

LSFS19 29.5.1989

Maria

Q: ... we could start a bit with you saying a bit more about say your family background which - presumably your family are still in Spain?

A: Yeah, my family's still in Spain, they live over there, my sister used to be here, but she went off to Spain not long ago, and...

Q: Well, did you decide to come over here of your own accord -

A: Yes.

Q: - or was it, it wasn't anything to do with them sort of -

A: No, no, I decided to come basically for the language, I wanted to learn the language, and mainly you know because in Spain it's really difficult to - to get away from home and have an independent life, you know, because the possibilities for work and employment are really, you know, (?) short, and this was a different - this is a different way of life that I really like, I don't like the Spanish way of life, and I was more independent, you know, otherwise I would have had to stay with my family for a long time, you know, and I didn't like that so I came here a year. It's not that I came - I really have a good relation with my family, a really open relation but it's not - I hate it feeling you know, dependent from someone.

Q: How many of them are there?

A: Oh, well, I just have one sister and one brother so it's a really large family.

Q: And are you the youngest?

A: No, I'm the middle, I'm in the middle. My sister is just one year and a half older than I am and my brother is - he is just nine...

Q: So whereabouts are your family in Spain?

A: Well they live in Barcelona, but they are not from Barcelona, my father is from - he's actually from a [SPANISH VILLAGE] in, and my mother is from a [SPANISH VILLAGE].

Q: Yes.

A: Well we came to Barcelona for... to work because it's not possible to work in... so they came really to work and then they make their own lives there and everything, and all my family is there as well so -

Q: So they've all settled in Barcelona.

A: Yeah. And I was born in Barcelona.

Q: And what - you mentioned you'd done like the equivalent of A-levels -

A: Yeah

Q: - in presumably in Spanish equivalent -

A: Yeah

Q: What did you do those in?

A: Well I think the system is different, I think here you have to choose subjects and there it's more general, you have to choose between science like physics and maths and everything like that or you can choose, this is when you are in ...you can choose between literature and languages and Latin and Greek and ... you know, literature, language and Latin, Greek -

Q: So you do all those bits of subjects within the same exams -

A: ... yeah

Q: And what - how old are you when you take those?

A: Well I finished when I was seventeen.

Q: So they're a bit earlier than here, 'cos here we tend to finish, it's usually you're - you're in sixth form taking A-levels, you're eighteen in the year that you finish.

A: The thing is when you finish the A-levels you take a pre-university course and then you're eighteen at a pre-university course which is... preparation for university, but I didn't do that.

Q: What did you do?

A: Well, I came here then.

Q: Oh, right.

A: I came here...two years and English.

Q: ... So were you seventeen when you came here?

A: Yeah, I was seventeen.

Q: So you've been here how long, three years?

A: No, a year and a half. I was seventeen, I was going to be eighteen.

Q: Right. Right. And now you're - that's right. Now you're nineteen.

A: I'm nineteen, nearly twenty.

Q: Well, twenty -

A: Twenty in October, yeah. My sister was here when I came so I stayed with her, it was like, you know, somewhere to go, but I didn't live with her for a long time, because I don't get on with my sister when I live with her, when I live with her. I prefer not to live with her.

Q: How old's she?

A: She's twenty - she's twenty-one now...

Q: And - so can you get on with her when she - like when you're not actually living together?

A: Yeah, we do actually, we have, you know, quite a close relationship when we're not living together, but when we are we just... we don't get on at all.

Q: And you also put that you'd done something on tourism and languages, was that for university?

A: Yeah, ... university... I did for a while. Actually the - actually one of the reasons why I came here was because I really liked that course, but it's a university course in Spain and it's four years in university, you know, the same course can take here six months, it's really... the system, the educational system in Spain's really bad, you know, because, you know due to the employment problem they try to keep people in university, colleges for, you know, for a long time,... and really useless things to know which is, you know, not going to -

Q: - to help you.

A: Not going to help you, but they try to keep people there because otherwise they would increase the unemployment lists.

Q: So who finances you while you're doing it, is it your family or -

A: Yeah, my - well, it's - the university, when you go to university, is financed by your family, you don't have the chance to pay for your own studies because it's really difficult to get a job. Some people do and they study... but it's really difficult and it takes longer. And then, you know, college is actually really is financed by the government ... which is also really bad, I don't think it's really... 'cos they use the books every year, the same books, so they could - we could actually get...

Q: It makes it more expensive.

A: Yeah, it does.

Q: So in some ways is it like a cheap way almost for the government to keep the unemployment figures down?

A: Yeah.

Q: 'Cos the families are generally paying for their children to go there.

A: Yeah, yeah, it's really really bad. 'Cos you study all sorts of useless things, I mean four years in... course is a waste of time, it's really a waste of time, it's a university course and you end up really well prepared but also it's depressing, I have all my friends there, they study at the moment, and you go to see them ... and you're really depressed because they don't see any way out, it's really depressing and when you go and get, you know when you finish and you go out and get a job you don't get there unless you are, you know, you know someone in that company or - it's really... to get...you have to make sure that the person who's (?) serving you is not the boss's daughter or something like that.

Q: So was it your idea to come over here?

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean it was your own kind of initiative to come.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what's the job you're doing here again?

A: Well, I'm working for - it's an (?) INVESTMENT COMPANY and I work for them translating documents because they have most businesses in Spain I translate the deeds and also documents... It's quite interesting...

