ to avoid embarrassment no longer had a place. She claimed that her conclusions were confirmed by interviews with three celebrity men of different ages – Stanley Baker popular film star who had just entered his forties, twenty nine year old George Lazenby who had taken over as James Bond in *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* that year, and Maurice Roeves star of *Ulysses* and *Oh What a Lovely War* who was thirty two.

Her interviews consisted of asking these celebrity men about their experiences of being in love and their attitudes to dating. Maurice Roeves agreed with Lambert that ‘playing men at their own game’ and acting ‘cold’ was not the route to more successful relationships between the sexes: ‘Lots of men I know just stay away from girls completely. They’re not queer…but they’re terrified of the new tough, cold-blooded attitudes or women nowadays.’ Lambert continued, ‘Is he himself like that I wondered’, to which Roeves replied: ‘Oh no – thank goodness. And when I’m in love, I feel everything with tremendous intensity. I *need* someone to love and respect.’[[511]](#footnote-511)

Indeed, Stanley Barker also revealed himself to be a man who embraced the emotional experience of being in love:

‘Stanley Baker seemed an obvious man to ask about love. He is a rarity: a film star with 19 years of happy marriage behind him. “I’ve fallen in love twice in my life” he told me. “The first time it happened I was 15, the girl 19. Okay, you can call it puppy love – but the fact remains that when she went back to Wales I became so ill I couldn’t work. It was like the end of the world. The second time I fell in love was with my wife, and it happened immediately I met her. I became terribly emotional, and spent all my time wondering whether I was making a fool of myself…Do I like being in love? Often I feel miserable – yet it’s a great emotion. You’re living at the very peak of your nervous vitality”.’[[512]](#footnote-512)

The topic of men’s emotional lives was given increasing space in the newspapers by the 1970s. Men talking openly about their experiences, hopes and disappointments of love in the public eye was becoming more acceptable. The *Daily Mirror* ran a two-part series called ‘Men in Love’ in the summer of 1971 authored by journalists Jill Evans and Michael Hellicar.[[513]](#footnote-513) The tagline was ‘Men in Love Talk’, and it featured interviews with four men over the two days. What was significant about the series was that it was concerned with the thoughts of what were described as ‘real’, and ‘ordinary’ men, not high profile celebrities. The series claimed that – ‘It means the same thing, whether they are in their teens or in their sixties’ – and the interviewees were drawn from varying walks of life and ages aiming to demonstrate men’s emotional worlds across the spectrum of society. It included a man who had been married for forty years, a young man in his teens engaged to his ‘first love’, a middle-aged man who was married with four kids but in the throes of a passionate affair with a mistress more than twenty years younger, and a homosexual man in his late-twenties who was in a loving, stable relationship necessarily shrouded in secrecy and lies.

Although asserting that ‘love’ meant the same thing whatever the man’s age, the responses from the interviewees revealed a different picture of the influence of the public debate on male expressiveness, as well as the wider discussions on the topic of love and intimacy that had been occurring since the 1950s. Arthur Cheek, 62, was a ‘film sales supervisor’ who, despite having been married most of his adult life to a woman ‘he loved’, ‘still can’t even define what love is’, moreover he declared that: ‘I don’t think about the emotional security of our marriage. When you’ve got it you don’t have to question it, I suppose.’[[514]](#footnote-514) Cheek’s testimony reveals the influence of ‘generation’ on the interpretation and response to the new discourses on emotion. The attempt by marriage experts to define and categorise ‘love’ from the 1950s onwards had not made it any easier for this man to describe it. Moreover, he had not been influenced by the discourses encouraging persistent analysis of one’s marriage relationship and its emotional condition, declaring that he ‘never thinks about it’.

On the other hand, Peter Grant, 18, who was a ‘display assistant’, asserted in an informed and confident manner that: ‘He really knows he is in love for so many reasons.’ He said that the way he knows it is love is the emotions being with his fiancé stimulates in him: ‘Whenever we’re together there’s a sensation of happiness and contentment.’ Reflecting on their relationship and its emotional stability he claims that they argued more before they were engaged, but that all of those arguments contributed to them getting to know each other and that ‘now we understand each other and she looks at me and I look at her and we smile.’[[515]](#footnote-515)

Eric, 28, ‘a homosexual who lives with a forty-five-year-old company director’, was keen to present his experience of love as an ‘honest’ and emotionally open one that, due to the fact that ‘the permissive society hasn’t got round to accepting love between two people of the same sex’, had to be hidden from the outside world in an entirely ‘dishonest’ manner. Eric found this frustrating and incongruous with all the emphasis on ‘openness’. He juxtaposed his relationship with the insincere games played in relationships with members of the opposite sex, highlighting what he believed to be the irony that many heterosexual relationships based not on honesty but on deceit were laid open for society to see, whilst his had to hide in the shadows: ‘I sincerely believe that a man cannot experience true love until he has loved and been loved by another man. Men don’t play silly cat-and-mouse love games with each other. They understand each other’s emotions.’[[516]](#footnote-516) His testimony was placed alongside that of forty-eight year old Stanley whose deceit towards his wife and family was dealt with matter-of-factly, justified by the fact that he was ‘in love with his mistress’ with whom he shared an emotionally ‘open’ relationship in which they talked honestly together[[517]](#footnote-517). The shift in thinking towards viewing extra-marital relationships as sites for personal growth, was making an impact.

The road to an acceptance of male expressiveness was a long one, as Dixon admits, and in the seventies, a time before homosexuality had been widely accepted, public displays of male emotion were not met with positivity from all: ‘For some the new proneness to tears among footballers and other men was not a sign of admirable emotional openness but rather of weakness, abnormality, or homosexuality.’[[518]](#footnote-518) He continues that ‘emotional regimes – the rules and values governing the experience and interpretation of feelings – change slowly, gradually, and partially. Grandparents and parents pass on to the next generations the attitudes to emotion and expression ingrained in them as children, even as they attempt to correct what they see as the failings of their own upbringing. No culture has a unanimous attitude to emotions or a single emotional regime.’[[519]](#footnote-519) He writes that in the 1970s: ‘This transformation of the emotional regime, in reality, had only just started, and many men were left behind under the old dispensation.’ Indeed, his research has shown that the public discussion of the demise of the ‘stiff upper lip’ and the supposed arrival of ‘the new man’ continued into the 1980s and beyond.[[520]](#footnote-520) Thus it is important to consider the influence of ‘generations’ on the discourse of male emotionality. What can be said however, is that by the end of the 1970s masculinity had undergone a significant transformation. The dominant models of masculinity available to men in the early 1970s were unrecognisable to those of the early 1950s, representing a radical transformation in only twenty years.

**The Cult of Celebrity and Male Liberation: Pop Music**

One of the biggest influences on this shift was, as Dixon has identified, the influence of pop music: ‘The new expressive masculinity, exemplified by weeping sportsmen and movie stars, and advocated by women writing for the tabloid press, received further support from British pop music’. [[521]](#footnote-521) The pop culture of the 1960s and 1970s rebelled against the ‘stiff upper lip’ and the dutiful, deferential man of the 1950s. From the colourful and patterned clothes of psychedelia to the flamboyant androgyny of glam rock, pop stars broke down the old traditions of male attire and delighted in unrestrained sartorial expression. By the 1970s, long hair and unkempt beards had become the fashion for most men as the clean cut and restrained image of the 1950s and early 1960s man became a thing of the past.

Yet it was not just their song lyrics or their clothes that influenced the changes in masculinity, what these male pop stars talked about off stage was significant too. As seen in the Lambert article above, the increasing visibility and acceptability of men talking about their emotions and their private lives was influenced by the still relatively new celebrity culture and the beginnings of a more intense press intrusion into the love-lives of the stars. The stars of pop music were undoubtedly the major influence and by the 1970s a culture of male pop and rock stars talking about their romantic relationships was being cemented, strengthening the campaign for male emotional liberation.

Although the interest in the private lives of stars was not new, much of the coverage in the press and in magazines prior to the late-1960s had been somewhat one-dimensional, focusing on the facts and gossip about these relationships rather than the complexities and deep emotions involved. From 1963 to early 1967, a culture of ‘sugar pop’ aimed at teenagers had predominated fuelling a: ‘Vigorous pop and teen press with at least a dozen weeklies and/or monthlies vying to bring their readers all the latest news, gossip and interviews about the Beatles, the Stones, the Searchers, Cilla and Dusty, right the way through to the Walker Brothers and the Small Faces.’[[522]](#footnote-522) Magazines aimed at teenage girls such as *Boyfriend*, *Mirabelle, Valentine* and *Petticoat* provided the latest gossip about the ‘boys in bands’, yet the interviewers were usually satisfied asking whether the pop star in question ‘believed in love’ or ‘wanted to get married’ and who their ‘ideal girl’ was. As Jon Savage has shown, the newer teen girl magazines such as *Fabulous* which was launched in 1964 provided a more direct rapport with the stars with ‘features showing stars in their own homes interspersed with old school photos and pop stars' musings on ideal girls.’[[523]](#footnote-523) Yet the ‘rapport’ was limited in its detail with these magazines making a conscious decision not to include features on the wives and girlfriends of pop stars. There was an emphasis on perpetuating a fantasy that these celebrity men were somehow attainable romantic partners. If only girls could master the right hairstyle and latest fashion trends, they were in with a chance of bagging themselves a pop star boyfriend.

One magazine which did probe a little deeper into the romantic lives of the popstars was music weekly *New Musical Express* which featured a series in 1967 titled ‘Star Boyfriends’. Anecdotal evidence suggests that journalists believed this to be a period when the magazine was becoming increasingly appealing to a mainly male readership. Advertisements for the publication throughout the decade featured an image of a young man trying to seriously read his copy of the magazine whilst pushing his playful, giggling girlfriend away and telling her to ‘get her own copy!’ This depiction of *NME* readers hinted at the enduring assumption that women were superficial pop fans, only interested in the good looks of band members, as opposed to the sophisticated, serious young men who were getting into the progressive rock and anti-establishment underground music of the latter part of the decade. It aimed to set itself in a different camp to the ‘fan mags’ for girls such as *Boyfriend* and *Mirabelle* which confined themselves to features encouraging young women to swoon over the latest ‘dreamboat’ on the music scene. Yet, alongside the self-consciously serious coverage of new music, *NME* also regularly featured articles focusing on the love lives of pop stars – their courtships, engagements and weddings.

The ‘Star Boyfriends’ feature consisted of young journalist Dawn James – an established contributor to various teen and music publications – meeting the girlfriends and wives of famous band members in their homes and interviewing them about their relationships. The series included interviews with Maggie London, wife of Manfred Mann’s lead singer Michael D’Abo, Carmen Jiminez, fiancée of Georgie Fame, and Pauline Davis, other half of Spencer Davis of the Spencer Davis Group. Rather than encouraging girls to swoon over band members, this feature was an attempt to show the realities of life ‘in love with a pop star’. The interviews teased out the difficulties of maintaining intimacy and trust with men who were forever on tour:

‘Sitting in her modern living room at home in Potters Bar, Pauline talked about her life as a pop star’s wife. “It isn’t all glamour,” she said. “It gets very lonely when Spence is away. I miss him very much. Sometimes it seems I’ve been waiting for him to come home my whole life…Now his absence is harder to bear because he is away at lovely places, meeting exciting people, while I am here at home with the two children…So now I have to keep the romance in our lives more than ever.”’[[524]](#footnote-524)

Yet whilst the series aimed to expose a little more about the realities of the stars’ love lives, it followed in the tradition of the 1960s press of interviewing the women behind the celebrities rather than the men themselves, cementing the idea that it was women who talked about personal relationships. The ‘Star Boyfriends’ series was published during a moment of transition. By 1967 the ‘sugar pop’ bubble had burst and ‘the scene’ had changed. By 1968 long-players began to outsell singles and the music culture took a more serious, introspective turn with the arrival of psychedelia and progressive rock. The teenage market waned as the fans grew into young adulthood. Inevitably the communication between stars and journalists changed too, towards a more open, honest conversation.

Teen pop had helped the expressive revolution yet it was exposed as mere ‘surface emotion’ and was discredited by the close of the decade when authenticity was prioritised. The ‘manufactured music’ of the mid-1960s was discarded in favour of the ‘authentic’ self-penned lyrics of the singer-songwriters who would come to dominate. Indeed, even the girls’ magazines had lost faith in the fantasy of marrying a pop star and living happily ever after. In the June of 1969, popular girls’ magazine *Mirabelle* ran an article with the title, ‘If You’re Thinking of Marrying a Pop Star…Think Again!’ It featured interviews with the wives and girlfriends of famous band members, seeking to reveal what ‘life is really like when you’re a pop star’s girl’. Like the *NME* series, it considered the highs and the lows of being in a relationship with someone in the public eye, probing into the realities of jealousy, being unfaithful and the everyday grind of making this kind of marriage work. Although it conveyed a sense of these marriages as unique due to the very public role of one (and sometimes both) of the partners – making claims like, ‘it’s a known fact that guys in pop are hardly ever faithful to just one girl’ – it demonstrated that behind the ‘fantasy’, these relationships could be as challenging as those of the rest of society.[[525]](#footnote-525)

Influenced by the rise in importance of honesty and authenticity, as well as the decline in ideas of deference, by the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, a more intrusive style of journalism was being established around the private lives of popstars, with an expectation that men would have a lot more to say about their emotional lives than previously. This new kind of press coverage, along with the shift towards ‘transparent’ relationships and the turn towards a more expressive masculinity would all converge in the portrayal of two members of the most famous band of the sixties – *Beatles* stars, John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

**‘I’m in Love for the First Time’**

**Pioneers of the New Transparency: John Lennon and Paul McCartney**

Although *The Beatles* forged their careers out of the subject of ‘love’ – from the old-fashioned romance and ‘sugary’ teenage love of the early years, to the politicised version of the later 1960s when they forcefully argued that love was all the world needed – both Paul McCartney and John Lennon reflected that they had never actually been ‘in love’ until they met the women they would establish married lives with in the 1970s. Paul and Linda Eastman, and John and Yoko Ono, would go on to become celebrity ‘pioneers’ of the new ‘transparent’ relationships, colluding with the press in displaying their self-consciously ‘modern’ intimacy for the rest of society to see. Thus, Paul and John would also be portrayed as trailblazers of the new expressive masculinity.

