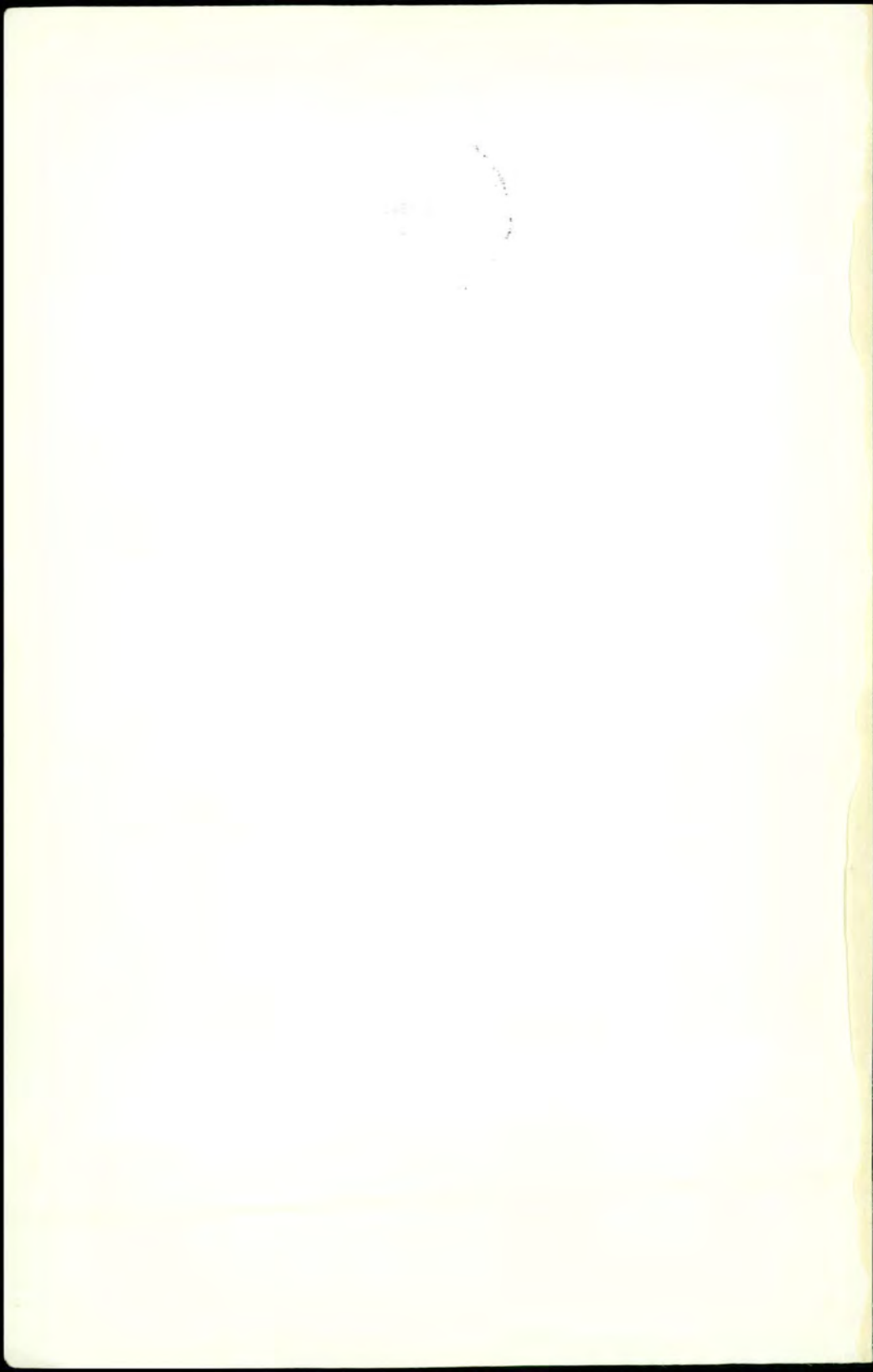


# Working Girls

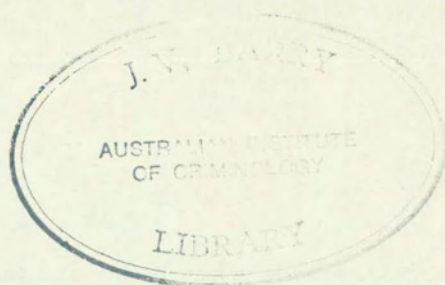
*Prostitutes, their Life  
and Social Control*

**ROBERTA PERKINS**

Australian Studies in Law, Crime and Justice







## **WORKING GIRLS**

**Australian Studies in Law, Crime and Justice**

*Wayward Governance: Illegality and its Control in the Public Sector*

Peter Grabosky

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# **Working Girls:**

## **Prostitutes, their life and social control**

**Roberta Perkins**



**Australian Institute of Criminology**

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*This book is dedicated to working girls everywhere*

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Roberta Perkins  
April 1991

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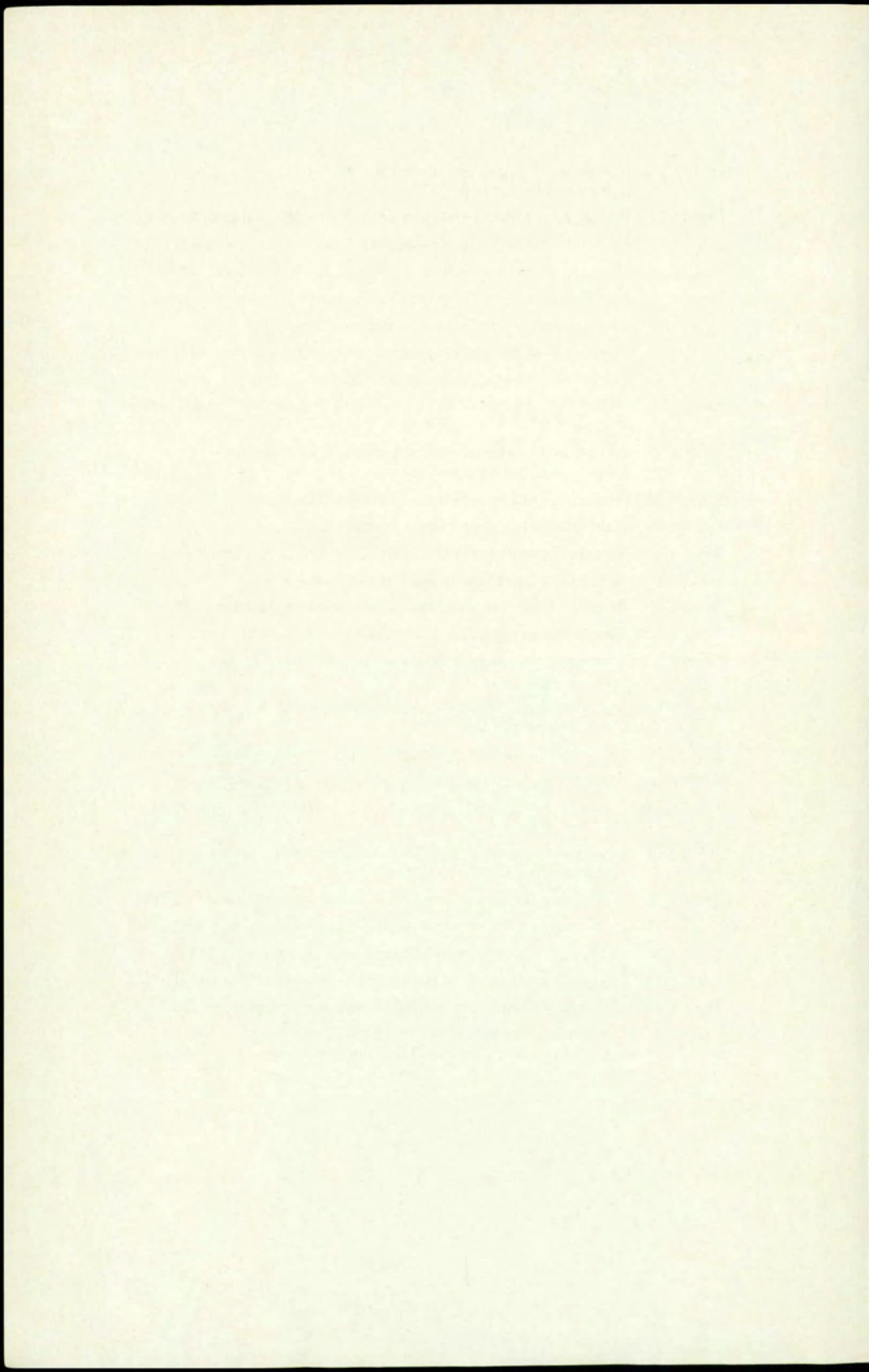
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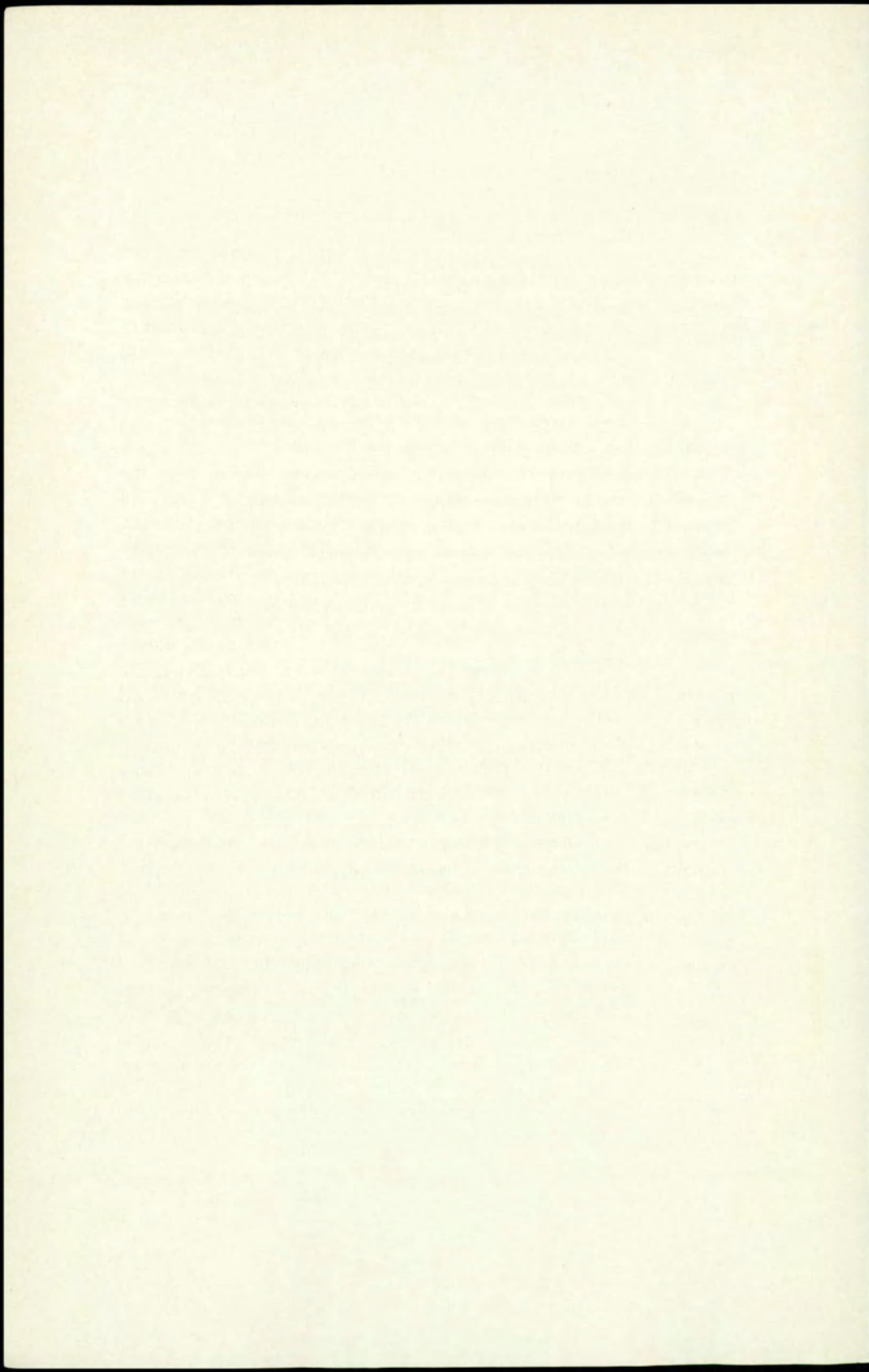






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## INTRODUCTION

If prostitution is the "oldest profession" (which is probably far from true), then it is also the oldest social debate. Legislators, theologians, philosophers, municipalities, police, criminologists, psychiatrists and social scientists have debated the proper place of prostitution in society for centuries. Some have argued that it is anti-social and should be eradicated; others that it has an essential role in society. Then there are those who have maintained that it will persist in society regardless of the opinions of authorities and ideologists, and therefore should be controlled or regulated by law.

Much of the problem with this on-going debate has been the lack of substantial evidence either way, which has opened the path for such speculation and prejudicial convictions. Supposition and predilection on prostitution has produced a mountain of mythology on the subject, and, in turn, this mountain has proven to be an effective barrier to realistic appraisals and irrefutable theories. What is even more alarming is the morass of myths, morality and misogyny that permeate the subject, which has arisen partly due to the chauvinism of the intelligentsia in the past, and partly due to the titillations of sensationalist journalism, movie screen imagery and other misinformation from the media at large. It is as though each generation of the populace is confronted by prostitution as two alien and hostile cultures. As one prostitute told me in disgust over a newspaper story: "It is like we are strange nocturnal animals that crawl out of the sewers at night."

The major cause of this deplorable situation of ignorance and bias has been too little objective analysis and empirical investigation from scholars, and a lack of public contact. Too many people have had too much to say on a subject they are much too ignorant about. It would be unthinkable for a serious political scholar to write about the machinations of government without ever having sat in a parliamentary session or spoken to politicians for opposing parties. The same principle of observation and objective analysis applies to writers on prostitution. Of course, the blind prejudices of extreme moralists who have never spoken to a prostitute will continue to exist, but these will no longer have the support of scientists, journalists or jurists who have done their homework well, and,



ultimately they will also not gain credence from any well-informed public.

Some readers may be sceptical about changes to public thought which has been too indoctrinated by prejudicial views of ancient and modern ideologists. But, since the sixties, literature on the subject of prostitution has had a more positive approach, with participant observers, empiricists and prostitutes themselves beginning to dominate recent writings. Highly inflammatory news items about prostitutes no longer have the public credence that they once did, as a more critical audience, which is better informed, makes more appropriate value judgements.

This book is an addition to this growing literature on prostitution from an objective and well-informed position. It has an empirical approach, with the insights of a participant observer, as well as the interior perspectives of prostitutes themselves. It reflects my public support of prostitutes over the years from the position of a subjective radicalism. I have argued for a decade now that prostitutes and their industry are among the most maligned and misunderstood segments in our society, despite having once shared with the rest of society an opinion of prostitutes as women with high sexual motivations and criminal minds. In 1980, however, on joining the Crisis Team of volunteer welfare workers at Kings Cross' Wayside Chapel, I came face to face with these "denizens of degradation" for the first time. None of them struck me as representative of the image I had of prostitutes as loudmouths, untrustworthy over-painted tarts. They seemed so ordinary. Soon after, residents of Darlinghurst were mobilising against the street prostitutes in their area. They were telling newspapers the kinds of things I once believed prostitutes were capable of. Through my daily contact with these same women, I realised that neither the residents nor the journalists were telling the truth, because the women in their stories were nothing like the women I had come to know and like. It was this misrepresentation that prompted me to begin a public campaign of counteracting the myths and malignant stories that often provided moral and political opportunists with "evidence".

My associations with prostitutes cover two distinct periods. The first was contact with street prostitutes of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst and the women in the little East Sydney brothels. Most streetwalkers were heroin addicts and many of the brothel workers had criminal connections. But, I soon learned that these women were



also mothers who cared much for their children, that they did not come from broken homes nor a background of juvenile delinquency, and most of them did not pursue promiscuous lifestyles outside of prostitution. I was so impressed by this reversal of the public profile of these women that I wrote my first book on the subject, *Being A Prostitute*, published in 1985.

Five years ago I entered my second period of association. The women this time worked in parlours (bordellos, up-market brothels) and in private (call-girls) flats across the Sydney metropolitan area and in Canberra, Wollongong and Newcastle. Many of them, I discovered, had worked, or were still working, as office secretaries, as nurses, as air stewardesses, and in public relations. Others were students working to pay their way through college or university. Many had also worked in factories or as waitresses, barmaids or shop-assistants. A great number of them were single mothers, and about half had bourgeois backgrounds. Once again they failed to meet the stereotype. Rather than ice-cool dames with particular misanthropy, they were often warm, generous, sensitive women with quite ordinary suburban lives beyond prostitution. Once again I was compelled to write about them, and this book is the outcome.

This book has three objectives:

1. To demonstrate empirically that prostitutes are basically ordinary women with only their occupation distinguishing them from others.
2. To bring to the general public a balanced, well-informed view of prostitution, shed of its tawdry reputation.
3. To convince legislators to adopt a more practical method of dealing with prostitution.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* has two definitions of the word "prostitute":

1. a person, esp. a woman, who engages in sexual intercourse for money as a livelihood. 2. one who debases himself or allows his talents to be used in an unworthy way.

The first definition is more appropriate to the meaning of "prostitute" expressed throughout this book. The semantics in the book have been expanded to incorporate the words "sex workers/sex work", "sex industry" and "commercial sex" as alternative terms bearing the same meaning in order to avoid word tedium and too much repetition.

The first chapter of the book introduces the reader to the subject of prostitution by taking a number of perspectives, and raising the issue (tirelessly so in the literature, I'm afraid) of prostitution either as legitimate work or activity, or as an immoral and basically antisocial pastime. From four perspectives—that of the prostitute, the moralist, the scientist, and the jurist—a history and discussion of prostitution as work, immorality, a subject for study, and a legal entity is examined, drawing certain conclusions and endeavouring to determine from the evidence whether in fact the prostitute should be regarded as a "sex worker" or as a "scarlet woman".

Chapter Two explores the law on prostitution across Australia. It begins with an historical outline bringing us to the present situation in Australian jurisdictions; and then discusses in detail the implications and effects of the three major legislative trends: criminalisation (in all but two state/territorial jurisdictions), legalisation in Victoria, and decriminalisation in New South Wales.

In Chapter Three a sample of Sydney prostitutes is compared with two high-status groups of women—health workers and university students—with a view to determining the extent of difference between them, especially in their demographic and class perceptions, their familial and other social relations, and their early sexual experiences. Findings here should indicate to what degree, if any, prostitutes are socially, psychologically, and sexually different to other women, and how these might be seen as predisposing them for sex work.

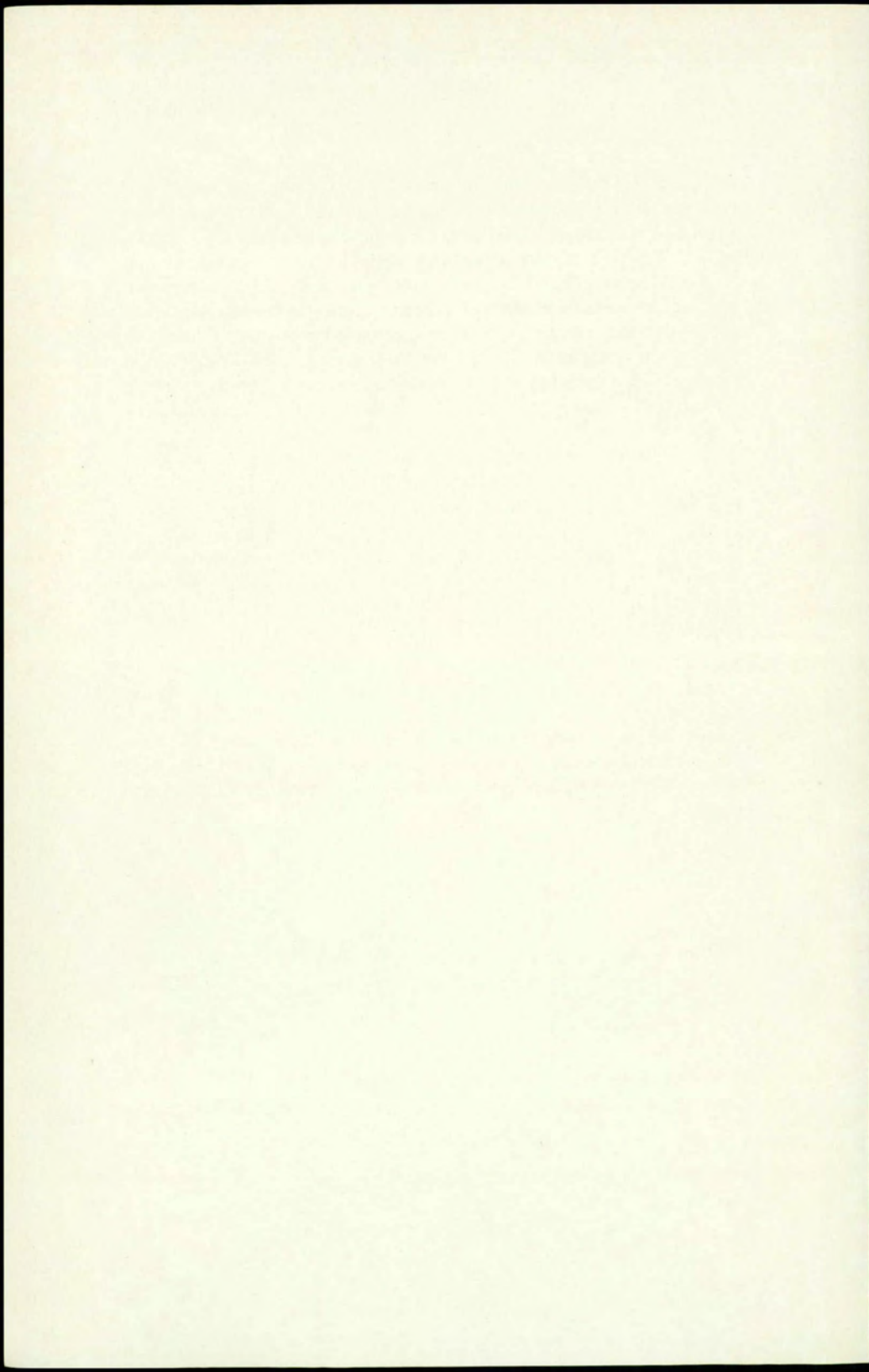
In Chapter Four the working lives of the prostitute sample and other prostitutes are scrutinised and compared to earlier studies of Sydney prostitutes, and sex workers in America. Descriptions of workplaces and problems that arise, the nature of sex work, and the men in the business are offered for analysis, and the reasons prostitutes give for entering the business are examined in relation to the popular view. Also, the more positive features of the work, such as high income, short or flexible hours, and advantages expressed by

the workers themselves are juxtaposed with the negative features of violence, contagion, arrest and drug addiction in an effort to arrive at a full and realistic appraisal of the commercial sex industry.

The final chapter serves as a summary and conclusion based on the evidence at hand throughout the book. It especially attempts a satisfactory discourse on decriminalisation, the politicisation of prostitutes **and concord** between feminists and prostitutes through an ideological **integration**. It asks the final question: will prostitution survive with **increasing** sexual liberation in society, or will it change direction in a major reconstruction of the industry? Is saleable sex, really necessary, after all?

This treatise is another addition to a very much overburdened literature (of some 6,000 or more publications) on the subject of prostitution. But, it is an important addition in two major aspects. Firstly, it adds to a small but growing number of books that are reversing misconceived attitudes on prostitutes/prostitution. Secondly, it attempts a solution to an age-old debate with some practical concessional formulae. This book may not be the last word on prostitution, but I sincerely hope it will be pivotal.





## Chapter 1

### SEX WORKERS OR SCARLET WOMEN?

Prostitution has different meanings for different groups in society. A general impression of commercial sex might be that of the ruling cultural dictum, but each social group also tends to interpret it according to the dominant values of its subculture. Thus, to the prostitute it represents work, with the same values and norms found in industrial relations and commercial enterprise. To the church leader and the dedicated Christian it is an immoral act highly offensive to their God and contravening the codes of behaviour in their religion. To the academic it is an interesting social phenomenon requiring research and theoretical analysis to explain its existence. To the legislator, jurist, lawyer and philosopher of law, it is a human behaviour beyond social norms demanding legal interpretation and regulation. To the writer, actor and artist it has a fascinating aesthetic appeal. To the customer of the prostitute and the average male it is sexually titillating. To the average woman it can be forbidding yet intriguing at the same time.

In this chapter prostitution is critically examined from four perspectives—work, morality, science, legality—tracing the historical sources as well as arriving at a rational understanding for each viewpoint.

#### Prostitution: A Work-Based Occupation

People have got to realise that prostitution is a community service because it provides a definite service for a lot of men—and women, I might add—who wouldn't have that outlet for their fantasies otherwise.

This comment by a Kings Cross prostitute in 1983 probably expresses how most sex workers feel about the business they are in. June, a parlour worker on Sydney's North Shore, put it another way:



Doing prostitution... feels like the amount of money you're paid gives me the sense that my labour is valued, from a purely monetary sense... [Other] work I've done... felt to me to be particularly undervalued, most particularly in nursing.

This comparison of sex work with other work is a constant theme in prostitutes' conversations about their occupation. But, what exactly do *they* mean by "work"?

The *Macquarie Dictionary* (1982) has nearly 50 meanings for the term "work". But, the one which seems most pertinent to the viewpoint of prostitutes is this one: "Employment; a job, esp. that by which one earns a living." Raymond Williams notes that:

There is an interesting relation between work and labour. Labour has a strong Medieval sense of pain and toil; work earlier, in one of its senses, had also a strong sense of toil (Williams 1976).

A common defence by prostitutes when questioned on the amount of money they make is: "I work hard for my money!" They speak of aching limbs, mental exhaustion and pelvic pain. Marie is a private prostitute, who includes fantasy work in her business, and she expressed it thus:

The jobs vary in intensity and sometimes I feel very exhausted and I don't feel like doing another job. I wouldn't do it unless I could give it all my attention and be as alert as I should. If I don't have that strength any more then I finish for the day.

Fatale is a bondage mistress who considers her work extremely demanding:

It does take a lot of energy out of me and it can be very stressful at times, even an ordeal. To be dominant takes so much energy; not only does the stance have to be right, you have to be a supreme actress and give off an incredible aura, which makes you a good mistress... I usually require some time in meditation to try and get

my thoughts back together again. I think 12 hours [her shift length] is far too long for me because of the pace I work at. When it's 12 hours straight without a break, after a day of working I'm physically exhausted the next day, and mentally drained if the sessions have been stimulating. I continually get sick and run down with shifts of that length.

It is probably this aspect of prostitution which others find most difficult to understand. How can sex be work? After all, for most people it is a pleasant natural pastime, and for the average permissive pragmatist its enjoyment makes it inconceivable as toil. For the Christian moralist, extramarital sex is "sin" not deserving the dignity of being referred to as "work". In both these instances, their responses bear a strong relationship to the Protestant work ethic, with its doctrine of work as toil, sin as pleasure, and work never equated with pleasure.

The strong economic motivation for women entering prostitution is the same for anyone entering the work force. This itself is a strong indication that prostitutes are seeking incomes, and not just some imagined or real psychological propensities. What prostitutes have to exchange for this income is the use of their bodies and time in a sexual service. In the 1983 (Perkins & Bennett 1985) study of Sydney's inner city prostitutes, nearly 97 per cent of the sample of 121 women stated earning an income as their reasons for entering prostitution, and 62 per cent of them claimed their only other alternative was a welfare pension. An American study arrived at similar findings. Nearly a third of 29 mid-west prostitutes worked in commercial sex for entirely economic reasons, while a further 17 of the 29 were psychologically as well as economically motivated, according to the researcher (Decker 1979).

In the sense that prostitutes exchange their labour for cash, it is little different to the everyday exchange of non-sexual labour for cash. Doctors, chartered accountants, lawyers, typists and tradesmen also exchange their labours or skills for cash. The argument that prostitutes are different to these is that they enter an intimate arrangement with another person by physical contact with that person's sexual parts. Prostitutes counter-argue by saying that they do not feel emotionally intimate with their clients and that many of their services do not include sex. Besides, doctors also make a living

## Working Girls

which include physical contact with the sexual parts of their patients, and no one seems to question their right to take money for it or treat it as work. Some office secretaries have been known to sleep with their bosses for a higher income, and no one would consider calling them prostitutes. Laura, an American call-girl, argued thus:

I use my body to earn a living. What is the difference between working with my hands and working with my pussy. You're still working with a part of your body, which is no different to working with your brains.

The Protestant work ethic principle of separating work and pleasure often troubles some prostitutes too. Martine, a Potts Point parlour worker, spoke about her problem with this:

When I first started work whenever I felt myself getting excited I would stop myself and told myself that I was doing that because I would get too tired after I orgasmed. But then, the more I kept stopping myself the more I realised I was doing it because I felt guilty. I thought that if I had an orgasm it wouldn't be a job any more but pleasure; it would be too enjoyable and I shouldn't get paid for it. It takes a lot not to be turned on as you get very sexually excited jumping in and out of sessions. Now I think, if I don't orgasm it just becomes like any other job.

This is a very good point. How many people in the work force strive to make their job more pleasant so it will not be "like any other job"? Then there are those fortunate highly paid executives, actors, artists, statesmen, writers, correspondents, to name a few, who are stimulated by their work, but who might, like prostitutes, justify the pleasure they derive from their job with: "But I work hard for my money!" Should they be criticised like the prostitute because their work is also pleasurable?

The prostitutes' argot is an excellent indicator of the way these women perceive what they do. They refer to themselves as "working girls" or simply "workers". The men who visit them are called "customers" or, more often "clients", and their payment is a "fee" or "pay". The owner or manager of a brothel is called "the



boss" and the employees are "staff" or, in the case of prostitutes "the workers". Time spent with a client is known as "a job", or "a session", and the period involved is referred to as the prostitute's "time". The brothel is sometimes called "the workplace", and the time spent there is known as "a shift". A prostitute takes "time-off" for example when having a coffee or lunch break, going shopping, or seeing a doctor during her shift, and when she is not working on a shift these are her "days off". This has been the language of the oldest prostitute I have known in Sydney, and she worked during World War II. It is also a language well understood by American prostitutes.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, there are those who will claim that this language has arisen in an attempt to legitimise and justify prostitution as a "profession", but, on the other hand, there are professions, like lawyers in private practice, independent artists, freelance writers and politicians, who would not use such work-based terms yet would insist that what they do is work. The fact remains that prostitutes in parlours are rostered onto "shifts", do provide labour for cash, and do have customers who pay for the service. Independent brothel worker Jeanette has a routine which could apply in any number of professions or trades:

I do my books every Sunday, I go to work sharp at 7.45 p.m., and I go in to make a certain amount of money.

My many years' association with prostitutes makes it difficult for me to visualise prostitution in anything else but work-based terms. During our research in 1983, Garry Bennett and I, in seeking to define prostitution, were forced to this conclusion:

Prostitution is a business transaction understood as such by the parties involved and in the nature of a short-term contract in which one or more people pay an agreed price to one or more other people for helping them gain sexual gratification by various methods (Perkins & Bennett 1985).

Years later there is no reason to challenge this viewpoint, and it may stand as a useful definition for this study. It narrows



prostitution to a purely commercial transaction, in which the payer is called customer and the payee is the prostitute. It clearly defines "prostitute" also as someone who identifies her/himself in this arrangement. It thus avoids confusion with such murky terms and euphemisms as "good-time girls", "gold-diggers", "hostesses" or mistresses financially supported by their lovers and other quasi-prostitutes, or with other social interactions, like dinner date sexual obligations, sexual favours by career climbers, or the marriage contract. Although, it is interesting to note the words in the old marriage vows, whereby the groom said, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow", and the bride replied, "With my body I thee love".

Using the above definition, prostitution may be expressed in such work-oriented terms that it can be appreciated as an industrial relations or commercial interaction. In Marxist rhetoric it is described thus: the working method of the street prostitute is based on the principle of bargaining and free trade, similar to street vendors and open markets as ancient as human society itself. The "call-girl" reminds us of the small business operations of the *petit bourgeoisie*, with its modest, though lucrative, profits, and minimal overheads. Brothels, or parlours (*bordellos*, *bagnios*, stews, *seraglios*) are the equivalent in structure to a small to medium sized factory, a hotel, or other building used solely as a workplace, involving large capital expenditure, high overheads and a large regular profit. The "owner of the means of production" may be an individual, a partnership, or a company of shareholders, who employ auxiliary salaried staff, such as managers, receptionists, barmaids, or cleaners and commissioned staff, or the prostitutes. The prostitutes here work in the proletarian tradition in which their labour is hired and exchanged for cash. The prostitute's exchange-value is usually half the exchange-value of the goods (sex) purchased by the client (customer or consumer). This is her commission in a shared arrangement with the owner, whose share is a surplus-value from which wages for auxiliaries, rent, power, telephones, advertisements and other overheads, and capital for reinvestment into the business (for example, improvements or expansion) must be extracted. The balance of this surplus-value is the profit for the owner(s). Whichever of these modes of operation a prostitute chooses is usually motivated by earning power, personal preference, ambition, enterprise, discretion and an ambience compatible with her psychological outlook.

The outcome of choosing a mode of operation can vary enormously between individuals. For example, in street prostitution much depends on how an individual will interact with this environment. There are women who seem to be perpetual victims, who are being constantly robbed, beaten or raped. The streets are a potentially dangerous place to them, and were it not for their excessive drug addictions, for which only street soliciting provides high enough income, they would not be there. To them, every client and other man on the street is a threat. They are tense and distant in their contacts with them, and they lack skills of communication and the clever repartee that is often useful in extricating oneself from a tight dangerous corner. They are often obviously nervous on the street and show apparent lack of confidence.

On the other hand, there are women who are stimulated by street work. They seem to enjoy the action and excitement, and combine something of the exhibitionist and the voyeur in their approach to life on the streets. They have fun communicating with men and have the talent for a good sales pitch, which brings them a high number of jobs. They are rarely beaten, robbed or raped, and they make large amounts of money from quick turnovers, or "short-time" with many clients. These women are professionals at their business, but, more than that, they are comfortable with street life. They ooze confidence and a sense of street-wisdom. While most of them are also drug addicts, some of them are not. The difference between these women and the negative street workers lies in their personalities and their psychological adjustments to various social environments.

In the parlours, adjustment can also depend on these personal factors. But, just as often, it is the external factors which can affect the individual's working environment. Where a boss shows more concern for the welfare of the clients than for the workers, or refuses the use of condoms, or cheats his or her staff, or, in the case of a male boss, demands sex from his workers, the workplace is unpleasant. In instances of condom bans, women often develop strategies of slipping sheaths on customers without their knowledge. But this induces stress from fear of discovery and the consequent dismissal. In situations like these the women have little power or control over the working conditions. The worst example I heard about where the boss acted as an insensitive autocrat was where a worker was threatened with dismissal if she continued to refuse to see a client



## Working Girls

with obvious herpes. Marie found her working environment unsatisfactory only because of management:

The only thing I dislike at the moment is management; that's the only distasteful part of my present working conditions. Everything else about my work I really enjoy. I feel really excited about going to work apart from the occasional conflicts with management.

Another unpleasant aspect of a parlour working environment is disharmony among the workers. This can arise because of a single disruptive woman, or a quarrel between two enemies on the staff, or theft by an unknown worker, or one woman seeking favours from the boss, or, simply the competition between workers, particularly when business is slow. Occasionally, one worker will be suspected of not wearing a condom in a safe-sex house, or she might be doing anal intercourse or other activity viewed as unsavoury by the rest of the staff. This can be resolved if management supports their staff and is anxious for harmony. Then, some women are incompatible with other women—a usually disastrous situation in a parlour's confined spaces. Caroline admits to being such a woman:

I don't like women and they don't like me... my main problem is working with women... It is a sense of competition or something, I don't know, but whatever it is 95 per cent of women hate me on sight. Yet, my present employer is a woman and she's been very good to me.

There are pleasant workplaces, such as where management has a policy of making condoms mandatory, where the boss has a good personal relationship with everyone on the staff, and, especially where harmony, even friendships, exist among workers. But even in the most conducive parlour atmosphere, ultimate control rests with management. The boss dictates prices, limits working time by rostering shifts, and can employ as many workers for a shift as he or she thinks fit (obviously the more workers the greater the competition between them, while it means increased business for the owner). On top of this, no parlour management to my knowledge had ever paid sick-pay, holiday-pay or superannuation. These are

benefits that will only arrive with unionism, and that can only occur with an empowerment of prostitutes in the first instance. There is an obvious lack of power for prostitutes within this kind of work structure, which is why some women choose to become independent call-girls, or take to the streets. Kelly is one woman who chose the streets after some time working in parlours:

What I like about the streets is you can start when you want to, finish when you want to; you are virtually an independent person. You don't have to put up with half the things you have to put up with in the parlours. And the money's better on the street.

Street, brothel and parlour prostitution is a very ancient practice, but did the prostitutes of ancient times consider what they did as work? One of the earliest forms of commercial sex was in a different tradition—temple prostitution—which once flourished as part of the religious cults of the Ancient Near East, India and South-East Asia. Prostitution was a religious duty to the women attached to the temples of love and fertility deities, and the proceeds they made went to the up-keep of the temple, which, of course, meant them as well. But, according to Herodotus, every woman in Babylon was obliged to prostitute herself on the steps of the temple of the goddess, Mylitta, at least once in her lifetime. It was not a task relished by many women, we are told, but they endured it as a task of duty. Even though the proceeds went to the temple, this toil sounds like unpaid work. Clement of Alexandria reported that on Cyprus women sold sexual services in the temple of Aphrodite in order to earn enough for their dowries. These women, too, might have considered this toil work (Henriques 1962).

In Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire slaves were often sold to the keepers of the state-controlled brothels. But the histories also tell us that non-slave women were prostitutes too, usually in the taverns and streets. These were usually women without men to support them, widows, deserted wives, orphan girls—the poorest women in society. Prostitution, for them, would have been their only source of income, and there is little doubt that they thought of it as work. In Grecian society there was a class of prostitutes known as *auletrides*, who were musicians, acrobats and strip-tease dancers as well. They were often beautiful young women who hired themselves



out as entertainers at banquets, fiestas and orgies. Since they were paid, this was their career, their work, and probably prostitution was not clearly separated from their other activities. The highest ranking prostitutes in Ancient Greece were the courtesans, known as *hetairai*, whose gifts and pecuniary benefits from the prominent men of Athens were probably considered as payment for services rendered. But there were other benefits, since their close association with the most powerful men in Grecian society brought them a status above all other women. However, in order to reach this level, a great amount of work was required, for not only were the *hetairai* beautiful, but they had to have achieved the highest social graces and have learned to read and write (Henriques 1962; Simons 1975).

Prostitution also flourished in the European Middle Ages. The streets, taverns, brothels and courts were places where they frequented. Once again, widows, orphans and the poorest women made up the lower ranks of these sex workers, while ambitious learned women were the courtesans. An interesting development in the Late Middle Ages occurred with the establishment of prostitute guilds in some towns, indicative of the trade tradition in medieval commercial sex (Henriques 1963, pp. 42-52).

In the 19th century the largest numbers of women ever recorded made a living from selling sex. Once more these consisted of widows and deserted wives, the unemployed and the under-employed. London was reported to have 80,000 prostitutes in 1840, mainly on the street (Flexner 1914, p. 24). In contemporary Paris the number was 30,000 (Simons 1975, p. 75; Ryan 1839). The economic factor in this rise in female prostitution alone would strongly imply that commercial sex was an alternative, and often only, form of employment. A French physician, Alexandre Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchatelet, in the 1830s contacted 5,200 Parisian street prostitutes and concluded his investigation with a statement that nearly all of them were there due to dire poverty (Parent-Duchatelet 1857). William Sanger in New York a few years later found that 60 per cent of 2,000 prostitutes were foreign women, a third of whom had fled starvation in Ireland. The poverty and alien backgrounds of these women make it very likely that prostitution for them was employment for survival (Sanger 1858-1937, p. 456).

Today, with increased employment, education and welfare subsidies, much fewer women need to work as prostitutes. In accordance with the earlier definition of prostitution, I estimate that

about 1,000 female prostitutes worked in Sydney each week in 1986.<sup>2</sup> This is a mere 0.06 per cent of an approximate female population of 1,680,000 for Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1984) or about 1 in 100 women aged between 15 and 45. The NSW Select Committee Upon Prostitution in 1986 estimated between 1,500 and 2,200 prostitutes of both sexes in the State of New South Wales worked on a single day (Parliament of NSW 1986, p. 68). The Victorian Inquiry Into Prostitution in 1985 estimated there were between 3,000 and 4,000 prostitutes of both sexes in the State of Victoria.<sup>3</sup> The South Australian Police Department claimed 250 prostitutes in the city of Adelaide, while an estimate for the State of Western Australia claimed 330 prostitutes.<sup>4</sup> Estimates for male prostitutes range from 5 per cent (Select Committee 1986, pp. 71-2) to 10 per cent of the total prostitute population<sup>5</sup>, but taking the least number, since there are considerably fewer males working as prostitutes in other states than New South Wales, and extracting these from the above estimates, I arrive at the following conclusion: in NSW the average number of female prostitutes at a given time is 1,750, or 0.06 per cent of the total female population; in Victoria the corresponding figures are 3,300 or 0.16 per cent; in South Australia 238 or 0.03 per cent; in Western Australia 314 or 0.04 per cent. Comparisons with other countries shows considerable variation. In Paris, for example, one estimate put the percentage of females who worked as prostitutes at 0.5 per cent (Jaget 1980). In Birmingham, England, the estimate was 0.47 per cent (McLeod 1982). For the United States of America, 0.5 per cent of women take up prostitution (Winick & Kinsie 1971). Why such discrepancies exist between areas of similar cultural heritage may be explained by any number of causes—like variations in morality or economies that discourage or prompt women to enter prostitution, or different definitions of "prostitute" and different methodologies for estimating populations by the various researchers. What we might conclude, however, is that as many as 0.5 per cent of women become prostitutes, and as few as 0.03 per cent. In any case, the numbers are extremely small. Given that, as we have seen, the pay is good and working conditions can be pleasant, why do so few women take up commercial sex? The answer to that lies in the forthcoming discussions in this book.

Situations and methods of operation may change in prostitution, but the essential element of commercial exchange, in which one party pays for a service and the other party receives the



fee as a part of her income, remains the same throughout the ages and across cultures (excluding temple prostitution). Like the tradesman or the doctor, the prostitute depends on her skills, expertise and bodily labours to conduct a service: it is work for an income, little different, apart from the nature of the work, to other forms of employment. For the more fortunate among them this work can be pleasant, even fun, or stimulating. For the less fortunate, it is tedious, boring and tiresome, or even dangerous. There are those who are traumatised by it and do not last long in it. On the other hand, there are those who gain enormous satisfaction from it, and make a career of it. Like all human endeavours and experiences, prostitution is not the same for all people.

### The Moral Response

The anti-prostitution sentiments of the modern Christian Church have their sources in Old Testament dogma and the philosophies of the early Church fathers. Although prostitution has remained condemned in Christian theology almost since the foundation of the Church, remarkably there have been long periods of Church tolerance in Christian societies throughout history. The recent renewed attempts by the Christian Church to exert pressure on the state to eradicate prostitution has largely hidden the compromises of the past.

Although in the eyes of the Church some acts of prostitution contravene the seventh Commandment—"Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery"—there are more direct references to it in the Old Testament. The most appropriate is found in the Book of Leviticus 19:29:

Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot,  
lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full  
of wickedness<sup>6</sup>.

It was much more serious for daughters of priests in Israel, since as members of the upper religious class they had to set a good example; any of them found as harlots resulted in their extermination by fire (Leviticus 21:9). Thus, to be a prostitute in ancient Israel was an unholy disposition, and the early Christian Church adopted the

literal meaning of these references. Curiously though, the responsibility for ordinary women becoming prostitutes rested with their fathers, who were forbidden to sell or encourage their daughters to enter prostitution, and were expected to prevent them if they were so inclined. On the other hand, daughters of priests bore full responsibility for their actions because they profaned their fathers.

The early Christian Church, though, was founded in Rome. Here, it had a direct model of prostitution. While the Romans regulated prostitution through its state-controlled brothels, citizen women who took up prostitution were regarded with contempt. For non-slave Roman women to prostitute themselves meant they gave themselves the same status as slaves. The aristocrat woman who turned to prostitution, in fact, was banished from the city (once again because she must set a good example to ordinary women). The word "prostitute" is derived from the Latin "Prostitutus", meaning "up front" or "to expose", in reference to the fact that prostitutes were expected to appear in public with their faces uncovered, unlike Roman citizen women, who covered their faces with a *palla* (head cloth). Thus, like Hebrew prostitutes, Roman prostitutes were stigmatised. But the nature of the stigma was quite different. For Israelites it was sacrilegious; for the Romans, however, prostitutes were rebels because they could not be controlled by their menfolk, and therefore defied the social mores of the *patria*—Roman prostitutes, as was suggested by their term "prostituto", were public women (Henriques 1962).

What impressed the founding fathers of the Church were not the subtle differences, but the outcome, which was the same. St Paul, who thought celibacy was a holier existence than the sexual life, provided this example in his effort to demonstrate the spiritual connection with the body's sexual parts:

Do you know that your bodies are members of Christ?  
Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make  
them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you know  
that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one  
body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall  
become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord  
becomes one spirit with him. Shun Immorality  
(Corinthians 6:15-18)



## Working Girls

St Jerome, who was tempted during his privations in the desert by hallucinatory dancing girls, in 385 preached to Eustochium, the daughter of one of his most devout female followers, on the virtues of virginity out of concern for an imagined inclination to harlotry. The most ardent opponent of prostitution at the time was St Augustine, who invented the concept of original sin to explain the lust of men and the evil incarnate of women. He strongly alluded to the fact that the presence of prostitutes in society threatened good women:

What is more base, empty of worth, and full of vileness than harlots and other such pests? ...Let them be with matrons and you will produce contamination and disgrace (Augustine of Hippo; Migne).

Yet Augustine had a practical side too, for he also said that harlots "fill a most vile function under the laws of order", because, he warned, "take away harlots from society and you will have tainted everything with lust." Thus was born the idea of prostitution as a necessary evil. Centuries later the great medieval theologian, St Thomas Aquinas would elaborate on this theme:

Rid society of prostitutes and licentiousness will run riot throughout. Prostitutes in a city are like a sewer in a palace. If you get rid of the sewer, the whole place becomes filthy and foul (Thomas 2:2).

Some of Augustine's teachings had a curious influence on men centuries after him. He promoted the idea of sex without passion as better than sex with passion, which became a cornerstone in a 19th century medical rationale for limiting conjugal sex. Men were warned not to indulge in too much sex with their wives, and when they did so to do it without emotion. Many men, of course, turned to prostitutes, and as we have seen, there were plenty available at the time<sup>7</sup>. The curious role of religion in society sometimes has a double edge.

The necessary evil approach opened up a peculiar tolerance for prostitution from the 4th century through to the Reformation. Mary Magdalene provided the perfect model for a harlot to save herself through redemption, and this opened the doors for a

charitable concept to impose itself on the "necessary evil". Mary Magdalene may have been a composite of three women, but there are only vague references to her in the New Testament and even vaguer assumptions that she was a prostitute. She is referred to as "a woman of the city, which was a sinner," (Luke 7:37) and Jesus tells us that "her sins, which are many, are forgiven." (Luke 7:41) Whatever the truth, she was a perfect Church vehicle for a female object lesson. Whilst an antithesis of the Virgin Mary, in the end she gained almost as high a place in heaven. Hers was the classic redemption and one of Christianity's highest ideals.

A number of prostitutes in the early Christian period followed in Mary Magdalene's footsteps by giving up their trade and becoming holy women. After death some of them became saints—Sts Mary the Harlot, Pelagia, Afra, Thais, Digna, Eunomia, Eutopia, to name a few—thus proving once again the virtues of salvation, and demonstrating that the greater the sinner the greater the holiness. From carnality to canonisation, these women served to underwrite Christianity's messages of redemption (*See Bullough 1982, pp. 38-40*).

In the Eastern Church the concept had unprecedented success when Theodora, the wife of Emperor Justinian I and herself a redeemed harlot, founded an institution, *Metanoia* (Repentance), for reformed prostitutes. In her lifetime 500 repentant prostitutes entered this institution. In the 10th century, four centuries after Theodora, Emperor Leo the Wise turned a Constantinople brothel into a refuge for reformed prostitutes (Bullough 1982, p. 37). The Western Church repeated this in the 13th century when Pope Gregory IX founded an order known as the Magdalenes, dubbed "the White Ladies" on account of the colour of their habit. These were reformed whores turned nuns, whose convents spread across Europe dedicated to the purpose of saving "fallen women". The most famous of these institutions was the Soul House, founded in Vienna in 1384. Unfortunately the place was closed in 1480 when it was discovered that the inmates had relapsed into old ways in order to raise funds to support the convent (Bullough 1982, p. 41). Although the Church viewed the Magdalenes as an experiment that failed, in fact the order had endured for over 250 years. In any case, by then the Church had found other means of dealing with prostitutes.

The necessary evil concept and the Magdalene model had paved the way for an intimate association between Church and whore



that would have been inconceivable in either ancient Israel or in St Augustine's time. In the high Middle Ages some extraordinary examples of this association existed. The Bishop of Winchester rented rooms to prostitutes in Southwark under an ordinance of the English King Henry II which lasted 400 years (Burford 1976, pp. 41-2). In 1337 the nuns of Stratford opened a brothel for business to support their convent (Burford 1976, p. 75). In 1347 Queen Joana of Naples opened a brothel in Avignon next door to the Pope's residence, and gave the control of it to the nunnery on the other side (Scott 1968, p. 68). In Toulouse a brothel known as "the Grand Abbaye" served as a source of revenue for the university for 200 years (Cleugh 1970, p. 138). Early in the 16th century Pope Julius II was so inspired by the success of the Avignon brothel that he established one in Rome (Tannahill 1981, p. 264). No attempt at compromise on this scale has occurred since that period. The Reformation and its allegations of Church corruption have put paid to that.

In the 16th century the esteemed Renaissance Humanist Lorenzo Valla, so admired by Martin Luther, wrote that prostitutes were more useful than nuns (de Reincourt 1974, p. 241) but his view had come too late to be appreciated. Notwithstanding his admiration of Valla, Luther in his attack on the established Church also vilified prostitutes:

[A man] may have had vile commerce with 600 harlots and seduced countless matrons and virgins, and kept many mistresses, yet nothing of this would be an impediment and prevent his becoming a bishop or a cardinal or a Pope (Richards 1979, p. 1211).

Protestantism rejected prostitution outright and banned its existence in those countries which adopted Lutheran and Calvinist codes. But in the counter-reformation, the Papal Church also attempted to ban prostitution, severing its long association with prostitutes and their redemption. In 1560 Paris banished its prostitutes and threatened to brand with hot irons those in the city after 24 hours had lapsed following the edict. The Pope ordered all prostitutes out of Rome by 23rd July 1566, but when 25,000 persons (prostitutes and their dependents) packed to move out, he was forced to rescind the order on 17th August (Sanger 1858-1937, p. 120). In the grand scheme of things, in the end, neither the Reformers nor the



Papists, successfully eradicated prostitution. When the dust settled at the end of the religious wars in the mid-17th century, prostitution in Europe was still flourishing.

There followed a period of moral laxity with regard to prostitution. But by the mid-19th century a call for moral order returned, with prostitution its main target. Feminist Josephine Butler, who had waged a successful campaign in England to gain the repeal of the *Contagious Diseases Acts* (insidious pieces of legislation that discriminated against prostitutes) in 1885 began a fresh campaign for women's rights. Following a trip to Brussels she was confronted by English women working in brothels there and assumed they had been kidnapped. She told her account to a hack journalist, W.T. Stead, who followed up with a highly fictitious and sensational article called "The Maiden Tribute of Ancient Babylon" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It blew Butler's story out of proportion with its implications of hundreds of innocent English girls being whisked off to the Continent and forced into prostitution. A massive public demonstration in Hyde Park following the article brought together feminists, evangelists, Anglican church leaders, Socialists and radicals of every kind and creed. The British Government responded with a notorious piece of legislation known as the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* in 1885, an important set of laws because it ushered in legislation across the Commonwealth and America that would begin the legal prohibition of prostitution in the 20th century. The ramifications of this legislation on prostitution will be discussed in more detail in the Section on the Legal Response.

The point to be made here is that what began as a concern for women's rights with the collaborative efforts of feminist Butler and Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army, with the view to curbing the traffic of women, set in motion a series of legislative attacks on prostitution and the women freely involved in it that has continued to this day. In the later 19th century and at the turn of the century the most reactionary element of the evangelist movement put their weight behind the legislation with the successful recruiting of the working classes in a middle-class thrust for social purity. The National Vigilance Association was formed in the wake of the legislation in 1885 to insure its ultimate enforcement. When law enforcement officers, pushed along by the social purity spirit of this organisation, closed 200 brothels in London, drove most of the prostitutes from the streets, and invaded their little homes, Butler,

one of the original members of the association, resigned in disgust. One of the leading female social purists, Ellice Hopkins, managed to establish an active moral vigilante organisation termed White Cross Army, made up of mostly working-class men, which gave police a much needed citizen's arrest committee. When a second bill was passed to deal with the traffic in women, which became known as the *White Slavery Act* of 1912, a much wiser feminist leader, Sylvia Pankhurst, wryly remarked:

It is a strange thing that the latest Criminal Amendment Act, which was passed ostensibly to protect women, is being used to punish women (Walkowitz 1982, pp. 79-93).

Through the social purity leagues of Britain not only did religion enter politics, but it aided in the enforcement of the laws it lobbied for and almost wrote single-handedly. These powerful religious forces have remained in positions of great influence to this day, still guiding the hands of government in its moral crusade against prostitution and what they perceive as other vices (such as homosexuality, pornography, and permissiveness).

Fundamentalist Christian organisations are persistently the staunchest opponents of prostitution in Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia. But Catholic and orthodox Protestant sects refuse to alter their traditional position on prostitution. When the NSW Select Committee Upon Prostitution published its report, the Sydney Diocese of the Anglican Church responded with a strong criticism on 11 June 1987. It introduced its response by establishing its views on the issue:

Prostitution is indeed dangerous. The history of human relationships proves the point in terms of physical and emotional danger to the prostitute, those who live off the prostitute's earnings and the clients who pay for the services. This fact alone should force responsible governments to limit prostitution. Prostitution is now inextricably linked with the twin problems of drug addiction and AIDS. This makes it one of the most powerful vehicles for harm in our community (Anglican Press Service 1987, p. 1).



Following this, the Church disagreed with those recommendations of the Select Committee which suggested more moderate legislation, the repeal of draconian laws, and environmental regulation of prostitution, on the basis that it "does not condone brothels...street prostitution...brothel operation." According to the Church:

The ideal would be to eradicate prostitution. Society does not need the stain that it creates...the desperate lives of those using prostitution to support drug habits, or unmarried mothers trying to raise cash to support young children, or young teenagers seeking refuge from hostile or broken home environments, or men incapable of building satisfactory relationships being enticed by what is essentially a very deceptive form of loneliness and unfulfilled love...The Church's position is clearly defined: prostitution in any form is wrong. Adultery, fornication and homosexuality are not intended forms of human sexual expression. Exchanging goods or services for such activity does not make them any less wrong (Anglican Press Service 1987, p. 2).

The Church, however, does not ignore the need for compassion in this issue of morality and the sex industry. On the contrary, in the spirit of the Magdalenes it holds out its hand to those drug addicts, unwed mothers and teenagers it spoke of earlier:

The Church has long had concerns for the disadvantaged in society. Our Lord was ridiculed as a friend of prostitutes and sinners. It has been, and continues to be, the Church's wish to reach out in love and practical help for such people (Anglican Press Service 1987, p. 2).

Since addicts, unwed mothers and teenagers represent less than half the women in prostitution, how can welfare assistance and institutions help the other half, who are divorcees, struggling students, underpaid nurses, and women who choose prostitution as a career? Women like Laura, Martine and Marie, judging by their



comments in the previous Section, would probably consider this attitude both patronising and impractical. Most drug addicts, unwed mothers and teenagers whose only livelihood is commercial sex would probably not be too impressed either.

In an institution which promotes celibacy, chastity, and the duty of sex for procreation, it is difficult to see how prostitution can ever be tolerated by the Church, unless radical departures occur from its traditional views. In traditional Christian ideology, the prostitute is influenced by the devil and is therefore antithetical to Christ. The Church sees prostitution as intrinsically immoral because it promotes sin. But as philosophy scholar Lars Ericsson points out in a well-argued document:

To say that prostitution is intrinsically immoral is in a way to refuse to give any argument. The moralist simply "senses" or "sees" its immorality. And this terminates rational discussion at the point where it should begin (Ericsson 1980, p. 339).

Fundamentalist Christians, in particular, often accuse prostitution of corrupting young people, or as a threat to the family. These are usually highly emotive responses intended to whip up political and legislative support for their anti-prostitution sentiments. Ericsson presents a counter-argument:

Nor has [prostitution] ever been a threat to the family itself. People marry and visit whores for quite different reasons. In point of fact, the greatest threat to the family is also the greatest threat to prostitution, namely, complete sexual liberty for both sexes (Ericsson 1980, p. 338).

As for the phobia of prostitution corrupting children, this is often a frontline defence for protecting the family. However, it is repressive Christian mores and anti-sexual attitudes which more often break down family relations, with young people fleeing their natal homes for a better life, and maybe taking up prostitution as a matter of survival. Street prostitute Kelly is a case in point:

The first home I remember going into was when I was five and it was a Salvation Army Home. From the time I was seven until 13 I was living with these foster parents. My foster father was quite good when my foster mother wasn't around, but he used to have this terrible habit of wanting to kiss me on the lips and he used to pin me against the wall just to kiss me. I hated my foster mother; she used to bash me and was very strict with issues. My childhood was very lonely because I could never get to know any of the children at school. I had to hurry straight home after school and wasn't allowed to go out by myself. If I did go out it was with my foster parents, and then everything was organised for me: what I wore, whom I spoke to, really really strict. On a couple of occasions they let me go to kid's parties on condition that the parents of the girl whose party it was picked me up and dropped me home again. My foster brother used to babysit me when the rest of the family was out. When I was eight he sat in the lounge room with just a towel wrapped around him. He started masturbating and made me sit there and watch. I was scared of all of them so I did as he asked. As time progressed he started rubbing his penis in between my legs, until one day he tried to enter me. He said: "Now don't you tell anyone otherwise I will tell them you're lying." My foster father was a doctor and he was a masseur for the local football club. Five of the boys raped me when I was 13, and that was my first actual intercourse. My foster mother blamed me and said I looked for it, and she put me in an institution as an uncontrollable child. I remained there for a year and then ran away to Tasmania with a girl from the institute. I was eventually arrested at 16 for being in moral danger. I had a job in a shoe store at the time. Six months later I ran off again, this time to Sydney, where I met a man whom I later married. I conceived on my honeymoon. When I was 17 I met another man and he put me into prostitution.

Raised in a Christian institution and fostered to a Christian family is no guarantee of avoiding prostitution. Margaret, another street prostitute, has a similar story:

My father was an alky and my mother a barb freak. She took valium and secanol a lot to cope with Dad and he used to drink a lot to cope with her. I can understand why Dad took to drink because Mum used to rave a lot and why she took tablets because he used to hit her a lot. I felt really threatened and unloved, and I was put into institutions a lot by my parents because they couldn't cope with me. I was unlucky to have been born into a family that was poor and unable to look after me. At age 10 my first introduction to a government institution was for breaking and entering. No one asked me why they sentenced me, they just did it, for my own protection they said. I ran away from there and in a year they sent me home, but it was the same old hassles of Mum arguing and Dad drunk. So I ran away from there and was charged with exposure to moral danger. No one asked me why I kept running away. I was 13 and I ran away again, but this time not back home. I ran away to the Cross and started working on Victoria Street in my school uniform.

For Margaret, Kelly and many other young people the family offers no protection, and for some, prostitution is far better, since it provides them with a sense of independence and an income.

Yet the moral message remains a very powerful persuasive force in modern society, distilled as it is through law codes, and pervading everyday relations through the media and language. Two well-springs for moral thought exist, in ruling class dictum and intellectual communication. Lord Devlin's argument for an enforcement of morals through legislation is an example of the former.

Following the United Kingdom's *Wolfenden Report On Prostitution and Homosexuality* (1957), Devlin delivered a lecture to the British Academy in 1958. He argued that since prostitution was disapproved of by a majority in society, the law had a duty to protect the interest of this majority. Sexual deviance, he claimed,



undermined the fabric of society, and society, in order to protect its existence must utilise whatever power it had at its disposal. He further rationalised that where a majority in society possesses a moral conviction it has a right to demand of society the means by which it might maintain the status quo, since any change, however insignificant it may appear, changed the moral order for the majority. Devlin argued that this is the essence of democracy and the law must respond in favour of the majority (*see* Devlin 1959/65).

Yale Professor of Law, Ronald Dworkin argued against Devlin:

The claim that a moral consensus exists is not based on a poll. It is based on an appeal to the legislator's sense of how his community reacts to some disfavoured practice... An awareness of the grounds on which that reaction is generally supported [includes] sifting through these arguments and positions trying to determine which are prejudices and rationalisations, which presuppose general principles or theories vast parts of the population could not be supposed to accept... It may be that when he has finished this process of reflection he will find that the claim of a moral consensus has not been made out. In the case of homosexuality, I expect, it would not be, and that is what makes Lord Devlin's indiscriminating hypothetical so serious a mis-statement. What is shocking and wrong is not his idea that the community's morality counts, but his idea of what counts as a community's morality (Dworkin 1965-66).

Devlin's assumptions about public morality and the need for a legal enforcement of morals is exactly the kind of ruling class indoctrination that has worked as a social control forum for centuries, and was also seen in the middle-class social purity regimes of the last century, as well as the media and political propaganda of the fundamentalist organisations today. It is, in fact, less to do with majority rule and more to do with reasoning through the power of collective consciousness in a sexual paradigm (*see* Foucault 1980).

Just as successful as an instrument of moral propaganda is intellectual communication. Not as overtly intentional as ruling class

dictum, it is, nevertheless, equally effective as a mechanism of moral order. As a parallel to this there is Freudian analysis reinforcing notions about female sexuality as providing propaganda for the maintenance of female submission in western society. The following example which demonstrates the above theory is one of the most blatant instances of morality proselytisation.

Ray Sexton, a psychotherapist, and Richard Maddock, a practising psychologist and Episcopal priest, investigated a series of female patients whom they were treating for depression, among other neuroses, some of which manifested in a clearly physical form (for example headaches, vomiting and abdominal pain). It was suggested that these might be outcomes of guilt following a proposal that these women were prostitutes. The authors explain:

In our professional activities we have seen profound psychological problems in professional prostitutes which required professional psychiatric assistance in order to help them overcome their emotional difficulties. But even more frequently we have seen theological problems that underlie sexual misconduct on the part of individuals who have never prostituted themselves professionally, but for some reason believe that they are prostitutes (Sexton & Maddock 1980, p. 226).

Sexton and Maddock claim that their patients' psychological problems were due to a past event when a suggestion was made that they may be prostitutes. This was only effective after the women had realised differences between good and bad behaviours. In a "primary gain" of information in early childhood they learned of the Ten Commandments, including the meaning of adultery. Later in childhood they were subjected to a "secondary gain" of information, including the meaning of prostitution. But, had the women been called "a bad girl" even before the "secondary gain", a connection could be made to enable them to identify subconsciously as prostitutes. Treatment involves regressing the patient back to the first moment when she was referred to as bad and learned about prostitution.

The authors mention Jesus' association with "loose or immoral" women, and "He was aware of the individual problems of



prostitutes and types of sinful behavior. He used these individuals to teach about the forgiving Grace of God." (Sexton & Maddock 1980). In a modern sense, cleansing the soul is a treatment that ends these women's feelings of guilt. In the logic of the authors, God enters the consciousness first, followed by knowledge of morality. A reverse logic here might be that had God not entered the consciousness first, then a concept of wickedness may never exist. Becoming a prostitute first and then knowing God is a situation not unfamiliar to Christian missionaries among pagan cultures. Under such circumstances the missionary expects the individual to re-shape her moral consciousness.

Although the Sexton and Maddock study is an extreme example of morality through intellectual communication, there are many more subtle examples of intrinsic moral values in academia, even where the researcher is unaware of it but unconsciously relays moral messages through deep-seated biases. Stereotypes of prostitutes are perpetuated this way from assumptions made in the original study through to more blatant instances of bias in popular media. The many reproductions of prostitute characters on the movie screen are a good example of this process. The filmmaker reproduces popular stereotypes because he/she responds to a tacit approval of audiences, but also because of biases which he/she shares with the community at large in a common cultural consciousness (Perkins 1989, pp. 28-34).

Sexton and Maddock are not too different to Devlin in that there is an assumption in their work that they are speaking to a majority of people in simpatico with their religious language and theory. Such an assumption spills over into fundamentalist organisations which think they represent a majority. As Dworkin (1965/66) points out, this is done without reference to a poll. In fact polls on public opinion about prostitution have been conducted in Australia. In the 1960s a national poll solicited people's opinions on the "legalising" of prostitution. Of the 1,045 participants, 53 per cent of the non-religious agreed to "legalising", as well as 51 per cent of the non-church going religious, 43 per cent of Anglicans, 35 per cent of Catholics, and 28 per cent of other Protestants among churchgoers. Forty-five per cent of all participants agreed with "legalisation", 46 per cent opposed it, 7 per cent offered no opinion and 2 per cent failed to answer. The sexual ratio was 1,1:1 in favour of males; 51 per cent of men agreed to "legalisation" and only 39 per



cent of women (Wilson & Chappell 1969). The *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a poll in conjunction with the researchers Irving Saulwick & Assoc. in 1985. Some 2,027 Australians were participants, including 436 church-goers. In all, 75 per cent of the total thought prostitution should be "legalised", and so did 56 per cent of the church-goers. The sexes were nearly equal in opinion, with 80 per cent of men agreeing to "legalisation" compared to 71 per cent of women. Street prostitution was thought to be the most offensive, with 76 per cent of the total opposed to its "legalisation". The women's magazine *Cleo* also ran a poll on prostitution recently. All, or nearly all, of the 1,231 respondents were probably women, and one question asked them which type of prostitution they thought should be legal. Only 21 per cent opposed any "legalisation", while 36 per cent agreed to brothels, 42 per cent agreed to parlours, 64 per cent agreed to escorts, and 6 per cent agreed to street soliciting, being "legalised". Interestingly, women over 25 years were the most tolerant, with only 10 per cent disagreeing to any kind of "legalisation", while those under 19 were the least tolerant, with 30 per cent disagreeing with any "legalisation" (*Cleo* May 1989). As you can see, this is far from a majority; in the past 20 years increasingly more people are inclined towards tolerance.

Christian logic is deeply imbedded in our common consciousness. Through state power and moral authority it reaches every individual in society, and, as we have seen in the example of Sexton and Maddock, it challenges intellectual logic. It is this persuasive cultural dynamic which maintains social control over prostitution and makes prostitutes outcasts.

### The Academic Response

On the one hand, much academic research, particularly in the social sciences, has provided us with essential insights into the nature of prostitution. But, on the other hand, some academic research into the world of the sex worker, particularly the early studies in criminology and psychoanalysis, seemed to provide a scientific logic to the moral response.

Many disciplines have contributed to our knowledge of the commercial sex industry. Vern Bullough et. al. (1977) compiled a comprehensive list of 5,500 works published between 1539 and 1977

which dealt with various aspects of prostitution. Since then the total number of publications may well have risen to around 6,500. The disciplines most represented in this list are medicine and law, while psychiatry, which has probably had the most effective impact on the public consciousness, contributes one of the smallest number of entries among the disciplines. The social sciences of sociology, psychology and anthropology have contributed less than the humanities, with history the leading contributor in all these disciplines (*see* Table 1.1). The dominance of medicine and law entries indicates a high interest in these disciplines as a reflection of the community concern for controlling prostitutes.

*Table 1.1: List of publications by: a) Discipline; b) Area; c) Period*

<i>a) Discipline</i>	<i>N.</i>	<i>%</i>
General	108	1.97
Anthropology*	152	2.77
Area Studies	787	14.33
Bibliography	24	0.44
Biography/Autobiography	266	4.84
Business	112	2.04
Fiction (English)	295	5.37
Guides/Descriptive history	45	0.82
History <sup>+</sup>	540	9.83
Juveniles	83	1.51
Legal/Police regulations	833	15.17
Literature <sup>+</sup>	88	1.60
Males (prostitutes/clients/pimps)	53	0.97
Medicine/Public health	1130	20.58
Organisations publications	132	2.40
Psychiatry	77	1.40
Psychology*	88	1.60
Religion/Morality <sup>+</sup>	133	2.42
Sociology*	473	8.61
War	72	1.31
	5491	100.00

\*Social Sciences = 713 (12.98%)

<sup>+</sup>Humanities = 761 (13.85%)

## Working Girls

*Table 1.1 continued*

*b) Geographical Areas*

	<i>N.</i>	<i>%</i>
Non-specific	10	1.27
Africa	8	1.02
Asia generally	8	1.02
Australia and Pacific	3	0.38
Austria/Germany/Switzerland	42	5.34
Canada	7	0.89
China	21	2.67
Eastern Europe and Greece	10	1.27
Europe generally	11	1.40
France	51	6.48
Great Britain and Ireland	50	6.35
Holland and Belgium	9	1.14
India	44	5.59
Italy	30	3.81
Japan	74	9.40
Latin America	60	7.62
Middle East	22	2.80
Scandinavia	9	1.14
South-East Asia	10	1.27
Spain and Portugal	20	2.54
United States of America	264	33.55
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	24	3.05
	787	100.00

*c) Historical Periods*

History generally	97	17.96
Ancient Times	25	4.63
Middle Ages	19	3.52
Early Modern Times	31	5.74
Eighteenth Century	60	11.11
Nineteenth Century	200	37.04
Twentieth Century	108	20.00
	540	100.00

Source: Bullough et al. 1977



Academic research of prostitution can be said to have only begun in the 19th century. One of the earliest of these was the study carried out by Alexandre Jean Baptiste Parent-Duchatelet in Paris in the 1830s. A physician, he investigated an incredible 5,200 street prostitutes. He was not influenced by moral opinion and very little scientific research on prostitutes had been conducted before him, so that he was not swayed by any particular school of thought. In his day, prostitution, though not approved of, was treated more as a fact of life rather than a criminal phenomenon. It was understood as an activity mostly engaged in by the desperately poor who suffered from unemployment or pitifully low wages. Parent-Duchatelet concluded that:

Of all the causes of prostitution, none is more important than unemployment and the poverty inevitably resulting from low wages (Parent-Duchatelet 1857).

In the late 19th century the new morality of the evangelists began to change the popular view of prostitutes. They were no longer seen as just poor women struggling to survive. The new laws in Britain, prompted as we have seen by the social purists, put paid to that view. Now prostitutes were the women who defied the law and therefore had criminal status, and since law-breaking and sin were equated, the social and economic factors in prostitution that were raised as an issue by such researchers as Parent-Duchatelet were forgotten. The question being asked was: "Why do *some* women become immoral?", instead of "Why do *poor* women become immoral?". Coinciding with the popular moral and legal views of prostitution and female deviance were the early stages of two research traditions that would have far-reaching impacts on 20th century thought about women involved in commercial sex.

The first of these traditions was the new science of criminology. Two of its founders were the Italian social Darwinists, Cesare Lombroso (sometimes referred to as "the father of criminology") and Giulio Ferrero. They developed an astonishing new theory on prostitutes at the turn of the century based on atavism, in which prostitutes were assumed to be representative of a kind of primeval female whose sexuality was as virile as male libido (Lombroso & Ferrero 1895). This view of prostitutes as sub-

human women, presumably, was inspired by a fact that they often initiated sexual contact with their customers. Lombroso later produced evidence to support his theory by demonstrating that prostitutes' virility corresponded with a more masculine appearance, such as larger frames, huskier voices, and hairier bodies (Lombroso 1898). This fantastic piece of empiricism became a cornerstone of the new science, and threads of it remain in present-day police attitudes on prostitutes. It, of course, delighted the moralists who had a scientific justification for their attacks on deviant women as it created a circular re-inforcement between the prevailing moral outlook and the new scientific dogmas. Also the psycho-legal logic of Lombroso's atavism complemented the growing theories on passive female sexuality vis-a-vis deviant behaviours in the second of the new research traditions — psychoanalysis.

Sigmund Freud himself had little to say about prostitutes. But in his discussion on the "polymorphously perverse disposition" in children's sexuality, he made this comment:

Children behave in the same way as an average uncultivated woman in whom the same polymorphously perverse disposition persists. Under ordinary circumstances she may remain normal sexually, but if she is led on by a clever seducer she will find every sort of perversion to her taste, and will retain them as part of her own sexual activities. Prostitutes exploit the same polymorphous, that is, infantile, disposition for the purpose of their profession; and, considering the immense number of women who are prostitutes, or who must be supposed to have an aptitude for prostitution without becoming engaged in it, it becomes impossible not to recognize that this same disposition to perversions of every kind is a general and fundamental human characteristic (Freud 1905/79, p. 109).

Thus, unlike Lombroso, Freud never considered prostitutes' sexuality strikingly different to most women. But for many of his followers prostitutes were key figures in a dialectic of deviant female sexuality. The problem for psychoanalysis as academic research methodology, though, is the nature of the treatment itself. The very



intensity of the treatment with each patient limits the number of patients a doctor is able to see. Thus any statistical conclusion made from one doctor's list of prostitute patients was based on a small sample, and this then makes it suspect scientific empiricism. This fact may well account for the extraordinary diverse theories about prostitutes that the Freudians produced for half a century. A review of just a few of these will be sufficient to indicate the extent of this diversity.

Karl Abraham (1942) in 1920 claimed that prostitutes' acceptance of a fee indicated a deep hostility towards men. Helene Deutsch (1929) said they were masochistic. Jeannie Lampl-de Groot (1928) thought their sexual assertiveness was due to a failure to resolve their Oedipal (that is "Electra") Complex. Maryse Choisy (1960 & 1961), who worked as a waitress in a Parisian brothel in order to observe her subjects in 1928, claimed that prostitutes and their clients resented one another, due, she asserted, to a hatred of father by prostitutes and a hatred of mother by clients. The Italian Freudian, Tibor Agoston (1945), argued that prostitutes and their customers were involved in an immature fantasy and were unable to develop adult responsibilities of long-term relationships. He felt that the prostitute achieved a subterfuge of maturity by submerging her real infantile personality beneath a pseudo-personality, which was rented out in her transactions.

The situation did not improve among the neo-Freudians. Frank Caprio (Caprio & Brenner 1961), after a world brothel tour in 1953, concluded that lesbians were more compelled to become prostitutes than other women, due to a pseudo-heterosexual defence against their suppressed homosexual tendencies. Thomas Szasz (1957) thought prostitutes denied their genitals by allowing male strangers to "possess" these sex organs. Harold Lichtenstein (1961) argued the other way: he claimed prostitutes "castrated" their clients in order to "possess" the phallus and thus win back the love of mother lost in the Oedipal phase. Marc Hollander (1961) argued that prostitutes symbolically castrated their clients in an act of revenge for the way men mistreat women.

Perhaps one of the most amazing studies in the psychoanalytical tradition was that of Edward Glover (1960), who investigated the lives of 20 call-girls and arrived at a classic Freudian conclusion. These women, he asserted, failed to resolve their Oedipal phase, maintaining hostility towards their mothers, yet being distant



from their fathers. As a result, they were contemptuous towards men, which explained their apparent frigidity. With sexual pleasure having a monetary value for them, this indicated a strong anal fixation due to an association of cash with faeces (filthy lucre?). In addition, Glover (1960) argued, this masked a submerged homosexuality.

Another neo-Freudian, although not quite so outrageous in his claims, was Harold Greenwald (1958), who treated a number of call-girls. They also failed to resolve Oedipus, and entered prostitution in a hope of finding a father figure to love, whilst maintaining anger towards their mothers, whom they tormented by an open identification as whores. Greenwald admitted to his study's shortcomings due to a small sample, and went to great lengths to point out that his conclusions were pertinent to his patients only. By then, though, psychoanalysis as a useful scientific methodology was falling out of favour. But much of the damage had been done, since its analytical outcomes had reinforced popularist, moralist and legislators' negative views of prostitutes.

Sociology was another science that had grown as an important analytical academic tradition in the early 20th century. Unlike psychoanalysis' focus on the individual's internalisation of his or her reaction to inter-personal stimulus, sociology is concerned with the external agents interacting with the person. The earliest sociological research, however, was theoretical rather than empirical, and one of the fundamental schools of the science in the early 20th century was functionalism. Perhaps the foremost scholar from this school to turn his attention to prostitution was Kingsley Davis, who was most concerned for the nature of the relation between "deviant" and "normal" behaviours. In a milestone work he argued that prostitution has an important function in society alongside marriage because men are kept contented with emotionally free sex beyond the nuptial bed (shades of Aquinas?). Therefore, he contended, prostitution was more likely to complement marriage than weaken it. Dislocations in marriage are more likely to occur with men involved in extra-marital affairs than involved with prostitution, since the mistress is much more ready to be a substitute for his wife than the prostitute. Davis (1937) concluded then that prostitution should hardly be termed "deviant". Later, he argued that in the economy of sex the exchange of sex for cash by prostitutes was intrinsically no different to wives trading sexual access to their

bodies in marriage for financial security. He also thought that women in the general work force might improve their working conditions by taking up prostitution, since prostitutes "set their own hours, determine their own vacations, as well as escape income taxes" (Davis 1961). Not quite so utopian, but, nevertheless, with uncanny insight, Davis had hit upon some of the reasons for some women throwing in their "straight" jobs for prostitution.

Davis' functional analysis may be criticised for its assumptions that the social structures and the relationship between social functions, like marriage and prostitution, for example, will remain unchanged. It assumes that women will always be the majority of prostitutes, and that men will maintain the same form of dominance over women. Thus, it tends to prop up conservative notions of sex and society, whereas he intended to challenge them. Already, today over half a century after Davis' initial work, some of the functions of social roles have changed, especially in the work force, in sexual permissiveness, and in the importance of marriage.

But there are some redeeming features of Davis' analysis. He saw wives and prostitutes together in reciprocal arrangements with men in a sexual socioeconomic relationship between the sexes. The "collusion" of wives and prostitutes in this role indicate a clear overlap of so-called "deviant" and conventional social roles. Davis found that the exact demarcation point between deviancy and normalcy was no longer as clear as socially supposed. He therefore concluded that rather than deviant and orthodox behaviours functioning as contrasts, they closely interacted and complemented one another. This is one of functionalism's major assets in sociology: the de-construction of previous concepts of "deviance".

Another important sociologist with essential contributions to research into prostitution was William Isaac Thomas. He emerged from a different school, the so-called Chicago school of sociology, with its role in promoting the analytical tradition of symbolic interactionism. The main concern of the symbolic interactionist method of research is the relationship between the individual and his or her social environment. This is best analysed through the perspective of the subject, whose interpretation of norms and values in his or her sub-culture establish a very different meaning than usually assumed by society. The social meaning of "deviance" makes little sense, since the deviants become those who fail to conform to the norms of the sub-culture. Symbolic interactionism



allows the research a much deeper insight into the subject's world than ever possible using a functionalist or psychoanalytical approach. Whereas the functionalist will ask "What is important for society?" and the psychoanalyst will ask "What is important for the subject?", the symbolic interactionist will ask "What is important for the individual (that is subject) in society?" Critics of this method, however, argue that it is too narrow in scope and fails to take account of the wider social structures that underpin society.

But, whatever its limitations, symbolic interactionism was utilised by Thomas early this century to produce one of the outstanding works on prostitutes to his time, and certainly the most insightful of these women. Delving into some 90 case histories of young women and others brought before the juvenile and criminal courts, he found that many of the women moved into prostitution for survival and moved out to marry or settle down into conventional lifestyles. He alerted us to what many researchers today are just beginning to discover: that prostitutes are ordinary women who cross into deviant lifestyles and back into social conformity. These women's lives, however, were affected by their social circumstances which sent them into prostitution just as much as their social circumstance after their experiences in prostitution. As Thomas points out: "It is only when we understand behavior as a whole that we can appreciate the failure of certain individuals to conform to the usual standards." (Thomas 1923/67, p. 2). The women were usually very poor, many came from undesirable family relations, and many were migrants. He referred to their general social milieu as a "culture of survival", and recognised the plight of economic sustenance, or what he calls "the over-determination of economic interests" because this is both "universal" and "predominant" in achieving "economic success... a value convertible into new experience, recognition... security" (Thomas 1923/67, p. 256). Thomas notes with the bitter irony of his case histories:

We only have to refer to the criminal code to appreciate the variety of ways in which the wishes [desires] of the individual may conflict with the wishes of society... There is, therefore, always a rivalry between the spontaneous definitions of the situation made by a member of an organised society



and the definitions which his society has provided for him (Thomas 1923/67, p. 42).

Thomas concluded his analysis of his "unadjusted girls" with some probing questions still the basis for sociological enquiry 75 years later:

How far is abnormality a matter of deficient social organisation? ...How far is individualism compatible with social cohesion? ...How is the general social efficiency of a group affected by various systems of relations between man and woman? (Thomas 1923/67, p. 2)

These were questions which tantalised a group of later sociologists from the Chicago school of thought who grappled with the relationships of individuals and society in theories of social deviance. Some of these social deviance theorists, like Edwin Lemert and Howard Becker, were of the interactionist school, while others outside the Chicago school, most particularly Robert King Merton, championed the structural-functional position in the sociology of deviance. Becker summed up the position of the interactionists:

[Societies] create deviance by making those rules whose infractions constitutes deviance... From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender" (Becker 1962, p. 91).

Lemert (1951) referred to "social pathology" as the situation in which the individual is seen to be the cause of an infraction which is due to ills in society itself, such as sexual repression, social inequality, labelling and social ostracism. As a group the social deviance theorists say deviance occurs as a result of conflicts of interest between powerful "in-groups" and powerless "out-groups". The "in-groups" protect their interests by constructing laws, which they promote as "natural laws of justice", while the "out-groups" are defined as "law abiding" or "law breakers" depending on the degree of acceptance of these laws. "Deviants" are those most unable to

meet the demands and constraints of these laws, and are dealt with by the state's oppressive and institutional apparatus controlled by the "in-groups" such as reform schools, police, courts, prison, and mental asylums, aimed to control and rehabilitate them, or in the case of incorrigibles, lock them out of society forever. Such a situation arose for a group of street prostitutes in Sydney. They were arrested soon after a law was passed in 1983 to make street soliciting offensive. Overnight they became criminal "deviants" ending in gaol sentences. Bearing a double stigma, of social as well as criminal "deviant", they were scapegoats of powerful government forces and the victims of powerful middle-class reactions. I commented on the position of these unfortunate women at the time:

[The prostitute] mirrors our inadequacies and our distorted sense of human sexuality, while at the same time tendering to the back-log in human reality. For her honest raw-boned approach to a part of ourselves we find ugly in our own denial of self, we villify her, deny her rights, and lock her up in an attempt to cast out of our minds what most of us know she is telling us is true (Perkins 1984).

Merton's structural-functionalism sees deviance occurring when a person is unable to meet the "ends" (or values) by the acceptable "means" (or rules), leading to an illegitimate attempt at acquiring the "ends". Deviance then, "arises from a dissociation between ends and means" by which mostly people from the lower classes, rather than the upper or middle classes, will be in a position to depend on a deviant lifestyle to achieve what others acquire through conformity (Merton 1957).

His major critic was Lemert (1967) who felt his analysis too simplistic and failing to confront complex situations. As Becker (1963) pointed out, white-collar crimes are just as prevalent as blue-collar crimes but less often solved and brought to public notice. Lemert (1968) levelled similar criticisms at Davis' narrow focus on the trading of sex for pecuniary benefit. Not only prostitutes and wives are involved but women who sleep with their date for providing a generous outing, mistresses kept by their lovers, waitresses who allow their bottoms to be pinched for a tip, and secretaries who sleep with their bosses for a raise.



David Matza (1969, p. 84) sums up nicely for deviance theorists in his comparison between prostitution and other professionals. As with any service, he points out, prostitution renders a service for a fee, it is devoid of emotion, and it does not discriminate between customers. As he put it: "Prostitution is among the oldest of professions, and professionals always fear prostituting themselves."

Psychologists, especially since the 1940s, have shown an interest in prostitution. The branch of psychology that has made the most important inroads into this area of study has been social psychology, a largely empirical science interested in outcomes as much as origins. Until the time of the psychologists of the 1950s empirical analysis of prostitutes was rare, but since then it has become one of the major methods of research. One of the earliest empiricists to study prostitutes was British psychologist T.C.N. Gibbens, who was also inclined towards behaviourism. In the early 1950s he conducted a survey of 400 "wayward girls" focusing on differences between those juveniles who had been prostitutes and those who had not. He was surprised to learn that very little differences existed between them in their intellectual, emotional and psychological dispositions (Gibbens 1957, p. 3ff).

Later, Gibbens turned to adult prostitutes by conducting a study of such women in Holloway Prison. His findings were quite disturbing: 25 per cent of these women had attempted suicide, 25 per cent had some physical disorder, 25 per cent were alcoholics, 25 per cent were drug addicts, and 15 per cent suffered acute mental stress. This is a very different picture to Thomas' "unadjusted girls", who were self-sufficient and pragmatic, and moved freely from one lifestyle to another. There were two problems with Gibbens' adult sample. Firstly, it was not measured against a control group, so that it is impossible to determine how unusual these findings might be in a prison population. Secondly, since these were incarcerated women it would be incorrect to assume that these incarcerated prostitutes were representative of prostitutes per se, most of whom had never been gaoled.

Gibbens' American counterpart was social psychologist and one-time colleague of Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy. Once again there is a bias towards criminalised prostitutes, since Pomeroy's sample of 175 sex workers included 154 gaol inmates. But his findings were very different to Gibbens' adult sample. Rather than



the depressing picture seen in the British study, Pomeroy's women seemed lively and positive. Two-thirds of them had not regretted taking up prostitution. They saw it as work and entered it to earn more money than they could otherwise. They found it interesting and easy work that was enjoyable, and providing them with freedom and sexual pleasure. For the first time in a major prostitution study here were women admitting to obtaining orgasmic experiences at work. It helped to dispel a myth of the cold, unemotional, frigid prostitute promulgated by the psychoanalysis many years earlier (Pomeroy 1965, pp. 177ff).

These psychological studies were not milestone works in the history of prostitution research, but they did pave the way for a strong trend towards empiricism and statistical analysis. With the impact of feminism on the female consciousness, women researchers showed a renewed interest (since the early Freudians) in prostitution, but now applied statistical findings to causal factors. They came from many disciplines, but the most influential studies were by American women, like anthropologist Jennifer James, sociologist Nanette Davis, and social psychologist Mimi Silbert.

James concentrated on a group of street prostitutes in Seattle and developed a series of studies probing the familial relationships and early sexual experiences of these women in her search for the causal factors for women's entrance into prostitution. In one of her studies she found that a group of juvenile street prostitutes had attracted the attention of authorities because of their sexual behaviour well before entering prostitution (James 1972, p. 102ff; 1978). She followed this up with a survey of 200 adult and juvenile prostitutes, and discovered that 51 per cent had problems with their parents, 16 per cent were incest victims, 43 per cent had been raped mostly outside of work, and 21 per cent had been pregnant and/or had abortions in early adolescence. Most of them had experienced their initial coital intercourse at least a year before a comparative sample of non-prostitute women (James 1979). Finally, she took her sample of street workers and compared them to findings on women's sexuality in other studies. She concluded that her prostitutes had:

- Learned less about sex from their parents and more from personal experiences.
- As children, experienced more sexual advances from adult men.