Q: Do you have to do a lot of secretarial -

A: Yeah, I do as well, I do as well secretarial work.

Q: Had you learnt that already as well?

A: No, actually I - well I didn't have any qualifications when I got the job, I mean I'm really lucky to be there 'cos I don't have any secretarial skills, I mean I know, you know, how to type and things like that but it's not actually something I've been studying, so well, you know, I learn quite quick everything so they're happy with me.

Q: In terms of things like in the questionnaire it asked about sex education and you've more or less ticked that I think everything you learned at school, but that you'd also learned a lot about it before.

A: Yeah, well, my mum mainly was really open about it. I think, I can't even remember, I remember my mum telling us about, you know, sexuality, and - my mum didn't tell us about contraception much, you know, not much to know about it... so I remember her telling us about it but I remember I was really little, you know?

Q: How little?

A: I don't know, I was about ten or something like that.

Q: So did you understand it?

A: Yeah, I did - I got the basic idea, you know, and then now that I look at my, when I was at school and everything, I can notice a change between, you know, everything was more open from - from the age of, was it ten or seven for us, 'cos there was a change in the Spanish history, and teachers at school became really open about the... and everything and they actually gave us a lot of information about it at school.

Q: Did you have set lessons it was in?

A: Yeah, yeah. We had lessons. Well, we - we had a subject called Ethics -

Q: Ethics?

A: Ethics, and that was included in that, it was like half the term... and that was, you know, every year, we had sex lessons... Do you mind?

Q: No, not at all. And did those kind of repeat throughout your secondary school as well? Or did they think you kind of knew it after sort of -

A: Actually at secondary school we did really interesting points of sexuality like homosexuality and ... the kind of thing, you know, you always feel that you missed - it was more about, it was not about the physical act of sex, it was more about - from a sociological point of view, and homosexuality and... well, you know, the history, not the history of homosexuality but, you know, like talking about homosexuality in Greece or -

Q: What, and putting it in a social context?

A: Yeah, a social context. It was really interesting 'cos it was quite open, 'cos I remember the teacher - we actually did this subject, homosexuality, 'cos the teacher was homosexual -

Q: Really?

A: And he really liked to talk about it. And he was a really open man, you know, he was really interesting, you know...

Q: Was it easy to ask questions and things like that?

A: Yeah, yeah, he was really open, everything.

Q: And was that a mixed class -

A: Yeah.

Q: Boys and girls.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that was alright?

A: Yeah, perfectly alright, yeah. We - well we girls... the class was really open and we got on really well, we got on really well, it was like a group of friends.

Q: You said they taught you about the kind of social context and presumably they talked to you about the actual physical things, did they talk to you about kind of feelings as well or -

A: What do you mean, feelings?

Q: Like how you might be likely to feel, say, if you were having a relationship or making love with somebody, how it would affect your emotions.

A: Not really. Well we dealing now in a general way, but we didn't actually ... emotions.

Q: Well, mainly they don't here either but sometimes -

A: 'Cos it's difficult, you know, I think it works differently -you know, everyone doesn't feel the same, it's something that is not general, but -

Q: And did they teach you as well about things like masturbation and -

A: They did, yeah. Masturbation... at college... training course...

Q: And did - over here, quite often, talking to young women of the same kind of debate, talk about masturbation and your sex education classes, they've often taken it to be only kind of male masturbation.

A: No, that's what we talked about. They were talking to us about, you know, there's not just male masturbation, there's female masturbation, they were trying to make us understand that, you know, because when - yeah, it's true, when you say to someone masturbation you imagine...

Q: Yeah, well that's certainly what a lot of people said to me, which you know, isn't really what the question we've put meant at all, in the questionnaire. And did they teach you about AIDS as well, or was that not -

A: Well I - they didn't talk to me about AIDS 'cos they didn't know much about it so they didn't want to give us the wrong idea, but, you know, I've heard about AIDS through other, you know, you know ... here and information in the papers, things like that.

Q: So most of your information has come from kind of the media and... and things like that.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Is that over here or in Spain?

A: Well, in Spain as well. I think - yeah, in Spain they're really trying hard ... especially in ... because... you know it's totally transformed... It's - it's an important point for homosexuals now. It's quite a risky place, it's a problem. It's really interesting as well that - 'cos I left Barcelona for two years and I came - I went back to Barcelona, and I find really - find ... really homosexual orientated, you know?

Q: Really? Much more than -

A: Even my friends, I mean I found - I found my friends and they came over here to visit me and some of my friends have discovered they are homosexuals and, you know, it was quite something to think about for me.

Q: But you hadn't thought about anything like that?

A: Well, yeah, you know, I thought about homosexuality, but I always thought about homosexuality as something that happened to someone else and now it's, you know, something close to me. Two of my best friends are homosexuals, and it was, you know, it was interesting to talk to them, see their point of view. They told me how they felt, you know, because it was - they were feeling like really messed up, 'cos it was a change for them to discover all these feelings in themselves.

Q: Is that male friends or female friends?

A: One of my best female friends is homosexual, one of my friends ... is homosexual.

Q: You've got two. And is that - kind of in Barcelona, is that kind of ostracised or is there a lot of prejudice or -

A: I found ... really, really gay, when I went back, like I mean you go out at night, there's a lot of - of gay pubs and things like that, you know. I mean I don't find it here, I find... it's more ...more compact than London, it's not so -

Q: Spread out.