All parties involved in these marriages were ‘people with a past’. Linda Eastman was divorced and already had a child. Paul had had a series of girlfriends and had been engaged to socialite Jane Asher with whom he had a high profile five-year relationship. After meeting in 1967, Paul and Linda married in a simple registry office ceremony on the 12th March 1969, with Linda already expecting their first child. John’s marriage to Yoko Ono was less straightforward as both were already married with children when they began their relationship and had to wait for their respective divorces. Indeed, Yoko was already on her second marriage. They were finally able to marry in Gibraltar in 1969, just one week after the wedding of Paul and Linda. Both of these marriages, initiated in the same month at the close of the 1960s, would go on to become iconic relationships of the more ‘honest’ and ‘open’ 1970s, acted out in full view of the public gaze.

**Paul and Linda**

Paul and Linda received intense press interest in their private lives and although Paul regularly spoke of his desire to have ‘privacy’, they also courted the chance to present themselves as a couple negotiating the new discourses of ‘transparency’, living a relaxed and happy existence in the Scottish wilderness bringing up a young family seemingly away from convention and tradition. They described their relationship with the press in the beginning of the 1970s as ‘on their terms’ as they tried to move away from the frenzy of ‘Beatlemania’ and the unwanted press intrusion of that period in Paul’s life. Paul claimed in 1972: ‘I’m known as that difficult bloke McCartney. That’s because I won’t explain myself unless I feel like it’[[526]](#footnote-526). Yet as the 1970s continued, and their initial rejection of the press and resistance to the outside world mellowed, their private lives were increasingly laid bare by the McCartneys themselves.

Whilst they spoke of their desire to be ‘ordinary’ – ‘I don’t look at myself and see an ex-Beatle. I see Paul McCartney, person, who has got a wife and kids he loves’[[527]](#footnote-527) – their lifestyle was presented in the press as at the forefront of the changes in marital and family life. Paul was represented as a father in the new model, witnessing the birth of his children, still a rare thing by the 1970s, and engaging in a hands on version of fatherhood.[[528]](#footnote-528) As Weldon wrote in *Down Among the Women*: ‘Fatherhood is not yet fashionable. Men are not present at the births of their children, if they can possibly help it. They do not shop, push prams, design the home.’[[529]](#footnote-529) Yet Paul was regularly shown to be eschewing the tradition of physical and emotional detachment from his children. An article from the *Daily Mirror* in 1978 with the title ‘Why Our Marriage is Still Going Strong’, included a picture of Paul bathing their daughter Mary in front of an open fire. The same article also included a picture of Paul carrying Linda over the threshold into their home after their marriage in a selection of intimate family photographs presented as a ‘family album’ to which the public had ‘special access’.[[530]](#footnote-530) The boundaries between the public life of the celebrity and the privacy of the family home had been broken down, with the McCartneys depicted as pursuing the ordinary everydayness of newlyweds and parents, although in a little less ordinary fashion. The celebrity had become ‘touchable’, ‘relatable’.

Paul as a relaxed, contented family man as opposed to a ‘pop star’ was an ongoing theme in the press portrayal of the Beatle in the 1970s. Another article in the *Daily Mirror* in 1971 included a picture of the McCartney family snapped at the airport returning from holiday.[[531]](#footnote-531) The family adopted informal poses, Paul sticking out his tongue and Linda pulling a face, mocking the intrusion of the press camera. Such a picture, intended to be seen by the public, would have been considered vulgar a decade before, and is indicative of this representation of the McCartneys as a new kind of family throwing off the shackles of propriety and restraint which had defined previous constructions of family life.

The McCartneys’s marriage was presented in the press as the epitome of the new ‘transparency’ in relationships. Unlike Paul who eschewed regular interviews, Linda was a frequent interviewee for the tabloids and the broadsheets throughout the 1970s, talking openly about her marriage with language that was infused with the new discourses stressing honest communication and emotional expression. In ‘Why Our Marriage is Still Going Strong’, Linda talked about what she believed to be the reason for the endurance of her marriage to Paul placing honesty and complete openness as the key: ‘Honesty in a relationship is so important. If you can’t be honest with your man there’s not much hope.’ She continued that there was no place for traditional romance in their relationship, that it was a relationship working on a far deeper level than the kind which required romantic gestures. She argued that although Paul ‘writes a lot of romantic, slushy songs, that doesn't mean he's a sloppy person’ and indicated their mutual belief that all the romantic stuff was a mask that had no place in a truly honest relationship: ‘I love him for how he is and he doesn't have to pick up the guitar at the drop of a hat and sing love songs to me.’ Linda placed open communication as the route to holding long-term relationships together, not the buying of flowers or chocolates: ‘Most couples take each other for granted after a while. It’s natural. If it got to be a problem I’d sit down with Paul and discuss it.’[[532]](#footnote-532)

This ability to be reflective about their relationship and to discuss problems without hesitation explicitly echoed the advice emanating from marriage guidance, psychology and the nation’s agony aunts. Linda showed that the pair were not afraid to confront each other about issues and tell the truth, even if it was hard for the other person to hear. She gave the example of Paul expressing his concerns that she was not giving enough energy to their joint venture, their band *Wings*: ‘If Paul feels Linda's not pulling her weight career-wise, he tells her in no uncertain terms. "When he says it, I know he's right. But he understands that I love our home; and our family is more important than work."’[[533]](#footnote-533) There was frankness, honesty and understanding in the McCartney’s marriage, paving the way for a deep form of closeness. Linda described this as ‘the solid bond I feel with Paul now’.[[534]](#footnote-534)

Linda demonstrated that the couple even attended to the perpetual encouragement from the ‘experts’ to engage in arguing as a means to strengthen marriages. When she admitted that it wasn’t always rosy in their relationship and that they did have fights Linda claimed that ‘they always end happily’ due to their ability to be totally honest.[[535]](#footnote-535) Thus, there was no underlying resentment or repressed emotions threatening to undermine their relationship. ‘Happiness’, Linda constantly reiterated in the article, was the point of marriage and it came from sharing everything with each other and allowing both individuals to express themselves freely. She believed that marriage should not be a prison of unspoken anguish, declaring in 1974 in an article for *the Guardian* that: ‘I really think it comes down to either you’re happy or you’re not. If you’re not you should split and get happy as individuals.’[[536]](#footnote-536)

Yet it wasn’t just an ability to communicate and raise any concerns to be worked through with each other that the McCartneys presented as the key to the success of their marriage. The couple regularly spoke of their desire to share every part of life together and to spend all their time with each other. It was this aspect of their relationship – the extreme ‘togetherness’ that they believed the new transparency required – that was regularly interrogated by the journalists, who increasingly came to view this as unnatural and a somewhat extreme interpretation of the new vision of intimacy.

The *Daily Mail* featured an article in 1972 with the title, ‘The Private Lives of Paul and Linda McCartney’, in which it stated that: ‘Paul and Linda are totally dependent on each other. They don’t need other people and they like it that way.’[[537]](#footnote-537) An article for the *Daily Mirror* a year later involved an interview with the McCartneys in which the interviewer questioned such intense ‘togetherness’: ‘The McCartneys are inseparable. Doesn’t it put a strain on a marriage when two people are together as much as you are?’ to which Linda replied: ‘You have to have a special understanding’ she smiled. We just feel that it is very important to be together.’[[538]](#footnote-538)*The Guardian* also emphasised this particular aspect of their marriage in 1974: ‘Where the other Beatles had been his friends and musical partners now there was only Linda. Paul and Linda are constantly together and they take the kids with them everywhere.’[[539]](#footnote-539) By 1980, the McCartney’s physical ‘togetherness’ was so infamous that an interviewer for the *Daily Mirror* chose to draw attention to the ‘peculiar’ fact that the couple even cut each other’s hair. This act of ‘grooming’ each other, although presented as an expression of closeness and intimacy, was given as an example of ‘togetherness’ being taken too far.[[540]](#footnote-540)

Yet, for all this seemingly forward thinking, radical model of a marriage, the journalists were also always keen to focus on the more traditional qualities of this relationship, promoting Linda’s enthusiasm for motherhood and housework. Indeed, the McCartneys portrayed themselves as pioneers of the ‘new transparency’ but were not afraid to show that they were sticklers for a few of the old conventions too and it was these traditions that Paul and Linda held onto as evidence of their ‘ordinariness’: Linda commented in ‘Why Our Marriage is Still Going Strong’ that: ‘Paul, perhaps because he’s a Northerner, is a bit of a chauvinist.’ And the journalist continued: ‘Linda readily admits, “Yes, he does believe that the woman should run the home. I could be quite happy staying home as a housewife…children make our relationship complete.”’[[541]](#footnote-541) Linda regularly evoked Paul’s northern heritage as evidence of his ‘normalness’ and the reason why some of the traditions of married life were retained: ‘You know, Paul McCartney is still a very Northern man at heart. He's good to his woman, likes a pint, picks his nose. Very normal. And he's the boss.’[[542]](#footnote-542) The fact that at home the old highly gendered model of the practical running of the family was in place appeared to balance, in the eyes of the press, the more unsettling aspects of this marriage based on ‘transparency’ and extreme physical ‘togetherness’.

A more challenging relationship for the press to interrogate was that of John Lennon and Yoko Ono whose version of ‘transparency’ and ‘togetherness’ became even more extreme and alarming than that of the McCartneys.

**John and Yoko**

Towards the end of the 1960s, John Lennon was particularly influenced by the new discourses on male emotionality and the ‘rediscovery of feeling’ more generally. As Dixon has shown, John keenly supported the liberation of men from emotional restraint, denouncing the practice of telling boys to stop crying: ‘“Be a man”, what the hell’s that? Men hurt.’[[543]](#footnote-543) He actively sought out therapy to help him uncover his own repressed emotions in the early 1970s following the breakup of the Beatles. Dixon writes: ‘It was in his private, therapeutic journey after the band split up in April 1970 that Lennon discovered his tearful side.’[[544]](#footnote-544) John and his new wife pursued ‘primal scream’ therapy in California in 1970. This was a form of therapy which helped patients to regress to their early infancy and let out primal screams and tears as a means of releasing all the emotions that socialisation and adult repression had blocked over the years. It was pioneered by American psychiatrist Arthur Janov who would later author the book *Prisoners of Pain* (1980) which argued that crying was effective in releasing blocked emotions, building on theories of emotion originating with Freud. Janov’s major contribution to the study of emotion was his new form of therapy and John and Yoko were his most famous clients, bringing his work to the attention of the British public.[[545]](#footnote-545) John described the benefits of primal scream therapy thus: ‘It allowed us to feel feelings continually, and those feelings usually make you cry. That’s all. Because before, I wasn’t feeling things, that’s all, I was having blocks to feelings, and when the feelings come through, you cry.’[[546]](#footnote-546)

John entered the 1970s, then, with a new lease of life, focused on pursuing personal emotional liberation. The surface emotion of the early 1960s – all the ‘puppy love’ songs of the Beatlemania days – were left behind in favour of a deeper, more honest emotional exploration. Lennon’s interest in reviewing and reviving his emotional life influenced his self-presentation and his engagement with the press. He was embracing a new world of feelings and did all he could to show the British public that he was a man unafraid of expressing his emotions, especially his love for Yoko Ono.

In an interview for the *Daily Mirror* in 1968 titled ‘The World Around Us’, John talked candidly about his struggle with betraying his first wife Cynthia when he fell in love with Yoko: ‘My marriage was not unhappy. But it was just a normal marital state where nothing happened and which we continued to sustain. You sustain it until you meet someone who suddenly sets you alight… With Yoko I really knew love for the first time.’[[547]](#footnote-547) Like the McCartneys, the relationship between John and Yoko was presented as one of deep love and openness, a contrast to the relationships of their younger days when they did not ‘know love’ and had been swept up by the societal pressure to settle down and marry. John had fallen prey to the discourses of propriety and outdated moralism a few years earlier when he had married his girlfriend Cynthia because she was expecting their child. In the portrayal of his relationship with Yoko, John engaged with the debates about the ‘new morality’ encouraging a discussion in the press about attitudes to adultery and divorce. The interviewer for this article joined in their questioning of the ‘old morality’, highlighting their plight to be together as similar to the desires and experiences of many ordinary people in late-1960s Britain: ‘John and Yoko fell in love. They had no right to because both were married. Problems like this involve the Browns and the Smiths of the world every day and no one raises an eyebrow. But it’s different for John and Yoko? Or is it?’[[548]](#footnote-548) The coverage of the John and Yoko affair was a challenge to the increasingly outdated belief that although these things happened in private they should not enter the public sphere. The couple were eager to make their relationship a political point and delighted in sharing their love with the public with the press looking on with a mixture of fascination, sympathy, disbelief and disdain.