- Were more involved in incestuous relations with their fathers or stepfathers.
- Generally initiated sexual activity at a younger age.
- More often had no further relations with their first coital partner.
- Experienced a higher incidence of rape (James & Meyerding 1977a, p.138ff; 1977b, p.31ff).

Davis used a symbolic interactionist approach to her sample of 30 street prostitutes contacted in a prison in Minneapolis. She provided a scenario in which these women passed through three stages in what she terms as a "process of drift into prostitution". Features in the first stage are an early coital experience, promiscuity in early adolescence, and familial instability. By mid to late adolescence most of these women had experienced their first act of prostitution as a relatively easy "slide" from promiscuity to actually accepting cash. The second stage is a "transitional" step from initial prostitution to professional adoption of commercial sex. It was undertaken by 21 of the women for an average period of six months. During this stage each woman "normalises the deviant status" and first acquires a label as prostitute from others. In the final stage "behavior becomes regularised, and the self-conception revolves around sex as a vocation. Deviance is no longer viewed as a segmental part of self". From the "bad girl" label it has been a series of gradual or "drifting" sequences to the final acquisition of the permanent label of prostitute, known, by then, to authorities as a "common prostitute". "Such an approach," says Davis, "stresses the significant ways in which deviance comes to be shaped by the attitudes and actions of others." (Davis 1971)

Silbert based her study (Silbert & Pines 1982a, p. 477ff; 1982b, p. 395ff) on 200 adult and juvenile San Francisco street prostitutes. Unlike the James and Davis' studies, half of Silbert's juveniles came from families with above average incomes. On this basis Silbert hypothesises that these women were not motivated by economic factors. It may, of course, have been independence from oppressive family lives. Findings for the study included: 60 per cent of the women were raised by one parent or divided parents; alcohol was a major problem in most families; mothers were beaten in over half the families; two-thirds of the subjects were physically abused



as children; 60 per cent were victims of child sexual abuse and nearly a third of these were incest cases; a third of the women experienced early pregnancies and/or abortions; and nearly three-quarters of them were raped at some time in their lives. Finally, 60 per cent of the sample said they were considered promiscuous in adolescence and the average age of initial coital intercourse was 13.5 years.

Collectively, but most especially Silbert's study, these studies paint a grim, bleak picture of prostitute women's lives, both prior to entrance into prostitution, and after it. They do support a popular feminist notion about prostitution as an abusive scenario, in which the women are victims who lack control over their environment. Unfortunately, they also bolster the arguments used by the extreme moralists, such as fundamentalist Christian organisations, in their bids to introduce tougher laws and stiffer penalties to deal with prostitutes (and further victimise these women). However, each of the studies in this research group depended on street prostitutes for their samples. Furthermore, Davis obtained her sample from the prison system, and Silbert sought her sample from among drug rehabilitating women. Also, there was a heavy bias in James' and Silbert's samples towards juveniles. None of these are truly representative of prostitutes *per se*, since street soliciting is carried out by a small minority of prostitutes; incarcerated and drug-using prostitutes are a small section of the prostitute subculture; and juveniles are also a small minority of sex workers.

In the past decade there has been an increase in the number of works on prostitution that are heavily reliant on prostitutes' own interpretations of their situations. The prostitutes are not simply subjects for the benefit of the researcher's analysis, but their comments and views are often the very core and essence of the work, frequently supplying a self-evident analysis. There is usually no attempt, or little effort, on the part of the writer to structure or generically assemble the material, but it is left for the reader to contemplate the raw data. Some have feminist orientations, others have other political intentions, but all make an appeal for human rights based on a non-deviant argument for prostitutes. They have been inspired by the prostitutes' movement since 1975, and are more concerned for circumstances affecting prostitutes in their work than for causal factors, such as found in the studies of James, Davis and Silbert. Among the more prominent of these works are: McLeod (1982), Jaget (1980), Perkins and Bennett (1985), Pheterson (1989) and Delacoste and Alexander (1987).



Eileen McLeod's (1982) study is an outstanding work in this field. Unlike most of the researchers mentioned throughout this Section, who have had only fleeting, mostly non-participatory, contact with their subjects, she has spent many years in the criminal justice system as a parole officer, coming in intimate contact with prostitutes on an almost daily basis. In addition she is a sociologist. Her work is both a narrative and scientific treatise of prostitution in Britain, with a high dependence on the first-hand material of 30 prostitutes in all areas of the industry. There is no search for family upheavals, sexual abnormalities, nor pathologies in her analysis, but it is a direct and descriptive account of the working lives of prostitutes, with solutions offered for improving the day-to-day conditions of the sex industry and reforming laws. Her descriptive analysis expands on the prostitutes' viewpoint that their work offers good pay and flexible hours, but is far too dominated by men, with far too little protection offered them against violence. She also expands on data from clients, showing that they more often view the prostitute as their "other girlfriend" rather than as a mere sex object. McLeod's discourse on the current laws in Britain is in effect a lobby to legislators. In describing her objectives for undertaking the study McLeod probably sums up the attitude of most researchers and other writers in this genre:

Two convictions lay at the core of this book. First, that people should be regarded as equal, and secondly, deriving from this, that the most constructive working relations are co-operative rather than competitive and hierarchical (McLeod 1982, p. 147).

In this Section we have encountered some of the research carried out on prostitution over the past two centuries. Small, though select this may be, it nevertheless indicates the enormous diversity of opinions that have emerged in the course of the history of this research. Some, like Lombroso and the Freudians, seem bizarre in the light of knowledge today, while others obviously push a moral, political or careerist intention. Even within disciplines, such as psychoanalysis or sociology, there is a great diversity of opinion. Taken together, all of these studies and opinions with their contrasting, as well as complementary, findings, provide the material for a lively dialectical argument either way. It is an impressive

literature on the subject of prostitution (grand even, if you consider the quantity on Table 1.1). But so much has been written, yet so little learned. The myths and misconceptions that surround prostitution continue to reinforce the notions on the subject in the public consciousness. It is the intention of this book to make an inroad into this void of knowledge.

### The Legal Response

Turning once again to Bullough's (1977) list of publications (Table 1.1) we note the huge amount of literature on the legal aspect of prostitution. Two reasons probably account for this: a high public concern for the control of prostitution; and, prostitution's long history of fluctuating legalities perpetuates a high profile interest among legal researchers. The assumptions at the heart of both these responses are that if prostitution is not suppressed by law the moral fibre and the sexual mores of the community will be threatened, not to mention the inevitable damage it is likely to do to the family institution. Lord Devlin had correctly assessed the position of the law when he argued that its responsibility is to uphold the morality of the majority. In western legislative systems prostitution is assumed to disrupt the moral order in three important areas. The first is that it is the most blatant form of promiscuity. The second is that it indulges in extra-marital sexual relations. The third is that its commercial nature involves sex without love. However, promiscuity, in recent years, has become acceptable in some sections of society, and prostitution no longer appears to challenge the sexual code so much. Whilst promiscuous individuals may go through the motions of a brief love affair with each sexual liaison, lust not love is the motivating factor in many, if not most, of today's sexual relations. In this respect it is little different to sex in prostitution. With regard to extra-marital relations, most people would probably still find this objectionable. But, most wives would probably rather their husbands involve themselves with prostitutes than lovers. A *Cleo* survey (May 1989) indicated that nearly 13 per cent of women would not object to their husbands/boyfriends visiting a prostitute at least once. Interestingly, almost a fifth of the women over 25 found no objection to this. Perhaps traditional attitudes are changing due to an increasing acceptance of prostitution.



If traditional morality is no longer an appropriate social critic as a source of legislative change, there still remains other reactions to prostitution which have in the past been successful in influencing legislative changes. Opponents of prostitution argue that it spreads diseases, that it entraps innocent young women, and that it should be confined to certain areas. All of these are loaded with thinly-disguised moral values convinced that prostitution is intrinsically evil as a direct cause of sexually transmissible diseases and "white slavery", and it should be placed out of harm's way (if not entirely eradicated). But, as we shall see, prostitution is one of the least important causes of diseases, according to the medical evidence this century. Legislation to deal with the wilful spread of disease by *anyone* exists in most western jurisdictions. While "white slavery" usually involves the traffic of women for prostitution, it is not the only reason for this heinous crime. In some non-western countries it serves the harem or purdah systems. In other contexts organised trafficking is often the only way poor third-world women can enter western countries for the purposes of voluntary prostitution and marriage. Where trafficking involves the involuntary movement of women, of course, legislation should be enacted against the traffickers, but not against prostitution, since it is not the product of trafficking any more than trafficking is the product of prostitution. The issue of areal confinement is a complex one and will be dealt with later in the context of environmental planning. But to confine prostitution to designated "red light" areas is yet another example of moralism of the "necessary evil" kind. All of these issues have a long history in the west, and it is to this we now turn.

Western laws on prostitution have three major sources: Mosaic, Ancient Roman, and Germanic laws. Apart from those Mosaic laws on p.18 of this book, the Deuteronomy law 23:17-18 is at the heart of Judaism:

There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel... You shall not bring the hire of a harlot... into the house of the Lord your God in payment for any vow.

This was clearly reactionary to polytheism, with its sacred prostitution, the very antithesis of Judaism (Henriques 1962, pp. 364-6). It also reflects Hebrew paranoia for maintaining cultural purity



after centuries of captivity in Egypt. Their fanatical devotion to their divine deliverer made them ideologically different to their more powerful neighbours in nearly every respect. The laws of Ancient Israel were as much a reinforcement of this political and cultural independence as a reaction to the cults of Near Eastern sacred prostitution.

Certainly the Mosaic laws provided the basis for early Christianity's anti-sexual attitudes. But in practical terms prostitution flourished as much in Israel as it did in any other nation of the Near East, as references to it in the Bible testify (for example, Ezekiel 16: 26 and 27, 23:8; 1 Kings 22:38; Isaiah 23:16; Hosea 4:15 to name a few). The Christians were aware of this, and since most of them were more familiar with Roman laws and attitudes than those of the Israelites it seemed appropriate to look at *Lex Romanicus* for inspiration. In theory and practice the Romans were more pragmatic than the Israelites, and it is this pragmatism that led to the Augustinian "necessary evil" approach to prostitution.

The Romans were more interested in regulating prostitution, not eradicating it, in spite of their general contempt for women who became prostitutes. However, the idea of regulation by state control occurred first to the 6th century B.C. King of Athens, Solon, who established state controlled brothels, or *dicteria*. The Greeks had many classes of prostitutes: temple harlots, the *dicteriades* or inmates of the state brothels, and, as already noted (pp 15 and 16), *auletrides* and *hetairai*. The Romans adopted the idea of state-controlled brothels, or *lupinar* (house of she-wolves). But, not until the time of the Emperor Augustus did a set of codes govern the behaviour, restrictions and privileges of prostitutes. As we have seen, Roman prostitutes were forbidden to cover their faces in public, but also the *meretrix*, or state brothel inmates, were forbidden to wear the colour purple, to wear shoes, or to put their hair in fillets, in public, while they were required to dye their hair red or yellow (Simons 1975, p. 40).

Roman prostitutes were forbidden by law to own property. Thus they were distinguished from other women, since aristocratic women could and did own property. But any aristocrat found offering sex for money was banished. Roman citizen men were forbidden from marrying a brothel "madam", and senators were not allowed to marry any woman who had once been a prostitute. Yet, such a prominent man as the Emperor Claudius married Messalina,

who had a reputation for once being a temple harlot. Also, the Plutarchs assure us, it appeared not to have been a public scandal for a prominent man to enter a *lupinar* (Bullough 1964, p. 53). So popular were these *lupinar* that they were established wherever the Roman legions marched (Simons 1975, p. 45). Thus, the brothel, like the aqueduct, the sewerage system, the road system, and the Latin alphabet, was a heritage of Roman conquest and colonisation.

Under such a system, which seems harsh on prostitutes, state workers had a measure of protection from the state:

Once a woman was registered [as a prostitute] she had certain legal protection. For example, if a man refused to pay his fee at the appropriate time the prostitute could complain to the *aedile* [public building officer]: if the case was proven then the *aedile* could force the client to pay the woman her due (Simons 1975, p. 39).

In Ancient Germania a very different process was at work. The various German tribes, who fiercely opposed adultery, were not kindly disposed towards prostitutes. The Visigoths gave prostitutes 300 lashes and cut off their hair. Recalcitrant women who persisted with prostitution were sold into slavery. Judges who accepted bribes from prostitutes were given 100 lashes. Prostitution was considered such a heinous crime and a woman accused of it so ruined, that the Lombards dealt harshly with anyone falsely accusing a woman of it (Bullough 1982, p. 36). While the early Christians were content to adopt the principles of *Lex Romanica*, later, with the conversions of Germanic peoples to Christianity, wherever they went in Europe they took their fierce laws on prostitution with them. The Saxons introduced them to England, and when Charlemagne became Holy Roman Emperor in 800 A.D. he enforced the Frankish law of whipping and exiling prostitutes by excommunication in Christendom.

Medieval canonical lawyers, however, felt the Germanic laws too harsh. They were also uninspired by the Scriptural laws, since these were too impractical. So, once more Christian states and the Church looked to the laws of Ancient Rome. These seemed most practical for the growth of town life in the Middle Ages. As with the Roman laws, so Medieval prostitutes were not entitled to own property nor bring evidence to court in their own defence. One major



concern for the Church lawyers was extracting tax from the prostitute without accepting the "wages of sin". Thomas Aquinas offered a solution: "The harlot must be required to pay the tithe from her earnings—but the Church might not accept payment until she reformed." (Brundage 1976, p. 838). But the canonists slipped out of this paradox by leaving the responsibility for tax collection to town authorities.

As towns grew in size, and space became a premium, authorities sought to either confine prostitution or remove it from the city. Thus, in England, prostitution in Sandwich was confined to a section of the town, while in London it was ordered outside the city walls (Bullough 1964, p. 113). In Valencia prostitutes were confined to a brothel quarter, with armed guards enforcing this law. In Venice in 1446 a law was passed forbidding prostitutes to eat, drink or sleep in taverns (Henriques 1963, p. 52). By the late Middle Ages, prostitutes were often forced to comply with dress regulation, in order for them to be distinguished at a glance. For example, in Leipzig they had to wear a yellow cap with blue trimmings; in Vienna a yellow handkerchief had to be pinned at the shoulder; in Augsburg they had to wear a green sash; in Zurich and Berne it was a red cap; in Bergamo a yellow one; in Parma it was white; in Milano black; and so on (Henriques 1963, p. 44). Across Italy a common law allowed any citizen to strip a prostitute naked in the street if she was "improperly" dressed (Henriques 1963, p. 45).

The Reformation brought profound changes to the laws on prostitution. The toleration days were over as reformists turned to the old Germanic laws to enforce their notions of moral order. An Augustinian philosophy satisfied the legal reformers in Lutheran states. St Augustine had taught that sex was an unclean pastime which resulted in a loss of bodily control. The reformists felt that this loss of bodily control was a fundamental problem in the traditional Church, so they reversed the argument to indicate that losing bodily control invites carnal lust. For Reformation lawyers then, self-restraint was essential for good social order. Much later, the 18th century philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1780), would extend this argument in his notion of sexual desire objectifying the object of love.

Once the reformists were able to reconcile traditional notions of extramarital romantic love with the medieval custom of arranged marriage by introducing the ideology of marriage as a culmination of



romantic love, then legislating against sex beyond marriage was an easier matter. This is at the core of prohibitionist laws on prostitution to the present day. Calvinism, which spread much more widely than the more moderate Lutheran Church, introduced such ideas to Scandinavia, Scotland, and England, and, in turn, was taken to America by the Puritans, to become the basis of morals even to this day in the United States.

Morality was not the only concern in the Reformation treatment of prostitution. The period of Church reform coincided with the spread of syphilis, and this provided the reformists with extra fuel for prohibiting prostitution (just as the same argument prevails among the more conservative elements of the 20th century). Prostitutes were blamed for its spread, and many cities simply passed laws banning prostitution altogether. In England in 1546 Henry VIII gave into pressure by ordering all brothels closed (Henriques 1963, p. 61). Curiously though, while the rest of Europe responded to syphilis with anti-prostitution legislation, Spain, at the height of its inquisitional power, retained a tolerant attitude on prostitution (Sanger 1858-1937, p. 169). In the port of Seville, for instance, a hotbed of syphilis (and some might argue was a major point of entry for the disease, if they concede to the theory that syphilis was a native American disease brought to the Old World by Spaniards returning from the New World), town authorities ordered a medical surveillance of the city's only brothel in 1570 but did not consider closing the place (Perry 1985, pp. 148-9).

For the next two centuries prostitution legislation wavered back and forth but gradually the laws were relaxed and fell into disuse. The English Parliament, under Puritan influence, reaffirmed its previous position on prostitution when it retained ordinances on brothel prohibition in 1626. But the situation had relaxed to such a degree a century later that Bernard Manderville was prompted to write a paper, 'A Modest Defence of Publick Stewes' in 1724 explaining the need for regulation of prostitution:

Unregulated prostitution had led to an increase in illegitimate births, alienated affections of wives and husbands, tempted people to live beyond their incomes, debauched married women, warped virtue and ruined young virgins (Bullough 1964, p. 161).

England had remained more uncomfortable with prostitution than the Continent, where brothels became as much a part of community life as taverns, theatres and sporting arenas. Indeed, prostitutes also solicited business in these social gatherings. Meanwhile, England passed a *Disorderly Houses Act* in 1751 and a *Brothel Act* in 1755, which, together with the common law on brothel keeping, kept houses of prostitution to a minimum by prosecuting brothel owners/landlords.

It was the Napoleonic Wars which wrought changes to prostitution on the European continent. Napoleon's Grand Army was ravaged with gonorrhoea and syphilis, and once again prostitutes were held to blame. He therefore abolished camp following and forced medical inspections of brothels in towns where his army billeted. Finally, the Code Napoleon of 1810 introduced a system of brothel licensing across Europe. Only Berlin refused to comply, finally passing laws against brothels which forced the closure of all its prostitution houses in 1844. However, an outbreak of syphilis in the years following this led to a reversal in 1851, with the re-opened brothels under strict regulation and health surveillance (Sanger 1858-1937, p. 456).

While the licensing system became the established method of dealing with prostitution on Europe's mainland for the next century and a half, England adopted another measure, which would have far-reaching consequences across the Empire and the Commonwealth well into this century. The first important legislation in the 19th century were the *Contagious Diseases Acts* introduced in 1864 to protect Her Majesty's Naval and Military personnel overseas. No one seemed to consider that it might have been this same personnel carrying venereal diseases with them, rather than prostitutes in the countries of occupation passing the infection onto them. A series of amendments to the Acts enabled authorities simply to quarantine any woman in a lock hospital (medical gaol) on someone else's suspicion that she was infected. It always involved confining women and most often prostitutes. Feminists of the time rightly saw it as highly discriminatory, and finally the Acts were repealed in 1886 following a furious campaign led by Josephine Butler. But by then the British Government had other legal means of dealing with prostitutes.

As we have seen (p. 24) the extreme right wing of the Evangelist Movement lobbied for, and successfully achieved, prohibition legislation in England in 1885. The *Criminal Law*



*Amendment Act* of 1885 was the first piece of legislation to make a frontal attack on the existence of prostitution since the 17th century. In the years following, it effectively closed not only structured brothels but the little rooms where street prostitutes often took their clients in all major English cities; it broke down the existing structure of prostitution, which was female-dominated and independent, and drove it into the hands of male pimps and other entrepreneurs; it alienated prostitutes from the working-class female population through a legal stigma which clearly demarked the identity of prostitutes from other women; and, it raised the age of consent from 13 to 16 for girls, which enabled greater police involvement in private family affairs and made juveniles a particular legal entity foreshadowing the emotional response to "white slavery" (see Walkowitz 1980).

In the United States of America, a similar set of circumstances set wheels in motion leading to repressive legislation, though a little later than Britain. Once again feminists collaborated with social purists to usher in this legislation. But while feminists were fighting against male sexual hegemony, the moralists agitated against vice per se. Slavery, alcoholism and prostitution became the three major issues in American social purity politics in the 19th century. Slavery, of course, ceased with the Civil War, but prostitution continued to flourish until the turn of the century, though usually confined to specified "red light" (or "tenderloin") districts in the cities. St Louis was the only city to introduce regulation, apart from the unwritten code of environmental control, which was compulsory medical surveillance of prostitutes and brothels in 1870. But the pressure mounted in the 20th century, especially following hysteria over the assumed "white slavery" of Europe and Asia. The Federal *Mann Act* resulted in 1910, restricting the movement of single women not just into and out of the country but across State borders. This seemed to herald in a wave of state legislation amendments which effectively outlawed prostitution across the country, including such notable instances as the introduction of vice laws in New York following the publication of George Kneeland's (1913) investigative report and the closure of New Orleans' Storyville district in 1917 after a concern for the health of naval personnel. The upshot of the American anti-prostitution legislation was even more severe than in England, since prostitution, once a



female-dominated industry in America, fell into the hands of crime organisations (*see* Winick & Kinsie 1971, p. 201ff).

The criminalisation of prostitution in Europe is more closely linked with the international concerns for "white slavery". In 1904 the International Agreement for the suppression of the "White Slave Traffic" was drawn up between 13 European countries in Paris and this entailed co-operation and corresponding legislation to suppress trafficking of women (in 1910 Brazil was included in the agreement). The League of Nations took up the issue as a major agenda item in a series of assemblies after 1921. Thirty-three countries, including nearly all of Europe as well as Japan, China and India, at the initial conference agreed to co-operate in investigating the extent of the problem and then introduce inter-locking legislation. Only the United States of America declined to take part, since it argued that legislation should be an individual nation's concern dealing with localised situations only (*see* Bullough 1964, p. 179ff). The United Nations continued where the previous international conferences had left off. In its 4th session in May 1949 a "Draft Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others" was drawn up with intentions of abolishing the traffic of women by individual co-operative legislation. In 1958, 24 countries ratified this agreement. Among those countries to decline participation were America and Australia, once again on the basis that legislation should be an individual national conscience, not international. Bullough sums up the sentiment of the international body:

This international action was accompanied by a decrease in the traffic, particularly in Europe, but also between Europe and South America. This decrease was due not only to greater international vigilance, but to the abolition of licensed brothels in certain countries... With the decrease of licensed brothels there was a corresponding decline in the traffic. Prostitution continued, but the number of countries in which the government licensed or registered prostitutes has steadily fallen (Bullough 1964, p. 17).

The pressure to cease licensing prostitution because it was believed to be responsible for the traffic of women resulted in

wholesale and worldwide reverses. Licensing ceased and was replaced with various criminal statutes, for example, in Argentina in 1938, France in 1946, Japan in 1955, Italy in 1958, Thailand in 1960, Peru in 1982. Other jurisdictions, such as West Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands sought alternate forms of legislation, such as environmental regulation (or "legalisation") or legal reforms (or "decriminalisation").

In this historic review of the laws on prostitution in western societies, the ebb and flow of regulation had covered widely diversified legal systems of control, each of which has played its role criminalising, regulating and tolerating prostitutes. In any understanding of the current legal contexts, it is essential that a broad knowledge of this historic development exists. It is especially important that the reader is aware that the present worldwide trend of prohibiting prostitution has its direct antecedence in 19th century morals and the changes of law in response to that. It should be noted also that this has had a global impact, even upon non-Christian Third World countries.<sup>8</sup>

In any logical discourse on law and in view of the many controversies on prostitution and legal entity, it is important to discuss the issue of rights. Human rights have a long history among society's highest ideals, through Locke, Rousseau, Kant and Mill to Bertrand Russell. Human rights frame the constitution of many nations, the most notable being the American Bill of Rights, which incorporates at least three fundamental aspects which concern us here: right to free speech; right to privacy; right to equality by law. The Australian Constitution does not include a 'Bill of Rights' but the principle of equality of justice prevails as an essential judicial doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

Yale legal academic Ronald Dworkin (1978), in his so-called "rights thesis", argues that individual human rights should be considered a logical and natural process in any democracy. If, for example, we consider religious freedom to be the right of any individual, then the state has no right to prevent an ethnic or sectarian minority setting up its church regardless of public opinion.

In a discussion on Dworkin's "rights thesis", New York Professor of Law, David Richards, adds "two crucial normative assumptions" to the essential ingredients of human rights. The first of these is autonomy, which:



gives to persons the capacity to call their lives their own. The development of these capacities for separation and individuation is, from the earliest life of the infant, the central development task of becoming a person (Richards 1979, p. 1225).

The second of these assumptions is equality:

Because autonomy is so fundamental to the concept of what it is to be a person and because all are equal in their possession of it, all persons are entitled to equal concern and respect, as persons (Richards 1979).

Richards predicates that these constitute the very notion of human rights. The law, as an instrument of people's rights, should then imply the enforcement of these rights, as defined by Dworkin and Richards. Since many national constitutions either do not recognise these rights or fail to enforce them under constitutional law, we should turn to a higher authority which enshrines such notions in its written charter. The impartial body of the United Nations is the highest authority on the planet. Article 29 of its Declaration of Human Rights reads:

In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others (United Nations Doc. A/810, 1948).

This remains one of humankind's highest ideological achievements within the greatest international forum yet conceived.

The argument that prostitution within the law is a human right that challenges its regulation by law can be supported best by viewing it within the following paradigms:

- Prostitution as an infringement on the rights of others.
- Prostitution as an infringement of public morals.
- Prostitution as a right of employment.



- Prostitution as a right of individual choice and personal freedom.

The first paradigm can be approached with a response to an article by criminologist David Sternberg (1983, pp. 77-107), whose functional analysis of prostitution includes nearly every cliché of the prostitute as a victimiser. He argues, for example, that wives of her clients are victimised because men spend money on her instead of them. Firstly, of course, most husbands have "pocket money" which they may spend as they see fit. Secondly, the same argument might be extended to include bartenders who sell drinks to these husbands, bookies who accept racing bets from them, and storekeepers who sell them items for their hobbies (such as fishing, sailing and other sports). Are the wives of these men also being victimised? Another example given by Sternberg are clients who are robbed by prostitutes. While this occasionally occurs, true professionals among the ranks of prostitutes would not contemplate robbery, since they endeavour to encourage their clients to return in the future. In any case, many more prostitutes are robbed by their clients than the other way around.

Perhaps Sternberg's most legitimate example is noisy street prostitution in residential areas which infringe on a community's right to quiet and harmony in their neighbourhood. This may not apply to all street prostitution, since some is conducted with a great deal of discretion, and it doesn't apply to prostitution *per se*, most of which is indoors and clandestine. It would be unjust to frame criminalising legislation for all prostitutes on the basis of a few rowdy individuals and their clients. These can and should be dealt with in existing public offence laws, without the necessity of introducing special laws on soliciting or prostitution *per se*.

Most claims to prostitution infringing on the rights of others are individual and often isolated instances. Prostitution is a business of discretion and anonymity, in which both prostitutes and their clients wish to conduct this business with the utmost quiet and undue attention. Thus, infringing on the rights of others is the last consideration. In fact, most street noise in an area of street prostitution is caused by rowdy passers-by that neither the prostitutes nor their genuine clients want either. Even instances where non-prostitute women living in an area frequented by street prostitutes are bothered by male cruisers are not so much a problem of prostitution

as of general male harassment of women. Therefore, since most of the problems often associated with prostitution are not caused by prostitutes themselves, to punish these women legally is in itself an infringement of those women's human rights. The legislators should look to increase laws and penalties to curb the obnoxious behaviour of street offenders who are responsible for these problems; and this would be of benefit to prostitutes as well as residents.

In the second paradigm we are back into the circulatory argument of jurist Lord Devlin (see p. 28-9), in which he defends the law as a protector of the very morals from which it was founded. To persist with prostitution as being immoral, one should also insist that promiscuity and masturbation are immoral and deserving similar legal punishment. In today's sexual climate this now seems quite ridiculous. Public morals today, therefore, probably have a very different meaning to that of Devlin's time, 30 years ago. So I will look to morals and ethics which may appeal to a pluralist community of many religious ideologies. Perhaps one which most people would agree to is a moral that insists on consideration and respect for others (which also accords very much with Christ's teachings). Once again, the only area of prostitution which might infringe on this universal moral is the minority area of street prostitution. Public polls would seem to confirm this. In polls conducted by the *Sydney Morning Herald* (13 May 1985) and *Cleo* (May 1989), whilst most people agreed to "legalisation" the majority were opposed to "legalising" street prostitution. Similar results came from a survey by *The Canberra Times* (19 July 1989) with 54 per cent of 651 participants agreeing to "legalisation", 40 per cent against it and 6 per cent non-committal. As with the *Sydney Morning Herald* outcome more men (58 per cent) than women (49 per cent) favoured "legalisation"; interestingly, like the *Cleo* survey the older respondents were more favourable to it than the younger.

To return to Lord Devlin and his major critic, Ronald Dworkin, it becomes difficult to define morality clearly enough for the entire community. To accept Devlin's narrow precepts is to assume a strict Christian fundamentalist view as the consensus, which Dworkin argues is far from the case. Then again, Dworkin (1978, pp. 253-4) objects to the broader definition of Devlin, that "the common morality of a society at any time is a blend of custom and convention, of reason and feeling, of experience and prejudice",



because to legislate on the basis of prejudice is in itself to resort to an immorality.

For the third paradigm one might not go beyond the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", Article 23, which provides everyone with the right to work and seek employment without obstruction (United Nations Doc. A/810, 1948). This is a fundamental human right, and if we return to the first Section in this Chapter we can see the extent to which prostitutes consider their occupation to be work. Sternberg, however, questions the validity of prostitution as work, and therefore the benefit of rights to work should not be applicable to prostitutes. He refers to commercial sex as "pseudowork", involving few skills and certainly none which other women do not possess. He refers to American prostitutes' preference for fellatio over coitus as an example of seeking the easiest labour, and that prostitution is more an experience of excitement than of a "legitimate occupation and profession" (Sternberg 1983, pp. 94-7). Of course, it would be doubtful if Sternberg would criticise stuntmen, deep sea divers and racing car drivers, who seek excitement in their work. Nor would he be critical of the well-paid, high-powered executive for making his job easier with extra staff.

The fact is that prostitution requires the exchange of a service for labour, which is the most fundamental element of any employment. That point is too often missed because, as already stated most people view sex as leisure. When defending the feminists' position on prostitution, Sternberg (1983, pp. 95 and 97) refers to prostitution as the "most blatant degradation of women", while earlier he refers to what he calls "legitimate" work as a "degrading and alienating economic system". Perhaps he strikes the truth of the matter when he says: "People have a 'gut feeling' that prostitutes are being inordinately well paid for activities which are not 'really' work." One might just as well argue that chefs are "inordinately well paid" for not "really" working, since many housewives and bachelors also do cuisine cooking. In any case, if prostitution should be considered a leisure activity rather than work, the United Nations' still guarantees prostitutes the right to leisure under Article 24 (United Nations A/180, 1948). Either way, it is not the place of the law to intervene in the exercise of the right, but to enforce it.



The last paradigm reflects the most fundamental of all human rights, freedom of choice, or the autonomy and equality so eloquently expressed by Richards. The term "crime without a victim" in reference to prostitution was coined by the deviance theorists (Schur 1965) in a bid to convince legislators that these kinds of "crimes" should be decriminalised because nobody is harmed by them. New South Wales, Denmark, Sweden and The Netherlands, all responded to this with some efforts at decriminalising their prostitution legislation. Reduced to its most fundamental interaction, prostitution is simply sexual activity in private. Two oft repeated catch-cries in the libertarian movement have been "the law does not belong in my bedroom" and "keep your laws off my body". This, after all, is an essential aspect of autonomy, and has been most vehemently pursued by gay liberationists. Gay reformers argue that they have a right to have sex with whomever they please, so long as both parties consent and are of a legal age. The only difference between homosexual couplings and heterosexual ones are the sex of the partners, and that is a matter for preference not law. In prostitution, it is not sex but the payment of cash which is the only difference between it and other casual heterosexual couplings. Where it does differ more substantially is when the prostitution occurs in a brothel. But, then it is more a matter of environment and town planning, and not sexuality.

Today we are witnessing history repeating itself. In the wake of the Reformation a wave of anti-prostitution legislation swept Europe. But, in the age of reason and enlightenment, these legislative measures relaxed as the laws fell into disuse and a return of *laissez-faire* occurred. In the 19th century—first in response to spreading disease—licensing and regulation of the kind once occurring in the Middle Ages was established, and then—in response to the Evangelist Movement and the various social purity organisations—laws prohibiting prostitution or its activities were introduced. Now, in the new age of reason and enlightenment, with the maturity of human rights and the decline of morality, comes a fresh rethink on prostitution. We are presently at the crossroads between a return to "Medieval" regulation, or a return to "Early Christian" *laissez-faire*. Into the breach of legal philosophies Australia, with its experiments in legalisation and decriminalisation, is thrust, to stand at the threshold of universal legislation on prostitution. This role will be discussed at length in the next Chapter.

## Conclusion

A common theme throughout this Chapter has been the artificial devices created by society to identify prostitutes as separate from other women. These devices included stigma, alienation, science and law. The Romans stigmatised their prostitutes as "rebellious women" and identified them with slave status. The Israelites stigmatised prostitutes in Israel as "sacrilegious" and tended to identify them with women from other nations.

The Romans and Medieval Europeans enforced dress regulations to make prostitutes appear different to other women. In modern society the same intention is seen in science and law, with academia locating the deviance through theoretical and empirical rationalisations, and the laws controlling this deviance by isolating those deemed to be most responsible for it. The law and the Church in modern society collaborate in dealing with prostitutes by the joint stigma of "criminal" and "immoral", which in effect make these women appear fundamentally different to other women.

One of the outcomes of this Chapter has been to illuminate the stigma of "prostitute" as an artificial, constructed and superficial process created through the three major channels of the Church, the scientific approach and legislation. As the rest of this book will only too clearly demonstrate, this artificial construction masks an essential truth: that prostitutes are ordinary women in a specific occupation that involves promiscuous sex, female sexual freedom and sex as a commodity. The essential truth highlights prostitutes as little more than "sex workers", while the artificial devices seen in this Chapter mark them permanently as "scarlet women".

## Notes

1. A lexicon of Australian sub-cultural terms is currently being prepared by a group of authors. My contribution is 'Prospeak' of nearly 300 words commonly used by prostitutes. It will be two or three years in compiling and publishing.
2. A head count was made of street prostitutes in October 1986 on three consecutive nights in three



weeks: Kings Cross readings were  $29 + 13 + 14 = 56$ ;  $16 + 21 + 10 = 47$ ;  $15 + 20 + 10 = 45$ . On William St. at the same time readings were  $8 + 13 + 11 = 32$ ;  $7 + 15 + 9 = 31$ ;  $6 + 12 + 10 = 28$ . On Canterbury Rd. it varied from 15 at one time to 0 at another. From these I estimated that 103 women worked the streets by adding  $56+32+15$ , or approximately 10% of all prostitutes. In the same month I counted 71 parlours in the Sydney metropolitan region. Numbers of workers in each fluctuated from 15 to 5 in a week, that is an average of 10 each, or a total of 710. About 25 prostitutes worked in the Kings Cross strip clubs and bars in the same week. A combined total of 735 was taken, or about two-thirds of all prostitutes. In the advertisements placed by call-girls I counted some 76 separate operations in October 1987 as near as I could calculate keeping in mind duplicates and more than one phone number in some places. With an average of two call girls per operation I estimated a total of 152 prostitutes or about a quarter of all prostitutes. The total of 990 is called 1,000.

3. *Inquiry Into Prostitution*, Victorian Government, October 1985, p. 46. This Inquiry tended to estimate against a wider population without the specific time periods used in my estimate or that of the *Select Committee*. Rather than looking at populations in a day or a week, its broader scope of prostitutes were "working on a regular basis". For a recent police estimate see note 4.
4. *Select Committee*, op. cit., pp. 71-2. Recent correspondence with the various police departments has resulted in the following police estimates of prostitutes in their jurisdictions. The Australian Federal Police claim 50 prostitutes in regular employment in the ACT, with 100-150 supplementing this core group as casual workers (5



October 1989). The Northern Territory Police claim about 70 prostitutes in their jurisdiction (30 October 1989). The Victorian Police think there are about 2000 prostitutes in their State, less than a quarter of whom are working legally (30 Oct 89). No official figures exist for Queensland and Tasmania, but I would estimate a current population of prostitutes in Queensland at approx. 500, while in Tasmania it is less than 100.

5. *Inquiry Into Prostitution*, op. cit. estimates 200 male prostitutes in Victoria. My estimate for Sydney is that men and transsexuals represent 10 per cent of the prostitute population.
6. All Biblical references/citations are from the Revised Standard Version of *The Holy Bible*, Wm. Collins Sons, New York, 1952/75.
7. In addition to the figures cited for London and Paris (p.16), there were also large numbers of prostitutes in 19th century American cities, for example New York in the 1830s had 20,000, and San Francisco in the 1850s had 3,000 (M. Rugoff: *Prudery and Passion: Sexuality in Victorian America*, New York, 1971). Rome, Brussels, Vienna, Chicago, New Orleans all had similarly high numbers of prostitutes with percentages of the total female population in prostitution from 12% for San Francisco to 4% for London.
8. Many non-western societies in the past (that is pre-contact, pre-colonial, pre-neocolonial, etc.) never regulated prostitution. Some, such as Ancient Near Eastern nations (Babylonia, Assyria, Media, Phoenicia, Samaria, Ugarit, Kadesh, Egypt, Crete, Cyprus and the Archaic and pre-Classic Greeks) encouraged it as part of their religious cults, as did pre-colonial India. In China and Japan some form of regulation occurred, even though prostitution

was highly tolerated in both these areas. Burley & Symanski (in R. Symanski: *The Immoral Landscape*, Butterworths Toronto, 1981, 266) found only 21 of 300 societies investigated by them where open toleration and government sponsorship took place: 11 were in East Asia, 5 in the Pacific, 4 in Africa, 1 in native South America. This may suggest widespread resistance by the various patriarchies rather than religious morals.

9. Serious political discussions on a proposed Australian "Bill of Rights", broadly based on the American "Bill of Rights" (first 10 amendments in the American Constitution), occurred. Some have argued that constitutional rights are no guarantee of basic civil rights and liberties. They point to the USSR Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech, assembly, the press, and demonstrations, all of which are denied. Also, in America, blacks, women and various minorities have to remind Congress continually of its violations to the "Bill of Rights". Constitutional obligations of human rights mean nothing in oppressive regimes.

## **Chapter 2**

### **CONTROL, REGULATION AND LEGISLATION**

Of greatest concern to prostitutes are the laws which control and regulate their industry. This is not to deny health, violence, industrial relations and taxation as important issues in their lives. The statutes are the aspect of prostitution over which they have least control, and which affects not only those issues just mentioned but also their private as well as their public lives. The law can force them to seek more clandestine places of work and thus reduce their incomes; it can encourage the intervention of organised crime in their industry; it can force them to accept pimps and panders for protection from arrest; it can involve them in a police extortion racket through having to pay individual policemen in order to avoid arrest; and, it can give them a criminal status even without a previous record. In spite of pimps and police extortion, these are no ultimate guarantees against arrest during police "blitzes"; they simply reduce the number of arrests. Criminalising legislation then turns women in prostitution, with no other record of crime, into criminals. Little wonder, then, that prostitute organisations make law lobbies their quintessential focus.

Australian prostitution legislation offers an interesting variation of control and regulation from state to state. This Chapter begins with an historical development of this situation and then investigates the state statutes with a view to determining how these affect the lives of prostitutes.

#### **Prostitution Regulation in Colonial and Early Federal Australia**

A history of prostitution legislation in Australia can be divided into three distinctive periods: the convict period; the late colonial period; the Federal period. In the first, apart from some ineffectual English common laws on "brothel keeping" and "disorderly houses" and colonial public nuisance legislation, no laws existed to interfere with a prostitute's industry. In the second period, regulation of prostitutes was sought through the various "contagious diseases" legislation. In the last period, criminal laws were introduced, beginning in the last



decade of colonialism, to prohibit the activities of prostitutes, a situation which has continued in most states to the present day. It should be stressed at this point that this prohibiting legislation was aimed at the activities of prostitution and not at prostitution itself (which, of course, was the ultimate aim of the moral agitators in the last century). But, in most instances, without these activities, prostitution would be non-existent as a viable commercial enterprise. Therefore, it is the nature of the legal prohibition which makes the law discriminatory to prostitutes.

There is no evidence that prostitution as we might recognise it existed among pre-colonial Aborigines. Since women were monopolised by older males through kinship alliances and the betrothal of female children, a surplus of females did not exist, and young men had to satisfy their sexual urges through clandestine heterosexual affairs, kidnapping women, homosexuality and "boy wives" (see Westermarck 1908-71, pp. 459-61). Professor Elkin, the eminent anthropologist and scholar of Aboriginal culture, alluded to pre-colonial wife loaning between males in a reciprocal system of exchange (Elkin 1974, pp. 161-2). Some writers claim that prostitution was unknown in tribal societies before contact with Europeans (Decker 1979, pp. 28-9). Thus, it is likely that the earliest Europeans to Australia were quick to manipulate the Aboriginal exchange system to their own benefit by buying women with European goods prized by Aboriginal men.

There seems little doubt that prostitution came to Australia with the First Fleet in 1788. Historian Robert Hughes (1987, p. 71) notes that of the 192 convict women who were transported on the First Fleet only two had previous reputations for being a "poor unhappy woman of the town". Another historian, L.L. Robson (1965, p. 77) claims that only one in five of all women transported to Australia had been prostitutes in England. Yet, contemporary accounts implied that the number of women already experienced in prostitution before arriving in the colonies was much higher. There is, of course, that now well-known remark made by naval lieutenant Ralph Clark (cited in Summers 1975, p. 267) in response to the arrival of another 200 convict women to the colony of New South Wales aboard the Second Fleet in 1790: "My God, not more of those damned whores!" In 1817 Earl Bathurst writing to Governor Macquarie on the "state of prostitution" in the colony stated that "female convicts during their voyage to the colony are permitted to

live with officers and seamen of the ships." (HRA, vol. 1, no. 9, p. 750). The general attitudes in Sydney Cove were such that women embarking as assigned household servants "were in general received rather as prostitutes than as servants." (NSW Parliamentary Papers Vol. 2, p. 585)

On the other hand, as medical historian Dr Waugh (1971, pp. 146-50) has noted, the prominent English surgeon, Sir Anthony Carlisle, told a parliamentary commission in 1831 that the half-yearly voyage from England to Australia resulted in infertile prostitutes on board becoming remarkably fruitful in the colony due to so long a period without intercourse. Contemporary accounts are therefore quite conflicting concerning demands on convict women.

Much of this, as Hughes, Sturma and other historians have pointed out, was due to "the stereotype of women convicts as prostitutes emerg(ing) from... and ignorance of working class habits" (Sturma 1978, p. 10) by middle-class authorities. The words "whore" and "slut" were derogatory terms applied generally to working-class women by a disdainful middle class. The fact is, that most of the women lived in *de facto* relationships with men both in England and after transportation to Australia, and this in the eyes of the middle class constituted an immorality deserving the stigma of whore (Hughes 1987, pp. 244-50). Thus, it is the women who "lived" with their "*de facto* husbands" who more likely made up the sturdy female pioneer stock than the professional prostitutes who clung to town life, where business with urban males, sailors and the military thrived.

Modern historians still seem to respond to the myths about working-class women, rather than accept that in early colonial times, as today, only a minority of women chose to survive through prostitution. It was not a case of "most of our founding mothers and early poor women... forced into prostitution" (Dixon 1976, p. 139), nor, as Anne Summers (1975) indicates, were they necessarily processed into prostitutes by the brutal sea voyages to Australia. In her feminist analysis of female convictism she is convinced that:

It was deemed necessary by both the local and the British authorities to have a supply of whores to keep the men, both convict and free, quiescent. The whore stereotype was devised as a calculated sexist means of social control and then, to absolve those who benefited



from it having to admit to their actions, characterised as being the fault of women who were damned by it (Summers 1975, p. 286).

It was probably unnecessary for British or colonial authorities to create or institutionalise prostitution in early Australia. There were enough women en route who were already experienced prostitutes, and enough who would take it up as a choice for survival in the colony to keep men "quiescent". The ancient whore stereotype would apply to them through practice, just as it was applied to others through assumption. As Judith Walkowitz (1974, p. 29) remarks in relation to its application to working-class women in 19th century England: "the distinction between promiscuity and clandestine prostitution may have remained blurred."

With a high level of poverty in the colony and a large surplus of men, prostitution was pretty much assured, institutionalised by the state or not. Robson's (1964, p. 4) statistics on the numbers of convict men transported compared to the numbers of women implies a ratio of at least 5:1 in favour of males, and that is without considering the male excess among free colonists, officials and military personnel. By the end of transportation to New South Wales in 1840 the ratio of men to women was 3:1 in favour of men (Summers 1975, p. 278) in spite of deliberate attempts to redress the balance with single, free, women immigrants. But it was poverty and low wages which encouraged women into prostitution in early colonial Australia (just as in late 20th century Australia) rather than any surplus of males (although some professional prostitutes from England would have immediately grasped the situation as a lucrative business venture). As one colonist noted: "There are not sufficient lodgings for them, or occupations, and they are forced into prostitution for these reasons." (HRA vol 1.1, no. 9, p. 198). The Reverend Vale wrote to Macquarie in 1818 that: "the greater part are compelled to prostitute themselves in order to find a place for their nightly shelter." (HRA vol. 4, no. 1, p. 287). Although the good Reverend probably exaggerated the situation in order to manipulate charity funds, nevertheless it stresses to some extent the economic problems of the colony in relation to prostitution.

Poverty and prostitution, along with homelessness, unemployment and drunkenness, were enough of a problem to colonial authorities for them to consider legal action. One witness to



the Molesworth Committee of 1838 probably expressed what most authorities felt: "(The female convicts) are, all of them, with scarcely an exception drunken and abandoned prostitutes." (cited in Summers 1975, p. 274) In 1822 Commissioner Bigge, in his official investigations into the Australian colonies, told Macquarie that more than 20 "brothels" (most were private houses used by women to sexually service men) existed in the little town of Sydney, and that many of the inmates of the Parramatta Female Factory were being used as prostitutes as well as "legitimate" workers (Bigge 1972).<sup>1</sup> Female factories at Parramatta and Cascades, near Hobart, with their alleged abuses by staff, immorality and prostitution by inmates, were a source of much controversy in the colonies. Such comments as the following gave these factories unsavoury reputations:

The greater portion [of inmates] betake themselves to the lodgings in the town of Parramatta, where they cohabit with the male convicts in the employ of Government, or with any person who will receive them (Hutchinson 1963, p. 52).

The meagre sustenance and brutal treatments of these factories were largely responsible for the abscondings, cohabiting and prostitutions of the unfortunate inmates.

Feminist historian Miriam Dixon (1976, pp. 139-40), in her analysis of colonial prostitution, points to a risk to one's self-esteem as a possible deterrent for many considering entering prostitution. Whilst this may be true for most women today, the likelihood of starvation and brutality in convict Australia was probably much more demeaning, and actually may have made the economic independence of commercial sex seem appealing.

In colonies desperately trying to bring an end to transportation after half a century of convictism, and anxious to improve a reputation soiled by brutality, virtual enslavement and a "low class" population, the authorities in Van Dieman's Land and New South Wales thought to arrest their social problems by repressive legislation rather than welfare. Thus, in order to wipe out the national stain, they made poverty and homelessness crimes in the *Vagrancy Act* of 1824 in Tasmania and the *Prevention of Vagrancy Act* of 1835 in New South Wales. The homeless, the desperately poor, drunkards, beggars, petty criminals and the prostitutes could be

arrested and detained for "being without lawful means of support." It certainly did very little to stop poverty and prostitution and it forced the colonial powers to support those detained in gaol. But they were useful laws for rounding up "undesirables" at will and especially when the authorities wished to impress visiting notables. They did reflect the ideologies of the work ethic of the Protestant authorities as well. These served as a model for similar legislation in Queensland in 1851 and in Victoria the following year. The South Australian response is curious. This colony was founded as the ideal colony and was Australia's only non-penal urban settlement. All the problems associated with the other colonies were assumed not to occur. Yet, in 1842 only six years after the founding, an official communique mentions "the large numbers of females who are living by a life of prostitution in the city of Adelaide, out of all proportion to the respectable population" (Penney cited in Horan 1984). Two years later the *Police Act* was passed in the colony, with Clause 18 dealing with the "public annoyances" of prostitutes and other "undesirables".

These public nuisance statutes identified prostitutes as a social group along with other "problem" groups. In mid-century they became the focus of Christian charity, as an alternative system of dealing with prostitutes. Shelters for "fallen women" began to appear in the colonies, such as the refuges, reformatories, Magdalene Homes and girl's industrial schools of Christian organisations. These were no more successful than repressive laws. But one individual who had some success "rescuing fallen women" was the redoubtable Caroline Chisholm, who almost single-handedly shipped hundreds of free immigrant women to New South Wales in the 1840s with the intention of redressing the sex imbalance and marrying them to colonial men in order to strengthen the bourgeois family system. In 1841 she founded a female immigrants home, providing shelter and work for destitute women and immigrant brides for the colonial males. She claimed to have found work for 1,400 women, including 76 who were "reclaimed prostitutes" (Kiddle 1950, pp. 50-4). But in the end the task proved too much for even the tireless Chisholm.

The gold rushes of New South Wales and Victoria in the 1850s not only wrecked Chisholm's dream of a "respectable colony built on family life", but they made a farce of the "vagrancy" laws with hundreds of men abandoning their families for the diggings, thousands more men arriving in Sydney and Melbourne also bound



for the diggings, professional prostitutes following the men to their make-shift gold towns, and hundreds of deserted wives and children in the cities having to fend for themselves through stealing, begging and prostitution. One witness to the Select Committee On The Condition Of The Working Classes in 1859 said: "The discovery of gold... have left numbers of women and families in Sydney without protection or any regular means of subsistence." (NSW Votes and Proceedings 1859-60). Police Inspector McLerie added that "more than half the prostitutes are under 20", and another witness elaborated on this:

I have seen very young girls following the call of a prostitute... But not so young as to make it a worse sin than common. If by a female child you mean a girl of 14 or 15, yes, but for that purpose she is no longer a girl (cited in Dixon 1976, p. 104).

*The Argus* newspaper in Melbourne in 1859 wrote:

Melbourne swarms with prostitutes. Morning, noon and night they are seen exhibiting themselves at their doors and windows, and with all the effrontery of harlotry. In the streets they may be seen at all times, frequently without bonnets, walking arm in arm and three abreast. Around hotels they congregate every evening; they rendezvous at the Theatre Royal bars for special practice at their seductive arts (cited in Winter 1976).

Comments such as these, loaded as they are with moral outrage, were making deep impressions on evangelical and other Christian organisations. It was obvious to them that the "vagrancy" laws alone were insufficient to deal with the growth of prostitution. But the colonial governments of the time were troubled by other problems. They were not anxious to deal with prostitution on purely moral grounds; but the threat of venereal disease, or "the social evil" as it was dubbed, offered them the incentive to control prostitution on health grounds. The English *Contagious Diseases Acts* of 1864-69 provided them with the means to legislate this control. Queensland was quick to respond with its *Prevention of Contagious*



## Working Girls

*Diseases Act* of 1868. Almost a replica of the British Acts, the colony's medical administrator, William Hobbs, describes its intentions:

With the tide of immigration that set in to this colony about 1864, a large number of loose women were landed in Brisbane... This Act was an adaptation of the Imperial Act of 1866, in which provision was made for the examination of prostitutes at regular periods; for the establishment of Lock Hospitals within the colony, to which the diseased were to be sent and detained until cured (cited in Cumpston 1989, p. 257).

The Act right from its inception proved to be ineffectual in either containing the disease or in regulating prostitutes, for as Dr Hobbs was forced to admit in an official report in 1879:

The Act, by providing the 14 clear days' notice shall be given by the police to a prostitute before being summoned for examination, affords her the opportunity either of abandoning her mode of living, or leaving the place in which she plies her vocation... The first issue of the notices to attend at the place appointed for examination was the signal for a stampede of those women of doubtful reputation. Many of them left Brisbane (Cumpston 1989, p. 257).

In spite of this report and a recommendation by the Queensland Legislative Assembly to repeal the Act in 1885, it remained on the statutes until 1911. A feminist-Christian lobby like the one in England never materialised in Australia.

The Queensland Act differed from the British model in one essential detail. The English Acts were intended for the protection of military and naval personnel only, but in the Queensland Act the civil community of Brisbane and other towns were the chief targets of protection. In Tasmania it was closer to the British ideal. Following requests by the Commodore and Staff Surgeon of HMS *Wolverine* to the Tasmanian Government to implement similar legislation as England for the protection of their sailors, the *Contagious Diseases Act* was passed in 1879 and Lock Hospitals established at the

Cascades female factory building and as an annex of the Female House of Correction in Launceston, in accordance with a closer relevance to penalisation than to treatment (Daniels 1984, p. 59). This Act remained in force until 1903.

The Victorian Government introduced the *Conservation Of Public Health Act* in 1878. But in spite of its name it had a function no different to Queensland legislation based on the British system:

This Act provided that upon complaint on oath by a sergeant of police or a higher officer that a female was reputed to be a common prostitute, and that he had reason to believe that she was suffering from a disease (syphilis in all its forms), a Police Magistrate might require her to prove by the evidence of a medical practitioner that she was free from the disease (Cumpston 1989, p. 258).

The highly discriminatory nature of this as well as the Acts in Queensland and Tasmania<sup>2</sup> highlights the most effective outcome of this health legislation. As a legal control mechanism it failed but in singling out prostitutes for treatment and incarceration in the lock hospitals it focused on this small group of women as a dangerous social group and as pariahs requiring specialised legal attention. Early in the colonies they were identified with convict women generally, as convicts were identified with them. Under the "vagrancy" laws they were not recognised as a special group but in general were cast with the homeless, the abject poor, drunkards and others lumped under the expression "without lawful income". But after the "contagious diseases" legislation prostitutes became a legal entity, easily singled out as a group by moralists and the social purists agitating for the legal prohibition of commercial sex.

Once this happened there arose official requests for the numbers of prostitutes in order for colonial governments to assess the extent of the "problem". Brisbane police recorded 77 prostitutes in 1868, but by 1884 this population had "risen" to 136 (Evans 1984, p. 136). Adelaide police reported 500 prostitutes in the city in 1881 (Horan 1984, p. 89). The City of Sydney Council reported 613 prostitutes in 1885, but by 1908 the Central Methodist Mission claimed the numbers had "risen" to 2,000 or 3,000 (Allen 1984, p. 204). The Melbourne newspaper *The Spectator* in 1885 claimed the



city had 2,000 prostitutes, but the Victorian Government Year Book in the same year estimated only 597. By 1905 Victorian police were claiming that Melbourne had 3,000 (Winter 1976, p. 40). Quite obviously figures were being cited without empirical basis and often for political gain or manipulated for moral arguments. In 1871 Sydney had a population of 137,566 persons, while Melbourne had 206,780. By 1901 Sydney's population had grown to 481,830 and Melbourne's to 496,079 (Clark 1980, pp. 165-6). Applying the above figures, this would indicate that approximately 0.9 per cent of Sydney's female population in 1871 worked as prostitutes, and about 0.6 per cent of Melbourne's females. By the same reckoning, in 1901 approximately 1.2 per cent of the female population in both cities were prostitutes. If the cities' fathers had made the same kind of calculations, a kind of moral panic must have set in. Propelled along by the social purist lobbyists, the colonial legislators must have considered duplicating England's *Criminal Law Amendment Act* of 1885.

The world traveller R.E.N. Twopeny (1883, p. 124), who visited Sydney in 1881, and must have been familiar with London's East End as a native of that city, remarked on his amazement at the numbers and boldness of Sydney's prostitutes. In 1871 a booklet appeared entitled *Vice and Victims in Sydney* by an anonymous author. It warned of the moral dangers facing young men in the city:

There is a class of girls and young women here—hopeless specimens of whom may be seen airing themselves in the Domain and gardens on Sunday afternoons, and on Sunday nights in George Street, putting even rough modesty to the blush by their shameless speech and acts—sapping the foundations of the State and urging youth to ruin and infamy (cited in Winter 1976, p. 30).

Such highly emotive words might have been seen as the "evidence" of moralists' own eyes surveying the open soliciting of women on the Sydney streets of George, Pitt, Castlereagh, Elizabeth, Phillip and King, as well as Martin Place in the 1880s and 1890s. In Melbourne during the same period street prostitution occurred openly on Collins, Bourke and Swanston Streets, while the city block bounded by La Trobe, Spring, Lonsdale and Exhibition Streets



contained a "red light" area of brothels and bordellos (Winter 1976, pp. 30-2, 40). In the 1880s police reported their frustrations at convicting Melbourne's "brothel keepers" due to difficulties acquiring evidence of ownership (McConville 1980).

Finally, the colonial governments acted with a series of laws aimed at suppressing the activities of prostitutes, the recruitment of women for prostitution, and the operators of the sex businesses. South Australia quickly followed the English legislation in 1885 with the *Criminal Law Consolidation Amendment Act* in a knee-jerk reaction to hysteria about possible "white slavery" of the European sort (with Sydney being seen as the "sin city" where kidnapped Adelaide girls were taken) (Horan 1984, p. 106). The same Act increased the age of consent for girls from 12 to 16.

The Victorian Government introduced the *Crimes Act* in 1891 also to discourage the procuring of adult females (procuring of children had been a statutory offence since 1864). In the same year the *Police Offences Act* made "importuning" in a public place an offence throughout Victoria under Section (s.) 7(2). In Queensland in 1899 the *Criminal Code Act* prohibited procuring (ss. 217-19), unlawful detention (s. 220), and keeping a "bawdy house" (ss. 231, 235), each of which became indictable offences. This *Criminal Code* remains in force in the Queensland statutes, except for s. 220, unlawful detention, which was repealed in 1989.

In the 1890s Western Australia was faced with the same situation as New South Wales and Victoria had 40 years earlier, following the discovery of gold east of Perth. Prostitutes were quick to follow the miners to the gold town of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, while deserted wives plied a commercial sex trade in Perth. The Government reacted with an omnibus legislation in 1892, the *Police Act*, which made soliciting (s. 59), and consorting with prostitutes (s. 65) offences, and the *Criminal Law Amendment Act*, making procuring (ss. 2, 11) an indictable offence. The *Municipal Institutions Act* was introduced in 1895, giving local authorities power over the prohibitive offence of "brothel keeping" (s. 99) in the gold towns.

Thus, more than a hundred years after the first white settlement in Australia, prostitutes and prostitution, which had been introduced to the continent by the first white settlers, for the first time came within the direct ambit of criminal law. Not only were prostitutes blamed as disease carriers and a danger to the health of

society by the "contagious diseases" legislation, now they were held largely to blame for society's immorality and female criminality by the law. It is important to understand that this definition of prostitutes as social pariahs is a legal fiction first introduced in this country less than a century ago.

The coming of Federation in 1901 did little to change this situation, except reaffirm and strengthen the existing legislation. Amendments to the Western Australian *Police Act* in 1902, for example refined previous laws. "Brothel keeping" (s. 7[1]) was made an offence within its frame, and tenants or landowners who leased to "brothel keepers" (s. 7[2] & [3]) were also liable. A "brothel" for the purposes of this law referred to any place "kept or occupied by one person or more than one person" involved in prostitution. In addition to the laws pertaining to "common prostitute wandering the public streets" (s. 65[8]), and "consorting with... known prostitutes" (s. 65[9]) or "occupying a house with prostitutes" (s. 65[7]), the act of soliciting and living on the earnings of prostitution (s. 8[1]) were added. Police were given enormous power over prostitution operations under this Act, a situation which led to the restriction of commercial sex to two areas in the state, Hay Street in Kalgoorlie by 1910 and Roe Street in Perth by 1920 (Davidson 1984, pp. 171-3). In effect, prostitution regulation in Western Australia had become a system of containment under police supervision. Under s. 42, for instance, police had a right to remove forcibly any prostitute or "reputed thieves" known to them from theatres.

The Western Australian *Criminal Code* introduced in 1913 also dealt with "brothel keeping" (ss. 209, 213). Its most important prostitution laws were concerned with the procuring and detention of women in brothels (ss. 191[2]-[4], 192[2], 194[2]). In the matter of detaining a woman in a brothel against her will, the curious notion of lawful stealing of property presents itself when the owner or manager of a brothel

withholds from her any wearing apparel or other property belonging to her, or if, after wearing apparel has been lent or otherwise supplied to the woman or girl or by the direction of such person or any other person, he threatens the woman or girl with legal proceedings if she takes away with her the wearing apparel so lent or supplied, it is lawful for a woman or



girl to take any such wearing apparel as may be necessary to enable her to leave a brothel.

Similar legislation has appeared in the statutes of other Westminster law systems both in Australia and overseas. Apparently, in cases of "white slavery" traffickers and brothel keepers removed the victim's clothing and replaced it with the skimpy or flimsy garments appropriate to commercial sex but not for public appearance.

The other states also refined their existing legislation. In Victoria, the *Police Offences Act* was amended in 1907 to include prohibitions against living on the earnings of prostitution (s. 5) and keeping a brothel (s. 6). In South Australia the *Suppression of Brothels Act* of 1907 gave police greater powers of conviction and indictment over brothel ownership (police under the *Police Acts* of 1844 and 1863 had always had greater powers for controlling street prostitution in South Australia than other colonies by treating it as a "public annoyance"). In Tasmania the various vagrancy and public nuisance statutes were incorporated into the *Police Act* of 1905. In addition, this Act prohibited "living on the earnings of prostitution" and "soliciting for immoral purposes" under s. 17, one of the most blatantly moralistic legal rhetoric in Australian law.

The *Criminal Code* of Queensland remained unaltered following Federation. An interesting comparison with Western Australia can be made with the legal interpretation of a "brothel". As we have seen, in Western Australia even a single prostitute in a house may have been seen as a brothel. In Queensland though, an early court decision defined the term thus: "A house used by a woman for the purpose of prostitution of herself only is not a brothel." (*Singleton v. Ellison* (1895) 1QB p. 607) Yet in another court decision a "brothel", may have been accepted as such where a number of such single-prostitute establishments were grouped together: "If several flats in a block of buildings under one roof are used for the purpose of prostitution, the whole block may be a brothel." (*Durose v. Wilson* (1907) 71JP 263). These interpretations guided the law in the *Criminal Code*.

Several states used the old English term of "common prostitute" in their statutes. In the Queensland *Criminal Code*, s. 217 refers to a "common prostitute" as "a woman who commonly offers her body to men for lewdness in return for payment, even though she



neither offers nor has sexual intercourse with them" (cited in *R v. De Munck* (1918) 1KB 635). The Canadian *Criminal Code*, which had also adopted the term, might express a common view by adopting an attitude of a "common prostitute" as a woman "once a prostitute, always a prostitute." Under this rationale she may not be "common" on her first prostitution experience, but any subsequent experiences would label her so.

In 1911 the Queensland *Contagious Diseases Act* was replaced by the *Health Act Amendment Act*, which was used not only to continue detaining prostitutes suspected of infection, but demanded that they attend periodical medical supervision. Under s. 132B(iv) it enabled the Governor in Council to regulate

Requiring prostitutes within the metropolitan area... and other such localities to which the regulations may from time to time, by Order of the Council, be extended, to submit themselves for periodical examination by a medical officer at specified times and places.

Under s. 132E(2) a court could further sentence a prostitute or vagrant convicted of an offence of "vagrancy" or other misdemeanour and

(i) Commit the female to be detained for any period not exceeding 12 months in an institution approved by the Governor in Council... as a reformatory...;

(ii) Impose imprisonment as aforesaid; or

(iii) By its sentence imposed either of the above punishments, and suspend the execution of such upon such conditions as it thinks fit.

Thus, the Queensland Government devised its health regulations as a backstop to its criminal legislation and as an alternative to indictment under criminal statutes resulting in incarceration of prostitutes for offences other states treated as misdemeanours.

Whilst most state legislation included health laws to punish individuals responsible for knowingly infecting others, and enabling the detention of those who proved to be a "public health menace", in South Australia the *Venereal Diseases Act* of 1920 included the prohibition of the use of medical certificates for the purpose of prostitution (s. 16) and the criminal indictment of any owner or occupier of a place of prostitution who permits "any person suffering from a venereal disease to occupy" the place (s. 23). Woven into this legislation are the moral idea that prostitution is intrinsically wrong, and the mythology that prostitutes are irresponsible infectious creatures. These kinds of attitudes continue to pervade the criminal and health legislation right up to the present time.

Unlike the other colonies, New South Wales prior to Federation did not implement prostitution-specific laws. In 1908 the state government passed the *Police Offences (Amendment) Act* by which soliciting (s 4[1]), living on the earnings of prostitution (s 4[2]), and brothel keeping and leasing premises for the purpose of prostitution (s. 8B) amended the *Vagrancy Act*. This had an immediate impact on the prostitution industry, changing its course from a relatively free-wheeling trade to a highly structured brothel enterprise in which the prostitutes became controlled by criminal bosses, or, in other words, "proletarianised" (Allen 1976, p. 213). In an insightful article Golder and Allen (1979-80) trace the development of prostitution in New South Wales from its late colonial laissez-faire operations often involving a prostitute and her boyfriend/husband protector through to the 1908 regulation when both were subject to the laws of soliciting and "pimping", after which many prostitutes were forced into houses owned by criminal networks where they received protection from the law through extortion and police corruption. They further explain how the *Vagrancy (Amendment) Act* of 1929 was introduced to deal with increases in female prostitution on the street following a recession in the traditional female textile trade, a clear case of the law being used to suppress the outward signs of a flagging economy.

Whilst New South Wales avoided the "contagious diseases" legislation of other states, in 1908 it introduced a nasty piece of health regulation known as the *Prisoners' Detention Act*. Similar to the Queensland legislation, it did not make prostitutes a special category, but its powers of detaining prisoners suspected of having a venereal disease even beyond their convicted sentence made



prostitutes an obvious target after many came before the attention of the gaol authorities following incarceration for convictions under the *Vagrancy Acts of 1901 and 1902*. Indeed, the two Acts were held up as complementary legislation for recommended means of dealing with infected persons (Cumpston 1989, p. 260). Such an insidious precedent might have seen criminal laws being deliberately constructed in accordance with health regulation for the control of infectious diseases, so that gaol sentences might be passed on individuals for the purposes of bringing them under the control of medical authorities. It was indeed, the "contagious diseases" laws in other guises.

As in England and America, the criminalisation of prostitutes brought with it those connections between the women and hardened criminals that involved prostitution in the networks of organised crime. In Sydney throughout the 1920s and 1930s prostitution was inexorably linked with the sly grog and cocaine traders (McCoy 1980, pp. 101-2). This might best be seen by outlining the lives and events of two women of the period, well known for their involvement in prostitution but in different facets of the industry; one was a "madam" and owner of a number of brothels, while the other was a freelance worker sometimes described as a "gun moll".

Tilly Devine is a legendary figure among Sydney's many colourful characters of the 1920s period. English-born, she married an Australian soldier known as "Big" Jim Devine in 1919 and came to Sydney to live with him. In 1921, to avoid the soliciting law, she and Jim purchased a Cadillac, which they used for trading; he would drive while she solicited from the back seat. She purchased her first brothel in Palmer Street, East Sydney, in 1925. Within a few years she had acquired as many as 20 such houses in the street, earning herself the nick-name of "the Bordello Queen". In addition to houses of prostitution Tilly became involved in the traffic of cocaine. Many of her customers were her "girls" who became addicted to the drug, acted as dealers for her by interesting male clients to the brothels, and they became tied to her in a system of perpetual debt through advanced purchases of the drug. Tilly's long-standing rival in both prostitution and drugs was Kate Leigh, who owned a string of brothels and sly grog shops in Surry Hills. The rivalry became so intense that each woman had gangs of hired thugs to protect themselves and to harass their arch enemies. Tilly's gang of razor slashers would mutilate some of Kate's girls, and Kate would



retaliate by having her gang of gunmen take pot-shots at Tilly's girls from rooftops.

On one occasion a rival gang attacked the Devine home in 1929 forcing "Big" Jim to slay one of the underworld's most vicious hoodlums in the ensuing gun fight. He was acquitted of murder. The Devines, it was suggested, had become so powerful that Tilly could bribe the entire police force. Her friendship with high ranking policemen was legendary. By the Second World War she had become the wealthiest woman in Sydney. But after the war her fortunes began to wane until finally the Taxation Department caught up with her, causing her to off-load her assets at such a rate that by 1959 she had only one house left in Palmer Street. Tilly, who had a record of 204 arrests, mostly for soliciting, consorting and offensive behaviour, had long been surpassed and her power had long been broken by the time of her death in 1970. But the image of Tilly Devine, "Bordello Queen", lived on to be emulated by a generation of "madams" after her (Blaikie 1980, ch. 1; see also McCoy 1980, pp. 117-20; Allen 1979-80, pp. 218-20).

As Tilly Devine was the archetypal brothel "madam" of the post-war period, Nellie Cameron was the period's best known prostitute. Nellie once worked for Tilly, but at other times she worked for some of the most notorious gangsters in Sydney's underworld. It was said she was raised in a middle-class North Shore home, but at 14 ran away from her family to become a Kings Cross prostitute. Her first "pimp" was the brutal Norman Bruhn, leader of the infamous Darlinghurst Push razor-gang. When he was slain in a gangland war she gave her allegiance to another vicious hood, Guido Calletti, and when he too died in a gun fight, she became the lover of the hired killer, Frankie Green, known as the "Little Gunman". She was once asked by a policeman why she chose hoodlums and gunmen as "pimps", and she replied wryly: "So that you can wake up in the morning and look at someone lower than yourself." (cited in Winter 1976, pp. 106-8). This reply is a pitiful self-indictment of someone resigned to a lowly status. It reflects a terrible internalisation of guilt suffered by prostitutes of the period, when they were openly scorned by society, identified as the archetypal female criminal, and forced to associate with the most brutal gangsters of the time. Throughout Nellie's career as Sydney's top prostitute she was shot on three occasions. One of these bullet wounds troubled her for the rest of her life, and assuming it caused

her a lethal cancer, rather than face a lingering death she gassed herself in 1953, at the age of 41. She looked years older, her broken body showing the distinctive signs of the wear and tear of her hard life. "Nellie," wrote George Blaikie, "was a beautiful woman, but the lifestyle of a gangster's girl and prostitute took its toll with her premature death." Nellie spent most of her life in prostitution; it may be true to say that she gave her life to it too (Blaikie 1980, ch. 3).

Prostitution's association with organised crime in Sydney continued throughout its entire period of criminalisation. But, by the late 1970s, when the state government decided on legal reform, the city's biggest criminals maintained only a fleeting interest in commercial sex, having turned most of their attention to the much more lucrative heroin trafficking.

The third wave of criminalising legislation occurred in the 1930s. In some instances, the legal changes involved only one or two additions, such as the Victorian *Police Offences Act* of 1940, with its amendment to s. 3, enabling the conviction of a single prostitute in a flat or her home for "brothel keeping". In other instances, the changes were substantial and involved entire Acts and complex pieces of legislation. The Queensland *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* of 1931 was an example of such legislation. It included soliciting (s. 5[1]), brothel keeping (s. 8), permitting prostitutes to operate in lodging houses (s. 9), living on the earnings of prostitution (s. 11[a]) as offences, while under s. 10 brothel keepers were obliged to supply police with all names, ages and occupations of brothel inmates upon request by the police following representations to them by "two respectable residents" living in the vicinity of the brothel in question. The Queensland *Health Act* of 1937 reinforced the criminal statute by its prohibition of soliciting (s. 60[i]), pandering (s. 60[iii]) and occupying a house frequented by "known prostitutes" (s. 60[iv]); a tradition of complementary health-criminal legislation continued to apply.

In 1924 Tasmania introduced its *Criminal Code Act*, which made procuring (ss. 128[ii]-[iv], 129), unlawful detention in a brothel (s. 130) and keeping or owning a "disorderly" or "common bawdy" house (s. 140) indictable offences. The state's *Police Offences Act* of 1935 expanded on the previous "police" statute, with vagrancy (s. 5), consorting with "known prostitutes" (s. 6), soliciting (s. 8[ii]), living on the earnings of prostitution (s. 8[viii][a]), soliciting for immoral purposes (s. 8[viii][b]) and keeping or owning



a "disorderly house" known to "harbour prostitutes" (s. 10[ii]). As a legislative package these laws were one of the most comprehensive sets of prostitution legislation in the country.

The South Australian *Police Act* of 1936 gave police extraordinary powers, equal if not exceeding that in Western Australia. A policeman could enter any house, room or place of entertainment (for example concert or music hall) and order a "common prostitute" to leave the premises (s. 63). He could apprehend her at any time (s. 67) and even do so without a warrant based just on her reputation as a "common prostitute" (s. 70). Here, it seems, the phrase "once a prostitute, always a prostitute" was most strongly believed. For the purposes of the law this Act defines a "brothel" as "any house or premises, or part of any house or premises, to which people of opposite sexes resort for the purpose of prostitution" (s. 101). While this interpretation is closer to the Western Australian definition than the Queensland, it is just as sexist as the latter. Brothel keeping and ownership were offences (ss. 102, 103) in the Act, and any letting arrangement became null and void once prostitution occurred on the premises (ss. 104, 105). Any police constable could enter any premises suspected of being a house of prostitution with no more than written permission by any superintendent, inspector or sergeant of police (s. 106). Later these legislated police powers would be difficult to wrest back from the police.

It is no coincidence that these legal modifications occurred in the wake of the Depression. With increases in vagrancy, homelessness and prostitution as a response to unemployment and poverty, police powers had to be increased to deal with desperation and "idle hands" which the police were certain led to crime. It was a move to "nip serious crime in the bud" with convictions for misdemeanour offences. Usually, however, it had the reverse effect. Prostitutes came under special attention as particular female offenders. Few people considered the increasingly stringent laws as manoeuvring prostitutes, like Nellie Cameron, into serious crime, because of a common assumption that they were lost to society in the first place by their prostitution. The police understood that prostitution could not be entirely suppressed and acquired the power through legislation to regulate rather than remove commercial sex. It enabled them to be selective and discriminatory in their use of the law, so that the least compliant, the most troublesome and the most



outspoken prostitutes could be dealt with by the criminalising legislation. What remained were women most likely to follow police instructions, most likely to stay invisible and quiescent, so that the criminalising legislation may publicly appear to be effective, especially to moralists, social purists and other prohibitionists who demand the impossible: the eradication of prostitution.

This historic review has shown how prostitutes have become a legally identifiable social group. In the early days of Australian colonialism, without the legal means to identify clearly those women working as prostitutes, they were closely identified with the convict population. Later, the vagrancy legislation could separate those convict women settled in family life and those wandering the streets, but still prostitutes were not a legally defined group and were regarded along with vagabonds, petty thieves and the desperately poor as an amorphous group of social "misfits". The mechanisms of the contagious diseases legislation singled out prostitutes as a legal entity separate from the rest of the population. With the introduction of criminalising legislation just prior to Federation, prostitutes were clearly identified in the public mind and were easily targeted for special legal treatment that closely paralleled them with the criminal class. It is this last stage of legal identification that has remained in the public consciousness to this day, and has provided the state with the means of socially controlling this small group of women with their aberrant sexual mores as it sees fit.

### **Criminalising Prostitutes in Current Australian Legislation**

In the last Chapter's discussion on basic rights three rights might be seen to predominate in concerns for legislation on prostitution activities in Australian jurisdictions. They are:

- The right to commercial trading without infringing on the rights of others.
- The right to private sexual relations and to occupational choice.
- The social right to good moral order in society.

These lie at the basis of the three broad legislative trends in modern society. In the first view prostitution is a response to a large

demand and, like gambling and drinking, which also have dubious reputations with the conservative and moral sectors of society, in this sense it is related to the old Christian attitudes of "necessary evil". Thus, if it is not to be eradicated, it must be controlled and regulated through legislation. Control and regulation within this scenario usually restricts the trading of commercial sex, and is a system currently referred to as "legalisation". In its broadest sense, it has a historical precedence in Athens of the Classic Period, in the Roman Empire, in the late Medieval Period, and in the licensing systems of 19th century Europe.

The second view adopts a legal *laissez-faire* approach. It believes that prostitution should be freely available with no restrictions, or few legal restraints, based on a tradition of freedom of choice. In the earliest periods of human history, in most non-western societies where prostitution existed, in European history until the late Middle Ages, and throughout most of 19th century England and its colonies, as well as North America, the operations of prostitutes were little restricted by law. In a post-criminalising law climate this *laissez-faire* approach has taken on a kind of utopian dream among most prostitutes subjected to harsh penalising legislation and is known as "*decriminalisation*".

The third view is historically the most recent to be translated into law, deriving, as we have seen, from the high-powered moralism of the late 19th century. Throughout the 20th century European cultural contact with non-western societies wrought changes in traditional attitudes to prostitution, with such countries like Japan, India, Thailand and China (where traditionally prostitution had been officially approved of and certain kinds of prostitutes had a high social status) introducing harsh laws against commercial sex modelled on British and American legislation. One of the heritages of European colonialism has been the introduction of strict prohibitive laws on prostitution to curtail it among tribal peoples with no previous restriction. In Australia, as we have seen, prohibitive legislation is less than a century old. This approach in current Australian legislation is the subject of this Section.

Four Australian states—Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia—and two Territories—Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory—possess legislation prohibiting activities usually associated with prostitution. It is necessary to understand that the act of prostitution itself, in which a

## Working Girls

*Table 2.1A: Prostitution Laws in Offences and Crimes Statutes in Australian States and*

State Territory Acts/Codes/Ordinances as at 1989		Indecent conduct of prostitute	Loitering for prostitution	Soliciting in certain areas only	Soliciting by clients	Soliciting in public
A C T	Police Offences	22(g)	17A(b)			17A(a)
	Crimes Ordinance					
N T	Summary Offences	56.1(h)				53.1(a)
	Criminal Code Suppress Brothels					
Q l d	Vagrants, Gaming					5.1(a)
	Criminal Code					
W A	Police Act		65.8			59 76G.1b
	Criminal Code	207.1				
S A	Summary Offences		25(b)			25(a)
	Criminal Law Consol					
T a s	Police Offences					8.1(c)
	Criminal Code					
V i c	Prostitution Regulation Act		5.1(c) 5.2(c)		5.2(a) 5.2(b)	5.1(a)
N S W	Summary Offences Crimes Act			19	20	



## Control, Regulation and Legislation

*Territories*

	Pimping/ living on earnings	Consorting/ harbouring/ cohabiting	Procuring/ pandering	Keeping/ managing brothel	Leasing brothel	Offering massage etc.	Child prostitution
	23(j) 91C	22(f)	91A 91B	18(a) 18(b)	19(a)		91D
	57.1(h)	57.3	136(a)	3      7	8      9		
	5.1(c) 11(a)	5.1(d)	217.2 218	8 231 235	9	8A	217.1
	76G.1a	65.7 65.9 76G.2	191.2	76F.1 209   213	76F.3		194
	26.1	13   21	63 64(b)	28	29   31		65
	8.1A(b)	8.2 10.1(b)	128-30	143	11		132.1
	12		10    11	15 40.1 55.1 58.1			7.1 7.3
	15		91A 91B			16    17	

## Working Girls

Table 2.1B: Prostitution Laws in Statutes of New Zealand, North America

Country or Jurisdiction	Soliciting on street	Customer "kerb crawling"	
New Zealand	<i>Police Offences Act 1927 S.46 inc. loiters</i>		
England and Wales	<i>Street Offences Act 1959 S.1(1) "common prostitute"</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1985 Ss.1-3</i>	
France	Common law "immoral practices"		
Canada	Criminal Code S.195		
California (which is similar to most American states, except Nevada, where licensed brothels exist).	Penal Code S.647(a) "lewd conduct" S.647(b) "engage in prostitution" S.647(c) "loitering"		
West Germany	legalised in some areas		
Sweden			
Netherlands	Restricted to certain areas		
Denmark			
	Decriminalisation in practice despite the occupation" (which traditionally includes		

Table 2.

## Control, Regulation and Legislation

*and some Western European Countries*

Brothel Keeping	Living on the earnings	Procuring	Operating or assisting in a brothel
<i>Crimes Act 1961 S.147</i> "brothel is one or more inmates"	<i>Crimes Act 1961 S.148</i>	<i>Crimes Act 1961 S.149</i>	<i>Massage Parlour Act 1978 S.5</i> "anyone operating without a massage permit is liable"
<i>Sexual Offences Act 1956 Ss30-1</i> "brothel is two or more inmates"	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1956 Ss. 30-1</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1956 Ss.22-3</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.36</i>
Penal Code S.335	Penal Code S.334	Penal Code S.334	Penal Code S.335
Criminal Code S.179 "common bawdy house is one or more inmates"	Criminal Code S.195(1)	Criminal Code S.194	Criminal Code S.193
Penal Code S.315 "house of ill fame" S.316 "disorderly house"	Penal Code S.266h	Penal Code S.266i	Penal Code S.318
legalised in some areas	Penal Code S.181a except in legal brothels	Penal Code S.181	
Penal Code S.7 "immoral code of life"			Real Property Code S.42 which enables landowner to evict prostitutes.
Penal Code S.250 (under review) restricted to certain areas	Penal Code S423.2 (recently repealed) Coercive pimping and procuring of minors still prohibitive.		
Penal Code Ss.228-9 (lapsed use)	Penal Code Ss.228-9 (lapsed use)	Penal Code Ss.228-9	
presence of Penal Code S.199 prohibiting earning an income from a "non-legal prostitution)			



commercial transaction exchanging sexual pleasure for cash takes place, is not prohibited by these laws (although, in New South Wales a recent law has prohibited "an act of prostitution... in a public place"). But in each of these jurisdictions the usual means by which prostitution can take place, such as soliciting, managing a brothel, consorting with prostitutes, advertising, and, in most cases, using a private flat/home, is prohibitive. A comparison of the various laws in each state/territory can be seen in Table 2.1A. The most striking variation on this table is between the states and territories mentioned above and Victoria and New South Wales. The latter two states, in fact, have adopted systems of "legalisation" and "decriminalisation" and will be the subjects of discussion in the subsequent Sections in this Chapter. For those interested in comparing Australian legislation with other Western countries, Table 2.1B includes some laws in New Zealand, England, and North America.

The current laws in the four states and two territories are directly descended from the legislation of the early Federation period, with the refinements that occurred in the immediate pre-war years prior to 1939. The main changes that have taken place since then have been of a minor kind, such as altering the names of Acts to give them a less "oppressive" designation. In 1976, for example, the South Australian Government changed the name of the *Police Offences Act, 1953-75* to the *Summary Offences Act*, but the actual prostitution laws remained more or less intact. Other minor alterations included amendments to sexist terminology, such as in the Tasmanian legislation the *Criminal Code Amendment (Sexual Offences) Act* of 1976, s. 71 amended previous references to "female" in the *Criminal Code* to "person". On the other hand, the stigma of old terminology, such as "common prostitute" and including prostitutes with "reputed thieves", "known criminals", and "vagrants" as a single category in some laws continues in the legislation.

Perhaps the most important legislative initiatives were those of the territorial ordinances becoming parliamentary Acts and ordinances passed by the territorial governing bodies. Originally the Northern Territory adopted laws made by the South Australian parliament, and copied its *Police Offences Ordinances* from the South Australian model in 1923. But with self-government in 1978 this ordinance became the *Summary Offences Act 1979*, and an autonomous *Criminal Code Act* came into force in 1983. However,

an old South Australian statute, the *Suppression of Brothels Act* of 1907, is retained to control "brothel keeping".

In the Australian Capital Territory the same autonomy as the Northern Territory has not occurred, but Canberra's administrative body introduced the Territory's *Police Offences Ordinance* in 1930, and in 1942 its *Crimes Ordinance* was a carbon copy of the New South Wales *Crimes Act 1900* with the same laws dealing with the exploitative aspects of prostitution (pimping, procuring, under-aged employment in brothels).

The laws in these states and territories fall into a number of categories for the purposes of controlling prostitution: for example, the offences, crimes, health, liquor and tenancy statutes. We will concern ourselves here with the criminal law statutes of misdemeanour offences and certain felonies. Soliciting, pimping, consorting, and "brothel keeping" are usually classed as "misdemeanours" and found in the Police or summary offences laws. Procuring, detention, and the ownership or management of brothels are found most often among the more serious crimes listed in the Criminal Codes. The most serious crimes of all are those involving procuring by coercion, fraud or drugs, and the procuring of under-aged females.

Soliciting is treated variously by the different jurisdictions as a relatively minor offence, although penalties attached to the appropriate laws (as at 1 October 1989) can be as high as a \$1,000 fine, or as low as \$10. In the ACT *Police Offences Ordinance*, a "common prostitute" who solicits or loiters in a public place for the purposes of prostitution can be fined a maximum of \$10 although there is provision for a magistrate to order recognizance for good behaviour for a period of up to one year, and if this is not achieved the person can be gaoled for up to half a year (ss 17A[a] & [b], 17B). In the South Australian *Summary Offences Act* soliciting can bring a maximum penalty of \$40 or two months gaol (s 25[a] & [b]), while in Tasmania's *Police Offences Amendment Act, 1987* it can result in a \$100 fine or six months gaol (s. 8[1][c]). In the Queensland *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* a "known prostitute" found soliciting can be fined as much as \$400 or imprisoned for six months by the court (s 5[1][a]). For the purpose of this Act a prostitute, along with persons living on the earnings of a prostitute or consorting with one, is deemed to be a "vagrant", or someone "with no visible means of support or with insufficient lawful means".



Provision exists under the Act (s 5[2]) for a magistrate to take alternative measures for females convicted of soliciting. The court might have her detained in an institution (not a gaol) for up to one year, or impose imprisonment (supposedly if she is an "incorrigible"), or suspend any of the above penalties as it "thinks fit". However, under a suspended sentence she may be arrested at any time if she fails to observe any of the conditions set by the court, and it may impose any of the suspended sentences.

In the Northern Territory *Summary Offences Act* soliciting can bring a fine of \$500 or three months gaol, or both (s 53[1][a][ii]). Whilst a "common prostitute" may be fined \$40 or one month's gaol for soliciting under the Western Australian *Police Act* (s 59), she can receive the harshest of penalties for "persistently solicit(ing) or importun(ing) for immoral purposes" with a \$1,000 fine or one year's gaol elsewhere in the Act (s 76G[1][b]). Western Australia also includes other laws related to public soliciting. For example, in the *Police Act* "any common prostitute wandering in the public streets or highways behaving in a riotous or indecent manner" (s 65[8]) can be penalised with a \$500 fine or six months gaol. The act of soliciting might also be construed to apply in the *Criminal Code* (s 207[1]): "any person without lawful justification or excuse does any act [by which] ...the comfort of the public is interfered with [or] obstructed in the exercise or enjoyment of any common right is liable to imprisonment for one year."

The meaning of soliciting for the purposes of the Law has been questioned in court<sup>3</sup> to imply the active seeking of business in any public place, such as street, park, car parking lot, railway station, inside a motor car in a public place, in a theatre or a hotel or bar (although the liquor legislation in each jurisdiction usually permits the removal of prostitutes from licensed premises, or permits the prosecution of licensees who allow prostitution on their premises<sup>4</sup>). This means that a "common" or "known" prostitute might not be guilty of soliciting by simply streetwalking where she is approached by customers and does not initiate contacts with customers. South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, however, possess laws against "loitering for the purpose of prostitution", and this may be used instead of a soliciting law where police can show that a woman was on a street for prostitution or "immoral purposes".