A: Spread out. And, you know, you find all these - you go to a club or something, you're always finding - like here I hardly, I hardly see any homosexuals, but there you go in the streets and you find loads, I mean it was really amazing for me to see all these -

Q: And are people really open about it?

A: Yeah, really open. Probably here is - you know, they're...

Q: Yes, 'cos there are quite a lot of gay clubs and things in -in London.

A: Yeah, but it's not only - there it's not only the gay clubs 'cos I don't - I don't normally go to gay clubs, but you know, even in a normal club you find loads of homosexuality in there... I really accept homosexual equality, which is funny because people here, they're really against it, some of them -

Q: Here? Yeah, there's quite a lot of prejudice here, which is why I think you don't see so much of it kind of just walking down...

A: They're really conservative about the idea, really really conservative and if I tell them off, no there's nothing wrong with homosexuality, then they think oh so you're a homosexual. I tell them, I'm not a homosexual, I think it's something - I mean heterosexual... is something that comes, is mainly a religious idea that, you know, from Christians and everyone become like having a male and female relationship. Homosexuality is something natural, it's a natural feeling and, you know, in Greek society the normal thing was, you know, being homosexual, not heterosexual.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: But they're really conservative,... they get really aggressive about it, say oh I hate homosexuals -

Q: You don't think some people are quite, I don't know, afraid of it?

A: Yeah, they may be,... disgusting.

Q: Did - either of your friends who've become homosexual, did that make you kind of think about or question your own sexuality differently?

A: Yeah... yeah, I know I'm not homosexual but (?).. my fault, I'm sure about my sexuality ... homosexual.

Q: But it might make you sort of see things in a -

A: Yeah, it makes you think, you know, it makes you think and see things in a different way and probably accept it more, mainly because they're really good friends, and I don't think people that criticise homosexuality have, you know, information about it so really something to base their ideas on 'cos they - they don't actually have the problem I think...

Q: You talked, or rather you put in your questionnaire, that you'd had a number of sexual relationships, some of which had included sexual intercourse and some of which - is that mainly over here or Spain as well?

A: I haven't had lots of sexual relationships - yeah, mainly over here. I don't like to get into a relationship where the sexual point is the basic reason of the relation, which is really disappointing because, you know,...

Q: What, you mean sex is disappointing or the fact that people go for it is disappointing?

A: Yeah, the fact that people, you know, show this interest about you because... really interested about you but they just want to please themselves.

Q: Have you found that a lot?

A: Yeah, I mean every time. Yeah, it's really disappointing, but yeah -

Q: Is that with English men or maybe Spanish men or any other -

A: I actually haven't had any relationship with a Spanish one.

Q: What, it's all been English?

A: Not - English, Dutch, I don't know...

Q: Do you think there's any element of it at all in them sort of seeing you as somebody who's away from home and therefore being like ..

A: I've never thought about it. No, I don't - I don't think so, just, you know, I'm just a possibility like any other.

Q: No, I was just wondering whether, you know, were you to be living here with your mother, father, sister, brother, you know, in your house somewhere or here or something, if you went out with the same people, maybe they wouldn't - or maybe they would - automatically think that you were available in the same way as you being like totally away from home, do you know what I mean, you don't have any family around who's actually going to say kind of well, watch it sort of thing to either him or you or -

A: I haven't - I haven't had this...

Q: So how can you tell, do you know straight away that someone's kind of not really interested in you for yourself?

A: Yeah, I can tell, I mean there's people that, you know, are really obvious about it, but I mean it's - it's something that, I don't know, that - specially when I... my English, I do not have the same facility of expression to - to make someone have an idea of myself... to make ... people ... how to communicate and talk to them, so probably I - I don't have the same facility here as I could have in Spain. So, you know, at the beginning mainly, when my English was

worse I – I had the feeling that, you know, people should ... because, because my, I mean my external image was... what I could offer wasn't that obvious and difficult for me to express myself, you know. It's like, you know, it's like if I - if I go out with German boy that doesn't speak English, doesn't speak Spanish, I would feel really used because what's the point in a relation when you cannot understand each other?

Q: Right.

A: So it was a bit the same, you know, I had more facility than I could have had with a German boy, but it was a bit the same, you know.

Q: So you had relationships where you have kind of been able to communicate?

A: Yeah, I had. Actually (?) I can talk, I had - I've been going out with just two men (?) now for a long time, I've been going out with a Canadian boy and that was - sorry - at the beginning of coming here, I mean it wasn't - I mean it wasn't working because of the capacity of expression, I notice it wasn't working for that, and there was no point in the relation. So it was really short. And then I had a bit longer a relation with an English boy and...'cos he's actually, as a person he's actually really poor, I mean he's really materialistic and -

Q: What, he's just into money?

A: Yeah, I mean not my money but he really cared about the image he could give, like having a nice car, having a nice flat and having a girl to go out with... and that's all, so I haven't...relation...

Q: How long did those relationships last?

A: Well, the first one didn't last for long, it was about three weeks, and the second one was about three months.

Q: And were either of those sexual relationships?

A: Yeah.

Q: What, both of them?

A: Yeah, both, yeah. The first one wasn't very much because it was just for three weeks, and the second one was actually - it was, I actually think it was mainly sex because it's also really strange because - I don't think, well I didn't enjoy the sex we were having. I mean even the sexual relation we were having was really poor and -I mean it was a really silly relation, it was a waste of time.