John explicitly and consciously responded to the call from society’s ‘experts’ to express his emotions freely. He put no restraints on expressing his love for Yoko, speaking the words constantly. Although his overblown gestures were perhaps not always quite what the advice dispensers had in mind. John used the opening of his 1968 art exhibition in Yoko’s honour to make a very public admission that he was indeed in love with her, releasing 365 helium balloons to celebrate the fact. The *Daily Mail* covered the event on its front page, reporting that: ‘[when] someone asked Mr Lennon why he did not dedicate the exhibition to the Queen [he] said, ‘I don’t love the Queen, but I love Yoko. I don’t think marriage is the end point of love.’[[549]](#footnote-549)

Yet whilst John believed love could and should exist beyond the confines of marriage, he was clear that this most *avant garde* of new relationships would end up being legally legitimised, revealing that like the McCartneys, some of the old traditions still had meaning for them: ‘“When we are free we shall marry.” said John. “There is no need to marry – as Mick and Marianne say – but there’s nothing lost in marrying either.’”[[550]](#footnote-550) Whilst their marriage was a small-scale affair, their honeymoon became a public event –a week long lie-in in an Amsterdam hotel so that, as they told one journalist, ‘the world could witness their love’.[[551]](#footnote-551) Naturally, the *Daily Mirror* eagerly sent a journalist out to interview the eccentric couple and his comments upon witnessing them echo the discourse of overblown, unnatural ‘togetherness’ that was also used to describe the McCartneys’ marriage in the 1970s:

‘John and Yoko are devoted to each other. They radiate such an aura of ‘togetherness’ one can visualise them on an island affectionately picking the ticks out of each other’s hair…it is noticeable that they smoke from the same cigarette.’ [John] says, ‘We’re the left shoe and the right shoe. I’m being me for the first time in my life and we’re happy.’[[552]](#footnote-552)

The image of their animalistic grooming echoed that of the McCartneys cutting each other’s hair. John’s final statement alluded to the new emphasis on relationships being the space where individuals were truly ‘themselves’, unrestrained, honest and open, and pursuing a process of personal growth. With Yoko he had finally found a relationship which allowed him to put this new theory of intimacy into practice. Yet, the journalist subtly suggested that, like the McCartneys, perhaps they had taken this model too far, becoming almost one person and disappearing as individuals – the left shoe and the right shoe, smoking the same cigarette.

The press revelled in interrogating the constant public displays of affection indulged in by John and Yoko, the *Daily Mirror* dedicated a two-page spread to their kissing in the winter of 1969. The article read:

**‘**Ever since they turned their honeymoon into one long lie-in, [they] have shared their romance with the world…And as they turn a simple embrace into a full scale dramatic production, it is almost as if they are the first people ever to discover the kiss as a means of expressing emotion. It is a performance they never tire of staging.’[[553]](#footnote-553)

Their kissing was still gaining attention two years later, with another article again mocking this overblown version of ‘openness’:

‘It looked like a tender farewell scene at the airport yesterday. A couple held hands and lovingly kissed each other. But this happens to be that inseparable pair John Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono. So, of course, nobody was saying goodbye to anybody. The couple were simply expressing their usual mutual affection.’[[554]](#footnote-554)

The article described the physicality of this expression of intimacy with excessive, almost physically intrusive, detail: ‘First their eyes meet. Then he raises his hand to her chin. And, without a word, he tilts the chin upwards. They do the nose rubbing bit and she closes her eyes and briefly flicks out her tongue as their lips meet.’ The usually private act of an intimate kiss was made entirely public. The article’s title – ‘John and Yoko star in a kiss’ – hinted at the idea that John and Yoko, as well as the journalists, were revelling in breaking down the taboo of what were considered appropriate intimate public acts and what should be reserved for behind closed doors. Intimacy was being ‘staged’ for public consumption.

Indeed, the Beatles couples colluded with the press in staging and parading the new forms of relationships, and in doing so they changed the expectations of what celebrities should share about their love lives with the public and what the press could ask of them. Their actions in the late-1960s and 1970s were ‘game changing’. They were major, international stars with significant influence on the culture of the day. This was a key moment in the emergence of a celebrity culture that persists to the present, sowing the seeds of the very public honeymoons and marriages that we see in the press today. Yet in the 1960s and 1970s this was a new phenomenon, and the journalists were clearly uncomfortable at times with how intrusive they could be. They were caught between a desire to follow a good story and the reservation that entering the bedroom and reporting the intimate goings on of these public figures was new territory.

Although the press regarded the fact that Paul and John prioritised their romantic relationships above their friends and careers (with destructive consequences for the band) as a step too far and often portrayed their interpretations of the ‘transparency’ discourse as unnaturally extreme, even unhealthy – the ‘bed-ins’, the excessive kissing, the need to be with each other 24/7 and the hair cutting. They also delighted in using them as a vehicle through which to comment on the changes occurring in society around them. Newspapers had a key role to play in the dissemination of ideas about personal relationships during this period and the romantic relationships of *The Beatles* were exploited to present, explore and interrogate the new discourses of love and marriage that had been ushered in by discourses of honesty, openness and transparency. They revealed the tension between public displays of ‘togetherness’/‘openness’, and privacy. They paved the way for the degree of collusion that exists today between celebrities and the press. Yet in the end, the coverage of the Beatles’ relationships served almost as a warning against a too extreme, all-consuming version of the new ‘transparency’ which could cut an individual off from the rest of society, rather than being held up as models for the ‘ideal modern relationship’. Even at its peak the discourse of ‘transparency’ was revealing its flaws and being critiqued for its potential to ‘expect too much’ from individuals. This will be explored further in Chapter Five.

**Mick Jagger**

Yet whilst the Beatles men embraced the new expressive masculinity and attendant discourses of open communication and honesty in relationships, a very different representation of intimacy was put forward by the Beatles’ rival, *Rolling Stones* frontman Mick Jagger. In contrast to the marriages of the McCartneys and John and Yoko – united by their engagement with the new discourses of ‘transparency’ – the high profile marriage of Mick Jagger and his model wife Bianca (after Marianne he did decide to marry) had a very different rendition in the press. In one interview for the *Daily Mirror* in 1974 Mick rejected any notion that marriage meant sharing one’s physical and emotional life or that love should be declared and demonstrated publicly:

“I don’t depend on anybody. Well who would I depend on?”

The interviewer replied: Well, perhaps your wife?

“Her least of all. Anyway, how do you mean depend?”

Someone to prop you up.

“Neeow. I don’t need that.”

It’s all you is it?

“That’s right. It’s all me.”

And his wife echoed his desire for separate lives:

“No, no I don’t think I’d like to work with Mick. He doesn’t even like to be photographed with me. He said it is bad for his image.”[[555]](#footnote-555)

Jagger was presented as a less ‘emotional’ person than either Beatle. Indeed from the beginning of their music careers *The Beatles* had been packaged as ‘emotional’ men, whilst the *Rolling Stones* presented an explicitly dangerous version of male sexuality. Jagger embodied the ‘rock star’ image that the *Beatles* men could never live up to. He would not be constrained by a relationship, going ‘through the motions’ of marriage rather than seeking a deep and meaningful connection with a woman. He talked about his lack of interest in long-term love in an interview with *Woman’s Own* magazine which the *Daily Mail* commented on in 1976:

‘Rolling Stone Mick Jagger, whose five-year marriage has not been noted for its togetherness, has made a confession. I’ve never been madly, deeply in love in my life…I wouldn’t know what it feels like. I’m not a very emotional person.’[[556]](#footnote-556)

In contrast to the overblown public gestures and discussions of love indulged in by the *Beatles* men, Jagger was explicit about his lack of desire to talk openly about his love life: ‘I think you should be a gentleman with women. You shouldn’t talk about them. I can’t stand people who live out their loves in public.’[[557]](#footnote-557) Thus, whilst Paul and John both engaged with the new emphasis on male emotionality, unashamed of talking about their love, and making their romantic relationships very publicly the centre of their lives, rather than incidental (even placing them above work which hinted at a very new model of masculinity), their rival for column inches was depicted as failing to successfully negotiate this new vision of 1970s marriage and masculinity. The lack of communication in the Jagger marriage was presented as the source of its instability. Moreover, Jagger’s attitude of not ‘living out their loves in public’ was portrayed as being ‘out of date’ and harking back to a time of ‘gentlemanly’ respect and restraint.

Yet as the following chapter will reveal, Jagger’s rejection of the emotional intensity of the ‘transparent’ relationships model represented a turn towards ‘playfulness’ and ‘immaturity’ – embraced particularly by the counterculture, but also woven into mainstream culture – which co-existed with the call for honesty and openness. It was merely a different strand of the reaction to the ‘mature fifties’ and the desire to forge a new way for romantic relationships in the 1960s and 1970s.

**Chapter Five**

***‘Is a Woman Supposed to Reserve Her Innermost Thoughts for her Husband Whom She Sees for a Few Hours a Day?’***

**Rejection and Dissatisfaction**

Chapter Five will consider the ways in which the ‘transparency’ model could engender dissatisfaction for its unattainability, as well as its rejection from some corners of British society. The idea that honest and authentic communication, where couples revealed their true emotions to each other, was the ‘glue’ that held relationships together had pervaded popular culture by the 1970s, however there was already an uneasiness about the ‘workability’ of such a model. Much criticism came ‘from the ground’ when couples had tried to put the changes encouraged by the advice culture into practice but had come up against the practicalities of life which could hinder the process of deep, honest verbal communication prescribed. The feminist movement connected this to its critique of the power structure within society arguing that the ‘transparency’ discourse was not workable because it had overlooked the fact that it required an equality between men and women which did not exist. A questioning of whether the focus on ‘the couple’ was the best way to move society away from repression was established, and experiments in alternative methods of achieving ‘transparency’ which focused on taking the pressure off ‘the couple’ were undertaken in the commune movement. This chapter will also consider an alternative rejection of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse, that of ‘play’, which in some manifestations rejected the ‘transparency’ model, questioning its focus on long-term, monogamous relationships. Indeed, it will be shown that one strand of the ‘play’ discourse – that epitomised by Mick Jagger – rejected the need for expressing feelings in intimate relationships altogether.

**Difficulties of Achieving Transparency**

Providing a man’s perspective of the quest for transparency, *Beatles* biographer, journalist and author, Hunter Davies dealt with the new expressiveness in his 1971 novel *A Very Loving Couple*, which revealed the constraints of ‘everyday life’ on putting into practice this new approach to intimacy . The protagonist Samis desperate for deeper more honest communication with his wife Liz. Married for a number of years, settled with children and living a life of routine and day to day grind, Sam laments the loss of their early years together when they had time for each other – time to ‘communicate’. The absence of time and Liz’s lack of interest are, in Sam’s mind, the reason for the staleness of their marriage as they stand in the way of revealing their true and ‘changing’ selves to each other: ‘Not long ago we used to talk all evening, giving each other our undivided attention, hungry for each other’s thoughts and words since our last communion the night before.’[[558]](#footnote-558) Without these evenings of open discussion, the couple were growing apart, in the dark about who the other one had become. Sam refers to the aspect of ‘personal growth’ which he believes the pair used to achieve through their discussions of their innermost private thoughts: ‘We weren’t each other’s audience. We were mutually exploring.’[[559]](#footnote-559) Their communication used to serve as a way to figure out their own identities and without the space to talk openly Sam struggles with his self-identity.

His feelings of loss about their honest, deep relationship bubble on beneath the surface: ‘My worries about not communicating would probably cease, for a while, with the excitement of the new job and new problems and new things to talk about. But I was worried all the same.’[[560]](#footnote-560) Sam makes the distinction between merely ‘talking’ and ‘communicating’, for it was possible to talk to one’s partner without truly communicating. When Sam wonders whether a meaningless, ‘playful’ affair with one of his work colleagues might help bring back a sense of purpose to his life, he is drawn, ironically, to Cathy who he ‘didn’t fancy’ but he liked because ‘she was open and natural and honest.’[[561]](#footnote-561) ‘Openness’, it appeared, had become an important quality of attractiveness in any potential romantic partner by the early 1970s. So too had being ‘natural’, and Davies’ novel keenly reflected the shift in language about emotions during the 1960s towards the valorisation of ‘naturalness’ as detailed in Chapter Two. Recognising that spontaneous and ‘natural’ emotions were the sign of freedom and modernity, in his quest to bed one of his more ‘forward-thinking’ colleagues Sam believes he will have to shake off all lasting aspects of restraint: ‘I’d have to prove to her I could just do things naturally, let it all hang out, get rid of my hang-ups.’[[562]](#footnote-562)

Indeed Davies explored the difficulties of adapting to the new ‘expressive age’ in his novel, with both Liz and Sam struggling with the hangover of emotional restraint. In one scene Sam observes Liz playing with their son and contemplates her motherly love: ‘I could tell she was biting her bottom lip, loving him but holding herself as if loving him wasn’t permitted, as if such natural emotions were somehow to be stifled and controlled.’[[563]](#footnote-563) Later in the novel Sam remembers the moment he cried in front of Liz during their early years together: ‘I started to cry. I looked away, ashamed, frightened, unbelieving almost. A grown man, crying. It had never happened before.’[[564]](#footnote-564)

During his reminiscences, Sam reveals that he is not entirely *au fait* with the new male emotionality. His inability to describe his life progression in terms of the feelings he had then and his subsequent emotional development in the way the experts and counsellors of the age encouraged leaves him frustrated:

‘I can’t possibly recollect the emotions I had at the time. I’m not even sure of my own feelings now, this minute, as I watch myself growing, so how can I know what a stranger was thinking all those years ago. I could even bring back slabs of the conversation. But as for what I felt, I can only guess.’[[565]](#footnote-565)

At times Davies portrays Sam as a man struggling to be ‘modern’ and liberated because he knows it is ‘good for him’ – it is what the ‘experts’ recommend. Sam understands the psychology behind free emotional expression and knows for example that when his wife cuddles their son he should not be jealous because it is what childcare expert Dr Spock advises, yet he reflects that he resents his son for the affection he no longer receives himself:

‘I knew it was good for him. The best medical books said that. It made him wanted and secure and important. He wouldn’t grow up all warped and twisted and unloved and frustrated. Like his Dad. Dear Dr Spock. My mother cuddled me all the time, so what went wrong?’[[566]](#footnote-566)

Yet Sam, as a man who *is* aware of his internal battle with the ‘new expressiveness’, is also entirely reflective of the new psychologically introspective individuals that Carstairs *et al* had foreseen. These were the same psychologically informed individuals who persisted with analysing all the details of their ‘love lives’ which were also mocked by teacher, social worker and author, Jeremy Seabrook, in his survey of Blackburn, published the same year as Davies’s novel:

‘Janice is pale, impassive, with a hint of melancholy, the product of a society that is leisured and introspective. She and her friends spend their time falling arbitrarily in and out of love, analysing and dissecting their motives, spinning a filigree of psychological speculation around each other’s most trivial actions.’[[567]](#footnote-567)

Ultimately, Davies demonstrated in his novel that the new honest and open relationships of the 1970s required the time to invest in ‘communicating’ which could be difficult to find amongst the realities of married life. The novel hinted at the unattainability of these new prescriptions for ‘open’, ‘honest’ loving and proposed the idea that they inherently led to dissatisfaction.

