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978-0-521-76004-1 - Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918–1963

Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher

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## Sex Before the Sexual Revolution

Famously, at least for Philip Larkin, sexual intercourse did not begin until 1963. So what did sex mean for ordinary people before the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s? They have often been pitied by later generations as repressed, unfulfilled and full of moral anxiety. This book provides the first rounded, first-hand account of sexuality in marriage in the early and mid-twentieth century. These award-winning authors look beyond the conventions of silence among the respectable majority to challenge stereotypes of ignorance and inhibition. Based on vivid, compelling and frank testimonies from a socially and geographically diverse range of individuals, the book explores a spectrum of sexual experiences, from learning about sex and sexual practices in courtship, to attitudes to the body, marital ideals and birth control. It demonstrates that while the era's emphasis on silence and strict moral codes could for some be a source of inhibition and dissatisfaction, for many the culture of privacy and innocence was central to fulfilling and pleasurable intimate lives.

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