Q: And was the one you had with a Canadian -

A: Yeah

Q: - was that your first sexual relationship or had you had -

A: No, he was - it was my second actually, I haven't had that many. My first one was in Spain and it wasn't too good -... the first.

Q: And had you - like when you had your first sexual experience, was it something that you'd intended to do or was it like something that happened by accident?

A: No, I wanted to do it.

Q: So you kind of planned it in a way?

A: No, we didn't plan it but it was like, you know, it had to happen.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was seventeen, it was just before I came here...

Q: And did you know what you kind of expected from sex?

A: Yeah, so it was quite disappointing.

Q: 'Cos what did you expect, what did you think it would be like?

A: Well, I didn't expect much from the first relation so it was -it wasn't really disappointing because I, you know, I knew it wasn't going to be great or something so - it was okay, I think if - I mean sex for me, it's not really important really, I mean it's always... I don't - I don't really care if sex is not going really well, but of course the other person cares so you have to -

Q: - care. Do you think sex is more important for the man then, than for the woman?

A: Yeah, definitely, yes. I mean it's, you know, it's... problem... has a genetic explanation, I mean we don't have the same sexual, same sexualities.

Q: What do you think the difference is?

A: Well, even, you know, even if we could... an orgasm it would be different. A male orgasm is not the same as a woman's so - well, everything, we ovulate once a month and it's something - is probably the only different thing between man and woman but it's different and it's there.

Q: But do you think men and women feel differently...?

A: I think men feel - normally they feel, they need more sex than woman and... it's like some - something they have to do, you know, it's like a need, it's like when I'm thirsty I drink and that's all, you know, they need to have sex ... natural thing. Probably for woman it's, you know... easily than men.

Q: What about things like pleasure?

A: Well I think pleasure is - I think it could be the same.

Q: Mm, I think it could be the same.

A: I think pleasure for instance in an orgasm is the same for men as the woman but the..., you know, the - the time to hit that point or - is different - I mean the point is the same in itself but the way to get through is different.

Q: Do you think - I mean, have the men that you've been involved with, have they actually given you pleasure?

A: No. No, actually I haven't had an orgasm through, you know, through intercourse...

Q: Have you had it through other ways?

A: Yeah. I think.

Q: What, through yourself doing it or sort of someone -

A: Well through myself doing it or somebody else doing it, but not through inter - sexual intercourse. I haven't tried actually.

Q: Do you see pleasure as having to come through intercourse?

A: No, not at all. I mean intercourse is just, you know, it's something that... men's sexual ... having sex... but it's not the most important thing, I don't think it's the centre of the pleasure in a sexual relationship.

Q: What do you think the important things are?

A: Well, there's lots of things you can do, you know,... like in my last relation... that lasted three months and it was really poor in that way 'cos the only thing was that, it was intercourse, it was not kissing or anything else, it was just that, so it was -

Q: So he wasn't bothering to sort of -

A: No.

Q: - to give you any stimulation.

A: No, it was really a selfish thing, you know.

Q: Could you talk to him about that?

A: Yeah, I actually - actually did, but...

Q: He was what?

A: He was really, you know, selfish in that way, he just - I mean he didn't care about me at all...

Q: Yeah. Sounds like a good thing you got rid of him.

A: Yeah.

Q: What did you do about contraception?

A: Well I normally - I'm quite... about this, 'cos I've been - I've been given advice about contraception and then... - well yes, I've used contraception, I normally have used condoms because, you know, I don't want to - to get into ... or something that you really can just use for... So, you know, I used the pill when I was going out with this man for three months -

Q: Right.

A: - because I found he was getting serious and I thought it was a good idea, but I stopped using it ... waste of time. But sometimes I don't use anything, like when I have my period or something like that, 'cos I mean it's not totally sure I'm not going to get pregnant but it's quite sure I'm not and -

Q: Do you do that because you don't like using condoms or because of any other reason?

A: I think condoms are really - it's not (?) valid just because, you know - ... lazy way to ...

Q: What, you can't be bothered to use anything?

A: I'm really irresponsible in that way actually because ... I - once I thought I was pregnant, right, and I didn't use anything and I was - delayed my period, but I experienced myself, it was that problem, you know, like someone - someone, my sister said to me, oh what are you going to do, you know. Well, I had it really clear, you know, well if I'm pregnant I know I'm not prepared to have a baby so I'm just gonna have an abortion. It was really easy, I mean it wasn't traumatic, and, you know, it wasn't depressing,... it was very (?) natural and -

Q: But presumably you weren't pregnant?

A: No, I wasn't.

Q: But would it have been easy for you to get an abortion?

A: Yeah, I mean - yeah. It might be really cruel of me but yeah, I mean I think I live for myself, I could be selfish or not, everyone is... 'cos the main thing in this life for me is myself, you know, so I'm not going to destroy my life, I'm just going to...

Q: At the same time as which in a way you're taking risks by sort of allowing yourself to possibly get pregnant.

A: Yeah. Yeah...

Q: But is it - like you were saying it's a bit like a lazy way of doing things, like can't be bothered to use a condom or whatever -

A: Yeah.

Q: Is it - I mean is it that or is there a sort of idea that it's more kind of exciting or whatever, just not having to do that?

A: I don't know because, you know...'cos, you know, I had this feeling when I did - when I don't use anything, you know, I had this feeling I'm not going to get pregnant, you know, I was really sure.