Nell Dunn also explored these issues in her lesser known novel, *Incurable*, published the same year as that of Davies. *Incurable* is the story of Maro and her search for fulfilment away from the frustration of being a mother to three children, the wife to a husband with a debilitating illness and one half of a marriage which was devoid of emotional expression. Indeed, the story revolves around Maro’s attempts to connect with her own ability to be emotionally expressive, a journey travelling the world which was both physically and metaphorically about finding freedom through feeling.

The moment which stimulated Maro’s urge to go travelling, leaving her children in the care of her mother and her husband in his hospice was a realisation that she simply had no existence because she had no feelings. When her son Tim tries to connect with her, Maro replies: ‘“I know you’re here, Tim, I can see you but I can’t feel myself.” And I couldn’t. I just had no feelings, no existence, it felt as if I wasn’t there or anywhere…as if I had no body, no spirit, nothing. I was lost. “Crazy”. “Sunk”.’[[568]](#footnote-568) Maro describes her breakdown as the profound realisation that feelings were not something to be taken for granted, repressed and denied as she had done throughout her life. Rather, infused with the discourses of emotional expression and growth, she makes the claim that feelings are connected to your identity, when they are gone, as she believed they were, so too has your true identity: ‘I did used to feel sometimes but I never believed that feelings had any value. That what I felt could be important, rather than being totally disregarded and instead some rigid plan made out and dutifully followed.’[[569]](#footnote-569)

During her travels, Maro meets beatnik Daniel who is adventurous, free and emotionally expressive, the antithesis of her husband Ricci. When Daniel asks her to travel with him, she is cautious for despite it being her ultimate goal, she fears the pain associated with reconnecting with her ‘feeling self’: ‘She had half hoped he would disappear so she could avoid the emotion of seeing him and being with him – she didn’t want to have to feel.’[[570]](#footnote-570) Yet she allows herself to embark upon the journey and it is Daniel who teaches her how to feel, how to search for the ‘truth’, experiencing the inevitable pain rather than shying away from a ‘full life’ out of fear. Daniel is portrayed in the novel as a man in the ‘new mould’, understanding his own feelings and encouraging of a similar understanding in others. He openly weeps in front of Maro when they reflect on the emotional emptiness of his parents’ marriage. Having seen a picture of Daniel’s family, Maro tells him that she could see from the photo that they had no emotional connection: ‘“Your parents, they never made the trip to one another, they never melted, did they?” He looked at me in astonishment. “How did you know?” He sobbed, quaked, quaked in my arms, shook.’[[571]](#footnote-571)

The pair discuss in detail the problems of intimate relationships, and the ‘emotional bridge’ between men and women. Reflecting on her marriage and its lack of communication, Maro reveals her frustration to Daniel:

‘I remember once I came upon Ricci sitting on a grassy bank throwing nuts to lambs. It was the first sunshine of April. I caught his pure delight full in the face – he alone, the grass, the sun, the lambs close upon him – he was happy there, he loved that place – he dug it all, he had feelings. Why did he never tell me about them?’[[572]](#footnote-572)

Daniel asserts that it is a two-way thing and that she needed to give more of herself in relationships too:

‘You must give yourself the chance to have a whole relationship – never mind too much if, in the end, it’s bad or good, as long as you can give the whole of yourself to it – you’re always avoiding giving yourself. Holding back, holding back.’[[573]](#footnote-573)

Daniel’s version of a relationship is explicitly modelled on that of the ‘transparency revolution’. He tells Maro: ‘I want to open you up – to pour all my anger into you and for you to absorb it all and give me back your own.’[[574]](#footnote-574) When Maro resists, he argues: ‘So you want a lover to help you keep your blanket of insulation from feeling, from people, from the harshness of the world? But I want to rip it from you.’[[575]](#footnote-575) She replies out of fear, ‘I don’t trust you not to kill me’ to which Daniel responds: ‘That’s because you don’t trust yourself. Listen to your feelings and trust them a little.’[[576]](#footnote-576)

Daniel, in true 1970s fashion, is consumed by his search for truth and self-honesty, and he inspires Maro to face the truth of her own lack of courage: ‘My mistake had been fear, lack of courage…always I have gone about things by cunning lies – now is the time to drop that, to be brave enough to penetrate to the meanest greediest depths of my soul.’[[577]](#footnote-577) Demonstrating the influence of her background and the fact that her relationship with Ricci had begun at a time when expectations of relationships and of emotional life were very different, Maro reflects:

‘Why did I always have to pretend –the hard work of pretending – I never thought that you were allowed to live by real feelings – feel what you felt – tell what you felt…Always escape, try, try not to feel. Feeling meant pain, agony, feelings were to be avoided at all costs. ‘Be stoical,’ Ricci had once said to her, and that’s what she’d always been – but was this really right – because by being stoical didn’t one lose sight of one’s feelings altogether? Isn’t being stoical in the end just being cowardly? To sink down and expose yourself, your raw real sensitive self, to take courage and drag away the clutter, to live with a new simplicity close to myself, to my feelings.’[[578]](#footnote-578)

Maro is convinced that feelings are the answer to being ‘fully alive’: ‘Open your heart, confront the pain, the tears, the rain, the cold…Have courage to feel, to grip and tangle, not to draw back in fear. It is never ending battle, the struggle to be fully alive.’[[579]](#footnote-579) However, she comes to realise that the intense, ‘transparent’ type of relationship endorsed by Daniel was something she simply was not yet equipped to cope with. She accepts at the close of the novel that whilst she yearns for it, she cannot enact her desire for ‘transparency’ in reality:

‘I yearned in some secret part of me to have a relationship where everything was shared, close, close as D said, “It should be ALL Love, Love, Love,’ and yet I was unable to trust myself or anyone else enough to give anything…Always hold back, keep in control – never let yourself go.’[[580]](#footnote-580)

In the end, Maro returns to her life of ‘duty’ in motherhood embracing and seeing for the ‘first time’, its value. Moreover, she seeks to bring just enough of her new found world of feeling into her marriage to make a level of change. In a parting letter to Daniel she writes: ‘I respect your unrequiting search after what is real and true more than anything – even if I had really loved you I wouldn’t have recognised it because it would be a new feeling.’[[581]](#footnote-581)

Like Davies’s novel, *Incurable* exposed the complexities of putting into practice the new emphasis on emotionality, honesty, transparency and freedom. The conflict in people’s lives between the new emphasis on growth and the old model of restraint was painful and often unresolved. In both novels, a marriage that does not live up to the ‘transparent’ ideal is accepted as the ‘reality’ by the protagonists. Yet even when marriages had ticked the boxes of ‘transparency’, this did not guarantee ‘success’.

Despite all their ‘progress’ towards an open, honest relationship, Bradbury makes quite clear that the Kirks’ marriage in *The History Man* was no happier or perfect for ‘changing with the times’. The Kirks, like Maro and Ricci, and Sam and Liz, represented a generation (those who had grown up in the 1950s) ‘duped’ into marriage by the cultural discourse of their time, a discourse that said marriage is just something everyone does: ‘I suppose Barbara and I really belong to the marriage generation, despite ourselves. If we’d been five years younger, we’d just have shacked up together. Taken the best of it, and then cut loose.’[[582]](#footnote-582)

Howard’s remark was evocative of the widespread disillusion with the ‘marriage fever’ of the 1950s and 1960s which characterised the 1970s, fuelled by changes to the Divorce Law which made it possible to legally put an end to marriages which had irretrievably broken down. Couples who had been swept up in the romance of mid-century marriage, or just the ‘normality’ of it – ‘it’s just what you did’ – were reaching the time in their lives where they were able to look back and question their choices. As James and Kedgley concluded, the mistress was a necessary and inevitable feature in the age of these unsatisfactory relationships: ‘The very existence of the mistress shows that all is not well in the state of monogamy today.’[[583]](#footnote-583) The ‘mid-century’ model of marriage was called into question as a model that was driving couples apart rather than encouraging ‘togetherness’:

‘From our case history we see very clearly how the marriage did not live up to the expectations of both husband and wife. They married at the most typical age – twenty-one. They had an average middle-class family – two children. They followed the conventional pattern of marriage – they bought a house and she stayed in to bring up the children, while he ventured forth to make his mark with his work. In these moulds they grew apart rather than together, to the extent where both recognise now that they lead ‘independent existences’. The mistress in this case is clearly a symptom of a failing in the conventional marriage – the impossibility of two people in such diverse roles being able to satisfy one another. If we look at this couple closely it was the popularised version of love that brought them to marriage. This love, really infatuation, was the first thing to go with the reality of living together.’ [[584]](#footnote-584)

One man’s letter to *The Sun* at the close of the 1960s summed up the disillusionment with marriage it claimed was felt by many. The feature was titled ‘The Marriage compromise’ and the letter read:

‘I am one of the millions who have followed the age-old courtship, marriage and together-ever-after routine, and for me marriage has been ‘sheer endurance’. It took me two years of married life to realise I was not in love with my wife. I believed that sex and love were the same thing. I have learned at a bitter price what love really is, that sex and all the physical wonders that love can bring are purely bonuses. They are fabulous if you have them, but never confuse them with love. That is a selfish emotion beyond the reach of most of us. Marriage, for most of us, is a compromise, for want of a better system.’[[585]](#footnote-585)

**Feminism and the New ‘Transparency’**

The need for a ‘better system’, or at least a serious questioning of the existing system, was the crux of the feminist critique of the ‘transparency’ model. The criticism was that the campaign for relationships based on honesty, openness and transparency had not gone far enough, it had not thought seriously about the nature of those relationships in terms of the structure of society. The advice culture had focused too exclusively on ‘the couple’, abstracting it from the rest of society and feminists argued that it was hardly surprising that many couples were struggling to put the advice into practice when they existed in a society of unequal power relationships between men and women. As James and Kedgley demonstrated when they critiqued the possibility that the old marriage model – husband going out to work whilst the wife stayed at home – could lead to a closeness when two people were living such separate and different lives, feminism argued that the differences in ‘roles’ and in ‘privileges’ accorded to the genders was at the root of the problem of satisfying intimate relationships. If those structural changes could be made then the desire for ‘transparency’ was more likely to be achieved.

Lee Comer explored these issues in her book *Wedlocked Women* (1974) which had started life as a pamphlet with the title ‘The Myth of Motherhood’ which had circulated in the women’s movement in 1970. Comer, an ex-teacher, used her experience of motherhood and her interviews with fellow housewives to discuss the effect of the isolation of women bound to children and the home and the devastating effects this had on their self-esteem. Like Hannah Gavron before her, and Ann Oakley, whose book *Housewife* was published the same year as her own, Comer sought to expose to public view what she described as ‘that subterranean world of the housewife’, critiquing the family, marriage and the divide in men’s and women’s work, as she did so.[[586]](#footnote-586)

Comer was staunchly against the culture of desperately trying everything to make an unhappy marriage work. Whilst the advice literature had shifted towards a focus on the happiness of the individual and an acknowledgement that when a marriage was not fulfilling for the people involved, divorce was a positive option, there was, as Comer identified, inevitably an emphasis on ‘really working at it’. She asserted that the belief disseminated in the advice culture, as it was in the romance culture, that marriage, or more broadly, an intimate relationship between a man and a woman, was the sole site for finding fulfilment, happiness and self-realisation, was a ‘myth’ that destined people to despair when their relationships did not provide the goods promised:

‘We may lie awake at night wondering where we went wrong. We don’t see that the expectations – the baggage that we all bring to marriage – are impossible to live up to. If we didn’t expect to find personal salvation through married love we wouldn’t be disappointed in not finding it.’[[587]](#footnote-587)

Comer believed that what was required was a breaking down of the model of the consumerist family and a greater appreciation for the ‘reality’ of the people involved in attempting to make this fantasy work: ‘When the dream of mummy, daddy, nice house and car and two bright children is replaced with the reality of people, will we be able to talk truthfully about privacy, who we are and what we want to be.’[[588]](#footnote-588) She argued that all the emphasis on new types of relationships and how to create them overlooked the reality that truly honest, ‘transparent’ relationships were not achievable until the power structure of society had been transformed. To expect a transparent relationship based on equality with your spouse when your other relationships were based on inequality was not, she claimed, realistic:

‘Is a man who works on a building site, spending much of his day leering at women passers-by, to come home and treat his wife as an equal? Is a man who gives orders to women at wok as habitually and effortlessly as he pees, supposed to, as soon as he closes his front door, regard his wife as an equal? Is a woman who has deferred to her boss’s judgement all day at work supposed not to defer to her husband’s? Is a woman who has been conditioned to be a passive sexual object, suddenly supposed to take the sexual initiative when she is married?’[[589]](#footnote-589)

Of particular importance with regard to Chapter Three of this thesis was her bold question:

‘Is a woman who works all day in close contact with other women in the typing pool, the shop or factory, supposed to reserve her innermost thoughts for her husband whom she sees for only a few hours a day? Are we supposed to neglect the intimacy of the work place in order to concentrate on the home?’[[590]](#footnote-590)

Comer was critical of the focus on ‘the couple’ and the importance of relationships in the home, at the expense of fostering other relationships in the lives of women. She claimed that the current situation in which men and women were restricted to separate roles and lives in society inhibited their ability to come together in open, honest communication. Speaking of motherhood in an interview in *Spare Rib* in 1974, she stated that it ‘exhausted all the resources which previously sustained you through long nights of talk, activity and emotional relationships.’[[591]](#footnote-591)

Indeed, the debates about the ‘transparent’ relationships of the 1970s featured reasonably regularly in *Spare Rib* in articles about intimate relationships, yet the focus was mainly on the power struggle caused by inequality. However in June of 1976 a new series revealed that it was impossible to simply ‘write off’ the emphasis on ‘transparency’ as unworkable or a barrier in the quest for equality. The series revealed that some of the magazine’s readers were being torn between their feminist ideals and their strong belief in their personal struggle towards ‘transparency’ in their own intimate relationships.