None of the above states or territories possess specific laws on customer soliciting, "kerb crawling" or "gutter crawling", thus reflecting not just a legal bias but a police bias as well, since soliciting laws, unless specifically mentioning "common prostitutes" might be applied to customers soliciting as much as prostitutes. Police responses to accusations of bias include claims that prostitutes are usually easier to identify than customers on the streets, and that prostitutes more readily plead guilty.

The laws of "living on the earnings of prostitution" are aimed at those who depend "wholly or partly" on the income of a prostitute, with the added evidence of being "without lawful means". Prostitutes are never charged with living on their own earnings, brothel owners and managers are usually charged under "brothel keeping" laws rather than "living on the earnings", and suppliers of goods and services who extract higher than normal payments from prostitutes are rarely arrested under these laws. Although the current laws are non-sexist with women as well as men liable to arrest for "living on the earnings" of someone who is a prostitute, police bias continues to see men living with prostitutes as "pimps" in the traditional sense and they are more vulnerable to arrest than female lovers or female pimps (although these women are more often arrested for "consorting").

All states and territories possess "pimping" laws. Under the SA *Summary Offences Act* the penalty for "living on the earnings" is a maximum of \$200 or six months gaol (s 26). In the Tasmanian *Police Act* it is also \$200 but has a gaol alternative of one year (s 8[1A][b]). Queensland's *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* carries a maximum penalty of \$400 or six months gaol (s 5[1][c]), while police also have automatic powers of search of premises believed to be habitually used by prostitutes and pimps (s 11[a]). The WA *Police Act* carries a maximum penalty of \$1,000 or 12 months for "living on the earnings" (s 76G[1][a]), and the NT *Summary Offences Act* also has a maximum of \$1,000 or six months or both for a first offence, but for second and subsequent offences there is an automatic conviction of 12 months imprisonment (s 57[1][h]). The ACT *Police Offences Ordinance* carries only an indictment penalty of a maximum of three months (s 23[j]). Comparisons between penalties under the soliciting laws and those for "pimping" show that the law treats "pimping" as the more serious offence. However, due to the fact that many more prostitutes are charged many more times

for soliciting than pimps are for "living on the earnings", these values seem to have false meanings in the practical logistics of police apprehension. Police argue that, once again, prostitutes are more easily identified, as well as more vulnerable to arrest, than pimps.

Consorting with prostitutes, living (cohabiting) with them, and in at least one instance, harbouring them are offences in all of the above states and territories (but not in Victoria or New South Wales). The "consorting" laws can be used as backstop legislation for controlling pimping, but much more often they serve to arrest prostitutes working in brothels. Penalties for consorting are often as severe as those for pimping. In the SA *Summary Offences Act* consorting with "reputed thieves and prostitutes" can bring a fine of \$200 or six months imprisonment (s 13), while occupying the same premises "frequented by reputed thieves or prostitutes or persons of notoriously bad character" can result in a \$100 fine or three months gaol (s 21). Tasmania's "consorting" law (s 8[2]) in the *Police Offences Amendment Act* can bring a penalty of \$200 or one year's gaol. For "harbouring prostitutes" in Tasmania, under the same Act this can result in a \$200 fine or six months gaol (s 10[1][b]). In Queensland's *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* consorting carries a penalty of \$400 or six months (s 5[1][d]), but in the ACT *Police Offences Ordinance* it is an indictable offence, with a maximum of six months (s 22[f]) imprisonment. In the NT *Summary Offences Act* a person found to be consorting is charged with pimping (s 57[1][h]) for the first offence, but for any subsequent offences he/she faces the maximum conviction of 12 months gaol (s 57[3]).

Under the WA *Police Act* a person found to be an "occupier of a house frequented by reputed thieves and prostitutes" (65[7]) or "consorts with reputed criminals or known prostitutes" (65[9]) faces a maximum penalty of \$500 or six months in each case. A person who is in the "habitual company" of a prostitute and is "without lawful means of support" is deemed to be living on her earnings and can be charged in s. 76G(2) with pimping and fined a maximum of \$1,000 or receive 12 months imprisonment. The language of this WA legislation, no less than others, indicates precisely where the law locates prostitutes. Although the offences committed by prostitutes, such as soliciting, vagrancy, consorting, and in some cases, "brothel keeping", are usually much less severe than those committed by "reputed thieves", "known criminals", "rogues", and "vagabonds",



the legal implications are that their associations with criminals indicates conspiracy and accessory. Since in WA law prostitutes are assumed to be always female, and female criminality is often associated with contravening sexual codes, there is a strong relationship between prostitution and female crimes in popular thought. This then is reflected in the law which associates prostitutes ("bad women") with criminals ("bad men").

The offence of "brothel keeping" in some states is also considered a crime with serious consequences. Even in the most lenient instances penalties usually involve a scale of punishments dependent on the extent of reoffending. In the NT *Suppression of Brothels Act* (old SA legislation retained in force in the Territory), a person convicted of "brothel keeping" or leasing premises for the purpose of prostitution for the first time receives a maximum fine of \$40 or three months gaol, but for subsequent offences the penalty increases to \$80 and a recognizance of 12 months, with imprisonment of six to twelve months, depending on his/her behaviour in accordance with the court order and his/her record (s 3). Any woman found to be on any premises held out to be a brothel who refuses to disclose the name of the owner/manager may be charged in his/her place, and her husband/lover living with her can be charged with "living on the earnings of prostitution" (s 7). Under the SA *Summary Offences Act* "brothel keeping" brings a maximum of \$100 fine or three months gaol for a first offence, and \$200 or six months for subsequent offences (s 28). The Act also provides for landowners or tenants leasing or sub-letting or "permits any premises to be used as a brothel" with penalties of \$200 for a first offence and \$400 or six months for subsequent offences (s 29).

The ACT *Police Offences Ordinance* penalises "brothel keeping" with up to 12 months imprisonment (s 18[a] & [b]). In Western Australian legislation "brothel keeping" can be penalised under laws in both the *Police Act* and the *Criminal Code*. The first is the most lenient and is used more often as a deterrent than the second. It includes keeping, leasing or owning premises used as a brothel and can bring a penalty of \$100 or six months for the first offence, or \$200 or 12 months for subsequent offences (s 76[E][1]). In the *Criminal Code* "brothel keeping" is considered a serious crime but is used only in certain circumstances, such as for convicting a "keeper" known to be detaining women against their will, employing under aged girls, or drug dealing on the premises. Punishment is



indictable for up to three years gaol for "brothel keepers" (s 209) or for "any person who appears, acts or behaves as master or mistress having care or management is to be taken as the keeper" (s 213). Similar legislation is found in Queensland, with the *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* penalising "brothel keepers" with \$400 or three months for a first offence and \$800 or six months for subsequent offences (s 8), while under the *Criminal Code* a "brothel keeper" (s 231) and whoever "acts as master or mistress having care and management" (s 235) can receive maximum penalties of three years imprisonment with "hard labour". Tasmania's *Criminal Code* is the harshest of all, carrying a maximum penalty of 21 years gaol for "brothel keeping" or a penalty at the discretion of the judge (s 143).

One of the most perplexing problems in prostitution legislation is determining a legal definition for "brothel". Much of this has varied in accordance with court decisions in individual cases. As we have seen, early Federation legislation for the states established legal definitions of the term (pp. 78-9) according to English cases, such as *Singleton v. Ellison* and *Durose v. Wilson*, which have been confirmed in more recent cases.<sup>5</sup> Queensland legislation has been most influenced by this English trend, whereby a single prostitute on a premises does not constitute a brothel, although a block of flats in which a prostitute worked in each one might be so regarded as a brothel. In Western Australia a single prostitute on premises may not disclude the premises from being declared a brothel, but, it appears that any prostitute who sees and services a client in her own home is not "keeping (these premises) for the purposes of prostitution" (Dixon 1982, pp. 8-10). In Victorian legislation a similar approach to the question of a single prostitute's premises not being a brothel was upheld in an early court decision (*Barrington v. Rochfort* [1926] VLR 492). Likewise New South Wales courts have favoured the opinion that one prostitute is not a brothel when determining the meaning of brothel as a "disorderly house".<sup>6</sup> In a notable South Australian case, the Supreme Court acquitted a woman from "keeping a brothel" because she managed an escort agency where the act of prostitution, defined as sexual intercourse for a payment, did not take place (*Bosch v. Samuels* [1972] 3 SASR 37). However, in the appeal, the High Court reversed this decision by claiming that contact with the place by men seeking

to have intercourse elsewhere constituted the premises as a brothel (*Samuels v. Bosch* [1972] 127 CLR 517).

As with the "pimping" laws, so also "brothel keepers" are much less often charged with an offence than prostitutes because they too are difficult for the police to identify, as well as less vulnerable to arrest than prostitutes. Prostitutes working in brothels are subject to various "consorting" laws and offences of occupying premises "frequented by known prostitutes" found in the statutes mentioned earlier. Landowners and lessors are easier to locate than "brothel keepers" who do not own the premises and provide fictitious names as lessees. Landowners noted on public record as possessing property used as a brothel are liable to arrest under the SA *Summary Offences Act* if they persist in wilfully letting to prostitutes in spite of warnings (s 31[3] & [4]), or under the WA *Police Act* (s 76F[3]) or Tasmania's *Police Offences Act* (s 11). In the ACT whoever leases, lets or sub-lets a caravan for use as a brothel is liable in the *Police Offences Ordinance* (s 19[a]), and in Queensland's *Vagrants Gaming and Other Offences Act* lodging house "keepers" are liable for permitting prostitutes as boarders (s 9). Penalties for these offences are similar to those for "brothel keeping" in the offences statutes. In any case, landowners do have provision in the various tenancy laws to enable them to evict those involved in prostitution on their premises, and to make leasing contracts null and void.<sup>7</sup> In the NT *Suppression of Brothels Act* such provision exists with ss. 8 and 9. Even where a landowner is aware of the use of his/her property for prostitution, he/she may still act accordingly either by pretending to be unaware or treating police intervention as a warning to exercise their rights as landowners or suffer the consequences.

Procuring a person for prostitution is considered among the most serious crimes in the prostitution laws. It is included in the criminal codes of each state and territory and usually brings an indictable penalty. Procuring takes a number of forms, depending on the nature of the act, from inducement to drugging or use of violence on the victim, and depending on the age of the victim. Penalties are usually dealt in accordance with the severity of the case. Thus, a bound and gagged, drugged young teenager is likely to be very much more serious in the eyes of the court than an adult woman persuaded to work as a prostitute through a procurer's charm. In the WA *Criminal Code* procuring a woman to become a "common prostitute" or an "inmate of a brothel" (s 191[2],[3] & [4]), procuring a woman



for prostitution through false pretences (s 192[2]) or detaining a woman in a brothel against her will (s 194[2]) bring a maximum penalty each of two years imprisonment with hard labour. In the Queensland *Criminal Code*, for procuring any woman, not a "common prostitute", for unlawful carnal knowledge, including prostitution (s 217[2]), for using threats, drugs or fraud to procure a woman (s 218), for detaining a woman against her will (s 220) can each result in a gaol sentence with hard labour of up to two years, while for assisting or permitting a man to have unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman (s 221) can bring another three-year sentence. In the NT *Criminal Code* the procuring of any person for prostitution by any means carries a maximum indictable penalty of three years (s 136[a]).

The SA *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* prohibits the procuring of a person to become a "common prostitute" or an "inmate of a brothel" (s 63) and to do so through the use of threats, fraud or intimidation (s 64[b]) can bring a maximum of seven years gaol each. In the ACT *Criminal Ordinance* enticing a female under 21 years of age into prostitution carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment (s 91A) and for procuring any female through the use of threats, violence, fraud or drugs can bring ten years gaol (s 91B). The severest penalties occur in the Tasmanian *Criminal Code*, in which procuring a person for prostitution (s 128), doing so with drugs, threats and intimidation (s 129) and detaining a woman in a brothel against her will (s 130[1]) each carry a maximum penalty of 21 years imprisonment or punishment at the judge's discretion.

These procuring laws reflect the public hysteria of "white slavery" existing in the late colonial and early federal periods but seem much less appropriate today. Even so, they remain in force to dissuade individuals from attempting to force others into prostitution. Although only occasionally used, they might be applied at times in the particular case of a prostitute persuading and encouraging another woman to take up prostitution. In this sense these laws are open to police discrimination, as has been the case in a recent Californian incident.<sup>8</sup> Like all prostitution offences, the procuring laws continue to reinforce the popular notion of prostitutes as "bad women" by protecting "good women" from becoming "bad". They imply that women require some insidious manipulation by outsiders (usually men) to become prostitutes.



In the minds of the public, the police and the courts the most heinous of the prostitution crimes is the procuring of under-aged women. The age of consent for lawful carnal knowledge varies from state to state,<sup>9</sup> and this is usually the basis for protection in the prostitution laws. In Tasmania's *Criminal Code* it is a crime to entice into prostitution or carnally "defile" a girl under 17 years under a threat of 21 years gaol (s132[1]). In the ACT *Criminal Ordinance* the employment of a girl under 18 years in a brothel is illegal, bringing indictment of up to five years gaol (s 91D). In the Queensland *Criminal Code* the procuring of a girl under 18 years for "unlawful carnal knowledge" (or prostitution) can result in two years hard labour (s 217[1]). In the SA *Criminal Law Consolidation Act* the employment of a girl under 17 in a brothel carries a penalty of up to seven years gaol (s 65). In the WA *Criminal Code* allowing a girl under 21 years in a brothel can result in a penalty of two years hard labour (s 194). A common defence of brothel managers charged under the above laws is that they were led to believe the girl was much older, but rarely do these succeed in courts of law. More likely successful defence is achieved in the case of a client in street prostitution who claims he believed a girl was older than the legal age of consent, particularly if she is only a year or two younger than the legal age. Inscribed into these attitudes are popular notions that brothels are places of entrapment for unwitting females, while on the streets women go wilfully "beyond the pale" of "common decency" and attract less sympathy. Also, the age of consent statutes were designed to protect a female's virginity, whereas, quite obviously a teenage prostitute has no virginity to protect, but even here there is a toleration point. The excuse of being duped into believing a girl is older "than she looks" no longer holds when a girl is under 14 years, and courts generally take the dimmest view of all to girls of 13 or less prostituting themselves on the street. Then the prostitutes are no longer held to blame, but the clients are, for encouraging innocent children to have sex with them.

Whilst the above represent the laws controlling prostitution in the criminalising legislation of Australia, Western Australia is a special case. Although its laws, like the other states and territories above, are ostensibly aimed at eradicating prostitution through criminalising the activities associated with commercial sex, it adopts a practical approach to the "problem" of regulation through an officially recognised "containment and toleration" policy. In the

words of Commissioner Norris of a Royal Commission investigating the prostitution legislation in Western Australia in 1976, this policy evolved from the practices of the Consorting Squad "to control and contain the evils associated with prostitution." (Western Australia 1976). In effect it is a "necessary evil" approach, but with the use of laws of prohibition. It requires the police to turn a blind eye to the existing legislation in some instances and enforce it in others. The manipulative and discriminatory nature of this police practice is quite obvious, but it does enable a certain amount of practical application for police control over prostitution. Police have limited the number of brothels to some 15 in Perth and four in Kalgoorlie, and nine escort agencies: street prostitution is simply unacceptable.

Under this contradictory policing system, tolerated brothels are provided police protection in exchange for information on drug dealers and criminal activities. Workers in these brothels are required to register at a police station, providing their names, personal details and photographs. In Kalgoorlie they are closely scrutinised and their movements restricted:

The women are not allowed to have relatives within a 500 kilometre radius, cannot have their brothers to visit, are not permitted to have stable relationships with local people and they are restricted to certain areas of the town. They are not allowed inside any hotel ...or in private homes unless accompanied by a chaperone. The local TAB is out of bounds and access to the swimming pool is restricted. They are subject to dusk to dawn curfew, and there is an unwritten convention that they don't attend social functions in the town. The women must live in one of the brothels (Marshall 1986, p. 9).

Unlike legislated "legalisation", this kind of police control dictates terms and makes demands that are both humiliating and discriminating to prostitutes and "madams" in the business. In some respects prostitution legislation in Western Australia is the most oppressive to prostitutes in this country, for it not only possesses laws making prostitution activities illegal, but an official police manipulation is also condoned. In addition, the *Local Government*



*Act 1960* s. 206, enables Councils to pass by-laws restricting or prohibiting brothels and "brothel keeping" in municipal zones.

In 1982 the Western Australian Criminal Law Revision Committee established a working party to review the state's prostitution legislation. Recommendations for "decriminalisation" with planning regulations were made and for removing the term "common prostitute" from the statutes. No legislative changes occurred following this report (Criminal Law Revision Committee 1982). In 1991 a Western Australian Community Panel on Prostitution has made recommendations to repeal the current laws and to introduce a licensing system for brothels, escort agencies and single prostitutes premises. The South Australian Government also conducted an inquiry into prostitution and its report was tabled before Parliament in February 1980 (SA Select Committee 1980). The recommendations of this report demonstrated a bold advance in parliamentary thought at the time. It called for a repeal of all present prostitution laws, for the legal right to operate a brothel in a non-residential area, for a right to discreet advertising, and for the right of prostitutes voluntarily to support whomever they desired. It was referred to as a "decriminalisation" but the restricted zoning of brothels, and the retention of the laws on street soliciting, meant that it was a form of "legalisation" instead. The "Millhouse Bill" (named after the member of the Legislative Assembly who presented it) came before Parliament with the proposed legislative changes in accordance with these recommendations and was defeated by a narrow margin (Private Members' Bill No. 31 1980).

In 1986 the Hon. Carolyn Pickles, MLC, also introduced a private member's Bill calling for "decriminalisation" to the South Australian Parliament. Its proposed laws included limited advertising, and the approval of "small brothels" (with not more than two prostitutes at the same time, and not more than two bedrooms) provided these were not in residential zones or near churches and schools. But, like its predecessor, soliciting and "loitering... for the purpose of prostitution", were prohibited. The "Pickles Bill" was defeated by a single vote (Private Member's Bill No. 18 1986). Quite obviously, at the time, the South Australian Parliament was in a frame of mind to seriously consider changes to the law to enable a form of "legalisation".

In the post-war years and the 1950s the Queensland Government developed a "toleration" policy on prostitution that



allowed the establishment of "red light" areas in inner Brisbane and the north coast town of Townsville, as well as the introduction of brothels to the Gold Coast (Winter 1976, p. 46). However, soon after the Country-Liberal Party came to power in 1957 the attitudes of the former Labor Party Government were reversed, with enforcement of existing legislation and the closure of brothels. Since then Queensland has dealt with the existence of prostitution (usually submerged beneath the cover of "massage parlours") with a heavy hand. But situations have been so repressive that police corruption became a major problem and the Government had to respond to public allegations with a Royal Commission to investigate police "extra-curricula activities" in a hotel well-known for its prostitutes in 1963, and again in 1986 with the Fitzgerald Inquiry (1986-89) to investigate claims of police corruption.

The Queensland situation highlights a major criticism of the prohibition approach to prostitution legislation: that harsh laws invite police corruption. This kind of corruption derives from a common belief among police that prostitution is inevitable regardless of how strictly the laws are enforced; it then becomes a matter of police regulating rather than eradicating commercial sex activities, and, without the legal means of such regulation individual policemen resort to demanding payment to "turn the other way". Soon this kind of corruption involves most officers whose duties include the apprehension of prostitutes contravening laws, until it becomes an institution within the police force, rationalised as a normal way of dealing with prostitutes who would otherwise be constantly before the courts or continue to work in clandestine operations difficult for police to detect. The confidentiality of police involvement in corruption inevitably has to involve prostitutes and brothel managers under threats of silence. The case of Shirley Brifman, a Sydney prostitute who managed brothels in Brisbane as well, serves as an object lesson. When she threatened to expose 34 detectives for receiving payments from her she was found dead from an "overdose" in a Brisbane flat in 1971 before she could appear as a court witness on the matter (Wilkinson & Bacon 1983; Bacon 1983).

Police claims of difficulties with detecting and identifying brothel managers, pimps and clients, lead to prostitutes bearing the brunt of arrests and payments to police. Attempts by women to avoid both, results in the development of clandestine operations such as

"massage parlours", subterfuge on the 'phone, and mobility among streetwalkers. Arresting officers counteract these with entrapment methods, such as pretending to be a potential client.<sup>10</sup> Prostitutes then devise a number of ploys so as not to be trapped. Making a client get completely undressed before discussing sex, and checking the contents of a client's clothing while he is showering to see if he carries anything that might identify him as a policeman, are two common procedures of prostitutes before making any incriminating comments. Another ploy, that of having the client place the fee on a table and leaving the room before the prostitute took possession of it, was the subject of a South Australian Supreme Court case. The arresting officer charged the woman before she touched the money but the court acquitted her of the charge because she had to have taken possession of it before committing an offence (*Samuels v. Warland* [1977] 16 SASR 41).

A glance at Table 2.2 will indicate the extent of arrests for prostitution-related offences in each state.

*Table 2.2: Prostitution-related arrests for fiscal year, 1986-87*

<i>State</i>	<i>Population in 1985</i>	<i>Prostitution arrests</i>	<i>Pro-rata of arrests/ population</i>
TAS	442,100	6	1: 73683
WA	1,407,500	46	1: 30598
SA	1,362,900	61	1: 22343
QLD	2,546,400	920	1: 2768
	5,758,900	1033	1: 5586

Sources: ABS 1986; various Police Department *Annual Reports* 1987; ABS *Court Statistics* 1987.

Given that the pro-rata probability of prostitute populations in community populations across Australia is unlikely to vary much, Table 2.2 indicates a decided lack of consistency of police enforcement in jurisdictions with prohibitionist legislation. Obviously, there are political and ideological factors involved in

## Working Girls

which Queensland has the highest level of intolerance, and Tasmania the lowest.

In the Territories arrests have been almost negligible. One newspaper in 1985 claimed that no arrest for prostitution had taken place in the ACT since 1978 (*The Canberra Times*, 18 December 1985). In correspondence with the Federal Police, they advised on 5th October 1989 that no arrests were made in 1987-88 and two convictions for "managing a brothel" occurred in the five preceding years. The Northern Territory Police advised on 30th October that they too had made no arrests in the five years prior to 1987, and no convictions occurred in 1987-88. In 1988-89 a charge each was laid for "keeping a brothel" and "living on the earnings", but these were dismissed or withdrawn. In both areas police admit to the existence of prostitution, but they appear to pursue an unofficial toleration policy provided the industry remains invisible and unobtrusive. Consequently, no street prostitution is known in either Territory.

Table 2.3 compares the arrests for prostitution-related offences in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland.

*Table 2.3: Arrests for prostitution-related offences in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland*

Type of Offence	1986-87			1987-88		1988-89	
	TAS	WA	QLD	TAS	QLD	WA	QLD
Keep/Manage premises		35	242		236	36	181
Living on earnings	} 6	1	51	} 2	76	4	99
Soliciting/ loitering		4	83		101	36	72
Using premises			544		59		115
	6	40	920	2	472	76	467

Source: Correspondence with the Tasmania Police 13 October 1989; Western Australia Police, 7 November 1989; Queensland Police Department, 12 October 1989.



The Tasmanian figures seem to support a long-held contention by the state's authorities: that prostitution is rare on the island. More likely, however, is the fact that prostitution which remains clandestine is ignored, while the visible "soliciting and loitering" forms of prostitution are quickly dealt with. In Western Australia, in spite of its "containment and toleration" policy, arrests for "keeping/managing a brothel" still occur. Undoubtedly, these were instances of persons attempting to establish premises for prostitution without reference to the police first, and most likely were independent women operating outside the brothel system. The significant increases in "soliciting/loitering" are not easily explained since it is hardly likely that a sudden influx of street prostitution occurred. It may have been a blitz on a handful of street workers in a police response to a renewal of official discussions on "decriminalisation" and "legalisation" in 1988. The disproportionate rates of arrests of prostitutes, "brothel keepers" and "pimps" (more likely husbands or lovers) in Queensland with probably no more than 50 per cent more prostitutes than Western Australia and the same laws as that state, indicates a much higher level of intolerance. Certainly, this police pressure has not eradicated prostitution, as indeed both the laws and the enforcement reflect this intention. The fluctuations seen in the figures are due to political factors rather than effective enforcement. The 920 arrests in 1986-87 represent a peak in the last four years. It is 24 per cent higher than the 748 arrests for 1985-86, and 95 per cent higher than the 472 arrests for 1987-88. No doubt 1986-87 witnessed exceptional police activity with regards to prostitution arrests because this was a time when the Fitzgerald Inquiry on police corruption was at its publicity height. Significantly, though, it was the prostitutes who received the major impact of this "blitz". It is also a good example of state manipulation of laws in a jurisdiction with repressive legislation which is applied at will.

The situation in South Australia offers an interesting comparison with both Western Australia and Queensland. Its legislation is slightly different to the phraseology of these other two states and there is no "containment/toleration" policy. Table 2.4 indicates arrests in South Australia for the 1980s.

## Working Girls

*Table 2.4: Arrests for prostitution-related offences in South Australia*

<i>Type of Offence</i>	<i>82-83</i>	<i>83-84</i>	<i>84-85</i>	<i>85-86</i>	<i>86-87</i>	<i>87-88</i>
Brothel offences	51	42	44	41	54	39
Live on earnings	4	1	11	4	2	7
Procuring	1	1	0	2	3	6
Soliciting	5	1	10	1	3	7
	61	45	65	48	6[1]	59

Source: South Australian Police Department 1987-88 *Annual Report* and communication with South Australia Police Statistician, October 1989.

Compared to the Queensland figures above (which fluctuate by 50 per cent) the South Australian figures are more stable (with a fluctuation of 30 per cent). There is even no indication of exceptional police activity in 1986 while the "Pickles Bill" was presented to Parliament. Possibly the lobbying of the Prostitutes Association of South Australia in 1984-85 might account for increases on "living on the earnings" and "soliciting". Of the cleared offences for South Australia between 1982-83 and 1987-88, 265 were of females and 62 of males. In common with police the world over, there is a clear police bias towards arresting women. The vast majority of brothel offences involved women as prostitutes or managers, and nearly all of the "pimping" also involved women. Presumably, these female "pimps" were brothel "madams". Once again it is the women's visibility which makes them vulnerable to arrest.

Criminalising legislation which is designed to prohibit prostitution altogether, in practice serves as a mechanism of control reinforcing the traditional power structures of moralism and patriarchy wielding immense suzerainty over women and sexuality. Through its labelling of identifiable "bad women", its enshrinement of female chastity, and its draconian punishments, this form of legislation continues to prop up the ideals of 19th century moralism. After a century of application, this form of legislation no longer



serves its original purpose of eradicating commercial sex practices, but plays into the hands of the police and other state apparatus for the purpose of abusive power. Consequently, it should be clear to legislators by now that prohibition laws have outlived whatever moral purposes they were thought to serve in the Victorian notions of propriety and proper conduct.

### **The Legalisation Experiment: Victoria**

In 1984 the Victorian Government decided on a bold experiment: the legislated proscription of legal prostitution. More than just a legal attitude changed here. The old statutes, with their draconian rhetoric and stigmatising language, were allowed to die, and a new legal package, full of "vim" and vigour of 20th century liberal rhetoric, took their place. This newcomer to the state's legislature was an omnibus statute, encompassing all that was considered progressive and practical in the regulation of the commercial sex industry. The statute is known as the *Prostitution Regulation Act 1986*, and it followed a working party on planning for brothel "legalisation" and a most comprehensive and well-researched government inquiry into prostitution. Yet ultimately it failed.

To gain some appreciation of the extent of legislative changes occurring in Victoria between 1984 and 1986, and of the events that led to the introduction of "legalisation", it is necessary to trace the prostitution laws in that state preceding the reform. As we have seen, "importuning for immoral purposes" in a public place was made an offence under the *Police Offences Act 1891*, s. 7(2), and the procuring of females was a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1891* ss. 14 & 15. The *Police Offences Act 1907* included living on the earnings of prostitution (s 5) and "brothel keeping" (s 6) as offences. Amendments to the *Police Offences Act* in 1928 included soliciting (s 26), prostitutes assembling in "refreshment houses" (s 30), or behaving "riotously" in public places (s 69[2]), "pimping" (s 79) and "brothel keeping" (s 80). In 1931 consorting was added (s 69[3]) to the same Act. The next major legislative reconstruction occurred in the 1960s, which began with the introduction of the *Prostitution Act* in 1961, which amended the *Police Offences Act* to include the offence of "loitering for the purpose of prostitution" (s 3). In 1966 the *Summary Offences Act* was introduced as omnibus



legislation to include most offences in public places. The main offence for a street prostitute was "for the purpose of prostitution to solicit or accost any person in a public place or loiter in a public place" (s 18). In the next year an offence aimed at clients was added, making it illegal for a person "to loiter in or frequent any public place for the purpose of inviting or soliciting any person to prostitute him/herself for pecuniary reward" (s 18A). These laws were introduced in response to residents' complaints in the St Kilda area.

The *Vagrancy Act* was also amended in 1966, and included the offence of "pimping" or living on the earnings of prostitution "wholly or in part" (s 10[1]). The keeping, managing or assisting "in the management of a brothel" was an offence (s 11[1]) under this Act. According to the Victorian Inquiry Into Prostitution "arguably a receptionist who answers the telephone, makes appointments and collects money from clients could be convicted of the offence even though he or she is simply receiving a salary for these tasks" (Inquiry into Prostitution 1985). Prostitutes in brothels or "massage parlours" were convicted under s. 12 of this Act for being an "occupier" of premises used for the purposes of "habitual prostitution". Although "brothel" was clearly defined as any premises "resorted to by people of both sexes... for the purposes of engaging in prostitution" (s 12A), a court decision maintained that use of premises for prostitution on one occasion was not "habitual prostitution" (*Fox v. Wade* [1978], VR 362). However, in most instances of conviction of prostitutes on premises used for prostitution (even though these were disguised as "massage parlours" and the women as "masseuses") the police produced evidence of constant use, and in any case, as was traditional for prostitutes, the women rarely contested charges for prostitution laid against them.

The *Crimes Act*, as amended in 1958, covered most offences of procuring (s 59). Although this law specifically aimed to protect persons under 18 years from being enticed into prostitution, as well as adults, other clauses in the same Act made it a criminal offence for adults to "sexually penetrate" young people and children, with some defence of ignorance of age, in cases of 16 to 18-year-olds where they had consented and have had carnal knowledge with other people before (s 49), or in cases of 10 to 16-year-olds where they had consented and the offender was no more than two years older than the young person (s 48). These laws might be applicable to clients of

prostitutes, especially among streetwalkers, who tend to be younger than brothel workers.

The laws outlined above in the *Summary Offences Act 1966*, the *Vagrancy Act 1966* and the *Crimes Act 1958* were still in force in 1984 when the first step in the legislated "legalisation" of prostitution in Victoria occurred with the passage of the *Planning (Brothels) Act* in Parliament. The events which led to this legal phenomenon, however, are traceable to public concerns for street prostitution as well as brothels. Whilst the most immediate concern of the Victorian Government in 1984 was the spread of brothels into residential communities, the ongoing community debates over street prostitution in St Kilda since the 1950s reached a climax in November 1978 with the formation of a resident lobby, Westaction, ably supported by the Mayor of the local Council. This organisation held a public meeting on 19 November and claimed that "the residents of St Kilda are under siege" from prostitutes, pimps, drug addicts and customers cruising the area in search of sex. At the same time they presented a submission to the state government, accompanied by a petition of the signatures of 2,000 residents, calling for legal action against the "massage parlours" in the area. Meanwhile, on the streets the prostitutes and their clients were subjected to open abuse and even violence from residents. A very nasty situation was brewing (see Johnston 1984, pp.338-65).

Labor Party MP Joan Coxsedg became interested in the events and after communications with the prostitute lobby group, Hetaira, in 1979, together with the ALP Status of Women Policy Committee, convinced the Victorian State Labor Party to press for a "decriminalisation" of the prostitution laws. This was preferred to the "legalisation" proposals being touted in parliamentary circles at the time (Johnston 1984, p. 345). The Victorian Labor Government seemed caught in a vice of its own making, with party members on the one hand advocating "decriminalisation" and constituents, on the other, demanding tougher criminalisation. It established the Working Party to the Minister for Planning and Environment to investigate the location of brothels. The Working Party's report made a number of recommendations, such as the legitimisation of brothels with properly controlled land use, a licensing (or permit) system, and prohibition of brothels in residential zones. In addition, it recommended an "amnesty period" of up to 12 months to enable adjustments to be made by existing brothels seeking a permit to



operate through the planning authorities (Working Party 1983). The *Planning (Brothels) Act*, which made brothels with planning permits legal, was one outcome of the Working Party's report. The establishment of the Inquiry Into Prostitution was another.

The Inquiry's tasks were to analyse the extent of prostitution in Victoria, assess the current laws as an appropriate mechanism for regulating it, and to submit its recommendations to the state government. The major concern of this government was the extent of community reaction to prostitution; the circumstances of the St Kilda dispute were not a clear assessment of the public response across the state. The Inquiry sought wider community opinions by turning to the various polls. It found that in a survey conducted by McNair Anderson Associates in 1982 59 per cent of Victorians thought that prostitution should be legal. In 1985, in the national survey mentioned earlier (p. 32), 72 per cent of Melbourne citizens agreed that prostitution in premises in certain areas should be legal. Interestingly, among voters 82 per cent of Australian Democrats, 78 per cent of Labor Party voters, 74 per cent of Liberal Party voters and 67 per cent of National Party voters agreed (Irving Saulwick & Associates et al. 1985).

The Inquiry made 91 recommendations to the Victorian Government in October 1985. These included recommendations for the improvement of health and welfare needs of prostitutes, as well as proposals for legal change. But perhaps the general thrust of the Inquiry's *Final Report* might be seen in the first two recommendations:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that prostitution-related activities should be criminal offences only to the extent necessary

- (a) to prevent harm to prostitutes and those at risk of becoming prostitutes;
- (b) to protect the community from demonstrable nuisance caused by prostitution-related activities.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the criminal law provisions designed to protect prostitutes should be confined to



- (a) preventing the sexual exploitation of people under the age of 18;
- (b) protecting adult prostitutes, whether male or female, from violence, intimidation or, in certain limited cases, fraud (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, pp. 249-51).

In summary, the Inquiry made legal recommendations which partly supported existing legislation, sanctioned the idea of legalised brothels and called for partial decriminalisation of present laws. It approved of street prostitution in areas specified by municipal councils and subject to local government by-laws. It recommended the repeal of statutory regulations that criminalised prostitutes in brothels and the owners, management and auxiliary staff of these premises. It felt that living on the earnings and procuring for prostitution should only be offences where violence, coercion, fraud or drug inducement were involved with adult prostitutes and those recruited for prostitution. On the other hand, pimping and procuring in which young people under 18 years were involved as prostitutes, even without coercive methods, was thought to be intolerable and punishable with indictable penalties of up to five years imprisonment. Clients of prostitutes under 18 years should be dealt with nearly as severely. The explicit advertisement of prostitution was to remain an offence, but advertisements for massage parlours and escort agencies were to be limited and legally regulated (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, pp. 253-88).

The Inquiry also made recommendations with regard to controlling the brothel industry and with reference to regulation under the then existing *Planning (Brothels) Act 1984*. This statute included premises owned and used even by a single prostitute, and legally approved of such premises, as well as the larger premises traditionally recognised as "brothels" (such as "bordellos" and "parlours"), only if their owners held permits to operate issued by local municipal councils. In accordance with amendments to the *Town and Country Planning Act 1961* and the various planning ordinances, councils considered the issue of these permits in relation to certain location provisions, such as the distance of the brothel from residential zones, churches, schools, hospitals and other community facilities, its proximity to other commercial enterprises, and its size,

parking and other facilities. In the case of council rejection of applications for permits, the applicant had the right of appeal to the Planning Appeals Board. The matter would again be determined on the basis of the brothel's location. The Act regulated entitlement to a permit on the basis of the applicant's character. No one who had been convicted of a drug offence or an indictment of more than 12 months imprisonment could hold a permit, and no brothel owner could hold or have an interest in more than one permit, so that relatives and business partnerships were not allowed more than one permit between them, and only one permit was issued per brothel. In addition, permit-holders were obligated not to conduct any other business on the premises and not to allow persons under 18 years in them (see amendments to the *Town and Country Planning Act*, ss. 27, 49).

Under the *Town and Country Planning Act* provisions, brothels without permits to use the land were subject to very harsh penalties amounting to a fine of \$600 each day the illegal brothel remained open (s 49[1A]). For those with permits, under the *Planning (Brothels) Act* such offences as "living on the earnings of prostitution", "brothel keeping", leasing premises and using premises for "habitual prostitution" no longer applied to owners, managers, lessors and prostitutes involved with the premises (ss 9-13).

Whilst the Inquiry agreed in principle with the system of legal brothels, it felt some fundamental changes were necessary to clarify certain provisions of licensing premises in accordance with its desire to improve the legal protection of prostitutes and prevent exploitation. Thus, licensed premises should "exclude criminals from the operation and management of brothels, to protect prostitutes and to prevent adverse environmental effects of brothels. The system should be administered by an independent licensing board" (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, p. 329). This board should consist of nominees from each of the Commissioner of Police, the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Planning and Environment, and its functions should consist of the issue of licences to appropriate persons without criminal connections, or drug offences and convictions for indictable offences within the previous five years; to operate premises as a brothel; provided it is not within close proximity of residences, schools, churches, hospitals or other community facilities. Abuse of any of the provisions and privileges



attached to the licence should render the licensee liable to a penalty and improper management to revocation of the licence (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, pp. 330-5).

The Inquiry recommended that towns of less than 20,000 people should be given the option to prohibit brothels within provisions of local government by-laws, while for larger urban centres the regulations of the *Planning (Brothels) Act* should continue to insist on Council approval of brothels in appropriate zones. It also insisted that a single prostitute should be able to use self-contained premises, but not a flat or home unit, as residence and for the purpose of prostitution without the need to possess a brothel licence. But in the case of premises any larger used as a brothel without the proper authority, harsh penalties should continue to apply, and, in line with proposals for greater police involvement in the administration of licences and greater powers of entry to illegal brothels, Magistrates' Courts rather than Supreme Courts should be involved in the legal process of proscribing premises (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, pp. 302-23).

One other important regulation was proposed by the Inquiry (1985, p. 363) with regard to controlling the management of licensed brothels, and this was in relation to protecting the community from irresponsible unhealthy activities in a brothel. In conjunction with existing regulation in the *Venereal Diseases Act 1958*, which penalises a brothel owner for allowing an infected prostitute to work on the premises (s 26), the Inquiry further recommended that a holder of a brothel licence should be liable for "knowingly permitting" a person infected with a proscribed disease, including HIV/AIDS, to work on the premises.

In general, the Inquiry showed a sympathy for prostitutes and, in recognition of the existing discrimination in the legislation, attempted to divert the law from this discriminatory course with a recommendation for limited and regulated street prostitution and for a repeal of the laws usually applied to brothel workers, and proposed that single prostitutes in premises should be exempt from the licensing regulations and legal sanctions, in obvious support for individual independence. In addition, throughout the report there is a strong call for legal protection of prostitutes. However, there are also some areas of the report which seem to contradict the general trend described above. For one thing, whilst the Inquiry rightly recognises the need for some statutory control of local government in relation to



locations for brothels in a clear understanding of a traditional bias against prostitution at the municipal level, it relies on these same municipal councils to suddenly shed their biases in providing specified areas for street prostitution.

By recommending police involvement in the licensing regulation process it indicates a lack of appreciation for the traditional hostility brothel owners and managers and prostitutes feel towards the police, which mitigates against co-operation and may even deepen mistrust. The presence of the police perpetuates the criminal stigma of prostitution in society. There probably is little need to involve police in the administrative aspect of licensing, and if, as the Inquiry suggests, there is a requirement for investigating new applicants, this can surely be done through the co-operation of the criminal investigative methods and records of police without the necessity to involve them further.

The Inquiry is strongly opposed to a "red light" area for a number of reasons, including concerns for prostitutes as well as the community at large. One opposition to it felt that the confinement of brothels to a specific district would result in encouraging the development of discreet prostitution beyond the "red light" area, and would not "accommodate all existing establishments" (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, p. 294). But, the limits imposed by the licensing system have managed to generate the same effect, with a development of clandestine establishments (or escorts and private operations) and a failure to accommodate all the existing establishments.

Finally, the proposition of non-licensed premises for a single prostitute—whilst a noble gesture much improved on the present criminalisation of independent operators—also legally promotes a situation that is potentially one of the most dangerous for prostitutes. The proposition should have been extended to include two prostitutes at least, so that one woman by herself will not be forced to obey the law thus placing herself in a vulnerable position.

In the introduction notes of the Prostitution Regulation Bill the following explanation is provided:

This Bill is designed to implement the recommendations of the Neave Inquiry Into Prostitution. The philosophy underlying those recommendations is that prostitution is an exploitative

business which should not be encouraged or promoted. This Bill, and a number of administrative measures to be undertaken by the Government, are aimed at minimizing prostitution and its associated harms. The Bill seeks to provide a comprehensive statement of the statute law governing prostitution in Victoria.

The basic approach of the Bill is as follows:

1. To focus the criminal law relating to prostitution on exploitative practices. In the case of adults, the Bill adopts the principle that prostitution-related activities should be subject to criminal penalties only to the extent necessary to protect adult prostitutes from violence and intimidation. In the case of young people, the present criminal law has been strengthened so as to ensure, as far as possible, that they are protected from abuse or exploitation.
2. To instigate a stringent system of licensing of brothel operators so as to exclude criminals from the management and operation of brothels.

This Bill entered Parliament on 23rd October 1986, and passed with parliamentary concession as the *Prostitution Regulation Act 1986*. It repealed the *Planning (Brothels) Act*, and amended or repealed sections relevant to prostitution in the *Town and Country Planning Act*, the *Health Act 1958*, the *Crimes Act 1958*, the *Maintenance Act 1965*, the *Summary Offences Act 1966*, the *Vagrancy Act 1966*, the *Liquor Control Act 1968* and the common law offence of keeping a "disorderly house". In other words, prostitution regulation was streamlined in an omnibus statute. An outline of the Act is as follows.

The soliciting laws in the *Prostitution Regulation Act* were transferred almost intact from the *Summary Offences Act*. It is an offence to "solicit or accost any person" or "loiter in a public place... for the purpose of prostitution", with, for a first offence a fine of five penalty units<sup>11</sup> or a month in gaol; for a second offence, 15 penalty



units or three months; and, for a third or subsequent offence, 25 penalty units or six months (s 5[1]). Similarly, the previous laws on clients' loitering, soliciting or inviting a person in a public place to prostitute him/herself, along with the same penalties as above, were also transferred intact (s 5[2]).

It is the laws on "child" (under 18 years of age) prostitution which are both revamped and given harsher penalties that are a major feature of the new Act. For "inducing" a "child" to take part in an act of prostitution, a person faces a penalty of seven years imprisonment (s 6[1]). Anyone owning, managing or occupying a brothel (even a legal one) who allows a "child" onto the premises either as a prostitute or as a client is liable to four years imprisonment (s 7[1]). For receiving payment from a "child" from the proceeds of prostitution can bring seven years imprisonment (s 9[1]). In each of these laws the accused has a defence if he/she has "taken all reasonable steps to find out the age of the person concerned" and "believed on reasonable grounds... that the person concerned was aged 18 or more".

Procuring adults for prostitution through the use of violence, coercion, drugs or fraud can bring seven years imprisonment (s 10), and forcing another person to provide payment from prostitution also through the same methods can bring the same penalty (s 11). But simply living on the earnings of another's prostitution without the use of threats, drugs or fraud can also result in four years gaol (s 12[1]), unless the accused is exempt from this law as owner, manager or authorised staff of a legal brothel (s 12[2]). Anyone who is "living with, or is habitually in the company of, a prostitute; or ... has exercised control, direction or influence over the movements of a prostitute" is deemed to be "aiding, abetting, procuring or compelling the prostitute to prostitute him/herself" and therefore living on the earnings for the purposes of the law (s 12[3]).

Under the Act it is also an offence for an owner, manager or other authorised person in control of a brothel, whether it is licensed or not, to "knowingly" permit a prostitute infected with a sexually transmitted disease (including HIV/AIDS) to work in the place, with a fine of 20 penalty units (s 13[1]), unless they can prove to the court that the infected person was not infected at the time of the alleged offence (s 13[2]). It is also an offence for a prostitute to work with the knowledge that he/she is infected and is subjected to the same penalty as the owner (s 13[3]).



The advertising of prostitution services via the print or electronic media, or the publication of advertisements seeking employment for prostitution, either as a prostitute or other staff in the same service, are offences, each bringing 40 penalty units (s 14[1]-[3]). Under s. 14[5] the "Governor in Council" may regulate advertisements for prostitution as to "size, form and content" or "any class of prostitution services", or prohibit such advertising in certain publications or of "any class of prostitution services" (s 14[5]).

Anyone who operates an unlicensed brothel (being, in the meaning of the Act, any premises in which people resort for the purpose of prostitution, regardless of size or numbers of persons) is liable to a very serious offence, with maximum penalties of 60 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment for a first offence, or 90 penalty units or 18 months imprisonment for a second offence, and 20 penalty units for each day the owner, manager or other person in charge continues to operate the place after conviction (s 15). If a licence holder operates a legal brothel with a partner or associate who is not licensed to operate it, the licensee is liable to a penalty of 60 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment (s 16). If a legal brothel is not personally supervised by the licence holder or a manager approved of in the meaning of the Act, it is an offence carrying a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units or six months gaol (s 17[1]-[3]), unless it can be proven to the court that the proper supervision was assumed to be taking place at the time of the alleged offence.

The Act requires a Brothel Licensing Board, consisting of a member nominated by the Chief Commissioner of Police and a member each nominated by the Attorney-General and the Ministers administering the *Local Government Department Act*, the *Town and Country Planning Act*, Part II of the *Health Act*, and Section 5 of the *Community Welfare Services Act*, whose functions are to approve of applications for brothel licences and of persons as brothel managers, to issue licences and supervise their three-yearly renewals, to revoke or suspend licences where deemed fit, to order investigations by the police of complaints from prostitutes and others about the manager or management of a brothel, and to liaise with and assist police where necessary in their duties in relation to prostitution (ss 18-19).

Persons considered as eligible for a brothel licence must be 21 or more years of age, and not to have been sentenced for a drug offence nor indictable offence of more than 12 months imprisonment nor served a gaol sentence for at least five years. Also they must not

be an associate of a similar offender or detainee and have not had a previous brothel licence revoked. Associates in the meaning of the Act include spouse, defacto partner or business partner.

Applicants for a new or a renewal (every three years) licence are required to supply the Board with his/her name and address, as well as those of the property owner and any appointed manager of the brothel, a permit to use the land for a brothel under the authority of the *Town and Country Planning Act*, and the prescribed licence fee (ss 22-26). The Board has the power to cancel or suspend a licence in such instances of the licensee being convicted of a drug or indictable offence, an abuse of land use contrary to the conditions of the *Town and Country Planning Act*, and a licensee's involvement with people in the management of the brothel in contravention of the conditions of licensing (s 27). Once a licence is revoked and the brothel is not occupied by another licence holder, the police may apply to a Magistrate's Court to declare the premises a "proscribed brothel", or illegal for further use as a brothel (s 37). Once this is achieved the police are required to publish the fact in a newspaper (s 38), and prevent occupation for the purpose of prostitution. Anyone "found in or entering or leaving" the premises, unless for a lawful reason, is liable to a penalty of up to 25 penalty units (s 39[1]&[2]), while the owner or occupier is liable to a penalty of up to 60 penalty units (s 40).

The *Town and Country Planning Act* enables a permit for land use as a brothel to be issued by a municipal council or other authority with certain considerations restricting its location according to, as expressed in the *Prostitution Regulation Act* s. 50, its size, the number of persons to be employed, and hours of operation, as well as its proximity to a residential building, a church, hospital and other community facility, another brothel, and other operation likely to have similar traffic, noise and operational hours. Under the *Town and Country Planning Act* s. 49(1) any abuse of land use is an offence by the brothel owner, and police have the powers of automatic entry of premises suspected of being an illegal brothel in the same Act, s. 49A(1). For the purpose of this Act, an illegal brothel is one without a permit of land use, whilst in the *Prostitution Regulation Act* it refers to one whose owner lacks a licence to operate. Such premises can be declared a "proscribed brothel" and in this Act makes owners, managers and prostitutes (as occupiers) liable (s 40).



Whilst most prostitution laws are now contained within the *Prostitution Regulation Act*, two laws in the *Health Act 1958* should be noted here as relevant to Victoria's overall regulation of prostitution. No medical practitioner must issue a prostitute with a certificate "signifying or implying that the prostitute is not infected with a sexually transmitted disease" (S 139E[1]), and nor must a person use a certificate issued by a medical practitioner for the purpose of prostitution to indicate their freedom from a sexually transmitted disease (s 139E[2]). Under the same Act the Governor-in-Council can make certain regulations to insure the cleanliness of brothels, their inspection by health authorities, the provision of information about sexually transmitted diseases for those working in a brothel or visiting it, the availability of contraceptives in brothels, and the safeguard of the health of the prostitutes and their clients (s 141A).

Retrospectively, the *Prostitution Regulation Act* seems to have fallen short of its intentions described in the introduction to the Bill. It will be recalled that one of the Bill's intentions was "designed to implement the recommendation of the Neave Inquiry". The Act does this most specifically in the regulation of licensed brothels and by harsh laws on procuring with menaces (in fact, the Act increases the penalties recommended by the Inquiry), and, in this respect, the Bill's intention to offer prostitutes protection from violence, intimidation and exploitation is fulfilled. But, whereas the Inquiry recommended a legal form of street prostitution under local government by-laws, the Act implements the previous criminalising laws of the *Summary Offences Act*. The Inquiry also showed an understanding of certain circumstances in which prostitutes choose to support another (for example, a lover, husband, adult child), and did not recommend the criminalising of persons "living on the earnings" where this was clearly done at the prostitute's free will. The Act, on the other hand, treats all cases of "living on the earnings" as though these were by necessity exploitative of prostitutes. In the case of prostitutes working in brothels, the Inquiry felt that they should no longer be subject to laws which make it an offence to be simply an "occupier" of the premises. However, under the Act, in the case of a "proscribed brothel" its occupation is illegal even for prostitutes. In general, the Act offers prostitutes limited protection from exploitation, while they, as well as their chosen dependents, are dealt with as criminals, except where the prostitute works in a legal



brothel (although this still does not prevent the law from convicting a lover or husband for example). Its laws perpetuate old notions based on the mythology of prostitution through their focus on prostitutes' activities per se (regardless of how little harm these might be to the community at large), on drugs, and on an assumed dominance of brothel operations by criminals. Thus, the status of prostitutes, even in a legal brothel, is not improved by the Act, and there is a grudging acceptance of them in legal brothels which appears to be the practical extension of the Bill's aims at "minimising prostitution".

The reactions to the Act and its intended "legalisation" of prostitution by prostitutes themselves is not too surprising. They are heavily critical of its legal encouragement to large brothel owners at the expense of small brothel operators and single operators (whom the Neave Inquiry recommended should be exempt from the law and licensing). A single prostitute cannot afford the permits, rents for commercial premises, the licence, and other accoutrements required to obtain a licence, and if she operates as before she can have her home declared a "proscribed brothel" and herself charged as an "occupier" if she continues to work. Whereas legal brothel owners may live on the earnings of their staff, the staff's lovers, husbands and other adult dependents in their families are liable. The entire "legalisation" structure is slanted in favour of big business, capital and entrepreneurs. As one prostitute put it: "The men have got what they wanted. The women are more exploited than ever." (Hutton 1987).

Some women thought they were better off before "legalisation", when police did not "persecute the working girls" for "using premises for habitual prostitution" and, at least, they could defend themselves in court (although few ever did) or pay off police. According to them, police only started "getting tough" after "legalisation" (1984) and demanded real names as opposed to false names which was the practice before. Police, of course, under a legal system which officially legitimises certain forms of prostitution or certain places, are obliged by the government to enforce laws on other prostitution in order to justify the "legalisation". At least, in a system where all prostitution activities are illegal, strategies and relaxation can take place, as we have seen in Western Australia and Queensland. But in the "legalisation" system not only are the legal infrastructures propped up by enforcement procedures, prostitutes

are further controlled by a divide and rule tactic of "legal whores" and "illegal whores".

The conviction figures on Table 2.5 indicate a sharp decline in the annual number of arrests from 1981 to 1985. The lowest number occurred in 1985 because this was the "amnesty period" of one year following the introduction of brothel permits in 1984, when no arrests of brothel owners, managers or workers were made.

*Table 2.5: Criminal matters proven for prostitution related offences in Victorian courts, final appearances, 1981-85*

Year	Sex	Children's Court Under 15 and 15 over		Magistrate's Court Under 25 and 25 over		Higher Courts Under 25 and 25 over		Total
1981								
	M	1	3	106	230	0	0	340
	F	0	15	486	493	0	0	994
1982								
	M	0	3	76	183	0	0	262
	F	0	3	438	473	0	0	914
1983								
	M	0	4	71	206	0	0	281
	F	0	7	471	471	0	0	949
1984								
	M	0	1	100	252	0	0	353
	F	0	3	306	284	0	1	594
1985								
	M	0	2	72	152	1	0	227
	F	0	2	163	109	0	0	274
		1	43	2289	2853	1	1	5188

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1981-85, *Court Statistics*, cat. 4501.2

When the "amnesty period" ended in July 1985 there were 120 brothels in Victoria (apart from two in Geelong, all were located in Melbourne), of which 70 were considered for "legalisation" in 54 applications for permits (Inquiry Into Prostitution 1985, p. 161). Following the passage of the *Prostitution Regulation Act*, only 42 brothels had been granted permits. Two-thirds of prostitution premises had gone out of business, and a large number of prostitutes had been forced into an illegal status in a system purportedly designed for their protection from exploitation. By October 1989, 56 brothels had received licences. Most prostitutes are still working illegally (according to Victorian Police only 500 or about a quarter of prostitutes in the state are working in the legal brothels), while those in legal brothels complain about the increasing greed of licensed owners. With so many women available for work in legal brothels, owners often crowd shifts with workers in order to give clients a wider choice of prostitutes. For the women, though, this increases competition and decreases earnings. Police also claim that crime and drug dealing in brothels have increased since their presence in legal brothels has been disallowed. It would appear, though, that since legalisation there has been a decline in arrests, if Table 2.6 showing police statistics can be considered indicative compared to Table 2.5 on court appearances for the years prior to the end of the "amnesty" period.

Since most of the offences in the *Prostitution Regulation Act* were yet to be proclaimed, sections in statutes to be amended were still in use. The most interesting figures in this table are the rapid decline in the number of arrests of clients for inviting prostitution compared to the steady increases in arrests of prostitutes for soliciting, accosting or loitering.

Police rules, house rules, zoning, time restrictions (even a "de-registration" period in Switzerland) are all variables of a unique feature of "legalisation": the official control of prostitutes. Once prostitutes become "legal" the state can also enforce its laws on income tax more easily. In criminalising legislation prostitutes can also be controlled through police regulation, but the intention of this legislation is to prohibit the industry of prostitution not to control its activities. Variations of this derive from policing methods. In any case this form of legislation criminalises all prostitutes, managers and owners, and alienates the entire industry from society. But in a "legalisation" system prostitution is repressed rather than oppressed



by a process that alienates prostitutes from one another, and co-opts brothel management in an alliance with the state, maintaining control over the sex workers by the same capitalist hierarchical structure that promotes collaboration of management at the expense of workers in any industry.

*Table 2.6: Arrests for prostitution-related offences in Victoria*

<i>Type of Offence</i>	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>	<i>1988-89</i>
Permitting premises to be used as brothel	37	42	18
Soliciting for immoral purposes	66	53	47
Soliciting/accost for prostitution	0	82	163
Loiter/soliciting by prostitutes	101	101	153
Inviting prostitution by clients	194	40	76
Living on earnings	28	31	25
Procuring	3	8	8
Other	0	9	3
	429	366	493

Source: Correspondence from Victoria Police, 30 October 1989.

### **Prohibition and Policing in New South Wales, 1908-78**

While New South Wales was the last state to introduce laws to prohibit the activities of prostitution, it was by no means the most lenient of the states with its prohibition laws and policing practices. In fact, throughout this century it became one of the harshest jurisdictions enforcing this prohibition in the world, with, perhaps, the exclusion of the United States. During this time the various New South Wales governments implemented legislation changes wrought in Parliament in order to deal more effectively with prostitution more often and more extensively than the other states. For seventy years

police used a variety of strategies to eradicate prostitution, and when this proved an impossible task they resorted to more unsavoury tactics, such as selection, discrimination and extortion.

As we have seen, before Federation, colonial authorities depended largely on vagrancy laws and the common law of brothel keeping to control prostitution. In 1901 New South Wales introduced its first law specifically aimed at prostitutes, and in its first State Parliament included it in the *Vagrancy Act 1902*. It was unlawful for whoever ,

(s 4[1][c]) being a common prostitute, wanders in any street or public highway, or in a place of public resort, and in either case behaves in a riotous or indecent manner.

It proved to be ineffectual in stopping street prostitution, and as a misdemeanour offence did not provide police with the powers they sought, or with a harsh enough penalty to be a deterrent. In 1908 the *Police Offences (Amendment) Act* amended the *Vagrancy Act* with the inclusion of the first law to deal with a commercial sex activity. This made it an offence for whoever,

(s 4[1][i]) being a common prostitute, solicits or importunes for immoral purposes any person who is in a public street, thoroughfare, or place.

The authorities perceived "pimps" (in reality the women's lovers, husbands or hired protectors) with almost as high a nuisance value as the prostitutes. So the same amendments included criminalising men who "live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution" (s 4[2][o][i]). The law provided for the presumption that a man lived on a prostitute's earnings "if proven to be habitually in the company of a prostitute and has no visible means of subsistence".

The law provided for a penalty of imprisonment as well as a heavy fine. In addition to soliciting, prostitutes might also be arrested under the *Vagrancy Act* for offensive or "indecent" behaviour (s 8A). "Brothel keeping" was also added to the same Act in these amendments by incriminating whoever,

(s 8B) being the owner, occupier, or agent of any house, room or place, or being a manager or assistant in the management thereof, induces or suffers any female whom he knows to be a common prostitute to be in that house, room, or place... for the purposes of prostitution.

It is unlikely that this law meant "occupier" to include any prostitute on the premises, since the offence is one of "inducing" or allowing a "common prostitute" on the premises, more appropriate to lessors, lessees and "brothel keepers". Table 2.7 shows the number of arrests in the first decade of these laws.

*Table 2.7: Arrests for prostitution-related offences, 1908-19*

Year	Soliciting	Riotous/indecent behaviour	"Brothel keeping"	
			Males	Females
1908	43	640	0	2
1909	120	437	3	6
1910	140	192	7	19
1911	44	327	8	19
1912	55	667	5	8
1913	39	820	2	8
1914	16	763	5	8
1915		1152	2	3
1916	26	1580	0	5
1917	6	1541	3	1
1918	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1919	301 (vagrancy)	511	0	0

Source: NSW Police Department, *Annual Reports*, 1908-1919

These figures demonstrate the relationship between "soliciting" and "indecent behaviour" arrests. The decline in the latter from 1909 to 1911 is due to a preference by police using the former—at the time a new and untried law. The increases in "indecent behaviour" arrests from 1912 indicate greater police enforcement of the laws in an effort to stamp out street prostitution.



"Soliciting" was not listed in 1915, and from 1919 it was included in general female "vagrancy". The reason for the exceptionally high arrests for "indecent behaviour" in 1915 to 1917 was a maximum effort to eradicate street prostitution in the war years to protect the service men from disease and immorality.

The comparative rates of arrests of male and female "brothel keepers" reflects the greater powerlessness of women in avoiding arrests. It was probably this more than anything else which paved the way for male domination of the brothel trade, which coincided with an increased demand by prostitutes driven from the streets and seeking premises in which to carry on their profession (Golder & Allen 1979-80, pp. 18-19). Not only in New South Wales, but elsewhere, such as England in the 1880s (see p. 54-5) and America in early 20th century (Rosen 1982), female prostitution came to be dominated by males following the introduction of oppressive legislation, for the simple reason that men were in a more powerful position than the "madams" to buy property on a large scale and pay officials and police to "turn a blind eye". Interestingly, "living on the earnings" was not listed as a separate offence. Possibly, so few arrests were made that it did not warrant special mention, and whatever arrests may have occurred were included in the general category of male "vagrancy".

No major legislation was introduced in the 1920s, but increasing female unemployment, due to a collapse of traditional female trades, (Golder & Allen 1979-80, pp. 19-21) which resulted in increases in the number of prostitutes, alarmed authorities to such a degree that police enforcement of existing laws was stepped up. Finally, in 1929 the notorious "consorting" law was introduced by the *Vagrancy (Amendment) Act*, which made it an offence for whoever,

(s 4[1][j]) habitually consorts with reputed criminals or known prostitutes or persons who have been convicted of having no visible means of support.

It became the chief instrument of the police for arresting prostitutes in brothels. Table 2.8 indicates this trend, along with some other interesting observations for the 1920s and 1930s.

Table 2.8: Arrests for prostitution-related offences, 1920-39

Year	Vagrancy (Female)	Indecent behaviour (Female)	Consorting (Female)	"Brothel keeping"		Permitting prostitution	
				Males	Females	M	F
1920	31	863		3	3	1	3
1921	48	1265		1	1	0	2
1922	41	1790		2	0	9	12
1923	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1924	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1925	50	1309		2	0	0	8
1926	40	1936		0	1	5	9
1927	22	1811		0	1	1	3
1928	32	2157		0	4	2	8
1929	27	1902		0	0	5	7
1930	184	819	62	1	0	1	4
1931	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1932	40	384	98	9	8	2	3
1933	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1934	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1935	316	436	12	0	2	0	0
1936	232	491	23	0	0	0	5
1937	193	543	10	0	0	0	4
1938	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1939	32	847	14	0	0	3	0

Source: NSW Police Department, *Annual Reports* 1920-39

From 1920 the category "female vagrancy" almost exclusively dealt with the law on soliciting, while other vagrant categories were listed under a category of "idle persons". The category "indecent behaviour" also largely included prostitutes' offences, though not exclusively. The relationship between it and "vagrancy" is obvious in the 1930s, when "vagrancy" arrests increased and "indecent behaviour" arrests decreased. Also, with the introduction of the "consorting" law, police concentrated some of their time devoted to the arrest of prostitutes on brothel workers. The two categories "brothel keeping" and "permitting prostitution on premises" is a curious division of the law into those who owned or managed a brothel and those who permitted ("suffered") prostitution

on premises. In either case the bias towards arrests of females continued.

While police practices fluctuated in accordance with usage of the various available laws, generally the number of arrests of prostitutes in the 1930s declined from the earlier decade. However, whereas prostitutes received 120 prison sentences for "vagrancy" in the 1920s, they received 366 such sentences for the same offence in the 1930s, as well as an additional 109 gaol sentences for the new law of "consorting". Thus, whilst prostitutes were being arrested less often, when arrested it was for offences likely to result in a harsher penalty and with greater chances of imprisonment. The courts were not responsible for this, since in the 1920s the ratio of gaol sentences for all court appearances was one in every three arrests, while in the 1930s with the police using more "serious" offences to arrest prostitutes the ratio of sentences in court appearances increased to one in every two arrests.

During the Second World War the New South Wales Government, out of a concern for American servicemen stationed in Sydney falling prey to chicanery and swindling, passed the *Disorderly Houses Act 1943*. The broadest definition of "disorderly house" was adopted for this statute.<sup>12</sup> Police soon began applying the Act to close Sydney brothels under the following section:

(s 3[1]): Upon the affidavit of a Superintendent or Inspector of Police showing reasonable ground for suspecting that all or any of the following conditions obtain with respect to any premises, that is to say—

(a) that drunkenness or disorderly or indecent conduct or any entertainment of a demoralising character takes place on the premises, or has taken place and is likely to take place again on the premises;

any judge of the Supreme Court may declare such premises to be a disorderly house.

This provided police with much wider powers over brothels than at any time previously. But "brothel keepers" simply adopted the ploy of moving house just prior to the judgment in court. It would prove to be a greater inconvenience to the police than the much



simpler procedure of arresting the most visible and vulnerable personnel in prostitution—the prostitutes. Although this never assured them of removing the places of prostitution.

In any case the bulk of prostitution in the war years occurred not in brothels, nor even on the streets, but in pubs, bars and at private parties arranged for the Americans to meet women. And the prostitutes in these clandestine situations did not identify as “whores”. They referred to themselves as “good time gals” and the “Yankee dollar” was their major objective. Maggie, who worked as a “good time gal” at the time, recalls what it was like:

There was a lot of money about in those days. The Yanks were here and they were good with their money, buy you anything you wanted. Prostitutes were always the street girls. We saw ourselves as “gold diggers” or “good time girls”. I’ve never worked the streets.

In the post-war years, with the influx of migrant men from Europe, potential customers for prostitutes were even more numerous than they had been in the war. Many of these men arrived in Sydney either before their families or as single men, and since there was a general racial bias against them by most Australian women, they sought to relieve their loneliness by seeking out prostitutes. To grasp some understanding of this situation the following statistical profile is given. In 1947 12.8 per cent of Sydney dwellers were foreign born. By 1971 this had almost doubled to 24.9 per cent. The most disproportionate sex ratios among migrants were found with those originating in Mediterranean and East European countries, with 1.3 Polish men, 1.3 Yugoslav men, 1.1 Greek men, 1.2 Italian men and 1.2 Maltese men for every female counterpart in Australian cities in 1971 (Price & Pyne 1977, pp. 335-6). Based on the migrant figures and the above ratios, the calculated surplus of migrant men in Sydney in 1971 would have been 1,252 Poles, 3,642 Yugoslavs, 1,233 Greeks, 4,359 Italians and 1,403 Maltese. But, of course, not only unattached men visited prostitutes during the period; although they may have been the most frequent visitors.

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The police statistics for arrests in the post-war years and in the 1950s are as follows:

*Table 2.9: Arrests for prostitution-related offences, 1945-59*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Vagrancy (Female)</i>	<i>Offensive behaviour (Female)</i>	<i>Consorting (Female)</i>	<i>Permitting prostitution (Males) (Females)</i>	
1945	91	1055	5	0	0
1946	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1947	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1948	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1949	102	1388	37	1	1
1950	43	1671	43	1	1

	<i>Soliciting (Female)</i>	<i>Living on earnings (Male)</i>				
1951	23	2	1648	39	0	3
1952	24	5	2566	26	0	0
1953	43	4	2792	98	3	8
1954	32	12	2804	66	18	7
1955	55	18	3229	44	4	11
1956	28	33	3259	65	8	7
1957	11	26	3934	78	1	2
1958	9	36	4537	87	7	3
1959	17	35	4903	80	5	10

Source: NSW Police Department, *Annual Reports*, 1945-59

The rate of arrests began to escalate after 1952, probably in response to increasing prostitution activities as demands by the migrant influx became apparent. In 1959 nearly 5,000 arrests for "offensive behaviour" mainly of prostitutes occurred, compared to less than 1,400 10 years earlier. In 1951 the police listed "soliciting" and "living on the earnings" separately to "vagrancy", which thereafter declined in number as it referred specifically to "without lawful subsistence". But arrests rose across the board, except

"soliciting", which seemed to fluctuate for some unknown reason, although, no doubt street prostitutes were finding themselves being increasingly charged with "offensive behaviour". The most dramatic increase occurred among brothel prostitutes arrested for "consorting" when the 1953 figure rose to over 376 per cent of the previous year; obviously a blitz year for brothel workers. Once again there is a strong female bias, with the 217 male arrests for "living on the earnings" and "permitting prostitution on premises" being a mere 0.7 per cent of the 30,765 prostitution-related arrests for the 1950s. As with the pre-war practice of sending prostitutes to gaol as a means of eradicating commercial sex, in the period 1945-1959 231 prison sentences were issued by the courts for "soliciting" and 424 for "consorting".

In the 1960s the prostitution industry in Sydney reached its pinnacle. According to one writer the most popular area of commercial sex was in the little houses of the East Sydney lanes, where, in 1968 some 40 small brothels with about 130 women working in them represented a third of all prostitution in the city (Winter 1976, p. 35). One ex-worker in these houses, Karen, remembers what it was like:

It was packed like a football oval at times. The madams often held parties to which top personalities were invited. Everyone used to come down there to have a look. There were rows and rows of little houses with two rooms. You had a madam and also had to pay a sitter. We all looked glamorous and went to the best boutiques for our clothes. We would stand outside our houses and wait for the men who strolled along the laneways. A lot of girls were on with big time crims, and after I broke up with a policeman I was on with a famous crim.

By this time some of the migrant men had earned enough capital to invest in the brothel trade. East Sydney became an area dominated by Maltese migrants. One of them, Joe Borg, who arrived in Sydney about 1950, epitomises their involvement in prostitution. By 1968 he is thought to have owned 17 little houses in East Sydney, which he operated or let as brothels, employing about 40 prostitutes. He was the biggest brothel owner since Tilly Devine in the 1920s.



But his meteoric career came to an abrupt end on 28th May 1968 when he was blown up in his car outside his North Bondi home. Two other Maltese men were charged with his murder and convicted to 20 years imprisonment. At Borg's funeral a woman, presumably one of his employees, placed a wreath on his coffin bearing the message: "In memory of Joe Borg, who done a lot of good for a lot of good people." (Winter 1976, pp. 96-109).

The sudden rise in the brothels of East Sydney, the Maltese involvement in prostitution, and the gangland slayings of Borg and others, led to reactions from local residents, morality organisations, the police and the government. In 1962 lobbying by the Council of Churches stirred the Heffron Labor Government to use police powers to close down the brothels just before a state election. But as soon as the election was over, they opened up again. Police tried to reclose them with the *Disorderly Houses Act*, but Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions in 1966 demonstrated the limitations of this statute in declaring a brothel a "disorderly house", and the case was dismissed<sup>13</sup>. Since the case involved a single woman working as a call girl in a flat, there followed a flourish of one-woman brothels in East Sydney.

On the night of 23 February 1968, the eve of another state election, police amassed their biggest ever brothel blitz by blocking all exits from the East Sydney lanes and then swooping down on all and sundry. They managed to herd 168 customers and sightseers, and only 17 prostitutes (most had escaped) into waiting paddy-wagons on charges of "offensive behaviour". Ultimately the show of brute strength failed in its objective, and the Askin Liberal Government had to resort to other strategies for eradicating prostitution. Table 2.10 indicates the extent of police enforcement for the 1960s.

A glance back at the previous arrest figures will demonstrate that this period was the most oppressive for prostitutes and owners and managers of brothels. The "offensive behaviour" rates of arrest reached an unprecedented high. In 1964, 14,850 arrests of prostitutes occurred for "soliciting", "consorting" and "offensive behaviour". Taking Wilson's estimated population of Sydney prostitutes of 500 for that time, (Wilson 1971, p. 66) that would average nearly 30 arrests for each woman. Of course, many prostitutes, protected by pay-offs or influential lovers, would not have been arrested, and many others would have been arrested only a few times. Ultimately,

Table 2.10: Arrests for prostitution-related offences, 1960-69

Year	Soliciting (Female)	Offensive behaviour (Female)	Consorting (Female)	Living on earnings (Male)	Permitting prostitution (Males)	(Females)
1960	16	6,335	72	39	1	6
1961	6	6,658	63	55	1	0
1962	4	7,587	93	33	2	9
1963	13	12,981	50	47	11	28
1964	17	14,791	42	44	14	13
1965	21	12,743	42	52	5	13
1966	19	12,173	40	34	10	48
1967	24	8,094	46	43	31	146
1968	60	2,485	55	50	21	179
1969	74	1,634	46	34	24	166

Source: NSW Police Department *Annual Reports*, 1960-69

the brunt of these arrests would be borne by a minority of the most troublesome women in a clearly discriminatory policing practice. In 1985 in cities over twice the size of Sydney, such as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, arrests of prostitutes amounted to 11,700, 15,000 and 6,560 respectively. In the 1960s police harassment of prostitutes in Sydney was probably one of the heaviest in western countries. On the other hand, the ratio of gaol convictions dropped considerably, with, for example, only seven such penalties being imposed on prostitutes "consorting" from 1962 to 1968. The reason for the sharp decline in arrests for "offensive behaviour" after 1966 was probably due to police spending more time on arresting owners and managers of brothels, as the rise in arrests for "permitting prostitution on premises" indicates. Police attention in this area most likely was a response to the frustrations of failing to gain success with "disorderly house" applications in 1966. Once again it was the female managers who bore the brunt of this attack on the brothels.

In October 1968 the Askin Liberal Government pushed through Parliament the *Vagrancy, Disorderly Houses and Other Acts (Amendments) Act* in a desperate attempt to deal with prostitution (among other offences) legislatively. By these amendments the language of the *Vagrancy Act* was "modernised" substituting the term "common prostitute" with "known prostitute", and adopting a



non-sexist tone in the offence of "pimping" so that females might be included. But further laws were also added to provide police with additional powers. Under the *Vagrancy Act* it was now an offence to "loiter for the purpose of prostitution" (s 4[1][k]), or for a "known prostitute" to be on, or simply suspected of being on, "premises habitually used for the purpose of prostitution or of soliciting for prostitution" (s 8BA). To deal with the rising number of brothels disguised as "massage parlours" a new law was added to the same Act, making it an offence for whoever

(s 8BB) uses for the purpose of prostitution, or of soliciting for prostitution, any premises held out as being available for the provision of massage, sauna baths, steam baths, facilities for physical exercise, or services of like nature.

As well as the amendments to the *Vagrancy Act*, the *Disorderly Houses Act* was amended with the addition of a subsection that would overcome the kind of court decision delivered in 1966. In other words a "disorderly house" now also meant

(s 3[1][e]) that the premises are habitually used for the purpose of prostitution, or that they have been so used for that purpose and are likely again to be so used for that purpose.

This would become, along with the laws on "using premises for prostitution" and "using massage etc. premises", the key legislation in the government's harassment of brothels.

The 1968 amendments were only the beginning of a government plan to "get tough" with prostitution (and other public offensive behaviours). In 1970 it repealed the old *Vagrancy Act* and replaced it with the streamlined omnibus statute, the *Summary Offences Act*. Under this Act "soliciting" or "loitering" for prostitution (s 28), habitually using premises for prostitution by a "reputed prostitute" (s 29), and using "massage" premises as well as those "held out as being available for the taking of photographs or as a photographic studio" (s 30) continued to be offences. Whilst "living wholly or in part on the earnings of the prostitution of another person" applied to either sex (s 31[1]), it only applied to males where



he "lives with or is habitually in the company of a reputed prostitute and has no visible means of support" (s 31[2]). An owner, manager or other "who knowingly suffers or permits the premises to be used for the purpose of prostitution" (s 32) were included as offenders, but landowners had the legal means to avoid arrest by ordering the eviction of anyone from their premises on "reasonable grounds" for suspecting prostitution was being conducted. In addition, prostitutes could also be arrested for "offensive behaviour" (s 7), "vagrancy" or being "without lawful means" (s 22), and for "consorting with reputed prostitutes" (s 25).

As well as being part of the government's five-year determination to eradicate prostitution, there was also a motive to "clean up the Cross" with a focus on street prostitution, which had grown in extent in the Kings Cross area with the influx of American servicemen on "rest and recreation" leave from Vietnam. Bonnie, a street prostitute who worked in the early 1970s, described the situation thus:

Soldiers on R & R were around then and it was pretty easy to pick up a guy on the street and take him home. You only had to walk out of your flat and they would be there.

Police became heavy-handed at times, and the strategy of prostitutes was to avoid arrest at all costs, as brothel worker Lee explained to me:

Whenever blitzes were on they had to make arrests and sometimes they would come smashing in doors. When a blitz was on you took off. You didn't wait for them to come knocking. You flew out the back, over fences, and up streets, because with blitzes the fines were heavier, the bail was heavier and sometimes you were refused bail altogether.

The arrest figures for the 1970s show a quite different pattern to the decade earlier. Obviously police were under instructions to concentrate on the more visible aspects of the prostitution industry. Table 2.11 uses two statistical methods, which are not easily

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integrated, and in addition to changes in police policy, it should be treated with more caution than the previous tables.<sup>14</sup>

*Table 2.11: Arrests for prostitution-related offences, 1970-71 and court appearances for prostitution-related offences, 1972-78*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Soliciting (Female)</i>	<i>Offensive behaviour (Female)</i>	<i>Consorting (Female)</i>	<i>Living on earnings (Male)</i>	<i>Permitting prostitution (Males)</i>	<i>(Females)</i>
1970	90	136	4	31	16	3011
1971	3617	213	25	71	31	182
<i>Vagrancy offences</i>						
1972	4288	3712		46		51
1974	3301	2007		17		19
1975	2592	1221		21		24
1976	1930	1032		20		16
1977	2075	918		19		4
1978	1804	718		13		17

Source: NSW Police Department *Annual Reports* 1970-71 and NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, *Court Statistics* 1972-78

The sky-rocketing of "soliciting" arrest figures from 1970 to 1971 is, no doubt, a change in police attitudes towards street prostitution following the introduction of the *Summary Offences Act*, with its clear focus on street and public offences. A comparison with the arrests for soliciting or loitering of prostitutes in England and Wales at the same period will indicate the extend of policing in Sydney. Between 1975 and 1979 an average of approximately 3,000 arrests for soliciting or loitering a year occurred in England and Wales (McLeod 1982, p. 24) During this period about 200 English prostitutes were imprisoned for these offences a year (prostitutes in England were automatically given gaol sentences on a third offence of soliciting), but at least three times this many prostitutes would have been fined or given recognizance only. In Sydney perhaps no more than 100 women worked the streets at the time of these arrests, and in 1972 they were arrested on average nearly 43 times each. One

study found 650 women received 4,681 fines for prostitution-related offences in 1975-76 (Aitken 1977). The astonishing number of women arrested for "permitting prostitution on premises" in 1970, compared to the most disproportionate pattern of the preceding and succeeding years' figures for the same offence, can only be explained as a major one-year blitz on brothels, which, of course, caught the visible female managers and not the invisible male owners. The year after there was a return to the pattern of the late 1960s, but then there was a decline in the arrests of both sexes for "permitting prostitution on premises". The "vagrancy" offences seem to be an alteration of categories rather than a shift in the focus of charges. The total number of female "vagrants" recorded by police statistics in accordance with the old system of arresting poor women as "vagrants" was only 41 in 1970-71, and since prostitutes were being arrested for "soliciting" or "consorting" these were probably not prostitutes. The court figures for "vagrancy" may be composites of "consorting" and "offensive behaviour" arrests. In any case, the police statistics for 1970-71 indicate that arrests for "consorting" and "offensive behaviour" were declining in favour of "soliciting" and, quite likely, "permitting prostitution on premises" (which may very well have been aimed at prostitutes by some fancy legal juggling).

In 1972 prostitution-related arrests peaked for the decade. But thereafter there was a rapid decline in arrest figures in all areas of prostitution. This might be explained by the Askin Liberal Government realising its fruitless attempt to stamp out prostitution, or due to a decline in street prostitution following the demise of "rest and recreation" leave as the Vietnam War petered to its end. In any case, in 1976 the Labor Party was returned to power, and with it came libertarian views that would make radical changes to the prostitution legislation. Certainly the previous years' policing tactics clearly demonstrated that the eradication of prostitution was impossible. The harshness of the laws and the abuses of police practices in the past seventy years was a major practical impetus for the reconstruction of legislation that was to follow.

### **Towards Decriminalisation: New South Wales in the 1980s**

As a term, "decriminalisation" only has meaning in the context of existing laws that criminalise particular persons or actions, and as a



concept it is antithetical to legal sanctions prohibiting those actions. In prostitution, then, it refers to a legislative action removing legal restrictions of prostitutes' activities or of the means of earning through prostitution. The only Australian state to attempt this legislative development was New South Wales. In the early 1980s this legislative solution offered an alternative to the "legalisation" of Victoria and stood in direct contrast to the criminalising laws of other states. So far as prostitutes were concerned it was the complete reversal of the harassments of the 1960s and 1970s. The romanticist might easily assume that the state government had a "change of heart" by trying to rectify years of oppressing this small group of women.

The reform, however, occurred neither as an outcome of romantic vision nor of conscience. It was a response to ideological changes developing from the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the growth of feminism and the libertarian view on "victimless crimes". In 1977 the Royal Commission On Human Relationships (1977) proposed the "decriminalisation" of prostitution, and the Wran Labor Government invited public discussions on this and other matters. In 1978 the NSW Women's Advisory Council to the Premier presented a paper with evidence of the costs of law enforcement and court proceedings far outweighing the amount of state revenue from fines for prostitution offences. This provided a pragmatic reason for law reform for the conservative element in Parliament, while the libertarian left responded to the humanitarian rationale for a revision of the prostitution legislation. The outcome was a revolutionary reconstruction of the legislation in 1979.

The *Summary Offences Act 1970* was the first casualty in the reconstruction. Its repeal meant the introduction of three statutes to deal with public offences, unlawful assemblies and prostitution. Of these the *Prostitution Act 1979* is of interest here. It was a greatly modified version of previous prostitution legislation, holding to the principle of prostitution as victimless, except where prostitutes were no longer legally prevented from free choice. The activities of prostitutes selling sex were no longer considered immoral nor socially wrong, although the sentiment among legislators that prostitution was demeaning and degrading to womenkind prevailed. Thus, under a rationale of freedom of choice, adult prostitutes were deemed responsible to no one but themselves. The new statute therefore contained no laws making soliciting, consorting, or using

premises (other than a massage parlour, health studio or photographic studio) for the purpose of prostitution illegal.

Under the same rationale no situations should be allowed to impede prostitutes' indulgence in their own choice of conscience. Thus, the laws pertaining to "pimping", "brothel keeping" and the procuring of someone for prostitution involuntary would be retained. The legislators demonstrated a naivety in assuming that all acts of "living on the earnings of someone else's prostitution" was by its nature an exploitation of all prostitutes, that anyone who owned or managed a brothel was necessarily abusing their workers, and that procuring was always the involuntary recruitment of women (and men) for prostitution. It is unlikely that the legislators nurtured some idealised vision of a pre-1908 legal situation, but the legislative changes of 1979 were effectively the first positive step towards total decriminalisation in Australia, and the *Prostitution Act* the first statute to free prostitutes from the law.

The Act continued to prosecute those living on the earnings of another's prostitution, but it made one slight alteration to the terminology in the old *Summary Offences Act* by referring to either sex in "pimping" when habitually in the company of a "reputed prostitute" and without "lawful means of support" (s 5). Although the previous law of "knowingly suffers or permits premises to be used" for prostitution no longer applied, owners and managers, as well as receptionists, of brothels were liable for "living on the earnings". Unfortunately, it also continued to apply to husbands, lovers, adult children of prostitutes, and any others whom a prostitute chose to support financially. The previous law on using "premises held out as being available for the provision of massage, sauna baths, steam baths, etc. ...or for the taking of photographs, etc." was rewritten into the new Act (s 6). Another law prohibited owing or managing these kinds of premises (s 7). However, with the decriminalisation of the laws on prostitutes' activities, prostitutes need no longer work in disguised brothels. Finally, the advertisement of prostitution was illegal (s 8). Thus, the law encouraged prostitutes to be independent, but then prohibited them or their agents from recruiting business in the same way as any other businesses. The statute was loaded with contradictions. Whilst it was legal for a prostitute to work in a brothel, the fact that owners, managers and receptionists could be charged with living on their earnings



encouraged owners to disguise brothels as massage parlours, which made prostitutes liable.

Unlike the Victorian *Prostitution Regulation Act* all legal references to prostitution were not contained in the same statute. The *Crimes Act 1900*, for example, covered the procuring laws. Until the legislative revisions of 1969-70 it also included "pimping" (s 91C), but now it made it an offence, punishable with seven years imprisonment, to procure anyone for prostitution, even "with that person's consent" (s 91A) and procuring anyone by means of fraud, intimidation or drugs carried a penalty of ten years imprisonment (s 91B). The first law, in particular, seems strangely out of step with the intention to allow prostitutes independence, and denies free choice. Once again, there is an underlying morality prompting the notion that prostitution per se, even as a choice by a free agent, is bad. In some circumstances a woman desirous of becoming a prostitute will feel it necessary to seek someone to assist her; that assistant may be an experienced prostitute whose knowledge will be invaluable to the recruit, but who will be liable to a charge of procuring.

In spite of the liberal nature of the *Prostitution Act*, police, so accustomed to harassing street prostitutes, continued to control them with the law of "offensive behaviour" in the *Offences in Public Places Act 1979* which stated that anyone in a public place who conducts him/herself "in such a manner as would be regarded by reasonable persons as being, in all circumstances, offensive" (s 5[1]). The success of this law depended on what is regarded as "offensive" and who is regarded as "reasonable", and it was open to too much moral interpretation. In 1979 to 1981 this law had an even wider moral interpretation by referring to such conduct as causing "alarm and affront" to offended persons. That this provided police with a means of controlling street prostitution is indicated by the fact that in the years 1976 to 1978 "offensive behaviour" arrests of females only numbered 1,663, while from 1979 to 1981, after decriminalisation, the number of females arrested for "serious alarm and affront" were 10,480 (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics 1976-81); the difference in the two figures represents street prostitutes who could no longer be arrested for soliciting.

Likewise the other area of the most independent prostitution: women who chose to work in their homes or in a rented flat could no longer be arrested for "habitually using premises for prostitution". But they faced eviction from rented premises under the *Landlord and*



*Tenant (Amendment) Act 1948* enabling property owners to act to have a lessee removed, in spite of the conditions of the lease, simply because prostitution was being carried out on the premises (s 62[5][d1]). For those conducting prostitution in their own homes, municipal councils might act where by-laws prohibit commercial activities in residentially zoned areas, or where there is a contravention of the zoning regulations in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*. The Sydney City Council brought proceedings against brothels in its jurisdiction in an effort to have prostitution conducted therein ceased and a contravention of planning regulations. The well known bordello "Touch of Class" appeared twice before the Land and Environment Court, and won the right to continue operating as a brothel.<sup>15</sup> In other cases the City Council also failed to press home its action as it was held that no illegality was being committed by the brothel owners or the inmates.<sup>16</sup> However, these cases involved large and wealthy syndicates or investors who could withstand drawn-out court proceedings. For self-sufficient workers whose independence was at the heart of the prostitution law reforms, no such resources were available, and invariably they were forced to move out at the first sign of trouble. Although no one has yet attempted it, there is room for contesting council actions by claiming a woman's prostitution in her own home as a "home occupation" free of planning restrictions as one of the "model provisions" in the *Environmental and Planning Assessment Act*. But in the legal contradictions that have followed the 1979 reforms, it does seem ironical that the very persons free of exploitation are the ones that are most victimised, while powerful brothel owners, who, in the *Prostitution Act* are assumed to be exploiters and therefore subject to the laws therein, are those who are in the best position to manipulate the law.

Children and young people were given special legislation outside the *Prostitution Act*. In the *Child Welfare Act 1939* it was an offence for a brothel owner or manager to permit a young person (16-18 years) or child (under 16) on the premises (s 77) and any young person or child found in a brothel or who "lives, resides or wanders about with...common prostitutes" even where the "prostitutes are the parents" (s 72[a]) could be apprehended by police with (s 75) or without (s 76) a warrant. However, the *Community Welfare Act*, as introduced in 1982 but not proclaimed until some years after, gave authority to special officers to "protect" rather than "apprehend" a

neglected child or any young person from exploitation. This was a more enlightened approach to caring for young people than the older Act. Although brothel owners or managers might still be penalised under the statute \$1,000 or 12 months imprisonment, or both (s 132), this was a less harsh punishment than other states (for Victoria see p. 118, for other states, see p. 101).