Q: Was that around your period as well or was that -

A: Yeah. So I mean it's not - it's not a hundred per cent secure but - I would...

Q: What about things like AIDS, are they - is that anything that you ever think about?

A: I've never worried about AIDS because I've actually just had three relationships, and I never questioned myself could this person have AIDS. It's probably silly 'cos everyone could have AIDS, but I've never questioned it to myself. I probably would have mind if I'd had a lot of sexual relationships but I don't, so - I don't, I'm not worried about the problem like, you know, that could affect myself.

Q: How much do you know about AIDS?

A: Yeah.

Q: But how much do you know about AIDS?

A: Well... you know, I know how - different ways you could get it... what sort of ... you use and - not much actually. I know in a general way.

Q: Do you know how sort of you might get it from one of your partners for instance?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What would that be through?

A: It would be through sperm... sexual relations through sperm.

Q: Or any sort of blood as well.

A: Yeah. I don't think you can kill each other in a sexual relationship (laugh)...

Q: No, but somebody might have a kind of cut or - you know, just some little something.

A: But not through kissing like some people think.

Q: No. But who do you feel is most at risk from AIDS?

A: Well, women can carry the virus, and actually not - not show the symptoms of the illness, and men can actually - I'm not really sure, I don't know much about AIDS, but... men probably.

Q: Well, in a way, anyone is at risk who actually kind of has a sexual relationship or shares a needle in drugs and things with someone who has got infected. But then it's difficult to know who has got infected because sometimes it doesn't actually show, you know people can actually have it for years without it coming to the surface so that it's actually diagnosed, unless you have a test, and obviously people don't all go rushing off to do a test.

A: It's really interesting also when - I last went to Spain, that was about three months ago, was a commercial on TV, it was promoting AIDS...

Q: What, anti-AIDS?

A: Anti-AIDS. It was anti-AIDS commercial. And the way they tried to get through, people was - was really natural and really probably (?) hurting, I went with this English friend of mine, we were watching this commercial on TV and we got really depressed... AIDS... how can they show that in TV properly here, they wouldn't show the same thing, it was really gruesome, you know what I mean, it was really, this is it, you know, so it's up to you. Which I think is better in a way.

Q: Yes, if it makes you sit up and take notice.

A: Mm. ... actually does, not like, you know, someone telling you until... you're infected but, you know, actually telling, you know... makes you oh yeah well, you know, think about it.

Q: 'Cos people - is it three relationships you've had?

A: Yeah, sexual -

Q: Had they, to you, as far as you knew, had they had relationships with other people?

A: Yes, yes. I don't know, I didn't see the possibility of, you know, getting infected through them, I don't know... I didn't think -

Q: So it didn't really seem particularly important?

A: No. Probably it is actually.

Q: So which - well I suppose in the sense that getting pregnant didn't seem to be that important to you either, which was the most sort of prevalent in your like thinking about things that might happen to you, pregnancy or AIDS?

A: Well, pregnancy, yeah, pregnancy probably. 'Cos pregnancy is something that is more possible, is more - well is not, is not that is more possible but is something that is there and

could affect your life, and - I don't know, you know anyone can, almost anyone can get you pregnant but AIDS is something that is not so extensive.

Q: Do you think it could become extensive?

A: Yeah. Yeah, it's a really - it's a problem.

Q: Can you see kind of yourself doing anything about it as you sort of get older and as you have more relationships?

A: Yeah well I would start - I would always make sure my partners well if they get into a serious relationship I mean it would be important to me to - to have a test or to have - or you know, for my partner to get test about it so we could always enjoy our relation ... having any worries about it.

Q: But do you think you could ask somebody you were having a relationship to go off and have a test?

A: Yeah, definitely, yeah. If I get into a serious relationship, I mean, not with someone that I mean if I have a really - you know like easygoing relationship, I wouldn't ask this person 'cos I wouldn't see any future. Maybe I would make love or have sex with this person once or I wouldn't have the confidence mainly to tell this person this, but if this person is going to be my partner and I am going to have several sexual relations with this person I would... yeah, I would have it myself and probably tell him to go as well, or expect him to go with me...

Q: Is it something you think you would talk about with a partner?

A: Yeah, 'cos it's quite, you know it's quite serious, I mean it's quite ... you know, probably this doesn't get serious... but ...on the other hand it's really - you know, you never know what you can -

Q: No, it's true.

A: If it takes several years to - to, how do you put it -

Q: Well, just sort of -

A: - materialise, yeah, I mean you never know but you know, the past relations you had or - ..be sure.

Q: And can you think of other ways you could protect yourself from it?

A: Well, you can always protect yourself by using condoms.

Q: But do you think you will do that?

A: No, I wouldn't have - that's why, I wouldn't have long lasting relationship with having to use condoms all the time 'cos I - I mean it's - it's a good way, I mean it's not a hundred per cent sure contraception but it's - it's not practic, you know, like having the pill would be, it's not really a practic thing.

Q: What, do you mean practical or prac -

A: Practical, practical, sorry.

Q: So have you ever asked somebody to use a condom?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And did they?

A: Yeah.

Q: And did that come from you or was it something that they were going to do anyway?

A: Well it did come from me and also it did come from them as well.