The magazineasked its readers to: ‘Interview themselves and to write about the problems, successes and failures of trying to understand and change personal relationships’.[[592]](#footnote-592) The limited response to their call for letters, claimed the magazine, demonstrated the difficulties of the task they required principally because: ‘If it’s hard to explain why a relationship is worth having, then how can you convince readers that it’s worth struggling to change and understand it.’[[593]](#footnote-593) The clash between the ‘anti-couple’ stance and the cultural shift towards working on improving relationships through honesty and ‘transparency’ was brought into sharp view in this series. Whilst the mail bag did not overflow with responses, the letters they did receive were detailed, personal and honest, revealing the struggle of many women to reconcile their reality of living in a couple with their feminist beliefs and the obvious influence of the discourses outlined in the previous chapters.

One letter by reader Sue Cox was printed in full with the title ‘I Keep Digging Our Relationship Up’ and demonstrates the personal conflict experienced at the intersection of these powerful ideas about intimacy in the 1970s. Sue was not married but had been living with her boyfriend John for a couple of years. She had begun to question whether, in reality and against all her ideals, she actually quite liked the idea of getting married for it was ‘a declaration of confidence in the future: of sureness of feelings that she was envious of’. She explained that she had never felt a confidence or security in her feelings for John, claiming to be at moments so close to him and at others indifferent. She attributed this to her expectations of the relationship which ‘are so often disappointed’:

‘I want so much out of the relationship. I want a truly deep understanding and liking which will reassure me constantly that we are the best of friends, and I want a lover who is both passionate and tender. I want to be able to read his mind and his heart and I want him to read mine. To this end, I often lay my mind and heart out on a plate and then feel frustrated because he can’t or won’t or doesn’t need to do the same.’[[594]](#footnote-594)

Sue recognised that in spite of her ‘conscious rejection of what she termed ‘the *Woman’s Own* ideal relationship’, she was still ‘bogged down in romantic hang-overs’. Despite, she claimed, having a good job, never really wanting marriage or children, always a career and equality, she had to confront the fact that ‘a relationship with a man has always been the thing of central importance in her life’. She berated herself for not ‘just letting it happen’, for constantly worrying at it. Her partner John described it as ‘digging it up to see if it’s growing.’[[595]](#footnote-595) At this point Sue conveyed her guilt that her ‘digging’ was taking its toll on John, because he was not partaking in it too. They could not achieve the mutual desire to reflect on, analyse, scrutinise and work in depth on the relationship which was being promoted as the way to behave in relationships during the 1970s. Sue argued that, actually there was a difference between the needs of men and women in relationships and that men were simply less able to 'dig it up’. The testimony conveyed the difficulties of putting into practice the discourses of ‘transparency’ and growth, as well as male emotionality, even for forward-thinking feminist men and women who were attempting to achieve a greater equality of power and role division in their relationships, which Sue claimed John and herself were.

Sue was tormented by contradictory beliefs and desires at a time when the old, stable notions of what an intimate relationship should be were crumbling away. On the one hand she espoused the feminist critique of ‘settling down’ with all its restriction and ‘boredom’: ‘I am diverted by the phrase “settle down”. An expression that is totally abhorrent to me. I have a horror of settling down if it means banality, ordinariness, predictability.’ Yet she found the constant aim to analyse her relationship for its state of growth, exhausting and ultimately destructive:

‘And I wonder if that is why I keep digging our relationship up to see if it’s growing? To create some trouble and drama? To shake it about so it doesn’t get boring? And yet I really don’t want this upset to go on. I am exhausted by my own inconsistency. What I really want is for the relationship to settle on a plane that is deeper and more fulfilling and exciting than what I take to be the norm behind the front doors down our road. But I am full of contradictions – I just said that I believe that one to one relationships are not ideal anyway. Please can I be excused my contradictions in a world that changes so fast?’[[596]](#footnote-596)

She feared her attempts to create a more ‘transparent’, expressive relationship when John was holding back would tear them apart: ‘The wronged party in our relationship is John. Because I don’t behave consistently towards him he is developing a guardedness and nervousness towards me. He seems to hide himself so as not to get hurt.’[[597]](#footnote-597) The aim to ‘shake’ the relationship up with conflict and encounter style therapy so that it did not become stagnant, so that it did not become a ‘farce’, could, as Sue’s account demonstrates, be a draining endeavour and potentially unworkable in its intensity on a day-to-day level.

Sue presented herself as a woman desperate for change and desirous of a freedom she could not even define, let alone, in her own words, achieve in her life just yet:

‘I believe in my head that living exclusively with one person of the opposite sex, with or without children, is a restricting and neurosis producing business, but I am still light years away from doing anything about it. I wonder if I set my heights too far. I have been looking for something high and wild. Should I recognise my own limitations imposed partly by my uneventful middle class upbringing, or should I strive for something I can’t yet identify – some soaring freedom perhaps, some strength that will bolster my spirit and make life a joy to wake up to every day.’[[598]](#footnote-598)

Whilst the proponents of ‘transparency’ had argued that the ‘false freedom’ of the 1950s model was being replaced by ‘true liberation’, accounts like Sue’s reveal that the emphasis on emotional freedom could be all but ‘freeing’. It was, for Sue and many other women (and men), felt as a pressure, an ideal that failed to correspond to their experience of their lives and relationships.

**Alternative Experiments in Transparency: ‘The Couple’ in Communal Living**

The feminist belief that the campaign for transparency between ‘the couple’ did not go far enough towards relinquishing repression and liberating individuals, was also one of the drives of the commune movement during the 1970s. There were estimated to be around fifty communal ventures in Britain by 1974. There was a formal Commune Movement which had a membership of around three hundred and which published a bi-monthly magazine, *Communes*, which had sales of over two thousand per issue.[[599]](#footnote-599) In the early 1970s, sociology lecturer Andrew Rigby conducted interviews with members of communes to discover what the commune movement involved and what its aims were. He concluded that what was happening in the ‘underground’ was simply a more extreme version of the changes occurring in mainstream culture. The ‘shaking off’ of repression in the underground went further than rejecting the discourses of restraint and ‘emotional maturity’ in favour of expressing all emotions freely, it was about rejecting the repression of a societal structure based on working, having a marriage, a family, possessions and a home. The repression was, as members of the underground saw it, more than a curb on feeling:

‘It was a curb on existing in a “truly” natural state. The manifesto of the underground was that man is potentially creative, expressive and pleasure-seeking in nature but man has been repressed. It is only through giving vent to one’s essential nature that one can realise one’s true identity, and only through the awareness of one’s true identity that one can go on to develop to the full one’s innate potentialities.’ [[600]](#footnote-600)

As one of the correspondents in Rigby’s study claimed: ‘Each individual’s life should be a search for self-fulfilment’, revealing the overt influence of humanistic psychology.[[601]](#footnote-601)

Members of the commune movement wanted to ‘return man to being controller of his own environment, to assert the primacy of the individual self over the claims of society and its institutions, and in the process restore meaning to individual existence.’[[602]](#footnote-602) ‘The couple’ and ‘the family’ were two of those ‘claims of society’. Sociologists were keen to examine the claims made by many commune members that the commune represented a viable alternative to the nuclear family. Indeed, sociologists Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch concluded in 1976 that: ‘The family has become one of the main problems communes are designed to solve – the relevant point of attack for changing the world.’[[603]](#footnote-603)

Members of communes espoused the feminist critique of the nuclear family, viewing it as ‘one of the prize agents in the repression of female sexuality.’[[604]](#footnote-604) They critiqued the discourse, outlined in the previous chapters, that marriage and the family were an environment highly conducive to personal growth, as Rigby wrote: ‘Communitarians were of the opinion that ‘the nuclear family was a restrictive framework from the point of view of the self-development of the parents in general, and the wife in particular.’[[605]](#footnote-605) The respondents interviewed by Abrams and McCulloch explicitly stated their grievances with the family in its present state in terms of its restriction on the freedom of development of the individual:

‘They say “I love you” but they mean “I own you” – that’s what I’m against….‘The family tends to restrict human potential, freeze relationships, stunt the exploratory and innovating side to our consciousness and cause manifold frustration.’[[606]](#footnote-606)

As Rigby wrote, communes sought to demonstrate that the nuclear family system was ‘not the only way of organising social life, and that in its present enclosed and isolated form such a system only served to separate people from each other rather than promoting caring relationships between them.’ It was portrayed as a barrier to the wider aim of ‘The Family of Man’ upon which the commune movement was established.[[607]](#footnote-607)

An article titled ‘Communes and the Love-Relationship’ by commune member Howard Davies in *Communes*, outlined the point that the present focus on ‘the couple’ stood in the way of achieving what he described as the ‘Love Everybody’ objective:

‘I think that in present social conditions the general emotional structure of people’s lives is too limited in area and loaded against more than two individuals being together long enough or being involved with one another intensely enough to form a multi-lateral love relationship.’

Yet he argued that ‘the chance was there with communes in developing that kind of widespread love’, by replacing the repression of the isolated nuclear family with openness, spontaneity and growth.[[608]](#footnote-608)

Rather than rejecting the idea of ‘the couple’ totally however, Rigby asserted that the commune ethos was, in most cases, actually about strengthening the relationships between couples through changing the idea of what was expected of it. If it was not expected to be the sole site for the intensity of emotional expression the experts advised, then there would not be the same immense pressure that the relationship was the only one expected to provide intense personal growth. Like, Comer, the commune movement argued that in focusing on ‘the couple’, society had made open, honest and emotionally fulfilling friendships, especially those between members of the opposite sex, a taboo for they threatened the exclusivity and stability of ‘the couple’ relationship. Despite experiments in having sexually fulfilling relationships beyond the marriage bed – the interest in ‘open marriage’ among radicals as portrayed in the *History Man*, and the tabloid obsession with ‘swinging’ – it was still the norm to be suspicious of an individual having more than one emotionally fulfilling, ‘transparent’ relationship in their lives. Communes aimed to create open relationships between all members, hoping, like Comer, to shift the emphasis away from ‘the couple’ and towards the recognition that ‘transparency’ in all relationships was required:

‘One of the prime advantages of the communal style of life over that of the nuclear family was the fact that the emotional strain placed upon two people living constantly in each other’s company, as in a nuclear family, is extreme and can lead to unhappiness, adultery and the breakdown of relationships. Within a commune, it was argued, no two adults need be forced constantly into each other’s company, with a resultant lowering of emotional strain through the establishment of close and affectionate relationships with other adults. This close relationship with other adults was typically seen as important for the self-development of the individuals involved and for the development of honest and genuine relationships between the commune members and the couple in particular.’[[609]](#footnote-609)

Indeed, communes aimed to function as permanent ‘encounter groups’ for their members which would, through offering an outsider’s point of view, help couples in their journey towards ‘transparency’. As one of Rigby’s respondent’s summarised:

‘Where there are only two people, then misunderstandings can arise, you only get a restricted view of each other – in a commune there are others to give an “objective” account of their perceptions, and so enable you to become more fully aware of each other as humans, clear up the misconceptions that develop through distorted perceptions. We talk things out here.’[[610]](#footnote-610)

Davies also wrote in his article that ‘inter-personal communication’ was the foundation of a successful commune, asserting that ‘encounter style group interaction’ where there was ‘an emphasis upon absolute truth, should be used to induce individual growth towards loving maturity and sensitivity, thus helping individuals to give and receive love.’[[611]](#footnote-611) Thus, although some members of the commune movement experimented with ‘open marriage’, as Rigby concludes, most communes rejected the idea and functioned as an ‘extended family system made up of separate couples’.[[612]](#footnote-612)

To further relieve the pressure on the couple, communes attempted to create more equal power relationships between men and women. In January 1971, *Woman’s Own* magazine printed an article with the title ‘Life in the House of Hippies’ by journalist Douglas Keay. The article consisted of interviews with five adults who were living communally with their young children in a house in London. The tagline for the article was: ‘They’re dirty, irresponsible, permissive parasites on society….This is how a lot of people see hippies. How do they see themselves?’[[613]](#footnote-613) Describing the set up in the house, Keay claimed: ‘They have freedom. They have resisted routine. They have attempted to make relationships more equal. Very often men do the cooking and sometimes wash up and scrub the floor.’ He quoted one of the men saying: ‘There’s no business about Pat or Gita doing these jobs just because they’re women.’[[614]](#footnote-614) According to Keay, the women were ‘liberated’ and ‘seemed happy’, one of them telling him that: ‘When I walk around a housing estate, I feel so sorry for all those women living in boxes with fridges and Flash-washed floors. They can see all the way to the end of their lives. I couldn’t live like that.’[[615]](#footnote-615) The ‘liberation’ and positivity of these new kinds of relationships was portrayed by Keay as ‘complete’ and inspiring to those still restrained by ‘the system’:

‘They are so maddeningly content, or certainly appear as if they are. They want to be friends with everyone. The words love and peace really do seem to have a real and important meaning to them. They make the visitor – this one at least – feel, with his bank account, mortgage, and small pile of possessions, somehow deprived by comparison. You feel like saying “Wouldn’t you honestly rather live in a nice clean house in a nice clean street? But you know the answer will be: “Not if it means giving up our freedom.”’[[616]](#footnote-616)