In spite of the contradictions apparent in the legislation as a whole, the *Prostitution Act* itself was a major revolutionary reform in prostitution regulation for a modern western state. Certainly, it was the most liberal and progressive legislation on commercial sex in Australia. It provided a model for not only other jurisdictions in this country, but for the rest of the world. However, it proved to be more of an idealistic experiment for liberal politics than a practical regulation for government. A situation not unlike that of St Kilda in Melbourne forced the government to reverse some of its earlier decisions. In the early 1980s a virtual explosion of street prostitution occurred in the inner suburb of Darlinghurst, and local residents organised into powerful lobbies for the return of prohibitions on soliciting. Although there was much occasion for residents to complain, especially with traffic jams of sightseers and tourists buses in otherwise quiet residential boulevards in early morning hours, many of the claims of gangsters moving in, public fornication, and residents living in fear of their lives made excellent copy for the newspapers but were mostly unsubstantiated.<sup>17</sup> Since the area was in the midst of changing its landscape to bourgeois tastes, the rise in street prostitution was as much a concern of developers and speculators as it was of local residents. Also, political opportunities presented themselves, as in the case of one self-appointed leader of a resident action group who got himself a seat on the City Council following the campaign against the prostitutes. The publicity, the residents' agitations, the police demands for a return of laws to control soliciting, eventually broke through the apathy of the government, and on Anzac Day 1983 the *Prostitution Act* was amended with the addition of the following law:

(s 8A[1]): A person in a public street shall not, near a dwelling, school, church or hospital, solicit another person for the purpose of prostitution.



A further subsection prohibited soliciting "in a school, church or hospital" (s 8A[2]), and "dwelling" for the purpose of this law referred to any place of residence "except where it is above or attached to a shop or commercial premises" (s 8A[5][a]). Simply speaking, it meant that prostitutes could no longer solicit "near" a house or a block of units, or any of the public facilities mentioned, but could do so quite legally in such a shopping centre as Kings Cross where residences were attached to shops or in hotels. The penalty for contravening the new law was a \$500 fine.

The effect of this law cleared the inner residential streets of Darlinghurst of streetwalkers, apart from a handful of redoubtables who became the prime target of the police blitz that followed immediately after the law was introduced. Most of the street prostitutes shifted to the "legal" area on William Street and a few moved to the western suburbs and began working along Canterbury Road. Very few moved into the centre of Kings Cross since the street workers established there strongly resisted them. They had a popular, lucrative area that was totally legal, and they weren't ready to have newcomers ruin it for them. Unfortunately, some of the Darlinghurst women, the most desperate and heaviest drug users among them, suddenly deprived of an income, turned to crime as a substitute. Prison statistics provide evidence in support of this changed behaviour. From the end of April (when the new soliciting law was introduced) to the end of June 1983, the weekly figures in the numbers of women incarcerated show a fluctuation rate of 13 per cent, while the June total was 9 per cent higher than the April total. The June figure was the highest record for female detainees for 2.25 years. Furthermore, for the year ended 30th June 1983 the most outstanding increases in types of crime were a 52 per cent rise in "break and enter" and a 44 per cent rise in "other thefts" (such as shoplifting or bag snatching) above the previous year's figures. The actual numbers of female prisoners in the weekly totals from 1 May to 26 June rose from 143 to 169, or an increase of 26 women (*see Perkins 1984*). The inference is that as many as 20 or more prostitutes took up crime as a means of income once commercial sex was denied them.

The Wran Labor Government offered another solution to what it perceived as a "problem" with prostitution. It proposed that a parliamentary Select Committee Upon Prostitution be appointed to investigate the various aspects of prostitution in New South Wales.



This was resolved in favour of such a Committee by Parliament on 30 March 1983 (NSW Legislative Assembly 1983) and the Committee remained in operation until 9 April 1986. It was one of the most thorough investigations into prostitution in Australia. The Committee interviewed 79 sworn witnesses (not including certain other witnesses interviewed in-camera), consisting of prostitutes, clients, brothel owners, activists, residents, policemen, social workers, medical workers, public servants, Church leaders, politicians, and an assortment of others; visited street prostitutes and brothels; toured other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas, and studied an immense literature on the subject. In its final report the Committee made 122 recommendations. The Introduction to this report states the Committee's position most clearly:

Prostitution is not endorsed by the Committee and no recommendation in this report is directed to the furtherance of this dangerous and undesirable trade (Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon Prostitution 1986).

Nevertheless, the Committee adopted a practical approach and was most careful to avoid moral implications in any of its proceedings. Its recommendations on the social, welfare, health and drug use aspects of prostitution demonstrate a sincere concern for prostitutes and propose a number of solutions aimed at improving their welfare. It acknowledged certain facts on police corruption and called for an internal departmental solution to this problem. It opposed the kind of prohibitionist approach to prostitution legislation that we have just reviewed, as it points out in the Introduction to the report:

While calls for the abolition of prostitution have an immediate emotional appeal, they fail to recognise the underlying social and economic preconditions of prostitution, and do not take full account of the historical evidence for its continued existence (Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon Prostitution 1986).

The Committee's approach to resolving the legal control of commercial sex was what it referred to as "decriminalisation with controls". The thrust of this approach is outlined as a series of intentions to:

- remove prostitution as far as possible from the ambit of the criminal law, while retaining provisions against the exploitation of minors;
- attempt to reduce levels of demand for, and recruitment into, prostitution through social welfare reform;
- treat prostitution as a planning matter with regulations to protect public amenity and to control noise and nuisance aspects of the trade;
- effect a controlled decentralisation of prostitution, as exemplified in the provisions for restricted street soliciting, and avoid the formation of red-light areas (Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon Prostitution 1986, pp. 241-2).

To these ends certain recommendations for reforming existing laws were made. Changes to the *Prostitution Act* should include a clarification of the soliciting law so that the term "near" would mean "directly in front of or in close proximity to or directly opposite", and the act of soliciting should only be an offence when the dwelling, school, church and hospital is "in use or being occupied". The law on "pimping" should only apply when coercion and intimidation are being applied, and discreet forms of advertising commercial sex should be allowed within the ambit of the proposed planning regulations for prostitution. The Committee also felt that the procuring laws in the *Crimes Act* should be repealed since there were ample other laws sufficient for dealing with coercive practices, although an additional law should be included to protect children and young people under 16 years from being procured for prostitution through fraud, intimidation, or drugs. It was also of the opinion that the existing laws in the *Offences in Public Places Act* should be enforced against obnoxious clients and on-lookers, rather than as currently, as stand-by enforcement against street prostitutes for soliciting. An important recommendation was the repeal of the Sections of the *Disorderly Houses Act* currently used to close



brothels, since the Committee felt this was an inappropriate statute for the control of prostitution.

With regard to brothels, the committee recommended that no brothels should be permitted in residentially zoned areas and should not be allowed to exist at street levels in shopping centres. Furthermore, the term "brothel" should be a legal designation referring to all premises involved in prostitution, including escort agencies and flats, homes or rooms in which only one prostitute operates. The ownership of brothels should be by individuals, whose names appear on the development applications and corresponding registration, and these individuals must be of "good fame and character" without a conviction for a "serious crime" within the previous ten years. No individual or his/her relatives should be permitted to own more than three brothels. Regulations guiding the brothel industry would be within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Planning and Environment, although the consenting authority in the issue of permits would be local councils. Rejection of permits could be appealed against by the applicant taking the matter to the Land and Environment Court.

For a parliamentary inquiry involving all Parties, the Committee's conclusions were quite radical, but still in the spirit of "decriminalisation" first mooted in 1977. Its retention of most of the laws in the *Prostitution Act* but inclusion of amendments which seem more equitable to street prostitutes and prostitutes' choices of supporting whomever they wish, and especially the proposal to amend the *Disorderly Houses Act*, demonstrate its intention to alleviate prostitutes and brothel owners of burdensome, inappropriate laws. Its confinement of brothels to commercial locations demonstrates a consideration for the community at large. It was a good compromise. But there are two major criticisms. The inclusion of private premises with a single prostitute in the planning scheme for brothels is unrealistic, because these exclusive, clandestine operations are not equipped to compete with large bordellos, and they would be forced to continue outside the protection of the law. The second criticism is that, in view of the tradition of resistance to prostitution demonstrated by councils, their authority in deciding on permits should be subject to the regulation of higher, less corruptible, more distant, authorities. This would save in terms of cost and time in court appeals, such as was experienced in the early period of legal brothels in Victoria.



For all its good intentions and practical suggestions, the Select Committee's list of recommendations was ignored by the Wran Government and its successor in 1988, the Greiner Liberal Government. Apparently, it was too revolutionary for both, which is a curious position, in view of the multi-partisan approach in the inquiry, the expressed need by the Wran Government to investigate prostitution in search of a solution, and the enthusiasm for the project by Parliament. As the *Report* is allowed to collect dust as a curiosity piece in the parliamentary library, and time diminishes the memory of its existence, in retrospect it would seem that the entire process of inquiry had been nothing more than lip service to social liberalism. It is tempting to speculate, however, on what the legislative outcome might have been had the *Report* recommended harsh oppressive prohibitionist laws.

Since 1988 the Greiner Government has, in fact, made some legislative changes, but in the opposite direction to the solutions suggested by the Select Committee. It repealed the *Prostitution Act* and re-introduced the *Summary Offences Act*, which also included "offences in public places" laws. But it was very different to the previous statute of the same name in the 1970s. The prostitution laws remained unchanged in the transfer from the *Prostitution Act*. So, in fact, it would seem that this Government is also prone to conducting lip service to positive action by appearing to implement tougher legislative with the use of the name of the old statute as an illusion of change, while retaining the actual laws intact. However, in May of the same year the Greiner Government was impressed enough by the protests and antics of a resident action group in the western suburbs calling for police action against the 20 or 30 prostitutes on Canterbury Road to push through Parliament amendments to the *Summary Offences Act* that made soliciting an offence "within view from" a dwelling, church, school or hospital, thus granting police even wider powers. It was followed by another amendment, a new law to criminalise clients as well as prostitutes for an "act of prostitution" in a public place.

The *Summary Offences Act* includes: "pimping" (s 15[1]), carrying a penalty of 10 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment; using premises "held out as being available for the provision of massage, etc." (s 16), carrying a penalty of five penalty units or three months imprisonment; owing or managing such premises (s 17), carrying a penalty of 50 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment;

and advertising prostitution (s 18), carrying a penalty of six penalty units or three months imprisonment. These laws are the same as the previous *Prostitution Act*, except the penalties have been increased.<sup>18</sup> Soliciting "near" or "within view from a dwelling, etc." (s 19[1]) or "in" the same places (s 19[2]) carries a maximum penalty of six penalty units or three months imprisonment (previously no imprisonment was imposed), while the soliciting of another person "in a manner that harasses or distresses the other person" (s 19[3]) has a maximum of eight penalty units or three months. The additional laws used against both prostitutes and clients include:

(s 20[1]): Each of the persons taking part in an act of prostitution

(a) in, or within view from, a school, church, hospital or public place; or

(b) within view from a dwelling

is guilty of an offence.

Public place here could include a park, oval, commercial or industrial area. This may apply whether the "act of prostitution" is in the open, or, as is customary with some street prostitution, in a vehicle "in, or within view from a school, etc." (s 20[2]), in either case carrying a maximum penalty of 10 penalty units or six months imprisonment.

The 1980s has been a confusing and uncertain period for prostitutes, especially street prostitutes who are often unsure when they are breaking the law and when they are not. On Canterbury Road, for example, there are locations where soliciting is legal and others where it is illegal. Table 2.12 shows the trend in arrests for the decade which reflects these changes.

The period 1979 to 1982 records no arrests for soliciting because in the *Prostitution Act* this was not an offence. However, there was an enormous increase in arrests of females for "offensive behaviour" or "serious alarm and affront" in 1979, rising by 6.5 times the previous year's figure, a clear indication that police continued to harass streetwalkers but with non-prostitution specific laws. The declining number of court appearances for using and own-



Table 2.12: Court appearances for prostitution-related offences 1979-89

Year	Soliciting near dwelling, etc.	Living on earnings	Premises as massage, etc. Use of premises	Owner etc.	Advertise prostitution
1979		4	43	10	0
1980		35	94	28	4
1981		53	84	21	0
1982		39	66	17	0
1983	210	40	26	21	8
1984	419	33	27	17	0
1985	258	31	12	2	22
1986	180	11	11	7	0
1987	238	20	2	7	0
1988*	367	31	8	4	0
1988**	9	1	0	0	68
1989*	151	5	1	1	1
1989**	623	3	5	2	3

\* Prostitution Act. \*\* Summary Offences Act (post-May 1988)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, *Court Statistics*, 1979-89

ing/managing premises "held out" as massage parlours probably indicates a period of adjustment as prostitutes and brothel owners got used to the idea that they no longer needed to use a "massage parlour" as a front for prostitution; the length of time indicates that old habits die hard. Since the above figures are not sex specific, it is impossible to determine the proportions of women represented in the different offences. However, following tradition, as Table 2.13 shows, the number of females generally in the prostitution-related offences is considerably higher than for males (including male prostitutes).

It is apparent from these figures that women continue to be the main target of arrest, whether there are laws aimed at prostitutes or not. In 1981 and 1982, before the reintroduction of a soliciting law, most likely the females appearing before the courts were managing premises held out as "massage". From 1983 on they were mostly those committing offences of soliciting "near" a dwelling, etc. Although by 1988 most street prostitutes were aware of the provisions which enabled them to work legally, about 20 to 30



## Working Girls

*Table 2.13: Court appearances for prostitution-related offences by sex and age groups, 1981-89*

<i>Year Sex</i>	<i>18-19</i>	<i>20-24</i>	<i>25-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40+</i>	<i>Not Known</i>	<i>Total</i>
1981							
M	0	18	13	12	5	0	48
F	10	18	22	12	5	1	68
1982							
M	2	12	7	8	5	1	35
F	4	19	17	5	1	1	47
1983							
M	17	19	32	19	7	2	96
F	33	55	60	19	2	2	171
1984							
M	16	43	68	23	10	0	160
F	45	191	145	45	6	6	438
1985							
M	12	16	36	5	4	2	75
F	10	77	90	42	1	4	224
1986							
M	7	23	23	5	2	0	60
F	11	40	51	24	2	4	132
1987							
M	9	25	15	8	0		57
F	19	86	53	31	2		191
1988							
M	7	35	28	19	6		95
F	30	130	122	70	15		367
1989							
M	23	69	39	27	4	7	169
F	68	243	146	132	14	11	614

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, *Court Statistics*, 1981-89

continued to defy the law by working along Canterbury Road, where most locations are "within view from" a dwelling, etc. The court appearances for soliciting in the above tables indicate an increase in arrests following the wider powers granted police with the change in terminology in the law. Armed with an additional law to arrest customers for an "act of prostitution" in a public place, police turned their attention to catching clients in their cars literally with their pants down. The first arrest of a customer was made in January 1989. The prostitute with him was arrested as well under the same charge. She was also charged with soliciting, so that whilst he was fined \$250, she had to pay \$400 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 1989). Thus, even when police are given powers to arrest clients, traditionally the woman still bears the bulk of the blame.

The recent public release of police arrest figures indicate an increase for soliciting charges in 1988-89 nearly 13 times higher than the previous year. Table 2.14 indicates the extent of this rise.

*Table 2.14: Police arrests for prostitution-related offences in the fiscal years, 1985-86 to 1988-89*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Soliciting</i>	<i>Living on earnings</i>	<i>Use of massage premises</i>
1985-86	41	6	8
1986-87	28	4	3
1987-88	63	34	2
1988-89	808	10	5

Source: Personal communication with Police Statistician, 16 October 1989

The extraordinary leap in numbers of arrests for soliciting in 1988-89 is a likely response to resident agitations in Canterbury.<sup>19</sup> Since very small numbers of women work on Canterbury Road (see note 2, ch. 1) we must assume they were arrested over and over again. But, the most extraordinary feature of these police figures is that there is no correlation with the corresponding court statistics on Table 2.12. Given the usual time-lags between arrest and court appearance, the court process of dealing with each case on its principal offence, case withdrawals and other anomalies, it still does

not explain, for example, why there should be 238 court appearances in 1987 and 376 in 1988 with only 28 arrests in 1986-87 and 63 in 1987-88 for soliciting preceding them. The only explanation received from police so far is that a change in case recording procedures had taken place around that time.

Just as the police turned to "offences in public places" laws to deal with street prostitutes once offences for soliciting had been withdrawn in the early 1980s, so they also used the *Disorderly Houses Act* to close down brothels when they no longer had the laws of "habitually" using premises for prostitution and of "suffer(ing)" or "permit(ing)" such use. In this period 11 premises came before the court with applications for declaring them "disorderly houses". The first case was the most crucial, since it tested the intent to decriminalise prostitution under the legislative reforms of 1979. The court ruled that the decriminalising legislation had no effect on the disorderly houses statute because it is not the lawfulness that is the question, but the fact that prostitution was being carried out.<sup>20</sup> However, it seems that police power to use the statute is far wider than in the context of prostitution, drunkenness or disorderliness, as their raids on gay premises indicate, claiming that homosexuality itself is "indecent conduct" or "entertainment of a demoralising character" (see Schwartzkoff 1983). The Police Department itself expressed dissatisfaction with the statute as it stands as an ineffective method of enforcement in the control of prostitution. Of the 11 applications before the Supreme Court in 1983, they point out, only four declarations were made, while three were rejected and one case withdrawn (the balance at the time were yet to be heard in full). In their submission to the Select Committee Upon Prostitution it was stated:

The exercise of making various applications has been long and costly but served to clearly demonstrate that the *Disorderly Houses Act* is an ineffective tool for the control of prostitution (NSW Police Department 1983).

The police were agitating for more efficient means of dealing with prostitution. But they continued to use the statute in the late 1980s, with some 50 premises in court applications seeking declarations as "disorderly houses" (*Sydney Morning Herald*,



20 June 1989). By March 1989 three had been so declared. But there are still others which continue to avoid being closed. One such case was the "escort" parlour, Moonlight, on which a decision was rendered by the Supreme Court on 27th April 1987 virtually reversing Yeldham J's earlier decision (p. 168, n. 20).<sup>21</sup> So while the arguments, court judgments, and police objections continue to abate on "disorderly houses", the police relentlessly pursue it as an action against brothel prostitution. They defend their action by claiming an obligation to enforce laws while they exist in the legislation. The question is one of efficiency and expediency, which is a responsibility of legislators. The evidence seems clear enough that in the case of the *Disorderly Houses Act*, especially with reference to prostitution, this is no longer efficient nor expedient. The question that continually begs an answer is "why is it still there?" in a legal climate of "decriminalisation".

The last aspect of NSW legislation to be considered here is the health regulation as it refers to prostitution. The *Venerable Disease Act* contains the most relevant laws. That which concerns prostitutes is the offence of knowingly spreading sexually transmissible diseases by "any act likely to lead to the infection of another person" (s 21). For workers, managers or occupiers of brothels, it is an offence to knowingly permit an infected person to work on the premises as a prostitute (s 22). A prostitute, along with the rest of the population, is under a legal obligation to seek treatment and refrain from behaviour likely to spread the disease if she is found to be infectious (ss 4, 5, 9A, 13). Prostitutes, owners, managers and others in brothels are prohibited from using medical certificate clearances in connection with prostitution (s 15). This latter law operates on the rationale that a person is cleared of infection for only the moment of the medical test, and does not take into account undetected infections nor the likelihood of being infected on the very next sexual contact. Some brothel managers display their staff's medical clearance on a board for client inspection, but this is clearly illegal.

Rumours of prostitute AIDS carriers appeared in the press in late 1984 (*Daily Telegraph*, 11 December and 14 December 1984). A wave of official panic spread across the state government and health authorities as they sought laws to enforce or new ones to implement. The *Public Health (Proclaimed Diseases) Amendment Act* was introduced in 1985 with AIDS infection by prostitutes in

mind. Under this statute "any person knowing they have a proclaimed disease shall not have sexual intercourse with another person" unless the other person has been warned of the risk and accepts it (s 50n). In the same statute brothel owners or managers could also be charged for permitting persons with a proclaimed disease to work on the premises (s 50o).

In 1987 the newspapers broke a story about a street prostitute named Sharleen who was believed to be antibody positive to HIV (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 1987). The Minister for Police, at the time, George Paciullo, claimed "the police had their hands tied", the incumbent Minister for Health, Peter Anderson, suggested using the *Public Health (Proclaimed Diseases) Amendment Act*, and Liberal Member for Bligh, Michael Yabsley, felt that "the full weight of the law must be used to stop her." (*Daily Telegraph*, 8 July 1987). But neither the law nor the health authorities did anything at the time. It was thought by Sharleen that she was infected through sharing needles. Two years later she appeared on the TV show "Sixty Minutes" (Nine Network, 30 July 1989) explaining her reasons for continuing to work as a prostitute and insisting she always used prophylaxis. The tone of the program was condemnatory of her actions and focused on her role as a prostitute. It hardly investigated her drug addiction and whether she continued to share needles.<sup>22</sup> There was an immediate response by the Greiner Government, with the Minister of Health, Peter Collins, referring to Sharleen as a "walking time bomb", and the Department of Health enforced a rarely-used law of the *Public Health Act 1903*, which enables health authorities to detain an infectious patient for treatment (s 32A[1]).<sup>23</sup> It was the involuntary nature of this action which so horrified civil libertarians, and reminded many of us that a law-bound society which considers the law as the ultimate solution to social dilemma can never really accept "decriminalisation" as opening the way to non-legal resolutions of situations which are at present controlled by legislation.

Earlier I referred to "decriminalisation" as seeking a return to some past utopian period of laissez faire. But in the nature of political hegemony in the modern state it is not so much offering prostitutes freedom from legal control as it is a matter of concentrating more on the elements of prostitution perceived as exploiting prostitutes, according to the ideologies of individual rights expressed by the civil libertarian and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This has



resulted in such situations as that in Sweden, where prostitutes may work in freedom but the restriction of premises is more reminiscent of a "legalisation" system. In New South Wales, also, the retention of the *Disorderly Houses Act* is a part of a legal hypocrisy which, on the one hand, encourages prostitutes' freedom of choice, but, on the other, denies them places where they might work. The retention of the "pimping" laws is another example of a legal contradiction, with "decriminalisation" an effective mechanism for the decline of the exploitative pimp, while its legislation enables police to criminalise such persons as husbands, lovers, brothel receptionists and others whom prostitutes freely choose to support. Thus, "decriminalisation" has become a clichéd term within a rhetoric of liberalism and human rights in the political expediencies of party politics. In New South Wales it has been an unstable enterprise where "decriminalisation" idealism was here one day, gone the next in response to the political whims of the party in power. This is a long way from the ideals of "decriminalisation" or of the reality of past legal *laissez faire*. Regardless of whatever trendy catch-cry is used to "modernise" a political party's platform, it is still bound by the will of the majority, and if that will is perceived as moralistic then the laws will change superficially to appear to be "modern" while the underlying principle of morality remains. This seems to have happened in New South Wales. This is a long way from the spirit of individual freedom of choice as the ideological imperative in "decriminalisation".

Nowhere is this more exemplified than in a comparison between the police statistics of Queensland, assumed to be the most repressive "police state" in Australia, and New South Wales, with its "progressive" law reforms. In 1986-87 (see Table 2.3) Queensland police made 920 arrests for prostitution-related offences. Of these 627 were of prostitutes for soliciting anywhere or using premises for prostitution. In 1988-89 (see Table 2.14) New South Wales police made 823 arrests for prostitution-related offences. Of these 808 were of prostitutes for soliciting in residential areas only. The first involved a population of possibly 500 women; the second a maximum of 30. Taking these estimated populations, in Queensland on average each prostitute was arrested 1.25 times, whilst in New South Wales the average is nearly 27 times. Thus, in the "decriminalising" trend in New South Wales legislation, the rate of arrest for each prostitute may simply increase in accordance with police energy so long as laws remain to be used. The morality of the



"bad woman" bridges all systems. The only way to remedy this is total "decriminalisation".

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavoured to show how prostitutes have been defined by law. Although, as we have seen, prostitution has been a part of white urban society in Australia since the foundation of British civilisation on this continent, for more than half of the two centuries of white Australian culture prostitutes were neither clearly legally identified nor subjected to criminal legislation. Throughout the early 19th century prostitutes were often identified synonymously with the convict class, and convict women in general identified with them. In the post-convict period of the 19th century prostitutes were often identified with a general class of social misfits and extremely poor, falling within the ill-defined legal category of "vagrants". It applied as much to the poorest of women and those without homes as it did to those women noted for their obvious immoral behaviour. Indeed, without a legal stigma demarking prostitutes from other women, it is likely that most female prostitution in the 19th century was transient and casual, whereby large numbers of women moved in and out of the sex trade as the expedience of poverty motivated them. Thus, even in the late 19th century prostitutes continued to be a part of a non-distinctive subculture of working-class women in Australian urban communities that were divided more clearly along class lines than lines of morality.

As we have also seen, the late 19th century trends to contain sexually transmitted diseases and immorality led first to the clear identification of prostitutes as a sub-group for health purposes, and later, by the turn of the century, as a legal entity for the purpose of criminal law response to morality legislation. In the early 20th century the situation had changed considerably so that prostitutes became a legally defined category of women earmarked as the archetypal female moral degenerates. This identification of them as part of the criminal class finally severed their old roots with the working class and with women in general. Indeed, it was now recognised that prostitutes emerged from all classes, but their entry into prostitution immediately re-categorised them as a special class

of women more closely associated with male criminals than with other women. The popular mythology of prostitutes that complemented the law in defining them as a special social group, also assumed that most of these women were products of a brutal proletariat childhood, and those middle-class women who succumbed to commercial sex were greater degenerates who had deliberately declined in social status. This identification with criminals modified the previous trend of casual and transient prostitution so that throughout the 20th century prostitutes entered the sex industry on a much more permanent basis and became "locked" into the cultural milieu of prostitution through the legal process of criminalising them. Most of these women would not have acquired criminal records, not have had police involvement nor come before the courts, had it not been for the fact that commercial sex had been made illegal. Once prostitution had acquired a criminal status, it attracted other products of criminality: extortion, and coercion, with the involvement of organised crime, institutionalised pimping and professional pandering (procuring).

Within the past decade two states became consciously aware of these problems and attempted legal reforms to reduce the exploitation and criminal connections which had become a part of prostitution since the introduction of criminal laws. But as we have seen, neither Victoria's "legalisation" nor New South Wales' "decriminalisation" successfully freed prostitutes from the stigma of criminals because these ambiguous systems remain strongly rooted in an overall legal system that continues enforcing laws that thinly-disguise the ideologies of 19th century moralism. Both Victoria and New South Wales Governments have done little more than provide lip service to the humanitarian principles on which the reforms were purportedly based. But in New South Wales, at least, most prostitutes are nowadays free of legal encumbrance, even if police have the power to deprive them of venues for working. The handful of women who do contravene laws on soliciting in non-commercial areas are made scapegoats by the present conservative state government determined to stay in power on a fiction of law and order. On 21st November 1989, the Greiner Liberal Government carried this fiction to its extreme by announcing its intention to imprison these women rather than fine them or place them on recognizance.

Legislators of this century have continued to fail to realise that prostitutes are not a special breed of women with compulsions



to indulge in criminal behaviour. The next chapter will explore this issue further by demonstrating that socially, culturally and psychologically prostitute women pursue lifestyles little different to the millions of other single working women, wives and mothers in the Australian community. Popular mythology keeps prostitute women separated from other women in people's minds, while the law, founded as it is in 19th century puritanism, keeps them separated in the social order.

### Notes

1. J.T. Bigge's "Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the colony of NSW" in Parliamentary Papers Vol 20, cit. J.D.Ritchie (ed), *Evidence to the Bigge Report*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1972, Vol. 2, and J.D.Ritchie *Punishment and Profit: the reports of John Bigge*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970. Bigge described the Female Factory at Parramatta, a large room annexed to the gaol, designed in 1804 to house sixty women (although it usually contained as many as 200 women and their children: "(It) consists of one long room that is immediately above the gaol, having two windows... (and being) 60 feet by 20 feet; and at one end are store-rooms, where the wool, yarn and cloth are kept. There is one fireplace, at which all the provisions are cooked. The women have no other beds than those they can make from the wool in its dirty state... No attempt has been made to preserve cleanliness in this room, as the boards had shrunk so much, that when they were washed, the water fell through them into the prison rooms below".
2. Contagious diseases legislation was not passed in New South Wales and South Australia in spite of some enthusiastic debating of the issue. It seems that more enlightened authorities and common



sense prevailed in these colonies than in Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria (on NSW see J. Allen: "The making of the prostitute proletariat in early 20th century New South Wales" in Daniels (ed.), 1984, p. 206; on SA see Horan, 1984, pp. 115-16). In NSW in 1979 an unsuccessful attempt was made to install a Lock Hospital, ostensibly to remove venereal diseased patients from Sydney Hospital (see M. Lewis: "From Blue Light clinic to the Nightingale Centre: A brief history of the Sydney STD Centre and its forerunners", Part 1, *Venereology*, vol. 1 no.1 Aug. 1988, p. 4.

3. Most court references to a definition of "soliciting" have occurred in English jurisprudence. As Jacobs J noted in *Fingleton v. Bryson* (1980) 26 SASR 208: "Surprising as it might seem, there appears to be no reported decision in Australia on the meaning of the word 'solicit' in this context" (at p. 209). The person in question had been charged with the *Police Offences Act 1953-75 (Summary Offences Act)* (SA) s. 25 for "soliciting in a public place for the purposes of prostitution". Jacobs J held that since the solicitation was made in a newspaper advertisement, to which the appellant replied and arranged to meet the respondent in a hotel bar, this did not constitute soliciting in a public place. The appellant was a police officer endeavouring to trap the respondent. A similar circumstance occurred in *Burge v. Director of Public Prosecutions* (1962) 1 WLR 263 whereby a prostitute charged under the *Sexual Offences Act 1956* (UK) S. 32 for "soliciting in a public place for immoral purposes" was acquitted because her advertisement displayed on a shop noticeboard was deemed not to be soliciting in a public place in any physical sense. The same circumstance prompted a similar decision in *Weisz and another v. Monahan* (1962) 1 All ER 664; 1 WLR 262, when a charge under *Street Offences Act 1959*

(UK) s. 1(1) for "soliciting for the purpose of prostitution" was dismissed; Lord Parker CJ concluded: "I am quite satisfied that soliciting in that connexion involves the physical presence of the prostitute and conduct on her part amounting to an importuning of prospective customers." (at p. 665). Much earlier *Horton v. Mead* (1913) 1KB 154 in response to a charge under the *Vagrancy Act 1898* (Eng) s. 1(1)(b) for "persistently solicit(ing) in a public place for immoral purposes", Phillimore J concurred: "(There) cannot be a conviction for solicitation unless it is proved that the solicitation in some way reached the ears or affected the senses of the person solicited." (at p. 158). See also *ex parte Langley; re Humphries and another* (1953) 70WN 217 (at 219). In *Behrendt v. Burridge* (1977) 1WLR 29, however, a woman was charged with the *Street Offences Act 1959* (UK) s. 1(1) for soliciting for the purpose of prostitution after she displayed herself in a front window of a house facing a street frequented by men seeking prostitutes in a manner which left no doubt as to her intention, and she was convicted, for as Boreham J explained: "If one asked the question of an ordinary passer-by, 'What is that young woman doing in that window, in that garb, in that (red) light, in those circumstances?', one ventures to suggest the clear answer would have been, though perhaps not in these precise words, 'She is soliciting for prostitution'." (at p. 33). On the other hand, Lucas J made it also perfectly clear in *Newman v. Paties ex parte Newman* (1979) QdR 402 when acquitting a prostitute charged with the *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act 1931* (Qld) s. 5(1)(1)(b), he said: "In order to constitute soliciting by a woman there must be an active approach from the woman." (at p. 403).

4. *Liquor Act 1912* s. 78(b) in Queensland; *Liquor Act 1912* s. 45 in New South Wales: *Licensing Act*

1976 s. 59(6)(b) in Tasmania; *Liquor Ordinance* 1975 s. 88(2) in Aust. Capital Territory; *Licensing Act* 1932 s. 51(1)(a) in South Australia; *Liquor Act* 1985 s. 105 in the Northern Territory; *Liquor Licensing Act* 1988 s. 115(b) in Western Australia.

5. See *Singleton v. Ellison* (1895) 1QB 607 and *Durose v. Wilson* (1907) 71 JP 263. Also *Donovan v. Gavin* (1965) 2QB 648; and *Strath v. Foxon* (1955) 3 All ER 398; 39 Cr. App. R 162; (1956) 1QB 67. The latter clarifies *Singleton v. Ellison* and *Durose v. Wilson* with: "Premises were held not to be a brothel where such premises were divided into two self-contained flats (with no common use other than a joint use of a kitchen), which were let separately to two known prostitutes, each of whom used her flat for the purposes of prostitution for herself alone."
6. *Ex parte Fergusson* (1966) 84 WN (Pt 1) 446, in which "immoral conduct of prostitution" is not "indecent conduct" and premises is not a "disorderly house" under meaning of *Disorderly Houses Act* 1943 s. 3(1)(a). Upheld by *Fergusson v. Gee* (1966) 86 WN (Pt 1) 149. Later however a reverse decision held that a premises is "disorderly" in s. 3(1)(e) of same Act, since it was used for "habitual prostitution", *Re applications of Shephard* (1983) 1 NSWLR 265.
7. *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act* 1931 s. 8(3) in Queensland; *Landlord and Tenants (Amendment) Act* 1948 s. 62(5)(d1) in New South Wales; *Police Offences Act* s. 11 in Tasmania; *Police Ordinance* s. 19A in Aust. Capital Territory; *Summary Offences Act* s. 31 in South Australia; *Suppression of Brothels Act* 1907 s. 105 in Northern Territory; *Police Act* s. 76F(3) in Western Australia.



8. Norma Jean Almodovar was charged with "pandering" under Californian *Penal Code* s. 266i when she told a friend who was a policewoman she could find a "john" for her. The tone of the conversation was in the nature of a social conversation with flippant comments on male companionships. She was sentenced to three years gaol, but she was released after one and a half years for good behaviour, and took her side of the story to national and local media in a bid to expose the injustice. According to her she was the target of a particularly nasty police response to her public statements on police corruption and misconduct within the force. As a one-time member of the police force, she resigned out of disgust, and took up prostitution as a source of income. She was in the act of writing her autobiography, "Cop To Call Girl", when police raided her home, confiscated her manuscript as evidence and arrested her for the above charge. She never saw her manuscript again. In the local court the case was treated lightly and she received a recognizance and "rising of the court" sentence. The police appealed and in the subsequent hearing she was sentenced to imprisonment (personal communication).
9. *Criminal Code* s 217, under 17 in Queensland; *Crimes Act* s. 660, under 16 in New South Wales; *Crimes Act* s. 49, under 18 in Victoria; *Criminal Code* s. 124, under 17 in Tasmania; *Criminal Law Consolidation Act* s. 49, under 17 in South Australia; *Criminal Code* s. 187, under 16 in Western Australia.
10. This is a common police tactic in America also. However, since in most States customers of prostitutes are also contravening laws, not only do policemen pose as clients to arrest prostitutes, but policewomen also pose as prostitutes to arrest clients. An anecdote to this is a satirical cartoon in

*Tricks Comics* showing two undercover cops, one a policewoman parading as a prostitute, the other a policeman pretending to be a client, arresting one another (cit. J. Gagnon, *Human Sexualities*, Scott Foresman, Glenview, 1977).

11. In 1989 a penalty unit in Victoria and NSW was valued at \$100, i.e. two penalty units = \$200, ten = \$1,000, fifty = \$5,000.
12. The English *Disorderly Houses Act 1751* provides an early definition of the term: "any house, room, garden or other places kept for public dancing, music or other public entertainment of the like... without a licence should be deemed a disorderly house." (s 2). In *R v. Quinn* (1962) 2 QB 245 (at p. 255) the decision was that "a disorderly house is a house conducted contrary to law and good order in that matters are performed or exhibited of such character that their performance or exhibition in a place of common resort: a) amounts to an outrage of public decency, or, b) tends to corrupt or deprave or, c) is otherwise calculated to injure the public interest so as to call for condemnation and punishment."
13. In *ex parte Fergusson* (1966) 84 WN (Pt 1) 446, Le Gay Brereton J, in deciding that discreet immorality was not disorderly, had made his judgment in a case involving a single prostitute on premises. In the appeal, in *Fergusson v. Gee* (1966) 86 WN (Pt 1) 149, Heron CJ concurred with earlier decisions in that prostitution per se, within the meaning of the Act, was not illegal nor disorderly and that the expression "indecent conduct" did not necessarily apply to prostitution.
14. In 1972 the Police Department ceased publishing arrest figures for prostitution offences. But the newly formed Bureau of Crime Statistics &

Research recorded and published court appearances for these offences. Since the police statistics are based on cleared cases of the Bureau's own final appearances in court, it is impossible to compare the two sets of figures due to police records showing each arrest made, while the courts heard cases based on the most serious offence of each defendant. See p. 153 for an example of discrepancies between police and court records.

15. In *Sydney City Council v. Ke-Su Investments Pty. Ltd.* (1983) 48 LGRA 381 McClelland CJ held that "Touch of Class" was a "well conducted brothel" entitled to continue operations free of council restraint. Following a ministerial decision to prohibit prostitution under the terms of existing development permits another case involving the owners of "Touch of Class" took place. However, in *Sydney City Council v. Ke-Su Investments Pty. Ltd.* (1985) 51 LGRA 187, McClelland CJ upheld his earlier decision with the conclusion that the planning laws were not designed to judge morality, nor to enforce what may be unlawful in other legal contexts.
16. In *Council of the City of Sydney v. Mailey* (1985) 51 LGRA 207 Cripps J found that the premises in question had been conducted as a brothel since 1971 and was still being so conducted. Therefore, he concluded that it had a right to continue doing so under an "existing use" right by a law in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* s. 106.
17. For instance, one newspaper reported "prostitutes operating in gutters" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 1981) and another reported "sex acts performed on doorsteps" and an "intimidation of residents" (*Daily Mirror*, 18 November 1982). Local housewives resorted to wearing aprons and



carrying baskets on the street in order not to be identified as prostitutes. The residents' action group even applauded a deranged old man for shooting his air gun at prostitutes and "their foul-mouthed customers" and referred to his death under police questioning for the wounding of one woman as "the death of a crusader" (*Sun-Herald*, 20 February 1983). At the time I was working as a social worker in the area and apart from my own impressions that the residents were grossly exaggerating the situation, prostitutes were denying much of the residents' public statements and protesting that they themselves had been subjected to much abuse and violence from the residents.

18. A comparison of statutory penalties will show the extent of the increases. One penalty unit in the *Summary Offences Act* is equal to \$100; here the penalty units have been converted to cash.

	<i>Prostitution Act</i>	<i>Summary Offences Act</i>
Living On Earnings	(s 5)\$800/12 mth	(s 15)\$1000/12 mth
Use of Premises		
"massage"	(s 6)\$400/6 mth	(s 16)\$500/6 mth
Owner/manager		
"massage"	(s 7)\$800/12 mth	(s 17)\$5000/12 mth
Advertising	(s 8)\$400/6 mth	(s 18)\$600/3 mth
Soliciting	(s 8A)\$500	(s 19)\$600/3 mth

19. Residents of the Canterbury area accused prostitutes of fornicating in "front yards, streets, church grounds" (*The Picture*, 1 April 1989) "using squash courts, business car parks, stairwells of home units" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1988), and a local independent candidate for a by-election claimed "organised crime is starting to take a stranglehold here" due to the prostitutes (*The Western Suburbs Courier*, 16 March 1988). One resident published a prostitute's diary

supposedly found dropped on the street. It contained an admission of having a 15 year old boy as a client, who paid \$50 (*Sydney Morning Herald* 10 February 1989). Prostitutes refute these claims and deny that any street worker would keep such a detailed diary, let alone carry with her onto the streets.

20. In *Re applications of Shepard (No. 1)* (1983) 1 NSWLR 96, Yeldham J concluded: "The conclusion at which I have arrived is that because some at least of the sections to which I have adverted retain a scope for operation where premises are declared a disorderly house under s. 3(1)(e) there has not been an implied repeal of that provision by the legislation to which I have referred, which was passed in 1979... I do not consider that the provisions of the *Prostitution Act* constitute a code... any more than did the *Summary Offences Act 1970* contain a code concerning prostitution."
21. In *Re application of Shaw*, Supreme Court No. 10620 of 1985, Judgment 27 April 1987, Enderby J said: "While the law remains as it is in my opinion, on the facts, since 1979—unless there are offences being committed or unless there is some other element or form of relevant nuisance or degree of 'disorderliness' - the problem, if there is a problem, is not to be solved or overcome by the use of the *Disorderly Houses Act* ... There remains what I call the Town Planning problem and in my opinion, while the facts remain as they are, the *Disorderly Houses Act* should not be used to solve a town planning problem."
22. There is a negligible rate of HIV infection among prostitutes in general, while it is spreading steadily among intravenous drug users (*see* Philpot et al. 1988). Where it is likely to appear in the prostitute

population, as in the case of American and European health research, is among the intravenous drug users working in the sex industry.

23. Other Australian States have similar laws: for example in Victoria's *Health Act 1958*, s. 128.1; in Queensland's *Health Act 1937*, s. 36; in South Australia's *Health Act 1935*, s. 143; in Western Australia's *Health Act 1911*, s. 263; in Tasmania's *Public Health Act 1962* s. 28.





## Chapter 3

### THE SOCIAL LIVES OF PROSTITUTES

Having examined the social artifacts of morality, scientific theory and the law as the means of distinguishing prostitutes in society, we will now examine the evidence for determining the extent of social difference between prostitutes and other women. In other words, are the moral ideologists, the social theorists and the legislators justified in singling prostitute women out as a special female group without reference to the findings from comparative studies of prostitutes and other women?

A number of studies within the past two decades have arrived at various conclusions using comparative samples. James and Meyerding (1977) compared their findings on street prostitutes to some general studies of non-prostitute women and found significant differences in early sexual characteristics. James and Davis (1982) compared 136 street prostitutes and 133 non-prostitute female offenders and found the prostitutes with significantly higher drug usage, juvenile crime records, incomplete pregnancies, early school leaving and broken natal homelives. Vitaliano et al. (1981) compared 152 prostitutes with 117 female property offenders and found the prostitutes were more often perceived as "deviants" with a higher ratio of sexual and criminal labels, and possessed longer records of juvenile offences, as well as earlier departures from their parental homes. These studies depended on crime statistics and prison populations for their comparative samples and therefore must be perceived as possessing a bias towards prostitutes as criminals.

Psychological testing of comparative samples resulted in some diverse findings. Maiuro et al. (1983) applied the Bem Sex Role Inventory test to determine gender identification of 101 prostitutes and 78 non-prostitutes, and found the prostitutes to possess a significantly higher "masculine" orientation. There is a close resemblance here with the now generally refuted theories of social Darwinist, Cesare Lombroso (*see* pp 35-6). Polonsky (1974) used the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and Thematic Appreciation Test with 21 prostitutes and an equal sample of non-prostitutes, but found no significant differences between them. Exner et al. (1977)

divided a sample of 95 prostitutes into five types, ranging from "call-girls" to street addicts, and compared each type with socio-economically matched non-prostitute types. They found no significant differences between "call girls" and brothel workers and their respective control groups, while non-addict "streetwalkers" were more immature than their control group, and street addicts had significantly higher psychopathological indices than their control group. These results were determined with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) and Rorschach tests.

Potterat et al. (1984) surveyed 14 prostitute and 15 non-prostitute gonorrhoea patients for a comparison of social characteristics, and found a differentiation in only three of 30 standard characteristics: prostitutes were more often the firstborn; they remained at school longer; they were more often involved in volatile love relationships. Whilst the samples here were small, enough evidence exists to demonstrate that findings in empirical studies of prostitutes are far from corresponding. The psychological tests are not always a true indication of social differences, and the studies mentioned earlier are far from a correct assessment of the overall situation of prostitutes in general by their concentration on street juvenile prostitutes and criminalised women.

Ideally, prostitutes should be matched with similar socio-economically situated non-prostitute women, or compared to a large sample of women in general, for more realistic assessments. However, this is not always practical within a limited time-frame and with limited financial resources. What I have done, though, is to take the opposite (and rare) position to most small-scale sampling of prostitutes with other "deviant" and low-status women controls by comparing a sample of prostitutes to two samples of traditionally considered high status women types, professional health-workers and university students. Health-workers and students provide excellent benchmarks for comparison with prostitution since they may provide *prima facie* indices of normality and diversity in the wider female population, as well as provide a yardstick for measuring normality and diversity in prostitution.

For this study a random sample of Sydney prostitute women, numbering 128 in all, was selected as representative of sex workers in general. Although most of them came from 36 brothels across the Sydney metropolitan area (*see* Table 3.1), the experiences of these



women in commercial sex were quite diverse and closer to the distribution of prostitute types and employment location of the general Sydney sex worker population (see Table 3.2). A questionnaire containing 84 questions was distributed widely in the prostitute population; the sample of 128 prostitutes represents those women who completed and returned the questionnaire. (See Appendix I)

*Table 3.1: Distribution of sample of 128 prostitutes in this study*

	%
Street prostitutes	3.9
East Sydney brothel workers	3.9
Kings Cross parlour workers	26.6
Suburban parlour workers	41.4
Escorts only	8.6
Bondage mistresses	7.8
Private workers (call girls)	3.1
Not disclosed	4.7

*Table 3.2: Previous occupations of sample of 128 prostitutes  
(responses numbered 221 due to multiple past occupations of some of the women in the sample. Thus percentages below are of 221)*

	%
Street prostitutes	11.3
Brothel or parlour prostitution	38.9
Escort work	20.8
Bondage and discipline	2.7
Private prostitution (call girl)	12.2
Hotel/club/coffee lounge prostitution	1.8
Never worked in any previous sex industry occupation	12.2

Of the control groups, 115 health-workers and 120 students took part, representing those women who completed and returned a modified questionnaire of 58 questions (the questions on sex work in the prostitutes' questionnaire were deleted, otherwise the questionnaires to all three groups were the same). Interestingly, 13 of the returned questionnaires of health-workers and students had to be discarded because the respondents admitted to having worked as prostitutes in the past. These controls consisted of nurses, doctors and counsellors from a number of community health centres and hospitals about Sydney, and behavioural science undergraduates from one of Sydney's major universities (*see* Appendix 2 for greater detail on the methodology of this study).

The following study, then, consists of a comparison between three groups of women—128 prostitutes, 115 health-workers, 120 university students—by which a measure of difference in social conditions and backgrounds between them might be determined. Since the prostitutes are the focal group, our concern here is to ascertain to what extent they are differentiated from health-workers and university students, and, by implication, from the population at large.

### Prostitutes in the Class System

Before exploring the social indices for determining the social class of prostitutes, some demographical features of the three samples should be outlined. Table 3.3 compares ages. The students are slightly younger as a group than the prostitutes, who are slightly younger than the health-workers. No inferences may be drawn from this configuration, except that the traditional view of prostitutes as teenagers and very young women is challenged. The prostitutes' ages cluster in late adolescence and throughout the 20s; three-quarters of the sample are between 18 and 30 years, while only a few may be described as middle adolescents and little more than a fifth are over 30. In addition, girls of 12 to 16 sometimes also work as prostitutes, but in Sydney these are a very small minority of all prostitutes and usually confined to the minority area of the streets.

Marital status in Table 3.4 shows the prostitutes as being more often married and having higher ratios of marriage breakdowns than the other two groups, although there exists a pattern between

*Table 3.3: Age groups of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Under 16	00.00	00.00	00.00
16-17	02.30	00.00	06.60
18-20	18.80	00.90	41.60
21-25	35.90	22.60	16.60
26-30	19.50	30.40	10.10
31-35	11.70	13.10	10.80
36-40	09.40	17.40	11.80
Over 40	01.60	15.60	02.50
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	00.00

*Table 3.4: Marital status of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Married once only	14.10	17.40	19.10
Second marriage	05.50	06.10	02.50
Divorced	08.60	11.03	02.50
Separated	10.90	01.70	04.10
Deserted	02.30	00.00	00.00
Single	58.60	63.50	71.80

them that is a continuum of married to single and marriage stability to instability from prostitutes to students. Many people might be surprised to discover that nearly half of the prostitutes are or had been married. It indicates that prostitutes are conventional women in their tendency to aspire to marriage and traditional family life. Since about a fifth of the prostitutes were married while working, this would indicate an extraordinary tolerance on the part of their husbands (only a few prostitutes work without their husband's awareness). On the other hand the relatively high ratio of marriage dislocations indicates one of two things: the husbands in these cases



found their wives' prostitution unbearable; or, some of these women turned to prostitution for survival after the breakdown in marriage.

In Table 3.5 the higher ratio of children among the prostitutes is a further indication of these women's aspirations for conventional family life. The ages of these children, seen in Table 3.6 show the prostitutes as having more young children. Since many of these are single mothers, prostitution is an economic imperative for the children as much as the mothers. Some of the prostitutes' children are well into their adolescence, which creates another kind of anxiety in the mothers. As street prostitute Kelly explains:

My oldest son will be 13 this year and I don't want to be at work much after that. He will soon be at the stage where he will be going out, venturing into the Cross. I wouldn't like to be working at a time when he is likely to come into the Cross and spot me on the street.

The prostitutes had their children to men who were not their current husbands or lovers more often than the health-workers and students (Table 3.7). Rather than suggestive of promiscuity among prostitutes resulting in pregnancies, it is more likely that the prostitutes, with higher rates of divorce, separation and desertion, have sought emotional comfort from men who are prepared to accept their prostitution and replace the estranged father in these women's family units.

*Table 3.5: Number of children of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
One only	21.10	10.40	06.70
Two	19.50	07.80	11.60
Three	04.70	04.40	04.20
Four	00.80	02.50	02.60
No children	52.30	74.80	75.00
Not disclosed	01.60	00.00	00.00

*Table 3.6: Ages of children of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=72</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=38</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=45</i> )* %
Under one year	08.30	05.20	04.40
2-5 years	36.10	18.40	22.20
6-10 years	23.60	15.80	24.50
11-15 years	20.80	21.10	28.90
16-20 years	05.60	18.40	17.80
Over 20 years	05.60	21.10	02.20

\* Actual number of children

*Table 3.7: Current husband/lover of prostitutes, health-workers, students as the natural father of the children*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=56</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=29</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=26</i> ) %
Where current husband/lover is:			
the natural father	30.40	61.50	75.90
not the natural father	64.30	38.50	20.70
the natural father of only some	05.30	00.00	03.40

Turning now to the social position of prostitutes in the modern class system it is important to understand that a historical tradition of prostitutes in Western societies reflects a two or three-tier structure approximating the social position of women in mainstream society. Thus, for example, as we have already noted, in Ancient Greece, the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, there existed on the one hand slaves and poor women surviving by

working in taverns, on the streets and in brothels, while on the other hand, courtesans plied their subtle trade in clandestine aristocratic social circles. On the lower level women from the peasant class entered prostitution for economic survival; but at the highest level women from the merchant class or the lower aristocrat echelon aspired to greater power and wealth through lovers at the political pinnacle. In either case, though, women were aspiring to improve their economic position by overcoming starvation or increasing their social standing. Though prostitution may have been one avenue for women to improve their economic position, it was usually at the expense of lowering their social status as women, so that while a woman's socioeconomic class might elevate as she acquires wealth through commercial sex, she attained none of the corresponding class privileges as her status slid into the "deviant" class or as outcasts.

We had, then, a situation peculiar to women. To obtain wealth and independence, the criteria for male power, a woman had to trade sex for it and lose social status at the same time (unless, as in the case of some clever courtesans, she could disguise her methods). Friedrich Engels, more than 100 years ago, assessed the situation perfectly when he said:

Prostitution is as much a social institution as all others. It continues the old sexual freedom for the benefit of men. In reality not only permitted but assiduously practised by the ruling class, it is denounced only nominally. Still, in practice, this denunciation strikes by no means the men who indulge in it, but only the women. These are ostracised and cast out of society in order to proclaim once more the fundamental law of unconditional male supremacy over the female sex. (Engels 1978, p. 740).

In his day, though, as early 19th century researchers Parent-Duchatelet and Sanger fully noted, the vast bulk of prostitutes were working-class women in an age of industrialisation and meagre employment opportunities. The "ostracism and casting out" that Engels spoke of also became judicial punishment in the 20th century as an outcome of translating late 19th century puritanism into criminal law.



The ancient tradition of high "class" whores and lowly harlots survived into the 20th century. Remarking on prostitution in New York, Gail Sheehy commented:

There is probably no vocation which operates with such a fierce system of social distinctions... [where] the street hooker is at the bottom of the blue collar end of the ladder... [and] the white collar end of the business begins with the call girls (Sheehy 1974, pp. 117-19).

She mentions the rivalry that exists, with street prostitutes referring to call girls as "those lazy flatbackers" and call girls expressing contempt for "street hookers" for an assumed ignorance and tendency to disease, as a "natural" division in the industry. Although prostitution was a means of gaining wealth for a woman a century ago, Sheehy (1974, p. 119) notes that "it is not uncommon now to find young call girls from wealthy families." Perhaps economic independence, even if this means less money, is more important to these women than wealth without personal freedom.

Eileen McLeod (1982, p. 23), in her study of English prostitutes in Birmingham, notes that "women working on the streets do tend to be women who have fewer material resources, such as telephones, rooms, flats or homes of their own to use" than prostitutes in indoor trades. As in New York and Birmingham, in Sydney it seems to be the case that women from lower socio-economic families are more often found working on the streets, whereas women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds more often gravitate to private prostitution (or call girl), even though street prostitution is the most lucrative form of commercial sex. Suburban brothels (or parlours) tend to be much less class specific, in that they employ local women and reflect the nature of the predominant classes in their areas of location.

It also seems to be the case that women of middle-class backgrounds are more sensitive to public exposure and are attracted to the most clandestine commercial sex in an effort to minimise the chances of discovery. Also, the ambience, sexual preliminaries and romantic dialogue found in private prostitution are more appealing to the bourgeois socio-sexual tastes of these women. On the other hand, women from working-class backgrounds seem to be less anxious

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about disclosures and are less inhibited in the more visible forms of prostitution. This is even more apparent among drug-addicted women, regardless of their class backgrounds. Working-class women are also less intimidated by the "hot" or "raw" sex without the trimmings of street prostitution than middle-class women. These are not hard and fast rules in Sydney prostitution, and, if anything, the class snobbery in prostitution is in decline as the traditional class divisions begin to blur with more middle-class women moving onto the streets and more working-class women establishing their own private operations.

To determine the class origins of the sample of 128 prostitutes I used four variables as indices: education; father's occupation; original religion; and, permanent residence. The findings in these variables will indicate to what extent class diversity exists among prostitutes and how much this might differ from findings for the health-workers and the students. Table 3.8 compares the education of all three groups.

*Table 3.8: Education levels of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=133</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=130</i> )* %
Below School			
Certificate	34.40	01.50	00.00
School Certificate	26.60	09.00	01.50
Higher School			
Certificate	14.10	15.00	15.40
Matriculation	07.80	14.30	58.40
Diploma/Trade			
Certificate	13.90	33.10	18.50
Degree	03.10	27.10	06.20
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	00.00

\* These numbers indicate more than one level for some participants

Not surprisingly the prostitutes have not attained as high a level of education as the other two groups, whose occupations and academic training depend on higher than average qualifications. However, as Table 3.9 indicates, the prostitutes' education approximates that of the general population of women. Some people, who are influenced by the popular culture image of prostitutes as women of low intelligence, will be surprised to learn so many of the prostitutes achieved either matriculation standard education, diplomas, trade certificates or degrees. It is not rare to find university or college students, nurses and other highly qualified women working as prostitutes to supplement a grant or low income.

*Table 3.9: Education achievements of women in Australia, 1986*

	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>% of female qualifications</i>
No school level	627,797	10.36
School level only	4,029,740	66.49
Post-school training	821,521	13.55
Trade certificate	118,211	1.95
Diploma	230,145	3.80
Degree	233,605	3.85
	<hr/> 6,061,019	<hr/> 100.00

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1986, Census figures supplied by Sydney office

It is still plausible to accept the father's occupation as an index of class for the family, since people of similar socioeconomic backgrounds tend to marry and the husband's occupation is regarded as more important than the wife's. In February 1989, 4,235,200 males were in full-time employment across Australia, compared to only 1,898,500 females, of whom 1,027,600 were married (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1989). In Australia the average weekly male earnings in August, 1989 was \$529.20, compared to that for females at \$343.20 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1989). Table 3.10 compares fathers' occupations for the three sample groups.



*Table 3.10: Occupations of fathers of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=117</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Managing director	04.70	04.30	10.10
Executive position	08.60	12.00	09.20
Professional	13.30	23.90	21.70
Clerical	03.90	04.30	14.20
Self-employed	21.90	17.10	15.00
Skilled labourer	17.20	06.80	10.10
Farmer	03.10	12.00	03.30
Transport/bus driver	10.90	03.40	02.40
Unskilled labourer	03.90	06.00	05.80
Unemployed/pensioner	03.10	03.40	00.70
Other**	08.60	06.80	07.50
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	00.00

\*Two of the health workers gave equal weight to two occupations of their respective fathers.

\*\*Included a diversity of occupations, e.g. artist, entertainer, musician, serviceman, policeman, media personality

Once again, it is probably no surprise to discover that fathers of the health-workers and students have higher status careers with higher incomes than the prostitutes' fathers. But it will also come as a surprise to those influenced by popular culture images of prostitution to find so many of the prostitutes' fathers in careers and high-level employment. Less than a third of these men are in blue-collar employment compared to about 15 per cent of the health workers' fathers and a little less of the students' fathers. It is interesting to note the similarities and dissimilarities that occur between all groups, such as prostitutes' and health-workers' fathers corresponding pro rata as "managing directors", "clerks" and unemployed/pensioners", or the equal numbers of prostitutes' and students' fathers as "farmers". Table 3.11 which shows male occupations in general in Australia provides an interesting comparison to this data.

*Table 3.11: Male occupations in Australia, 1989*

	<i>Number of men</i>	<i>% of male wage earners</i>
Managers/administrators	631,400	13.07
Professionals	585,500	12.12
Para-professionals (technicians, police, etc.)	251,500	5.20
Tradespersons	1,115,400	23.08
Clerks	306,200	6.34
Salespersons/personal service workers	399,800	8.27
Plant/machinery operators/transport driver	501,700	10.38
Labourers (factory hands, rural workers, miners, etc.)	780,300	16.15
Unemployed	260,700	5.39

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1989

Taking these averages, it is apparent that the fathers of the women in all three groups are more often employed in high level occupations (male average 25 per cent, prostitutes' fathers 27 per cent, health-workers' fathers 40 per cent, students' fathers 41 per cent) and less often in blue-collar occupations (male average 50 per cent, prostitutes' fathers 32 per cent, health-workers' fathers 21 per cent, students' fathers 18 per cent). It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that all three groups of women were more often raised in middle-class homes than the average woman.

Religion of origin can also be an index of class, since in Australia Catholicism has been traditionally associated with the Irish convict labourers of the 19th century, and Anglicanism more with the religion of the colonial ruling class and landed gentry. Although religious tastes may have changed considerably in the succeeding generations of the 20th century, religious institutions, at least until the present generation with its growing radicalism can still be a clue to one's class inheritance. Table 3.12 lists the inherited religions of the three groups.

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*Table 3.12: Inherited religion(s) of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=142</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=129</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=144</i> )* %
Church of England	36.60	38.00	35.50
Catholic	42.90	32.00	29.10
Other Protestant Churches	09.90	23.20	20.80
Jewish	00.70	00.80	03.50
Islam	01.40	00.00	00.70
Buddhism	00.00	00.00	01.40
Hinduism	00.70	00.00	00.00
Other Christian (Greek Orthodox, Mormon, Jehovah Witness)	07.80	05.40	09.00

\*In some cases individuals inherited two religions, one from each parent.

Significantly more prostitutes were raised in Catholic homes than health-workers and students, and significantly less came from Protestant (apart from Anglican) homes. However, due to the lesser relevance of religion to class today, this difference is not a sufficient indicator of class for each group. At most, the presence of inherited Catholicism might be a clue to one's Irish ancestry. A comparison of this data with an official census in Table 3.13 is instructive.

Taking this average, prostitutes were raised in considerably more Catholic homes and considerably less Protestant (apart from Anglican) homes than most women in New South Wales. However, many people do not continue to adhere to the religions of their parents throughout their lives. For many reasons, not the least of which are marriage to partners of other and stronger beliefs, or changes in ideological perception, certain people either change their religious beliefs or reject religion altogether. The prostitutes, health-workers and students are no exception as a comparison of Table 3.12 and 3.14 indicates.

The immediate impact of this comparison is the striking decline in traditional beliefs and institutional religions. Obviously, many prostitutes had been disillusioned with traditional religious condemnation of prostitution and sought another more tolerant form



*Table 3.13: Religious followings in Australia, 1986*

	<i>Number of adherents</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Church of England	3,723,419	23.90
Catholic	4,064,413	26.10
Other Protestant	2,559,001	16.40
Orthodox	427,445	2.70
Other Christian	607,630	3.90
Islam	109,523	0.70
Jewish	69,087	0.40
Hindu	21,454	0.10
Buddhist	80,387	0.50
Other non-Christian	35,742	0.20
Other religions	62,949	0.40
No religion	1,977,464	12.70
No details	1,863,642	11.90

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1986, Census figures supplied by Sydney office.

*Table 3.14: Systems of belief at present of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Church of England	10.20	11.30	15.10
Catholic	20.30	09.60	13.30
Other Protestant Churches	05.50	07.80	08.30
Jewish	01.60	00.00	01.70
Islam	00.00	00.00	00.80
Buddhism	02.30	00.00	02.50
Hinduism	00.00	00.90	00.00
Other Christian (Greek Orthodox, Mormon, Jehovah Witness)	04.70	08.70	03.30
Agnostic	39.10	40.00	40.80
Atheist	07.00	13.00	06.70
Other (Spiritualism, etc.)	09.40	08.70	07.50

of belief. The few prostitutes who have embraced Buddhism might reflect this. The only prostitute in the sample who was raised in a Jehovah Witness family was so repelled by this religion's idea of excommunicating its members who indulged in commercial sex that she not only rejected the religion but her family as well. With traditional religion's strong views on prostitution it is amazing that any prostitutes continue to acknowledge these systems of belief. Just as many of the prostitutes have repudiated their inherited religions, so have well over half the health-workers and students. Most of the latter would have done so on ideological and academic grounds. However, the fact that most of those who have jettisoned institutional religions adhere to a form of agnosticism and not atheism indicates that they have lost faith in orthodox religious beliefs but not in God.

As an index of class, residential patterns are even more difficult to analyse than inherited religions. In the 19th century spatial divisions or an urban population corresponded more closely to class divisions. But in the late 20th century the class lines have blurred and there is greater residential mobility as the earning power of blue-collar employees draws closer to that of white collar workers, enabling upwardly mobile working-class individuals to purchase property in traditional middle-class areas. However, cultural familiarity is still a predominant factor in an individual's selection of residential location, so that people of working-class upbringing will be attracted to areas predominated by others of working-class origin. Thus, as a rule of thumb, index of class in Sydney could be described as: the western and southern suburbs are predominantly working-class areas, the northern and eastern suburbs predominantly middle class, while such inner city locations as Kings Cross and Balmain are indeterminate. By using such a rough guide, the residential pattern of Table 3.15 might indicate a class configuration for the three sample groups.

No clues to the class proportions in university students generally should be drawn from this residential pattern since the student sample came from a university in the metropolitan north-west, and it must be expected that most of these women would have residences in the northern and western suburbs. To a lesser extent the same applies to the health-workers, none of whom worked in a southern hospital or community centre. However, the distribution of brothels in which the prostitutes worked was randomly selected across the metropolitan area. The fact that most brothels exist in Kings Cross and the western suburbs and only a few exist in the northern and eastern suburbs is itself a reflection of class snobbery.

But, in any case, there is a more even distribution of prostitutes' residences than in the other two groups, which might indicate that prostitutes are more likely to seek employment beyond their general residential environs.

*Table 3.15: Permanent residential areas of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
Western suburbs	27.30	15.70	29.10
Southern suburbs	11.70	01.70	01.70
Northern suburbs	08.60	29.60	50.00
Eastern suburbs	10.90	16.50	03.40
Kings Cross & environs	23.40	03.50	00.80
Surry Hills, Redfern & Balmain	09.90	27.80	05.00
NSW country areas	05.00	04.30	07.50
Interstate	00.80	00.90	00.00
Overseas	00.00	00.00	01.70
Not disclosed	02.30	00.00	00.80

What might we conclude from the above statistical profile? Referring once to again to the findings for education (Table 3.8), fathers's occupation (Table 3.10), inherited religion (Table 3.12) and residence (Table 3.15), two facts stand out most clearly. Firstly, and perhaps not too surprisingly, is the more middle-class situation of the health-workers and students, with their higher education, more fathers in white collar occupations, predominantly Protestant (including Anglican) upbringings, and greater tendency to choose middle-class suburbs for residency. Secondly, the prostitutes are inclined towards a diverse or mixed class delineation. With 61 per cent of them attaining no higher education than the School Certificate, 30 per cent with fathers in clearly white collar occupations compared to 32 per cent with fathers in blue-collar jobs, 43 per cent of them raised in Catholic homes compared to 46 per cent in Protestant (including Anglican) homes, and 39 per cent living in



the predominantly working-class western and southern suburbs of Sydney compared to 20 per cent in the predominantly middle-class eastern and northern suburbs, it seems that prostitutes as a group do not vary much from the average class divisions of the broader female population. Certainly, it can no longer be said with certainty that prostitutes are predominantly from working-class backgrounds. If anything, by comparing the prostitutes' own motivated determinants, education achievement and choice of residential area, with their inherited determinants, father's socioeconomic position and parental religions, the prostitutes have slightly descended in social class. This, though, may have nothing to do with the fact that they are prostitutes, and more to do with a general female position when she finds herself sliding towards poverty as an outcome of her attempts at independence or due to dislocation of marriage. Prostitution then would be her effort to reverse this trend.

### **The Family and Social Relations of Prostitutes**

A popular perception of prostitutes assumes them to have been victims of a negative parental homelife. Indeed, some serious studies have supported this view. A common finding among psychoanalysts has been that prostitutes are products of an unresolved Oedipal Complex leading to an uneasy mother-daughter relationship, and this is offered as an explanation for the subject's adult propensity towards commercial sex (*see* Greenwald 1958; Glover 1960; Lichtenstein 1961). More recent empirical studies in America have shown a high incidence of parental problems in the early homelives of prostitutes. Jennifer James (1979), for example, found that 51 per cent of 200 women in the sex industry had had past problems with their parents. In another sample of 200 prostitutes, Mimi Silbert and Ayala Pines found 60 per cent of these women were raised in broken homes and two-thirds were physically beaten (Silbert & Pines 1982a, p. 471ff). These studies, however, were based on samples of street prostitutes with a larger number of juveniles, and should not be considered representative of prostitutes *per se*. In an earlier study of mine (Perkins & Bennett 1985, p. 217), eight of nine women I interviewed at random in a sample of prostitutes expressed having distant or absent relations with their fathers. In view of these scientific findings as well as the popular assumption about the homelife of prostitutes, a comparison between the sample of 128 prostitutes and the two

*Table 3.16: Relationships between mothers and prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
Very close	33.60	45.20	45.80
Fairly close	36.70	35.70	35.80
Not very close	10.20	11.30	10.00
Not at all close	07.00	02.60	01.60
Very distant	07.80	00.90	05.80
Never really knew her	04.70	02.60	00.80
Not disclosed	00.00	01.70	00.00

*Table 3.17: Relationships between fathers and prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
Very close	27.30	27.00	26.70
Fairly close	33.60	34.80	40.10
Not very close	15.60	19.10	20.00
Not at all close	05.50	05.00	05.00
Very distant	09.40	01.70	04.10
Never really knew him	08.60	12.20	04.10

control groups of 115 health workers and 120 university students in the present study with respect to their relationships with their parents seems a good place to start this Section.

Tables 3.16 and 3.17 illustrate the responses of the prostitutes, health-workers and students to questions on their relationships to their mothers and fathers at present. These relations are not always the same as childhood reactions to each parent, but in most cases adult responses to their parents do reflect the nature of an ongoing relationship beginning in early childhood.

A significantly higher ratio of prostitutes had dislocated relationships with their mothers than the other two groups, while the



pattern of relationships with fathers is similar across all three groups. However, even in the case of prostitutes' mothers the dysphoria in relationships with their daughters is not high enough to assume this as a causal factor in prostitution. In any case, overall, more of the prostitutes were closer to their mothers than their fathers. Only a few of the prostitutes had extremely strained relationships with both parents. This indicates a negative homelife for these particular women, who as girls must have had unhappy dispositions with neither parent to confide in. It is this situation, rather than a dislocated relationship with one parent only, which is more likely to lead the adolescent girl into leaving home and becoming involved with juvenile street subcultures, including prostitution, as a means of survival. Since this applies to only a small minority of the women in this study, this process cannot be considered common to most prostitutes. It may, though, be much more frequent among the minority sub-group of sex workers, the streetwalkers, and most prominent among juvenile prostitutes, which is why the adolescent "drift" into prostitution appears as a high incidence in studies of street and juvenile prostitutes, such as conducted by James (1977), Silbert and Pines (1982), Nanette Davis (1971) and others. What this study indicates is that, in general, prostitutes come from relatively stable natal home environments.

Table 3.18 compares the relationships between the parents of all three groups.

Very little separates the three groups in terms of their parents' relationships. Nearly half of the prostitutes and health-workers and almost two-thirds of the students felt their parents were happily married, while less than 15 per cent of the health-workers and students and less than 10 per cent of the prostitutes thought their parents marriage was an unhappy one. There does not appear to be any evidence here of the prostitutes having a higher frequency of broken homes, although it seems apparent by the 10 per cent higher ratio of divorces among the prostitutes' parents that earlier dislocations of marriage had occurred, but these were terminated by divorce and remarriage rather than enduring an intolerable situation, such as seems more the case among the parents of the health-workers and students with their higher ratios of unhappy marriages. Nor can it be concluded here that the prostitutes were any more influenced by parental example in divorce trends than the other two (compare divorce figures in Tables 3.4 and 3.18). Other factors are involved here.



Table 3.18: Relationships between parents of prostitutes, health-workers, students

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=133</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=135</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=125</i> )* %
Happily married	45.10	48.10	63.50
Unhappily married	08.30	14.80	13.60
Separated	05.30	03.70	01.50
Divorced:			
<i>Neither parent remarried</i>	01.50	00.00	00.70
<i>Both parents remarried</i>	09.80	03.70	07.40
<i>Mother only remarried</i>	09.00	02.30	01.50
<i>Father only remarried</i>	06.00	07.40	04.70
Deceased:			
<i>Mother only deceased</i>	01.50	05.20	00.70
<i>Father only deceased</i>	10.50	08.90	04.00
<i>Both parents deceased</i>	03.00	05.90	02.40

\*Refers to more than one of the situations listed in some cases.

Popular mythology on prostitutes perceive these women as the products of broken homes. If we measure a "broken home" by the divorce of the parents (which, of course, only recognises the final manifestation of marriage breakdown, while it overlooks the hundreds more homes in constant turmoil without a termination of marriage), we find that for every three homes that are made, one breaks up, or, in 1987 114,113 marriages and 39,725 divorces took place across Australia in 1987 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1988 and 1986). Considering that only 26 per cent of marriages ended in divorce among the parents of the prostitute sample, it would seem that the prostitutes had come from relatively happy homelives.

One study suggests that prostitutes were more often the firstborn in their natal families (Potterat et al. 1984). But as Table 3.19 illustrates this was not the case in the present study. The prostitutes were neither more often firstborn than the other positions in the natal family order, nor more often firstborn than the health-workers or students. Prevalence of firstborn in the aforementioned study is probably an isolated example.

*Table 3.19: Position in natal family of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=123)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=108)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=117)* %</i>
Oldest child	31.70	34.30	33.30
Second oldest child	18.70	14.80	06.80
Middle child	18.70	15.70	16.20
Second youngest child	08.90	06.50	09.50
Youngest child	21.20	28.70	34.20
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	00.00

\*Those who were the only child in their families not included.

Very little attention has been paid in past studies to the relationships between siblings among prostitutes. It might be supposed that poor sibling relations coupled with poor relations with parents could lead to an individual's isolation in their natal family, resulting in some psychopathological factor that might presuppose prostitution. Table 3.20 compares sibling relations in the three sample groups.

*Table 3.20: Relationships between prostitutes, health-workers, students and their siblings*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=123)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=108)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=117)* %</i>
Close to all siblings	48.80	55.60	57.20
Close to some only	16.30	20.40	18.00
Close to sister(s) only	05.70	04.60	05.10
Close to brother(s) only	03.30	03.70	00.00
Not close to any	25.20	15.70	18.00
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	01.70

\*Those who were the only child in their families not included.

Significantly less of the prostitutes are close to all or some of their siblings, and significantly more are not close to any of them, than the other two groups, whose patterns are similar to each other. But this difference is not sufficient enough to place any importance on sibling relations as a determining factor for prostitution. Undoubtedly there are a few individuals isolated from both their parents and siblings in their natal family who were socially disturbed enough by this situation to lead them into an early departure from their parental homes and a consequent "drift" into commercial sex for survival. However, they represent such a minority that this problem could not be considered as a cause of prostitution. Incidences of dysfunctioning sibling relations and isolation in the natal family might, nevertheless, appear with higher regularity among juvenile street prostitutes.

Social isolation can be a precursor for an antisocial or psychologically disturbed way of life. Behavioural theorists have alerted us to the effects of social environment on one's social perceptions and modes of behaviour. Behavioural psychologists have shown in animal experiments that monkeys, for instance, isolated from their kin and others act differently and appear more disturbed than those raised in normal surroundings with mothers, siblings and others (Harlow 1962); or in studies of dogs, pups reared in isolation were more timid, excitable and generally immature than pups raised with their siblings and other puppies (Thompson & Melzak 1956, pp. 38-42). In a sociological context "isolation" means estrangement from normative social needs and cultural goals, while "normlessness" refers to a feeling by an individual that illegitimate means are necessary for attaining socially desirable goals (Seeman 1959). The psychoanalytical, psychological and sociological literature on prostitution has often carried the implication that social isolation in the formative years of a prostitute's life leads to anti-social behaviour, "alienation" or "anomie". By "antisocial" is meant prostitution, while "anomie" is the condition of disjunction with society leading to social alienation. We have already seen that there does not appear to be any apparent dislocations within the natal families of most prostitutes to enable isolation and a sense of "normlessness" to develop in adulthood. The nature of relationships with perceived friends throughout life has also been measured in this study. Table 3.21 compares childhood relationships.



*Table 3.21: Close childhood friends of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Many friends	19.50	16.50	23.30
A few friends	42.20	55.60	40.80
Two or three friends	16.40	13.90	15.90
One friend only	14.10	12.20	15.90
No friends	07.00	00.90	03.30
Not disclosed	00.80	00.90	00.80

Over 60 per cent from each group had many or a few friends in childhood, while more of the prostitutes were friendless as children. But little separates the three groups, and nothing can be gained to indicate significantly more prostitutes were isolated as children than women in general. Thus, for all intents and purposes those girls who became prostitutes as adults experienced average childhood relations.

Table 3.22 compares relationships of the three groups in their adolescence.

*Table 3.22: Close adolescent friends of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Many friends	22.60	16.50	16.70
A few friends	42.90	63.50	53.30
Two or three friends	16.40	11.30	19.20
One friend only	12.50	06.10	08.10
No friends	05.50	01.70	01.70
Not disclosed	00.00	00.90	00.80

The pattern of adolescent friendships resembles that in childhood, although there is a slight increase in all three groups acquiring many or a few friends and a slight decrease overall in the number choosing only one close friend. This is probably a development not unfamiliar in friendship selection in adolescence, with its emphasis on group bonding, affirmation of sexual and gender identity and cult conformity. The important point to make in the context of this study, though, is that the prostitutes vary little from the other two sample groups.

By adulthood, individuals tend to develop close friendships with others of their gender, while the opposite gender tends to be perceived more as sexual objects. Table 3.23, then, measures close friendships between women, rather than both genders.

*Table 3.23: Close women friends of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Many women friends	21.90	53.90	63.30
A few women friends	42.90	36.50	24.20
Two or three women friends	27.30	07.80	08.30
Only one woman friend	04.70	01.80	02.50
No women friends	03.20	00.00	01.70

In the adult pattern the health-workers and students have increased their close friendships considerably, while the prostitutes have stabilised their numbers of friends, except for an increase in two or three friends and a decrease in only one woman friend. This variation by the prostitutes might be explained by their preference for a small coterie of trusted friends, rather than large numbers, since it may reflect a need to minimise the number of women confidants once the prostitutes had begun work in commercial sex. In my experience with prostitute women, many of them seem to have lonely lives in social isolation outside the sex industry. They will often form close friendships with other women working with them, and these

friendships continue beyond the context of work into their everyday lives. Obviously, for many prostitutes there is a strong need to have at least one other woman with whom they can confide in and trust, and another prostitute is the ideal companion for this purpose.

For many women love relationships are as essential for social well-being as friendships, and prostitutes are no exception. As we have seen (p. 175), the prostitute sample married more often than the other two groups and experienced a higher pro rata breakdown in marriage. The possibility of a higher aspiration for conventionality among the prostitutes by their persistence with marriage even after divorce and separation has already been noted. It would be essential for them to choose a mate (particularly after a first marriage breakdown due to their prostitution) with an exceptionally tolerant attitude, not only for their own sake but also for any children from a previous marriage. One might assume that their clients would be an obvious choice here, but, as we shall see, very few prostitutes develop relationships with their clients, let alone marry them. Most clients are already married, and besides, perceptions about one another as "whore" and "client" stereotypes usually prevents relationships developing beyond that of commercial pleasantries. Prostitutes, therefore, seek exceptional men (or women, in the case of lesbians) as lovers or second husbands; not only men with understanding and high tolerance, but often also trustworthy and devoted, and (since clients could not be trusted because they cheat on their wives) as different in personality and attitudes to the women's clients as possible.

One method of comparing the nature of love relationships in the three groups is by measuring the duration of the women's current love or marriage relationship. Table 3.24 is the result of this comparison.

Although variations exist from group to group, overall the pattern is not dissimilar, with a third each of the prostitutes and students in a relationship of more than three years duration, a quarter of the health-workers in a similar situation, and about a third of all three groups in no present relationship. Considerably fewer of the prostitutes have relationships beyond ten years duration, which may reflect breakdowns in earlier marriages when these women took up prostitution for a living. On the other hand, more of the prostitutes managed relationships of more than three years duration than the health-workers, indicating high stability in second marriages and more carefully selected lovers among the prostitutes. But in the overall analysis of the findings for this variable there is little that



*Table 3.24: Duration of present love/marriage relationships of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Over 10 years	04.70	13.90	15.00
5-10 years	12.50	07.80	04.20
3-5 years	19.50	13.90	05.00
1-3 years	07.80	08.70	15.00
6 months to a year	10.20	09.60	05.00
1-6 months	06.30	07.00	13.30
Less than a month	03.90	01.70	05.00
No present relationship	29.70	34.80	35.80
Not disclosed	05.40	02.60	01.70

might clearly demark prostitutes from other women on the basis of greater instability in love relationships.

Finally, there is a need to illustrate an overall circumstance of social relations vis-a-vis social isolation in the daily lives of the three sample groups. This might best be demonstrated by measuring the extent of shared living quarters with others. Table 3.25 compares the three groups' companions in these living circumstances.

*Table 3.25: Companions in present shared accommodations of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=132)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Husband and children	09.10	12.20	17.50
Lover and children	06.80	01.80	00.80
Husband only	05.30	07.80	04.20
Lover only	14.40	14.80	07.50
Children only	09.10	05.20	04.20
Natal family	09.10	05.20	44.20
Friends/flatmates	30.30	33.90	15.80
Lives alone	15.90	19.10	05.80

\*Some respondents gave multiple answers.

In this configuration there is a lack of overall uniformity. In some instances the prostitutes and health-workers are similar, in others the health-workers and students are similar. One explanation for the high incidence of students living in their parental homes is a need for financial support from their natal families in the process of tertiary learning. Somewhat surprising are the number of prostitutes who have remained attached to their natal families; it is difficult to imagine many parents approving of their daughters' prostitution, so the subterfuge necessary within this living environment can only be imagined. Considerable numbers of the prostitutes and health-workers are living alone. But rather than suggesting loneliness, it is more likely a choice by the individuals involved to have living quarters entirely to themselves. For prostitutes, the social isolation, if it occurs at all, is an outcome of a public disclosure of their prostitution and is as much a group, as an individual experience. Thus, it is likely that many of the friends and flatmates sharing accommodation with the prostitutes are also prostitutes; at the very least, they are likely to be empathetic living companions. In sum, the prostitutes' pattern of sharing accommodation is only slightly differentiated from the other groups, and certainly not enough to indicate any strikingly diverse social circumstance to the norm for most women.

What conclusions might we draw from the prostitutes' statistical profile on family and social relations? To begin with, they have better relations with their mothers than their fathers, although not quite as close to their mothers as the health-workers and students. It does not appear that the prostitutes have emerged from more broken homes or turbulent homelives than the average population of women. Their relations with their siblings seems to be slightly better than with their parents, but a considerable number of them have negative relations with all their siblings.

In the patterns of friendships the prostitutes do not diverge much from the health-workers or students in childhood and adolescent relations, but seem to have less women friends in adulthood. This may be due to a preference for close and trusted confidants rather than a wide circle of female companions, which would increase the risk of disclosure and disapproval for their occupational lifestyles.

Contrary to popular thought, prostitutes are neither loveless nor particularly promiscuous women in their private social lives. The sample in this study indicates a high level of stable love



relationships, even if there is also a high level of breakdowns in earlier marriages. It would appear that these women are much more careful in selecting mates in subsequent relationships.

In their pattern of shared accommodation, the prostitutes are not markedly different to the health-workers. It refutes any suggestion that prostitutes are social isolates, living lonely lives devoid of other human contact apart from workmates and clients. Like most women they share their living quarters with husbands or lovers and their children, or, as with many young single women, with friends and chosen flatmates. Some, like some women in general, choose to live alone, probably for the same reasons: quietude, their own living space, or having a home to which they might retreat from the hassles of social and occupational life.

Most importantly, this study is representative of a broad population of prostitute women, and as such contrasts with findings from American street and juvenile prostitutes, with their bleak family backgrounds, as seen in the studies of Jennifer James (1977), Mimi Silbert and Ayala Pines (1982), and Nanette Davis (1971). This is not to suggest that the prostitutes interviewed in this study did not experience bad and threatening early homelives. Sharleen, a brothel worker in East Sydney, had negative relations with both her parents. Of her father, she says: "All I can remember was him standing in the doorway with a suitcase." Her experiences with her mother were very violent:

Our mother was drunk all the time. She was very cruel to me, and used to beat me a lot. Once she nearly chopped off my finger.

Bondage mistress Fatale feels she acquired a psychological masochism from her childhood experiences:

My childhood was such a hell. I was tortured much of the time. My mother left me when I was four, and so I was with my father a lot of the time, and he had different people looking after me. One man used to chase me around the back yard when I was five or six years old with a slug gun shooting slugs at me, and he locked me in the toilet all day while my father was at work. I used to have these nightmares of being stabbed constantly. I had one small room with my father, and I



would wait in there for him to come home from work or from dancing. I had no one else, just him. So I would wait for him to come home; constantly I waited for him.

June, a North Shore parlour worker, had an emotional and a communicative void in her relations with her mother:

We have nothing in common and just don't get along at all. We are very different in terms of personality, what our needs are and what our goals are. We simply don't like each other.

Brothel worker Jeanette's recollections of her mother were of her distant respect and admiration for her:

I can't ever remember my mother coming to visit me at my grandparents' farm, where I lived, until this one time when I was about ten. She was the epitome of everything they talked about. She went out and sat on the veranda and painted her nails red, and she fixed up her hair because she was going out with one of my cousins that night who was as much a floozy as my mother was supposed to be. I was just fascinated. I watched them put on this polish and do their hair, and I thought it was the most wonderful thing. And I never lost this fascination for her, which I think had a lot to do with the fact that I never really knew her.

Any person seeking explanations in the early lives of prostitutes might well point to Sharleen's horrific childhood experiences, or imagine that June's strained relations with her mother is reflected somehow in her unemotional encounters with men in commercial sex, or even suppose that Jeanette's fascination for her mother's floozy ways ended in her emulating her by becoming a prostitute. Like the psychoanalysts early this century they seek any idiosyncrasy as a causal source without considering the possibility that there might not be any relation between these various social circumstances in the early lives of these women. To imagine that prostitution is the outcome of multi-faceted negative childhood

experiences is to overlook the many prostitutes who had positive and obviously nurturing natal home environments. Martine, for example, has a deep rapport with her father, in spite of the not uncommon reservations in most father-daughter relations:

I spend a lot of time with my father. I go on annual holidays with him; we go away every year. We are very close but we don't talk about sexual things or very personal things. We tend to keep our conversation on a political and philosophical basis.

Maggie, who works in a small North Shore parlour, is a member of a Jewish extended family with its strong tradition of intra-familial support. She was raised in a nurturing environment in which the oldest generation adopts the caring responsibility for the rest of the family. No better environment existed for developing a sense of security, confidence and belonging in a child. She recalls her childhood with fond reminiscence:

As a child I was close to my grandmother, whereas I felt very competitive with my mother, who was very young, and I think because my grandmother took the mothering role it relieved her of that responsibility. But when my marriage broke up I immediately went back to living with my mother, who took care of my son, looking after him just as my grandmother had looked after me. At the time my mother and I became very close to one another.

These vignettes in the lives of these women provide support to the statistical data earlier in this Section. That data indicate that some prostitutes had negative relations with their parents, and experienced torturous childhoods in their natal family environments. The data also indicate that some led lonely, friendless lives in childhood and adolescence, some have had more than one unstable love relationship, and some live entirely alone out of choice or otherwise. However, the data indicate that more prostitutes experienced relatively stable parental home environments, had a number of friends in childhood and adolescence, have a stable love relationship, and share their living space with others. What all of this

suggests is that prostitutes do not appear to have less than average family and social backgrounds.

### Sex Lives of Prostitutes

Not too surprisingly many studies of prostitute women have turned to events in the pre-prostitution sex lives of their subjects in order to determine some predisposing factor for prostitution. James, for instance, found her prostitute sample more involved in incestual relations as children than other women (James & Myerding 1977). Silbert and Pines (1982a) found 60 per cent of their sample of 200 prostitutes were victims of child sexual abuse, and a third had been incest victims. Jennifer James, in fact developed an elaborate theory on causality of prostitution on the basis of her findings on the early sexual experiences of young prostitutes (*see* pp. 44-5). Other researchers were more intrigued by prostitutes' commercial sexuality compared to their sexuality in private life. Wardell Pomeroy (1965, p. 177ff), for instance, was interested in the extent of orgasmic experience of sex workers, at work and in private. But we shall return to that question later. Firstly, we will compare the three sample groups' sexual experiences in childhood to determine whether, in fact prostitutes had earlier or different such experiences than other women.

Table 3.26 measures the ages of the three groups' earliest sexual experience, and Table 3.27 measures the type of experience.

*Table 3.26: Age of first sexual experience of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Under 7 years	21.90	31.30	33.30
7 - 10 years	22.70	34.80	26.70
11 - 13 years	18.70	04.30	18.30
14 - 16 years	28.10	15.70	11.70
17 - 20 years	06.30	08.70	07.50
Over 20 years	01.50	02.60	00.00
Not disclosed	00.80	02.60	02.50



*Table 3.27: Type of first sexual experience of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=131</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=117</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Children's games	28.20	35.10	41.70
Exploring genitals	20.60	30.80	17.50
Masturbation	13.70	06.80	14.20
Heavy petting	20.60	22.20	23.30
Intercourse	16.80	05.10	02.50
Not disclosed	00.00	00.00	00.80

\*Some respondents gave multiple answers.