Q: So, say if you're in a relationship with somebody - I mean I know you haven't had that many sexual relationships but it's like the possibility is there for the first time sort of thing, would you approach it thinking that you would use something to protect yourself or would you actually feel

that you just wanted to see kind of what it was like, and maybe it was near your period or whatever, so -

A: No, no I would use - I would definitely use contraception, you know, the first time I had sex with someone but I would definitely use a condom or something, a condom...

Q: A diaphragm?

A: ...

Q: Yes, to go and have it fitted and -

A: Yeah...

Q: So I think in what you wrote, one of the - you said that you'd had a relationship that ... unwilling for sexual intercourse, was that somebody - ?

A: Yeah well he was, actually with this relation I had for three months and I avoided - unwilling because sometimes I ... against my, I wasn't forced to do it but I didn't want to do it, I wasn't actually forced but I didn't want to -

Q: So you weren't actually sort of raped or anything -

A: No, I wasn't raped.

Q: But you didn't really - did he know that you didn't want to do it?

A: No. I didn't tell him, otherwise he would have stopped probably. But -

Q: But isn't that what you would have wanted?

A: That's right, yeah, that's right, it's not so - it's not actually that I didn't - I didn't want to do it, it was something that it was, you know, okay like, do you want a coffee, okay, fine, you drink the coffee, because you don't really feel like drinking the coffee but you drink it anyway.

Q: So did you not feel you could say, sort of, no, I don't want to?

A: Yeah well, actually, yeah, I could - I could have say it, but it was something - it was that I really was a really poor relation and it was a really poor sex relation mainly, so I think ... didn't give me any pleasure when I wanted... I mean it was just like, you know, it was really poor, it was - I thought it was gonna last for three minutes so -

Q: What, so you sort of get it over with?

A: Yeah.

Q: And on those sort of occasions, would you use something then as a protection?

A: Yeah, well I got on the pill after a month going with men so I mean I was protected some way. I mean I'm sure any married couple would have this sort of relations very often.

Q: Can you imagine a relationship where - where somebody did give you a lot of pleasure so that you would actually desire sex yourself for yourself?

A: Yeah, of course I can, yeah I can, but even - even so, if a sexual relationship gives you a lot of pleasure and, you know, is great, for me it's something that complements a relationship between two people, it has to be something that complements this good relation.

Q: So the actual relationship you have with the person sort of aside from sex is more important than the sex.

A: Yeah, mm.

Q: Have you met anyone who you thought could be like that yet?

A: Yeah, I suppose I wouldn't go for a relationship if I didn't think so because, as I told you, I don't think - well like that's how I think, you know, so I wouldn't go with anyone just for the pleasure of going to bed with this person. You know, I always try to - to, you know, even - I have always ... relation can finish, but I always want - I always want to learn something about it, and as I'm giving something I want this person to give me something... you know...

Q: And your friends who are - your friends who've become gay, do they worry about things like AIDS?

A: They do, yes, they do. Actually he's now ... and he was really worried when I last met him but he had, he had a test and he was negative. So he's quite happy about it and he takes precautions a little more seriously... he's really - he was having a lot of sexual relationships, different ones, and he was getting really risky.

Q: So do you feel that you're a person who takes risks?

A: I do take risks but - I mean I ... worry at the moment because the possibilities of where I can take risks are really - I mean my sexual life is not really wide, I don't really risk to myself. I do care about my friends naturally but it's not important for myself at the moment. But I wouldn't take risks if I would get into a serious relationship with someone.

Q: But if say, something turned out to be, you know, just a very short relationship that lasted a week or something like that, would you take risks with that?

A: I would - I wouldn't take risks, not now I mean, I wouldn't. 'Cos I mean I get - I get more and more informed about AIDS and all these sort of - only, sorry, not only AIDS but other illnesses, how do you call it, venereal?

Q: Yes, venereal disease, sexually transmitted disease.

A: 'Cos my sister went through one of these diseases and I got really worried about it, and promised myself I won't do it again.

Q: Yes, 'cos that's another risk as well as -

A: Yeah. I mean it's not - it's not really pleasant to... so -

Q: Yes, and you only really need to have a relationship, or to have sex with somebody once to catch something, it's not sort of a question of having to do it over and over again, you could be unlucky once.

A: The first time.

Q: Like with pregnancy.

A: Yeah, like with pregnancy.

Q: So do you think you'll take risks with pregnancy again, I mean is that - do you think that's the way you'll sort of approach that?

A: ... the main risk was pregnancy that you wouldn't have... I probably would take risks, I'm stupid enough. But it's not - I mean I'm quite sure it wouldn't affect my life that much, having an abortion or something like that. It's stupid, I know, but maybe for another person it would be really traumatic, you know, really depressing -

Q: But then would you want to have more than one abortion, in the sense that you could get pregnant more than once?

A: Well I wouldn't like it, I mean I wouldn't like to have an abortion but it's - mainly because of the physical, you know, experience you have to go through, not the psychological... experience you have.

Q: Do you feel you take risks in other ways, I mean obviously you smoke, do you see that as a risk?

A: Well, everything, I think everything I do, I'm quite consequent - do you use that word? I accept the consequences of everything I do. I know what consequences can I be exposed to if I smoke so I'm not really - I don't really - I'm aware of the consequences of everything I do. But, you know, it's like everything in life, I mean stupid things I know but -

Q: But do you think that it's a bit like fate?

A: What do you mean, fate?

Q: Like fatalistic. So, you know, if it happens it happens, if it doesn't it doesn't.