Yet Abrams and McCulloch were unconvinced that change was so easily achieved, arguing that evidence from their study suggested that:

‘What happens when the constraints of legally forced monogamy and the wage-work-housework division of roles are removed is not the creation of an alternative system of personal relationships but rather a making plain of the deeper obstacles to equality through which men and women in this society struggle to relate. The commonest worry of women in communes was still “what if he leaves me?”’[[617]](#footnote-617)

Whilst it may work for its ‘middle class’ participants, these sociologists were sceptical that what was going on in many communes was an easily transferable model: ‘When husband and wife are both poets or potters and can afford to work only at what they find fulfilling, the sexual divisions built into normal marriages are at least much less compelling.’ But asked the authors: ‘Is this ‘any sort of model for a larger reconstruction of social relations?’[[618]](#footnote-618)

On the topic of the success of experimenting with an alternative model of the family, Abrams and McCulloch argued that:

‘The experiments in communal living which endured were the ones which did not try to dismantle the family. [These communes] viewed the family as one of the building blocks of the New Age – The object was to construct a community of families based on strong and spiritual attachments between mates and between parents and children.’[[619]](#footnote-619)

Indeed, many communes had to set aside their ideals in practice and embrace a model somewhere between the mainstream nuclear family and a total rejection of family bonds. This was a topic explored by *Spare Rib* in May 1975 in an article with the title: ‘Bringing Up Kids in a Commune Doesn’t Automatically Kill Off the Nuclear Family but There Can Be a lot More Messing Around’, in which one commune member revealed: ‘It took us a week to realise that “a commune” wasn’t a panacea for anything, and about a year of trouble to begin to understand why.’[[620]](#footnote-620) A fellow member reflected on the type of childrearing they had ended up establishing in the commune:

‘We could have decided to actively encourage that [communal parenting] – to kill off (or more likely bury alive) the nuclear family. I thought special relationships between children and parents might disappear. That would have been cruel as well as stupid – we weren’t doing anything brutal to special relationships between adults, “nuclear” or not’.’[[621]](#footnote-621)

This attitude was also identified by Rigby who claimed that the rejection of an ‘open marriage’ and ‘undefined parents’ model was for most people arrived at because they felt the best way for successful emotional development of the children in the commune was to have a strong attachment to their parents. The influence of attachment theories was, for Rigby, strikingly clear.[[622]](#footnote-622)

One significant way in which parenting in the commune moved away from that of the nuclear family was in relieving the isolation of mother and children. Communes embraced the emphasis on personal growth though play. Rigby described the emphasis on the commune being a fee environment in which children, like their parents, could follow their own paths of development and exploration: ‘This free environment in which children as a group played in order to “grow themselves” had the other motivation of freeing the parents (the mother) from the ‘onerous duty of constantly looking after children.’ This, Rigby concludes, ‘was a primary attraction to communal living for a generation of women who had gone to university and had had their careers interrupted by childbirth.[[623]](#footnote-623) Thus, whilst appreciating that children needed to know who their parents were and to have a good attachment to them, the childcare ethos of many communes was influenced by the growing criticism of Bowlby’s focus on the mother, which Thomson has recently explored:

‘There was a feeling that many mothers now found themselves, isolated, separated from the support of families in new estates, or worse still cooped up with their children in high-rise flats, and were often poorly equipped as a result to provide the necessary love, social relations, and freedom to play demanded by the increased expectations of post-war childcare.’[[624]](#footnote-624)

As Thomson claims, this was not a problem confined to those in difficult economic circumstances, it also applied to middle class house bound mothers such as those identified by Gavron and Comer. He concluded that: ‘For an emerging generation of feminists, the questions of their own freedom and that of children would come to be intimately linked.’[[625]](#footnote-625)

One of the interviewees in *Spare Rib*’s article on family life in a commune was clear that this ‘freedom to grow through play’ model had led to better, more fulfilling and honest relationships with her children because, like ‘the couple’, the pressure to be together constantly was removed: ‘Now it is a relationship built of talking, playing, messing about together. It’s a voluntary, spontaneous system. We’re not thrown together, we come together. It feels lovely.’[[626]](#footnote-626) Freedom, spontaneity and honesty was the yardstick for all relationships by the 1970s.

Yet it was not just the children of the communes who were allowed to ‘discover themselves’ through play. As *Woman’s Own* journalist Keay concluded, there was an aspect of members turning their backs on the responsibilities of ‘adult’ society to the communes movement:

‘In many ways and this is not a criticism, they reminded me not so much of children playing at grown-ups, but of grown-ups remembering what it was like to have the carefree thoughts they had as children and running their lives accordingly.’[[627]](#footnote-627)

Indeed, Thomson reflects that the way of thinking about children’s need for freedom to grow in the 1970s, was born out of the counter-cultural arguments about liberation, forged in relation to thinking about adult lives in the 1960s’ to which the notion of ‘play’ was fundamental.

**‘Don’t Take It All So Seriously’: The Rediscovery of Play**

The rejection of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse was not confined to the ‘transparency based on open, honest emotionally expressive communication’ model outlined in the previous chapters. Another strand of the rejection of the 1950s emphasis on maturity was to valorise immaturity through play, an idea that became one of the tenets of the ‘underground’. Richard Neville’s *Play Power* (1970) was the classic statement on the ‘politics of play’ which he described as: ‘The strategy which converts the Underground to a brotherhood of clowns; the lifestyle which unites a generation in love and laughter.’[[628]](#footnote-628) Neville wrote that the ‘rediscovery of play’ was the appropriate response to repression, with an appreciation of ‘immaturity’ rather than a fear of it, being the route to true liberation:

‘Play culture is coming back. Once upon a time, culture was fun and games. Then it became earnest, drab, puritan and anti-play. Now it is being “played” again, its quotient of fun and freedom proportional to its depth Underground – rock, fashions (dressing up), happenings, movies, street theatre, living. Purposeless play is creative.’[[629]](#footnote-629)

The emphasis on play in the early 1970s was influenced by new psychological theories which were entering the mainstream through, among other mediums, Pelican Originals. These theories promoted the positive role of play in child development, but also the important role it could have in the ‘search for the self’ in both adult and child. In D. W. Winnicott’s book *Playing and Reality* (1971), the link between self-knowledge and creativity was made explicit. Winnicott argued that the search for the self, required specific conditions:

‘These conditions are associated with what is usually called creativity. It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.’[[630]](#footnote-630)

Embracing play was portrayed as the ‘answer’ to resisting the ‘instrument of repression, the family’ which Neville described as ‘a mini government’ in which the realisation of the ‘true’ self was but a fantasy.[[631]](#footnote-631) The main way to put ‘play power’ into action, claimed Neville, was in one’s sexual life:

‘Sex is pure when it’s playful’. Of course the revolutionary sex play of the Underground is different in style and significance from the solemn, plodding, consumer-oriented eroticism of Hollywood and the perfume industry. Remember the last time you saw a love scene with Robert Mitchum? Heavy. Tense. Serious. Adult. Like most cinematic sex scenes. Like most marital sex scenes. What is it? It’s work. The Underground is turning sex back into play. Out goes Reich’s fuddy duddy orgone box…in comes happy, hippie playful sex.’[[632]](#footnote-632)

The ‘play’ ethos was not only a rejection of the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse of the 1950s, it was also a reaction to the ‘seriousness’ of the societal obsession with working at ‘transparency’ in long-term relationships. All the talk about how to make relationships more fulfilling through achieving ‘transparency’ *within* marriage did not go far enough towards creating freedom of the individual for many proponents of the ‘play’ idea in the ‘underground’. Yet, it is worth noting here that the play discourse (like the ‘underground’ itself) was fractured and there was a spectrum of how far it rejected the mainstream focus on honest communication and emotional expressiveness. Although much of the ‘underground’ espoused a message of ‘limitless love and truth’ whilst at the same time encouraging ‘play’, other corners embraced a total rejection of feelings in intimate relationships. Indeed, there was often a tension between a belief in the wider political message of ‘Make Love Not War’ and the power of this emotion to change the world, and a belief that feelings in relationships simply weren’t ‘groovy’. As Mick Jagger’s statements about his marriage to Bianca revealed in the previous chapter, the notion that feelings were ‘off limits’ was one that gained wide currency in the world of rock music.

**‘Feelings Are a Drag’ – A New Taboo on Emotions**

In 1969, a novel bounded onto the stage which would cause a sensation, revealing the rejection of all the ‘serious talk’ about feelings and the idolisation of ‘playful’ relationships amongst the underground rock heroes of the late-1960s. The novel was *Groupie*, and it told the story of a young woman called Katie who immerses herself in the sex, drugs and rock n’ roll of ‘the scene’, based on the author Jenny Fabian’s own experiences with the rock celebrities of the day. Using the formula of the ‘Confessions of a…’ novel, the story revolves around Katie’s journey from a young girl unaccustomed to the ‘emotional void’ of the underground rock scene to becoming a hardened proponent of ‘anti-feelings’ relationships herself.

When Katie first enters ‘the scene’, she desperately requires mutual emotional expression in her intimate relationships and the novel traces the frustration and rejection this creates in her experience of intimacy with various men. When she probes her lover Joe to reveal his feelings for her, to talk openly with her about their relationship, she begins to realise that emotions are neglected in favour of physical ‘sensations’:

‘You’re so cool, I really think you don’t care.’

‘I’m not one for showing feelings. You just have to suss them out.’

‘Well, I can’t,’ I said. ‘What do you feel for me?’

‘You’re a groove in bed.’ What an answer I thought.[[633]](#footnote-633)

Another man who goes by the nickname ‘Wank’, tries to convince Katie that she, like all girls, deep down seeks a man who will destroy all their feelings in favour of ‘sensations’: ‘Why don’t chicks admit things…You want me to scratch away your feelings because feelings are a drag. And feelings are a drag because they interfere with sensations, and deep inside chicks are all sensations. So how about being honest and admitting it?’[[634]](#footnote-634)

The rejection of the ‘serious’ talk about emotions was presented by this man as the way to achieve more ‘authentic’ intimacy, contrary to the advice culture of the time. Indeed, Katie eventually submits to the ‘taboo on feelings’: ‘I seriously considered what he said, and thought it was a groove to be cool and careless and not get hung up on emotions.’[[635]](#footnote-635) She describes to a friend the sense of ease that rejecting the discourse on emotional transparency had brought to her, and the fact that it made relationships simpler and more enjoyable:

‘Have you ever been out with someone you can’t speak to properly? You know, not being able to communicate with words properly?’

‘Yes’, I said, ‘And it’s terrible at first. Not being able to say what you want to becomes more and more frustrating, until suddenly it becomes a groove that you can’t say what you want to and you just sit there thinking it instead and not getting hung up.’[[636]](#footnote-636)

She establishes a relationship with another member of a band based on the code of relinquishing all feelings and communication, yet she recognises that in doing so she has forfeited an intimacy where both individuals can ‘be themselves’ and which provides the space for personal growth: ‘He thinks he understands me and I think I understand him…but neither of us knows very much about each other; just enough to keep us interested.’[[637]](#footnote-637)

The model of transparent relationships based on a ‘working at it’ attitude was dismissed as a restriction on the freedom of the individual and too associated with the negative concept of ‘commitment’. Katie summarises the reasons her boyfriend Grant does not believe in being emotionally expressive:

‘He’d been through the whole thing of telling a chick he loved her, holding hands and kissing, because that’s what chicks wanted, and it kept the whole thing running smoothly. But it had been a nuisance to him, he’d never been in love, and didn’t think he ever would be, because he didn’t believe in that kind of love. It was a mind trap people lumbered themselves into, with no happy ever afters, and full of obligations and hang ups which stopped a person doing their thing. There was no need to be like that with me, he said, and it was nice to be able to be himself as he really was. Anyway, I liked him like that, so why should he bother with all the crap?’[[638]](#footnote-638)

In the novel, men are portrayed as having totally rejected the societal emphasis on men’s emotional liberation, saying ‘I love you’ is simply, they claim, ‘not groovy’: ‘Does he say nice things to you…you know, does he tell you he loves you and that?’ ‘What?’ I laughed at Joe thinking of Grant as weak and imploring when he was alone with me. ‘Grant say he loves me? You must be joking!’[[639]](#footnote-639) Relationships where the individuals involved have been able to escape the trap of the emotionally open model were portrayed by the novel’s protagonists as more ‘authentic’ than those based on what they deemed an ‘obligation’ of expressiveness which was not always ‘honest’.