From this comparison it can be clearly seen that the prostitutes tended to be older than the others when they experienced their first sexual event. More than half, in fact, were more than ten years old when they had their first sexual experience, compared to just over a third of the health-workers and 40 per cent of the students. Thus, it would seem that the prostitutes were, on average, older than the other women with their initial sexual encounters. Of course, children's sexuality is now considered normal and healthy in the development of the human being, but are the prostitutes "normal" here or late developers in experiencing sex? Alfred Kinsey's monumental study of females is still regarded as the guidepost on sexual development, and his data found 48 per cent of females experiencing pre-pubescent sexual games (Kinsey et al. 1953, p. 107). The prostitutes are closer to this figure than the other two groups.

Martine recalls her first sexual experience at five years of age, and she remembers this as orgasmic:

My very first sexual experience was with this little girl over the road. We used to go down into this huge garden where we lived and we used to do this fantasy masturbation theme with hoses and stethoscopes. I can remember having orgasms at five. They were definitely orgasms, and she did too. They were definitely sexual because we would take our clothes

off and both reach orgasm. Then we weren't interested in the game any more. We used to play these games two or three times a week.

Kings Cross parlour worker Caroline remembers one of her earliest sexual experiences was also with a girl her own age:

I was six and with this little girl across the road we used to play lovers, pretend we were adult lovers and kiss and cuddle. I used to think that was really dirty, and that's why we did it.

Childhood adventures with the opposite sex seem just as common, for example Laura, whose initial sexual experience was "with little Billy; it was a kind of you show me yours and I'll show you mine, and that must have been when I was seven". Katherine is another private call girl, whose earliest sexual experience was much the same and also at the same age:

My sister and I were staying on a farm, and there was this monster of a kid called Bevan. We were up in the hayloft in the barn, and he just got his "willy" out. There was a bit of a fascination there for me, but I can't remember showing him my genitals in return.

One interesting fact stands out in the figures above: the much higher number of prostitutes whose first sexual encounter was intercourse. This might imply a particularly sheltered childhood for some, or, at least, one devoid of sexual experimenting, even of petting as a prelude to future vaginal sex. When these women underwent a coital experience as their first sexual encounter they were likely to have been in their adolescence. Without preparatory sexual experiences, intercourse may have had a deeper than average impact on the individual, loading her with guilt. The internalising shame resulting from this may have convinced some young women of their loose morals, leading them into prostitution. But this is mere speculation based on the flimsiest evidence of a few individual prostitutes and a slightly higher incidence of coitus as the initial sexual contact among the prostitutes. In the overall pattern, however, most of the prostitutes are not too divergent from the other two

groups. Their first experiences simply came later, and this alone contradicts a popular myth about prostitutes as promiscuous girls from childhood.

Call girl Laura, whose childhood was spent in America, said that intense sexual passion and orgasm wasn't avoided in adolescence but vaginal intercourse was avoided:

With lots of American girls, particularly Catholic girls, we learn to give a blow-job before intercourse. And that was about a year before my first actual intercourse at 17.

This is probably not too different for many Australian teenagers today. In such instances, though, it is the female who initiates these early sexual encounters. Is this always the case in childhood?

Society is becoming much more aware of the extent of child sexual assaults, and these it seems are much more common sexual experiences with girls than once realised, as some intensive research in this area has shown. A number of studies in America indicate that anywhere between 15 per cent and 35 per cent of females have been sexually assaulted prior to 18 years of age (NSW Government Child Sexual Assault Task Force 1984). Finkelhor (1979, p. 70) found that: "girls rate their experiences more negatively than do boys; 66 per cent compared to 38 per cent". This same study reported that in most instances of child sexual assault the perpetrator was a relative or trusted friend. "Assault" or "molestation" are emotive terms used to describe these forms of adult-child sexual relations, but they do not always assess the situation in reality. Parlour worker Zoe explained her circumstances thus:

My mother's lover was living in our house since I was 11 and he used to give us cuddles. In looking back now, it was sexual molestation I suppose, but my twin sister and I competed for his favours. We fell in love with him, absolutely adored him.

Nevertheless, cases of adult-child sexual contact, if not outright assault, or where the child is a willing participant, are considered to be manipulative, in which the adult persuades the child



## Working Girls

to go along with the event. In any case, most psychologists seem to feel that the encounter, regardless of who initiated it, is likely to prove negative for the child, if only as an outcome of guilt. Certainly in prostitution studies it is regarded as having a detrimental effect on the child and an important feature predisposing prostitution. In the James (1979) and Silbert (1982) studies, as we have noted earlier,

*Table 3.28: Ages of those prostitutes, health-workers, students sexually abused as children*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=50</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=34</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=22</i> )* %
Under 5 years	10.00	08.80	04.50
5-7 years	16.00	29.40	31.90
7-10 years	26.00	32.40	31.90
10-13 years	34.00	23.50	22.70
13-15 years	14.00	05.90	04.50
Not disclosed	00.00	00.00	04.50

\*Actual number of respondents who underwent this experience.

*Table 3.29: Perpetrators of child sexual assaults of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Total stranger	03.90	04.30	02.50
Known to victim			
but not kin	12.50	10.40	05.00
Uncle	04.70	03.50	03.50
Older brother	02.30	01.80	01.70
Stepfather	04.70	00.00	00.00
Natural father	07.00	03.50	03.30
Other kin (e.g. cousin)	03.90	05.20	02.50
Never assaulted as child	60.90	71.30	81.70

their prostitute samples reported very high incidences of child sexual assault. Table 3.28 compares the ages of child sexual abuse of the three sample groups in the study, and Table 3.29 compares the perpetrators.

In Table 3.29 10 per cent difference separates the ratio of child victims in the three groups (that is 39 per cent of the prostitutes, 29 per cent of the health-workers, 18 per cent of the students). The health-workers and the students fall within the expected ratio for child sexual assault victims, while the prostitutes are only slightly above it. Thus, it is not sufficient to project assumptions about prostitutes as particularly prone to sexual assault in childhood. Once again, as the James (1979) and Silbert (1982) studies indicate, this might be more apparent among the minority sub-groups of street and juvenile prostitutes in the total population of sex workers. The general pattern of perpetrators seem to correlate with Finkelhor's (1979) findings.

A question that might arise from this discussion on child sexual experiences, in view of its relationship to prostitution as a method of economic survival, is whether the prostitutes had been more often offered cash as children to comply with the sexual demands of adults. Were they "trained" as children for the role of a prostitute? Table 3.30 compares the three groups on this issue.

*Table 3.30: Pecuniary gain or the granting of cash or gifts in exchange for sexual favours of prostitutes, health-workers, students as children*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> <i>(n=128)</i> %	<i>Health-workers</i> <i>(n=115)</i> %	<i>Students</i> <i>(n=120)</i> %
Given cash/gifts for sex	07.80	01.80	00.00
Never offered cash/gifts for sexual favours	85.20	88.70	87.50
Uncertain/cannot recall	07.00	09.50	12.50

Certainly the prostitutes were offered cash or gifts as children in exchange for sexual favours much more often than the other two groups. But since (even if we include the "uncertain" percentage) this only amounts to a handful, no conclusion can be drawn as an indication that this event is a common experience in the lives of prostitutes.

Several of the women interviewed commented on their experience as child sexual assault victims. Streetwalker Kelly, whom you will remember as a victim of her foster brother in the Christian family, was an even earlier victim:

The earliest memory I have is of this man without any clothes on and I was very young, possibly three, and all he had on was a singlet. He was trying to drag me onto a bed. Now that's all I can remember.

Caroline also had an earliest memory of an assault: "The first thing that ever happened was some old man putting his hand up my pants". Obviously, these earliest memories had a lingering impact on some women, but later on it seems to have been less of an impact and more accepted as sexual development. Katherine recalls:

When I was about 11, I had these uncle characters who had a strange attraction for me. One was a friend of the family whom we called "uncle", and the other was my mother's father's brother, whom she called "uncle". Her uncle was an old boy who used to offer me cigarettes for kisses, and would cuddle me when Mum and Dad were out of the room. The friend of the family did much the same thing with me and my sister. They never left any scars with me. It just made me curious.

Some people could suppose that this nonchalance in Katherine as a child predisposed her for prostitution. But she did not enter the sex industry until her early 30s, a relatively late starting date for prostitutes generally. North Shore parlour worker June also was unperturbed by a childhood sexual assault upon her:

I can't remember when it was or anything like that, but it is a memory I have of the boy next door—19 I think



he was—babysitting me. It obviously didn't have much of an impact on me. I suppose I might have been nine or ten.

June didn't rush into prostitution either, entering it at 24 when she was in dire poverty. It would seem that some women are much less traumatised by adult-child sexual contact than others. Of course, this may have a lot to do with the nature of the assault, whether it was violent or threatening to the child or not. But the child's attitude towards sex might be an important factor in her response to the experience. A child raised to fear sex and internalise guilt, for instance, is likely to react with greater alarm and be psychologically affected by an adult attempting to have sex with her than one with a healthy comfortable attitude to sex who is intrigued by it rather than afraid. The forthcoming evidence would suggest that many, if not most, women who become prostitutes are in the latter category.

Marie was raised to accept sex in the normal course of growing up:

Sex was never a big deal in our family. My family walked around in the nude in front of one another. We were quite sexually educated, so when it happened we never made a big thing of it, but it was part of what we were doing, such as playing around with other kids, fingering one another, playing doctor and nurses, mothers and fathers, things like that.

Marie's first love affair has all the earmarks of childhood innocence, until it received the scrutiny of adult society:

I remember having this lesbian relationship with this girl living two doors up. I wrote her this really explicit letter about how much I liked playing with her Mum's vibrator and how much I loved her and loved her breasts. She was about 12 and my first real love affair. Although I was only nine or ten it was intense. When it all came out it was horrible, it really hurt. We weren't even aware that it could be considered sordid. As a matter of fact, my friend came home one day and said to me that one of her school mates had described

her as a lesbian. We didn't know what the word meant, so we looked it up in the dictionary and asked around. Only then did we find out that people thought it was really appalling.

Marie's case is not unusual among many lesbians, and I suspect not unique among heterosexual women either. She does not describe herself as lesbian today, but sees herself as bisexual, although she admits that most of her love affairs in adulthood have been with men. Also, Marie, too, did not enter prostitution as a youngster; she was 20 at the time and in economic difficulties.

A number of studies have stressed the high ratio of lesbians working in heterosexual prostitution. This was a not uncommon appraisal by psychoanalysts. Caprio, for example, claimed that lesbians were more likely to become prostitutes than heterosexual women, due to a psychological defence against suppressed homosexual inclinations (Caprio & Brenner 1961). Table 3.31 indicates the sexuality of the three sample groups.

*Table 3.31: Sexuality of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Heterosexual	67.20	69.90	90.80
Homosexual	09.40	21.70	03.30
Bisexual (ambisexual)	21.10	07.80	04.20
Not disclosed	02.30	00.90	01.70

Kinsey and his co-workers (1953, p. 488) found 3 per cent of women exclusively homosexual and 20 per cent with some past homosexual experiences. It is likely to be at least twice that ratio today; but even so, the health-workers have an exceptionally high ratio of lesbians, and the prostitutes have a moderately high ratio. Probably, the prostitutes, with their nearly a third lesbians and bisexuals, are closer to the general population of women than the other two groups.

Some people might argue that prostitutes, by the very nature of their work, can never be described as "exclusive lesbians". But, it might be equally argued that the very nature of their work can reinforce a woman's lesbian identity, given that most prostitutes insist that commercial sex is exclusively work. In fact, it may be easier for a lesbian to separate prostitution as work from private sex as pleasure than many heterosexual women, since, in the lesbian's opinion lovemaking with other women, is her true sexual identity. It might be allegorical to a public executioner or an abattoir slaughterman who would never consider killing people or animals in their private lives. In any case, those who insist that *real* lesbians could not be involved in heterosexual prostitution probably assume that all lesbians are misanthropic, which, of course, is far from true.

First sexual (vaginal) intercourse, or "loss" of virginity, is considered a highlight of a woman's sexual development and marks the commencement of "mature" sexuality in a penile-heterosexual sense (of course, in a lesbian sense another event might suggest the same level of importance). Here a roughly equal significance in the initial coital experience for all of the samples has been assumed. Table 3.32 compares the age of the event in the three groups.

*Table 3.32: Age at first sexual intercourse of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Under 12	07.80	00.90	03.30
12-15 years	41.40	10.40	05.00
15-18 years	35.90	31.30	32.60
18-20 years	09.40	31.30	25.80
20-25 years	02.30	17.40	08.30
Over 25	00.80	03.50	00.80
Not disclosed, or still virgins	02.30*	05.20	24.20**

\*Obviously none of these prostitutes were virgins.

\*\*In view of the number of adolescent students, many are virgins.



The prostitutes really stand out here. Nearly half of them had experienced coitus by 15 years of age, compared to only 11 per cent of the health-workers and 8 per cent of the students. Between the ages of 15 and 18 about a third of each of the health-workers and about a quarter of the students "lost" their virginity. In other words, the prostitutes had preceded the others in "losing" their virginity by a few years: 85 per cent of the prostitutes had experienced coitus before they reached their late adolescence. Probably this represents a much higher incidence than the average female. Kinsey and his co-workers (1953, p. 288) found that only 3 per cent of their female sample had experienced coitus by 15 years and 20 per cent had done so by 20 years. Undoubtedly the situation is much changed today when probably most women have experienced coitus prior to marriage, compared to Kinsey's 1950 sample of less than half. In any case, the prostitute sample in this present study is extraordinarily diverse compared to the other samples, and nowhere else in the other variables is there such a differentiation. Therefore, some importance must be attached to this finding.

A high ratio of early coital experiences among prostitutes is not in itself unique. Jennifer James (1979), Mimi Silbert (1982) and Nanette Davis (1971) all found that their respective samples of street and juvenile prostitutes had undergone coital sex in early adolescence. One might assume that an early coital experience is one of the predetermining factors in prostitution. But, this does not explain it sufficiently for all prostitutes, given, for example, that more than half of the sample followed the "normal" pattern of initial intercourse in mid to late adolescence. The above mentioned researchers viewed their samples' early coitus among the negative factors leading to prostitution. Table 3.33 indicates the context in which the "loss" of virginity occurred.

If we take the first four contexts listed in Table 3.33 as "positive" experiences and incest and rape as "negative" experiences (not surprisingly, not one of the prostitutes was a virgin on entering the sex industry), we can clearly see that in most instances in all three samples the first intercourse was in a "positive" context. Admittedly, the prostitutes have higher incidences of "negative" contexts, but these are not sufficient to assume that early coital experiences for prostitutes are mostly negative. Some people may express surprise that four of the prostitutes adhered to the Christian ideal of remaining virgins until marriage. Though positive in that it conforms to social

Table 3.33: Context of first coital experience of prostitutes, health-workers, students

	Prostitutes (n=128) %	Health-workers (n=115) %	Students (n=120) %
A love affair	42.20	53.90	43.30
A casual encounter	18.00	19.10	10.00
With a friend	18.70	13.90	10.90
In marriage	03.10	07.00	05.80
Incestual contact	06.20	00.00	00.80
In rape	10.20	00.90	05.00
In prostitution	00.00	n/a	n/a
Not disclosed, or still virgins	01.60	05.20	24.20

norms, as parlour worker Maggie points out in her own case, it may not have been much of an experience at all:

I was 18 and I was a virgin when I got married. So *it* happened after I was married. I had known him since I was seven and we had never played doctors and nurses. I wish I had because I would have known what to expect, or rather, not to expect. I remember thinking on our wedding night: "That was *it*? Oh, well, seeing as he has gone to sleep, I suppose I might as well go to sleep too." We had had no opportunity before marriage, perhaps a little bit of petting but nothing else.

So, what can we make of the anomalous first coitus situation with the prostitute sample? Probably, a large number of prostitutes (perhaps most but certainly as many a half), undergo sexual (vaginal) intercourse in their early adolescence. Perhaps these women are already advanced in maturity, with a psychologically more mature attitude to sex than the average girl. That most of them initiated the sexual encounter as a "positive" experience with a lover, a friend or chosen casual acquaintance would indicate their greater preparation

for coitus than most other girls their age. That only a few of them had experienced a brutal or "negative" coital experience, "loss" of virginity was a choice rather than a misfortune. What is important here is that these girls initiated their "loss" of virginity at a time when they were about to move into womanhood and economic independence, and they were equipped with both the experience and the knowledge of the value of sex as a commodity as well as an advanced knowledge of male sexuality, much earlier than most other girls, who were still in awe of coitus and males. In other words, prostitution was no longer an awesome and frightening prospect as imagined by most other girls their age.

We have spoken much about sex and sexuality to date. We will now determine to what extent prostitutes might differ to other women in the experience of love. Are they as emotional and are they more likely to have more love partners in a given time span than most other women? First, let us see if the prostitute sample is as equally advanced in falling in love as they are in having achieved first coitus. Table 3.34 compares the ages of three groups when falling in love for the first time.

*Table 3.34: Age at onset of first love affair of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Under 15 years	25.00	16.50	15.00
15-18 years	47.60	47.80	53.40
18-20 years	13.30	13.00	12.50
20-25 years	04.70	13.90	05.80
25-30 years	00.80	05.20	00.80
30-35 years	00.80	00.00	00.00
Over 35 years	00.00	00.00	00.80
Never been in love	05.50	01.80	10.00
Not disclosed	02.30	01.80	01.70

Once again we find the prostitutes having experienced love earlier than the other two groups, but only by a slight margin and



certainly much less of a margin than with initial coitus. In all three groups, it seems, love was more often experienced without necessarily the accompaniment of sex. In any case, love is a young person's experience, with 86 per cent of the prostitutes, 77 per cent of the health-workers and 81 per cent of the students having experienced love by the age of 20. If anything might be drawn from these figures it is possibly that prostitutes might be slightly more emotionally mature in early adolescence than most women. But, returning to Table 3.32 it does suggest that curiosity about sex might be a stronger motive for "losing" virginity among the prostitutes than as a outcome of falling in love in early adolescence.

Most of the prostitutes interviewed seemed to have fallen in love for the first time with boys one to three years their senior, and then fell out of love with them within a year or two. In other words, it was a "puppy" kind of love, with lots of passion and little substance. Jeanette is unusual in having married her first lover. It was, incidentally, a marriage which at first was "made in heaven":

My marriage was very much a love affair. He was a beautiful lover, a wonderful man who gave me the guidelines to the way I am now, considerate and soft in bed rather than passionate. He was nice and gentle, easy and beautiful, and he made me feel that we were one the first time we made love.

Jeanette was 16 and pregnant to him when she married him, and he was then 25 years. Laura also fell in love for the first time at 16, but the circumstance was very different, and, in fact, quite rare as love affairs go:

He was the first boy I had ever kissed. He was very suave and worldly, and 12 years older than me. But I would never have intercourse with him because I became aware that he was my cousin. I gave him blow-jobs instead and didn't consider that incest.

There was a wide assumption that prostitutes were girls who fell in love with older, unscrupulous males, who often turned out to be pimps. Jeanette is such a case. In spite of a marriage of bliss and sexual joy, her husband was anxious to put her on the street still pregnant:

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What he had put to me was that if I didn't work for him he would bring all his friends from the hotel around to rape me. He gave me an hour to think about this. I'll never forget it; I was so gullible, and you know what I thought: it would be terrible for him because he had said it would be a terrible thing for him to have to do to me.

Table 3.35 compares the age differences between the first lover and the woman for the three sample groups.

*Table 3.35: First lover's sex and age difference to prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=121)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=113)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=108)* %</i>
Male, 10+ years younger	00.80	00.00	00.00
Male, 10-5 years younger	01.60	00.00	00.00
Male, 5-0 years younger	01.60	03.50	00.90
Male of same age	27.30	40.70	44.50
Male, 0-5 years older	28.90	26.60	35.20
Male, 5-10 years older	24.00	10.60	08.30
Male, 10+ years older	05.80	04.40	03.70
Female, 5+ years younger	00.00	00.00	00.00
Female, 5-0 years younger	00.00	00.90	00.00
Female of same age	02.50	04.40	01.90
Female, 0-5 years older	02.50	01.80	00.90
Female, 5-10 years older	03.30	06.20	00.90
Female, 10+ years older	00.80	00.00	00.90
Not disclosed	00.80	00.90	02.80

\*Includes only those who have been in love.

Regardless of the individual's sexual orientation in later adult life, some lesbians, particularly among the health-workers, had males as first lovers. What stands out, however, are the higher number of prostitutes with first lovers more than five years their senior. Given that nearly three-quarters of them had fallen in love by



18, this indicates that most of these love affairs consisted of an adult male and an early to mid-adolescent girl. One might well be persuaded by Greenwald's (1958) analysis of prostitutes in search of father figures in these cases. However, since less than a third of the prostitutes fall into this category not a great deal of weight should be attached to this psychoanalytical assessment of prostitutes *per se*.

If we cannot assume that all of these cases of older men with teenage girls are exploitative situations, some, at least, might be similar to Jeanette's circumstance. Where these older men had led their adoring teenage girlfriends into prostitution, naivety and a certain lack of maturity in love is apparent in the women. So, while they may have achieved more experience in sexual matters they were just as vulnerable as other young females in matters of love with manipulating males. Overall, it seems that the prostitutes were more inclined to fall for much older males than the other two groups. This may have been an outcome of having earlier acquired greater sexual experience, with these women looking for more mature men than boys their own age. However, over half of the prostitutes fell in love with males around their own age or up to five years older in their first love affairs, which is closer to the pattern for the other two groups and most likely women in general. Once again, a myth about prostitutes is brought asunder by empirical facts.

Another popular assumption about prostitutes claims that they are promiscuous in their private and pre-prostitution lives. If this were true it would be apparent in love affairs. Jennifer James (1979) found her sample of juvenile street prostitutes to have been particularly casual with their first coital partner. To measure this in the present study, the duration of the prostitutes' first love affairs were assessed and compared to those of the other two sample groups. Table 3.36 (overleaf) shows the result of this comparison.

Very little separates the three groups in this configuration. Slightly fewer prostitutes had first love affairs of less than six months, but nearly two-thirds of the prostitutes, nearly three-quarters of the health-workers and over 80 per cent of the students ended their first love affairs in two or less years, while more of the prostitutes had initial love affairs that lasted beyond five years. This would indicate that the prostitutes were hardly fickle about their first lovers, even if they had been with their first coital partners. They were no more or less promiscuous as lovers than the other two groups. The fact that less prostitutes managed to retain their first lovers beyond



ten years indicates that most likely the lovers were unable to maintain the relationship after the women had taken up prostitution.

*Table 3.36: Duration of first love affair of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=121)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=113)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=108)* %</i>
Less than 6 months	19.00	23.00	26.90
6 months to a year	21.50	22.10	24.00
1-2 years	22.30	27.40	29.60
2-5 years	19.80	15.10	09.30
5-10 years	13.20	05.30	02.80
Over 10 years	00.80	05.30	03.70
Not disclosed	03.30	01.80	03.70

\*Includes only those who have been in love.

On the question of orgasmic experience a useful start might be the study of Wardell Pomeroy (1965). He destroyed any previous notions about prostitutes as being frigid, impassive, insensitive participants in prostitution. Pomeroy compared three groups of prostitutes: 83 gaol inmates, presumed mostly ex-streetwalkers, with a median age of 30.3; 61 reformatory inmates, also mostly ex-streetwalkers, with a median age of 19.5; and 31 call girls, with a median age of 26.8. Although not truly representative of a prostitution population, Pomeroy's findings in Table 3.37 provide sufficient indication that prostitutes enjoy orgasmic experiences both at work and in private.

The configuration in Table 3.37 confirms the author's knowledge of prostitutes in Australia, that is, prostitutes orgasm more frequently in their private lives. The statement by some prostitutes that they never orgasm at work or they fake orgasms to please their clients is probably true, but it is not the case with a large number of women who seem capable of orgasms on the job. The mistaken belief that female orgasm is an expression of affection often leads to inhibitions with many prostitutes. Probable factors for explaining the difference in sexual responses in Pomeroy's sample

Table 3.37: *Orgasmic experiences of prostitutes*

	Group 1 (n=83) %	Group 2 (n=61) %	Group 3 (n=31) %
Never orgasms:			
At work	21	18	23
In private	1	9	10
Spasmodically:			
One to five a week at work	20	5	30
26%-50% of time in private	16	14	24
Most frequently:			
Always at work	14	23	7
51%-100% of time in private	42	27	31
Multiple orgasms:			
At work	0	5	0
In private	27	45	28

Source: Pomeroy 1965.

groups are age (Group 2 being mostly teenagers) and class morality (Group 3 being mostly middle-class women).

Most of the prostitutes surveyed or interviewed admitted to experiences of orgasm at work. Maggie's response to the question on orgasm reflects the most common experience:

I orgasm more frequently outside of work. I think work is a part of you, but you can't take your hormones for a walk. It all depends on the other person.

Jeanette, too, says she orgasms much more frequently with her husband, "almost every time", but it sometimes happens at work:

It's usually when I'm having French [cunnilingus] done to me, and sometimes when I'm riding a guy especially if I've had lots of guys before. But, when I

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feel I'm coming I'll generally switch off by thinking of the \$20 I've just made and work related things like that.

But there are those women who, for whatever psychological reason, orgasm more at work than in their private lives. Laura is a case in point:

I actually orgasm more with work, perhaps once every 20 times. I don't know why. Out of work I orgasm very seldom, about once a year.

Caroline also experiences orgasm more often at work:

I've only orgasmed outside work once in three years, apart from one relationship in which I used to orgasm all the time. But at work I orgasm about four times a month. It's very much tied up with my cycle and it's never in sexual intercourse but always French [cunnilingus].

Call girl Katherine's response was the most unusual:

I never had an orgasm in my life up to the day I begun to work as a prostitute. I probably have an orgasm in eight out of ten jobs. It's more easy to have an orgasm the more ugly and unattractive the client is. It's really made my sex life great. Because I'm much more in control in prostitution than in usual social sex situations, I respond with greater and more frequent orgasms.

The women working in bondage and discipline or fantasy work seem to be the least inhibited. Marie, for instance, says she orgasms "about 90 per cent of the time" in her private life, while at work...

As often as I can. If I want to orgasm I just tell them [clients] what they have to do to make me orgasm and they'll do it. But this depends on my mood: sometimes



three and four times in a session, sometimes once, and sometimes I don't feel like it. I don't feel guilty about this. Why should I? I enjoy it and it makes the job more pleasant.

Martine, who earlier explained her reasons for enjoying orgasms at work (p. 10), went on to describe her motivations to orgasm in the context of her control over the situation:

I try to orgasm every time I go to work, if possible, and if I'm feeling randy. I usually bring myself on with a vibrator, or I make the clients do oral sex on me. I don't orgasm as frequently at work as I do out of work because I don't orgasm in every session.

These varied responses to the question of orgasm indicate the enormous sexual diversity among prostitutes. As well as disintegrating the myth of the frigid prostitute, it also indicates quite clearly once again the psychological and social heterogeneity of women in a prostitute population. In some ways also, the above studies are compatible with the wider research into female orgasmic experiences. For instance, Pomeroy's (1965) samples of 9 per cent (Group 2) and 10 per cent (Group 3) never reaching orgasm in their private lives are similar to 11 per cent of Kinsey's et al. (1953, pp. 252-4) female sample who had never attained orgasm even after 20 years of marriage and 11.6 per cent of Shere Hite's (1977, pp. 604-5) female sample who never orgasm. However, certainly more prostitutes attain more frequent orgasms in their private lives than Hite's third of her sample who attained orgasm regularly with intercourse. Pomeroy's sample also recorded a higher frequency of multiple orgasm than Kinsey's sample of 14-15 per cent who did so regularly. The prostitutes in the present study seemed to confirm Hite's general findings that oral and clitoral stimulation was more likely to provide more frequent, spontaneous and satisfying (or intense) orgasms. Overall, it seems that prostitutes can enjoy orgasms like most women. Interestingly, while sex in their private lives results in more frequent orgasmic experiences than with most women, that occurring in the context of work is closer to the frequency in the general female population's most frequent orgasmic experience (see, for example, *Face to Face* 1985, p. 275).

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Turning now to the more negative aspects of prostitutes' sex lives, rape is one of the most devastating experiences of women in general, and prostitutes, no less than other women, sometimes fall victims outside of their workplace (the incidence of rape at work will be dealt with later). Table 3.38 compares the incidences of rape between the three sample groups.

*Table 3.38: Incidences of rape of prostitutes (beyond work), health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Never	53.10	79.10	88.30
Once only	21.10	13.90	07.50
Twice	13.30	04.30	01.70
Three times	07.00	00.90	00.00
Four times	00.00	00.00	00.80
More than four times	03.10	01.80	01.07
Not disclosed	02.30	00.00	00.00

The prostitutes were much more often raped than the other groups. Nearly a half of them have been victims at one time or other in their private lives. One researcher claimed that somehow rape victims precipitate rape by their behaviour, demeanour or presence in unusual situations (Amir 1967b, p. 493 ff). If this is the case, it might explain the reason for a higher ratio of prostitute victims in everyday life, especially if these women, through their actions or display, invite sexual interaction with nearby male strangers. This would mean that off-duty prostitutes somehow disclose a desire for seduction, or are ready for sex at any time. It does sound like a common notion of the prostitute stereotype as "once a prostitute always a prostitute", in spite of the evidence in this study so far indicating prostitutes as normal women and their desires for normality in their private lives. It also sounds like a Christian doctrinal judgment about women being naturally sinful and polluting as objects of lust which is reinforced with a patriarchal notion of men at the mercy of their own sexual weakness, preyed upon by

"nymphettes", "temptresses", and prostitutes, in particular. This kind of rationale has long been dismissed by intelligent people in favour of the power thesis, best seen in Susan Brownmiller's (1975) analysis of rape. This suggests that women are vulnerable to men exercising power over women by means of violence. It may account for a high incidence of prostitute rape victims in the context of work, but it cannot be assumed that prostitutes are somehow more "sexier" or "saucier" in their private lives, thereby feeding another popular male notion of women "asking for it". What then does account for the higher incidences of rapes in the prostitute sample given that they appear ordinary on their days off?

The answer to this might be found by investigating the nature of the perpetrator. Table 3.39 reveals the result of this investigation.

*Table 3.39: Persons responsible for raping prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> (n=77)* %	<i>Health-workers</i> (n=27)* %	<i>Students</i> (n=19)* %
Husband or lover	13.00	18.50	15.80
A friend	15.60	11.10	26.30
Other person			
known to victim	35.00	37.10	26.30
Lone stranger	22.10	18.50	26.30
Pair or a pack	14.30	14.80	05.30

\*Number of rapes (not number of women) per type of rapist.

The configuration in this Table is similar in all groups: that is, most of the women were raped by men known to them. In the case of the prostitutes this was nearly two-thirds of the rapists. Amir (1967a), in a study of rape crimes in Philadelphia in 1967, found that 48 per cent of the rapists were men in primary relationships with the victims. Very likely this was only the tip of the iceberg since many rapes by husbands, lovers and friends are never reported by the victims, who, in these kinds of assaults, are more traumatised by feelings of betrayal than by the physical violation. In 1987-88 nearly 9,000 crimes of sexual assault were reported by police across



Australia (*Police Reports* 1987-88). In 1983 a survey of rape victims found that only 24.7 per cent were reported to police; many victims felt police would do nothing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1983). What all of this means is that the prostitutes were very likely most often attacked by men who knew that they worked as prostitutes, and the men assumed they had sexual access to them at any time, based on some mistaken notion that whores have less rights than other women.

Another traumatic area in women's sex lives is abortion. Contrary to the beliefs of many moralists, this is often accompanied by serious considerations, guilt and a sense of loss. Prostitutes are no exception here. Table 3.40 compares the number of abortions experienced by the three sample groups.

*Table 3.40: Incidences of abortions of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
No abortions	43.80	66.90	80.00
Once only	27.30	20.00	10.90
Twice	14.80	05.20	05.80
Three times	07.80	04.30	02.50
Four times	02.40	00.90	00.00
More than four times	01.60	01.80	00.80
Not disclosed	02.30	00.90	00.00

Once more the prostitutes have a higher ratio of experiences than the other two groups (although one might also assume that the health-workers are exceptionally high for their age groups). Does this mean that the prostitutes take less precautions against pregnancy, or that they simply have a higher number of sex partners, thus increasing their vulnerability for pregnancy? Table 3.41 provides some of the answers to this by comparing the fathers of the aborted fetuses.

*Table 3.41: Father(s) of aborted foetus of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=81</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=43</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=25</i> )* %
Husband	12.40	25.60	12.00
Lover	51.80	62.80	72.00
Casual acquaintance	28.40	06.90	16.00
A relative (incestual)	02.50	00.00	00.00
A rapist	04.90	04.70	00.00

\*Number of abortions (not women) per type of father.

In all three groups abortions occurred most often as a result of an unwanted pregnancy with a lover, but the higher ratio of casual acquaintances as fathers of the foetuses among the prostitutes most likely includes a number of clients. As we will see, the high use of prophylaxis doubling as a contraceptive amongst prostitutes at work keeps pregnancies to an absolute minimum, but the sheer logistics of numbers of sexual partners and condom breakage in prostitution means unwanted pregnancies are still feasible. This then could well be the difference in abortions between prostitutes and other women.

What can we surmise from this statistical profile of the sex lives of prostitutes? It seems that in most aspects little divides the prostitute sample from the other two samples. However, there are a few areas which might be highlighted due to significant differences. Although the prostitutes experienced initial childhood sexual contact a little later than the health-workers and students, as a group they were one or two years earlier in experiencing their first sexual (vaginal) intercourse, which might be seen as a predisposing factor for prostitution. However, contrary to most studies on street and juvenile prostitutes, this experience among the more representative sample of prostitutes was "positive" rather than "negative". This provided the prostitutes with greater, more "mature" sexual experiences by mid-adolescence than the other women, so that by late adolescence or early twenties they were able to make more rational, pragmatic choices about their sexuality, including prostitution as an option.

The prostitutes also slightly led the other women in other sexual experiences, both "positive" and "negative", such as being victims of child sexual assaults, falling in love earlier, having older male lovers in their first love affairs, having longer first love affairs. And, it seems, that prostitutes have more frequent orgasms than women generally. Since these are not excessively higher incidences, the most that might be said is that prostitutes as sexual beings are slightly more sexually experienced, sensual and libidinous in their pre-prostitution sex lives than most other women. The fact that they are raped more often in their private lives and have more abortions seems more closely related to the fact that they are prostitutes rather than to their sensuality or libido. None of this makes them abnormal in their sex lives; simply extra-normal.

### Conclusion

Most people today are inclined to accept the popular prostitute mythology. This mythology is based on a mixture of past fact and fable and research which has been ill-informed, biased towards one kind of prostitute or dependent upon insufficient sampling. The persistence of the myths is due to Christianity's need to perpetuate its object lessons. The result is an unjust indictment of a group of women whose only crimes have been a promiscuous sexuality and an economy based on supply and demand. But, in spite of more recent trends in research and pleas for justice from some of society's more rational thinkers, the myths continue to permeate beyond the popular throng to authority and officialdom. Eileen McLeod noted prevailing attitudes among English parole officers, people who had dealt with prostitutes for years, yet still treated them with scorn:

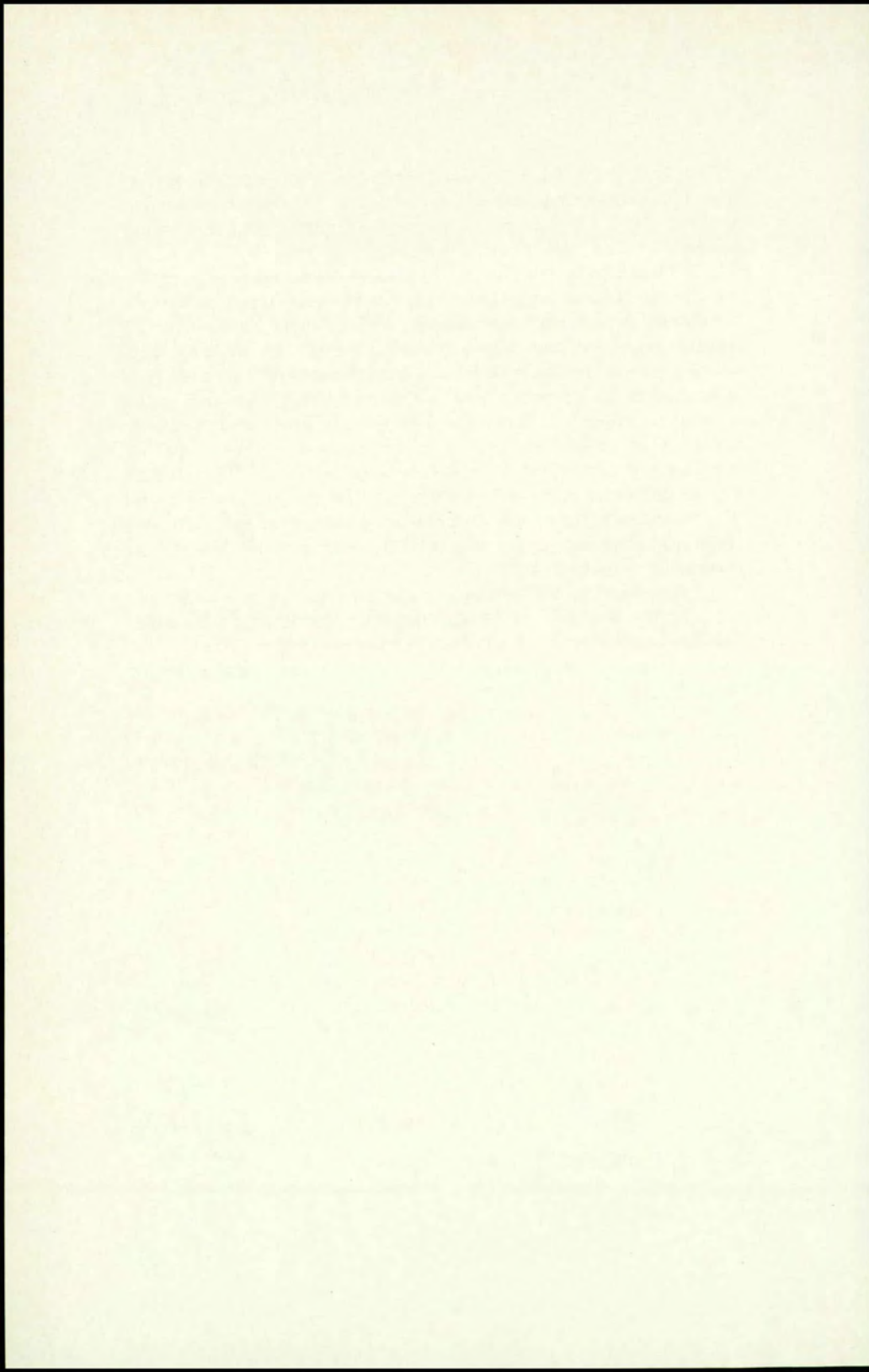
The stereotyped view of street prostitutes at that time (mid seventies) was that they were in some way inferior beings either psychopathological, crude, brazen or a mixture of all these things... The attitude among probation officers... was that if a woman was involved in prostitution there must be something wrong with her—she must be psychologically confused or mixed up, beaten by her father (McLeod 1982, pp. 114, 120).



With such askant notions widespread among officials on whom prostitutes must, at some time or other, depend, these women are at a distinct disadvantage in our bureaucratic and law bound society.

This Section has sought to remove these notions from the common consciousness by refuting the myths with empirical facts. In the comparative study of prostitutes, health-workers and university students we have seen that prostitutes are not all working-class women, are not products of broken homes, nor loveless, friendless people adrift on a sea of social isolation. Neither were they more sexually active as children, nor significantly more often sexually assaulted in childhood, and their earliest love affairs were not considerably different to those of the other women. Their slightly higher libidos and sensuality are not sufficient to warrant social ostracism, and neither should they be regarded as especially different simply because they enjoyed their first coital experience a year or two earlier than other women.

It is time society removed its tattered and worn blinkers and faced reality with the same enthusiasm it had embraced earlier and much misguided research findings. And it is time it realised the true significance of popular imagery and the myths surrounding the sex industry.



## Chapter 4

### THE WORKING LIVES OF PROSTITUTES

In the last Chapter the study was concerned with the social backgrounds of prostitutes. In this Chapter we will concentrate on the other part of prostitutes' lives: their working conditions. In spite of the great amount of media "exposure" and common perceptions of prostitutes at work, very little is known publicly about this side of their lives. Even customers rarely manage a realistic appraisal because their perceptions are too often screened through a bias of sexual fantasies. Few researchers have been able to study this aspect thoroughly because of the sex industry's closed ranks against outsiders. Most researchers, though, have shown greater interest in causal factors leading to a woman's entrance into prostitution than in the actual working conditions.

In recent years, however, a number of symbolic interactionist studies have been "breaking the silence", especially where there has been a heavy dependence on in-depth interviews, enabling prostitutes to speak out and express their work in their terms. Thus, a profile of their working conditions is becoming more widely known. But, even so, the guiding hand of the researcher in these cases is quite apparent, and much depends on the selection of material by the writer to stress his/her point about the work. Thus, William Isaac Thomas (1967), the renowned "father of symbolic interactionism", in 1922 emphasised the adaptability of his subjects, who could move easily from their sexual working life to a socially conventional life. Claude Jaget (1980), a French journalist writing about the "prostitutes strike" in 1975, selected interview subjects for their anger and frustration in the face of political and social insensitivity. Kate Millet (1973), the feminist literary scholar, used her interview material to stress the psychological effects of sex work and criminalisation on her subjects. Eileen McLeod's (1982) subjects were selected to highlight occupational normality in sex work. Reinhart Filla (1975a & 1975b), an Australian sociologist who undertook research into Melbourne prostitutes, used his interview material to explain his subject's sense of reality as a critique of socially designated "deviance". Perkins and Bennett (1985) utilised



their material as a way of stressing the extent of assertion and control prostitutes have over their working lives. From these examples it can be appreciated that there exist many sides to a prostitute's working life, and its interpretation for public audiences depends as much on the medium (the writer) as the author (the prostitute).

What is attempted throughout this Chapter is an observer's account of prostitution, supported by statistical responses from the 128 prostitutes surveyed and enlivened with some comments from the interview material obtained in the course of the present study. This account is not utterly devoid of personal biases, which are impossible to overcome completely for any writer/researcher. But the intention here is to present a view of prostitutes' working conditions from its positive and negative perspectives. Since the subjects are Sydney prostitutes it will be particularly pertinent to sex work in this city. But my knowledge of prostitution in other parts of the world would suggest that the sex industry in Sydney is essentially no different to that in most western cities of an equivalent size.

### **Public to Private: Where Prostitutes Work**

There are a number of circumstances and environments in which the exchange of sexual pleasure for cash occurs. For instance, in some bars and hotels of Sydney women sit and drink with the express purpose of meeting men and offering sex for a fee. About fifteen years ago the author became aware of a hotel in the centre of the produce markets in the inner city area of the Haymarket where mostly Aboriginal and Islander women hung around to service the produce workers sexually when they finished work. The hotel manager was well aware of the situation and, in fact, supported it by offering rooms to customers at an inflated tariff. The place received a great deal of attention by police, partly because of the frequent brawls that occurred, but also because of a particular racial bias of many policemen at that time. The hotel was never closed nor the licensee arrested, perhaps due to an "arrangement" with the local police. This was a lively area of prostitution in its "heyday" but it came to an end when the produce markets shifted to Flemington in the late seventies. Although this was the women's only livelihood, most bar prostitution today is casual and clandestine.

Another form of prostitution once flourishing among a small group of women was that catering to merchant seamen. The women involved were given the derogatory term of "ship molls" and they operated in certain hotels of the city and Pyrmont (an inner city wharf area) frequented by seamen on leave. Occasionally these women were invited on board the ships for "parties" and "orgies" but mostly their work was conducted on shore. Today, they are rare as speciality prostitutes in Sydney, while, a small handful of such women still work as "ship molls" in the southern New South Wales industrial port city of Port Kembla. In Sydney, seamen on leave now visit the established and well publicised inner city brothels, although sometimes escorts are hired for "orgies" on board visiting ships.

"Courtesans" or women who date, marry or become mistresses to wealthy men for financial gain are not unknown in Sydney's "haute classe" social circles. However, it is often difficult to identify them clearly as their true intentions remain closeted and even their besotted beaux, lovers, and spouses are usually convinced their relationship is based on love or desire and not mercenary premeditation. It is quite unlikely that any of these women would admit to being prostitutes, but the only real thing that separates them from the much maligned streetwalker is that they do their hawking in exclusive society instead of under a street lamp.

Juvenile prostitution often receives a great deal of media attention, usually following an unqualified comment by a politician, a visiting dignitary or leading churchman. Then comes the usual police blitz of rounding up any likely looking youngster on the streets of Kings Cross after dark. These "kids of the Cross", as they are often dubbed, quite often turn out to be young adults dressed as teenagers to attract the paedophilic subconsciousness of many street clients. In spite of the large number of teenage prostitutes stated by outraged officials, the fact is there are very much fewer "under-aged" prostitutes than often supposed. In three consecutive nights in October 1986 the author counted no more than 30 street boys and girls in known areas of street soliciting in Kings Cross. Their ages ranged between 12 and 15, and they usually roamed about in pairs or groups from pinball parlours, Fitzroy Gardens in the heart of the Cross and Green Park in Darlinghurst, regular areas for client pick-ups. Their young ages prevent them from working in the established areas of street prostitution because the women resist their presence there. In mixed-sex groups they spend the night in casual prostitution



as they require money, "hanging about" and "scoring dope", and when they retire to bed it is often half-a-dozen or so to a rented room, in squats or in a youth refuge.

There are an infinite number of prostitution operations, and these are but a few of them. They are referred to here as casual, clandestine and minority forms of prostitution. The rest of this Section concentrates on the "professional" forms of prostitution; that is where there is no doubt about the commercial nature of the exchange and the women involved very much identify as prostitutes at work, even if there is a strong denial in their social lives. Often, there will be an attempt to avoid the reality of their situation through a pretence that they are working only for a brief period, or by a preference for the term "working girls" as their social designation rather than "prostitute" or "whore". The term "whore" is particularly abhorred by Sydney prostitutes, unlike many of their European and American counterparts, who use the term in reference to themselves frequently. On a politically motivated level it serves to "defuse" the stigma of whore used as a derogatory term by society at large. However, the resistance to it by prostitutes in Australia is probably because of a belief that the word is more a label for social identification and psychological propensity, whereas "prostitute" is more closely linked with the occupation of commercial sex, and is an occupational designation, like "plumber", "bus conductor" or "engineer". In any case, most Sydney prostitutes prefer to be called "working girls".

"Professionals" work full-time or part-time as a prostitute, and sex work is their only source of income, or, at least, is the largest portion of their income if they have two jobs. These women work on the streets, in brothels (parlours, bordellos, or "traps") as "straight" prostitutes, bondage mistresses and escorts, and about a quarter work in private as "call girls" or agency escorts.

Female street prostitution in Sydney occurs regularly in three areas: the heart of the commercial section of Kings Cross; along William Street, which connects Kings Cross to the city centre; and on Canterbury Road, a major arterial road in the western suburbs. Each of these areas has a slightly different mode of operation, and these will be described in turn.

Kings Cross streetwalkers stand against walls and shopfronts on the footpaths of the well-lit "red light" streets within close proximity to private hotels or rooms rented for the purpose of taking



clients. The usual method of operation is for a prostitute to initiate contact with a male pedestrian by asking him if he wants a "girl". But a male strolling the area with prostitution in mind might initiate contact by asking a prostitute how much "she is". Most of the clients are tourists, country visitors, young men from the outer suburbs having a "night out" in the Cross, and sailors from the nearby naval base. Very few married men in Sydney risk chatting to a street prostitute under the area's bright lights with its milling crowds in case someone known to them spots them.

Kings Cross street working attire is quite mixed, from jeans and little make-up to sexy dresses and heavy make-up. The women who choose tight-fitting garments that show off their figures to advantage usually do the most business. The women claim that red and black (most especially), either together or alone, seem to have the best effect, and spiked-heel shoes attract most clients.

In such a confined area competition is strong and each woman has a well-defined working space ("her spot"), which she guards jealously. Vigorous objection follows any encroachment on this space, occasionally leading to violence between contending parties. Sometimes an innocent female visitor to the Cross finds herself at the receiving end of a prostitute's verbal abuse when she unwittingly stands on a claim. Arrangements are often made between women so that each is aware on which particular days or nights she has a right to work on a particular location.

The professional pimp has gone nowadays, and is replaced by the "sitter" as protector against male violence. These are usually lovers of the women or hired off-duty club bouncers, and they pass the time sitting in nearby coffee shops or lounging on cars where they can keep an eye on their girlfriends or charges.

Since most of the streetwalkers are addicts, a high customer turnover is preferred as this brings the most money in the shortest space of time. Thus, "short time" or the "quickie" is aimed for with prices between \$30 and \$50, depending on whether the client is prepared to haggle and whether the service will include halfstrip (removing the woman's top) or not. The absolute minimum is fellatio or coitus removing only the woman's panties and taking only five to fifteen minutes. An efficient worker will be back on the street soliciting within half-an-hour.

Street working on William Street is quite different to Kings Cross. Rather than take their clients to hotels or flatettes, most

women on William Street pay for the use of rooms in nearby houses leased by enterprising entrepreneurs. Instead of individual spaces, they stand on the street in clusters, according to the proximity of these houses. Thus, these women are found to cluster about street corners about 100 metres from the house of their choice. Each house has a hired "sitter" whose job it is to organise rooms as the prostitutes arrive with their clients, and to deter violence from aggressive customers.

This does not imply a cooperative effort in business. In fact competition is even fiercer on William Street, where potential clientele come from passing male motorists. The object then is to catch the eye of the cruising motorists, rather than attract men with conversation as in Kings Cross. The dress of William Street workers is scantier and more revealing than in Kings Cross, with short skirts, leotards and fish-net stockings bringing attention to the legs, or wearing eye-catching colours and dazzling outfits. Also unlike Kings Cross, the men driving along William Street are more likely to be married Sydney residents, preferring the anonymity of traffic lines to the bright lights of Kings Cross.

When a car pulls up at the William Street kerbside, the driver will beckon to the woman of his choice. She will approach the vehicle from the passenger side and speak to the man through the open window, careful not to place her head inside the car and thus avoid the possibility of being seized by the hair and dragged in. The bargaining of services and prices is conducted between the man and the woman through this open window, he attempting to obtain a maximum service for a minimum fee, she trying to get agreement on the minimum service for the maximum fee, until eventually a compromise is arrived at. Then the woman will point to the house where the service will take place and agree to meet him outside. Most of these women have learned through experience not to enter the client's car, but to see him on their terms, in a house well protected by a "sitter" and the presence of other people.

Nearly all of the William Street women are addicts. They are strictly forbidden to take drugs on the house premises by the "sitter" and shooting-up inside will result in instant dismissal. In the past, less scrupulous house owners and "sitters" actually dealt in drugs, but nowadays the women have to arrange to meet their drug dealers outside.



Operations on Canterbury Road are similar to William Street in that potential clientele are motorists cruising along the kerbside. But there are no houses to which the women might take their clients and they are forced to use the men's cars for servicing. Consequently the women are strung out along a four and a half kilometre stretch of road. Some of the women claim that the lack of organisation means less competition and greater business. But, of the three areas of street prostitution, in the opinion of most streetwalkers interviewed Canterbury Road is the least desirable. Having to resort to "car jobs" increases the risk of injury and being robbed considerably. Furthermore, the relative isolation of the Canterbury Road worker compared to say, William Street, is a potential risk from misogynist men with no intention of paying for sex. Because of the proximity of dwellings, schools, churches and a hospital on this road, it means few locations are "legal", unlike Kings Cross and William Street, and the Canterbury Road worker is at constant risk of arrest. The quieter area attracts more drug dealers in cars and also increases the risk of arrest for the women caught in possession of recently purchased quantities of drugs.

The public exposure is one disadvantage that deters most prostitutes from choosing to work on the streets. Violence is also more prevalent here than in any other form of prostitution. Bashings, robbery, rape are just some of the hazards, usually associated with "car jobs". But others include street violence, which means that avoidance of "car jobs" is no guarantee of eliminating injury. One woman in 1985 was lassoed on William Street by young maniacs in a car who then accelerated, dragging her behind the vehicle. Verbal abuse and ridicule from passers-by is another hazard, which can be emotionally debilitating unless the street worker can develop a psychological barrier to the jibes and barbs and learn to deal with these by clever repartee or ignore them. Much of this negative interaction with passers-by is linked with the community's overall difficulty in accepting the presence of street women, and it undoubtedly reflects a recent popular sentiment that prostitution is acceptable so long as it is not too visible.

But street prostitution has some advantages too. Firstly, it allows bargaining with customers, and providing the minimum of service means it is the most lucrative form of sex work. This makes it especially attractive to heavy drug users. The low overheads for an independent street worker, whose only major outlay is nightly rent of



a room, and the flexibility enabling a street worker to work as long as she likes, or for only a brief time, provides her with control and manipulation of her working life. For some women standing out in the open, exposed to the gaze and scorn of all, threatened by the potential danger, risking limb and reputation, filled with the mixed emotions of fear, tension and excitement, street working offers an adventure matched by few other everyday experiences available to women. For these women standing alone on the street late at night is the female equivalent to a man's adventure into unmapped territory.

In October 1986, at the beginning of this study, 71 brothels (parlours or bordellos) existed across the Sydney metropolitan region. Three years later, when writing this book, exactly 61 remained. Although this latter figure includes a few new premises, many more had disappeared altogether. The decline was due to some forced closure under the *Disorderly Houses Act*, but most closed down because of a general decline in business. Although public fear of AIDS has been largely responsible for this downtrend, much of it is also due to the gradual decline in commercial sex with the increase in casual sex in society over the past 20 years. This will be discussed at length later, but, for the moment, let us look at Sydney's brothel industry in some detail.

"Brothel" is a general term used to describe houses of prostitution and assignation. In Sydney, however, it is a specific term within the sex industry for the little houses in East Sydney. They have been a part of a tradition of brothels located in East Sydney, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills for well over half a century, directly descended from Tilly Devine's Palmer Street trade and the little brothels of the lanes in the 1960s. In 1983 22 of these houses existed throughout East Sydney and Darlinghurst. Three years later only four remained, and still remain today. The rest had been forced into closure by the *Disorderly Houses Act*, the City Council and the local resident action lobby. It was definitely the end of an era. But it is ironic that it should have survived the extensive police pressures of the past only to end in a period of "decriminalisation".

The operation of the East Sydney brothels is traditional. One or two women usually occupy one of these little terrace houses at a time. They stand in an open doorway to attract attention from passing male pedestrians and motorists. Their dress is similar to the women on William Street. The open door and red light are the signals indicating that the house is a brothel. When the door is open, it acts

to invite men to step inside and inquire of the prices and services. When it is closed it signifies that the occupants are busy. Furniture and decor in these places are minimal and not intended to impress visitors. Instead this indicates cheap prices and quick service. Bargaining and "short time", like streetwalkers, are the preferred options. These places have an advantage for the client, according to Lisa, who, like most of the workers in these brothels, is a "professional" of many years and gained her apprenticeship on the streets in the late 1950s and in the lanes in the 1960s:

Men feel comfortable coming to our houses. They don't want to go to a massage parlour and be asked if they want all weird and wonderful things. They just want to come in here, have sex, pay their money and go. Young girls rush them; they are frightened if they go with the girls around the Cross they will be ripped off. They like the homey atmosphere of our houses. They feel safe here, and they know that if they leave their wallet on the dressing table and they come back in an hour you're going to give it to them. They know they're not going to catch anything, and no one's going to bash them over the head. They feel welcomed and they know they can come in, sit down and watch television.

The other kind of brothel is much more extensive. Colloquially it is referred to as "parlour", having derived from the term "massage parlour" and probably introduced into Sydney in the late 1960s (with the demise of the brothels in the lanes) from an American West Coast concept of disguising a brothel as a massage clinic in order to avoid the law. In the 1970s Sydney parlours, like their American counterparts, had prostitutes dressed in the white uniforms of a masseuse, massage tables instead of beds, and no condoms on the premises, so as to minimise arrest. Most parlours were also paying police as much as \$1000 a month to "turn the other way". But with the changes in law in 1979, this subterfuge and extortion was no longer necessary and "massage parlours" became brothels, plainly and simply. It is possible that some police corruption continued by using threats of arrest of managers for living on the earnings.



Parlours can be divided into a number of "types". For example, at one end of the trade is the average suburban parlour, with its armchair comfort but lacking exotic and expensive looking trimmings. At the other end are the elaborate, extravagantly decorated, "haute classe" parlours, which one well-known manager of the famous "Touch of Class" parlour, the late Zara Powell insisted should be referred to as bordellos (Reines 1985). These are mostly found in the inner city suburbs of Potts Point and Surry Hills. A third type might be the so-called "Asian parlours", which have Asiatic decor and employ Asian (mostly Thai) immigrant women. Finally, there are the few bondage and discipline parlours, which cater for speciality services involving sado-masochism, fantasy jobs and other "kinky" sex.

The usual parlour arrangement involves an owner, a manager, a receptionist, and a number of prostitutes. Sometimes the owner and the manager are the same person, and sometimes the receptionist has the job of managing the premises. The manager's role is to organise shifts by rostering each prostitute's working time throughout the week; to keep a ledger of cash received and paid out; to organise a linen service or the washing; to purchase toiletries, bathroom and other items; to pay prostitutes their earnings at the finish of their shifts; and to hire and fire staff. The receptionist's role is to answer the phone, make appointments for clients, answer the door, and see to the client's comfort in the waiting room. Although receptionists are not usually assigned authority over the prostitutes, those who have never previously worked in the sex industry sometimes assume a position of superiority over prostitutes based on the common social designation of whores as low status women. Ironically, under the present legal situation receptionists are vulnerable to arrest for "living on the earnings of a prostitute" while the prostitutes have legal status.

When a customer walks into a parlour without a prior appointment, he is the immediate focus of attention. The receptionist offers him a complimentary drink and then advises the prostitutes on duty so that they might see him for a selection. The receptionist is anxious to process her part in the operation so as to minimise the time she must spend pampering to his needs in the preparatory stage. She is also often anxious for him to be taken to a room by one of the prostitutes quickly to avoid becoming a sexual object herself. Men entering a brothel assume that all the women inside are available for



their sexual whims, otherwise, they rationalise, whatever are they doing there? However, prostitutes make themselves available in the brothel; receptionists never do.

The system of selection is not always the same in every parlour. In some the client enters a lounge room and is seated among the workers, so that he may select the woman of his choice after a look around and a short conversation involving all of them. In others, each worker on duty enters the waiting room individually so that the client might choose one of them after a series of such entrances and exits. A number of parlours parade their workers in a line, known to some prostitutes by the derogatory term of "meat rack", in order for the client to size each woman up and compare them before he makes his choice. Whichever selection process is used it has the effect of putting the women in a competitive relationship with one another. Some prostitutes, critical of this system, argue that a client is looking for sex and anyone of the women would do. But a tradition of selection has evolved over the years, so that customers expect to see a number of available women, and this does nothing more than feed their egos and vanities.

Most suburban parlours operate on a two shift basis (16 hours) while many of the inner city premises have three shifts and are open 24 hours a day. Women who have been with the same parlour for some time are in the best position to obtain shifts suitable to other routines in their lives and most convenient to their regular customers. Newcomers usually end up with the shifts no-one else wants.

Unlike the streets and the East Sydney brothels, prices in a parlour are fixed by the management and the customer pays for the prostitute's time, rather than a minimum or maximum service. Thus for half an hour of her time a man might pay \$70 to \$90, depending on the place, or, for an hour of her time he is expected to pay \$100 to \$150, and so on. This usually entitles him to fellatio and coitus (as many times as the man is capable of in the allotted time) and any other kind of sexual activity carries an extra fee, or is negotiable with the prostitute. In most parlours, prostitutes are obliged only to participate in masturbation, fellatio or coitus. If a woman is averse to other forms of sex or "kinky" sex, she may decline the request and refer the customer to a bondage house.

The amount of money a prostitute is credited with by being selected by a number of clients in her shift is usually split 50/50 with the house. Thus, if a woman sees 10 men in a shift and each sees her

for half an hour at \$70 per half hour, she brings in \$700 and takes home \$350 as her earnings. Some premises expect "shift money" or \$20 to \$50 per shift from each prostitute as well, others charge for use of toiletries or drink money, all of which most workers interpret as exploitation. But the practice of "extras" is declining because with decreasing business and fewer workers, most parlour owners are anxious to attract more prostitutes to their premises. In an effort to increase the number of workers, some parlours have even made the split 60/40 in the prostitute's favour.

The big inner city parlours attract more workers because their appearance and reputations are assumed to have a higher turnover of clientele. Some of these fabulous parlours, with their plush, luxurious and expensive interiors, have cost as much as a quarter of a million dollars just to renovate. Customers are waited on by a manager making certain their needs are served, by a receptionist introducing them to the workers, and by a drink waitress serving the complimentary beverage. Each man is ushered into a different waiting room, giving him the impression of exclusivity, and ensuring his every whim is satisfied. Many women interviewed have expressed dissatisfaction after having worked in these places, which usually expect them to dress in designer clothes, wear expensive jewellery and have their hair dressed at the most exclusive salons, all at their own expense. In others, there is a list of workers' earnings displayed for all to see, with the name of the week's highest earner placed on the top each week. If a woman's name consistently appears on the bottom she is fired. Intended to motivate ambition in individuals in a spirit of "fair" competition, it promotes envy, suspicion and lack of confidence. Resentment among the workers in this kind of atmosphere is high, and women have pointed out that rather than a "fair" arrangement, high earning power depends on a number of factors other than an individual's ability, personality and looks. It depends on such factors as one's shift (night workers tend to do better than day workers), one's personal commitments restricting her to daytime work, the inconsistency of client turnover, and favouritism with a boss. A system intending to increase business, often actually has the reverse effect with a rapid turnover of resentful women.

Relations between workers and management varies considerably from parlour to parlour. The assumption that a female boss in a female parlour is a better arrangement than a male boss is



not always correct. Some men in charge are considerate towards their staff, and some women in charge act like tyrants. About half of the parlours are managed by men and about half by women (although in many instances the owner is a man), but the problems that most often occur between a boss and a worker are more often due to poor industrial relations than unequal gender relations. There are, of course, instances where male bosses sexually harass their staff and some expect to sleep with new workers to "try them out". But, some workers claim to prefer male bosses because they are easier to manipulate than a female boss. Most workers, though, express a preference for a female boss, regardless of how tyrannical she might be, because female bosses are more likely to have a greater concern for health and safety in the workplace. Women managers will appreciate the need for mandatory condom use in a parlour more than men in charge, who, like the client believe that condoms are a barrier to satisfactory sex. Female bosses are also more likely to have empathy for a worker suffering menstrual tension and not assume it to be a ploy for avoiding work, as some men are likely to do. On the other hand, female bosses are more likely to detect a sham when it occurs.

The crux of the tension in industrial relations in the brothel trade is linked to a conflict of interests. The boss is motivated by profit; the worker by personal feelings. Thus, the boss expects the worker to see every client, unless he is diseased or violent, and is not prepared to accept her reluctance on grounds of physical repulsion or her fatigue. Some bosses believe their workers are basically lazy, and even rejecting a client under suspicion of infection is considered an excuse to avoid work. Seeking a second opinion on a client's state of health serves two purposes: to assure the worker that she assessed correctly; to convince the boss that she wasn't lying. A client sitting too long in a waiting room is assumed by some bosses to be one of the worker's boyfriends hanging around or a drug dealer. They want clients processed in a parlour like an assembly line, with their workers tirelessly doing the processing like machines. The human factor of weariness, and inability to function varying from individual to individual after a given time, and the psychological limitations to repetition are rarely considered in the quest for profit. When workers complain of overwork, a boss might put on more staff, which then increases competition between workers, builds up staff tensions, and contributes to resentment among workers for the inevitable lowering



of income. Unlike other industries, prostitutes have no union or industrial arbitration to turn to when they feel dealt with unfairly.

Like any other work situation the presence of a boss in a parlour increases tension and decreases efficiency. The workers become nervous under a belief that the boss is scrutinising their work, while the boss is suspicious in the belief that the workers are "ripping him/her off" by wasting time or dissatisfying customers. Any worker who spends too long in a room with a client or appears to be too nice to a customer, is often suspected of making private arrangements either to get extra money from the client and thereby short-change the boss, or to see the client outside and thereby deprive the boss of regular income. The problems of the brothel are often not so much related to police harassment, customer aggression or prying officials, but more usually due to the day-to-day administration of the place.

The ultimate solution for most Australian prostitutes in Sydney when they feel they are being exploited, harassed and abused is to move to another parlour where the conditions are more satisfactory. But that is often impossible for the immigrant prostitute, especially if she is in this country illegally. Most of the immigrant prostitutes are Thai, but large numbers also come from Cambodia, the Philippines or China. Even with a three or six-month visa it does not permit them to work in Australia. But many continue to stay and work in Australia after their visas expire, which means they become illegal aliens and as such are targeted by federal immigration officers. These women are often caught in an economic dilemma. Most have borrowed heavily from opportunistic agents in their own countries to travel here. These agents are operating an illegal trafficking business and the fees they offer to accrued interest for arranging passage are highly inflated. One Thai woman claimed she had a debt of \$21,000 to these agents, but more often the debts range between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per woman. Since many of the women come from poverty stricken families, and they believe Australians to be extremely wealthy, they grasp the opportunity to work in Australia as prostitutes in the firm belief that they will pay off the debt well before their visas expire and have ample cash to send back to their families. Invariably, they not only fail to do so but often accrue a further debt in order to pay the first and end up on a treadmill of prostitution and debt peonage.

Arrangements for a working venue are usually made in advance by the foreign agents through contacts in Australia, so that the Thai woman with no knowledge of English will be taken to a parlour soon after she arrives. Most (but not all) of the brothels receiving the immigrant prostitutes are the "Asian" parlours, so-called because of a decor of pagoda gables, rice-paper lanterns, Chinese screens, prints and other objects, and the Buddhist shrines (used as altars for prayers and offerings by the women). Most of the clientele are South-East Asian men resident in Australia, with the occasional overseas visitor and Australian male looking for an "exotic" experience. Because most of the workers are in similar circumstances, these parlours act as a cultural refuge in an alien and sometimes hostile world beyond. Faced with the reality of a much smaller income than anticipated, many of these women are forced to work double shifts, or 16 hours a day, seven days a week, in an effort to rid themselves of their debts and send relief back to their families. Thus, it is not whips, chains or locked rooms keeping these women tied to a ceaseless life of commercial sex but debt, poverty and a genuine fear for their safety if they return to their homelands still owing the traffickers.

Very different is the situation in the bondage parlours. The women who work in these places are among the most assertive and independent in the sex industry. As Marie put it: "in bondage I can have a say in my working conditions to a certain extent". Few other sex workers have the same amount of control over their working environment as the bondage mistresses. Bosses often do not interfere with the way they conduct their work, because in some instances the boss does not understand sado-masochism and fantasy and feels more comfortable keeping his or her distance. In the case of the ex-mistress who is a boss, she understands that this kind of work is a highly personal experience in which the mistress achieves the most efficient business if left to her own devices. Experienced mistress Fatale explains her situation:

I like working in a dungeon where it is quiet and I have full control over the environment. I put on music which I know will heighten the experience. I am conscious of every move I do, and it is an exercise in all my skills.



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The compatibility with her working environment can be explained as being an extension of her private preferred home environment:

I feel comfortable in the dungeon. It's like the way I live at home, in total darkness, like a cave, and this is how I am. My home is like a dungeon and a dungeon is like my home, so I am going from one comfortable environment to another as I go from home to work.

To enter a bondage parlour is like passing into another world; a world of science fiction, of fairy tale, or Disneyland, or of a Hollywood set for a Gothic horror movie. The lighting is dim, reminding one of gaslight, and the hallway walls are festooned with chains, whips and graphic images of torture and pain. The dungeon is the centre piece of this world; a large room painted black and red, with racks, torture wheels, ceiling harnesses, a complete set of whips and canes of every imaginable type on display, and leather suits for confining movement, like the ancient straight jackets of medieval torture chambers. But the dungeon is not the only room in the house for client fantasies. For those with transvestite fantasies there is a "tranny" room, by contrast well-lit, and decorated with fluffy, frilly ultra-feminine dresses, rows of over sized stiletto-heeled shoes, and a dressing table that would make a film star envious. There is also a medical room, equipped with an operating table, charts and pictures of male and female anatomy on the walls, and every conceivable cutting, slicing, pulling, grasping surgical instrument available. Water sports with enemas and urinal pans are usually conducted in this room too. Then there are schoolrooms, baby rooms, kindergartens, the variation from house to house is endless. Like most parlours, bondage houses have a "girl's room" where the women can relax between sessions, adjust make-up, hair and clothing, and chat about the last client. Where most prostitutes in other parlours change into conventional garments in this room at the start of a shift, mistresses will be stepping into rubber outfits, zipping up studded leather garments, bat-suits, nurses, teachers or infant costumes ready for a day's work.

According to brothel workers, working in a parlour has one distinct advantage over working the streets: it is a safer, more secure environment. For a lonely woman, working in a parlour can offer an



opportunity for regular contact with other women and even for striking up friendships. Cameraderies between brothel workers are not unusual because of the ample time to communicate with one another between visits by clients, especially since they have shared experiences at work, regardless of their individual backgrounds. There is less opportunity for this on the street, and whatever bonds form among streetwalkers these tend to be more often related to the after hours common experiences of scoring from the same dealers and using drugs together.

But brothel workers also express some disadvantages to working in a parlour. High among these are the restricted working hours, splitting half the takings with the house, and the imbalance of power with the boss in command dictating working conditions. Another common complaint, especially where workers are not communicative, is boredom, sitting around waiting for the next client. Some workers blame their high level of smoking and drinking on this. For avid readers and students filling in time with an assignment, this is less of a problem, and may even be an advantage. But for some women, the parlour can be a lonely, tedious, stultifying environment relieved only by the occasional session with a client. Where intra-staff relations or relations between staff and management are strained, the confined space of the parlour can intensify disharmony and alienation, and a petty disagreement might trigger off months of tension and exacerbate an already explosive situation. While this sort of situation can arise in any workplace, in a brothel, where there is an atmosphere of sexual tension, anxieties about clients, perhaps anxieties about one's own role, and the constant fear of public exposure, strained industrial or staff relations will exaggerate events to such a level that resolution becomes impossible. This kind of situation can encourage an ex-streetwalker, who may have left the streets because of the daily hassles of visible prostitution, to return to the free-ranging life of street soliciting.

Escort work also takes place in a brothel which offers house or hotel calls. An available brothel worker will be sent by taxi or hired driver to the place designated by the client over the phone. It works much the same way for escorts attached to an agency independent of the brothel trade. In either case escorts split the take 50/50, but there is a better opportunity of obtaining a fat tip or "extras" from a satisfied client in the afterglow of a good night out.

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Zoe is an escort worker for an agency. She describes the arrangement thus:

I would phone up and tell them I would be on call that night. Then I got dressed ready to go out, and sat home waiting for the phone to ring. They might ring from the agency and say there's a client at the Menzies Hotel, or whatever, a business man with a Bankcard for two hours at \$125 an hour. I would catch a cab to the hotel, meet the client in the bar, fill in the Bankcard or take the money, phone through to the office to tell them I've arrived, have a drink with the client and go out or up to his room. Most of the work was fairly chatty, chatting about his business or silly small talk, do the job in his room, and then phone through after it to let them know I've finished.

Escort work can sound glamorous and exciting, especially with a client with a high public profile. But it can also be the most dangerous of all prostitution work, as Zoe points out:

The job risk is much higher than in parlours. You are very vulnerable in the client's room and have no control over the situation, which can be pretty frightening if things get nasty. You always let the client know that you have to phone the office before and after the job so that he is aware that you are being guarded. If you haven't phoned in an hour after you've told the office you've arrived when you are booked for an hour job, presumably they would send someone out looking for you. But meantime you could be dead.

What is referred to as "private prostitution" in Sydney is the equivalent to the work of the American "call girl". This is the most clandestine operation of the "professional" forms of prostitution. The most basic example is one or two women in a rented flat answering phone calls from clients (thus, the term "call girl") and making appointments to see them in the flat. The number of women involved in one such business can be as high as four or five. There are also situations where a person rents an apartment or house and hires a few



women as "call girls". The owner-manager might take all incoming calls and arrange the appointments. Although this kind of arrangement has all the earmarks of privacy and exclusivity, and certainly no one is seen without an appointment, in structure it is more like a mini-parlour than an independent "call girl" business.

In October 1987 I estimated there were some 76 "private prostitution" businesses (see p.64), and taking two sources in September and November 1989 there were a total of about 161 "private" and escort operations. To gain an impression of numbers of private operations the advertisements in two major weekly publishing outlets for prostitute advertisers, viz. *Naughty Sydney*, 8 September 1989, and *Wentworth Courier*, 1 November 1989. Under the column heading of "Home Entertainments" in *Naughty Sydney* were 46 entries; but after eliminating all duplicate phone numbers the total left was 38 businesses. Under the column heading of "Escort Services" in *Naughty Sydney* were 62 entries; but after eliminating all duplicate phone numbers and the obvious parlour advertisements the total left was 44 businesses. Under the column heading of "Personal" in *Wentworth Courier* were 175 entries, but excluding those for "straight" massage, male escorts, "call boys" and obvious parlours, the total left was 102 businesses. Adding all three totals together (that's  $38 + 44 + 102$ ) the number of entries was 184; but after eliminating all phone numbers duplicated from one column to the next the final total is 161 businesses. Consideration, however, should be given to the probability of some businesses with two or more phone numbers which are impossible to determine by looking at the entries. It is likely that, if known, the elimination of these would reduce the total quite significantly. This estimation does not necessarily mean that the number of "call girls" has doubled, but, applying the "rule of thumb" approach of 1987, and comparing this with the decline in numbers of parlours, there does seem to be some correlation between the decrease in one and the increase in the other. Ignoring probable discrepancies due to some businesses with two or more telephone numbers, and what appears to be a much higher ratio of single workers in 1989 than in 1987, the calculated average of two workers per business decided on in the 1987 estimates will give us a total of 322 women, compared to only 152 in 1987. Since as many as 10 parlours have closed between 1986 and 1989, it might be argued that 170 more "call girls" in 1989 represents the shift of previous parlour workers into private operations. Such a calculation, however,



especially without knowledge of actual individuals involved in this surmised relocation, should be treated with caution, and used as a guide to possible trends only. Can this mean that "private prostitution" has become more attractive to those "professional" prostitutes as business in general declines in the sex industry?

Private prostitution depends solely on advertisements for recruiting business. The amount of new business acquired through word of mouth is almost negligible and certainly not sufficient to maintain a business. The trick to advertising prostitution is not to be blatant so as to attract the law prohibiting the advertisement of commercial sex, yet to make it obvious to the male reader what the advertiser intends. This can be done without mentioning sexual services (which also contravenes the obscene publication law) nor prices because the implications are potent enough for the interested parties. Advertising prostitution is highly competitive and for the "call girl" totally dependent on it she has to offer a "personal service" in order to compete with the big parlours, and she must individualise her advertisement to attract the potential client searching for his special sexual fantasy in order to compete with other "call girls". The result is often highly imaginative text, coupled with wit and a childish prattle which seems to accompany the fantasies of male sexuality. Some advertisements pander to male fantasies for exotica, others to coquettishness, and yet others to a kind of adolescent or infantile sex romp. A few examples of the text of these advertisements will suffice to illustrate the point:

### **Exotica**

Oriental Delights Excitingly different International ladies of your choice. Try our new Spanish and Indonesian delight

Mediterranean Magic New to Sydney, leggy attractive lady, black hair, fair skin and very, very friendly

Black is Beautiful So too is Santina

Carribean Beauty Dark hair, dark skin with fabulous body and a soft, caring touch

### **Sex romps**

Leeza is sweet and serene but will make your desires just sizzle with satisfaction. She adores dressing up and will fantasise beyond your wildest dreams.

I'm sensuous & seductive with an unsatiable desire for nice guys who want something different. You do? Mature Lady has some spare time from the housework to entertain the weary businessman.

**Bondage**

Aunt Agatha. Good old fashioned discipline like Auntie used to give.

Obedient Stephanie needs a firm master to make her behave.

Naughty Michelle seeks firm headmaster.

**Haute Classe**

I am a sophisticated intelligent well-bred well spoken lady offering an opportunity for discreet executive to experience... a service in a class of its own.

Source: *Wentworth Courier*, 4 October & 1 November 1989.

The initial contact with the client is by the phone. He may be enquiring about prices, or just trying to find out if the woman on the other end sounds like his fantasy or suits his personality. It is this moment when the "call girl" needs to exercise all her skills at salesmanship, by coming across as pleasant, sexy and nice to be with, without giving too much away. After all, it might be a policeman on the other end and mentioning sex and prices could be construed as advertising. The most successful "call girls" are those with a pleasant disposition on the phone, a sense of wit and alluring. "Crank calls", curious schoolboys and "wankers" (men who telephone to derive sexual gratification from simply listening to a woman's voice) are non-profitable, and the "call girl" has to learn to distinguish these in order to deal with them quickly. While the advertisement might arouse a man's interest, the phone conversation has to make the woman irresistible because even after making an appointment some men fail to keep it. Many clients ring a number of "call girls" and then decide which they most like the sound of.

The "call girl" also needs to be skilful in evaluating her caller by his tone, expression and enquiries in case she invites a dangerous man to her place. But once this is done to her satisfaction and an appointment is made, the next step is to try to develop the new client



into a regular. The business of the "call girl" turns over at a much slower rate than in a brothel, so she needs to cultivate a higher ratio of regular clientele. Men who prefer visiting a "call girl" to visiting a brothel are usually seeking more than sex; they are often looking for a female friend, companion or mistress. The "call girl" recognises this and acts the pseudo-mistress with her regular clients, so that she might have a number of mini-relationships going at the same time. The emotional strain of keeping such pretence going is much more draining than the brothel worker who sees her clients for the express purpose of sexually satisfying them. Although some clients in brothels do develop an attachment for certain women and this adds a strain in the relationship for the workers, the "call girl", from the first visit when the man arrives nervous and uncertain, must appear calm and amicable towards him even though she too might be secretly anxious, and thereafter as he becomes a weekly regular she has to maintain an intense level of intimacy with him. And, while she might be the only woman he has such intimacy with, she is on the same terms with as many as a dozen or more men. The streetwalker who refers to the "call girl" as a "lazy flatbacker" obviously has never been in her situation.

There are certain distinct advantages to the working life of the "call girl". Not the least of these, so far as she is concerned, is the anonymity of the work. Whereas the streetwalker is in public view for all to see, and the brothel worker is occasionally discovered by a man known to her, or worse, a member of her close family (like the Canberra parlour worker whose father walked into her workplace as a client), the "call girl" through the expediency of "sussing" a caller out on the telephone can usually detect anyone known to her. In any case, she can always spot a man who has made an appointment through the "peep-hole" in the door. "Call girls" are usually free agents, whose independence avoids the tensions of industrial relations and intra-staff conflicts sometimes experienced in brothels. Since much of their work is carried out in the daytime, a mother of young children can work as a "call girl" between say 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. by placing her children in a childminding centre or creche as any working mother might. She does not have to abide by a roster system.

The chief disadvantage to working as an independent "call girl", especially if a woman decides to work alone, is the risk of violence. In spite of great skills at detecting a maniac on the phone a



misjudgment sometimes occurs, and then the woman has to call upon all her powers of persuasion and remain calm in a potentially deadly situation if she is to escape injury. If this fails the results are sometimes fatal. The history of prostitution is filled with tragic situations when a woman is alone with a crazed misogynist, like Julie Plater, who was bashed to death on Christmas Eve, 1985, when she saw a man alone in a parlour in Harris Park, or of the horrifying death of the Kings Cross worker who saw a man alone and died with a leg of a chair shoved into her eye and brain.

The heavy dependence upon advertisements is another distinct disadvantage of running a private operation. If a newspaper in which an advertisement appears regularly suddenly decides to cease taking advertisements from prostitutes or deletes the "personal" column a "call girl's" business is drastically affected immediately. When the *Manly Daily* stopped running its "personal column" in 1986 the number of private operations on the North Shore rapidly declined almost overnight (although when another printed outlet was found some re-opened).

These then are the main types of prostitution carried out by "professional" prostitutes in Sydney. As stated at the beginning of this Section they do not differ much from similar operations in other western cities, and if they do differ noticeably it is usually in degree rather than kind. The famous "window" prostitution in Amsterdam, for instance, is not unlike the east Sydney brothels, except the Dutch prostitute sits behind a house window while the Sydney worker stands in a doorway. The women's attire, the male cruising, the bargaining, and closing curtains or door when busy are basically the same; the minor differences are but variations on a theme. Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 (overleaf) show the distribution of sex workers in the Sydney metropolitan region over recent years.

### Entrance into Prostitution

Perhaps the aspect of prostitution which most fascinates many people is why women enter the sex industry in the first place. Many researchers have attempted to answer this by providing psychological motives from events in childhood or early adolescence. But as we have seen, there have been so many conflicting opinions on the subject that little has been gained in this

Figure 4.1: Distribution of streetwalkers, brothels, strip clubs and bars in Kings Cross 1986-89

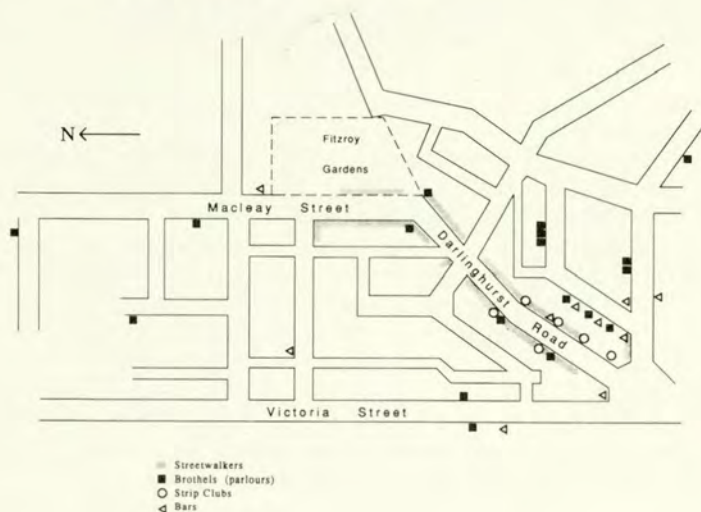
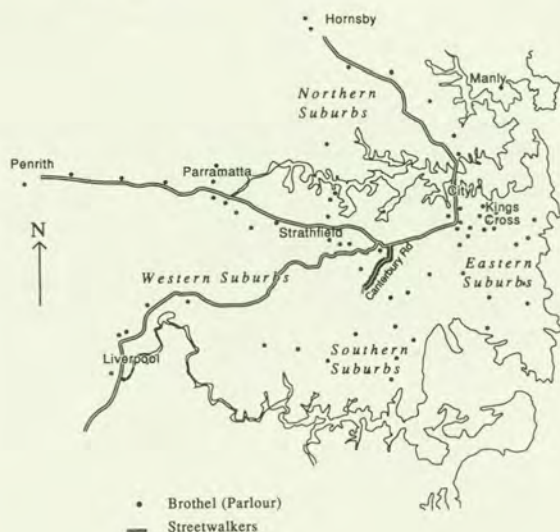


Figure 4.2: Distribution of streetwalkers, brothels and houses of assignation in East Sydney and Darlinghurst 1983-89



Figure 4.3: *Brothels and streetwalkers in Sydney metropolitan area 1986-89*



line of investigation. Jennifer James (1977) found early negative sexual experiences as a possible pre-determining factor for her street and juvenile samples. In the previous Chapter, the present study indicates an early coital experience as a possible predisposing motive for women entering prostitution at a later date, based on a more representative sample of sex workers, and, unlike the studies of James (1977), Mimi Silbert (1982) and Nanette Davis (1971), these early sexual activities were little different in kind to the similar experiences of other women. This Section, however, concerns the immediate motives for women becoming prostitutes, and attempts to reconstruct a scenario linking reasons given by the prostitute sample for entering prostitution, with the findings in the social background variables discussed in the last Chapter.

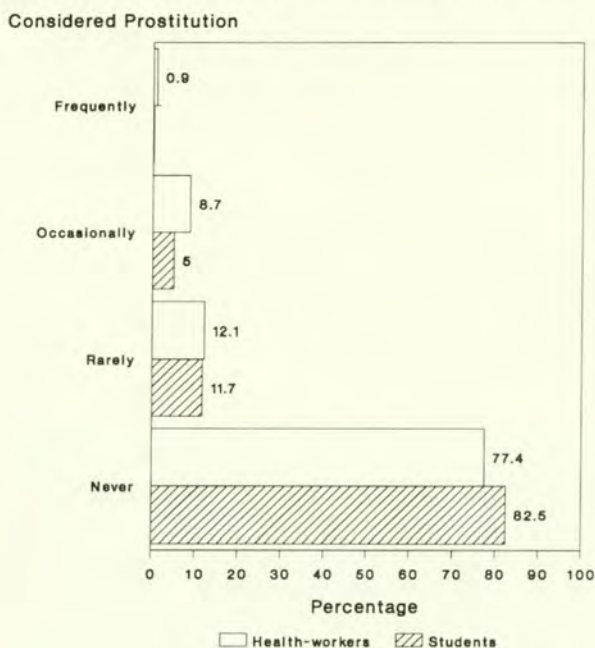
Firstly, it is useful to consider some general social perceptions on why women enter prostitution. The two non-prostitute samples of female university students and health-workers as indicators were asked if they had ever considered taking up prostitution themselves. Keeping in mind that in the preliminary stages of this study 13



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completed questionnaires from these two groups were discarded lest they biased the findings, the balance responded as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: *Extent health-workers (n=115) and students (n=120) have considered prostitution as a job option*



Quite obviously prostitution is largely rejected as a job option. But in view of the high level of social resistance to the sex industry and the negative misconceptions about it, it may be surprising to find so many of the health-workers and students considered it at all, let alone nearly 9 per cent of the original number of respondents to the questionnaire who admitted to actually working as prostitutes. Because the prostitute stereotype is a constant image of the archetypal "bad girl" in the subconscious of most women, it frequently flashes into the conscious mind whenever the individual thinks of "sin", "sexual promiscuity", "wantoness" and other concepts of negative socio-sexual behaviour. Other images, such as

the nun stereotype for "purity", the temptress stereotype for "seductiveness", the virgin stereotype for "innocence", the housewife stereotype for "duty", the mother stereotype for "nurturance", also play their part of emerging from the subconscious whenever the conceptual occasion arises. Women therefore relate to any of these at different times depending on the situation. Thus, a woman who is constantly concerned about her sexual behaviour with men may often fantasise about herself in the role of a prostitute, but she more than likely will never actually take on this role. Many more women imagine themselves as prostitutes than actually become them. Those who do may simply be women who have put their fantasies into reality.

In view of this, the imagined prostitute role will no doubt include motives for entering prostitution. The two samples of non-prostitutes responded to a question on why they thought women entered prostitution. The reasons they gave are listed in Table 4.1.