A: Yeah, I'm very optimistic ... and I like to live but I'm not afraid of dying.

Q: But do you feel you have any control over when you die?

A: No, I don't think, I don't think so, you don't have any control, if you die you die but, you know, it's something that happens. I'm not afraid of death.

Q: But do you think for instance, by smoking or by say even taking risks to do with AIDS by not using protection or whatever, do you feel then that you're - in a way they both cause, can cause death?

A: Yeah, yeah. But, you know - I mean I wouldn't like to die but I - I wouldn't like to die but I know I have to die, so I have to face it, and - yeah, well, I could die tomorrow from lung cancer or something like that, but it's a risk and everything in life is a risk anyway. You can cross the streets and be run over by a car and I think smoking is a really silly thing, but it's something...

Q: She said, stubbing her cigarette out. What about things like drugs, do you use any sorts of drugs?

A: No, I don't. I don't like - I like to be aware of what I'm doing, I don't like to be ... I really hate - I don't like drinking, mainly I don't like the taste, but I got drunk just once in my life and I hated it because it was, you know, a really strange feeling, it was like if - if someone was watching, it was me with my two persons, right, and my unconscious part was - or my conscious part was watching my unconscious part and I was feeling really stupid and not able to control myself, and I don't like that, I like to see and hear and feel what I'm doing -

Q: Right.

A: - and I guess it's a shame with any kind of drugs. I was... I mean I was not told -

Q: You have smoked?

A: Yeah, and I don't like it. I cannot say I haven't tried. And also I've tried cocaine and -

Q: What, sniffing it or -

A: Yeah, just once to see what it is, and it's not the same, I can say it's not the same like smoking dope... feeling, but ... I don't think it's natural sort of, I don't think that feeling you have of happiness and everything is great is natural, you better feel it like something you do naturally and then you congratulate yourself on it.

Q: Yes, you know where it's come from. So do any of your friends use drugs?

A: Well lots of my friends smoke dope.

Q: Any of them use sort of needle...?

A: ... I know from people that use is - needles and things like that, or people I used to be at school with, for instance, but they're not really my friends, I don't really have a relation like that. Now they're into it and it's really a shame -

Q: Yes, it's difficult to get out.

A: Yes, but actually my friends, the people I am most with, they don't - they don't use it.

Q: How do you meet people mainly over here?

A: I don't know, it's quite - it's quite easy to, it's quite easy for me to meet - I've noticed a great difference between the way English people socialise and Spanish people, Spanish people are more like - more open, you go to - every time you go out you meet lots of people, and here they are more like cool, it's really difficult for them to talk to you and -

Q: What, sort of intro-

A: Introduce themselves and, you know, make it... I don't think I'm a really shy person, I don't think I'm shy.

Q: Do you introduce yourself to people here quite easily?

A: I don't normally go to - I wouldn't even in Spain, but I wouldn't normally go to someone, hello, my name's... and - but you know, mainly you know, you know, I made friends like knowing someone and then this person introduces me to someone else and like, you know, a chain.

Q: Has it been any sort of kind of clubs or discos and things like that or is it mainly through friends introducing you to other friends?

A: Yeah, I don't - I don't go to clubs or to discos 'cos I don't like it, it's a meat market.

Q: What, for women or for both sexes?

A: Yeah. Well, for both. I mean you can find anything. I suppose, I mean, everyone - I like to talk, I love to talk and communicate and the possibility of communication in a discotheque where the music is so loud and -

Q: ...

A: Yeah, and everyone dresses so well just to see what chances they have... everything is so false, it's such a fake the whole thing, that I don't like it. I could go but I don't really enjoy myself.

Q: So what do you do most to enjoy yourself?

A: Well I normally just... (whistle)

Q: What were we saying? About -

A: Yeah, mainly - I have loads of friends coming here all the time, you know, and we have, you know, a drink, coffee or anything and we talk. I like people coming here and talking.

Q: What, just having people round to the flat?

A: Yeah, and I don't mind, you know, if they don't call and they just come, and - anytime, you know, they can come...

Q: 'Cos how many of you live here, is it -

A: Four - there's LORETTA, there's... and another English girl...

Q: So it's two Spanish and two English -

A: Mm.

Q: How did you meet them?

A: Well, I've always lived around ... and every time I've moved away I was - I was really missing the area 'cos, you know, you get used to it, you know where everything is, and... it's really central, and I was looking for something and I saw this place advertised, and I first moved with a Spanish friend of mine but she left and now these Spanish - this other Spanish friend of mine moved. I met LORETTA and ALISON here...

Q: So do you do much with the people in the flat?

A: Well I get on really well with LORETTA. The other English girl I hardly see her, I don't see her much, you know, but we - we get on quite well, and the other Spanish friend, I don't go out with her or something, she has her friends and I have my friends, but actually the closest relationship I have with... is LORETTA, we go out together sometimes. But she has her boyfriend and friends and I have my friends.

Q: How old is LORETTA?

A: LORETTA is twenty-two. We wanted... 'cos we were looking for someone a long time ago to share the other room, and we wanted two - we wanted two men to live here because it doesn't - it makes a difference, it doesn't make such a bitchy atmosphere, you know? 'Cos it was really a problem everyone was... all the time.

Q: Really, 'cos of the atmosphere?

A: Yeah, but, you know, we're... now.

Q: So do you think you'll stay here for a while?