Yet Katie interprets her own journey towards repressing her feelings in relationships as a process of personal growth, towards understanding herself and her needs. Indeed, she embraces the discourses of opening oneself up to ‘experience’ whether it is pleasurable or painful, as a way to grow:

‘The career part of me was coming along very nicely. My emotional scene was lagging behind in progress. I had learned to cool things, but I still made mistakes and I couldn’t distinguish between what was good and what was necessary for me. At the moment it was still necessary to sleep with guys who were not good for me. But that would change because the need to do that would eventually disappear. Of course, I still needed to love and be loved, but not in quite such a time-devouring manner. I would get that together too, because I was going to learn by my mistakes, and I was prepared to get hurt, be desolated and to totally open myself up to whatever nastiness came my way. Just as I had learned to suss things out which affected my career, so I was learning, at a slower pace, to suss out the kind of scenes and types of men which suited me best.’[[640]](#footnote-640)

The process of repressing her feelings is portrayed as a difficult one and Katie is conflicted at times by her desire for ‘rationalisation’ and her sense deep down that feelings could not be avoided or repressed and should be expressed outwardly:

‘What’s rational about anger and jealousy? Rationalisation is all in the head, whereas anger and jealousy are all in the genes, and I know I’ve got a good share, and there’s no fighting them. If anyone told me that I wasn’t being fair, I’d just laugh at them, because fairness is something you’re told exists, like God, but the others, love, anger and jealousy and the like are things you *feel* exist.’[[641]](#footnote-641)

The novel highlighted the contradiction within the rock scene that despite the taboo on showing or talking about feelings in intimate relationships, their music was often powerfully emotional in content, as Katie claims: ‘They reject love and yet respect it at the same time as the most beautiful thing in the world.’[[642]](#footnote-642) She realises that the music was ultimately more emotionally fulfilling than the men playing it could be: ‘I stood watching their intent sweating faces as their full, emotion-laden sound swelled around me.’[[643]](#footnote-643) She ponders whether the resistance to feelings in ‘the scene’ which was driven by the men as part of the embracing immaturity and play discourse, was actually no more than an ‘easy’ route to avoiding the increasing societal pressure that ‘grown men’ be emotionally expressive. Ultimately, she decides that the ‘anonymity’, the lack of knowing each other in these supposed ‘playful’ relationships where there was no ‘verbal bridge’ was unfulfilling and that she would prefer something a little more in the ‘transparent’ mould: “You don’t even know who I am.” I wasn’t standing for any of this anonymous fucking business.’[[644]](#footnote-644)

Yet it was not just the young and single members of the rock n roll underground who were making a point of ‘playful’ sexuality. In an article with the title ‘Love and Romance’ in *Spare Rib* , a married reader named Rowan Edwards outlined in great detail her experiment with a rejection of feelings in favour of playful relationships with men other than her husband as a way to find her freedom. Edwards described her situation as having been one of the many of her generation who had ‘fallen into The Trap’ of marriage:

‘Not that the young man intended any such thing – convention saw to it that the well-worn paths were trodden. 15 years ago we were so much younger, so unraised in consciousness. I was happy, I knew that. I was in Love. Little else mattered for several years, during which I discovered that it was not so much heart and soul that you had to give, as body, time, energy, youth, strength – in producing and nurturing his children. Even in an apparently equal marriage, you had to give your independence.’[[645]](#footnote-645)

Edwards referred to her former self as ‘a Jill-in-a-box’, claiming that when she came to realise her predicament, she ‘reacted suddenly with a huge leap’, influenced by the ideas of the time, ‘when such considerations were being aired all around me, I saw those years as wasted, lost, repression. I was not, never would be, thus owned.’[[646]](#footnote-646) Her solution to this feeling of ‘being trapped’ and ‘owned’ was to explore her sexuality with other men where there was no emphasis on having a deep, emotional relationship: ‘For the next few years, I underlined my lost independence, explored my neglected self, through other men. I felt callous, realistic. Tenderness was not lacking but affection, on the whole, was – that was how I wanted it.’[[647]](#footnote-647)

A turning point which shunted Edwards back towards emotional intimacy came when her husband also decided to embark on other relationships. After much self-disclosure and discussion, both individuals decided they had been on journeys of ‘self-discovery’ through these extra-marital, playful relationships, which had brought them back to each other with renewed emotional gusto.[[648]](#footnote-648) The testimony reflected the idea discussed in Chapter Three, that adultery was justified if it opened the individual up to personal growth, despite there being no emotional connection in these cases.

Edwards presented herself as in control of these ‘playful’, sex-based relationships, ultimately rejecting that model for the ‘haven’ of her emotionally involved marriage. Yet many feminists rallied against the ‘play’ discourse for its ability to justify the exploitation of women by men in the manner depicted in *Groupie*. The burgeoning pornography industry was the target for much of the feminist backlash with its promotion of what they termed ‘exploitative’ pornographic sex as being ‘playful’ and fun for the women involved, and for its misguided promotion of porn being about female self-expression.

**‘The Joy of Play’ Within Transparent Relationships**

The ‘play’ discourse was not confined to the ‘underground’ or to pornography magazines, and indeed it was not always antithetical to the mainstream focus on improving relationships through emotional ‘transparency’. The bestselling sex manual of the era was a tract on the importance of ‘play’, bringing the message that the rediscovery of play was the answer to the struggle for personal freedom to a mass audience. Alex Comfort’s iconic *Joy of Sex* (1972) promoted the kind of message emanating from ‘underground’ sources such as Play Power with the focus on ‘pure’ sex being that which is free and playful. It sold over 12 million copies worldwide, and its ‘place on family bookshelves and under coffee tables both marked and contributed to the popularisation of the sexual revolution’.[[649]](#footnote-649) The manual was the fruition of years of work on the subject of sexual repression. Since the 1950s, Comfort had argued that the ‘guilt’ association with sex in modern society had to be removed. His ideas started to gain wider currency in the 1960s with the republication of his book *Sexual Behaviour in Society* (1950) as a Pelican Original in 1963 with the title *Sex in Society*, which Hera Cook has described as: ‘The first substantial alteration in the theoretical construction of sexuality. Comfort made a greater contribution to the new discourse on heterosexual mores than anyone else had done since Lawrence.’[[650]](#footnote-650) The book was intended to aid in the ‘re-education’ of society in the realities of human sexual behaviour as a way to counteract the ‘state sponsored repression’ which shrouded the sexual act in unnecessary shame.[[651]](#footnote-651)

Although there were similar intentions to remove the repression of sexuality, Comfort’s idea of the future of sexual relations and that of the Lawrentian discourse were fundamentally different. Comfort rejected the ‘seriousness’ of the Lawrentian model with its emphasis on love alone justifying sexual relations and the need for sex to be a ‘spiritual’ experience, as Lynne Reid Banks portrayed in *The L Shaped Room* discussed in Chapter Two, relationships devoid of love were thus opened up to the same association with guilt and shame as those deemed ‘impure’ by the old moralism for occurring outside marriage. Comfort sought to shed the pressures of the Lawrentian thinking about sex and inject it with the fun and playfulness which he argued it was, by nature, intended to embody. He declared that: ‘Literature of sexual enjoyment can provide reassurance and pleasure, and heighten the element of play which is perhaps the marker of good sexual adjustment, if not the cause of it’, and his realisation of this vision in *Joy of Sex* ten years later would, according to Sheila Jeffreys, come to be seen as ‘the quintessential expression of the values of the sexual revolution’.[[652]](#footnote-652)

Yet Comfort’s sex manual was not focused on the ‘fun-oriented sexual anarchy’ or the ‘purposeless play’ promoted by Neville.[[653]](#footnote-653) It did not encourage irresponsible promiscuity. Quite the contrary, repeated use of the word ‘tenderness’ made it clear that what was being promoted was not a ‘no-feelings’ approach to sex, but ‘respectful’ and ‘affectionate’ sex which strengthened bonds between lovers:

‘Sex in man is only about one-tenth reproduction – nine-tenths play, the affectionate bond between long-term, concerned lovers, through which we express relationship, explore ourselves and one another, and exorcize basic human and mammalian worries through tender and unscared playfulness. Religion and psychiatry have unfortunately misread this play-function, as often as not, and set about converting what nature programmed as turn-ons and resources into hangups. Playfulness, like tenderness, is something our culture has undersold.’[[654]](#footnote-654)

He continued that:

‘Sex is the one place where we today can learn to treat people as people. Feedback means the right mixture of stop and go, tough and tender, exertion and affection. This comes by empathy and long mutual knowledge. Anyone who expects to get this with a stranger is an optimist or a neurotic. Also one can’t teach tenderness.’[[655]](#footnote-655)

The use of play in relationships was a way, argued Comfort, to allow sex to become another means of truly knowing and understanding the other person as well as oneself. Indeed, Winnicott had concluded that: ‘Only in playing is communication possible’.[[656]](#footnote-656) Playfulness and embracing ‘immaturity’ were defined as not in opposition to the discourse of transparency in relationships which had been the mainstream rejection of ‘emotional maturity’, but could be a powerful part of it:

‘One of the things still missing from the ‘new sexual freedom’ is the unashamed ability to use sex as play – in this, psychoanalytic ideas of maturity are nearly as much to blame as old style moralisms about what is normal or perverse. We are all immature, and have anxieties and aggressions. Coital play is probably man’s programmed way of dealing acceptably with these, just as children express their fears and aggressions in games. Bed is the place to play all the games you ever wanted to play, at the play-level’ – adults need to become less self-conscious about such “immature” needs.’[[657]](#footnote-657)

Comfort argued that both the taboo on emotional expression as well as the taboo on physical expression in the mode of intimate touch needed to be broken down in order to achieve more fulfilling relationships. He drew on Bowlby-esque notions of the legacy to society of generations of children who did not receive the physical demonstrations of love and affection when growing up, and declared that, like the desire for emotionally ‘transparent’ relationships between everyone, not just lovers, that physical communication between all individuals was a necessary shift to free society from repression. This was viewed as a repression of deep, authentic communication on all levels – verbal and physical:

‘The starting point of all lovemaking is bodily contact. It is also, from our infancy, the starting point of human relationships and needs. Our culture, after several centuries of intense taboos on many such contacts – between friends, between males – which are used by other cultures, has cut down intimacy based in bodily contact to parent-child and lover-lover situations. We’re getting over this taboo, or at least the part which has spilled over into baby-raising and explicit lovemaking, but coupled with our other cultural reservation, which says that play and fantasy are only safe for children, it has dealt us a bad hand for really full and personal sex.’[[658]](#footnote-658)

Comfort’s message of ‘sex as play’ gained wide currency during the early seventies, becoming the standard approach to defining marital sex. In 1972 The Book Club Associates published an *Encyclopaedia of Love and Sex* which contained a chapter titled ‘The Playground of Marriage’. It emphasised Comfort’s notion that playful sex was based on ‘mutuality’ and tenderness towards each other’s needs and feelings. Moreover it connected sexual communication with emotional communication:

‘For a man and a woman love-making can be a beautiful and satisfying experience, but this means they must understand and care for each other’s needs. In their love-play, the partners arouse their sexual feelings to the point where they will both derive the greatest enjoyment from intercourse. At the same time, they experience the emotional satisfaction which comes from the expression of their feelings for each other.’[[659]](#footnote-659)

Thus, contrary to the view circulating in some corners of the ‘underground’ and embodied in rock gods of the age such as Mick Jagger, that the new societal emphasis on emotional expressiveness in intimate relationships was just another ‘serious’ discourse like that of ‘emotional maturity’ before it, the advice culture often attempted to incorporate the interest in being playful and immature into its portrayal of ‘working at it’. Although Wallis emphasised the ‘seriousness of love’ –‘Love is serious, not trivial or flippant or sentimental. It is the most needed and the most important aspect of living’[[660]](#footnote-660)– in his 1969 book *Thinking About Love*, he also explored the concept that play was the ‘purest’ form of sharing, and that consequently because ‘transparency’ was about the most intense form of sharing an individual could embark upon – the sharing of oneself through mutual self-disclosure – then play must be part of that process: ‘Play is the purest form of sharing. All spontaneous sharing is a kind of play. And all true play is based on sharing.’[[661]](#footnote-661) Like Comfort, Wallis promoted ‘purposeful play’ as opposed to Neville’s ‘purposeless play’. Playing was to have the aim of deepening the connection between individuals.

Wallis claimed that the ability to play was lost in adults when it was replaced with ‘competition’: ‘It seems a pity that we adults almost wholly lose the ability to play. What we usually call games are not playing at all but competitions.’ Those people who could still play were those who had developed enough ‘self-love’ to shake off the need for competing:

‘Those people who have been able to keep the ability to play are people whose self-love developed so well that they do not feel ashamed to follow the example of children and so do not always have to be worrying about what they are achieving. They can afford to play because they are secure in themselves and sure of other people.’[[662]](#footnote-662)

Play therefore would have a prime and two-way role in the new ‘transparency’ for Wallis, because ‘transparency’ encouraged self-love which in turn would enable individuals to play more effectively, the increased amount of play would in turn encourage more and perhaps deeper ‘sharing’. The type of play adults could indulge in, claimed Wallis was not the physical play with toys as in childhood, and he did not focus on sexual play like Comfort, rather he insisted that verbal play was the route to true sharing: ‘The nearest that most of us can get to this is in talk. Like all play, conversation can be serious even while it is fun.’[[663]](#footnote-663) Again, play would be instigated as another way in which the new ‘transparent’ relationships could be ‘therapeutic’ for individuals suffering from the emotional legacies of their childhoods.

**Conclusion**

This thesis has argued that ideas about love and marriage in 1950s Britain were defined by the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse. ‘Emotional maturity’ was a psychological idea emphasising the need for control, containment and concealment of emotions and was supported by the persistence of a ‘culture of restraint’ in the post-war years. It fed into the resounding belief in social responsibility of the period with the notion that an individual’s actions had a wider responsibility to society. This discourse would lose sway to a ‘rediscovery of feeling’ in the 1960s and 1970s during which an emphasis on unbridled emotional expression, authenticity, honesty and spontaneity would redefine emotional culture in Britain.

The intensity of the conversation about ‘sex’ during this period has meant much of what was being said about emotion has gone unnoticed by historians. There existed a unique societal and cultural obsession with emotional relationships that was unheard of both before and since – and one that demands reconsideration from historians if we are to move beyond the traditional interpretations of cultural change in the long-1960s. Dramatic changes in the emotional culture of intimacy ran alongside those changes in physical intimacy synonymous with the period, and for many couples could have far more impact on their daily lives.

The ‘neglected’ decade of 1970s would witness the culmination of this ‘revolution’ in thinking about emotions in the idea of the ‘new transparency’ – an emphasis on mutual self-disclosure, intense ‘encounter-style’ communication and absolute honesty – in marriage and intimate relationships which became the dominant model. Yet, as the final chapter has explored, the focus on transparent, emotionally expressive relationships was not the only response to the ‘emotional maturity’ discourse of the 1950s. Another strand of rejection encouraging a return to precisely what the advice culture of the 1950s had discouraged – immaturity, also established itself. The ‘play’ discourse was, however, fractured with some aspects of the critique crossing over and supporting the ‘new transparency’ rather than opposing it. The period witnessed the emergence of multiple ‘emotional scripts’ and the ‘emotional revolution’ was a far from linear one.