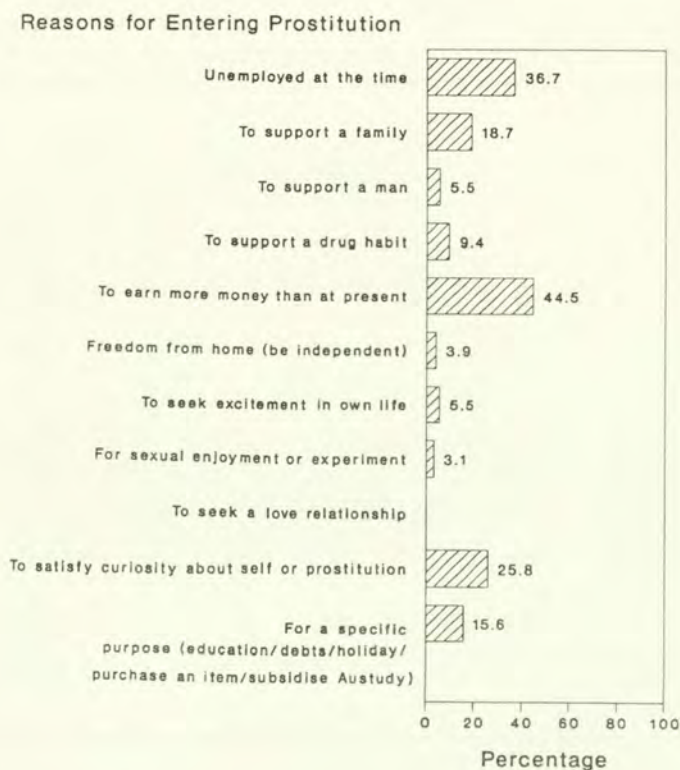
*Table 4.1: Motivations for entering prostitution as perceived by non-prostitutes. Since multiple answers were given by the subjects, percentages are of number of subjects responding to each answer. Each group provided about 500 responses.*

	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Loneliness	17.40	15.00
Seeking love and affection	25.20	19.20
Due to low self-esteem	42.60	34.20
Punishing men by asking payment for sex	05.20	05.00
Nymphomania	09.60	08.30
Sublimated lesbians/denial of lesbianism	03.50	04.20
Uncontrollable as children/delinquents	29.60	40.80
Peer pressure (influenced by girlfriends)	23.50	19.20
Manipulation by pimps	39.10	31.60
To support a drug habit	87.00	91.60
To make a lot of money	41.70	36.60
Financial crisis (unemployed/poverty)	89.60	87.50
Escape mundane existence/boredom at home	14.80	20.80
Other reasons	06.10	04.20

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Very clearly the non-prostitute sample imagine drug-taking and economic imperatives as the most frequent reasons for women entering prostitution. They also imagine that pimp manipulation, greed and a higher income incentive, and a past as uncontrollable children or juvenile delinquency are powerful motives in women becoming prostitutes. It is interesting to note the high ratios of psychological motives, such as low self-esteem, lack of love or affection, loneliness and nymphomania, supposed as underlying reasons for taking up prostitution. The list complements the usual assumptions about prostitutes made in the media, such as drug addiction, pimps, low self-esteem and poverty as the main

*Figure 4.5: Reasons given by prostitutes (n=128) for entering prostitution. These subjects gave multiple answers, so that 216 separate reasons were given. Percentages are of number of subjects to each reason.*





contributors to women's entrance into prostitution. The general assumption here is that prostitution is such an odious existence that no woman in her right mind would freely choose it as an occupation; some powerful driving force over which they have no control gets them involved.

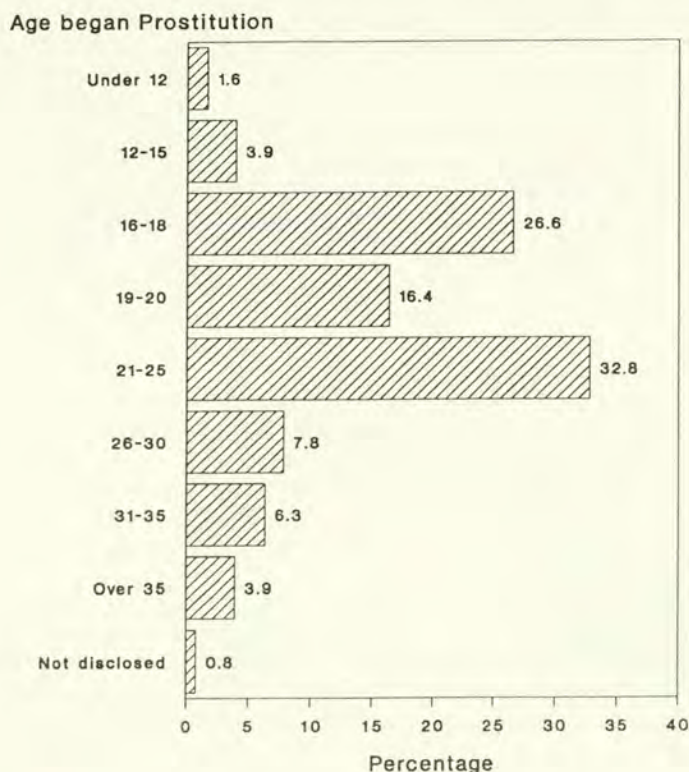
The reasons prostitutes give for having entered the sex industry, however, tell a very different story, as is seen in Figure 4.5.

An immediate contrast with the imagined motivations for entering prostitution suggested by the health-workers and students presents itself. Whereas the non-prostitutes supposed that drug addiction and pimp manipulation were high level motivations for becoming prostitutes, the reality of the prostitute sample is that these feature quite low among motivations. The economic motives of unemployment, supporting families and pursuing higher incomes given by the prostitutes as reasons for their own entrance into the sex industry do coincide more closely with the assumed motives given by the non-prostitutes. Another economic motive often overlooked by non-prostitutes is that of offering commercial sex in order to pay for an education, for money needed to take an overseas trip, to pay off debts, to purchase a car, house or other large expensive item, or for some other specific purpose. It is far from unusual to find a prostitute with a specific goal, giving herself a time span in which to earn a high income and acquire the desired object or objective. The reality is then that the vast majority of prostitutes have entered the business for money and remain in it for money. In other words, prostitutes see and treat prostitution as a job option, unlike most non-prostitutes, who see it as an expression of a psycho-social deficiency.

The age of entrance for the prostitute sample provides further insight into this phenomenon. Figure 4.6 shows the ratios of age groups for commencement of prostitution.

Most prostitutes seem to enter the sex industry in their late adolescence to early twenties. Figure 4.6 shows that over three-quarters were between 16 and 25 when they began working as prostitutes. Very few were in their early adolescence and little over 10 per cent were over 30 when they began. An interesting pattern occurs in the 16 to 25 years age group which would indicate that there are two age periods when large numbers of women enter the sex industry: about mid-adolescence and early twenties. The first period saw the entry of many of those girls who had experienced early coitus. These girls may have been promiscuous teenagers with

Figure 4.6: Age of entrance into prostitution (n=128)



a long history of coital activity, or, just as likely, they may have been girls who found prostitution the only means to pay for their drug habits. The women entering prostitution in their early twenties, on the other hand, are mostly women making clear and rational choices about becoming prostitutes based on a strong economic motive, either in order to pay for an expensive item or some other benefit, or, as Figure 4.5 indicates, due to unemployment or as a means of increasing earning power. Women who choose prostitution as a higher paying occupation represent over 40 per cent of the sample: they are not necessarily poverty stricken women with families, drug

habits and pimps to support. Like many women in their early twenties, they have become dissatisfied with their low-paying jobs and little chance of an early promotion, and sought other means of earning much more in a much shorter span of time. Why prostitution? Well, possibly no other job options for higher earning power are open to them, and maybe, as women confident of their sexuality, prostitution seems attractive to them as mature young women. But it is not that simple. There is one other important, almost essential, ingredient for entering the sex industry which enables the mature woman despondent with her working life to cross the barrier of social taboo and adopt the role of prostitute.

Let us listen to what some of the prostitutes I interviewed have to say. Martine entered the sex industry for a clearly economic purpose:

I didn't have any money and I couldn't get a job. I was very depressed because I couldn't make any money, and I knew women working in bondage and discipline and this sounded too good to be true. It did also fascinate me and I wanted to do it. So I just started because there were opportunities there. I didn't have any trouble getting a job because one of the women running the place was a personal friend of mine.

For Maggie, prostitution seemed to be the fastest way to pay off her debts:

I needed some money because I was having legal hassles and my present job wasn't bringing in enough to pay for this. A girl friend of mine had an escort agency and this seemed the quickest way to get the amount of money I needed.

Laura's decision to become a "call girl" was also economic, but was more spontaneous:

She was the first prostitute I had ever met. She worked privately. I sat around with her listening to her conversations about work, and sat there with my mouth open hearing her on the phone making



appointments. There was my girlfriend, Sharon and Kerry, the prostitute, who needed two girls to see two men. The phone call came and we just happened to be sitting there, and Kerry said: "Oh, come on, I'll dress you and tell you what to do and say. All you have to do is make love to these guys. It will be real easy." We needed some money at the time and we were out of work, so we went and did it and it was real fun. The whole fear was getting over the first time.

Sharleen began working in another area of the sex industry:

I met an old school friend and we had lunch together. She told me she was a prostitute and how much money she made. She asked me if I would "sit" for her one night at five pounds a night (in the 1950s). But the fellows kept asking for me, not her. So, I thought, I must be sitting on a gold mine. And that's how I started.

Caroline had also worked in the sex industry other than as a prostitute before becoming a sex worker herself:

I arrived here without a job or money. Because I had worked as a receptionist it was easy for me to look for a parlour to work in. If I had not worked as a receptionist in a parlour before, there's no way I would have become a prostitute. I would rather have begged on the street than become a prostitute.

Cassandra was paid to babysit for a prostitute's child:

This woman was paying me \$20 to mind her kid, while she came home after four or five hours with \$200 or \$300 for doing you know what. I thought: "Bugger this, why should I put up with her pissy kid when I could be out doing the same thing." I knew a vice cop and he got me a job down here. It's marvellous just how many cops have got girls jobs.

June lived in Kings Cross where she could closely observe the street prostitutes working there:

The first time occurred because I needed money to go overseas; I was determined to go overseas. But it probably wouldn't have happened, or I wouldn't have thought about it, had it not been for the fact that I lived in the Cross, where a lot of my social life was spent. Although I didn't personally know any prostitutes, I knew of many hanging around coffee shops and other places. I thought about prostitution as a possibility to earn money for about a month before I actually tried it.

We have earlier seen how Jeanette's husband turned out to be a pimp and put her on the street (pp. 215-16). Streetwalker Kelly had a very similar experience:

I was living with this guy for four years and his ex-wife was a prostitute. As the years went by I found out he was having an affair with a girlfriend of mine and he started her working. Being as it may, love is blind, and I gave him an ultimatum: if he got rid of her I would start working for him.

Apart from Kelly and Jeanette, these women entered prostitution for economic reasons (although one could argue that pimping is also an economic motive, except the motivation is from the pimp, not the prostitute). But in all of these examples one common factor clearly presents itself. Each of these women knew someone—a friend, a policeman, a prostitute who hires her, or prostitutes and their work generally—before they entered the sex industry. It would appear that for most women an economic imperative or even a psycho-sexual inclination is not enough (otherwise, the argument goes, all poor women and nymphomaniacs would automatically become prostitutes, which, of course, they do not). It seems that just as important as these two factors is the need for a woman to be closely associated with the industry first, or to have acquired some knowledge about it, before she actually takes the step to become a prostitute herself.

But there are exceptions. Marie is one such exception. You will recall that she was raised in a home with exceptionally frank views on sexual behaviour (p. 209). This might indicate that for Marie becoming a prostitute might present less trauma than for most women. However, she entered the sex industry without prior knowledge about it:

I could see my money getting smaller and smaller, and I didn't really want to go back to one of those casual jobs; that kind of thing didn't appeal to me any more. I could easily have got a job and I had lots of offers in the fashion industry, but it just didn't appeal to me. I thought I would like to do something different. I had seen these ads in the paper, which said something like: "ambitious woman wanted." I knew what it meant, but I thought I would ring up and inquire. It took me a whole day to make the phone call, and another whole day for me to get it together to go around there and see them. I was surprised to find the other women there a lot like me because I had expected them to be different, like floozies.

Here is an insight into the reason for so few women entering the sex industry as prostitutes. If a woman with Marie's liberal and open family life was so hesitant when her economic and psychosexual inclinations could have been motivation enough, it is understandable why simply being poor or inclined to promiscuity is not enough for most women not to just contemplate prostitution, (many women do that), but actually to become prostitutes. Knowledge or knowing someone is the key nexus between economic or sexual motives and practising commercial sex. Certainly, those women above, judging by their comments, would never have become prostitutes had it not been for a friend, a cop or contact with the industry previously.

If Marie is an unusual case (and, I must suppose, that there are other women with similar backgrounds who underwent similar experiences), then Katherine's case might even be more unusual.

Because I have been overwhelmingly curious about it, and having lived in London and run a wine bar, I used



to see a lot of guys who needed extra attention. Having given it away for such a long time and feeling that that is not very fulfilling, and having travelled around living out of a rucksack for a few years, I wanted a bit of comfort as well. Not to make a fortune, but just to live comfortably and have a bit of money to spare to help people and involve myself in other areas that I like. Prostitution gives you the security, but it also gives you a lot of free time.

Katherine had an economic motive for entering prostitution, and it seems that her "overwhelming curiosity" might have been the other side to a sex life that was not "very fulfilling". You will recall she had never had an orgasm before the day she began prostitution (p. 220). Obviously there was a very powerful psychosexual motive propelling her towards sexual experimentation. It seems that for her, prostitution was an inevitable conclusion, or, at least, would have eventually been attempted in her quest for fulfilment as a sexual being. As it was she was nearly 33 when she became a prostitute, an age well beyond the average for entrance.

None of this should detract from the fact that overwhelmingly entrance into prostitution is inexorably linked to the economic situation of the women who become prostitutes. In the study of 121 inner city prostitutes in 1983 (Perkins & Bennett 1985, p. 293), over 96 per cent gave an economic reason (including the need for high incomes for supporting a drug habit) for commencing prostitution. According to an American study conducted by John Decker in 1979, 31 per cent of his sample of 29 midwest prostitutes took up commercial sex for entirely economic reasons, 10 per cent did so for psychological reasons, and 59 per cent became involved due to a combination of factors. In a study of 23 street and brothel prostitutes of East Sydney (Perkins & Bennett 1985, p. 291) 61 per cent gave economic reasons for entering the sex industry, 13 per cent were perceived as having done so for psychological reasons, and 26 per cent for combined reasons. Eileen McLeod's (1982, pp. 26-9) study also indicates the extent of unemployment, poverty and low pay in "straight" occupations as motivating factors in the lives of the English prostitutes she investigated. It was clear to all of these researchers that the economic position of women entering prostitution is a reflection of the situation of females generally.

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Table 4.2 shows very clearly the differences in earnings between women and men in the states of Australia.

*Table 4.2: Average weekly earnings for Australian states, 1989*

	Weekly earnings	
	Male	Female
NSW	\$535.70	\$348.90
Vic	\$517.00	\$341.90
Qld	\$481.10	\$314.40
SA	\$484.70	\$321.80
WA	\$543.70	\$330.20
Tas	\$504.80	\$308.90
NT	\$546.50	\$399.10
ACT	\$571.50	\$398.00

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1989, *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia*, Cat. 6302.0.

In spite of women's better education and involvement in the nation's productive output, men still remain the economically privileged sex. Hackneyed arguments to prop up this inequality, such as men need more money as the family "breadwinner", no longer have validity in the face of increases in double-income families, divorce rates and single mothers. The high ratio of single mothers in prostitution is one example of this. Prostitutes generally are women who have tried to address the disparity in wage-earning power by entering the sex industry. But, as we have seen, they are just the tip of the iceberg.

A common assumption exists that prostitutes are women incapable of other kinds of employment. Table 4.3 compares the sample of prostitutes' past work experiences with those of the samples of health-workers and students.

Little separates the three groups in their past work experiences. The relatively high number of previous welfare/health and nursing work experiences among the health-workers is to be expected, but the high ratios of work experience in sales, office work and the service industry among the prostitutes may surprise some people. Popular perceptions might have assumed a much higher ratio

*Table 4.3: Previous work experiences of prostitutes, health-workers, students.**Multiple responses with 424 work experiences of prostitutes, 409 of health-workers, 338 of students.*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Factory work	32.00	18.30	16.70
Service industry	47.70	36.50	34.20
Transport industry	04.70	02.60	02.50
Office work	46.90	34.80	48.30
Sales work	49.20	32.20	55.80
Sex industry (stripping)	07.00	01.70	00.00
Theatre	11.70	11.30	05.80
Welfare/health	07.00	63.50	18.30
Domestic work	28.90	24.40	25.00
Nursing	14.80	71.30	20.00
Teaching	05.50	15.70	10.00
Other professions	03.10	02.60	03.30
Arts	10.20	05.20	05.00
Administrative	10.90	13.00	02.50
Housewifery	32.80	14.80	23.30
Other work	17.20	07.80	09.20
Never worked before	01.60	00.00	01.70

of other sex work, such as stripping and pornographic movies, for the prostitutes. But the most instructive finding here is the low ratio of prostitutes who had never had any other work experiences. What this configuration indicates is that prostitutes are women who have emerged from the general workforce; prostitution is not their first and only work.

A comparison of Table 4.3 with the national census on women in the workforce in Table 4.4 proves interesting.

A glance at both Tables 4.3 and 4.4 will show that the prostitutes' past job experiences, not unlike the national census, has a high percentage of clerks, sales and service workers, a low percentage of para-professionals, and a medium percentage of the physical work of labourers (factory and domestic work). Little can be



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Table 4.4: *Female occupations in Australia, 1989*

	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>% of female wage earners</i>
Managers/administrators	189,800	5.64
Professionals	375,100	11.15
Para-professionals (nurses, technicians, etc.)	202,300	6.01
Tradespersons	124,300	3.69
Clerks	1,011,600	30.07
Salespersons/personal service workers	729,100	21.67
Plant/machinery operators/transport driver	102,700	3.05
Labourers (factory hands, cleaners)	420,800	12.51
Registered unemployed	208,700	6.20

Source : Australian Bureau of Statistics 1989, *Labour Force, Australia*, Cat. 6203.0

Comparing this Table 4.4 with Table 3.11 reveals certain sharp contrasts with male occupations; eg. three times as many men in management/administration, eight times as many men as tradespersons, five times as many women as clerks, three times as many men as plant/machinery operators and transport drivers.

gleaned from this profile, however, that might provide some indication of the prostitutes as a group of women with special work skills. In fact, on the contrary, they appear to be a highly diversified group. But if anything, their work experiences do seem to lean towards the lower paid occupations of factory work, office work, sales work, domestic work and work in the service industry. This might explain why prostitution might appear an attractive economic alternative to the women involved in those occupations, but it does not help us to understand why women in high paid administrative occupations or in arts with a high level sense of creative achievement would turn to prostitution.

Fatale, you may recall, is the bondage mistress with a close affinity with her working environment (p. 243). She is also an artist, and to understand this side of her is to understand why an artist could find sex work attractive. She tells us something of her background:

I've been a landscape artist, professionally. I've made money out of performances, and I've done art work

both for nothing and for remuneration. And I've played in bands professionally, and as a professional musician I've taken part in sculptural performances. I'm working in a band at the moment on the performance piece called "Lady Macbeth", extracted from Shakespeare, of course.

She describes a period of her career as a sculptor, which she quite clearly associates with her role as a bondage mistress in one of Sydney's best known parlours:

I started doing little sculptures called "cult objects", which were suitable expressions of my own suffering. They represented a mythical evolution, which I had created myself for figurines showing stages in this evolution. They were quite distorted with their facial expressions of agony and ecstasy. They all appeared androgynous, except the last figure, which looked as though it were pregnant. Having had the kind of childhood that I have already spoken to you about [p. 199], I became fascinated by these images coming before me. I wished to express some kind of ecstasy inside the pain of my own past, and I was drawn to the images of our cultural past for inspiration, such as Christian iconography, like Bernini's "St Theresa". I actually did a piece on St Theresa's ecstasy, an installation involving a painting and, since I'm a symbolist, an electric fan to symbolise energy, and a turning crucifix as a mesmerising object. In addition, I included a film of Bernini's sculpture with the camera scanning the length of St Theresa's body. I was definitely struck by the state of agony and ecstasy shown on Theresa's face. I suppose this state might be described as "masochist in tendency". Now my little figurines also expressed that state with the higher order of St Theresa, and I think that state is related to the primal substances that are a part of our inherent nature. In a lot of primitive cultures this state is in evidence through the shamanistic rituals of pain involved with an ecstatic experience. I am drawn to

that state and empowered by it. A lot of my sexual pleasure derives from it. You might call me a masochist, but I think sadism is a primal state too, so the two go together. By doing sex work I am in touch with other people's energies, and I don't mean just physical energy either, but mental and spiritual energies as well; I mean primal energies. As an artist I've made it a goal to tap deep into the recesses of my own being and I think I have been given a gift to show how others can reach inside themselves to tap the common human and vital source of our primal energies in our primitive roots. Pain is an abstract term, but it stands for a common experience to all living things which comes from deep within us.

Pain has so many ways of being delivered, but being delivered in a sexual way, the experience starts with arousal and a vulnerability which opens up deeper feelings rarely opened in normal everyday existence. I think it is necessary for the whole being to tap into your primal energies, as I do in sex work and in my artwork.

None of the other women I interviewed had such exotic work experiences, and certainly nothing to which they might apply an esoteric understanding of the sex work in which they became involved. But, taken together, these women had an extraordinary range of past work experiences. Take Martine as an example:

I've been a strapper, looking after horses; I've done that for years. I've worked on farms, and as a nanny. I've worked in radio, and worked on a woman's newspaper for a couple of years. I've worked as a television presenter for a while, and I've also been a waitress and a dishwasher.

Marie has a equally versatile working past, and enterprising as well:



I used to work as a manageress of a fashion boutique. I've also done modelling. Once, when I was much younger I had this job selling hired television sets door to door. Also in my younger days before I came to this country I used to buy items cheaply in other countries and sell them for a profit when I brought them back into Germany.

Katherine had an aptitude for indoors and outdoors occupations:

Basically I've gone in for office work, or running an office; anything steady, that was me. But I had to be in the front part of the office because I've always been gregarious and enjoyed the company of people. When I finally branched out by doing some travelling, I did anything, including farm work; I loved getting a bit of dirt under my fingernails. Just recently I began working full-time in an advertising firm and continued prostitution part time.

June is another with a versatile working past:

I've worked in chemical laboratories, nursing, cinema projecting, teaching English as a second language, bar work, work on a prawn trawler, and waitressing.

But for all their broad work experiences, qualifications, and their obvious abilities at adaptation, these women in the end turned to prostitution for their major source of income. And the reason for that was simple: it paid more, and obviously considerably more to compensate for a lowered social status, the risk of disclosure and the other risks attached to the sex industry. These women were no struggling poor, although at the time of their entrance into the sex industry many of them were out of work, tired of mundane and unsatisfactory work, or in desperate need of extra cash. Table 4.5 compares the highest weekly earnings of prostitutes before they entered prostitution with that of the health-workers and students.

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*Table 4.5: Highest net income in a week of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes*</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Under \$100	03.90	00.00	11.70
\$100-\$150	14.10	00.00	15.80
\$151-\$200	16.40	00.00	07.60
\$201-\$250	21.10	00.90	08.30
\$251-\$300	11.70	06.00	17.50
\$301-\$350	12.50	16.50	20.00
\$351-\$400	06.30	22.60	05.90
\$401-\$450	02.30	13.00	03.30
\$451-\$500	03.10	18.30	03.30
\$501-\$750	03.10	20.00	03.30
\$751-\$1000	01.60	01.80	00.00
Over \$1000	02.30	00.90	00.00
Never worked/ Not disclosed	01.60	00.00	03.30

\*These figures relate to work prior to prostitution.

The figures in Table 4.5 were gathered in 1985-86, when the average weekly earnings for females in New South Wales was \$265.80 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1984-85). Over half of the prostitutes earned less than this as their highest weekly income, compared to about 45 per cent of the students and almost none of the health-workers. Since most of the health-workers were professional women they might be expected to include a number with very high salaries. A few of the prostitutes had also achieved high weekly earnings in their pre-prostitution occupations, which raises the question of their economic motive for becoming sex workers. Other factors, such as job dissatisfaction, might have been at work.

The evidence in this and the preceding Chapter indicates that women enter prostitution in two waves, based on age. The evidence of age of entry (*see* Fig. 4.6) found that about a third of the prostitute sample became sex workers under the age of 19, but mostly it was between 16 and 18, and more than a half of the sample became sex workers above the age of 20, mostly between 21 and 25.

Overwhelmingly an economic motivation was given as the reason for becoming a prostitute (Fig. 4.5), while about a quarter of the sample said that curiosity about prostitution or themselves (their sexuality) was an important motive, and a little less than ten per cent admitted to drugs as the motivating force. Earlier we discovered that women destined for prostitution more than likely had histories of coital experiences back to their early adolescence (Table 3.32). From these findings we can construct two scenarios for entry into the sex industry.

In the first scenario are girls of 18 or less. Most of these had "lost" their virginities before their sixteenth birthdays and more than likely initiated the occasions of initial coitus. They felt sexually mature by 16, but were still curious about their sexual passions and no longer held men in awe. They had learned that men most desire young female bodies and "innocent" girls, and were willing to pay handsomely for them. Coupled with the atrociously low wages paid girls in "straight" occupations, the economy of sex has an enormous appeal to these young women. Some of the girls were already practising virulent promiscuous lifestyles, so that prostitution is a mere extension, albeit profitable, of this kind of sex life. Another sub-group within this age group are girls who experimented with drugs in their early adolescence, so that by 16 to 18 they had developed uncontrollable addictions to expensive narcotics or other drugs. For them prostitution is the only occupation open to them able to support their habits.

The second scenario includes the bulk of women entering prostitution. They were above 20 when they first exchanged sex for cash either in the context of the sex industry or in a private social arrangement to a persistent stranger. They too had learned that the sexuality of young women has a price on it. The vast majority of this group were "broke", out of work, or bored with their present job when they decided to take up prostitution. They too had a mature approach to sex and had learned not to fear men, derived from long histories of coital interaction with males as far back as their early adolescence. But they had none of the wide-eyed excitement of their younger colleagues. These women were pragmatic in their decision to become prostitutes. But even so they required knowledge about the sex industry first from trusted friends or people already involved in order to dismiss the myths and negative popular notions that act as a barrier to entry.



Thus, we have two entrance scenarios, different in age, motives and kind. These are, of course, flexible, for, as always among prostitute women, there are exceptions, such as some a little older or a little younger than these pictures suggest, in which case they fall within the intermediate age group of 19 to 20. But this after all is the human diversity in prostitution, as in all social institutions.

### The Nature of the Work

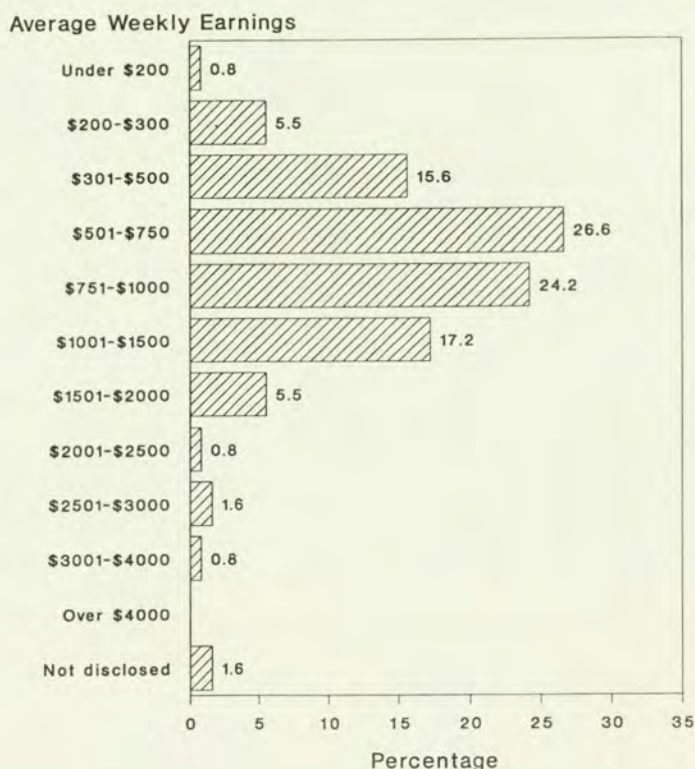
In the first Chapter we viewed prostitution as a work-based occupation from the perspective of the prostitute. Whatever sexual gratification or other emotional satisfaction a sex worker might obtain in commercial sex doesn't make it any less work, but simply more pleasant work. Earlier in the present Chapter the reader was introduced to "types" of work undertaken by the "professional" prostitute, including the structure of these "types" and their functions. In this Section we will delve deeper into the work of prostitutes by examining its nature and determining both the benefits and the drawbacks to being a prostitute. For example, how much is earned, how much time is involved, what is done, what workers think of their job.

Prostitution may be work, but it is also a service for men (although occasionally women also use the services of a female prostitute), for which they must pay a fee to the prostitute. This fee forms the basis of the sex worker's earnings, whether it be a portion of the fee in an arrangement with the management of the house in which she works, or forms her gross income from which must be extracted her overheads. Figure 4.7 indicates the average earnings of the prostitute sample of 128 women.

These figures were collected in 1985-86, but since the prices for sexual services have not changed in three years (nor had they for at least ten years prior to that) these earnings may serve as an example of prostitutes' weekly incomes today. If anything, in the wake of much negative publicity surrounding prostitution as a possible source of AIDS, prostitutes in Sydney at present may actually be earning less.

Over half of the sample had earned between \$501 and \$1,000 a week on average, before tax, while only a little over a fifth had earned less than \$500, and about a quarter had earned in excess of

Figure 4.7: Average weekly earnings of prostitutes (n=128)



\$1,000. A few of the prostitutes were earning between \$2,000 and \$4,000. The overall average, however, is something like \$800. Most people may have thought a prostitute earns more than that, and a few might be resentful that she could earn so much for "doin' what comes naturally". Most prostitutes feel that they are not paid enough, and they are impatient towards those who think they "get it easy".

But, all resentment aside, the fact remains that prostitution is a highly paid occupation, certainly one of the highest possible for women. If the weekly earnings shown in Figure 4.7 are converted to an annual salary, a comparison with the annual incomes of individual Australians would appear as Table 4.6.

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*Table 4.6: Prostitutes annual earnings compared to annual incomes for individual Australians*

	Males	Females	Persons	% Total	% Prostitutes
Nil	349,032	977,820	1,326,852	11.1	00.8
\$1-\$2000	88,326	435,046	523,372	4.4	
\$2001-\$4000	159,324	313,602	472,926	4.0	
\$4001-\$6000	756,534	1,136,771	1,893,305	15.8	
\$6001-\$9000	433,005	733,146	1,166,151	9.7	05.5
\$9001-\$12000	457,136	533,197	990,333	8.3	
\$12001-\$15000	528,943	439,756	968,699	8.1	15.6
\$15001-\$18000	718,446	406,246	1,124,692	9.4	
\$18001-\$22000	720,912	293,670	1,014,582	8.5	
\$22001-\$26000	447,646	150,574	598,220	5.0	26.6
\$26001-\$32000	444,149	110,498	554,647	4.6	
\$32001-\$40000	251,277	38,451	289,728	2.4	24.2
\$40001-\$50000	109,893	12,203	122,096	1.0	25.9
\$50001 and over	98,312	12,261	110,573	0.9	01.6
Not disclosed	341,357	467,778	809,135	6.8	
Total	5,904,292	6,061,019	11,965,311	100.00	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1986, *Census of population and housing in Australia*

From this comparison we can see that half of the prostitute sample earned on average as much as the highest earning two per cent of the Australian population, or as much as the highest earning 0.4 per cent of females in Australia. Over three-quarters of the prostitutes earned as much as the highest earning 9 per cent of Australians. Thus, there is no question that prostitution is an extremely lucrative occupation. Still, while most Australians in the workforce earn their salaries including such benefits as five weeks annual leave, public holidays or weekend double-time, not to mention other fringe benefits, these annual earnings for prostitutes may be considerably less if they do not work 52 weeks a year. Many prostitutes will leave the sex industry if they cannot earn at least



twice the salary they would earn in "straight" employment because they have a value on what it is worth to work as a prostitute.

Another misconception about prostitutes is that they do not pay taxes, and therefore not only get "easy money" but "bludge" on the system as well. However, many prostitutes do pay taxes on their incomes, especially "career" sex workers who have been working for many years, otherwise such large capital expenditure and property, dwellings and cars would leave them open to suspicion and likely indictment for tax avoidance. The lesson of Tilly Devine is not lost even today. But numbers of young prostitutes do not pay taxes. Some work only as their economic needs arise, others are so committed to a drug habit that every cent earned goes towards supporting their addiction so that their actual living expenses are negligible and they live like paupers, and there are those who feel resentful at paying taxes to a government which stigmatises them, does not support their demands for improved working conditions, and spends their taxes on paying police to persecute them. Martine compares her situation with that of another taxpayer of equal income rank:

I pay the same kind of taxes that a doctor does. But, I actually receive a lot less because I can't work until I'm 65 like my father can, I get no prestige from my job, and no recognition for what I do.

In recent years taxation agents have approached brothel management to assist them in collecting taxes from their employees. This has especially been successful in Melbourne's legal brothels where the tax deduction arrangement is similar to other places of employment. This is another reason why Sydney prostitutes oppose the introduction of legalisation in New South Wales. They maintain that prostitutes are free agents, even in a brothel where they are not paid a salary but share the service fee with the house on a contractual arrangement. It is not the place then for brothel owners to deduct tax on behalf of the government, but it is up to the individual prostitute to pay her taxes as a self-employed income-earner rather than as a wage-earner. After all, the brothel worker is treated as a hired agent by many owners in that they are not supplied uniforms and are expected to pay for their own overheads. In the case of a bondage mistress this can be exorbitant, as Martine points out:

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We have to buy all our own equipment, our own dildos, our own enemas, even our own amyl nitrate as the clients like snorting in a session. We have to buy our own leather clothing, which is very expensive, and our own lingerie, which is also very expensive. So, we do have considerable expenses.

For an independent "call girl" like Laura, who has her own business, her high earnings are offset against the overheads required in a successful operation:

I make between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a week, minus my expenses. I take home between \$1,400 and \$1,800. But that depends on how long I want to sit in the apartment. Whatever I make, the deductions of rent, electricity and phones are the same. And then there's the initial outlay for furnishings, linen and such like. I have to consider this apartment as part of my business expenses because I have my own apartment elsewhere. Any expenses I incur in the business apartment have to be considered business expenses.

On the other hand, for the streetwalker, overheads are comparatively minimal, as Kelly assures us:

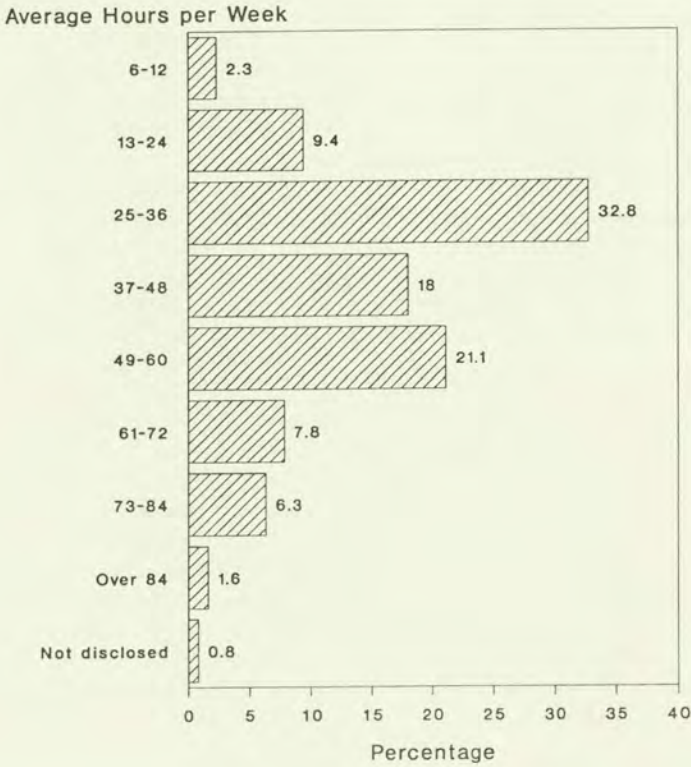
Apart from rent for a room, cab fares and babysitters, there aren't any other expenses. I don't go out of my way to buy working clothes. The clothes that I wear at work I've had for a while. I don't think it matters what you wear. I've gone in all dressed up and feeling really good and not done very well. Other times I've gone in dressed really casually in a pair of jeans and a top and done better than with a short dress.

Ultimately prostitution is a business of chance, dependent on the whims of customers, the general financial situation (for example the vagaries of stock market or a recession), the time of the year (Christmas and the end of the fiscal calendar are usually slow for business), and media hype on AIDS or police blitzes, which "kill" business altogether immediately afterwards. As Martine notes: "I can

go to work for 12 hours and not earn any money at all". So, while it might be a lucrative business, it is also very erratic.

The average number of hours worked by the prostitute sample is shown on Figure 4.8.

*Figure 4.8: Average hours prostitutes (n=128) worked per week*





A third of the prostitutes work 25 to 36 hours a week, or, as brothel workers, three to four days a week. Less than a fifth work the "normal" working week of 37 to 48 hours, or, in a brothel, five to six days a week. More than a fifth work 49 to 60 hours a week, although as brothel workers they are probably doing three or four days of double shifts. The women putting in more than 72 hours a week are streetwalkers with expensive drug habits. Compared to the hours actually worked by individuals in New South Wales, the prostitute sample worked less hours per week pro rata. Whilst 82 per cent of the state's employed worked 35 or more hours a week (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census in New South Wales 1986), only 55 per cent of the prostitutes did so. This raises the old thorny morality of prostitutes receiving high wages ("of sin") for little effort. This, of course, depends on one's personal value of one's body, and many prostitutes consider that for hiring out their bodies the hirer must be expected to pay a price equivalent to their value. Unions, of course, argue much the same thing in their struggle for higher wages. But the objection to prostitutes' high wages and short hours often seems to disguise a Protestant work ethic response.

As noted earlier, prostitution is a service, and it is paid for by the customer of the service. It is, then, about servicing customer demands, but not always about sex, for men frequently go to prostitutes as much for company as for sex, and sometimes the sex is superfluous to the actual contact. But, in most cases, sexual pleasure for the customer is the sole purpose. A usual service in a brothel is "part-French and sex", or fellatio to arousal followed by coitus for climax. In bondage houses sadomasochistic fantasies predominate as a service. On the street, it is usually simply fellatio to orgasm or a quick coital intercourse without preliminaries. While street prostitution services finish with the customer's climax in minimal time, in the brothels (parlours) the service depends on the length of time paid to be with a prostitute and therefore in an hour service, for instance, the customer may climax two times. The experienced brothel worker in a session develops a technique of prolonging arousal and foreplay so that actual intercourse time is minimised. Men who have been drinking (but not drunk) are disliked as clients because they take too long during the motion of intercourse.

The number of different services available in prostitution is quite extensive, and each has a colloquial term understood among

prostitutes but not always outside the sex industry. A list of the more important of these is provided below:

**B&D:** abbreviation for "bondage and discipline".

**Bondage:** shortened term for "bondage and discipline", which refer to sadomasochism as practised in the sex industry.

**Buck's Party:** all male party in which one or more prostitutes are often hired to liven it up and one is usually presented as a "gift" to the male in whose honour the party is held.

**English:** whipping or caning; a term not in much use nowadays.

**Double:** involves two prostitutes with one client, or, less frequently, two clients with one prostitute.

**Fantasy Job:** scenario suggested by client involving transvestite, infant, school-room, Gothic or other themes and costumes.

**French:** fellatio; can also refer to cunnilingus.

**Full French:** specifically refers to fellatio with ejaculation.

**Golden Showers:** urinating on client.

**Greek:** anal intercourse.

**Hand Relief:** masturbating the client; most often performed in a massage parlour as part of full service; also referred to as hand job.

**Heavy Bondage:** involving torture and pain with welts and drawing blood.

**Kissing:** extra service paid for by client; but it may also be given freely as a token of affection for a favourite regular client.

**Lesbian Acts:** two prostitutes hired by a client to make love in front of him. Although not exclusive to lesbians, if lesbian or bisexual women are on the premises they will agree to do it.

**Light Bondage:** spanking but leaving no marks nor involving pain, and may include some tying up but without torture.

**Medium Bondage:** caning, whipping, the rack and stocks, including some pain but without drawing blood or leaving welts.



**Part French:** fellatio without ejaculation.

**Sex:** coital intercourse; a term used specifically for coitus.

**Sexual Surrogate:** medical-therapeutic work in which a prostitute is hired by hospital/doctor to service a handicapped patient.

**Spanish:** rubbing client's penis between breasts until climax.

**Submissive Work:** where sex worker receives a beating or acts as a slave to client; opposite role to mistress work.

**Threesome:** where a client hires a prostitute to join himself and a companion (sometimes his wife) in lovemaking.

**Water Sports:** frolicking with basins, bedpans, siphon hoses and enemas often involving urination.

There is a clinical ring to these services, and certainly most prostitutes would view their work in a clinical way, even when this involves the pretence of love or affection with their clients. The reason many experienced prostitutes, once having overcome inhibitions about deriving pleasurable sensations in sessions with clients, seek orgasms at work is to make the job seem less clinical and mechanical to them. Some prostitutes find that the sex they have with their clients discolours the sex they have with their lovers or husbands. The comment by Zoe seems to sum up this disposition:

I had become so well established in my identity and role as a prostitute that whenever I went to show some initiative or assertiveness in my relationship with my boyfriend I saw myself as a prostitute. In prostitution sex is just a job, yet when I was in a love situation I couldn't dissociate the sex from the job situation. So when I made love it was like a job and I felt like a prostitute every time I got into bed with him.

This is certainly not the case with every prostitute, but it may be the reason some prostitutes will not kiss clients, or allow them to perform cunnilingus, since these are reserved for lovers only and serve as the acts in sex which distinguish work from love. Many



prostitutes have lovers who are as far from the perceived "typical" client in appearance, mannerisms and attitudes as it is possible to be. For example, these lovers are often much younger than the prostitute, unorthodox in attitude and less conventional looking than most clients. In other words, prostitutes are more likely to be attracted to men as lovers who are least like the client stereotype in a subconscious motive to distance themselves from their work in their private lives. The disposition is probably not too unlike the plumber who loathes having to work on his own pipes.

There exists a common notion that prostitutes are not free agents at work, that they must do exactly what the client expects of them. If that was true once, it is certainly no longer the case today. In some parlours managers insist on no condoms, demand that a client with a suspected disease be serviced, and expect every request by clients be met in a kind of "the customer is always right" attitude. But the experienced prostitute will not tolerate such dictates, and even the less experienced who may be persuaded to take a chance without a condom or with a suspected infectious client would rather leave the job than have to do a sexual act which is personally unpalatable. In this respect work reflects private sexual tastes, for these same distasteful acts are usually also avoided in private or social sex as well. Tables 4.7A and 4.7B contain lists of services offered or rejected by prostitutes in this study.

The services most acceptable to the prostitute sample are "Part French and sex", "sex (coitus)", "hand jobs", "threesomes and doubles" and "full French", while those most often rejected are "Greek", "heavy bondage", "sexual surrogate work", "kissing", "buck's parties" and "medium bondage". Interestingly, up to two decades ago Sydney prostitutes refused to offer French at all. The women expressed disgust at its suggestion and took affirmative action if the subject was raised. Lisa, who worked in the lanes in the 1960s, told me that at that time

the guys just asked for straight sex and nothing else, no oral or anything, and if they did they would have got their heads kicked in. One girl got caught doing oral when I was on College Street (1950s) and she was smashed and left lying in the gutter.

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Table 4.7A: Services offered by prostitutes (n=128)

	Prostitute Responses %
Hand relief	84.40
Full French	50.80
Sex (Coitus)	89.10
Part French and sex	91.40
Greek	04.70
Kissing	27.30
Fantasy without bondage	39.80
Light bondage with sex	31.30
Medium bondage with sex	18.80
Medium bondage without sex	21.90
Heavy bondage with sex	03.10
Heavy bondage without sex	10.90
Lesbian acts	46.10
Threesomes or doubles	53.90
Buck's parties	24.20
Sexual surrogate	07.00
Other (e.g. submissive work, any variations of above, certain bizarre acts rare even in the sex industry)	05.50

There was a general attitude among prostitutes then that fellatio was somehow perverted and dirty. This was a curious response in Australia, for as Kinsey and his colleagues (1953, p. 258) point out for American women generally in the 1940s, two-thirds of the younger better educated females who had extensive coital experience had practised oral sex on men. This recalls Laura's comment earlier (p. 205). But one has the feeling that in private, oral sex with Australian couples was practised much more frequently than was publicly communicated prior to the 1970s. In the early 1970s American researcher Morton Hunt (1974) conducted a survey for *Playboy* magazine to update the Kinsey data. He found that fellatio had increased among married couples considerably since the 1940s and was performed more frequently in the middle class than the working class. In her study of clients of call girls in New York,

*Table 4.7B: Services rejected by prostitutes (n=128)*

	<i>Prostitute Responses</i> %
Hand relief	00.00
Full French	37.50
Sex (Coitus)	04.70
Part French and sex	07.00
Greek	93.00
Kissing	59.40
Fantasy without bondage	32.80
Light bondage	44.50
Medium bondage	55.50
Heavy bondage	73.40
Lesbian acts	41.40
Threesomes or doubles	31.30
Buck's parties	57.80
Sexual surrogate	61.70
Other (e.g. submissive work, any variations of above, certain bizarre acts rare even in the sex industry)	12.50

Martha Stein (1974) found that 83 per cent requested fellatio. But American prostitutes offer and perform fellatio or "full French" much more frequently than Australian prostitutes, and reserve coitus for special clients or services. By the 1970s oral sex had become a standard practice in the parlours. Since the idea of "massage parlours" as clandestine brothels was imported from America, it is also possible that French came with them as a basic service. The older Sydney prostitutes who had resisted fellatio for so long were forced to conform or go out of business. Sharleen, a worker of 30 years, took a long time before she could cope with offering fellatio, and then did so only to compete with her younger rivals:

It's only recently (1980s) that I've done French. Before that no amount of money would have persuaded me to do it. But, as they say, if you can't beat them then join them.



The same sentiments expressed by the older workers towards oral sex in the 1960s is today expressed towards anal sex. As Table 4.7B indicates, Greek is one of the most abhorred of sexual practices for the women. Yet, according to many prostitutes, the demand for it has increased throughout the 1980s. It is in the same position as fellatio was twenty years earlier, and, as with the women then, prostitutes nowadays view it as degrading, depraved and dirty. Reasons often given for rejecting it are, it hurts, it is exclusively a homosexual act, the rectum is for faeces only, and it is associated with AIDS. But, as with fellatio, if anal sex grows in popularity generally it will spread as a regular service in commercial sex, for, contrary to popular opinion, prostitution follows sexual trends rather than initiates them.

The same might be said of heavy bondage, which, at the moment, is almost exclusively offered by mistresses in bondage houses. If it grows in demand as an alternative to sex which transmits body fluids, it may be offered eventually by the very same women who now find it too repulsive.

I asked some of the women who were not bondage mistresses if they offered bondage services in the course of their work. Kelly, the streetwalker answered:

I'm not into bondage very much at all. I do basics, straight sex and part French. I don't go into very many different kinds of positions. If I don't like doing things I won't do them. I couldn't do B & D anyway. I couldn't see myself being cruel to someone, because it's not in my nature.

Maggie's aversion to bondage was due to its association to a part of her past private life:

I'm not capable of bondage because of the violent undertones in my own marriage. I don't like violence in any form, even as symbolic violence.

Laura is more flexible, but even so she puts a limitation on it:

I get requests for golden showers, for instance, but most simply ask for it on the phone and then not turn

up. If somebody did turn up and really wanted it, well, I wouldn't do it on the desk. But I would do it in the shower. I don't do heavy bondage, and I won't do submissive work. I get a lot of calls for B & D, but I'll say to them: "I will do domination on you, but I won't allow myself to be tied up."

Caroline is the exact opposite:

Heavy bondage has never come up, but they can do it to me at \$100 a pop. It wouldn't worry me at all if it meant drawing my own blood, but I couldn't draw their blood.

Katherine finds it all a bit embarrassing:

I've tried tying them up but I can't take it seriously. There's one guy around here who likes tying the girls up and that's all a bit of a joke too.

The common belief that prostitutes will do anything if the fee is high enough seems far from the truth.

Of the other services rejected by most of the prostitutes buck's parties are avoided because the drunken, loutish behaviour usually associated with these male social events repel most women. Sexual surrogate work is rejected but not because patients are handicapped (in fact, many prostitutes have physically impaired, paraplegics and quadriplegics among their regular clients) but because this kind of work doesn't pay well and the prostitute has to work in an atmosphere of condescending medical staff.

There is a strong indication in all of this that prostitution is not quite as mechanical as many prostitutes claim, for their personal feelings, tolerances and intolerances appear impossible to separate entirely from their working environment. The outcome is individual responses to the sex industry by the women involved in it. The individual responses from the sample group have been combined into a list of major positive and negative reactions. The women were asked what aspects they most liked about prostitution, and what they most disliked.

*Table 4.8: Aspects of prostitution liked by prostitutes*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>
The amount of money to be made	92.20
Extent of personal freedom it allows	43.80
Flexible hours	57.80
Helping to understand oneself	31.30
Challenging nature of the work	23.40
Exciting work	11.70
Companionship among workers	41.40
Sexual fulfilment	06.30
Good for one's ego	12.50
An opportunity to meet men	03.90
Other	00.00

Nearly all of the prostitutes thought that the financial outcome working in the sex industry was an aspect they most liked. But freedom and flexibility were also high on the list, as was also the camaraderie between the women. Nearly a third found prostitution important for self-evaluation. On the other hand, popular notions of prostitution as sexually fulfilling for the women and as a sexual meeting ground for developing relationships with men do not rate high as positive aspects among the prostitutes. It is no surprise to discover earning power to be so popular, but the importance of female companionship, as pointed out earlier is a highly underrated aspect of female prostitution by outsiders.

For Caroline, prostitution has developed an improved self-identity:

It was the best thing I have ever done, because it has developed a strong character in me. Before prostitution I was just another clinging, obsessive female. Now, I am my own person, independent.



Martine found it gave her greater confidence and higher self-esteem:

When I started working I was actually quite frightened of men. Whenever I found myself in a room alone with a strange man I'd get scared. It was an awful feeling and I think most women have it. To be scared most of the time, to live in fear is not a good feeling. Now I'm no longer frightened of men and I'm learning a lot about them. I mean they are no longer as mysterious nor as revolting as I imagined them to be. When they come into the parlour they tell us these terrible secrets about themselves and sometimes they are extraordinarily honest, so that you really get to know these men on a very intimate level very quickly. I love my work because it has given me confidence to communicate with men and it has taken away my fear of them. I'm not afraid of them any more. It's the best thing that has ever happened to me. It's also given me confidence physically and I'm no longer self-conscious about my body. It doesn't worry me that I'm not perfect and I really do think that I'm attractive to some men but not to others, whereas before I use to have this very bad physical self-image.

Cassandra finds freedom and independence in the East Sydney brothels suitable to her role as a prostitute:

I like my freedom, particularly where I've not had to work for someone else. I don't have to pay protection money, or any shift money as some of the girls do in their places, and I don't have to pay out half my earnings like you do in the parlours. My girlfriend and I share everything: the rent, the phone, electricity and gas. I like the hours and we can come and go as we please. This way I am independent.

Street worker Kelly shares her sentiment about independence:

What I like about what I do now is I can start work when I want to and finish when I want to. I am virtually an independent person. I don't have to put up with half the things I would if I was in a parlour. Not only independence, but the money's better on the street. Overall, prostitution offers me much more money than I could get anywhere else, and the hours are more flexible than in any other kind of job.

For "call girl" Laura, prostitution has given her a jet-set standard of living:

I greatly enjoy my freedom. By freedom, I mean not so much on a daily basis, but on a yearly basis. If I want to go somewhere for a month, I can just go. I am not tied to five weeks annual holiday. I can just choof off and go when I like and for as long as I like. It has allowed me to travel and I've travelled a lot due to prostitution. When I travel to Europe I can go to an apartment with two girls working in it for a week. I only need two days in that place and I've got \$1,000. If I work there a week I can travel freely anywhere afterwards. That's what I enjoy most about prostitution.

These few examples probably reflect the sentiments of many prostitutes. Martine's discovery that her role as a sex worker enabled her to overcome her fear of men is a common experience with prostitutes. It is the first step to controlling the situation in prostitution. The popular concept that prostitutes are entirely under the control of the clients' demands is another example of the mythology surrounding the sex industry. In the individual interaction of prostitute and client, in fact, it is the prostitute who establishes the boundary of behaviour; the client simply announces his request, and if acceptable to the prostitute, she then sets the limits within her framework of convention. In some respects the client-prostitute interaction is reminiscent of the early stages of ordinary courtship, when social convention demands that the female stabilises the pace

of the sexual process in the romance in order to avoid sexual anarchy. Yet, of course, as in ordinary romance, it can sometimes go awfully wrong, resulting in violence. But in the majority of instances the prostitute controls the situation. As Laura expresses it: "I can always rush them if I want to or I can allow them to stay longer". June, a woman with a strong feminist consciousness, discovered where the myths end:

You do have a degree of autonomy in prostitution, which actually surprised me. Within that whole realm of men selecting women with its notion of female passivity, there is a strong input of sexual control by the women.

Zoe is another prostitute with a feminist perspective who found sex work to be very different to gender relations in everyday life:

They are paying for you, so you can demand what you want and don't want; no you can't kiss me, no you can't do that, time's up, whatever. In my personal experiences I found it was a total role reversal to the usual positions of power and dominance by men with women subservient to them. I gained a lot of confidence out of it.

Once more, women in prostitution are seen to have gained from their experience with the result that their relationships with males generally change thereafter; their perspectives of male sexuality becomes more realistic; and their position in gender relations is empowered; or as Maggie summarises: "You can control everything yourself". To return to Martine, in the dungeon her initial loss of fear of men had a very positive outcome for her in her working relations:

I couldn't believe that I would have the opportunity to vent my anger upon men, to harness them, and act violent towards them, as they had towards me in the past. Although men are not subjected to my outrage unwillingly, and the power relations in bondage have



false parameters, most of the time it is the inverse of how it operates outside and it gives you an opportunity to be in a powerful position as a woman, which hardly ever happens in straight society.

These are the more positive aspects of sex work. There are also many negative aspects, as Table 4.9 shows.

*Table 4.9: Aspects of prostitution disliked by prostitutes*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>
Having sex with men not liked	71.10
Having sex with strangers	38.30
Boredom	32.80
Having problems with the boss	19.50
Having problems with the police	21.90
Having problems with the council	12.50
Having problems with clients	47.70
Violence	35.20
Bitchiness among workers	52.30
Paying out half earnings to the house	48.40
The social stigma of being a prostitute	52.30
Other (This included an assortment of complaints about the behaviours of particular managers, policemen and clients; one woman complained about the long hours she had to put in)	07.80

The highest rated dislike is having sex with men not liked. This, at first glance, might seem to contradict the above discussion on power in prostitution and women in control, because, if a woman has so much control, why does she put up with men she doesn't like? But in the practical transactions of commercial sex, if a woman chose to see only those clients she intuitively liked she would soon be out of business. Pragmatically she must endure disagreeable men to survive, but she can restrict them much more than pleasant men, for

whom she might provide privileges such as kissing, staying a little longer, an extra drink, or extending her usual boundaries on behaviour. Of course, in a parlour there is less opportunity to pick and choose clients because of management scrutiny, but even independent "call girls" and streetwalkers have to put up with unpleasant men. But this is usually relative to the level of business, so that prostitutes can afford to be more choosy when business is booming.

A third of the women find it distasteful simply having sex with men unknown to them. Most non-prostitute women would probably find that to be one of the most repulsive aspects of sex work. June agrees with them, but manages by being objective: "I just basically want to get on with it, fuck with them, and get it over and done with."

Boredom and bitchiness are usually associated with brothel work, but in slow times an idle "call girl" or streetwalker might also express boredom as an unpleasant aspect. Staff conflicts in a brothel, as already discussed (p. 241), are destructive to the work environment, often driving a former brothel worker into private prostitution or onto the streets. But the streets are not necessarily devoid of tensions between workers, although a pair of incompatible streetwalkers have a much better opportunity to avoid one another than two women hostile to one another on the same shift in a brothel.

It may surprise some readers, in view of earlier comments, to find that problems with the boss have such a low priority. But this reflects the fact that industrial conflicts are not a frequent experience in the sex industry, and most of the time harmony between bosses and workers prevails. The same might be said of problems with police. This response, however, is made by women in Sydney, where few laws are available to harass them with. This priority undoubtedly would be higher in more legally oppressive climates, and higher still had the investigation been conducted in the midst of a police blitz.

Much more of a concern to most prostitutes are problems with their clients. More than bosses and policemen, clients can make working in prostitution an extremely unpleasant experience, because interactions with customers are much more frequent than with the boss and police, and, it seems, there are many more unpleasant clients than tyrannical bosses. Many men who visit brothels have a deep seated misogyny, or are as much influenced by the negative

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social attitudes towards prostitutes as the rest of the population. As Kelly remarks:

A lot of people have a tendency to put us down, particularly males who visit us. They're hypocrites because deep down they need us, but won't admit it.

Over a third of the prostitutes demonstrate a high concern for the violence in prostitution. This is not to suggest that all of these women have been victims of violence, but reveals a level of conscious awareness of it as a potential problem. What it does clearly indicate is the extent of violence from men that plagues many sex workers.

Violence, misogyny, hypocrisy are but the outward signs of the social stigma aimed at prostitutes. As Table 4.9 clearly indicates, if it isn't the highest concern of prostitutes, the social stigma is an aspect of prostitution which most of the women dislike. For Laura, it is her only real problem:

What I don't like is that prostitution is not socially acceptable. I feel that is the only thing I dislike about it. I can't tell people what I do as a job without a bad reaction.

So, we see that for prostitutes, sex work is a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant experiences. In a relaxed legal climate such as New South Wales there is one solution to an unpleasant working environment: change jobs. Kelly moved from the little brothels of East Sydney to a parlour, back to the little brothels, and then finally onto the streets in a bid to improve her working conditions:

I left the East Sydney brothels to work in the parlours because winter was coming on and I didn't fancy standing in the open doorway in a short skirt. But I didn't like the parlour I went to work in because their rules and regulations were a bit heavy. It's not that I can't abide by rules and regulations, but when you consider that we girls were doing all the work and the owners were getting half our earnings, having to start at a particular time, finish at a particular time, can't do



this, must do that, you have to see everybody, and don't force them to wear a French letter. That was the worst part. I ended up getting gonorrhoea twice because of the doctor visiting the parlour being so slack. I never had a disease in all those years in East Sydney. I had seven weeks off before I started back working in a brothel in Palmer Street. But it was closed down by the City Council a few weeks later. I went into a brothel in Riley Street, but that got closed down a couple of weeks later. Next I went into a brothel in Bourke Street and was there only two months when it was closed down as well. So, the only alternative for me was the streets.

Kelly's response to street working can be seen on page 15. It proved to be the best of her various working environments.

Working in prostitution doesn't last forever. Some women only intend doing it for a limited time, to pay off a debt, to "try it out" or "until something better comes along". The "something better" can be a well-paid job, or "love and marriage". A few women leave the streets or brothel to be supported by a "sugar daddy", but if they think they have stopped prostitution they need to analyse their situation more honestly. Then there are the career prostitutes who have been working for a decade or two. Some of them will retire as prostitutes and then use their experience to get a job as a parlour receptionist. The more frugal among them will have enough capital to open up a brothel or buy an existing parlour business. But very few prostitutes end up owners themselves. For someone like Sharleen, after nearly 30 years as a prostitute:

I'd like to live a normal life and go out to a restaurant every now and again. I've very simple needs really: I just want the house and my husband's business paid off.

Maggie regrets the day she must retire:

As long as I can. I'm now 40 and I thought I would have given up by now, but here I am. I suppose as long

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as I can still enjoy it. But even after I do give up work I'd like to be involved at some level.

It is likely that Maggie will manage a small private concern in the future since she was acting manager as well as a worker at the time of our interview. For many prostitutes the prospects of losing the pleasure they derive from commercial sex is a sobering consideration. Twenty-six year old Martine is a case in point:

I'd like to think I could work for another ten years. I enjoy it and as long as I continue to do so, and as long as I can cope with management, I don't think I should give it up.

Although the pleasure aspect might be a motive to work as long as they can for some women, others regret having to leave prostitution because it signals the end of youth and perhaps a symbolic decline in male attention.

Others aspire for the "yuppie" ideal. Caroline:

I would work until I'm 35 [in seven years]. Hopefully I'll have a terrace house with a sports car out the front, a child, a couple of dogs and cats, and be a housewife. I would provide the sports car, the furniture, the child and the animals. He can provide the house; that's his job.

Laura is undecided about her future, but she nurtures a pragmatic notion of somehow continuing her jet-set lifestyle with or without the sex work:

I don't think it's something you plan, but maybe in five years I'd like to get married and have babies. Idealistically that's what I'd like, but then I don't know how I'll feel when I'm 37. I can only know how I feel at 32 looking ahead. But I like my freedom too. Now I can pay for a sudden trip overseas when I want to. I like my little adventure trips. Because I'm used to that and I'm independent, I would find it difficult to tie myself down to one person. The only way I would

make a compromise is if he could give me the life I'm accustomed to. Instead of X number of men to get what I wanted, if one man could supply me the same I'd give up prostitution. I'm at a stage in my life when I enjoy travelling and adventure and whether this is achieved through prostitution, a career in photography [an expertise she has] or one man is immaterial.

Laura's reminiscences are a "nutshell" summary of the nature of prostitution. It is the best economic purpose for these women in the pursuit of their contentment and social goals.

### **Criminality, Addiction and Contagion**

So far we have seen some convincing arguments from the prostitutes interviewed telling us about the positive aspects of working in the sex industry. Whilst the money is good, the work offers a flexibility rare in most other employments, for the lonely woman there is female companionship, and, for many, it has the curious effect of developing character, making a weak woman strong and providing a social confidence that was previously lacking, these benefits are not without their price. The risk of violence has already been mentioned—a subject we will return to in the next Section. Here, however, three hazards of prostitution that are well documented in the research data on sex workers will be discussed. These hazards are police involvement, drug addiction and infection by sexually transmissible diseases. While the criminal behaviour and health of prostitutes are well studied, this is less for the benefit of sex workers and more for the community at large with its phobias about prostitutes as social and health contaminants. Studies of health in prostitution, in fact, represents a fifth of all research on the sex industry, or the most prolific of all disciplines in the literature (see Table 1.1), a clear reflection of the community's greatest concern for commercial sex.

A number of American studies indicate that prostitution and crime are closely related. Jennifer James (1978), for instance, found that 40 per cent of her sample of juvenile prostitutes had been in trouble with the authorities because of their sexual behaviour. Vitaliano, Boyer and James (1981, p. 325ff) compared a group of juvenile prostitutes with a group of property offenders, concluding



that the prostitutes had criminal records for theft and fraud almost as high as the women convicted of larceny. Datesman and Inciardi (1979, p. 455ff) argue that the use of heroin by some prostitutes forces these women to commit crimes in order to pay for their habits because income from prostitution is not enough. These latter researchers have a valid point, which corresponds with the activities of certain heavily addicted street prostitutes in Sydney. The reader is referred to previous comments on the effects of a law change in 1983 driving women from their commercial sex income source and increasing the rate of female crimes in New South Wales (p. 145).

Table 4.10 compares the prostitute sample with the samples of the two non-prostitute groups to determine juvenile criminality.

*Table 4.10: Juvenile offences of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128)* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120) %
Uncontrollable child	11.70	00.00	00.00
In moral danger	05.50	00.00	00.00
Theft/shoplifting	13.80	01.80	00.80
Possession of drugs	04.80	00.80	01.70
Prostitution	06.20	00.00	00.00
Miscellaneous others	04.80	00.00	00.80
No offences	60.20	95.60	95.00
Not disclosed	00.00	01.80	01.70

\*Some of the prostitutes committed more than one offence.

Some 40 per cent of the prostitutes were before the authorities for juvenile offences, compared to about five per cent each of the other two groups. However, "uncontrollable" and "in moral danger" are very likely linked to juvenile promiscuity, so that, together with prostitution offences, half of these offences are for sexual misbehaviour. As pointed out earlier, drugs were a likely commitment in early adolescence, and if we deduct the "possession" offences, we find that less than a third of the offences were for crimes against the person. But what is important to note here is not committing the offence so much as being before the authorities, who

act to remind the culprit that she is a criminal, a fact which may not have occurred to the person before that. This then would be the first step in processing the female adolescent into psychologically adopting an identity as "bad girl".

In the case of those who were incarcerated in a state juvenile detention centre, this is the public and institutional reinforcement of what they had already believed of themselves when they were hauled into court. Only one of the non-prostitutes was detained, and 20, or 15.6 per cent of the prostitute sample had been detained. More than half of these prostitute detainees were sentenced only the one time, while four had been sentenced more than four times and may be considered hardened juvenile offenders. This is hardly the sort of statistic to support a contention of prostitutes as criminally inclined women from early ages. These findings confirm evidence from Kerry Carrington's (1989) doctoral thesis, in which 2,046 cases of juvenile female offenders were investigated, and only 11, or about a half per cent of the total number, had been charged with a prostitution offence. Thus, just as most prostitutes were not "bad girls", most "bad girls" do not prostitute themselves.

In some instances detention might be a preferred option to homelife. Sharleen recalls her own situation:

We liked it in there and didn't want to go back home to get more beatings from our mother. She used to go to court and fight for our release and usually get us back again just to beat us again, and then back in we would go again.

Thus, protection from a negative home environment can be as frequent a reason for detaining a juvenile as the child's behaviour. But whichever is the case, the result is the same. Juvenile detention centres are notable as hot-beds of learning about crime, so that the novice will emerge from it with more skills than simply sexual misbehaviour and petty theft.

The pattern for adult criminal behaviour is much the same as the juvenile criminality for the prostitute sample. Table 4.11 compares the three groups on adult crimes.

Once more we see that over half of the offences are for sexual behaviour and drug usage. Very few of the offences could be described as "serious crimes". Some further commentary is



Table 4.11: Adult offences of prostitutes, health-workers, students

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Larceny/shoplifting	12.40	04.30	00.80
Malicious wounding	03.90	00.00	00.00
Drug offence	12.40	01.70	01.70
Offensive behaviour	05.20	00.70	01.70
Fraud	03.90	00.00	00.00
Prostitution	17.00	00.00	00.00
Miscellaneous others	03.30	05.20	00.80
No offences	50.00	87.00	93.30
Not disclosed	00.00	00.00	01.70

\*Some of the prostitutes committed more than one offence.

necessary here. Prostitution is socially perceived as a breeding ground for female criminals. This common perception makes prostitution appealing to criminal and quasi-criminal "types", whose initial involvement with prostitutes fostered the sex industry's reputation as a haven for male and female criminals. This circular pattern serves to perpetuate the popular notion, while, as we have seen, the "consorting" and "vagrancy" laws reinforce it in officialdom. So it is to be expected that within such a real or constructed scenario the crime rate among prostitutes will be higher than the general population of women. The surprise is not so much that more prostitutes than non-prostitutes have criminal records, but that this is as low as it is, given the pressures and temptations to become involved in crime that prevail in prostitution.

Also, the highly competitive, often stressful nature of the work can unleash abnormal behaviour under tension. Thus, Jeanette, who was charged with assault and malicious wounding, was driven to violence under provocation from another worker who had taunted her until she lost her temper.

On top of this, police notions about prostitutes, which are no different to the popular myths, mean that sex workers are continually under surveillance, and if arrested for prostitution, it simply begins an unwanted association with police and a criminal record.



But, as with juvenile detention, only 21, or 16.5 per cent, of the prostitute sample have been in gaol, half only once and only one person more than four times. With so few recidivists, this record is far from one expected of "hardened" criminals.

The reader might be surprised to find such a small ratio of arrests for prostitution in the sample. This is due to the more relaxed laws in New South Wales, although those with records of "soliciting", "consorting" and other prostitution-related offences are very likely women who worked prior to 1979, when, as pointed out earlier, very few sex workers escaped arrest. Sharleen can remember when arrest was a daily hazard in prostitution:

We used to get arrested every night, and once I got arrested seven times in one night. In all, I've probably been arrested about 2,000 times, at least.

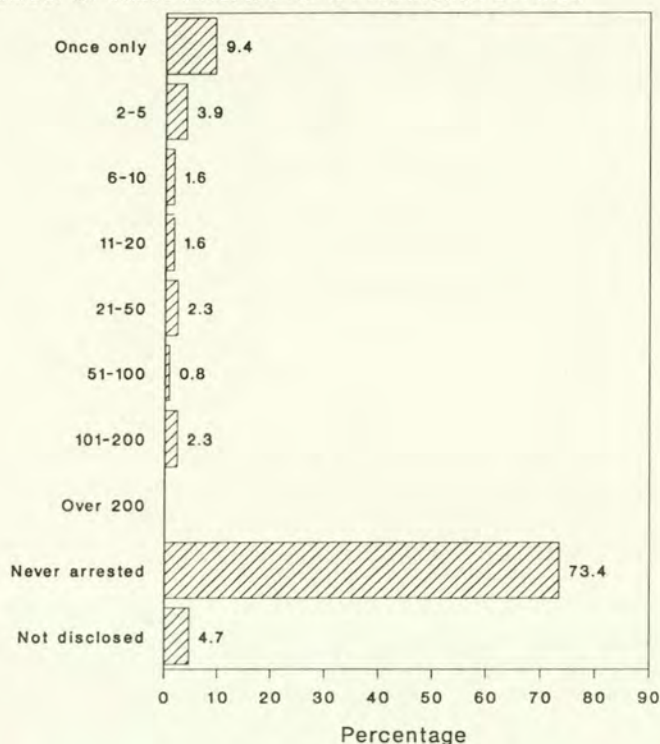
But even in a legally repressive climate such as the past in New South Wales, present-day Queensland or North America, some prostitutes manage to avoid arrest. Goldstein's study (1979, p. 13) of New York street prostitutes reveals that as much as two-thirds of them escape the police cordons. Figure 4.9 (overleaf) shows the number of times the prostitute sample have been arrested for prostitution.

Less than a quarter of the sample had ever been arrested for prostitution. Those with above 20 arrests probably worked prior to 1979, whilst the rest were mostly arrested for soliciting near a dwelling, church, school or hospital. Arrests for prostitution can sometimes lead to arrests for other offences. For example, a woman taken to the police station to be charged with a prostitution related offence provides the arresting officers opportunity for further arrests. They may check her past record and discover an outstanding warrant, or they may search the contents of her handbag and discover evidence of illegal drug usage or a stolen item purchased by the woman from one of the many petty criminals who hawk stolen property around the streets, in bars and brothels. Thus, the fact that prostitutes are vulnerable to arrest for prostitution means they are more likely to be arrested for other offences than the drug using population in general or other members of the community at large.

Prostitutes' relations with police vary from mistrust to open hostility. Most of the women have had at least one unpleasant

Figure 4.9: Prostitution related arrests of prostitutes (n=128)

Number of Times Arrested for a Prostitution Offence

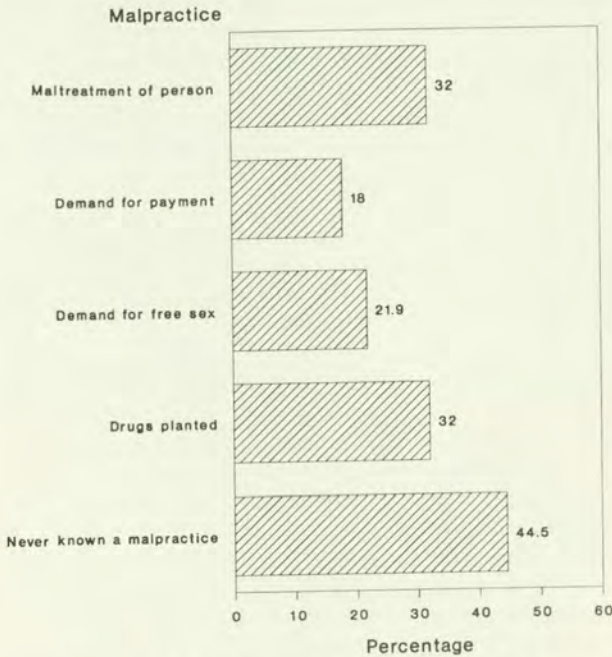


experience with a policeman. Perhaps the attitude of many policemen might be seen in an experience the author had with a police sergeant in 1982. This officer had responded to a complaint I made that a male resident on Liverpool Street had threatened a young street prostitute with a carving knife. As soon as the culprit saw the sergeant and his police companion he hid the knife inside his shirt. Although this was pointed out to the officers by those nearby who witnessed the entire event, the sergeant refused to search the man. When I insisted he do so he remarked that "If you want my opinion and the opinion of most of us at Darlinghurst (police station), if these women weren't here in the first place this sort of thing wouldn't

happen", and he turned on his heel and went away. It is such attitudes which have continued to strain relations between police and prostitutes.

To gauge the extent of mistrust of police by the prostitute sample they were asked about police malpractices. The response is seen in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Police malpractices experienced by prostitute sample (n=128)



Although in the 1980s police demands for money from prostitutes were negligible, this was likely to have continued with some managers and owners as indicated in the Select Committee inquires in New South Wales in 1985 and the Commission of Inquiry into Police Corruption in Queensland in 1986-87 which exposed police corruption. But police corruption in Sydney was much more widespread before 1979, according to the views of many prostitutes. Lee, a Kings Cross prostitute of the 1970s comments:



Weighing in was part of the way things ran in those days. What made me angry was that hooning was an offence and the police charged a lot of guys. Yet, I used to think to myself, the cops had a legalised form of hooning.

Jeanette also worked in the 1970s:

Most of the cops weighed-in, but I've never known any to demand a "freebie", not to me anyway. I think the idea was always put to the police by the girls who flirted with them. I've worked over 20 years and I've never seen it happen where it was put on the girl. But I have known girls who put it on them. The police were more interested in money; the "freebies" they could get anyway. There's a lot of cops' wives whom I've helped put fur coats on their backs, and a lot of cops' kids whom I've helped to educate right up until the laws changed in 1979, and all of a sudden I had surplus money.

If a parlour did not pay up Zoe tells us the consequences:

The parlour was paying protection money to a police undercover guy who came around occasionally. But the Council was trying to close us because we weren't a health studio. We began losing money because the clients were getting scared with Council men snooping around, so we didn't have the pay-offs for the cops, who began putting pressure on us to pay up or get busted. In the end the manager had no choice but to shut down and we were all out of a job.

But after the soliciting law was introduced in 1983 some of the police attempted to reinstate the previous extortion of the street workers, as Bonnie points out:

They're so corrupt in Sydney. Cops pick me up [in 1983] and say: "Well, it's like the old days girls, cough up or you're going to get busted".

Other kinds of malpractices were mentioned by the women I interviewed. Katherine mentioned one incident:

A friend of mine had drugs planted in her handbag and one detective wanted her to go down on him.

Jeanette was also a victim of some mistreatment:

It gave me lots of courage, and leaves me with nothing but contempt for them today. Of course, we were also young and cheeky, but it was a power trip for them. They'd push you and you'd say "Don't push me", but they'd push you more. So we just gave them a mouthful of cheek. For me, it was standing up for my rights. I had two cigarette burns here [her breasts] that I got from police.

In 1982 a new Vice Squad Inspector was appointed. This was Ernest Septimus Shephard, a man with a reputation for strict morals and high principles. Within a year major re-shuffles occurred in the rank and file detectives, with certain policemen being transferred to outer suburban and country stations. The corruption began to decline, and suddenly former policemen known for their extortion methods among the women ceased visiting them on the streets. Since Shephard's appointment and subsequent promotion to the Internal Investigation Branch the situation for prostitutes in Sydney has much improved.

Drug use is popularly considered to be extremely high among prostitutes (*see* p.255, Table 4.1). Silbert, Pines and Lynch (1982, p. 193ff) found that 59 per cent of a sample of San Francisco street prostitutes were current users of various drugs, and 39 per cent had done so in the past. Among New York prostitutes, Goldstein (1979) found that 84 per cent of streetwalkers used heroin, 33 per cent of call girls and brothel workers were using amphetamines, 81 per cent of streetwalkers were alcohol addicted, a further 20 per cent were regular users of sedatives, and all of the sex workers were regular smokers of marijuana. With findings like these overseas, it is little wonder that a common assumption of prostitutes as drug addicts prevails in the community.

## Working Girls

George Klein (1983) in Sydney in 1982 found a 76 per cent rate of heroin addiction, costing as much as \$3,000 a week for some individuals, in a sample of 101 street prostitutes. Perkins and Bennett in 1983 found 27 per cent of their sample of 121 inner city brothel and street prostitutes were regular drug users, while in another sample of 91 prostitutes who had sheltered in a woman's refuge in Kings Cross they found 69 per cent addicted to drugs. They concluded:

Boredom, frustration, lack of opportunities for employment, emotions in everyday relations, peer pressures, all play their part in making young women conform to the experimentation with drugs that goes on in various youth cults. In the end prostitution is the only work that will supply the necessary money (Perkins & Bennett 1983, p. 243).

But prostitution itself can also be stressful enough to indicate a need for powerful drugs. Bondage mistress Kellie describes her experience:

I wasn't coping with screwing all these guys, and from the first night when I screwed 14 men I knew I was going to need something a little stronger than smoking dope. I was using heavily and started to go into debt—my money outlay was way over my inlay. I dropped a trip one night at work in the middle of a B & D job. I cracked up completely and I guess I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I became so hooked on drugs, so introverted, and in the end I was living in this one-room cold water place with a mattress on the floor, no blankets, no sheets, no food, no nothing, and finally someone rang up the drug rehab centre.

Table 4.12 indicates the type of drugs used by the three sample groups in this study in their past.

From this it is apparent that prostitutes are more likely to have higher drug consumptions than health-workers, students and the broad female population. However, what is learned from this comp-



*Table 4.12: Drugs used regularly some time in the past by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=120)* %</i>
Tobacco	50.80	42.60	32.50
Alcohol	42.20	31.30	25.00
Cannabis	39.10	25.20	21.70
Amyl nitrate	10.90	01.80	03.30
Amphetamines	32.80	12.20	02.50
Hallucinogens	21.90	10.40	05.80
Barbituates and other pills	21.10	06.10	05.00
Heroin	18.80	05.20	01.70
Cocaine	19.50	06.10	02.50
Other drugs	01.60	03.50	03.40
No drug taken regularly	14.80	30.40	44.20

\*Most of the sample used more than one type of drug

*Table 4.13: Age when drugs, tobacco and alcohol first taken by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128) %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115) %</i>	<i>Students (n=120) %</i>
Under 12	02.30	06.10	05.00
12-15	29.70	15.60	13.30
16-18	25.80	26.10	22.50
19-20	07.00	14.80	13.30
21-25	10.90	08.70	02.50
26-30	01.60	02.60	01.70
Over 30	01.60	01.70	00.80
Drugs never taken	16.40	24.40	40.80
Not disclosed	04.70	00.00	00.00

arison is that, whilst more prostitutes took more drugs, neither of the other two groups are entirely free from drug addiction, and, in fact, we find that only 15 per cent less of the prostitutes than the health-workers never took any drugs regularly in the past.

The next question that arises is when these women began taking drugs. The results of this can be seen in Table 4.13.

This pattern bears a broad resemblance to the configurations of the early sexual experiences, initial coitus and first love affairs in that the two non-prostitute groups have higher ratios in pre-pubescence, and the prostitutes lead in early adolescence with some levelling in mid-adolescence. The differences are slight but it might reflect a parallel between drug experimenting and sexual maturity in adolescence. What is even more significant is the relationship between earliest drug taking and entrance into prostitution. Table 4.13 shows that nearly a third of the prostitutes had begun experimenting with drugs when under the age of 16, while between 16 and 18 more than a quarter of the sample commenced drug taking. Figure 4.6 shows us that a little more than five per cent of the prostitutes entered prostitution when under the age of 16, and over a quarter did so at 16 to 18. Figure 4.5 indicates that only about 9 per cent of the prostitutes began prostitution because of a drug habit. What all of this suggests is that whilst most of the prostitutes were experimenting with drugs in their early to mid-adolescence, only a small number of them entered prostitution because of it. In other words most of these drug takers were not sufficiently addicted at that stage to seek prostitution as a source to pay for their habits. Most were regular users of tobacco, alcohol and various "pills" for a "booster" or to complete a "stone". The minority of drug-addicted teenagers who entered prostitution in order to pay for expensive habits were very likely committed to costly drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

One of the drugs most used by prostitutes is tobacco. Many of the women in brothels complain that boredom sitting around waiting for clients is responsible for smokers increasing their consumption. Table 4.14 compares the prostitute sample with the other two groups.

The two non-prostitute groups correspond with a survey of females in New South Wales. The youngest of the groups, the students, are parallel with the census figure of 77.8 per cent of females aged 15-17 years who have never smoked, while the health-workers resemble the census population of 54.3 per cent of females

Table 4.14: Cigarettes smoked per day by prostitutes, health-workers, students

	Prostitutes (n=128) %	Health-workers (n=115) %	Students (n=120) %
None	21.90	59.10	75.00
Less than 10	06.20	06.10	11.70
10-20	17.20	10.80	17.40
21-30	29.70	13.90	01.70
31-40	14.80	02.60	00.80
41-60	03.90	00.90	00.00
Over 60	02.30	00.00	00.00
Not disclosed	03.90	00.00	00.00

Table 4.15: Alcohol consumed by prostitutes, health-workers, students

	Prostitutes (n=128) %	Health-workers (n=115) %	Students (n=120) %
Never drinks	11.70	12.20	10.00
Occasional drink	26.60	14.80	28.40
One drink a month	07.00	03.50	05.00
More than once a month, less than once a week	08.60	05.20	10.80
One drink a week	14.80	18.30	21.60
A drink every two days	21.90	36.50	17.50
One drink a day	04.70	09.50	06.70
More than one drink a day	03.90	00.00	00.00
Not disclosed	00.80	00.00	00.00

aged 18-24, 51.2 per cent aged 25-34 and 55.2 per cent aged 35-44 who have never smoked. Over 30 per cent more prostitutes than the general population of females smoke on a pro rata comparison, and they smoke more cigarettes a day on an individual comparison, with over half the prostitute smokers consuming 21-40 cigarettes a day



compared to only a fifth of the general female smoking population who smoke that number (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1985).

The stereotype of the hard-drinking prostitute has long been a figment of popular culture. Table 4.15 provides a more realistic picture.

The prostitutes do not appear to consume as much alcohol as the health-workers. If we accept a weekly drink as the boundary between heavy and medium drinking, then 46 per cent of the health-workers are heavy drinkers compared to 30 per cent of the prostitutes. The few prostitutes who drink more than once a day are well into the danger zone for alcoholism. In any case, all three sample groups are considerably above the New South Wales census for drinking among females, with 21 per cent of women 18-24 years, 16 per cent between 25-34 years and 19 per cent between 35-44 years moderate to heavy drinkers (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1985).

*Table 4.16: Cannabis consumed regularly by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> )* %
'Grass' (smoked)	44.50	26.10	08.40
Hashish	23.40	10.40	04.20
Bongs	28.10	09.60	06.70
Buddha sticks	24.20	05.20	00.80
Cannabis tea	04.70	00.00	00.80
Never use cannabis	46.90	73.00	89.10

\*Some of the individuals consumed more than one product.

The prostitutes are by far the heaviest current consumers of a variety of cannabis products. If any particular illegal drug is a likely candidate as "the prostitutes' drug" it is cannabis. It is a pleasant social drug, which is sometimes smoked either before a job for relaxing nerves or with a client to make the time pass with less tension. As regular consumers of the drug with surplus cash, prostitutes are a prime attraction for dealers. But the problem with

smoking "grass" at work is its illegality, and most cases of arrest for drug offences in brothels involves the possession of a small quantity of marijuana by one or two of the prostitutes on the premises. Consequently, most managers ban it in brothels.

Table 4.17 compares the consumption of "pills" and other drugs by prostitutes with the two non-prostitute samples.

*Table 4.17: Depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens used by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes (n=128)* %</i>	<i>Health-workers (n=115)* %</i>	<i>Students (n=120)* %</i>
Amyl nitrate	04.10	00.90	00.80
Amphetamines	20.40	05.10	00.80
LSD	03.40	01.70	00.00
Barbiturates	02.70	00.00	00.00
Serepax	08.20	00.00	00.00
Mogadon/Valium/Mandrax	03.40	00.90	00.00
Other drugs	03.40	02.60	02.50
None of these	62.50	90.40	96.70

\*Some of the individuals consumed more than one product.

Once again the prostitutes currently consume much larger quantities of "pills" than the other two groups. These are usually not the major drug consumed by drug-addicted prostitutes, although some of the women have made the stimulant "speed" (amphetamine) important as a means of coping with boredom in a parlour and have become addicted to it. Hallucinogenic drugs are usually avoided by most prostitutes, especially bondage mistresses, whose consumption of LSD in a dungeon could have a disastrous effect.

The public image of prostitution is often a heavily dosed heroin addict on the street propped up by a lamp-post or shop front. Many people, therefore have the impression that heroin is the major drug taken by prostitutes. They are wrong, of course, as heroin was a drug in use mainly among streetwalkers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. With the introduction of methadone treatment programs, heroin addiction has declined considerably over the past few years,

although cocaine consumption is increasing among both street addicts and other former heroin and "speed" addicts in other areas of prostitution. Tables 4.18 and 4.19 compare the consumption of these two drugs in the sample groups.

*Table 4.18: Heroin consumption by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Never used	74.20	95.60	99.20
Once in a while	10.10	01.80	00.80
Once a month	00.80	00.00	00.00
Once a week	01.60	00.00	00.00
More than once a week			
less than once a day	01.60	00.00	00.00
Once a day	03.10	00.00	00.00
More than once a day	07.00	01.08	00.00
Not disclosed	01.60	00.80	00.00

*Table 4.19: Cocaine consumption by prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
Never used	65.50	84.30	97.50
Once in a while	28.90	11.30	02.50
Once a month	00.00	00.90	00.00
Once a week	02.30	01.70	00.00
Once a day	00.80	00.00	00.00
More than once a day	00.00	00.90	00.00
Not disclosed	02.30	00.90	00.00

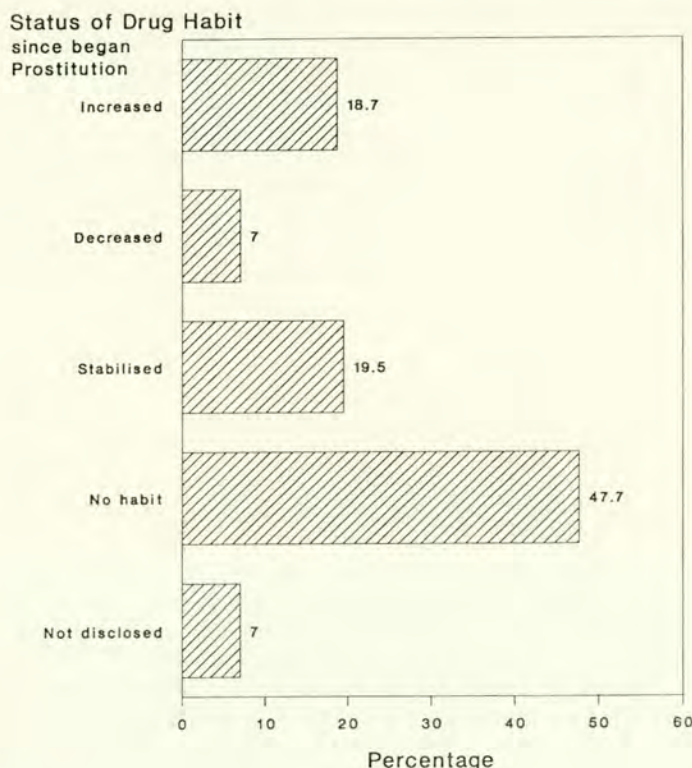


Among American prostitutes Goldstein (1979, pp. 70-86) found that a class distinction of drug use existed, with street addicts working as prostitutes using heroin and brothel prostitute drug addicts using cocaine. That distinction is less apparent in Australia (and probably now in the United States too), for, if anything, cocaine, which a few years ago was cheaper than the opiates, is gradually replacing heroin as the main street drug. The prostitutes in the sample were surveyed in 1985-86, and the above figures reflect the earlier stages of this process, with an infrequent use of cocaine and a more committed use of heroin, as though they were still "dabbling" with the former. I suspect that in time cocaine (or its derivative "crack") will have all but replaced heroin as the major intravenous drug, just as it seems to have done in the United States.