A: Yeah, yeah, I'm staying here for a while, I like the place.

Q: And do you think you'll stay in England for a while?

A: Yeah, I'm staying for good here.

Q: So you don't want to go back to Barcelona.

A: No. I... I don't know why. I like to go, you know, and stay there but ... leave a while. Every time I go I really miss this, I have all my friends here. 'Cos I have friends there but now they're, you know, - they're men and other people and they're doing other things and you don't find you have got much in common with them like you used to have.

Q: So you've sort of transferred things over here.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what else do you think might happen to you in the future, like in terms of work and marriage and children and things like that?

A: I won't marry.

Q: You won't?

A: No, I won't.

Q: Not ever or -

A: I don't think - I don't think I would. I won't because - mainly because I think marriage is, I mean it's against my... has a lot of to see with religion, I'm not a religious person. If I want to live with someone I would and I just see marriage as a way of arranging things mainly for material things and -

Q: And legal things.

A: Like legalising the situation, but I don't feel I was born to get married and have loads of children and things like that.

Q: Do you think you will have children?

A: I would like to have just one children. If I have I wouldn't be really silly, I really feel like I have to be a really ... to have a child because it's not only you know, having a child, for your own pleasure to have a child and see like your future in it and like prolonging your - your -

Q: Like your own -

A: Yeah, I feel like having a child is creating like creating something, you know, you have to give an education and you're going to be a basic thing, this, this person is going to depend on you and everything this person is - is going to be in the future is really related to what, what you've been giving to this person when... a child... And I really have to be prepared to have a child, but it's an (?) etiological thing, I'd just like to have one child, and I think it's really enough. It's really enough just to have one child and, it's strange but I wouldn't really like to have a baby boy, I would like to have a girl.

Q: You would like to have a girl?

A: Yeah, I wouldn't like to have a -

Q: Perfectly reasonable.

A: Why?

Q: Well it's like something that's very familiar in a way.

A: Yeah, it's like, yeah - you know it's - it's something else that you know.

Q: What about things like work, do you see yourself as?

A: Well I would like to - I would like to get more qualified, you know, like I would love to - to do some, to start something apart from, you know... apart from working, I enjoy my work but I want to be more professional in some way.

Q: Do you think you'll carry on doing the same sort of work?

A: Yeah, I would carry on with translation works and something related to language and things like that I like.

Q: How would you describe yourself as a person?

A: As a person?

Q: Yeah, what sort of person would you say you are?

A: Well I think I'm really optimistic, it's probably because - I don't know, I know I've been depressed before in my life but I feel really extremely happy at the moment, and yeah, I have this feeling everything is going to be alright. I don't know, I think I'm quite optimistic and... As a person I still have to - to build myself, you know, like I need to know lots of things, not - not in - in a professional way, you know, not in a qualification like learning things in college but experiencing - experience and I really like to see people's behaviour, it really teaches you know, and...

Q: Do you think you might go to college here and do something or do you think you'll just carry on working and translating sort of work?

A: Well, I have to - to pay for everything... to finance myself. So if I could go to college and carry on working it would be perfect but actually... I haven't got to - to get any information about it, I don't know if I can do that. Or, you know, as long as - as it you know allows me to carry on working I'll do a course... I started ... by myself, I just went to the library, you know, and reading books. I know people doesn't have to ... but I did because I do appreciate it.

Q: No, it's a very good useful thing to do. It's interesting.

A: But sometimes you go and get a job and they say, where's your diploma and your qualifications, your paper -

Q: Yes, what and they don't accept that you've read the books, that you haven't got the paper.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you - does your family help you out with money at all or do you have to pay your own way?

A: Yeah, I have to pay myself. I really... so I don't want my family to pay for anything. I mean even they wanted - even when I first came here I was telling them everything and I hated - I mainly hated the situation where I was being, you know, financed by them, you know, everything I got was - I was leaving... I didn't have to pay anything, and, you know, if I wanted to go I wish my mum would give me the money, and I hated that, you know, so I had to change that 'cos I didn't like it, and even to - to pay for my travel expenses to come here, to have some money when I first came, I spent all summer working. I didn't want anyone to give me a penny, you know, I wanted to do it by myself so I could feel proud of myself. You know, I don't - it's not that I don't like to be grateful to someone but, you know... you feel -

Q: Yes, that you've done it for yourself.

A: Yeah.

Q: No, that's good. One thing I forgot to ask you was, in terms of your relationships, were - how old were the boys or men or whoever that you actually had the relationships with?

A: Normally, normally five or more, five years -

Q: Older.

A: Older or more than I am. They're quite - they're not really my age but I - I haven't, I've never been out with a male of my same age. I'm - I guess because I don't find them really mature,

well some of them are but generally they're not, and like this Canadian boy was twenty-nine and this boy that I've been going out with three months was twenty-six.

Q: What was his job, did he have a job?

A: The last one, the... oh he's, he works for an advertising company... main things... successful.

Q: Yeah, I imagine if he works for ADVERTISING AGENCY - with all Mrs. Thatcher's propaganda... And how did you meet him?

A: I met him at a friend's, he's actually - I was living before in ... and it happens to be all the block of flats I was living in, they were all young people and we used to go out together... And I made friends with these two twin brothers who used to live downstairs, and we're really good friends now, we're actually good friends, and he was, you know, a friend of a friend...

Q: So you've actually met quite a lot of friends here?

A: Yeah, I can't complain.