At the same time that the new model of more ‘honest’ relationships established itself, it was faced with the widespread realisation of its inherent weaknesses and unsustainability. The unworkability of transparency between ‘the couple’ was a topic for criticism among various quarters in society, with established and coherent critiques created by the feminist and commune movements in the 1970s. These included the development of a different approach to the family and the couple to that espoused in the advice literature explored in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Whilst the proponents of making marriages and families more transparent argued that the nuclear family and ‘the couple’ could be a perfect site for developing the self and achieving personal growth if the 1950s repression on emotional expression could be removed, the critiques explored in Chapter Five claimed otherwise. For them, the structure and nature of the family and ‘the couple’ was inherently repressive. These ideas, particularly those feminist arguments about power relations between men and women and the need to change society before intimate relationships could have a chance of being truly equal and ‘transparent’, had a lasting impact on attitudes in the following decades.

As Cohen concludes in her study of family secrets, the transition to openness in the 1970s was a far from smooth one involving a lot of hard work and a great deal of suffering on the part of individuals.[[664]](#footnote-664) She argues that the emphasis on openness in relationships had begun to slow down by the close of the decade due to its being unsustainable in reality: ‘the ideal of intimate relationships without boundaries had worn thin…the experimentation with transparency had come to an end.’[[665]](#footnote-665) Openness did not allow for space or privacy, which she argues, in the everyday living of relationships, simply did not work for most people. Any privacy would be turned into a destructive secrecy because it was embargoed. In the end, it seemed to be an unattainable idealism.

Despite its problems, however, those ideas which were fully laid down by the 1970s, that romantic relationships should be emotionally open to the extent that couples reveal all truths to each other through self-disclosure and constant communication, that they should be the ultimate site for realising the ‘authentic self’, and that they require an insurmountable level of constant analysis and ‘hard work’, continue to be the expectations for intimacy today. A single search on the internet will reveal that the ‘transparency’ model is still the one promoted within the advice literature and the one most aspired to by the general public. A blog post for ‘Huffpost Healthy Living’ from 2012 urged its readers to ‘Be Radically Transparent for a Lasting Emotional and Sexual Relationship’.[[666]](#footnote-666) Its author, business psychologist and psychotherapist, Douglas LaBier described how:

Radical Transparency has two parts: One is being open and revealing about yourself to your partner. It includes letting go of inhibitions or defensive feelings you might be harbouring about what you haven’t revealed, and also acknowledging your reluctance to do so. The flip side is being open and receptive to your partner’s reality: his or her feelings, wishes, desires, fears and differences from yourself. It means openly encouraging your partner to express them to you. Radical transparency can be painful, perhaps relationship threatening. But it’s more likely to open the door to strengthening the foundation of your relationship.’[[667]](#footnote-667)

Indeed, the publication of *‘The Heart of the Fight’: A Couple’s Guide to 15 Common Fights and How They Can Bring You Closer* by psychologists Judith and Bob Wright in March of this year suggests that the belief in the positive role of marital conflict which was defined in the 1970s has become fundamental to the advice culture and our expectations today.[[668]](#footnote-668) The book describes marital conflict as an ‘adventure’ and encourages its readers to embrace such an exciting journey.

The link between women’s magazines and the advice manuals established during the period researched for this thesis is also still a fundamental aspect of how ideas about romantic relationships and emotional intimacy are disseminated throughout popular culture. It was an article in *Grazia* magazine, read in a dentist’s waiting room, which drew my attention to the publication of the above book. The fact that its authors perceive a need for another book on the topic however, reveals yet again the unattainability of the elusive ‘transparency’.

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80. Although the relationship between ‘emotional maturity’ and juvenile behaviour had been made as early as the 1930s as Durea’s article from 1937 demonstrates, the more intense and widespread concerns about juvenile delinquency in the post-war period brought the connection into public view, entrenching it in the advice culture aimed at young people. For concerns about juvenile delinquency in America see James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America’s Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York, 1986). For the British context see Wills, ‘Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England’. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. The term ‘Marriage Crisis’ is taken from the title of David Mace’s text *Marriage Crisis* (London, 1948). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Liz Stanley, *Sex Surveyed* (London, 1995), p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Cited in Claire Langhamer, ‘Adultery in Post-War England, *History Workshop Journal* 62 (2006), p. 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-57* (London, 2010, first published 2009), p. 559. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Griselda Rowntree, ‘Some Aspects of Marriage Breakdown during the Last Thirty Years’, *Population Studies* 18 (1964), p. 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Joseph Brayshaw, ‘Marriage and Divorce in Britain Today’, *Marriage and Family Living* 15 (1953), p. 300. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Rebecca J. Pulju, ‘Finding a *Grand Armour* in Marriage in Postwar France’, in Kristin Celello and Hanan Kholoussy (eds.), *Domestic Tensions, National Anxieties: Global Perspectives on Marriage, Crisis and Nation* (Oxford, 2016), p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Collins, *Modern Love*, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Ibid*., p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. For the classic statements on emotional relationships between husbands and wives of higher social classes in the eighteenth century Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*; Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth Century England* (New York, 1978);Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998); For evidence of the companionate marriage model in the nineteenth century see Jeanne Peterson*, Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Bloomington, 1989); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall*, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Collins, *Modern Love*, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. *Ibid*., p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Jane Lewis, David Clark and David Morgan, *Whom God Hath Joined Together: The Work of Marriage Guidance* (London, 1992), p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Martin Francis, ‘Flight From Commitment?’, p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. See Lesley Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, pp. 136-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Eustace Chesser, *Love and Marriage* (London, 1963: First published, 1957), pp. 51, 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. *Ibid*, p. 52. Note that the obsession with the self here did not refer to the type of intense psychological search for self-realisation that characterised the following decades, rather its more simplistic meaning of behaving selfishly and being concerned with one’s own needs over anyone else’s (although the search for self-realisation could certainly encourage a degree of selfishness too as its critics made clear). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Eustace Chesser, *You Must Have Love* (London, 1965: First published, 1960), p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. *Ibid*., p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Chesser, *Woman and Love*, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Barbara Cartland, *Marriage for Moderns* (London, 1955), p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Barbara Cartland, *Love, Life and Sex: A Book of Happiness and Fulfilment for Men and Women of All Ages* (London, 1973, first published, 1957)*, p. 91.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *Ibid*., p.103 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Chesser, *You Must Have Love*, pp. 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
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110. Madeline Kerr, *The People of Ship Street* (London, 1958), p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Claire Langhamer, ‘Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain’*, Cultural and Social History* 9 (2012), p. 279; Claire Langhamer, ‘Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth Century England’, *The Historical Journal* 50 (2007), pp. 173-96. Christine Gandy, ‘Paying for Love: Women’s Work and Love in Popular Films in Interwar Britain’, Journal of the History of Sexuality 19 (2010), pp. 483-507; Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Stephen Brooke, ‘A Certain Amount of Mush’: Love, Romance, Celluloid and Wax in the Mid-Twentieth Century’, in Alana Harris and Timothy Willem Jones, *Love and Romance in Britain, 1918-1970* (2015), pp. 83, 85-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. *Daily Mirror*, January 29th 1954, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
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115. Eustace Chesser, *Love Without Fear: How to Achieve Sex Happiness in Marriage* (London, 1949, first published as *Love Without Fear:* *A Plain Guide to Sex Technique for Every Married Adult* (London, 1941), p.15. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Eustace Chesser, *Love and Marriage* (London, 1957), p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
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123. *Ibid*., [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Chesser, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
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126. *Ibid*., pp. 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. *Ibid*., p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Ibid., p. 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Chesser, *You Must Have Love*, p. 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
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144. *Daily Mirror,* June 29th 1955, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Cohen, *Family Secrets*, p.211. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. *Ibid*. For her discussion of the *Daily Mail* see pp. 204-211. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. *Ibid*.,p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. *Daily Mirror*, 14th March, 1956, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. *Woman’s Mirror*, Oct 15th 1960, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. *The Guardian*, January 22nd 1969, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, 1999, first published 1988), p. xxvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. *Ibid*., p. xxv. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *Ibid*., p. xxvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Following Thomson, the term ‘Bowlbyism’ has been used to emphasise that what is of interest to this analysis is not so much the work of Bowlby himself, than ‘the broader influence and popularisation of some of his key assumptions’. Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 79. The term was first used by Denise Riley in her important work *War in the Nursery: Theories of Mother and Child* (London, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. G. M. Carstairs, *This Island Now* (London,1964), p. 49.  [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London, 1963), p. 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. ‘Our Image of God Must Go’, *The Observer*, March 17th 1963, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. ‘Living With Sex’, *The Observer*, June 13th 1965, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Daniel Jenkins, ‘Religion and Coming of Age’, in John A. T. Robinson and David L. Edwards, *The Honest to God Debate* (London, 1963), p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. ‘Living with Sex’. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution*, p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Patricia Robbins, *Lady Chatterley’s Daughter* (London, 1961), p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Lynn Reid Banks, *The L Shaped Room* (London, 1966, first published 1960), p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Although one reader’s response to the question of why they read Mills & Boon novels in a 1969 survey was: ‘They are clean and wholesome without any unpleasant sexy stuff’ (Peter Mann, *The Romantic Novel: A Survey of Reading Habits* (London, 1969), p. 22), the work of Joseph McAleer has shown that the company had an editorial policy of changing with the times to maintain high sales figures and thus readily incorporated the changing sexual mores into its plotlines, (Joseph McAleer, *Passion’s Fortune: The Story of Mills & Boon* (Oxford, 1999), p.4. Indeed, Jay Dixon has claimed that: ‘Mills & Boon novels, far from being against change, are in some areas ahead of society in their demand for a shift in public opinion.’, Jay Dixon, *The Romance Fiction of Mills & Boon* (London, 1999), p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Rachel Lindsay, *Song in My Heart* (London, 1961), p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Margaret Rome, *The Marriage of Caroline Lindsay* (London, 1968), p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Faith Spicer, *Sex and the Love Relationship* (London, 1972), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. *Ibid*., p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. J. H. Wallis, *Thinking About Love* (London, 1969), p. 157. J. H. Wallis was Training Officer for the NMGC since 1955, author of numerous books on the topic of love, marriage and marital counselling, and regular broadcaster on radio and television. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Spicer, *Sex and the Love Relationship*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. ‘Living With Sex’. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 325. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. *Ibid*., p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *Ibid*, p. 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Carstairs, *This Island Now*, p. 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. *Ibid.* pp. 260-1 [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
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188. *Ibid*., p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. *Ibid*., p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. *Ibid*., p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Carstairs, *This Island Now*, p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. *Ibid*., pp. 91-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. *Ibid.,* p. 98*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Sidney M. Jourard, *Healthy Personality: An Approach from the Viewpoint of Humanistic Psychology* (New York, 1974), p. 300. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Jeffreys, *Personal Values*, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, pp. 252, 325. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Carstairs, *This Island Now*, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. *Ibid*., p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Cook, ‘From Controlling Emotion’, p. 632. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. *Ibid*., p. 632-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. *Ibid*., p. 95. Thomas Dixon has argued that it was in the 1970s and 1980s that ‘attachment theory’ really began to influence standard childcare advice and cultural attitudes, however this chapter is in agreement with Thomson that the influence of Bowlbyism on 1960s culture was hugely significant. See Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
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204. *Ibid*., p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
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209. *Ibid*., p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. *Ibid*., p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Rosemary Haughton, *Love* (Harmondsworth, 1974, first published 1970), p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. *Ibid*., p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
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214. *Ibid*., p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
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221. Wallis, *Thinking About Love*, pp. 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. Bowlby, *Growth of Love*, pp. 95-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
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227. *Ibid*., p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
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230. *Ibid*.,p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
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237. *Ibid*., pp. 54-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
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240. *Ibid*., p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
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247. Grogan, *Encountering America*, pp. 1, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Rogers, *Encounter Groups*, p. 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Grogan, *Encountering America*, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (London, 1990, first published 1959), p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
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253. Barry Alan Farber, *Self-Disclosure in Psychotherapy* (New York, 2006), p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Sidney Jourard, *The Transparent Self* (New York, 1964), pp. 24-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. See Farber, *Self-Disclosure*, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
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257. *Ibid*., p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
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260. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
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262. *Ibid*., p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. *Ibid*., p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
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268. George R. Bach and Ronald M. Deutsch, *Pairing: How to Achieve Genuine Intimacy* (New York, 1970), pp. 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. *Ibid*., p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. *Ibid*., pp. 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. *The Sun*, November 16th, 1970, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
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276. George R. Bach and Peter Wyden, *The Intimate Enemy: How to Fight Fair in Love and Marriage* (New York, 1970, first published 1968), p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
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281. Rogers, *Encounter Groups*, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Jourard, *Healthy Personality*, p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. *Ibid*., p.16. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. Linda Francke, “See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me, Heal Me: The Encounter Group Explosion,” *New York* (May 25, 1970), p. 36. Cited in Frum, *The 70s*, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Rogers, *Encounter Groups*, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. *Ibid*., p. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. *Ibid*., pp. 76-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. *The* *Observer*, April 23rd 1972, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. Rogers, *Encounter Groups*, p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. *Ibid*., p. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
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294. Perhaps its most visible legacy has been on the creation of groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous which have familiarised the encounter group method. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. *The Observer*, Aug 20th 1972, p. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
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299. *Ibid*., pp. 85-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. David and Vera Mace, *We Can Have Better Marriages if we Really Want Them* (London, 1975, first published 1974), p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Taken from the description on the present Association’s website: <http://www.bettermarriages.org/about/history-of-better-marriages/> [accessed: 12 May 2016] [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
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306. See Cohen, *Family Secrets*, p. 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
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312. See Jonathon Green’s preface to the 1997 edition of Jenny Fabian and Johnny Byrne, *Groupie* (London, 1997), p. v. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Cohen, *Family Secrets*, p. 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. *Ibid*., p. 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. *Ibid*., pp. 25-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
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