Philpot, Harcourt and Edwards (1989, p. 499ff) have investigated prostitutes attending the Sydney Hospital STD Centre to determine the effect of drugs on their health, especially intravenous drugs as a major contributor of AIDS. The study involved two samples: 122 sex workers in 1985, and 150 in 1987. Both groups were almost exclusively brothel workers. Of the earlier group 18 per cent took tranquillisers, 6 per cent amphetamines, 42 per cent marijuana, 15 per cent cocaine and 11 per cent heroin. Of the latter group 26 per cent took sleeping pills, 8 per cent tranquillisers, 19 per cent amphetamines, 48 per cent marijuana, 16 per cent cocaine and 11 per cent heroin. On smoking tobacco both groups were similar, with 36 per cent in 1987 non-smokers, 14 per cent up to 10 cigarettes a day, 13 per cent smoking up to 20, 28 per cent up to 30 and 9 per cent above 30. There are broad similarities between this and the present study, with striking correspondence in marijuana and tobacco use. Philpot et al. (1989) concluded that differences in drug use between prostitutes and non-prostitutes related to the work experiences in commercial sex. This has already been noted in relation to cigarette and marijuana smoking.

Goldstein (1979, pp. 53-70) thought that most intravenous drug-using prostitutes had entered prostitution to support their habits. This was also the case in the present study, but it is not the case for drugs generally. However, as with cigarettes, it does seem that more prostitutes with habits of marijuana, narcotics and "pills" increased their consumption since working as prostitutes rather than decreased it. Figure 4.11 confirms this.

Figure 4.11: Drug habit after taking up prostitution (n=128)



Undoubtedly, prostitutes take more drugs more often than non-prostitute women. In the case of intravenous drugs, such as heroin and cocaine (which is inhaled as well), sex work was undertaken to support the habit. In the case of other drugs, as well as tobacco, there is a tendency to increase an existing habit but this was not the reason for entering prostitution in the first instance.

An important reason for the nexus between drugs and prostitution is drug dealers, along with other peddlars and penny capitalists of commodities (such as "hot" property), who are attracted to the surplus cash of prostitutes. With various drugs pushed under



their noses and with the power to purchase expensive items, it is little wonder that so many prostitutes indulge in drug consumption, one of modern society's most sought after luxuries. To a much lesser extent some prostitutes will seek out drugs as a means of relieving stress at work. Finally, between ten and fifteen per cent of sex workers use prostitution just to support their drug habits.

As with crime and drugs, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are considered in popular thought to be closely associated with prostitution as a source for public contagion with its high level ratio of infection among prostitutes. In the climate of fear following the spread of AIDS throughout the community, prostitutes are often assumed to be a "high risk" group by the public, the press and health authorities regardless of contrary evidence. As always, the truth paints a very different picture. In 1983 the World Health Organization claimed that no more than 6 per cent of male cases of STDs were contracted through female prostitution. In 1985 the NSW Select Committee On Prostitution (1985, p. 154) was informed that: "probably around 10 per cent of the total incidence of STD in New South Wales is prostitution-derived". But with less than 0.06 per cent of the State's females regularly employed as prostitutes, and only 4 per cent or 5 per cent of the male population (*see* next Section) as regular customers, this is a considerable output. Thus, while not a cauldron for diseases for the community at large, prostitution may still be an important contributor.

There are, nevertheless, many conflicting studies on the subject of contagion in prostitution. Conrad, Kleris, Rush and Darrow in 1981 tested 237 Atlanta prostitutes and found 20 per cent infected with *Neisseria gonorrhoea*. They compared these findings with those of studies elsewhere, such as an infection rate among prostitutes of 28 per cent in Fresno, 42 per cent in Agra, 51 per cent in Butare, 62 per cent in Stuttgart and 63 per cent in Colorado Springs. They were forced to conclude that prostitutes were "major transmitters of gonorrhoea and other sexually transmitted diseases" (Conrad et al. 1981, p. 244). An investigation of patient files at Sydney's STD Centre revealed that of 100 prostitutes who sought a total of 695 medical screenings, nearly a quarter were found to be infected (Jones 1984, p 303).

The recent findings have a remarkable similarity with earlier studies. For instance, in the mid-19th century, medical practitioner, William Sanger (1858), investigated some 2,000 New York



prostitutes and found 41 per cent with infections. At the turn of the century Flexner (1914) reported rates of infection among registered brothel inmates in Berlin at between 22 per cent and 32 per cent. Rosenthal and Vandow (1958, p. 94ff) found that an infection rate of 24 per cent for gonorrhoea in New York Prostitutes in 1946 had declined to five per cent in 1956, no doubt due to the widespread use of penicillin as treatment as well as improved methods of prevention. The cruder methodologies for detection and investigation in these earlier studies compared to current medical diagnoses make some of them unreliable.

There are also conflicting findings on the role of the brothel in STD infections. Some argue that its presence contains disease. When authorities closed the famous Chicken Ranch brothel in La Fayette County, Texas, on moral grounds in 1973, cases of gonorrhoea in the local population spread from 12 in the period 1967-72 to 93 between 1974-79, while syphilis increased from 12 to 17 cases in the same time. There appears some evidence that the brothel had minimised the spread of infection, but William Darrow (1984) pointed out that a rise in population following an oil boom or more diligent screening for gonorrhoea are other factors that should be considered. On the other hand, a study conducted by Basil Donovan in a Sydney brothel over a period of a year provided opposite evidence. In that time he screened 70 prostitutes on a regular basis, discovering 53 episodes of gonorrhoea, or a weekly rate of 10 per cent new infections. Among new workers he found an infection rate of 44 per cent in their first month of work, compared to only a weekly yield of 5.5 per cent of infections contributed by the regular workers, which, he feels, may be due to the latter's greater ability to detect infections in their clients. Lack of awareness in uses of prophylaxis were probable causes. Donovan (1984a, p. 268ff) concluded that the situation might best be rectified through co-operation between brothel managers and health authorities.

Table 4.20 compares the three sample groups in the present study to determine which STD infections they have experienced.

The pattern of the three groups varies slightly in order of STD prevalence, but in all cases thrush is the most prevalent by far. The fact that this infection does not always occur through sexual transmission alters the rate of infection between the three groups very slightly compared to other rates of infection. What is most striking about the configuration, though, is its similarity in overall

Table 4.20: STD infections of prostitutes, health-workers, students

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n</i> =128)* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n</i> =115)* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n</i> =120)* %
Gonorrhoea	31.20	02.60	01.60
Syphilis	01.60	00.00	00.00
Herpes	10.20	06.10	03.30
Hepatitis B	14.80	01.70	01.60
Chlamydia	13.30	05.20	05.80
None-Specific Urethritis	21.10	07.80	05.80
Trichomonas	21.90	16.50	05.80
Thrush	64.10	53.00	37.00
Genital Warts	18.00	13.00	05.00
Lice ("Crabs")	35.20	12.20	05.80
Pelvic Inflammatory Disease	14.80	02.60	05.00
Human Immunodeficiency Virus	00.00	00.00	00.00
Other diseases	03.90	00.90	01.60
Never had any STDs	16.40	35.70	49.00

\*Many individuals were infected by more than one disease.

pattern to the ratio of previous drug uses. In other words, about 19 per cent less of the prostitutes than the health-workers, and 15 per cent less of them than the students were never infected nor indulged in drugs. The connection here is not clear, except that sex work and social experiences somehow increases the likelihood of contagion and addiction (for example the older health-workers possess greater experiences of life than the younger students).

Table 4.20 demonstrates that the work of prostitution puts women at considerably greater risk of gonorrhoea, hepatitis B (more likely through intravenous drug use sharing of needles) and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and at moderately higher risk of herpes, chlamydia, trichomonas, warts and lice infections. Table 4.21 compares the frequency of infection.



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*Table 4.21: Frequency of infection of prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> ) %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> ) %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> ) %
No recurring disease	34.40	14.80	25.80
One recurring disease	28.10	26.10	18.30
Two recurring diseases	14.10	13.00	02.50
3 - 5 recurring diseases	04.70	03.50	02.50
6 or more recurring diseases	03.90	06.10	01.70
Never had an infection	10.10	33.00	46.70
Not disclosed	04.70	03.50	02.50

This Table makes it clear that while prostitutes might be more likely to be infected, the rates of recurring diseases are not any more frequent than the non-prostitutes. They are not, therefore, continually infectious creatures. In a study by the Sydney STD Centre 132 prostitute patrons were infected most with thrush (64 per cent), gonorrhoea (58 per cent), trichomonas (52 per cent), herpes (51 per cent), and chlamydia (46 per cent), while a control group of 55 non-prostitutes followed the same pattern, except for gonorrhoea and much lower constellations of overall occurrence. But, interestingly, the pattern of recurrence was almost identical (Philpot et al. 1988, p. 195).

The impact of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) on Australian society has wrought changes in prostitution, as in all other social groups where the transmission of human fluids between individuals has played a large part. Table 4.20 indicates not a single case of seropositive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the viral cause of AIDS, among this sample of prostitutes surveyed in 1985-86. About the same time the Sydney STD Centre tested 132 prostitute patrons for HIV and also reported no cases of seropositivity (Philpot et al. 1988, p. 195). In the United States, where the disease has existed longer and is more entrenched in the population, similar results of either negative infection or very small numbers of infected prostitutes have also been reported. The US Federal Centres for Disease Control conducted a massive national



survey of prostitutes and found 1.1 per cent seropositive women in a sample of 94 mostly female prostitutes in Georgia, none among 34 brothel prostitutes in Nevada, 1.4 per cent in 71 Colorado Springs women, 4.3 per cent in 184 Los Angeles women, 6.2 per cent in 146 San Francisco women and 57.1 per cent in 56 intravenous drug using women in New Jersey. In all these cases there was a close correlation between seropositivity and intravenous drug use and women with histories of other STDs were more likely to contract HIV (Centres for Disease Control 1987, pp. 157-61). There have been a number of more recent studies whose findings continue to support this trend in America (see Cohen et al. 1988; Fischl et al. 1987; *New York Times*, 20 September 1988).

In Europe no seropositivity was located in samples of prostitutes in London, Paris and Nuremberg (Smith & Smith 1986, p. 1392), but 6 per cent of 200 prostitutes in Athens were reported seropositive, none of whom were known as intravenous drug users (Papaevangelou 1985, p. 1018). Reports of infection in Africa are far more alarming. In Rwanda 88 per cent of 33 prostitutes were reported as seropositive (van de Perre et al. 1985, p. 245), while in Kenya 54 per cent of 90 sexworkers were found to be seropositive, most of whom bore symptoms of AIDS Related Complex (Kreiss et al. 1986, p. 414ff). It must be realised, though, that in central Africa there is a much higher ratio of casual prostitution than in western countries, that the social identification of "prostitute" is much more broadly applied (as it was in early colonial Australia), and the ratio of HIV infection in the population is as high for females as it is for males (it is much more heterosexually located than in Australia).

In 1985 no Australian female prostitutes were seropositive. However, by 1989 a handful of street prostitutes with histories of intravenous drug use were found seropositive in Sydney and Melbourne. The New South Wales Liberal Government reaction to the situation indicated panic and repression of individuals, with one prostitute involuntarily detained in hospital (see p. 156). This hard-handed response, so reminiscent of 19th century attitudes seen in the *Contagious Diseases Acts*, attempts to level blame on the individual and a particular group, such as, in this case, prostitutes. Both gay and prostitute advocates have demanded the removal of the tag "high risk group", since it perpetuates the existing stigmas of homosexuals and sex workers, and insisted on replacing it with the term "high risk activities" (referring to sex without a condom and the sharing of

needles for example), because most gay men and prostitute women are now practising safe sex.

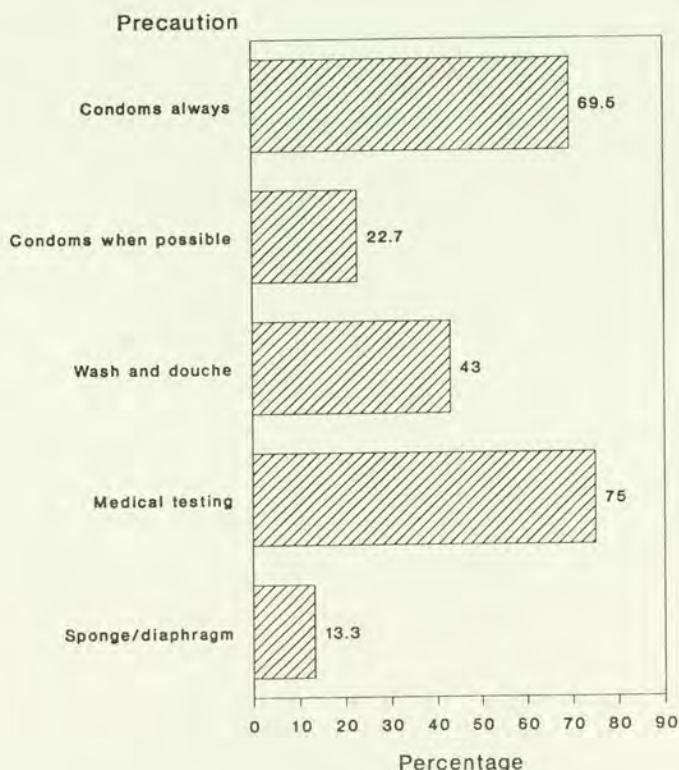
What is safe sex for prostitutes? Condom use with every client is essential, although some prostitutes switch to bondage services to avoid sexual contact altogether. In America the use of condoms among prostitutes has increased with the spread of AIDS. The Centres for Disease Control in 1987 (p. 158) reported that 16 per cent of prostitutes use condoms with every customer, 80 per cent do so at least some of the time and 4 per cent use them with both their clients and their private sex partners. Sydney STD Centre researchers found that patrons to the clinic had changed their sexual habits quite dramatically. In 1985 less than 20 per cent in a sample of 132 prostitutes used condoms in 80 per cent of their sexual contacts, but in 1987, following a series of explicit television ads in the so-called "Grim Reaper" media campaign by the Federal Government's National AIDS Council, 71 per cent of 200 prostitutes were using condoms on more than 80 per cent of their client contacts. The probable result of this change in habits was a decline in episodes of STDs from 70 cases in 1986-87 to only 30 in 1987-88 in 50 prostitutes attending the STD centre (Harcourt et al. 1989a, p. 4ff). It is possible that prostitutes regularly attending STD centres do not represent the broad population of prostitutes, since many, if not most, seek medical screening from private practitioners.

Figure 4.12 indicates precaution against disease taken by the sample of 128 prostitutes.

Irregular use of condoms, washing and douching after each client and inserting a sponge or diaphragm into the vagina are not sufficient methods of prevention. Medical testing is only satisfactory for detecting infection and is only useful for this purpose until the next sexual contact. In fact, some diseases, HIV for example, have long incubation periods and may not be detected in an initial test but will be exposed only in subsequent tests. The only safe method of precaution is the use of condoms on every occasion. But even here with a condom failure rate of around 1:121 (*see* Richters et al. 1988, p. 1488) this is not absolutely foolproof. It is, though, as safe as you can expect and with infection rates of HIV, for instance, much lower than that, the likelihood of being infected with AIDS from a single burst condom in a hundred sexual contacts in a client pool of 40,000 men is extremely minimal. As Figure 4.12 shows, more than 30 per cent of the prostitutes at that time were at considerable risk of



Figure 4.12: Precautions taken by prostitutes (n=128) against infection



infection from one kind or another of STDs. In more recent times, brothel owners have responded positively and most houses now have a mandatory condom policy, or at the minimum, each woman has the final choice (personal communication, Sydney brothels; *see also* Harcourt et al. 1988b, p. 540).

Medical testing has become essential for most prostitutes. Over 48 per cent of the sample said they sought testing for HIV antibodies once a month, and a further 39 per cent did so less frequently. The Sydney STD Centre reported a slight increase in numbers of prostitutes seeking HIV antibody test shortly after the

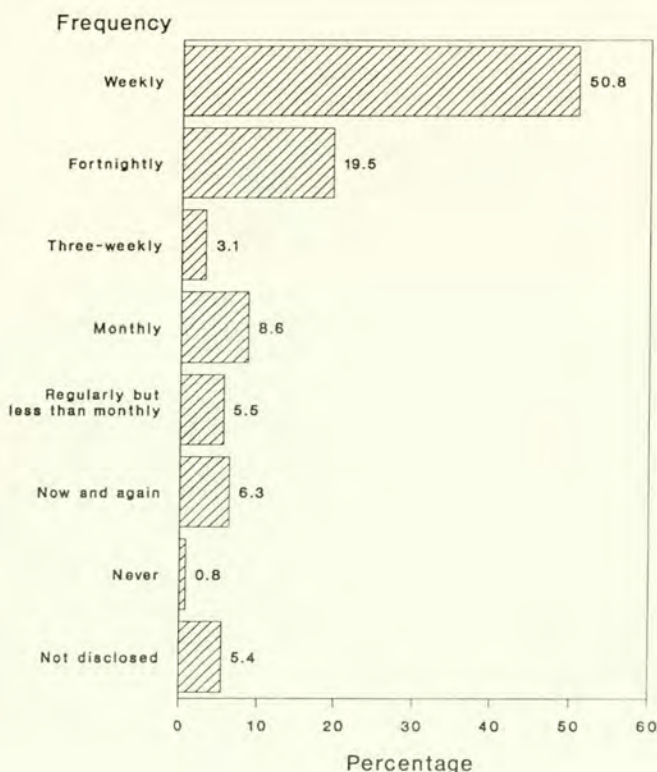


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"Grim Reaper" media campaign, but the frequency dropped to normal in subsequent months (Harcourt et al. 1988). Thus, there appears to be increases in medical checks as levels of anxiety rise. But growing awareness of proper prevention should reduce both anxiety and these "panic" tests.

Figure 4.13 indicates the frequency of medical screening by the sample of 128 prostitutes in the present study.

*Figure 4.13: Medical screenings of prostitutes (n=128)*



Over half of the prostitutes felt it necessary to have medical checks every week. Due to the incubation variation of diseases it is probably insufficient for detecting every infection in a week, and if the person is safeguarded by condoms on every sexual contact it is certainly excessive. But weekly checks assure some brothel managers that their staff are "clean", and, especially in brothels where the use of condoms is forbidden, it is considered necessary to protect the customer. However, apart from the complete lack of sensitivity for the worker, it is far from a positive security for clients. Such prevention methods are only as good as the medical report provided a week or so after the check-up, and then only for those diseases detected. In the meantime the worker may have been infected by her next client and will continue working and unwittingly infecting as many as 50 men a week until the report is known to her. She will be laid off, but it is too late. Unfortunately, such false security precautions are too often profit-motivated with an attitude that workers are a dispensable component of the business.

Another problem facing prostitutes in the workplace is the possibility of pregnancy. In an effort to avoid such a crisis the worker has to take precautions. Table 4.22 compares contraception methods employed by the three sample groups in this study.

*Table 4.22: Contraception among prostitutes, health-workers, students*

	<i>Prostitutes</i> ( <i>n=128</i> )* %	<i>Health-workers</i> ( <i>n=115</i> )* %	<i>Students</i> ( <i>n=120</i> )* %
The Pill (or Mini-Pill)	38.30	27.00	25.80
Depro-Provera	04.70	00.00	00.00
Intra-uterine device	10.20	04.30	03.30
Diaphragm/various caps	06.30	09.60	07.50
Sponge	23.40	00.00	00.00
Spermicidal creams/jellies	03.90	02.60	01.70
Condoms (as contraceptive)	39.10	10.40	10.80
Rhythm method	06.30	08.70	04.20
Sterilisation	11.70	06.10	10.80
Other methods	02.30	00.00	02.50
No contraceptive	09.40	41.70	45.00

\*Indicates that more than one contraceptive device used by some.

The most outstanding feature of this configuration is the much higher ratio of prostitutes using more contraceptive devices. This obviously reflects their repugnance for falling pregnant to a client. This contradicts the response by a handful of sex workers who use no contraceptive device whatsoever, unless these women are regular users of condoms, whose main purpose is to avoid disease but of course it serves the extra function of preventing pregnancy.

Other health problems in prostitution have been reported. "Dr Mack", whose Kings Cross practice introduced him to many concerns of prostitutes working in the area, found fatigue, emotional stress, poor nutrition, and injuries from assaults common health hazards in their lifestyles. Improper hygiene was also a concern. One patient suffered cervix malignancy due to advanced syphilis, and another had acute salpingitis due to PID (Perkins & Bennett 1985, pp. 274-8). Donovan (1984b, p. 272ff) also noted stress due to competition, tension with management, overwork, chronic depression and over indulgence in social activities common to brothel workers he treated regularly in a western suburbs premises. Thai prostitutes in the present study complained of continual pelvic pain due to their small frames accommodating relatively large size penises of Australian men. Although most brothels in metropolitan Sydney are scrupulously clean places with generally healthy spacial environments, some are obviously unhygienic and unkempt, adding to the problems of over-stressed workers.

In this study there are clearly more prostitutes than non-prostitutes involved in crime, drug addiction and disease contagion. On closer inspection it is not a matter of the majority of prostitutes, but 37 per cent more of them committed criminal offences than the health-workers; 15 per cent more of them took drugs at some time; and 19 per cent more were infected with STDs. In other words, it is a matter of degree not kind. The evidence throughout points to a clear fact. It is not so much that criminals, drug addicts and women deliberately testing fate with diseases are more inclined towards sex work, but that women who enter prostitution significantly increase the probability of involvement in crime, taking more drugs and being infected more often.



### **Pimps and Patrons: the "Boys" in the Business**

By now the reader should be used to the fact that prostitution consists of many facets. For instance, the workplace or workspace, the price structure, equipment (such as B & D items, condoms, or clothing), working conditions, are all examples of inanimate components. The owner of premises, the brothel manager, parlour receptionist, the prostitute, the client, the pimp, are examples of the human components. To date we have spent most of the time investigating one component, the prostitute. We will now deal briefly with two male figures, the pimp and the customer. All the human components relate to one another in different ways. The prostitute, for example, treats the client as a business contact. In spite of the physical intimacy of this contact, she offers superficial affection and will restrict the kinds of activities she will do with him. With her pimp, on the other hand, she offers loving affection, and will be prepared to maximise their sexual activities in an emotional union of mutual pleasure.

Let us begin with the pimp. "Pimp" is a term often interchangeable with "panderer" or "procurer", and possibly derived from the French "pimpant", meaning seductive (Oxford Dictionary etymology). In universal legal terms it refers to a person, usually a male, who "lives on the earnings of a prostitute", even if the prostitute is happy with the arrangement. Popular culture has created an image of the pimp as a brutal standover man who uses intimidation tactics to take most of the prostitute's earnings for his own keep. It is this image along with a common notion that the man should be the breadwinner not the woman that underscores the law on "pimping". For most prostitutes, however, men usually described as "pimps" are their lovers or husbands, whom they choose to support. Often these men act as protector or "sitter", driver, or have some other task established for them by their prostitute girlfriends or wives. There are many varying points of view on the role of the pimp. In one American study (Collier 1965, p. 120) it was claimed that most prostitutes have pimps and in England one writer (Mancini 1963, p. 73) thought that 80 per cent of prostitutes had them in the 1960s. Silbert and Pines' (1982b, p. 395ff) study of San Francisco street and juvenile prostitutes in the 1980s indicates that two-thirds of the women supported men. In West Germany the New South Wales Select Committee (1986, p. 96) found that "the practice of

male 'pimping' has been almost institutionalised throughout the large cities." In Sydney in the 1960s and 1970s brothel worker Lisa informs us that "nearly all the girls had blokes (pimps)". Street prostitute Lee at the same time points out:

There were plenty of pimps around 20 years ago. Most of these hoons [pimps] only had one lady, but there were the few clever ones who managed to have two—one at one end of Kings Cross and another at the other end—and spend their whole night running backwards and forwards between them.

In Sydney it is mostly an arrangement not unlike ordinary heterosexual coupling, but in America it seems closer to the popular stereotype:

A player [pimp] may have anywhere from one to twenty ladies, although two or three is most common. While the woman is walking the streets, hanging out in bars, or patrolling hotel lobbies, the player is out "on the set", moving through the "scene" of the city's night life (Milner 1972, p. 9).

Gail Sheehy describes the behaviour of pimps in New York:

The street pimp demands his girls bring in from \$200 to \$250 a night. The girls rarely see more than 5 per cent. The pimp pockets all and doles out "walking around money", \$5 at a time. Because of his neurotic need to prove total control, the pimp makes no allowance for a girl who can't meet her quota (Sheehy 1973, p. 5).

Karen, a Sydney prostitute of the 1950s, describes a ploy used by her pimp to get her involved with him and sex work initially:

This guy used to live off girls and he was the one who got me started off on the game. He introduced me to other girls whom I thought were terribly glamorous, not the type I thought prostitutes should look like. This



hoon kept telling me how much money I could make. I was mad for the guy at the time and would have done anything for him. He told me he owed a couple of guys money and couldn't I do it for him a couple of times to help him out. I must have been a real dope, but he was so persuasive and, as I said, I was mad over him.

We have already seen how Jeanette was first put on the street by her husband (pp. 215-16) and how Kelly agreed to work for a lover in order to have him for herself (p. 261). Margaret first went on the street to work for a female pimp:

I was 13 and had run away from Ashfield [girl's reformatory] and it was my first time up the Cross. I met this lady of 30 something. She was really a mother figure and all these models were after her, but I got her. It was for her that I worked. She had other girls working for her on the street but I felt really secure with her. I remember the first time I went out and she was saying: "Go on, you can do it." I was standing in Victoria Street still in my school uniform with her saying: "It's OK, just ask them if they want a girl." She used to bash me around, but I never got it off the ground at that stage. I did a few hand jobs, but no sex.

Obviously love is a major medium by which pimps get women involved in prostitution just to support them. But, in case the reader might be persuaded to think that this is a common method of entry into the sex industry a glance back to Figure 4.5 shows that only 5.5 per cent of the sample of 128 prostitutes entered prostitution to support a man.

Pimps are often drug dealers, petty criminals with one foot outside the law, or men seeking petty power. Margaret:

I had this guy, a pimp. Really tall and skinny he was, and he slept with a shotgun under his bed. He had four girls working for him. He was really mean, but in a strange sort of way I really felt safe with him around. I thought he was good because he supplied me with as much dope as I wanted. But I found I wasn't making



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any money. He was taking it all and just giving me dope.

Pimps in Munich, according to Barbara Yondorf, are responsible for 90 per cent of crimes associated with prostitution, while prostitutes only cause 10 per cent (Yondorf 1979, p. 423). But a number of crimes go undetected; assault of a pimp against a prostitute, for example. Silbert and Pines (1982b) found that over half their sample of 200 street and juvenile prostitutes were regularly beaten by their pimps:

In 50 per cent of these cases the women accepted it as a way of life, felt they deserved it, or were flattered by it as a sign of caring: [a prostitute told them] "It made him feel like more of a man and I felt it was my duty." (Silbert & Pines 1982b, p. 398).

There is a strong sense of masochism in this kind of attitude. Margaret also seemed to be constantly on the receiving end of some pimp's exploitation or brutalisation. She mentions another pimp who "upended me out of a top story window and held onto me by my heels". The sado-masochism apparent in these kinds of relationships might be an outcome of the pimp's own insecurity as a man having to depend on women for an income, or, as a lesson in fear (that is "leave me and you'll get worse treatment"). Karen discovered the extent of violence in her pimp when she attempted to leave him:

When I broke away from him eventually he gave me a bit of a hard time and one night he followed a girlfriend and I to a club, where he threw a bottle of beer at us. In the end I got some heavies to have a word with him and he stopped pestering me.

The role of the pimp in prostitution is very much over-rated. Rather than simply brutalising there is another side to the relationship between pimp and prostitute. One German study, in fact, found that a quarter of the pimps end up marrying the women they had depended upon (Niss 1971, p. 13). This study also found that half of the pimps had emerged from broken homes, which might be responsible for the anger and aggression they unleash on the

unfortunate prostitutes under their control. But there appears to be room for loyalties, alliances and even love in a world of broken dreams, shattered egos, lonely people and a subculture of violence. Benjamin and Masters found a side to the relationship rarely found in popular imagery:

[The pimp] is the only man a girl can talk to. When she comes home in the wee hours of the morning after drawing three freaks in a row, after being "burned" (robbed) and in general having a bad night, it's her pimp who understands. If she feels like sex (as opposed to work) the pimp is ready to oblige. If she is arrested, he is there with bail and lawyer and sympathy. Her pimp is her own private boyfriend who provides her with what little emotional warmth he is capable of (Benjamin & Masters 1964, p. 226).

But as has been said a number of times so far throughout this book, the pimp is a figure that has almost disappeared in Australian prostitution, unless you wish to take the literal meaning of the law and include every man (or woman) who falls in love with, lives with, marries, and is gladly supported in whole or in part by a prostitute.

The customer is very different to the pimp. Whereas the pimp is an irregular, often peripheral figure in prostitution, the man who seeks the services of a prostitute is a quintessential component in commercial sex. Quite simply, without him the business would not exist in the first place. As one prostitute put it: "I see all my customers as \$20 bills with arms and legs." Thus, sexual relations in commercial sex is biproductive, with an economic gain for the woman involved and an erotic satisfaction for the male customers. Just as the client views the prostitute as nothing more than a sexual object, so the sex worker feels no obligation to humanise her relations with her customer. Most prostitutes are contemptuous of their clients as men who are cheating on a woman, viz. their wives, fiances, girlfriends. This, coupled with the blatant objectification of prostitutes as women, the base unimaginative lust in most clients, and their folly in paying for sex, are the main reasons for a disdain felt by many prostitutes towards their customers, and is the source for the various terms for them in the prostitutes' argot. "Mug", for instance, among Australian prostitutes has roughly the same meaning as "sucker" in American



slang. American prostitutes use the term "trick", alluding to clients' attempts at manipulating for free sex, and also "john" in reference to the clients attempts to conceal their true identity beneath a common pseudonym. English prostitutes call their clients "punters", with the same essential meaning as on the racetrack: that is, they gamble their money away. But these conceptual attempts at providing the prostitutes with a sense of superiority over their clients have an ironic ring. Society, with its male and morality dominated values, perceives the client's interaction with the prostitute as a sex object, his polygynous nature, and his open sexuality as "normal" behaviour, while the prostitutes' promiscuity, economic drive and control over sexual interactions is considered "abnormal". Thus, the client-prostitute relation is complex and contradictory.

Very few studies have been made of clients of prostitutes (in Table 1.1 studies of males generally in prostitution are less than 1 per cent of all prostitution studies). Charles Winick (1962, p. 289) was one of the first psychologists to focus on clients. In his study of 732 men who frequented prostitutes he argued that men who seek sex from prostitutes are disturbed in some way, evidence which has received much the same scepticism from later researchers as the earlier claims about prostitutes by psychoanalysts. More substantial was Martha Stein's (1974) study of 1,230 clients of 64 American call girls. Hers was a remarkable piece of research involving observation and some psychoanalysis, by which she devised nine "types" of clients. Since many of the clients discussed by prostitutes in the present study seemed to fall into one or more of these "types", Stein's typology serves as good basic categorisation of a general client population.

**The Opportunists:** treat prostitutes purely as sexual repositories, establish no relationship with any of the women, and have minimal contact with them.

**The Fraternisers:** visit prostitutes in pairs or groups. Their visits are mainly male social affairs involving women only as peripheral companions.

**The Promoters:** seek personal satisfaction and peer prestige by encouraging other men to visit prostitutes they know. In return they expect emotional support from the women and a kind of non-sexual relationship with them.



**The Adventurers:** are mostly young men seeking sexual experimentation. They require a kind of therapeutic relationship with the women during their sexual explorations.

**The Lovers:** seek romantic attachments with prostitutes. They are usually older men who wish to rescue the women from a life of crime and corruption.

**The Friends:** are usually married, middle-aged and seek to have prostitutes as companions or second wives supplying sex on demand.

**The Guardians:** are usually the oldest "type". They see themselves as protectors of young prostitutes, perceived as "child-women".

**The Juveniles:** can be of any age but usually single. They prefer older prostitutes for the opposite reason to the "Guardians" seeking the younger ones. They want mother-figures.

**The Slaves:** wish to be dominated by prostitutes and seek humiliation in order to express homosexual, infantile, transvestite or exhibitionist fantasies.

Unlike Winick, who sought a universal character in clients, Stein found in them a sexual diversity that reflects the complex nature of the human male mind. The ratio of clients to each of these "types" varies considerably from one category to the next, from 4 per cent for the "Juveniles" to 17 per cent for the "Adventurers".

The numbers of clients seen by prostitutes in a given period of time vary according to the individual's personality, looks and number of services she is prepared to offer. It also varies according to the kind of prostitution, so that generally street prostitutes see a larger number of clients than brothel workers, who have more clients than private prostitutes. Figures 4.14 and 4.15 show the number of clients and percentage of regulars in the sample of 128 prostitutes.

According to Figure 4.14 the sample's average weekly number of clients is about 30 per woman. The women with above 60 clients are streetwalkers, while those below 20 are "call girls", escorts and part-time brothel workers. This average corresponds with some other studies. Stein (1974, p. 24), for instance, put the ratio of clients to prostitutes at 30:1, and an earlier estimate for Sydney was

Figure 4.14: Number of clients per week (n=128)

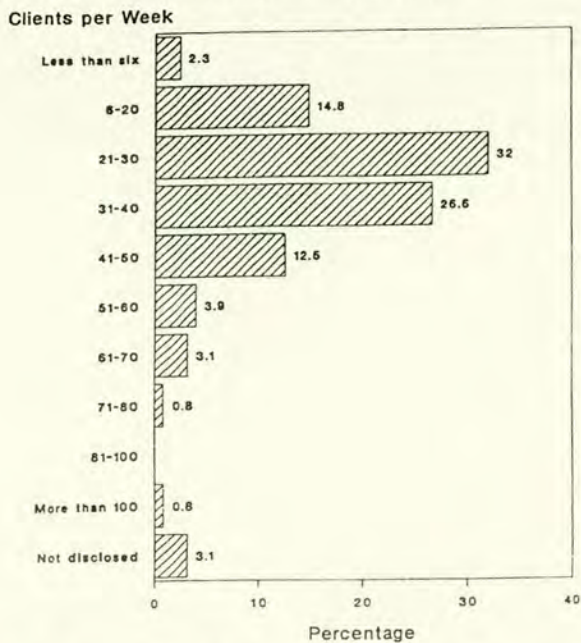
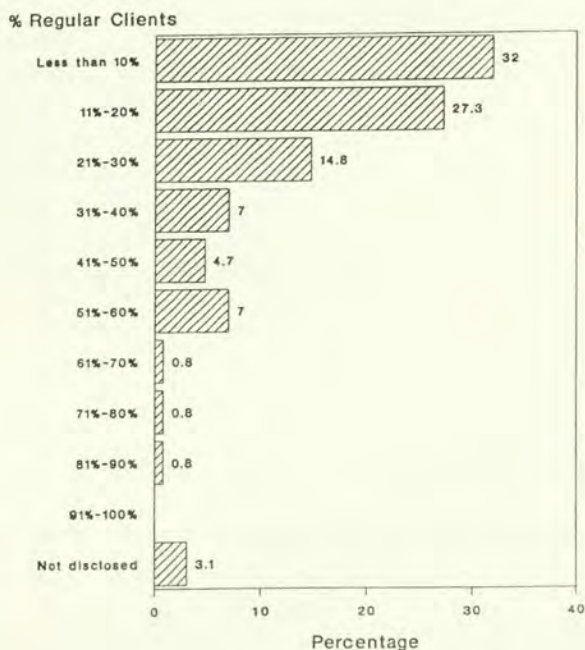


Figure 4.15: Percentage of clients of prostitutes (n=128) who are regulars



40 clients per prostitute a week (Wilson 1971, p. 67). McLeod (1982, p.12), however, estimated only 17 clients a week for her sample of Birmingham women. The latter probably reflects the high number of part-time workers in England.

Taking the estimate for "professional" prostitutes in Sydney in a given week (p. 17) and the average number of clients per woman also in a week, we find that approximately 30,000 men visit these women each week. Of course, some prostitutes may see the same man, if he is in the habit of moving about among prostitutes quite frequently, while, on the other hand, a number of men visit prostitutes as little as only once in their lifetime. Also, a number of tourists see prostitutes when they visit Sydney. But, to simplify for the purpose of a statistical guide, if we take the 30,000 men as visiting prostitutes only once a week and all of the men are Sydney residents, we can estimate that about 1 in 40 Sydney men, or 2.5 per cent of the male population aged 15-64 years, visit prostitutes a week. (The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated population for Sydney at 30 June 1988 was 3,594,400. Approximately half of this number were males. The percentage of males between the ages of 15 and 64 years in the Australian male population was 65.8 per cent, or approximately two-thirds of all males. Thus, 30,000 clients of prostitutes a week in a Sydney population of 1,196,133 males aged 15-64 years is about 1 in 40 men). Four decades earlier Kinsey and his colleagues (1948, pp. 249-59) found that about two-thirds of all American men had visited a prostitute at least once in their lifetime, and 15 per cent to 20 per cent were regular visitors. Gagnon and Simon (1972, pp. 222-3) claim that there were drastic declines in clientele in the 1960s and 1970s due to the growth of permissiveness in the so-called "sexual revolution". But rather than a sudden "revolution", Kinsey and his co-workers visualised an "evolution" of sexual permissiveness throughout this century. In their study of American females 14 per cent of women born prior to 1900 had experienced pre-marital coitus, compared to 39 per cent of those born after 1900 (Kinsey et al. 1953, pp. 298-302). AIDS too has been held to blame for "killing" the sex business, and indeed there was a rapid decline of up to 50 per cent of client turnover in the few years following the public hysteria on AIDS. But this appeared much more catastrophic than it actually was, because all it did was speed up a process of decline that has been evident for at least a quarter of a century but probably began in the 1920s.



Figure 4.15 on percentage of regulars is a reflection of this position, with well over half the prostitutes having less than a fifth of their clients as regulars. In a commercially buoyant situation, not only would more men be visiting prostitutes more often but we could expect a regular clientele for individual prostitutes much higher than this ratio. The older prostitutes recall the 1960s when they turned over between 80 to 100 clients in brothels per week each and at least half of these were men who saw them on a regular weekly to monthly basis. Prostitutes today complain that clients circulate among brothels much more than they use to, perhaps in search of women or premises still willing to see them without using condoms. The pattern of client regularity, though, varies between types of prostitution. Thus, while streetwalkers see the most clients, their rate of regulars is lowest, and among "call girls" they have the lowest number of clients but the highest ratio of regulars. Among brothel workers the ratio of regular clients tends to be intermediate between the two. Street and brothel prostitution tend to depend on passing trade, while "call girls" are more dependent on regular clientele.

Where do the clients come from? This can vary from woman to woman, depending on their age, appearance and type of prostitution. Cassandra, 38 years old and an East Sydney brothel worker says: "most of them are married, working-class guys, between 40 and 60." June, 29 years old, North Shore parlour worker: "18 to under 30 years most of them, a mixture of married and single men, and I suppose 60/40, middle to working class." Kelly, 31 years old, street worker: "Majority are middle-aged, half would be married, a lot of Italians, Greeks, Lebanese." Martine, 26 years old, bondage mistress: "Very poor men cannot come to see us very often because our sessions are very expensive. We don't get Asians, Australian Aboriginal men, nor black men from different countries. Basically we get mostly Anglo men." Laura, 32 years old, "call girl": "About half are married, a lot have just gotten a divorce, and a lot of old men who can't see anybody anymore. I do have a fair share of lawyers and doctors, and those in the upper echelon with their Rolls and Bentleys. But there are also those who work on the railways and are labourers. I find it interesting because I get to meet men I wouldn't normally meet otherwise." The impressions of the prostitute sample are illustrated in Figures 4.16 and 4.17.

Figure 4.16: Estimates of ratio of married men in clientele of prostitutes (n=128)

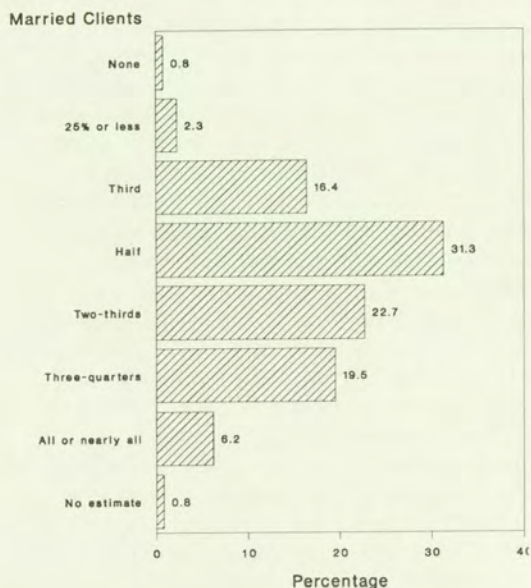
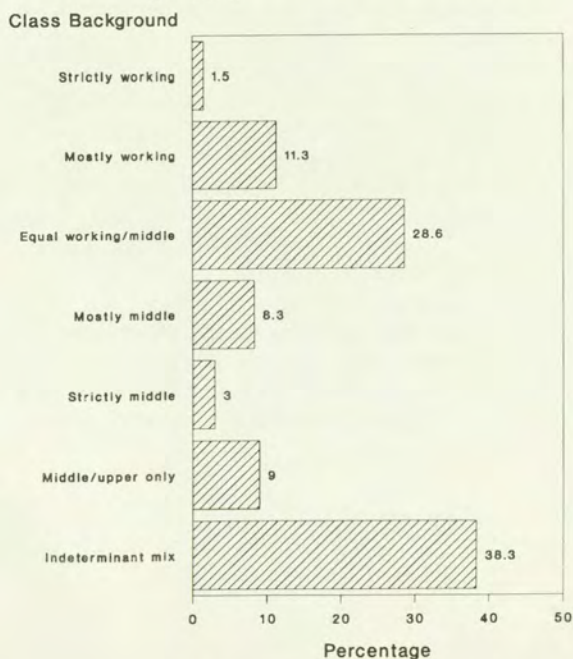


Figure 4.17: Estimated class backgrounds of clients of prostitutes (n=128)



The consensus among the prostitute sample is that almost three-quarters of the women estimate their married clients to represent from a half to three-quarters of their clientele, while over two-thirds of the women felt that their clientele was either equally mixed working and middle-class men or of an indeterminate mixture of classes. It would seem that clients' class depends more on the location of the brothel or "call girl" than on the type of prostitution. Thus, in street and inner city brothels there is likely to be an indeterminate mixture of classes among clients, while clients visiting northern and eastern suburb brothels and "call girls" are likely to be predominantly middle class, and those visiting western and southern brothels to be predominantly working class. Combining data from both the sample and the women interviewed, the following client profile presents itself. The men are mostly middle-aged and married, with all social classes more or less equally represented, and a variety of ethnic backgrounds, except in B & D, where Anglo-Australian men, who are generally middle class, predominate.

Among other studies, Stein (1974) found that most of her call girl's clients were middle class and married; Velarde (1975, p. 113) found that most men visiting legal brothels and call girls in Nevada were married while those going to streetwalkers were single; and Burnstin and James (1971, p. 5ff) found that clients of Seattle prostitutes generally were mostly married, over 30 and half were professionals and businessmen. Decker's (1979, p. 169) midwest American streetwalkers' clients tended to be over 30, married and middle class. Thus, there seems to be a general agreement between these American studies and the present one.

Popular culture sometimes imagines love relationships occurring between prostitutes and clients. Movies have not failed to capitalise on this notion with male characters saving female prostitute characters from a continued life of "degradation" by falling in love with them (for example, *Crimes of Passion*, USA 1984 & *Candy Ragentag*, Australia 1989) and "taking them away from all of that" (for example, *Vice Squad*, USA 1982). Once again, the reality is very different. Figures 4.18 and 4.19 show the sample's response to attraction to and relationships with clients.

As the figures illustrate, very few prostitutes are physically attracted to many of their clients, and even fewer develop relationships with them. The fact that a single prostitute in the sample never married a client is not to suggest that it is an impossible event



Figure 4.18: Frequency of attraction to clients by prostitutes (n=128)

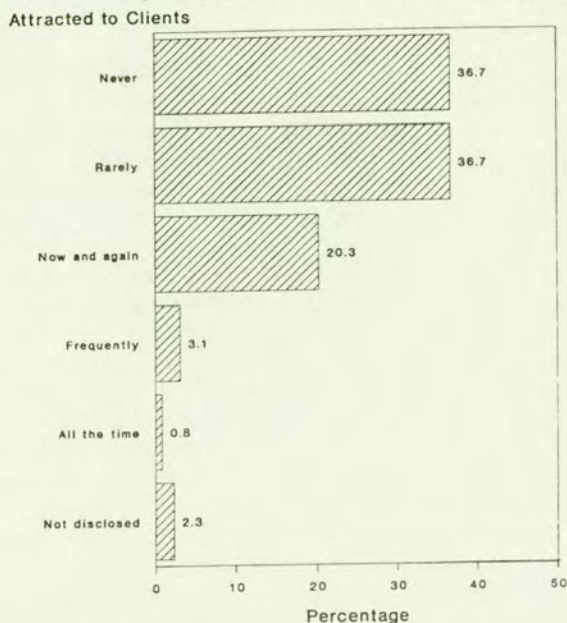
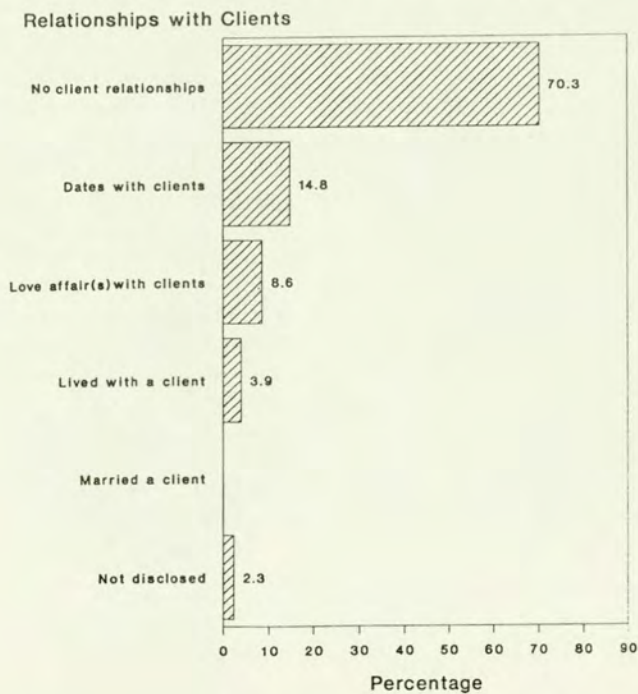


Figure 4.19: Relationships between clients and prostitutes (n=128)



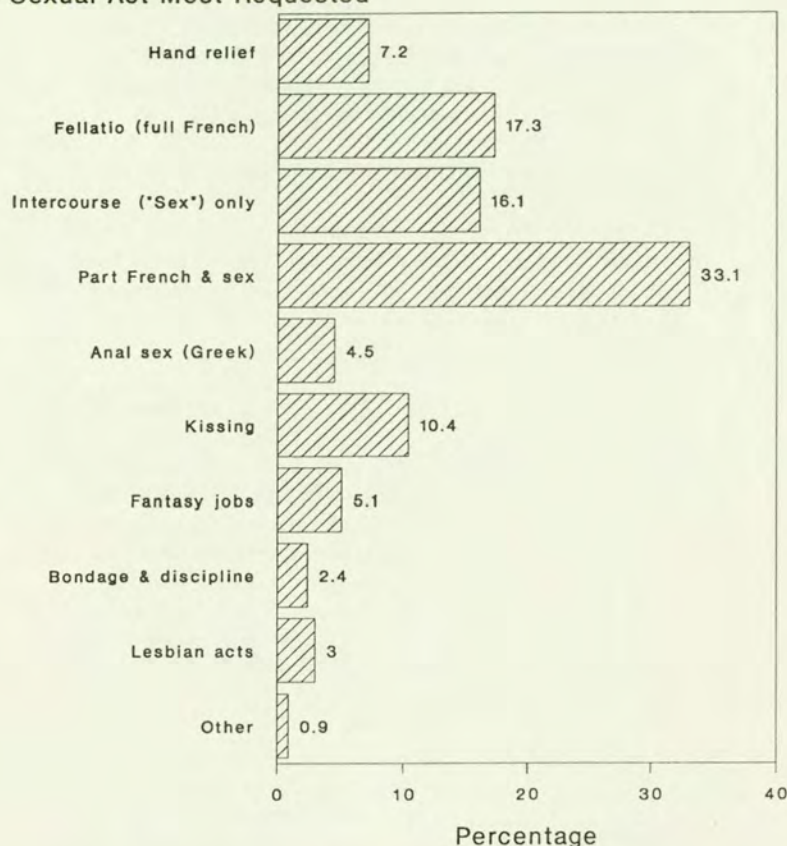
(I know of at least two who have). The reason for the low frequency of attraction to clients is not that they are mostly repulsive men, since that is not true; clients are a broad representation of males in general, with some repulsive, some attractive and most average. There is a psychological resistance to the men by the women. They fall into a perceived category of men once they become clients. Just as clients, like the rest of the population, have preconceived notions about prostitutes which cloud reality, so the prostitutes have developed notions about clients as a particular male stereotype which keeps them from having a serious relationship with them. Just as most clients would not marry a "whore" (the antithesis of "chaste" women sought for marriage), so most prostitutes avoid relationships with clients. There is a sort of unwritten taboo on clients as lovers among prostitutes, and the women who do fall in love with and marry clients are generally pitied by the others. The taboo does not exclude expressing opinions about an attractive client, or even going on a date (that could be good for business), but most women avoid beginning a relationship because it could lead to love and marriage. The rationale of the taboo is self-preservation, because clients are men who cheat on other women and therefore cannot be trusted.

Earlier I discussed the limitations prostitutes put on services they will offer. Now it is time to see what men want from prostitutes in the first place. Figure 4.20 is a list of sexual acts most often requested of the prostitute sample by their clients.

There is an extraordinary almost endless repertoire of sexual requests from men, particularly in fantasy jobs. This demonstrates the remarkable sexual imagination of the human psyche. The mutual meeting ground for these limitless fantasies of the men and the limitations of the sex workers is the central dynamic of commercial sex transactions. Still, it would seem that prostitutes offer a broader range of sexual activities than the men's usual source of sex. The low ratio of coital only requests compared to "full French" and "part French and sex" could indicate that fellatio is refused by the men's wives and lovers. This would be particularly more so with older men. Stein (1974, p. 312) found that "the most common complaint about wives was that they would not stimulate their husbands orally". In Winick's (1962) study of clients 73 per cent sought out prostitutes for a sexual satisfaction their wives would not do. Even in the mid-19th century Sanger's (1858-1937, p. 206) prostitutes told him the same thing. It is also true of the findings in the present study: men go

Figure 4.20: Requests most often made to prostitutes (n=128) by clients

### Sexual Act Most Requested



to prostitutes not so much just to have sex, but to have something they can't get elsewhere. Of course, there are also many men who seek out prostitutes because they are young women, and others who respond to an unwritten male code of sexually "possessing" every woman in sight.



## Working Girls

But sex is not all clients want. Streetwalker Kelly:

I usually get them mainly for company. I get a few who want to try kinky things, but most just want straight sex. I find they mainly just want to be with somebody, although they do have their sex as well. I suppose they think: "Oh well I better have sex since I'm paying for it." But their main interest is in talking to me.

Caroline says that many men are not particular:

I will say to them: "Is there anything particular you would like?" and most of them say "No". I will give them a choice between full French and intercourse. I would rather give them French, so I try to talk them into that.

"Call girl" Laura feels that she is a refuge for weary workers:

Their requests are very unkinky, very straightforward, very simple. Unlike a lot of American and European men, I find Australian men wanting nothing unusual. A lot of them really come to me for a little bit of affection. They don't ask for affection, but they appreciate what little affection you might show them. A good part of it is conversation. Not necessarily loneliness, but overwork. A lot are overworked guys who just want a little bit of relief.

Bondage mistress Martine speaks about her speciality clientele: "They most often want to be dominated physically, mentally and with some kind of torture or humiliation, or both."

Bondage and discipline, according to many prostitutes, is the fastest growing side of the sex industry. In ordinary brothels the women say that fantasy jobs are on the increase. It may be triggered by an item of clothing. June: "Fantasy requests increase dramatically when I'm wearing my rubber dress to about 10 per cent." Katherine: "About 25 per cent or 30 per cent of phone calls want kinky things, such as wanting me to wear nice underwear." Fetishism plays a large part. Kelly: "I have this one guy who just wants to fondle and kiss my

feet." Bonnie: "I had boots on this particular night and he wanted me to kick him in the balls, harder and harder until he came." Katherine:

There's this bloke who wanted me not to wash my fanny for 24 hours. He simply liked crusty fannies. He was an old boy in his 70s who had a nanny when he was a child and she had a smelly fanny.

A comparison of clients' requests in Figure 4.20 with Table 4.7 showing requests rejected by prostitutes is instructive. Over 7 per cent of the most requested sexual acts are of the fantasy and bondage kind, and as many as 40 per cent of the prostitute sample will oblige with fantasy jobs or 11 per cent who will perform heavy bondage. Thus, the most bizarre request will be complied with by some woman somewhere. As Caroline put it:

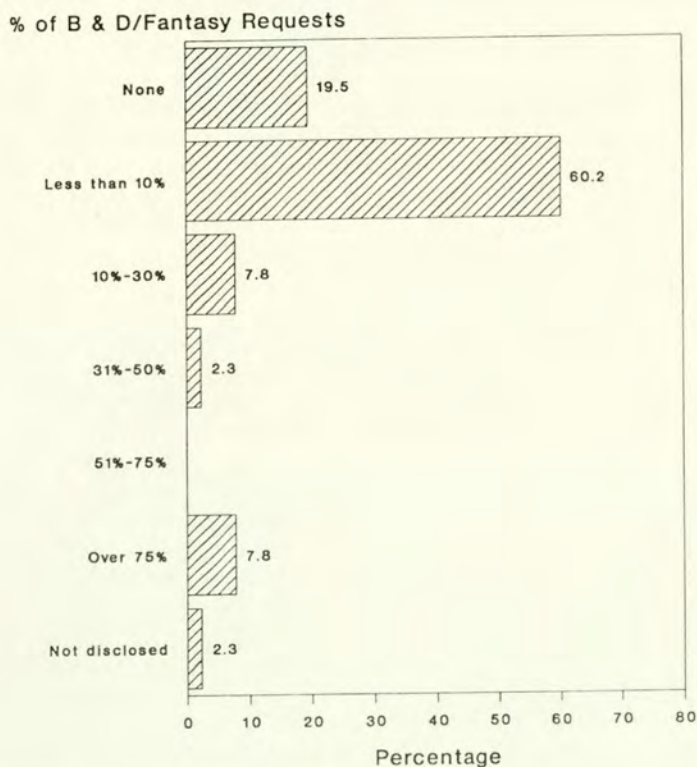
If a telephone caller is into heavy bondage we put him in touch with a bondage house. We tell him we can only cope with something light and simple. If he wants equipment and all the rest we send him elsewhere.

Figure 4.21 (overleaf) indicates the percentage of bondage and fantasy services requested by clients.

Quite obviously the 8 per cent of women who receive over 75 per cent of requests for bondage and fantasy services work in a bondage house, while the rest are women in ordinary brothels, "call girls" and streetwalkers who are sought for bizarre sexual services. Some, as we have seen, will agree to do fantasy jobs, light and medium bondage. But most find it too repugnant, particularly heavy bondage. The kind of job described by Martine below would repel most prostitutes, while the mistresses obviously got into the fun of it:

I made him jog on the spot naked with his knees up high, blindfolded, masturbating with one hand and a finger from his other hand up his anus, and rotating in a circle on the spot, with me belting him at the same time. It looked so fantastic that all the other mistresses in the staff room came and had a look.

*Figure 4.21: Percentage of bondage and discipline/fantasy requests made to prostitutes (n=128)*



The fantasy below described by Fatale would be more palatable for most prostitutes, at least up to drawing and sucking blood:

I have one regular who's into a vampire fantasy, in which I am the vampire. He brings along the costume, black nightgowns and other things, and we re-enact a scene which involves both fantasy and B & D. You've



got to be a good actress in this job, and it's good experience for an actress.

Sado-masochism is the sexual theme for most fantasies. Laura tell us of an experience of a girlfriend of hers:

This guy wanted her to dress in a Gestapo uniform and go out in the hallway of his hotel, knock on the door of his room, yelling: "Open up you dirty Jew", and hold a gun to his head.

The motivations for such bizarre performances obviously have a deep-seated psycho-sexual propulsion. It may not be as simple as Katherine suggests with her old man's passion for unwashed vaginas based on the odour of his nanny, and it is obviously more complex than the automatic response to conventional sex based on cultural socialisation. The limitless variety of requests would suggest an idiosyncratic and highly individualistic libido probably dependent on a life history of situations and events leading to the specific nature of the desire. How else would you explain one man's wish to be anally penetrated by any object, while another demands that the penetrating instrument be nothing else but a cucumber? There is a powerful urge to see bondage and fantasy enactments in terms of role reversal. If, for example, ordinary sex relations have sublimated sado-masochism, as the Freudians have been telling us for years, with males dominating females, then the transvestite fantasy of a male client represents a reversal of the situation. Many cultures in the past, including European medieval societies, have had rites of reversal, in which the sexes swap clothing or the king becomes a beggar and a beggar the king for a day. Perhaps bondage and fantasy in the sex industry is a human social need to relieve the burden of responsibility and power temporarily that is no longer socially recognised in the wider community. Mistress Kellie may have a point when she said: "Too much power and authority in their own life; I guess they want to feel what it's like on the other end." But many mistresses tell me that men of all classes visit them, except, as Martine noted, poor men do so less often because bondage sessions are expensive.

Other studies have attempted to explain the presence of explicit sado-masochism in modern society. Kinsey and his

colleagues (1953, p. 677) found that only 3 per cent of females frequently responded erotically to sado-masochistic stimuli, compared to 10 per cent of males, although 9 per cent of females did so infrequently compared to 12 per cent of males. Obviously men either need to express it more or they have more opportunities for doing so. Janus, Bess and Saltus (1977, p. 677), in their probe into the sexual lives of America's most powerful men, found that sado-masochism was preferred to coitus among the nation's top men—once again, the association of sado-masochism with socially ascribed power. Stein (1974) found 13 per cent of her call girls' clients falling into the "slave" category, a situation with a much higher ratio than appears among the clients of my prostitute sample.

Whatever the true nature of the client's desire for humiliation there is often a fine line between reality and madness in the bondage session, which is juggled by the mistress in control. Martine:

People go crazy in sessions sometimes, but, because we're usually dominant in the arrangement we can control the situation. I've had a couple of guys freak out; not on me, but get so scared. One tried to jump out of a top storey window once, but his dick was tied to the ceiling. Had his dick not been tethered he would have killed himself. We had to jump on him and hold him down, and he cried for about 15 minutes. They get pretty close to breaking down at times, but as a mistress you have to learn people's breaking point and you have to make up your mind whether you can take him to breaking point or not. If you decide to, you are then in a position of having to bring him back to reality.

For some men bondage is not a reversal of the power structure, but a role reversal situation enabling them to release emotions normally restrained. Bondage and fantasy in prostitution acts as a safety valve for a number of social tensions in men's daily lives.

Whilst most men may not decline telling other men that they visit prostitutes for "straight" sex, very few will ever disclose visits to a mistress. Although a temporary relief of male responsibility, it is still perceived as a demasculating experience by most men, and



whoever undertakes it has a suspect masculinity. Prostitutes understand this, which is why they keep customers secluded from one another in the bondage house. But what emerges from this apparent consideration for the sensitive nature of male peer approval is that the prostitutes become collaborators in an elaborate disguise of the truth about male sexuality, for which they are well paid. That is why the more bizarre and unmasculine the man's behaviour is in a session, the more he is willing to pay. It is the price of silence written into the so-called prostitutes' code of confidentiality. Prominent men are no different to other men and will also visit prostitutes from time to time. But the cover-up is more elaborate and the fee higher. Thus, the mystique of the prostitution industry is maintained. Wives and other women are convinced that only the most desperately lonely of men and men who habitually seek sexual partners as part of their unquenchable sex drive visit prostitutes. Men know about other men's visits to a brothel; that's part of the "boys club" syndrome. But they too are convinced that only "sick" men go to mistresses. This could not be further from the truth.

Bondage is sometimes assumed to channel potentially violent men into a harmless charade of violence. Bondage mistresses will reject this notion and point out that their clients are among the most sensitive and non-aggressive of men. Prostitution generally is also sometimes argued to be a sexual diversion that keeps the rape of women to a minimum. That too is untrue, as rape analysts like Susan Brownmiller (1975) will point out with their power thesis of rape. If others think that prostitutes are able to deal with male violence better than other women because they are somehow more "hardened", then they too are totally wrong. It is a concept carried to the highest authorities, as is clearly seen in the comment of the chief prosecutor in the famous English Yorkshire Ripper trial: "Some of the victims were prostitutes, but perhaps the saddest part of the case is that some were not." (*The Times*, London 28 July 1982)

Violence is an important issue in prostitution which has the widest implications for women in general because prostitutes are not beaten, raped, or murdered simply because they are prostitutes, but are so badly mistreated because they are the most vulnerable of women. It is not that they are mainly victims of brutal pimps either. That misconception perpetuates the myth that prostitutes are victims because of prostitution and gives other women false security. Neither are they mostly murdered by psychopathic serial killers, such as

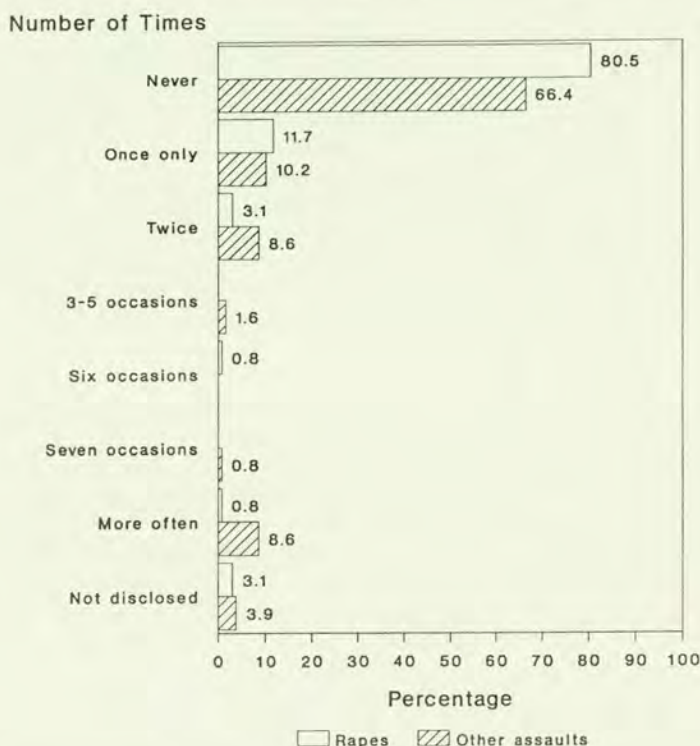


"Jack the Ripper" (whose five victims *were all* prostitutes), Peter Sutcliffe (the so-called "Yorkshire Ripper", most of whose 13 victims were prostitutes), the "Green River" murderer who slew more than 20 street prostitutes of Seattle and dumped their bodies on the banks of the river, or the so-called "Los Angeles Ripper", a maniac responsible for the agonising deaths of 11 prostitutes. Most danger done to prostitutes is by their clients; men, who as we have seen come from ordinary social and family backgrounds. The grisly toll of prostitute's deaths in Sydney, such as Marion Rooney, who was strangled to death in Kings Cross on New Years Eve 1971, Francine Godwin, stabbed to death in her car on 20th February 1971, and Julie Plater, bashed to death in a brothel on Christmas Eve 1985, were the result of client violence.

Studies of prostitutes in other countries show an appalling record of violence committed against the women, mostly by clients. Jennifer James (1972, p. 102ff) found two-thirds of her sample of Seattle street prostitutes were victims of assault by clients. Silbert and Pines (1982) found that 70 per cent of their sample of 200 San Francisco street prostitutes had been raped by clients on average 31.3 times, 78 per cent had been forced into an act of perversion by clients on average 16.6 times, 65 per cent had been assaulted by clients on average 4.3 times, 45 per cent had been robbed on average 3.6 times and 65 per cent had been physically attacked by other males on average 9.2 times. Joseph Scharbert (1974, p. 339ff) wrote that 20 prostitutes in Munich had been brutally slain between 1962 and 1972, and 30 prostitutes had been victims of armed robbery and 801 had been robbed in other ways throughout 1973. The prostitute sample in the present study were victims of rape and other violence at work to the extent shown in Figure 4.22.

From this we see that prostitutes are more vulnerable to assaults other than rape, than to rape itself. These assaults include bashing the victim with a fist or weapon, knife or razor attacks and the occasional deliberate running into a streetwalker with a car. Because violence is often spontaneous, bashing with fists is most common and usually motivated by misogyny, particularly after the client has climaxed, or a notion by the client that he has been "cheated" (he feels he didn't get his money's worth). "Car jobs" (working in a client's car) and being on premises alone are especially dangerous, leaving the woman in a most vulnerable position. But escorts and servicing house calls (going to a client's home) appear to

Figure 4.22: Frequency of rape and other violence committed against prostitutes (n=128) at work



be even more dangerous, according to the number of complaints the author has received from women involved in various kinds of sex work. Assaults or threatened violence with a weapon are usually premeditated with robbery in mind, and are less the actions of clients and more that of professional crooks. Menaces at gunpoint are not an uncommon experience in suburban brothels held up by a gang of robbers. But there have been incidences of knife and razor attacks by clients with a psychopathic hatred of women.

There are a number of reasons why rape at work is less prevalent than non-sexual assault. For one thing, the latter is quicker and less likely to cause the attacker injury. Prostitutes offer less of a



challenge to rapists exerting power through sexual violence over women. Also, prostitutes are probably often technically raped without them realising it. For example, the client who goes over time in spite of protests from the woman is technically raping her, but she probably would not perceive it as a form of rape. Comparing Figure 4.22 with Table 3.38 we find that prostitutes have been raped more often outside work. One reason for this variance could be that outside of work sexual assault is more easily identified as rape and rape by a trusted man has a much greater impact on the woman's emotions. But rape does occur in prostitution with alarming frequency. The most commonly identified forms of rape are where a client has sex with a woman and then refuses to pay her, and where women are kidnapped from the streets by a gang of youths.

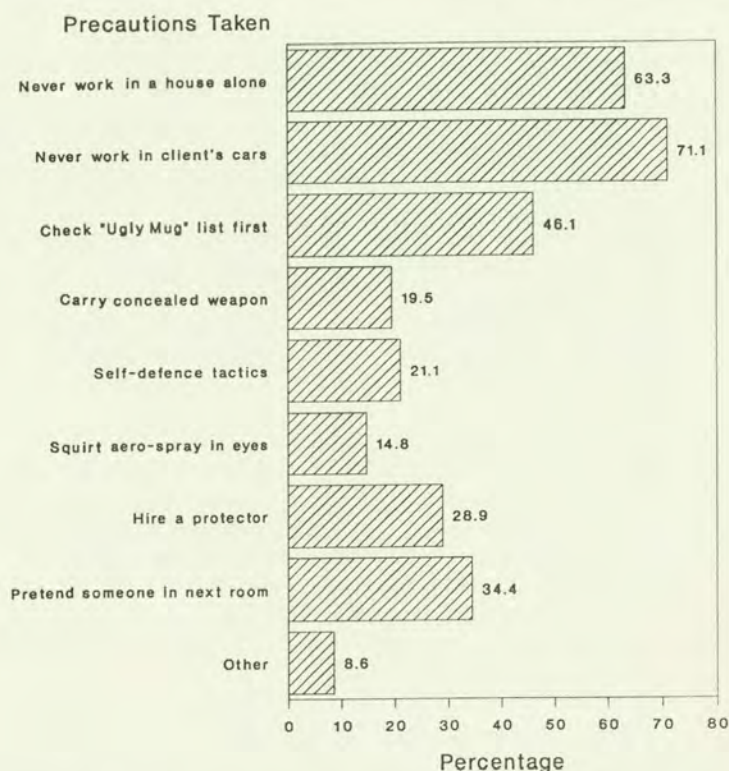
Youths in vehicles are a particular menace for streetwalkers. Most often these "westies" (as they are dubbed by the women in the belief that they are young working-class men from the western suburbs) are simply an annoyance with their foul-mouthed yelling and flinging rubbish out of car windows. But sometimes a youth gang might go further, ending in a rape of a prostitute dragged into a car from the street. In a twelve-month period between December 1984 and December 1985, 46 prostitutes on William Street had been victims of some outrage and 23 of them provided the author with details of 26 episodes of violence. This included such sadistic acts as burning a woman's breasts with a cigarette, dragging another along the footpath by her nipples, and lassoing a woman and dragging her half a block behind a speeding car (reported by the author to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January 1986, in an appeal for police protection of street prostitutes). Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) tried to explain youth gang violence as attempts by working class youth—frustrated by poverty, a political and legal system they cannot deal with, and the dominance of the middle classes—at redressing the balance. Unfortunately, their targets are usually people in more vulnerable positions than themselves, who are even more victimised by the system, and are in the same social class. Thus, street prostitutes become one of their favourite victims.

Figure 4.23 lists precautions taken by prostitutes as protection.

The list shows a number of measures a prostitute might take to avoid becoming a victim of violence. The most important seems to be to avoid being alone with a client in a house (flat or brothel) or



Figure 4.23: Precautions taken by prostitutes (n=128) as protection against violence. Most of the sample took two or three precautions.



in his car. The presence of other prostitutes and/or staff is most desirable for deterring client aggression and for calling out if in trouble. The "Ugly Mug" list was a list describing clients who had caused trouble based on reports from prostitutes. It was operative in the prostitute community in 1986 and 1987, published by the now defunct Australian Prostitutes Collective. It was particularly useful for street prostitutes spotting number plates of dangerous men's cars and for escorts scanning the list of troublesome men before visiting a hotel or private house. The above list of precautions indicates the awareness among prostitutes of the potential danger in their

occupation, and without these precautions undoubtedly the incidence of injury or death would be much higher.

Jeanette survived a particularly savage attack on her by a deranged client. In her description of the incident she blames herself, as many female victims of male violence are prone to do:

I had broken all the rules of the working girl. I went to work late, walked into a house after everyone had left and broke the rule that you do not work alone, and I picked him up in a back lane. Therefore, it was my own fault. He undressed and sat there holding his silly little thing and said: "Suck it!" In those days (early 1970s), French, Oh! my God, what would the other girls say, and could you ever live with yourself again? So, I glared at him and said: "You filthy mongrel!" Had I put my head down he would have slipped a noose of wire, such as they train you with in the army, around my neck. When I refused he whipped out a cutthroat razor. I ended up with 27 stitches in my hand, four in my nose and five in my throat. I wasn't raped. Had I been I think I would have died. But I was able to fight my way out of it and really stand up to him, even with every thing I owned practically hanging loose. And that gave me a great deal of satisfaction.

What have we learned about men in female prostitution? Firstly, while professional pimps exist, they are highly over-rated and hardly exist in Australia any more. The image of the brutal standover man is largely a figment of the popular imagination. Most of the men defined as "pimps" by law are in fact lovers and husbands freely chosen and supported by prostitutes. Clients are also the subject of popular imagery. They are not, however, lonely, perverted or in possession of powerful sex drives, but most often middle-aged married men of any social class. Violence in prostitution, often attributed to hoodlums, brutal pimps and psychopathic serial killers, in fact is most often committed against prostitutes by the clients and is probably not very different in dynamic to the domestic and other violence endured by women in everyday sex relations. So, what do we end up with? Ordinary men paying to have sex with ordinary

women, who choose to support other ordinary men as lovers or husbands.

## Conclusion

The working world of the prostitute is a complex structure of different operations and methods of trading in sex work, of pricing and management, of services rendered in a supply and demand system, and of men's secret sexual fantasies being expressed and fulfilled. To enter this world is not an easy choice for the women who do so. Some of these women have entered it as juvenile refugees from very unpleasant homelives, the reformatories and teenage street subcultures. But most are women in early adulthood who find themselves in dire financial situations and have someone they trust already involved in the sex industry. Contrary to popular thought, the sex industry is not dominated by mafia-style gangsters and standover pimps, and the women have control over their sexual interactions with clients.

There are the hazards, only too well-known in popular culture, and these include violence, infection, drug addiction and arrest. Occasionally, a prostitute is brutally murdered by a madman, or she is infected with HIV and develops AIDS, or she becomes heavily addicted to narcotics, or she ends up in prison. These are tragic consequences disproportionately "exposed" in the sensationalist press, dramatised in numerous movies, thundered from pulpits as object lessons for wayward women, or argued by politicians eager to show their mettle as strong leaders by calling for tougher legislative measures to deal with prostitutes. The truth, as we have learned, is that most prostitutes protect themselves against potential violence in men and against diseases, avoid overindulging in drugs, and do not involve themselves in crime.

Once again myths have been exploded by the truth of empirical investigation. On the one hand prostitution is a superficial reflection of everyday sex relations with its dominant males gaining access to female bodies through economic power. But, on the other hand, the reality of prostitute women setting limits, gaining in economic strength, and acquiring knowledge of true male sexuality, is a far cry from the common feminist assumptions of prostitutes as the most explicit example of female sexual oppression. I have



## Working Girls

already alluded to the concept of prostitutes paid to remain silent about the true nature of male sexuality in case men discover one another's secret desires. More threatening still is the possibility of wives and other women learning what prostitutes already know. If they did then the sexual revolution would well be won!

## **Chapter 5**

### **THE PROSTITUTES' RESPONSE**

We have come a long way together throughout this book and have now reached the concluding chapter. In the first half of the book the view was put forward that laws which criminalise prostitutes should be removed. In the second half evidence was presented in support of the argument that prostitute women generally have largely similar social backgrounds to most other women in our society. Three social factors taken together were seen to influence women commencing prostitution: at least half of the prostitutes have much earlier coital experiences than most women; most of them have some prior knowledge of prostitution; and, most sought sex work because of an economic reason. Although throughout the book comments by prostitutes have been invaluable as supporting evidence for the empirical data, so far these have been individual statements by women explaining or defending their actions.

It is time now to examine the more organised response to the moral, academic and legal attitudes of society from prostitutes as a politically active body of women. We will witness this phenomenon by firstly reviewing some of the common social attitudes that have lead to the mobilisation of prostitutes. Secondly, we will undertake a history of the prostitutes' movement and discuss some of its shortcomings. And lastly, we will attempt to find a way of locating prostitutes' rights within the general women's movement as the only practical solution for asserting these rights.

#### **"No Bad Women, Just Bad Laws"**

The title for this section is one of the slogans arising from the world prostitutes' movement. It seems to sum up most grievances felt by prostitutes. They do not consider they are "bad women" because they do no harm to society and their lives, apart from working in the sex industry, are undifferentiated from other women. And they accuse society's laws based on social misconceptions for their oppression. The problem for prostitutes continues to be re-enforced

by conflicting views in the recent literature on prostitute women. On the one hand, are the works of Jennifer James (1979), Nanette Davis (1971) and Mimi Silbert (1982), whose studies of juvenile street prostitutes disclose a social background of family violence and child sexual assault. On the other, are such accounts of prostitutes by Eileen McLeod (1982) and Gail Pheterson (1989), whose treatments of adult prostitutes illuminate women from ordinary social backgrounds asserting themselves sexually through sex work. Both sides offer a sympathetic view of the prostitutes' position as victims of a harsh society. But, whereas the first sees them as damaged women beyond repair with prostitution as a continuing arena of violence and abuse, the second argues they are women victimised by a male privileged economic system where they make clear choices for survival through prostitution. Both sides make claims to their subjects as "typical" prostitutes. There is little of William Isaac Thomas' (1967) "unadjusted girls" moving from "normal" to "abnormal" then back to "normal" situations as their economic position demands or certain aspirations are realised in the first scenario, and little of the battered woman syndrome in the second.

So, what is the "typical" prostitute, one that might satisfy both sides of the argument and find agreement with the prostitutes' own viewpoint? To endeavour to discover this let us return to the survey of the 128 prostitutes that have formed the empirical data base for this book. If we divide the entire sample into three "types" according to age of entry into prostitution, that is those who commenced sex work as early adolescents, those who did so in mid- adolescence, and those who became prostitutes in late adolescence or early adulthood, we discover three distinct groups with emphases on different social factors. Table 5.1 compares the three groups' responses to a list of experiential variables often associated with negative aspects in prostitution.

Seven women (5.5 per cent of the sample) commenced prostitution under the age of 16. For the sake of convenience, these shall be referred to as "kids". Thirty-four (26.5 per cent) commenced it between the ages of 16 and 18 inclusive. These shall be termed "girls". Eighty-seven (68 per cent) began sex work over 18 years of age. We shall call them "women". The disproportionate numbers of the three groups is a reasonable reflection of the dimensions of women entering prostitution in the various age groups.



*Table 5.1: Comparisons between prostitutes (n=128) who began sex work under 16, between 16-18 and 19 or over.*

<i>Experiential variables</i>	<i>Prostitutes</i>		
	<i>Began under 16 (n=7)</i> %	<i>Began 16-18 (n=34)</i> %	<i>Began 19+ (n=87)</i> %
Unhappy homelife	14.30	03.00	10.30
Parents divorced/separated	57.00	44.00	21.80
Distant father	00.00	17.60	15.00
Distant mother	43.00	26.00	11.50
Sexual assault by "uncles" etc	14.30	17.60	15.00
Sexual assault by close relative	14.30	20.60	10.30
Coitus by 16	100.00	70.60	33.30
Initial coitus as rape or incest	14.30	20.60	06.90
First male lover 5 years older	28.50	23.50	27.60
Juvenile arrest	28.50	59.00	23.00
Raped outside work	28.50	50.00	39.00
First drug used by 16	57.00	44.00	24.00
Narcotic use past and present	85.70	53.00	36.80
Pills, LSD, "speed" use past and present	100.00	61.80	39.00
Street working experiences	42.80	32.30	12.60
Brothel experiences	85.70	88.20	57.50
Escort experiences	57.00	47.00	30.00
Bondage experiences	14.30	03.00	04.60
Private experiences	43.00	26.50	18.40
Other prostitutions in past	00.00	08.80	01.20
No previous experiences	00.00	06.00	28.70

As Table 5.1 indicates, the "kids" have higher ratios of broken homes, problems with mother and are drug users. The "girls", on the other hand, have the highest ratios of sexual assaults

and arrest by the juvenile authorities. The "women" have much more moderate figures for broken homes, poor relations with mother, sexual assault, drug use and juvenile arrest. The latter are probably much closer to a general profile of women, as their larger influence on the comparative figures between the prostitute, health-worker and student samples throughout this book suggests. This is most apparent when we note that only a third of the "women" experienced coitus before 16 years of age, compared to almost half for the entire prostitute sample. What inferences might we draw from this data?

The emphasis on home life problems for the "kids" leads us to imagine that prostitution and drugs were the results of escapes from a torrid natal home and/or a strained relationship with their mothers. We might suppose that these represent the so-called "kids of the Cross" or adolescent children who drift to the Kings Cross area as unwanted children by their families. There they communicate with other "kids" of both sexes in similar situations who moved to the area earlier. The newcomers learn survival techniques from the established "kids", experiment with drugs which lead them into an addiction, and take up prostitution as a means of paying for their drug commitment. It is likely their prostitution began as a casual way of acquiring cash from men who approached them in pin-ball parlours. As their drug intake increases so does their commitment to commercial sex until finally they end up as "professional" street prostitutes.

With the "girls", sexual assault in family situations is as much a cause of their disjunction with their natal homes as broken homes through parents divorcing one another. The extraordinarily high ratio of rape beyond work among this group suggests that these young women's sexual lives were a series of violent episodes, a fact which may have played no little part in their decision to become prostitutes. But they also had high drug consumptions, another reason why many of them turned to commercial sex. Of most significance, however, is this group's involvement with the juvenile authorities. Since most girls are punished for sexual "misbehaviour" when brought before the courts (as opposed to boys, who are more often punished for acts of aggression, theft or violence), this group may well have internalised an official attitude of "bad girl" based on their sexual exploits. They would then fit the drift theory of Nanette Davis (1971) by which these "wayward" girls have identified with prostitutes before they even begin earning money through commercial sex



work. The "girls" differ from the "kids" mainly through their process into prostitution. The latter are the unwanted children who learn to survive through commercial sex, while the "girls" are mainly products of a juvenile justice system which persists in condemning adolescent females for their sexual experimentations.

Finally, the "women" fit more easily into the general assumptions made about prostitutes throughout this book. There is little in their early lives to suggest that their social experiences are very different to most women in society. Some (the dissected figures on Table 5.1 suggest about a fifth) have much earlier coital experiences than other women, but most seem to have reached late adolescence without particular social traumas that might lead them into prostitution.

What leads them into prostitution is an economic situation, or financial survival for themselves and, in many cases, their children, coupled with a knowledge about the sex industry which removes the barriers of mythological notions enough for them to perceive prostitution as a viable economic option.

What we have found in this analysis of prostitute sub-groups based on age of entry into prostitution is not one "typical" prostitute type, but three. James (1979), Davis (1971) and Silbert (1982), by their concentration on "kids" and "girls", arrived at findings for those groups which suggest a scenario of abuse leading into prostitution. McLeod (1982) and Pheterson (1989), on the other hand, concentrated on adult prostitutes and correctly concluded that female prostitutes are in sex work because of economic circumstances and not broken homes, drug use, juvenile delinquency or child sexual assault. Prostitutes across the world have rightly objected to being lumped in with the "kids" and "girls". On the other hand, they must realise that very young females do enter prostitution because of some of the social factors used to stigmatise all prostitutes. These young females are closer to the popular stereotype. But, society too has a responsibility to realise that the "kids" and "girls" in prostitution as an outcome of difficulties at home, juvenile "misbehaviour", sexual assault as children, or drug addiction, represent a minority among prostitutes. Adult prostitutes should not be made to bear guilt for the social flaws in juvenile prostitutes' backgrounds. And nor should the juveniles be made guilty for circumstances affecting them over which they have no control.



On the one hand the world prostitutes' movement has arisen as a challenge to the legal notions that continue to criminalise those who work in the sex industry. But, on the other, it is also a response to common attitudes in society that continue to strengthen the whore stigma. These attitudes and the laws are, of course, inter-related: the law exists as an outcome of the attitudes, but the attitudes continue to exist because of the illegal nature of sex work. Take the common notion that prostitutes "get what they deserve", for example. It motivates police to arrest prostitutes much more often than clients even where laws exist to prohibit "gutter crawling" as well as "soliciting" (such as in Victoria and England). The in-built attitude here is pure male chauvinism, whereby men are doing what comes "naturally" cruising for sex, while the women on the street are considered to be "unnatural" initiating sexual contact. Prostitutes receive little sympathy in the law even when they have been clearly wronged, as the classic example of the torture, murder and mutilation of the English prostitute Patsy Malone illustrates. Malone was sadistically tortured and then slain by police constable Peter Swindell, who only received a three-year gaol sentence for his heinous crime. In summing up the case, the judge justified his light punishment by saying that Swindell's crime "was not of the type from which others need deterring" (*The Times*, London, 28 July 1982). Rightly so, English prostitutes were outraged. Some demonstrated in front of the courthouse, while most cringed in fear with the knowledge that the judgment had virtually declared open season on them all.

Another attitude given legal sanction which angers prostitutes is the common belief that the women are helpless victims of some brutal pimp, of which the legal response is the prohibition of men "livings on the earnings of prostitution". Usually, the pimp figure in the popular consciousness is a brute, a working-class man or a black man. All sorts of racist and classist concepts are tied up in this notion, not the least of which is a shadowy figure conveniently distanced from the bourgeois law makers. Where the "bad women" image no longer seems viable to legislators, the pimp figure is a scapegoat for explaining why the state has failed to contain so many women in prostitution. The pimp becomes a "bogey-man" enticing innocent young girls from their loving families and trapping them in an environment of sexual slavery. Tied into this picture is a sexist attitude that women depend on men, even to the point of wanting to

finance them to stay. Another sexist attitude related to this situation is that pimps defy a "natural" order of men supporting women (which is why an earlier Australian colloquialism for "pimp" was "bludger", now synonymous with "freeloader" or lazy person; Wiltes 1978). Firstly, prostitutes are outraged by the suggestion that they must have a man to dominate them, and, secondly, they insist that they should be allowed to support whomever they like without their husbands or lovers being stigmatised as brutal pimps. They correctly assess this as another attempt at isolating them from mainstream society in a classic state manoeuvre to make them legal outcasts.

A third example of popular attitudes which are at the heart of prostitutes' grievances with society is that which believes that the sex industry, including the workers, are controlled by some sinister criminal forces. The common assumption is that the prostitute is at the bottom of a hierarchy of devious criminals, with a "Mr Big" at the top and "sleazy" brothel keepers in the middle ranks. Within this kind of fanciful regime we can perceive patriarchal notions of social order at work. The prostitute represents feminine powerlessness dependent on masculine economic power, while the brothel keeper is imagined as a slimy low-class man extracting huge profits from female helplessness. It is significant in this kind of fantasy to see him as a basically weak man unable to compete in the "real" world of male capitalism. The "madam" on the other hand, is perceived as a tough old tart ruling the brothel with the iron hand of a one-time underling suddenly granted dictatorial powers by the graciousness of some benevolent vice lord. She is no longer a helpless female but a male surrogate with masculine powers granted her. At the apex of this imagined power structure is a Mafia style crime boss ruling everyone and everything. He is, of course, representing male political power in this "natural" order, but it is important for the bourgeois power brokers of society that our "Mr. Big" is perceived as a migrant Italian or Middle Eastern man so that the law and order politics remain in the hands of white Anglo-Saxon men.

Prostitutes rebuke such notions because not only are they far from true but it also once more imagines the women involved in sex work as unable to control their lives without male hegemony. What many of the prostitutes in this book have pointed out time and again is just how much more control over their lives, including the inter-



sexual contact with male clients, they have in sex work compared to social situations beyond prostitution.

Attitudes detrimental to prostitutes are so intrinsic that most dictionaries carry two meanings for "prostitute". At the beginning of the book (p. 3) both meanings in *The Macquarie Dictionary* were cited. It is easy, therefore, for a lay person to convey these two expressions as having the same essential meaning, so that the woman "who engages in sexual intercourse for money" is also "one who debases (her)self... in an unworthy way". This kind of inter-locking meaning is at the core of the whore stigma, which Gail Pheterson goes to lengths to explain:

If a prostitute is a woman who "sells her honor for base gain or puts her abilities to infamous, unworthy use", then by definition she has no honor and does no good. The definition does not limit the unworthy use to sex, but, if one indeed collapses the noun and verb definitions, as public opinion is apt to do, then sex work becomes a specific case of dishonor and wrongdoing. It is important to recognise that the woman's shame is based upon what she offers (her body and her sexual abilities) whereas the unworthy cause to which she puts herself is presumedly men's sexual desire as customer... or man's financial interest as "pimp". We are in fact then talking about female dishonor and male unworthiness (Pheterson 1986, p. 9).

The law is, of course, uneven in its application to this logic because it represents a masculine viewpoint, and as such perpetuates the hypocrisy of sexism in yet another area of sexual relations. The cries for equality from libertarians and feminists demanding the arrest of clients as much as prostitutes misses the point here, that punishing men for seeking prostitutes does nothing to remove the stain of dishonour from the prostitute's reputation, or, in other words, two wrongs don't make a right.

Dishonour derives also from the popular notion that prostitutes are "cheap", not of course in price, but due to their giving sex too often to too many partners. It is another common term applied in an effort to keep women under male control.



San Francisco prostitute campaigner Scarlot Harlots's sardonic response is well understood by most prostitutes:

Cheap is when you fuck them just to shut them up.

Cheap is when you do it because they are worth so much.

Cheap is when you suck them till your jaw hurts so they won't say your're uptight.

Cheap is when you do it to keep them home at night.

Cheap is when you want less than pleasure, a baby, or a hundred dollars.

Cheap is when you do it for security.

Cheap is what you are before you learn to say "no".

Cheap is when you do it to gain approval, friendship, or love.

The advent of AIDS, an event which should have brought endangered groups together, has done little to bring a greater understanding of prostitutes to the wider community. Much of the blame rests with the health authorities who have treated prostitutes as a potential threat to the health of the heterosexual population. The bureaucratisation of AIDS control and prevention among prostitutes has witnessed the health bureaucrats desperately trying to find a way to communicate with women they have been taught are distasteful to the moral palate. One attempt to bridge the gap has been the bureaucrats' use of the term "sex worker" and its acceptance by prostitutes. This enables the bureaucrats to overlook their notion of "bad women" and it acts as a soft sell to gain easier access to prostitutes by using "nice" terms of reference. But, it does little to disguise the fact that these bureaucrats and health-workers have the opinion that prostitutes need health protection since they are unable to protect themselves. The low rate of viral infection among prostitutes should have convinced them to the contrary.

There is a problem allowing others to define you. The word "prostitute" has for so long been used as a social control weapon that prostitutes themselves find the term repulsive. Its Roman origin meant rebellious women, but Christianity has made it mean immoral women. European prostitutes are currently referring to themselves as "whores" in an effort to "take back" the word (just as gays have done with "poof") and defuse it as a weapon to perpetuate stigma. So too

should prostitutes make the word "prostitute" their own and give it a dignity as an interchange with "sex worker". Eventually then, society would redefine the dictionary meanings by a positive word association, instead of the current negative one. If the words so long used to denigrate prostitutes are reclaimed by them, the stigma will lose its sting with moralists continually trying to re-invent new words as weapons.

Throughout this book the evidence should be sufficient for our legislators to rethink the prostitution laws and to consider decriminalisation seriously. If empirical social facts are not enough, then costs should be. Earlier (p. 140) the New South Wales Women's Advisory Council's paper on the high cost of law enforcement of prostitutes leading to law reform in that state was mentioned. In the United States, Julie Pearl (1987, p. 769) pointed out that irrational application of harsh laws against prostitutes is one of the most costly exercises in law enforcement in the country. Between 1976 and 1985 violent crimes, she notes, increased by 32 per cent yet the rate of arrest for perpetrators of those crimes rose by only 3.7 per cent, while prostitutes were being arrested at an increasing rate of 135 per cent, in spite of no apparent rise in prostitution activities. In 1985, 16 American cities spent over \$53 million on police, nearly \$36 million on judicial procedure and almost \$32 million on the correctional process in combating prostitution with little or no effect on deterring further prostitution. Pearl concludes:

Many Americans may never wish to condone prostitution, but the time has come to ask whether we can afford to keep it illegal. In the face of rising complaints of violent crime in virtually all major cities, the thousands of highly skilled vice officer manhours devoted weekly to prostitution represent tremendous opportunity costs... A decision to re-allocate our resources need not be a declaration of the acceptability of prostitution. Rather it would be a well-founded statement concerning the proper use of criminal justice resource (Pearl 1987, pp.789-90).

Social attitudes expressed through newspapers in response to the New South Wales Select Committee Upon Prostitution from 1983 to 1985 prompted a number of prostitutes and brothel owners



to form a group to present an alternative report to the Select Committee through a submission direct to Premier Neville Wran. It was in a desperate bid to persuade the Government not to re-introduce harsh laws but to consider a regulatory system not disfavoured to prostitution. At that stage these women anticipated much more severe recommendations from the Select Committee than actually eventuated with the Committee's Report in April 1986. After a series of meetings with members of the Australian Prostitutes Collective, a small group representing workers and "madams" of East Sydney and Darlinghurst in December 1985 met with graduates in town planning from the Faculty of Architecture and the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales to endeavour to arrive at a solution on prostitution that would satisfy the community, the legislators and those in the sex industry. It was to be a compromise solution for all concerned. Even though those involved in these meetings worked in East Sydney, consideration was given to workers in Kings Cross and to parlours in the suburbs. Although the prostitutes' submission to the Premier was overlooked by the Government in favour of the Select Committee Report five months later, it represents the first time Sydney prostitutes themselves initiated an action through official channels of government.

The prostitutes' submission recognised certain claims by the community as valid and accepted the government's attempt at regulating street prostitutes. Some of the street workers in the group thought that their operations in Darlinghurst residential streets had gone beyond the pale, but agreed that it was unfair that they should have been singled out by the law while the hooligans and sightseers who were the real source of most nuisance problems in the area got off scott-free. Likewise, while the brothel workers could appreciate the potential problems associated with parking in a residential street for large parlours and residents, they considered it unacceptable to object to the presence of private prostitution involving one or two women in a residential area. They devised a system of regulation with the help of the town planner and law graduates which they felt should be acceptable to all but the more extreme moralists.

The prostitutes' recommendations for regulating street soliciting sought to define the legal term of "near to" by replacing this with an actual distance of, say, 100 metres from a residence, a school, hospital or church, only if these buildings were in current use. In addition, to reduce violence perpetrated upon street workers—



especially doing "car jobs"—licensed venues for streetwalkers to take their clients were recommended. These could be houses especially rented for the occasion of street workers servicing their clients, or "love hotels" fashioned after the Japanese idea, within close proximity to traditional areas of street operations. The purpose behind these recommendations was both to respect residents' privacy and provide protection for the women. Attempts at eradicating street prostitution for the past three-quarters of a century had failed dismally and did little more than mercilessly persecute economically-deprived women who did no harm to anyone. The prostitutes' recommendations were thought to be the most practical and humane solution to the age-old practice of street soliciting.

Parlours, or brothels with more than four bedrooms, were recommended by the prostitutes as fully commercial operations subject to the current environmental laws. These would be restricted to strictly commercial zones, and licences would be issued for their operation as legitimate businesses. It would be the responsibility of the state government to ensure that venues complying with criteria for obtaining a licence were not obstructed by unreasonable municipal ordinances and Council Chamber decisions.

Smaller parlours, or brothels with no more than four bedrooms and no more than four women working at any one time, were recommended as small businesses with the same legal rights in the environment regulations as a similar-sized doctor's surgery or a partnership of accountants' office. These could receive licences to operate in mixed zones provided they complied with criteria laid down by the laws regulating prostitution operations. This would not apply to private operations of no more than two women, who should under any reasonable consideration be able to work on premises rented or owned by them as residential without the need for official approval in accordance with the "home occupation" provision within the *Environmental and Planning Assessment Act 1979*.

The final group of recommendations were concerned for a regulatory body to issue licences and inspect premises and to ensure all conditions in the regulation statutes are complied with. A board of three was suggested, consisting of a representative each from the Departments of Planning and Health and from the Australian Prostitutes Collective. The departmental representatives' roles were to ensure that environment and health regulations were upheld before issuing licences, and the latter ensured that workers were not abused.

Licences would be issued on a triennial basis, but the licensing board would have the power to inspect premises at any time and to cancel licences as it saw fit. The board would also receive complaints from workers and managers and deal with them appropriately.

Social attitudes and legal reflections of them have long been a source of outrage to prostitutes. Only recently, though, have they sought to do something about this. The above action is one example, and the world prostitutes' movement outlined in the next section is another. But governments also have a responsibility here. Before introducing harsh laws to deal with the supposed misbehaviour of prostitutes, the lawmakers should ascertain the truth and advise the community accordingly.

### **A Decade and a Half of Struggle: The Prostitutes' Movement**

The political mobilisation of prostitutes, like many politicisations of minorities, was inspired by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. But due to the extensive surveillance and intrinsic involvement of police in prostitution, the collaboration of brothel owners with the authorities, and the extremely oppressive nature of the laws and law enforcement resulting in the powerlessness of prostitutes both in society and within their own subculture, their politicisation came somewhat later than, say, blacks, gays, women in the feminist movement, anti-war activists and the conservationists. Political campaigns require a great deal of public exposure for the individuals concerned, and most prostitutes were in no position to expose themselves and their families to derision. They had more to lose than other activists. Leaders of the gay movement, for example, were usually men who had emerged from the "closet" years earlier, and had developed lifestyles in supportive and empathetic gay subcultures. Prostitutes, on the other hand, were living two lives, the sanctity of their social life and their relationships with their children being threatened by the consequences of disclosing their clandestine life as "whore". The police would take care of that by arresting and publicly exposing as a criminal any prostitute who dared to challenge the authorities. From an early period in the feminist movement it was obvious to most sex workers that they were going to get no support from that quarter, and they could not expect support from other personnel in the sex industry, such as clients, pimps and brothel



managers, whose own interests would not be served by publicly "coming out". If a prostitutes' movement was to take place it would have to be initiated and carried by the prostitutes alone.

When the movement did begin it had followed a period of extreme provocation, and not surprisingly, the main focus was on the removal of oppressive laws. The word "decriminalisation" was coined as a result. The first prostitute advocacy of any permanency was the organisation known as COYOTE (an acronym for "Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics"), founded by the ubiquitous Margo St James on, appropriately enough, Mother's Day 1973, after receiving a grant of \$5000 from the radical Glide Methodist Church in San Francisco. In view of earlier comments made in this book about the role of the Christian Churches in condemning prostitution, such a gesture seems oddly out of step with mainstream Christianity. But throughout the history of the prostitutes' movement individual churches and pastors have defied the authority of the central Church by assisting the campaigners. In France, England and Canada, for instance, prostitute activists have conducted protest demonstrations inside churches (in the tradition of seeking "sanctity" or protection from God) with the blessings of the resident vicars. The first three meetings of the Australian Prostitutes Collective were held in the rooms of Kings Cross' Wayside Chapel. Indicated here is a tension in modern Christian thought, or what might be described as a maternalistic undercurrent in the unrelenting paternalistic Christian mode.

The main thrust of COYOTE's momentum was law reform, but it raised funds to keep the momentum going by public social events and conventions. The first convention was held in the Glide Church in 1973 and the money raised from this went into organising the first Hooker's Ball in San Francisco, a major profit-making event which thereafter became an important gala occasion every year in the city's social calendar (Jaget 1980, pp. 200-1).

The "official" launch of the prostitutes' movement, however, occurred in France, not America. It began with protests by street sex workers in Lyons, who had endured extreme police harassment, imprisonment and the murder of a number of their colleagues by a serial killer. A formal protest was sent to the authorities and press by a mixed group of prostitutes and supporters, including members of an activist organisation known as Nid, noted for "rehabilitating" prostitutes, demanding an end to police harassment and to police inertia with regards to investigating the homicides. When these



demands were ignored, and police increased their fines, some 150 prostitutes occupied the church of St Nizier on 3rd June 1975 and called a press conference. They told an eager press gallery that they refused to budge until certain prominent parliamentarians listened to their grievances. While the French left-wing newspaper, *Liberation*, head-lined an article on the event "Hookers in the House of the Lord", prostitutes inside the church hung a banner out the front reading: "Our Children don't want their Mothers in Gaol". The focus of attention for the prostitutes was very different to the public interest. Until that time most people had probably not thought of prostitutes as mothers. The Minister of Women's Affairs and other government officials requested by the prostitutes for a communication refused the women's invitation, and instead the women were driven from the church by a police baton charge early in the morning a week later.

But the exercise in demanding rights had not been in vain. Across the country, in Paris, Marseilles, Grenoble and Montpellier prostitutes also occupied churches when they learned of events in Lyons, and in Cannes, Toulouse and Saint-Etienne they "downed tools". The entire affair was dubbed "the prostitutes strike" by the press and a group of Parisian prostitutes formed themselves into an organisation they called "The French Prostitutes Collective". At the political level the French Parliament agreed to allow prostitutes more time to pay fines instead of gaoling them police were ordered to step up investigations of the murders and were investigated for corruption following a number of reports by the women (Jaget 1980, pp. 35-54).

But no move was made to decriminalise the laws in France, and later when the government proposed the return of licensing and the "maisons de tolerance" the prostitutes vetoed the idea completely as another attempt at controlling them. These events in France, however, sparked a universal resistance by prostitutes and the formation of a number of organisations modelled on the French idea of a collective. Prostitute advocacies mushroomed across Europe, including the Committee of Civil Rights for Prostitutes in Italy in 1979, Hydra in West Germany in 1980, ANAIS in Switzerland in 1982 and De Rode Draag in Holland in 1984 (Pheterson 1989, pp.6-7). Prostitutes in England were quicker off the mark, with Helen Buckingham founding PLAN (Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense) in 1975, and a group modelled directly on the French organisation, calling itself the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) in the same

year inventing the slogan which seems to sum it all up very nicely: "No bad women, just bad laws". ECP soon developed a strong socialist feminist perspective and on 18 November 1982 followed the French example by 18 members occupying the Holy Cross Anglican Church in Camden in protest over police brutality. They managed to achieve an official monitor of police behaviour as a result of the press coverage. In Canada, a Vancouver organisation, ASP (Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes), staged a massive demonstration outside City Hall on 20 April 1983, and followed up with a church occupation on 20 July 1984 in protest over new tougher legislation (*Network* July 1983; *The Body Politic* 1983; ECP Newsletter 23 July 1984).

A number of advocacy organisations were formed in America (among which were PONY in New York, PUSSY in Pennsylvania, PUMA in Massachusetts, KITTY in Kansas City and CAT in Los Angeles). But the most publicly active was the US Prostitutes Collective, with a strong feminist persuasion. In Tulsa they staged a street corner stand-in on 18 September 1983 in protest over penalties forcing prostitutes to become street cleaners (*Tulsa World, City/State* 16 September 1983; *Time*, 3 October 1983, p. 25). In March 1984 they conducted a street protest in Seattle in response to police inertia in the "Green River" serial murder investigations (*The Seattle Times*, 17 March 1984; *Time*, 16 April 1984; Penn 1984). In Sacramento on 14 March 1984 a newspaper office was picketed for printing an inflammatory story thought to encourage violence against prostitutes (*The Sacramento Union*, 15 March 1984). Masked protesters (it has become a tradition for prostitutes staging public demonstrations to wear masks to hide their identities) demonstrated outside Berkeley City Hall because of the municipal council's sanctioning of citizen vigilantes aiding police to hunt down prostitutes on 20 March 1984 (*The Tribune*, 20 March 1984; *SF Examiner*, 20 March 1984). In January 1985 a small army of masked colleagues of a "mistress of sadomasochism" marched with banners outside the Sacramento Superior Courthouse in protest over a trial likely to convict the mistress to a gaol term for solicitation in violation of her parole (*The Sacramento Union*, 1 February 1985).

Whilst these public outbursts captured the attention of the community at large over the plight of prostitutes, they achieved little by way of solving the legal problems facing prostitutes. In England, though, some headway was made with the co-operative efforts of



three prostitute organisations—ECP, PLAN and PROS (Programme for the Reform of Laws On Soliciting), a streetwalkers group founded by parole officer, Louise Webb—assisting MP Maureen Colquhoun in framing a 10 Minute Rule Bill calling for the repeal of a soliciting law penalty that allowed the detention of prostitutes after a third conviction. It passed a first reading in the House of Commons on 6 March 1979, but failed to obtain a second reading and reach the House of Lords for approval because of an electoral intervention and change in government (Jaget 1980, pp. 28-9). However, two years later the issue of repeal was revived as the Imprisonment of Prostitutes (Abolition) Bill, which finally passed through both Houses on 31 January 1983. But what appeared to be a major victory for prostitutes at the time turned sour when the police stepped up arrests and the courts increased fines, so that women still went to gaol, only this time it was for failure to pay fines. Nevertheless, what was achieved was real co-operation between prostitutes and government agents.

On an international scale in this decade some important advances were made to form a coalition of these prostitute organisations to deal with governments worldwide. The first steps were taken by Margo St. James, who with feminist Priscilla Alexander, founded the US National Task Force on Prostitution in 1979 in an effort to provide a mutual outlet for the actions of the myriad of advocacy groups then in existence across the country. A major focus of this coalition was to pressure the United States into ratifying the United Nations 1949 convention on the trafficking of women and children (*see* p 56) and to recommend "decriminalisation". It also hoped to negotiate with European prostitute groups for a united campaign to end legal oppression worldwide (Jaget 1980, p. 20; Pheterson 1989, p. 5).

The American coalition was not as successful as it was hoped, due mainly to opposition from the US Prostitutes Collective, whose chief spokeswoman, Margaret Prescod, argued that St. James and COYOTE's "good times approach belittles the prostitutes' plight" while the US Prostitutes Collective's street protest approach is much more effective (*The Wall Street Journal*, 28 March 1984). St. James and her colleagues, though, had greater success in Europe, where she and social psychologist feminist Gail Pheterson formed the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights (ICPR) in 1984, an organisation which was responsible for two "World Whores



Congresses". The first Congress took place in Amsterdam on 14 February 1985, and involved some 75 participants equally mixed between prostitutes and supporters from six European countries, three South-East Asian countries, the United States and Canada. It was mostly notable for two outcomes. The first was the unfortunate ideological differences between the Socialist feminist dominated ECP and the more "grassroots" approach of ICPR which came to a head in an unresolved outburst during one of the sessions. A permanent split between the feminist organised ECP, US Prostitutes Collective and their sister groups in Canada and the Caribbean on the one hand, and the prostitute organised groups attached to ICPR on the other seems imminent as a result of this. The second outcome was much more positive: the "World Charter for Prostitutes Rights", which listed decriminalisation, human rights, self-determination in working conditions, health control by sex workers, and public education as its main objectives (Pheterson 1989, pp. 33-42).

The Second "World Whores Congress" was a much grander affair. It took place on 1-3 October 1986 in the distinguished halls of the European Parliament building in Brussels. Nearly 150 people attended the three-day sessions, over three-quarters of whom were prostitutes from 18 countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia and the South Pacific. The sessions were divided into three parts, dealing each with human rights, including legal harassment, health, with a focus on prevention of AIDS, and feminism, with a discussion on resolving differences. The dialogue was mostly supplying information, comparing conditions in the various countries, and communicating for the purposes of solidarity, as well as ratification of the above Charter (Pheterson 1989, pp. 43-197).

These Congresses were essential for prostitute solidarity, but they were just as important as a forum for communicating to the governments of the world, as well as the population at large, the needs of prostitutes worldwide. The US National Task Force on Prostitution had achieved non-government status with the United Nations; the same was hoped for ICPR. Five delegates, including myself, from the Australian Prostitutes Collective attended the second Congress and put its case for national decriminalisation to the plenary assembly. This organisation, however, had already established a rapport with the governments of New South Wales and Victoria through the separate inquiries being conducted in each state at the time. A sister organisation, Prostitutes Association of South

Australia, had an even longer and earlier communication with its state government in the bills for "decriminalisation" presented to Parliament (*see* p. 103).

In Victoria, campaigns for prostitutes' rights actually pre-date prostitute organisations, when a group of feminists demanded the decriminalisation of prostitution laws at the State's Liberal Party Conference in 1970. But as the community conflicts in St. Kilda mounted throughout the 1970s, the Prostitutes Action Group was formed in November 1978 to bring the sex workers' cause to the open forums. At the time they received support from Women Behind Bars and the St Kilda Women's Liberation Group in their public battles with the council and resident conservatives. But eventually the prostitutes, having changed the name of their group to Hetaira to be more appealing to up-market prostitutes, gained the attention of parliamentarian Joan Coxedge, whose communications with the group led to an interest in law reform by the State Labour Party, finally resulting in "legalisation" (*see* p. 111)(Johnston 1984, pp. 338-59).

In 1984 the remnants of Hetaira formed a coalition with the Sydney group, Australian Prostitutes Collective, adopting this name as their own. Two years later the group received funding for health and welfare services among prostitutes from the Victorian Government. Such co-operation between government and prostitutes inspired the formation of other organisations in Western Australia, Queensland, the Australian Capital and Northern Territories, and applications for government grants. In 1988 the Victorian group changed its name once again, calling itself The Prostitutes Collective of Victoria, in an effort to dissociate itself from the chaos dividing the Sydney group at the time. In spite of this upheaval's disillusioning effect on the prostitutes movement across Australia, the Victorian group lead the way in arranging the first national conference on prostitution in Melbourne in 1988. In spite of the excellent model established by ICPR's World Whores Congress in Brussels, this conference seemed more beneficial to government officials and bureaucrats who considerably outnumbered prostitutes attending from the various states. In Adelaide the next year a much more prostitute-orientated conference took place with the purpose of forming the Scarlet Alliance as a national forum for prostitute organisations and establishing a national charter for sex workers' rights.



The rise and fall of the Australian Prostitutes Collective (initially called the Collective of Australian Prostitutes) is an object lesson to other prostitute organisations. It was founded by Kerry Carrington, Debbie Homberg, Roz Nelson and myself at a meeting in the Wayside Chapel's annexes in Darlinghurst, Sydney, on 13th July 1983 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 September 1983; *Campaign*, August 1983). The meeting was attended by 70 people anxious to give support to prostitutes in their struggle against conservative residents of East Sydney. Initially it was a lobby group only demanding decriminalisation, but in time it also took on the role of a welfare organisation attending to the daily needs of individuals. Members of the organisation had earlier established a rapport with the New South Wales Select Committee Upon Prostitution. Both groups had a common interest: to find a solution to the problems occurring between prostitutes and the community at large. With this in mind both groups co-operated, with the APC supplying prime witnesses and the Select Committee seriously considering recommendations from prostitutes. The APC formed a special sub-group with members of the gay youth organisation, Twenty-Ten, in order to negotiate with the Select Committee through the medium of submissions and verbal communication. This sub-group was called the Task Force On Prostitution, and in addition to presenting 21 written submissions its members appeared as witnesses as under:

- 30 August 1983, Annette Crowe (APC)
- 12 September 1983, Roz Nelson (APC)
- 12 September 1983, Garry Bennett (Twenty-Ten)
- 4 October 1983, Roberta Perkins (APC)
- 14 November 1983, Terry Goulden (Twenty-Ten)
- 15 December 1983, Debbie Homberg (APC)
- 27 June 1984, Roz Nelson and Roberta Perkins (APC)
- 19 July 1984, Bebe Loff, Marianne Phillips, Cheryl  
Overs (APC, Vic.)

Apart from these co-operations, Garry Bennett and I took members of the Select Committee on a night time tour of Kings Cross, East Sydney and Darlinghurst on 6 August 1983, when they spoke to street and brothel prostitutes, visited brothels and gained a general impression of the area. The findings from research conducted



at this time for the Task Group On Prostitution were published two years later (Perkins & Bennett 1985).

Among the recommendations made by the Select Committee were suggestions for increases in health and welfare services and the greater availability of condoms as an important AIDS prevention measure. By this time, however, the APC had received a substantial grant from the New South Wales Government in 1985 to combat AIDS in prostitution. It was the first Australian prostitute organisation to receive such funding, and one of the first in the world. It set a precedent for other Australian governments, and even in California the long-standing advocacy COYOTE was granted funds in 1987 from the state government as well as non-government groups to prevent the spread of HIV among prostitutes. In order to avoid controversy, COYOTE established a sister organisation, CAL-PEP (California Prostitutes Education Project), so that it appeared like two unrelated groups focusing on different needs of sex workers. Such subterfuge was deemed not necessary in the climate of "decriminalisation" in New South Wales, and certainly the State Government made no conditions on advocacy when granting monies for AIDS prevention in 1985.

Funding enabled the APC to establish office premises in Kings Cross, employ a staff of "project workers", and service every brothel in the State with condoms and educational material on a rotation outreach system. The idea of a "travelling parlour show" was introduced whereby members of the APC took STD workers to the brothels for thorough STD education programs. This service, along with less personal methods for preventing the spread of AIDS in the community, was largely responsible for the rapid mobilisation against AIDS by prostitutes and the widespread introduction of mandatory condom use in brothels across the State. In every respect the APC, with its liaisons with both prostitutes and the government, became the perfect medium through which the latter could communicate with sex workers for purposes of reducing health risk. While in a "decriminalisation" legal system such as in New South Wales the opportunity for developing mutual trust exists, in an oppressive atmosphere of criminalising laws, heavy penalties and persistent policing such as in California, Queensland, South Australia, England and France, mistrust and resentment make a permanent barrier between prostitutes and governments, and organisations such as CAL-PEP walk a fine line between

collaborating with the oppressors and assisting in illegal activities. The use of prostitute organisations in this way by oppressive governments is yet another example of social control.

The APC, for all of its excellent project work, was unfortunately doomed to a short-lived existence. By August 1987 it began experiencing serious internal disjunctions which threatened to disintegrate the organisation. Part of this was due to individual bids for power, but most of the blame for this unfortunate collapse of a well-run service must be laid at the feet of ministerial inertia in a more conservative Labor Party Government in 1987 than was in existence in 1985. The initial crux of the problem occurred when two senior government bureaucrats entered the management committee of the APC. Although a majority of prostitutes steered this committee, the two bureaucrats assumed a superior power, which led to a demand by the prostitutes for their removal. Instead of recognising the majority decision, the dissenting bureaucrats managed to seize the APC's negotiating arrangement with its bank. Once they had power over the government funds, they systematically removed their opposition on the staff by an expediency of formal dismissals. A first-class industrial brawl broke out, with the "bureaucrats' faction" (as the media dubbed it) claiming to "protect" public monies, while the "prostitutes' faction" took their grievances to the funding body. When they found this avenue blocked by the bureaucrats' colleagues within the department, they appealed directly to the Minister for Health, the highest authority for the funding body, presenting him with a petition of 500 prostitutes' signatures calling for the official removal of the two bureaucrats. But he claimed to be a neutral party with no right to interfere in what ostensibly is an independent organisation, in spite of the real risk of abuse of government funds. The prostitutes took this refusal to arbitrate in the dispute as tacit approval of the behaviour of the two bureaucrats, who by now had managed to secure a few token prostitutes on their side by offering them jobs. The prostitutes staged a street demonstration and picketed the Minister's office, which at one point involved police, an action that only inflamed an already volatile situation.

Whatever the Minister's real thoughts on the matter were, the fact was his Party was in a very shaky political position with a series of public scandals under its belt and criticisms levelled at it for its shortcomings in the rising AIDS crisis. He and his parliamentary



colleagues were facing a state election in a few weeks and the last thing he could afford was involvement in a scandal over misuse of public monies given to prostitutes, let alone lend support to the "prostitutes faction's" accusations of double-dealing by two of his senior officers. I imagine he thought that neutrality was the better course of valour. But his anxieties served him nought, for the much more conservative Liberal Party won the election with a clear majority. The prostitutes gave up now that they were faced with a government that was hell-bent on introducing tougher laws to punish sex workers. In the meantime the APC was allowed to continue operating under the control of the bureaucrats. But the vast majority of prostitutes no longer trusted it, and it became an organisation without function. In the end the Government decided to withdraw any further funding (now that a "decent" period had passed to allow memories to fade) and finish the embarrassment altogether.

So, finally, what occurred was a bizarre situation. The first prostitute organisation to receive funding to combat AIDS in an atmosphere of communication with government, legal relaxation, and mutual trust, was also the first to lose it, while other prostitute groups walking the tightrope between antagonistic forces were flourishing with government funds. But, these especially, should be aware of the history of the collapse of an efficient service for prostitutes operated by the APC. They need to be wary of who they allow onto their committee, and government employees, particularly those on the staff of the funding body who feel they have automatic superiority over prostitutes, should be carefully screened before being approved. It is important to realise that, as with the APC, there is no such thing as safety in numbers when the minority have state power to call upon surreptitiously. Most especially they should tread warily with government funding, lest it becomes a source of power to control prostitutes. It may, for instance, be withheld for a period of time until the organisation ceases its advocacy work, especially when this challenges the laws aimed at prostitutes. Thus, funding becomes a most effective weapon for the control of prostitutes by holding power over their most trusted means of communication with government in the bid for prostitutes rights. An organisation with all its good intentions in the flush of its early days of hard voluntary work, and dedication to achieving human rights, is soon corrupted with funding, for once this is withdrawn the initial enthusiasm seems primitive and futile. At first the funding appears like a reward for all



the hard work of the past and the "generosity" of the government in granting it gives the impression that the politicians understand at last. In the meantime, new workers in the organisation replace the old and these are motivated more by wages than causes. Soon, the organisation is structured in such a manner that funding becomes an imperative. Once it is withdrawn, or threatened with withdrawal, the members of the group feel they can't survive without it. Returning to volunteer work seems such a retrograde step. The loss of funding is like a deflated ego or a betrayal, and it seems fruitless to start all over again. Indeed, government funding is a corrupting influence. But it is also a more efficient mechanism for social control than the law. Such was the fate of the APC, for it failed to notice the warning signs in its enthusiasm for expanding its service with government funds. Others, however, might learn from its mistakes. Some prostitutes working in a fully government funded organisation with "grassroots" pretensions warn others they "should not bite the hand that feeds them", meaning "do not rock the boat", or be compliant. They may learn to their sorrow however, that the hand is made of steel; it cannot be bitten but it can smack with a savage wallop for disobedience.

### A Strategy for a Radical Integration

I love life, the rain, and the wind.  
I love the music of Bach, Vivaldi and Jean-Roger  
Caussimon,  
And of Brel, Brassens, and Greco.  
I love children, my children.  
Through their movements I discover life.  
I love my home;  
It gives me pleasure to cook for my friends.  
I love being at home and reading for an entire evening.  
I love the movies, the theatre.  
I love the warmth of my friends;  
I love to give gifts.  
I love to be nice like that for fun.  
I love my man.  
Am I not, then, a woman like you?  
Oh, excuse me,  
I am a prostitute. (cited in *Connexions* 1984, p. 4)

This poem, written by Barbara, one of the French women who occupied the church in Lyons in 1975, expresses what many prostitutes across the world feel about their own situation. It not only reflects the sentiments of women commenting in this work, but evinces its thesis. In a reverse perspective, some feminists have reflected upon themselves in the same manner (as indeed have many, if not most, women). Radical feminist Susan Brownmiller explains:

I am white, and middle class and ambitious, and I have no trouble identifying with either the call girl or the street hustler, and I can explain in one sentence: I've been working to support myself in this city (New York) for 15 years and I've had more offers to sell my body than I have had to be an executive (Brownmiller 1973, p. 74).

Brownmiller at one stage actually found herself facing the reality of entering prostitution as a strategy for survival:

There was a time when I was an unemployed actress, and working to support myself as a waitress and a file clerk. The disparity between my reality situation and my ambition for a better life was so great that I gave serious consideration to the social pressure to do a little hustling (Brownmiller 1973, p. 74).

Once again we are faced with the prime motivation for women becoming prostitutes. A whim, a piece of luck, a bit of extra money may be all that separates the prostitute from the non-prostitute. But, just how many women, in spite of a superficial identification, try to understand the prostitute as a person as well as a whore? When feminist literary scholar and philosopher Kate Millet decided to write on prostitution she undertook "the long and difficult process of finding women who could teach [me]". But Millet was no detached analyst for "I am a woman, so there are more personal motives behind my interest in prostitution." She found that subconscious niche in every woman's mind identifying her with "whore" that I had alluded to throughout this work:

A woman does not really need all that much imagination to have some insight into the prostitute's experience. I found a recess in my mind, a "closet" I call it, which, probably like most of us, I had dimly perceived yet hesitated to approach, a fantasy mesmerising me for half a lifetime, the 15 or 20 years since adolescence... I think many of us, maybe all of us, are really selling and not knowing we're doing it. The question lies then in who among us *could* stand, or will *have to* stand, on Broadway tonight (Millet 1971, pp. 78 & 80).

With such insights by leading feminists why then hasn't mainstream feminism embraced prostitutes into their fold? Why such ambivalence, with some feminists, as we have seen in the previous Section, taking a part as colleagues of prostitutes in their movement for decriminalisation and rights of equality as whores, while others are openly hostile to them? One English feminist was so outraged at the thought of being a prostitute that she wrote in a fit of disgust: "I would rather clean out stinking lavatories seven days a week than let strangers violate my body." (Stott 1978). In a meeting of feminists I attended some years ago, one woman, a nurse, during a discussion on STD prevention among prostitutes, blurted out: "I'm not going to clean out cunts for men!"

In the early stages of the modern feminist movement activists invited discourses between them and their "erring, embarrassing sisters" in sex work. Gail Sheehy describes one such meeting in her typical cavalier style:

The very first conference between feminists and prostitutes in Manhattan degenerated into a brawl. The two-day meeting in January 1972 was run by middle-class panellists in combat boots who wanted to save their sisters of the musk-oiled flesh. Surprise: a few white-collar call girls turned up to speak for themselves. They were not only articulate but also in total disagreement with their would-be saviours, whereupon the liberated panellists brushed them off as uppity. The feminists were determined to come up with a clear cut position on the issue... [call girl] "I'm



really tired of all of you talking about the *degraded* prostitute. You cannot sit here and make decrees about 50,000 to 75,000 prostituting women. At least you have to know the different types"... (another call girl) "You have to realise you're frightened of us. Because it's your husbands, your bosses, your radical-hip boyfriends who come to see us"... (yet another call girl) "I exposed my tender ass to come here today." A radical feminist observed that her sisters took a risk starting the whole women's movement three years ago. *Swock!* Prostitute slugged feminist. *Drubble.* The feminist broke into sobs. The conference went to pieces on the spot... [call girl] "So fuck off, feminists, and don't call us, we'll call you." (Sheehy 1973, pp. 197-9).

Sheehy summarised the situation: "Working girls are feminists in very basic, competitive, American capitalist terms." One call girl put it even more succinctly:

They're trying to butt into everything, grab the publicity and wreck our business. How many of them can make \$1000 a week lying down? (Sheehy 1973, p. 200).

It's not as simple as that, and nor do attitudes such as these do much towards resolving differences between the antagonists. As recently as 1985 the battle lines were still drawn when Margaret Prescod met Philadelphia Assistant District Attorney and outspoken feminist, Pamela Cushing, in a public discussion sponsored by Pennsylvania University's Law School Women's Law Group. The only things missing were the army fatigues and the fisticuffs. Prescod pointed to blatant racism and sexism in the state's dealings with prostitution and demanded decriminalisation as the only way to resolve this situation. Cushing replied with an all out assault on sex work:

Prostitution is something we want to keep illegal. We do not want to say that men can control women's bodies. Keeping the laws the way they are is helping

women. I feel as a feminist that prostitution should be kept illegal... so that it will be hard for women to go this route... I think there are other ways of making money—I don't think taking the easy way, going out and selling your body, is the answer (*The Philadelphia Tribune*, 29 May 1985; *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, 27 May 1985).

Her response angered prostitutes because she failed to understand the true nature of prostitution, where men do not "control women's bodies" in the contractual interaction, and for most prostitutes it is not "taking the easy way", which is demeaning both to sex workers and to women in general. Cushing, in fact, sounds less like a feminist in this last statement, and more like the patriarchal state, which after all she represents as district attorney. Also in this sense, Cushing's insistence that the laws should be maintained on the pretext that it stops women entering prostitution neither prevents them doing so, nor spares any thought for the women already involved. In the frame of mind of patriarchal Christianity, they are the most punished.

The Second World Whores Congress broached the question of feminism. Belgian feminists expressed surprise at the hostility shown by prostitutes towards the feminist movement: they shouldn't have been, with attitudes such as self-defined feminists like Cushing aired in open forums. In line with the cherished values of the modern women's movement the ICPR at the Congress proclaimed that the prostitutes have the same rights as all other women in a right to "financial initiative and financial gain", to receive "due respect and compensation in... occupation", to an "alliance between all women", to "determine their own sexual behaviour", and to have "relational choice (with) recourse against violence within any personal or work setting." The session on feminism at the Congress concluded with an appeal from ICPR that "urges existing feminist groups to invite whore-identified women into their leading ranks and to integrate a prostitution consciousness in their analyses and strategies." (Pheterson 1989, p. 197)

The crux of this final statement is a recognition that the prostitutes movement is doomed without wider support and that prostitution is a woman's issue to be resolved within a discriminating

society, and not just an issue to be dismissed within the context of patriarchal social control.

The problem for feminists coming to grips with prostitution derives from the early feminist theories. Although there exists no thorough feminist analysis of prostitution based on participation, observational and empirical data, many of the major ideologists of the women's movement have attempted to understand the prostitute's role in relation to patriarchal sex relations and capitalist economic relations. One of the earliest was Emma Goldman, the turn of the century American feminist anarchist whose criticisms of patriarchy focuses on the sexual objectification of women. At one time she even tried prostitution herself to raise money for the revolution. The following statements come from her classic paper, *The Traffic in Women*:

Prostitution has been, and is, a widespread evil, yet mankind goes on its business, perfectly indifferent to the sufferings and distress of the victims of prostitution... What is really the cause of the trade in women?... Exploitation, of course; the merciless Moloch of capitalism that fattens on underpaid labor, thus driving thousands of women and girls into prostitution (Goldman 1973, pp. 309-10).

Goldman was especially critical of female moralists and other women, citing Havelock Ellis' defence of prostitutes in a comparison with married women:

The prostitute never signs away the right over her own person (as married women do), she retains her freedom and personal rights, nor is she always compelled to submit to man's embrace (Goldman 1973, p. 315).

Goldman finishes with a note that might find support among more prostitutes today than feminists:

We must rise above our foolish notions of "better than thou", and learn to recognise in the prostitute a product of social conditions. Such a realisation will sweep



away the attitude of hypocrisy, and insure a greater understanding and more humane treatment. As to a thorough eradication of prostitution, nothing can accomplish that save a complete transvaluation of all accepted values—especially the moral ones—coupled with the abolition of industrial slavery (Goldman 1973, p. 317).

Significantly, the year this article was first published, 1910, also witnessed the passage of the *Mann Act* through the Congress of the United States, the Federal statute which heralded a string of state legislation over the next ten years criminalising the activities of prostitutes to the present day.

Simone de Beauvoir, often held as the founding “mother” of the modern feminist movement, emerged from a background of existential philosophy and literature (as one of the most important scholars of existentialism), rather than radical politics. In her milestone work, *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949, she made this searing condemnation of the social oppression of prostitutes:

Common prostitution is a miserable occupation in which woman, exploited sexually and economically, subjected arbitrarily to the police, to a humiliating medical supervision, to the caprices of the customers, and doomed to infection and disease, to misery, is truly abased to the level of a thing (de Beauvoir 1979, p. 578).

De Beauvoir also wrote this at a time of legal change, when the French Government decided to end brothel licensing and introduce legislation that virtually criminalises prostitutes. It might appear that her damnation of prostitution supports a legal persecution of those women who persist in commercial sex, for even the *hetairas* are perceived by her to be both victims and collaborators in the sexual objectification of women by men. However, in a footnoted explanation, de Beauvoir obviously does not believe that the laws in the present system are the answer:

Evidently the situation cannot be changed by negative and hypocritical measures. Two conditions are

necessary if prostitution is to disappear: all women must be assured a decent living; and custom must put no obstacles in the way of freedom in love. Prostitution will be suppressed only when the needs to which it responds are suppressed (de Beauvoir 1979, p. 578).

In other words, an end of patriarchy will mean an end to commercial sex, along with, according to de Beauvoir, the institution of marriage, monogamy and the confinement of women to domesticity. Free love is now upon us, at least in its incipient evolution, and much fewer women are confined to a domestic life as most young married women continue in the workforce, but prostitution continues as an essential social institution (though the signs of decline or change are beginning to appear).

For Kate Millet prostitution is a by-product of the nexus between women's economic position and their sexual relation to men:

The prostitute's role is an exaggeration of patriarchal economic conditions where the majority of females are driven to live through some exchange of sexuality for support. The degradation in which the prostitute is held and holds herself, the punitive attitude society adopts toward her, are but reflections of a culture whose general attitudes toward sexuality are negative and which attaches great penalties to a promiscuity in women it does not think to punish in men (Millet 1979, p. 123).

Millet first wrote these words in 1969, at a time when female promiscuity was much more unacceptable than it is today. At the moment the only female promiscuity that receives general disapproval is prostitution. Is the legal punishment of prostitution the only form of penalisation for female sinfulness left, or is this more a reaction by patriarchy to maintain legal control over some women in the face of declining male economic power in the domestic sphere? The situation as Millet saw it two decades ago is much more subtle and convoluted now.

Susan Brownmiller, somewhat later, in her analysis of rape, perceived prostitution in a continuum with male sexual power over women in general:

My horror at the idea of legalised prostitution is not that it doesn't work as a rape deterrent, but that it institutionalises the concept that it is man's monetary right, if not his divine right, to gain access to the female body, and that sex is a female service that should not be denied the civilised male. Perpetuation of the concept that the "powerful male impulse" must be satisfied with immediacy by a cooperative class of women, set aside and expressly licensed for the purpose, is part and parcel of the mass psychology of rape. Indeed, until the day is reached when prostitution is totally eliminated (a millenium that will not arrive until men, who create the demand and not the women who supply it, are fully prosecuted under the law), the false perception of sexual access as an adjunct of male power and privilege will continue to fuel the rapist mentality (Brownmiller 1975, p. 392).

Brownmiller wrote within the tradition of radical feminism, the most virulent force in the women's movement, which sees men as "enemy" and political or social radicalism as the only means of overthrowing male hegemony. Brownmiller's powerful consciousness-raising reaction to prostitution within a framework of a sexual power analysis has a dependence on solving the situation by using the same legal tactics against men that as legislators they use against prostitutes. This seems like a negative approach to a situation that requires wholesale social consciousness-raising changes from both sexes. Though a superficial treatment of prostitution in a different theoretical direction to the economic frameworks of earlier feminist writers, Brownmiller's analysis of sex work is the only one initiated in the radical tradition.

A major thrust of Brownmiller's historical analysis of rape was the concept that a woman is property, exchanged in the male marriage market and possessed by her father or her husband (or their respective kinsmen in some societies). Thus, a man is expected to protect his property (his wife or daughter) against the possession of



it (by rape or seduction) by other men. In wartime women are raped by the enemy in a symbolic gesture of possessing captured territory. In such an analysis, however, prostitutes (if not the property of a pimp or other male figure, as indeed most are not) are no man's (or everyman's) property, and are not perceived by the male-dominated legal-judicial system as having really been raped in cases of their sexual violation.

Shulamith Firestone, (1970), one of the earliest radical feminist theorists, does not deal with prostitution in her landmark work on biological materialism. But one might surmise the position of sex work in her overall analysis of women's fundamental oppression in "sex class" hegemony by males. It would be related to "love" in the scheme of male domination of women through ideological control; but in the climate of Firestone's post sexual-technological-social revolution prostitution might have an entirely different meaning in a context of sexual equality and liberated sexual relations regardless of age, sex, gender, sexuality, and, one might suppose, regardless of the nature of sexual exchange.

Whereas Firestone's radicalism might free the prostitute as an oppressed figure, the radical feminism of Mary Daly is likely to oppress the sex worker further. Daly (1978) sees social and cultural separation and female centredness, rather than revolution, as the solution for women in a society not just dominated by male percepts but where men are parasitical to female creativity. Thus, the prostitute would be both a prime example of male sexual despotism over female libidinous energy and a kind of fifth column in the society of women. Due to their supposed closer affiliation with clients, pimps, brothel owners and other male "parasites" than with female culture, the prostitute would not fit well into female separatism, unless, of course, she is a "redeemed whore".

But these are more extreme views. Most feminists seem caught in the dilemma of assisting prostitutes as women oppressed by the patriarchy and condemning prostitution outright as a sexist and patriarchal manipulation of sexual control of females. Feminists attached to ICPR and the prostitutes' movement coming from that direction seem content to support prostitutes in their demands for law reform and improved working conditions, which, of course, means supporting prostitution as a concept, but not as a male institution of female sex work. On the other hand, feminists attached to the ECP and US Prostitutes Collective are at the forefront of a movement to

integrate sex workers with housework and female racial inequality as part of a wider feminist demand for equal wages and employment for women and for a recognition of "women's work" as "legitimate work". It is very much related to the general class struggle, which has viewed prostitution as a work option for the most economically deprived women and as an institution for the privilege of mostly middle-class men benefiting from the sex labour of working-class women. Although the division of class is no longer as clearly defined as it once was in prostitution, for Socialist feminists it remains a metaphor for the economic oppression of women driving them into prostitution.

Socialist feminism is an uneasy "marriage" between Marxism and the women's movement. Early feminists, like Emma Goldman, concentrated on defining prostitution as the outcome of economic exploitation of women, but the later radical feminists have been critical of Socialism as a male centred movement which considers women as incidental in the class struggle. Even more "mainstream" feminists have felt that a Socialist's view of prostitution tends to overlook the social predilections that might be as important in a woman's entrance into prostitution as her economic situation. The economic reductionist view of prostitution by Socialist feminists is a cause for a rift in feminist perspectives of sex work.

Marx gave little thought to female prostitution, although it was an important social issue in his time. He did, however, consider it as an analogy to the "general prostitution" of the wider community by the owners of private property. He explained further in a footnote comparing sexual prostitution with exploiting labour:

Prostitution is only a *specific* expression of the *general* prostitution of the *labourer*, and since it is a relationship in which falls not the prostitute alone, but also the one who prostitutes [her]... the capitalist, etc., also comes under this head (Marx 1978, p. 82).

Thus, as the prostitute is the "labourer", so the pimp, brothel owner, or manager is the "capitalist". It is in this light that Socialist feminism's perceptions of prostitution have arisen. Engels (1978) was more explicit (*see* p. 178), but even his more specific analysis of prostitution is related back to a structure of class dominance. So, while Socialist feminists can provide support to prostitutes without



jeopardising their political commitments, it is done with an intention of eliminating prostitution as a source of female class oppression. Although these feminists would adamantly oppose such a suggestion, there does seem to be at least the potential for a "dangerous liaison" with moral reformists in a not too dissimilar situation which turned the 19th century feminists' intention to liberate prostitutes into state oppression of them.

Possibly one of the most sensitive of the feminist leaders to devote a lot of space to prostitutes was Kate Millet, whose insights into the lives of women she interviewed is like a mystical revelation for feminists, with its empathy, compassion, and her reaching out to touch the souls of the women with whom she explored their world of sex work. In her assessment of the prostitute known as "J" Millet feels that she is able to deal with the dilemma of condemning prostitution without condemning the prostitute:

I know what the years in sexual prostitution have cost J too, can see it in the damage in her eyes, at moments their blueness as dead as glass. It is no melodious or pietistic bullshit to see prostitution as a particular crime against humanity. Her suffering comes back when I remember our long halting talks, both her admissions and her denials, the long pained hours, her sensitive face. How much it has all hurt her; the years of silence and repression, the secrecy so deep it forbade her ever to remember for some years after. And at the time, how deeply the pain required that she utterly anaesthetise herself, passive even to the point of numbness. Now too bitter to love anyone. That's a lot to pay even for \$800 a week; it's a still more terrible sum for which to hold men liable... For the prostitute, probably the ultimate oppression is the social onus with which she is cursed for accepting the agreed-upon social definition of her femaleness, her sexual abjection (Millet 1971, p. 94).

There is a love and heart-felt compassion for this "sister" in pain. But I have heard very similar sentiments by genuinely sensitive Christian social workers evoking pity for women whom they perceive as suffering fatigue, anguish, de-sensitised emotions or an



expression of hostility as outcomes of prostitution experiences, when they may not be: but instead might reflect the observer's own bias. To also assume one individual's negative experiences as typical of others in the same situation and to project these assumptions to a wider population is to skew data for which the early psychoanalysts have been heavily criticised by feminists, among others.

Among feminist scholars, the historians have provided us with insights into past prostitution rarely found in feminist writings about present-day sex work. For instance, historians of social history like Judith Walkowitz (1980) on Victorian England, Ruth Rosen (1982) on 19th century America and Golder and Allen (1979) on Colonial Australia have demonstrated that prostitution of a century and more ago was controlled and managed by the women (usually "madams" or ex-prostitutes) themselves in brothels or they worked as freelancers on the streets without "pimps", drug-dealers or gangsters standing over them. Jess Wells, though not a historian, compiled a short historical overview, or "herstory", of prostitution. One of her revelations was to show prostitutes as liberated women when other women were heavily shackled by social conventions:

Looking at prostitution as an institution leaves untold the stories of many strong, brilliant women who led the most independent lives of their eras. Escaping from marriage and the patriarchal family, prostitutes were frequently the only women allowed on the streets at any time they chose, to attend theatre and teach (Wells 1982, p. vi).

As in patriarchal Europe, so in America and early Australia. Even on the American frontier, that bastion of male machismo escapism, prostitutes (so wrote feminist historians of western social history), were often the nurses, teachers, businesspeople, even town councillors, before the advent of families, wives, and moralism on the frontier immediately relegated them to outcasts (*see* Goldman 1972; Jeffrey 1979; Barnhardt 1986). Feminists would have felt more comfortable with prostitutes of the past than many seem to be with those of the present; but this might be due more to a matter of distance than to any changes in prostitution.

The latest feminist attempt at defining prostitution for the women's movement was made by Carole Pateman (1988) in her

analysis of the "sexual contract", which involves males dominating female bodies and lives through a tradition of prescribed cultural, social and legal transactions of power. Pateman's contract theory is in fact a variation of Daly's analysis of patriarchy's cultural and ideological hegemony of femaleness. She establishes her position on prostitution thus:

Within the structure of the institution of prostitution, "prostitutes" are subject to "clients", just as "wives" are subordinate to "husbands" within the structure of marriage (Pateman 1988, p. 194).

She therefore falls in line with the very earliest feminist debates on patriarchal hegemony, and she takes issue with the historical views of Wells and the feminist social historians. She justifies criticisms of prostitution as a focus on a problem about men rather than the women who are involved in it:

To argue that there is something wrong with prostitution does not necessarily imply any adverse judgment on the women who engage in the work. When socialists criticise capitalism and the employment contract they do not do so because they are contemptuous of workers, but because they are the workers' champions (Pateman 1988, p. 193).

This is an appropriate enough analogy, but is it fully understood by feminists in general? For example, Socialists demonstrate their disgust for capitalism by putting their entire political weight behind the trade union movement. Feminists express their distaste for prostitution, but, apart from a handful of individuals, there is no attempt by women's liberationists mobilising en masse to support the prostitutes' movement. In any case, Pateman herself moves away from the relationship to capitalist structures by using analogous comparisons with "classic" capitalist wage labour, where a worker is employed in the production industry and has no involvement with the consumer of the commodity he/she has produced. In prostitution, according to Pateman (1988), the central contractual dynamic is between customer (consumer) and prostitute (worker), while an employment contract between the prostitute and



the brothel owner is peripheral. Indeed, as she points out, many prostitutes are "small scale private entrepreneurs".

If it is difficult comparing prostitution to the production industry, it is less so with a service industry such as hairdressing or massage (indeed, the masseuse often crosses the boundary of prostitution by masturbating clients. Does she become a prostitute on those occasions?). Some hairdressers and masseuses operate their own small businesses, but most, like most prostitutes, work for a boss. There is a contract for service labour between the customer and the hairdresser/masseuse which involves personal taste, bodily contact and an interaction between worker and consumer. The owner of the salon or massage clinic is in a relation to the consumer similar to the large scale owner of the means of production, but the worker has an intimacy with the consumer that more closely resembles the prostitute's relationship with her clients.

Another of Pateman's analogies is the professional sportsperson whose body is an essential component of his/her contract with the team manager. But, in fact, the sportsperson has less rights with his/her body than the prostitute, because the former has a contractual obligation to compete with his/her body on every occasion demanded by the team manager, whereas in prostitution most prostitutes can refuse a customer or work with their bodies for any number of reasons and at any time.

Even more unlikely is Pateman's attempts at finding similarities between prostitution and surrogate motherhood in which a woman contracts to fall pregnant and give birth to a child belonging to a childless couple. In the first place, the brief period of time a prostitute has with each customer involving virtually no emotional interchange can hardly be compared to the length of time of a pregnancy in which there is an emotional involvement of at least three people: the biological mother, the genetic father and the social mother towards the unborn foetus. Secondly, there is no question of either prostitute or surrogate mother "selling" or even "hiring" her body. She is paid for a service which necessitates the use of her vagina or uterus, just as a motor mechanic is paid to do a service requiring the use of his/her hands or any other part of the body which might be necessary.

The focus of attention in Pateman's analysis is the *female* body and its relation to sexual (heterosexual) interaction in a social (patriarchal) sense. The problem here is that she assumes it must



*always* be the same in this relationship, if not socio-dynamically, then at least symbolically. She notes:

When women's bodies are on sale as commodities in the capitalist market, the terms of the original contract cannot be forgotten; the law of male sex-right is publicly affirmed, and men gain public acknowledgement as women's sexual masters—that is what is wrong with prostitution (Pateman 1988, p. 208).

Whilst this may be true for such prescribed social rituals as marriage, romance and seduction, it only exists, as I have pointed out, as a figment of the patriarchal imagination in its construction of the prostitution myths. The prostitutes throughout this study have stressed over and over again how different sexual interactions in prostitution are to ordinary social sexual situations. Certainly prostitution might appear a public announcement of the "male sex-right", but the reality is a quite different dynamic. So long as prostitution remains shrouded behind a veil of patriarchal myths this reality will always appear to be more like a reflection of everyday sex relations.

Whilst patriarchal capitalism is responsible for more women being prostitutes than men, and patriarchal myths of the sexual imperative in men perpetuate the objectifying of women, female prostitution is a social situation in which women have more power over sexual interactions than in any other circumstance involving both sexes interacting. In a recent paper on women and AIDS, Kippax et al. (1988) conclude:

Sexual negotiation between men and women typically takes place between those with power and those without... Negotiation may be possible within the "permissive" discourse. Women who are confident in and of their sexuality are better able to resist their complimentary positioning. They are thus more likely to be able to maintain the essential tension of the contradictory impulses to assert the self and respect the self and respect the other (Kippax et al. 1988).

The problem with Pateman's analysis (as indeed is the problem with the writings of most feminist scholars on prostitution, with the exception of the historians, who, not unlike Mary Daly's (1978) "golden age" of matriarchy, have discovered a past of women-dominated female prostitution) is in equating prostitution's sexual interactions with those of most social situations in which women find themselves subjected to patriarchal conditions. In theory and the patriarchal imagination it is the same, but beneath the surface prostitutes are more like the ancient Roman "prostituto", in which the women were rebels of the patriarchy rather than totally subservient to it.

There are two ways women might deal with the patriarchy. One is, as suggested by Mary Daly and the separatists, to remove completely from it, or create two cultures side by side, one male-centred and the other female-centred. But, this may appear a negative approach in which a solution for sexual equality in the same society would be as remote as the sexes would be to each other. The second way is by women somehow empowering themselves in sex relations. The sexual-technological-social revolution of Firestone might seem an extreme action, and much too remote in time. A reassessment of women's position in everyday sexual interactions might be more plausible. Among the most assertive women in society are the prostitutes. If some of this assertion could be converted from commercial to social sex situations, males may discover they have less sex-rights than they are accustomed to think.

Courtship and marriage are traditional means of patriarchal sexual control of women, but with assertive female sex roles these may change for the benefit of women, or disappear altogether in a climate of free sex initiated by both sexes without a prescribed power base. Empowerment in (hetero)sexual interactions has been a key objective for women in the feminist movement's radical aims for removing restrictions on sexual behaviour in the socialisation of females, within a stream of consciousness from Simone de Beauvoir (1979) to Kate Millet (1979), and from Shulamith Firestone (1970) through to Carole Pateman's (1988) critique of "sexual contract". Prostitutes with a feminist consciousness would be invaluable here in the frontline of these sexual politics, even though ultimately such a sexual utopia may spell the end to prostitution. But the concept of marketing sex within a mercantile and materialist society is likely to continue, although in a very different form to its present structure.



with, perhaps youth as a commodity and a choice for either sex to sell or buy as the circumstance suggests.

Sexual and economic self-determination for women as major objectives for feminists are partially achieved by most prostitutes in their response to a patriarchal sexual mode manoeuvred to their economic advantage. What requires to be refined here is a feminist revaluation of prostitution as a female control base. With the sex industry back in the hands of a prostitute management, with sex workers continuing to command the terms of individual sexual interactions, and with a feminist consciousness on prostitution expanded to general sex relations, the struggle against male objectification of the passive female body might make some headway. Of course, it may mean the decline of prostitution as it exists today, but with sexual and economic equality in society not many prostitutes are likely to object.

Feminists have long done battle with legislation, for example, in their demands for abortion, reform of the rape laws, equal opportunity in the workplace, childcare, and reframing the family laws. Feminist scholarship has alerted us to the fact of the "whore" stigma as a social control mechanism for oppressing all women. With most women it is used to re-direct them back into patriarchal sexual authority, while with prostitutes it is used to keep them suppressed. The decriminalisation of the prostitution legislation, therefore, would immediately free prostitutes from the shackles of unjust laws, but it would also be a positive step in removing a punitive threat to all women, especially those who aspire to freedom of sexual choice. Without its legal manifest the "whore" stigma would lose its potency, especially with an empowerment of females in sexual interactions as perceived among the key objectives of feminists.

The above outline of aims and achievements for both feminists and prostitutes will only be truly effective in a co-operative effort. It is time to bury old prejudices and rethink the position of prostitutes and their objectives in the light of fresh evidence such as found in this and other recent studies, and incorporate these in the overall political objectives for women. Rather than view prostitutes as passive, mis-guided participants in the patriarchy's sexual control of women, feminists will find it more profitable to see them as radical traditionalists inside a patriarchal structure turning the situation to their sexual, social and economic advantage. There is no need to



elaborate on the dangers of division within the ranks of revolutionary politics. If feminist prostitutes are continually pushed aside by mainstream feminism they may eventually develop radical theories likely to wedge deeply into the rank and file of the women's movement, causing feminists to either align themselves with sexual liberationists or with puritanical reactionaries. Beware the fate of the Victorian feminists' response to 19th century prostitution.

Feminists need to recognise prostitutes' identification as workers in the capitalist structure, and not deny this in efforts to understand sex work in patriarchal structures, because it is work related experiences which are essential in the prostitute's bid for control over their industry. Any focus on the sexuality aspect in sex work feeds fuel to conservative bases in the Church and the state. A Church-state-feminist consortium would eventually crush the prostitutes' movement and demonstrate to women generally that sexuality is one area in feminist politics that is least in need of reform, when, in fact it has been the inter-sex relation most ideologically and politically applied by the patriarchy to oppress women, through the legal punishment of prostitutes and the social confinement of other women.

For mutual effectiveness prostitutes and feminists need to address co-operatively the following issues:

- Defuse the "whore" stigma by decriminalisation and a general female identification with prostitutes.
- Encourage sexual assertion such as practised by prostitutes (at work) for all women as a means of acquiring sexual empowerment.
- Assist prostitutes in gaining control over their industry by identifying their needs with the needs of other workers in the capitalist system.
- Develop feminist theories that recognise prostitutes' management of their clients, their economic independence (as opposed to an interdependence on patriarchal capitalism and sexual rights, to which all women are in some way committed), and their political potential as assertive women.

## Conclusion

This final Chapter began with a summary of the findings for the sample of the 128 prostitute women in this study. By subdividing this group into three "types" based on age of entry into sex work, it was discovered that variations in motivations for entry and social factors existed between them. This suggested that: about five per cent of women in prostitution began in their early adolescence, were motivated by negative homelives and/or problems with their mothers, and socialised with other homeless "kids" surviving by casual prostitution; about a quarter enter the sex industry in their mid-adolescence as females having identities as "bad girls" through involvements with juvenile authorities and the courts, or due to drug addiction, and survive as full-time prostitutes supporting these or later addictions; and, about two-thirds turn to prostitution as a work option in their adulthood as a consequence of economic crises. Thus, the common prostitute stereotype of the drug addicted teenage streetwalker represents a small portion of sex workers, while adult women from ordinary social backgrounds, including average homelives, the general work force, and a family life as wives and mothers, who make clear economic choices about sex work, represent the majority of the prostitute population.

Since mostly ordinary women take up prostitution due to the general social conditions which are not favourable to women in society, it has been argued that the continuance of repressive and punitive laws against them is a violation of a number of human rights, as well as further oppressing women as the sex most likely to take up prostitution for economic survival. In response to this legal repression, prostitutes in the past two decades have organised into advocacy groups calling for decriminalisation. The AIDS crisis has provided some of these groups already communicating with governments with funds to fight the disease. But, as the experiences of the Australian Prostitutes Collective demonstrates, there is a real fear that the "benevolence" shown by government funding bodies is a subtler means of controlling prostitutes through co-opting their organisations. By themselves, prostitute advocacies are unlikely to win their struggle for decriminalisation and self-determination in their industry. They require the assistance of other branches of the women's movements. Unfortunately, feminist ideologies have adopted negative analyses of sex work by a focus on the sexual



interactions in a patriarchal context instead of developing a theory on prostitution as a reflection of male economic dominance and moralism. Prostitutes and feminists now need to co-operate in an endeavour to improve women's general situation in society, so that they can control sexual interactions and take command of the sex industry if they choose to work in it.

This book has covered a lot of ground since its opening passages on prostitution as an occupation. What I have tried to emphasise is the normality of the women who become prostitutes. This normality is often submerged beneath a repertoire of myths about sex work that are far from reality. These myths from patriarchal perspectives frame the laws, the social attitudes, and the popular image of the women. A review of feminist writings about the sex industry concludes the book because the negative response from feminists demonstrates the extent of influence by this mythology; a mythology which is part of the overall social reflection of women's subordinate position in society. The social expectations of women in society are their submission to men in public and private life as compliant, obedient, sexually passive beings. The mythology of prostitution presents a view of sex workers as brazen, socially defiant, and sexually animate. The disparity between mythology and expectation is an obvious divide and rule tactic, but prostitution remains a social venue not just for female misfits with aggressive personalities. It serves as a medium in which women with assertive natures may express themselves, and women normally suppressed in social life are able to assert themselves. And, after all, encouraging women to be more assertive has been a political strategy for feminist demands for over a century and a half.

Probably the last word should come from one of the prostitute women in my study. Martine:

When I started working in prostitution I soon realised that being "bossy" wasn't always negative and actually it is a really strong attractive characteristic in you to some men. I feel good about it now and a lot more comfortable with myself. I'm not going to take it any more that women have to be nice and sweet and, you know what I mean. I come from a feminist background, but I still get all that shit put on me all the time, like: "You're too aggressive!" or "You're too



direct!" Now, how can you be too direct, I ask you. Now I just don't take any notice of that shit, and I don't get as much of it these days because I mix with other women who are in prostitution, and we actually shut up.



## APPENDIX I

### Questionnaire

#### 1. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

##### 1.1 Which age group do you belong to?

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| a) Under 16 | e) 26 to 30 |
| b) 16 or 17 | f) 31 to 35 |
| c) 18 to 20 | g) 36 to 40 |
| d) 21 to 25 | h) Over 40  |

##### 1.2 What educational level have you reached?

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Under School Cert.    | d) Matriculation for university entry |
| b) Attained School Cert. | e) Diploma or trade certificate       |
| c) Higher School Cert.   | f) University degree                  |

##### 1.3 What is/was your father's occupation?

- |                                      |                         |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Managing director                 | g) Farmer               |
| b) Executive/Administrator           | h) Transport driver     |
| c) Professional                      | i) Unskilled labourer   |
| d) Office clerk                      | j) Unemployed/Pensioner |
| e) Self-employed /<br>small business | k) Other                |
| f) Skilled labourer                  |                         |

##### 1.4 Which religion(s) do/did your parents belong to?

- |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| a) Church of England | e) Moslem   |
| b) Catholic          | f) Buddhist |
| c) Other Christian   | g) Hindu    |
| d) Jewish            | h) Other    |

##### 1.5 Which system of belief do you follow or accept now?

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| a) Church of England | g) Hinduism       |
| b) Catholic          | h) Other religion |
| c) Other Christian   | i) Agnosticism    |
| d) Jewish            | j) Atheism        |
| e) Moslem            | k) None of these  |
| f) Buddhism          |                   |



## Working Girls

1.6 What is your present marital status?

- |                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| a) Married once       | e) Separated |
| b) Married twice      | f) Deserted  |
| c) Married more often | g) Single    |
| d) Divorced           |              |

1.7 How many children do you have?

- |          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| a) One   | e) Five        |
| b) Two   | f) Six or more |
| c) Three | g) None        |
| d) Four  |                |

1.8 Which sex are your children?

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| a) All female    | d) Mostly male                               |
| b) All male      | e) Half of them female,<br>half of them male |
| c) Mostly female |  |

1.9 What ages are your children?

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Under one year    | d) Ten to fifteen years    |
| b) Two to five years | e) Sixteen to twenty years |
| c) Six to nine years | f) Over twenty years       |

1.10 Is your present husband/lover the natural father  
of your children?

- |        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| a) Yes | c) Of only one or some but not all |
| b) No  |                                    |

I.II In which region do you live permanently?

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Northern suburbs | f) Western suburbs           |
| b) Southern suburbs | g) New South Wales elsewhere |
| c) Inner city east  | h) Other state (inc. ACT)    |
| d) Eastern suburbs  | i) Overseas                  |
| e) Inner city west  |                              |

## 2. FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD RELATIONSHIPS

### 2.1 What is/was the relationship between your natural parents?

- a) Happily married
- b) Unhappily married
- c) Separated
- d) Divorced, neither remarried
- e) Divorced, both remarried
- f) Divorced, mother only remarried
- g) Divorced, father only remarried
- h) Mother only deceased
- i) Father only deceased
- j) Both deceased

### 2.2 What is/was the relationship between you and your father like?

- a) Very close
- b) Fairly close
- c) Not very close
- d) Not at all close
- e) Very distant
- f) Never really knew him

### 2.3 What is/was the relationship between you and your mother like?

- a) Very close
- b) Fairly close
- c) Not very close
- d) Not at all close
- e) Very distant
- f) Never really knew her

### 2.4 How many siblings do you have?

- a) One sister only
- b) One brother only
- c) A sister and a brother
- d) Two or more sisters only
- e) Two or more brothers only
- f) Three or more mixed siblings
- g) I am an only child

### 2.5 What position in your family are you?

- a) Oldest child
- b) Second oldest child
- c) Middle child
- d) Second youngest child
- e) Youngest child

### 2.6 What is/was the relationship between you and your siblings like?

- a) Close to all of them
- b) Close to one or some, not others
- c) Close to sister(s), not brother(s)
- d) Close to brother(s), not sister(s)
- e) Not close to any

## Working Girls

2.7 As a child how many close friends did you have at one time?

- a) Many
- b) A few
- c) Two usually
- d) One only
- e) None usually

2.8 As a teenager how many close friends did/do you have at one time?

- a) Many
- b) A few
- c) Two usually
- d) One only
- e) None usually

### 3. PRESENT RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 How many women friends do you have at present?

- a) Many
- b) A few
- c) Two or three
- d) One only
- e) None

3.2 If you are in a love relationship or marriage how long has this lasted?

- a) More than ten years
- b) Six to nine years
- c) Three to five years
- d) One to two years
- e) Six months to a year
- f) One to five months
- g) Less than a month
- h) Not in a relationship

3.3 With whom are you living at present?

- a) Husband and children
- b) Lover and children
- c) Husband only
- d) Lover only
- e) Children only
- f) Natal family or one parent
- g) Friends or flatmates
- h) I live alone



#### 4. SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

4.1 What was your first sexual experience?

- a) Children's games
- b) Children's experiments
- c) Masturbation
- d) Heavy petting
- e) Intercourse

4.2 At what age did this occur?

- a) Under seven
- b) Between seven to nine
- c) Between ten to thirteen
- d) Between fourteen to sixteen
- e) Between seventeen to twenty
- f) Over twenty

4.3 If you were molested as a child then by whom?

- a) A total stranger
- b) Someone you knew  
other than a relative
- c) An uncle
- d) An older brother
- e) Step father
- f) Foster father
- g) Your natural father
- h) Someone else

4.4 At what age did this occur?

- a) Under five
- b) Between five to six
- c) Between seven to nine
- d) Between ten to thirteen
- e) Between fourteen to fifteen

4.5 Within what context did you experience your first sexual intercourse?

- a) A love affair
- b) A casual encounter
- c) With a friend
- d) In marriage
- e) Incest
- f) Rape
- g) In prostitution

4.6 At what age did this occur?

- a) Under twelve
- b) Between twelve to fourteen
- c) Between fifteen to seventeen
- d) Between eighteen to twenty
- e) Between twenty-one to twenty-five
- f) Over twenty-five

## Working Girls

4.7 As a child were you ever given money or gifts for granting sex?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4.8 How old were you when you first fell in love?

- a) Under fifteen
- b) Fifteen to seventeen
- c) Eighteen to twenty
- d) Twenty-one to twenty-five
- e) Twenty-six to thirty
- f) Thirty-one to thirty-five
- g) Over thirty-five
- h) Never been in love

4.9 Who did you first fall in love with?

- a) A man/boy more than ten years younger than you
- b) A man/boy five to ten years younger than you
- c) A man/boy less than five years younger than you
- d) A man/boy approximately the same age as you
- e) A man/boy less than five years older than you
- f) A man/boy five to ten years older than you
- g) A man/boy more than ten years older than you
- h) A woman/girl more than ten years younger than you
- i) A woman/girl five to ten years younger than you
- j) A woman/girl less than five years younger than you
- k) A woman/girl approximately the same age as you
- l) A woman/girl less than five years older than you
- m) A woman/girl five to ten years older than you
- o) A woman/girl more than ten years older than you

4.10 How long did this first love affair last?

- a) Less than six months
- b) Six months to a year
- c) One to two years
- d) Three to five years
- e) Six to ten years
- f) Over ten years

4.11 What is your sexual preference now?

- a) Straight (heterosexual)
- b) Lesbian (homosexual)
- c) Bisexual

4.12 How often have you been raped? (for prostitutes: outside work)

- a) Never
- b) Once only
- c) Twice
- d) Three times
- e) Four times
- f) More than four times

4.13 Who was/were-responsible for this/these?

- a) Your husband/lover      d) A lone stranger
- b) A friend      e) A pack
- c) Someone else known to you

4.14 How many times have you had an abortion?

- a) Never      d) Three times
- b) Once only      e) Four times
- c) Twice      f) More than four times

4.15 Who was/were the father(s) on this/these occasion(s)?

- a) Your husband      d) A relative (father, brother, uncle etc)
- b) A lover      e) A rapist
- c) A casual acquaintance

## 5. WORK RELATED EXPERIENCES

5.1 What kind of work have you done?

(for prostitutes: apart from sex work)

- a) Factory work, inc. dressmaking, seamstress, etc.
- b) Service industry (e.g. barmaid, waitress)
- c) Transport (e.g. truck driving, bus driver, taxi driver, etc.)
- d) Office work (e.g. clerical, typing, secretarial)
- e) Sales work (e.g. sales representative, shop assistant)
- f) Sex industry (e.g. stripping, porn movies, Not prostitution)
- g) Theatre work (e.g. acting, dancing, showgirl, set designer, etc.)
- h) Welfare, social and/or health worker
- i) Domestic work (e.g. cleaning, housemaid, Not housewife)
- j) Nursing
- k) Teaching
- l) Other profession  
(medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, etc.)
- m) Arts (arts, crafts, commercial art, dress designing, etc.)
- n) Manager, executive, administrator
- o) Housewife
- p) Other
- q) Have not done any other work but the present



## Working Girls

5.2 What is the highest weekly earnings you have received (after taxation deductions) in any of these?

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a) Less than \$100 | g) \$351 to \$400   |
| b) \$100 to \$150  | h) \$401 to \$450   |
| c) \$151 to \$200  | i) \$451 to \$500   |
| d) \$201 to \$250  | j) \$501 to \$750   |
| e) \$251 to \$300  | k) \$751 to \$1000  |
| f) \$301 to \$350  | l) More than \$1000 |

(Questions 5.3 to 5.16 were given to prostitutes only)

5.3 Why did you begin working in prostitution?

- a) I was unemployed at the time
- b) To support my family
- c) To support a man
- d) To support a drug habit
- e) To make more money than my present job
- f) To find freedom from homelife
- g) To find excitement in my life
- h) For sexual enjoyment/sexual experimentation
- i) To find a sexual partner/lover/companion
- j) Curiosity
- k) Other reason

5.4 How old were you when you first began prostitution?

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Under twelve        | e) Twenty-one to twenty-five |
| b) Twelve to fifteen   | f) Twenty-six to thirty      |
| c) Sixteen to eighteen | g) Thirty-one to thirty-five |
| d) Nineteen to twenty  | h) Over thirty-five          |

5.5 What kinds of prostitutions have you worked in before the current one

- |                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a) Street          | e) Private (call girl)               |
| b) Brothel/Parlour | f) Other                             |
| c) Escort          | g) Have not worked in any other kind |
| d) Bondage         |                                      |

5.6 What kind of prostitution do you work in now?

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| a) Street              | e) Escort  |
| b) East Sydney brothel | f) Bondage |
| c) Kings Cross parlour | g) Private |
| d) Suburban parlour    |            |

5.7 If you have changed kinds of prostitution what has been your reasons?

- a) To make more money
- b) To have more control over my working
- c) Decided to give up prostitution for a while
- d) Had trouble with the boss
- e) Pressure from police or council
- f) To raise my family
- g) To work in a safer and more protected environment
- h) Just for a change
- i) Other

5.8 What is your average weekly earnings in prostitution?

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| a) Under \$200      | g) \$1501 to \$2000 |
| b) \$201 to \$300   | h) \$2001 to \$2500 |
| c) \$301 to \$500   | i) \$2501 to \$3000 |
| d) \$501 to \$750   | j) \$3001 to \$4000 |
| e) \$751 to \$1000  | k) \$4001 to \$5000 |
| f) \$1001 to \$1500 | l) Over \$5000      |

5.9 How many hours do you work on average a week?

- a) Six to twelve hours (one or two days)
- b) Twelve to twenty-four hours (two or three days)
- c) Twenty-four to thirty-six hours (three to six days)
- d) Thirty-six to forty-eight hours (four to seven days)
- e) Forty-eight to sixty hours (five to seven days)
- f) Sixty to seventy-two hours (six to seven days)
- g) Seventy-two to eighty-four hours (seven days)
- h) More than eighty-four hours

5.10 What kinds of services will you offer?

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) Hand relief              | j) Medium bondage without "Sex" |
| b) Full French (fellatio)   | k) Heavy bondage with "Sex"     |
| c) "Sex" (intercourse) only | l) Heavy bondage without "sex"  |
| d) Part French and "Sex"    | m) Lesbian acts                 |
| e) Greek (anal intercourse) | n) Threesomes (or doubles)      |
| f) Kissing                  | o) Buck's parties               |
| g) Fantasy without bondage  | p) Sexual surrogate             |
| h) Light bondage            | (medico-therapeutic)            |
| i) Medium bondage           | q) other                        |
| with "Sex"                  |                                 |

5.11 What kinds of services will you not do?

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Full French (fellatio)   | h) Medium bondage          |
| b) "Sex" (intercourse)      | i) Heavy bondage           |
| c) Part French and "Sex"    | j) Lesbian acts            |
| d) Greek (anal intercourse) | k) Threesomes (or doubles) |
| e) Kissing                  | l) Buck's parties          |
| f) Fantasy without bondage  | m) Sexual surrogate        |
| g) Light bondage            | (medico-therapeutic)       |
|                             | o) other                   |

5.12 How many times have you been raped whilst working?

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| a) Never       | f) Five times            |
| b) Once only   | g) Six times             |
| c) Twice       | h) Seven times           |
| d) Three times | i) More than seven times |
| e) Four times  |                          |

5.13 How many times have you been bashed, knifed or otherwise assaulted?

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| a) Never       | f) Five times            |
| b) Once        | g) Six times             |
| c) Twice       | h) Seven times           |
| d) Three times | i) More than seven times |
| e) Four times  |                          |



5.14 What precautionary measures do you take to protect yourself?

- a) Never work in a house alone
- b) Never do car jobs
- c) Check "Ugly Mug" list before going on an escort
- d) Carry a concealed weapon
- e) Use self-defence tactics
- f) Carry small aerospray can to squirt attacker's eyes
- g) Have a protector nearby (e.g. hired sitter, boyfriend)
- h) Pretend a protector is in the house
- i) Other

5.15 What are the things you like about prostitution?

- a) The amount of money I can make
- b) The extent of personal freedom I have
- c) The flexible work hours
- d) Helps me understand certain things about myself
- e) Challenging work
- f) Exciting work
- g) Good companionship among workers
- h) Sexual fulfilment
- i) Good for my ego
- j) Opportunity for meeting men
- k) Other

5.16 What are the things you dislike about prostitution?

- a) Having sex with men I do not like
- b) Having sex with strangers
- c) Boredom
- d) Problems with the boss
- e) Problems with police
- f) Hassles with Council
- g) Hassles with clients
- h) Violence
- i) Bitchiness among workers
- j) Having to pay out half my earnings to the parlour
- k) The stigma of being a prostitute
- l) Other

## Working Girls

(Questions 5.17 to 5.19 were given to students and health-workers only)

5.17 Have you ever considered prostitution?

- a) On numerous occasions    c) Rarely
- b) On some occasions        d) Never

5.18 If you have worked in prostitution, why?

- a) I was unemployed at the time
- b) To support my family
- c) To support a man
- d) To support a drug habit
- e) To make more money than my present job
- f) To find freedom from homelife
- g) To find excitement in my life
- h) For sexual enjoyment/sexual experimentation
- i) To find a sexual partner/lover/companion
- j) Curiosity
- k) Other reason

5.19 If you haven't worked in prostitution, why do you suppose other women have?

- a) Loneliness
- b) Seeking love or affection
- c) Low self-esteem
- d) Punishing men
- e) Nymphomania (overt or covert)
- f) Sublimated lesbianism
- g) Delinquent childhood and early adolescence
- h) Peer pressure (influenced by friends and/or social group)
- i) Manipulation by pimps
- j) Drug addiction
- k) Mercenary reasons (wishing for more money)
- l) Economic necessity
- m) Escape from a mundane existence or homelife pressures
- n) Other reason(s)

(Questions 6.1 to 6.8 were given to prostitutes only)

## 6. CLIENT DESCRIPTIONS

6.1 How many clients do you average a week?

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Less than six        | 9) Sixty-one to seventy      |
| b) Six to twenty        | h) Seventy-one to eighty     |
| c) Twenty-one to thirty | i) Eighty-one to ninety      |
| d) Thirty-one to forty  | j) Ninety-one to one hundred |
| e) Forty-one to fifty   | k) More than one hundred     |
| f) Fifty-one to sixty   |                              |

6.2 How many of these would you describe as regulars?

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| a) Less than 10% | f) 51% to 60%  |
| b) 10% to 20%    | g) 61% to 70%  |
| c) 21% to 30%    | h) 71% to 80%  |
| d) 31% to 40%    | i) 81% to 90%  |
| e) 41% to 50%    | j) 91% to 100% |

6.3 How often are you attracted to a client?

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| a) Never         | d) Frequently   |
| b) Rarely        | e) All the time |
| c) Now and again |                 |

6.4 Have you ever developed a relationship with a client?

- a) Never
- b) Have had dates with clients
- c) Had a love affair with one or more clients
- d) Have moved into a live-in situation with a client
- e) Have married a client

6.5 What percentage of your clients would you say were married?

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) None of them            | e) About two-thirds             |
| b) About a quarter or less | f) About three-quarters or more |
| c) About a third           | g) All or nearly all            |
| d) About half              |                                 |



## Working Girls

6.6 From which social class do they mainly come?

- a) Strictly working class
- b) Mostly working class
- c) Equally working and middle classes
- d) Mostly middle class
- e) Strictly middle class
- f) Middle and upper classes
- g) Indeterminate mixture of all classes

6.7 Which three of these services are most requested by your clients?

- a) Hand relief
- b) Full French (fellatio)
- c) "Sex" (intercourse) only
- d) Part French and "Sex"
- e) Greek (anal intercourse)
- f) Kissing
- g) Fantasy jobs
- h) Bondage
- i) Lesbian acts
- j) Other

6.8 What percentage of services requested by your clients are bondage and fantasy jobs?

- a) None
- b) Less than 10%
- c) 10% to 30%
- d) 31% to 50%
- e) 51% to 75%
- f) Over 75%

## 7.LEGAL HISTORY

7.1 Have you ever been in a children's court or been seen by a district officer for any of the following?

- a) Uncontrollable child
- b) In moral danger
- c) Theft, stealing or shop lifting
- d) Possession of drugs
- e) Prostitution
- f) Other
- g) Never

7.2 How many times have you been placed in a children's detention centre?

- a) Never
- b) Once only
- c) Twice
- d) Three times
- e) Four times
- f) More than four times

- 7.3 Have you ever been arrested for any of the following adult charges?
- a) Theft, stealing or shop lifting
  - b) Malicious wounding, manslaughter or murder
  - c) A drug offence (possession or supplying)
  - d) Offensive behaviour
  - e) Fraud
  - f) Prostitution (soliciting, consorting, cohabiting, vagrancy, etc.)
  - g) Other
  - h) Never been arrested
- 7.4 How often have you been arrested for a prostitution related offence?
- a) Never
  - b) Once only
  - c) Two to five times
  - d) Six to ten times
  - e) Eleven to twenty times
  - f) Twenty-one to fifty times
  - g) Fifty-one to one hundred times
  - h) One hundred and one to two hundred times
  - i) Two hundred and one to five hundred times
  - j) Five hundred and one to one thousand times
  - k) More than one thousand times
- 7.5 How many times have you been in gaol?
- a) Never
  - b) Once only
  - c) Twice
  - d) Three times
  - e) Four times
  - f) More than four times
- 7.6 Have you ever known the police to do any of the following?
- a) Maltreat you or others
  - b) Demand "freebies" of you or others
  - c) Demand a "weigh-in" (money or goods) from you or others
  - d) Plant drugs on you or others
  - e) I do not know of the police being involved in any of these

## 8. DRUG HISTORY

8.1 How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| a) None                 | e) Thirty-one to forty |
| b) Less than ten        | f) Forty-one to sixty  |
| c) Ten to twenty        | g) More than sixty     |
| d) Twenty-one to thirty |                        |

8.2 How often do you drink alcohol?

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Never                  | e) Once a week          |
| b) Very occasionally      | f) Every couple of days |
| c) At least once a month  | g) At least once a day  |
| d) More than once a month | h) More than once a day |
- but less than once a week

8.3 Which of the following marijuana products do you consume regularly?

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| a) Grass   | d) Buddha sticks |
| b) Hashish | e) Cannabis tea  |
| c) Bong    | f) None          |

8.4 Which of the following do you take regularly?

- |                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| a) Amyl                   | g) Mogodon |
| b) "Speed" (amphetamines) | h) Valium  |
| c) LSD (acid or "trips")  | i) Mandrax |
| d) Barbies or "downers"   |            |
- (eg. Amytal, Nembutal, Tropinal, Seconal)
- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| e) Modocate          | j) Other "pills"             |
| f) "Seras" (Serapax) | k) I do not use any of these |

8.5 How frequently do you use heroin?

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Never                   | e) Once a week                      |
| b) Once in a while         | f) More than once a week, less than |
| c) About once a month      | once a day                          |
| d) More than once a month, | g) Once a day                       |
- less than once a week      h) More than once a day



8.6 How frequently do you use cocaine?

- a) Never
- b) Once in a while
- c) At least once a month
- d) More than once a month, less than once a week
- e) Once a week
- f) More than once a week, less than once a day
- g) Once a day
- h) More than once a day

8.7 Do you take any of the following regularly?

- a) Morphine
- b) Methadone
- c) Pethidine
- d) Fortral
- e) I do not take any of these

8.8 Which of the following have you taken regularly in the past if you do not use them now?

- a) Tobacco
- b) Alcohol
- c) Cannabis products
- d) Amyl products
- e) "Speed" (amphetamines)
- f) LSD (acid, trip, etc.)
- g) Pills (barbies, Modecate, Serapax, Mogodon, Mandrax, Valium, etc.)
- h) Heroin
- i) Cocaine
- j) Other
- k) I have never taken any of these regularly.

8.9 At what age did you first begin using drugs (inc. tobacco and alcohol)

- a) Under twelve
- b) Twelve to fifteen
- c) Sixteen to eighteen
- d) Nineteen to twenty
- e) Twenty-one to twenty-five
- f) Twenty-six to thirty
- g) Over thirty
- h) Never taken any drugs at any age

8.10 What effect has prostitution had on your drug habit? (prostitutes only)

- a) My habit has increased since I began prostitution
- b) My habit has decreased since I began prostitution
- c) My habit has remained steady since I began prostitution
- d) Never had a habit

## 9. SEXUAL HEALTH HISTORY

9.1 Which of the following diseases/infections have you had?

- a) Gonorrhoea
- b) Syphilis
- c) Herpes
- d) Hepatitis B
- e) Chlamydia
- f) Non-specific urethritis (NSU)
- g) Trichomonas ("trich")
- h) Thrush
- i) Genital warts
- j) Lice ("crabs")
- k) Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)
- l) Human immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- m) AIDS-related illness
- n) AIDS
- o) Other
- p) Never had any of these diseases

9.2 Of those diseases you have had how many have you had more than once?

- |         |                           |
|---------|---------------------------|
| a) None | d) Three to five          |
| b) One  | e) More than five         |
| c) Two  | f) Never had any diseases |

(Questions 9.3 to 9.5 were given to prostitutes only)

9.3 Which of the following precautions do you take against STDs?

- a) Always use condoms
- b) Use condoms whenever I can
- c) Wash and douche after each job
- d) Regular check ups (inc. pap smears and blood tests)
- e) Other precaution(s)
- f) I do not take any precautions

- 9.4 How frequently do you have a check up at a clinic or with a doctor?
- a) Once a week
  - b) Once a fortnight
  - c) Once every three weeks
  - d) Once a month
  - e) Regularly, but less frequently than once a month
  - f) Every now and again
  - g) Never
- 9.5 How often do you have a test for AIDS/HIV antibodies?
- a) At least once a month
  - b) Less frequently than once a month
  - c) Never had a test for AIDS/HIV antibodies
- 9.6 Which of the following contraceptives do you use/take?
- a) The Pill (or Mini-Pill)
  - b) Depo-provera (intravenous contraception)
  - c) IUD (Intra-Uterine device) or Coil
  - d) Diaphragm, cervical cap, vault cap, vimule cap
  - e) Sponges
  - f) Spermicidal creams or jellies only
  - g) Condoms
  - h) Rhythm method ("safe period")
  - i) Sterilization ("tubes tied") for you or your partner
  - j) Other
  - k) I do not use any contraceptives

(Question 10.1 given to prostitutes only)

#### 10. FUTURE IN PROSTITUTION

- 10.1 How much longer do you intend working in prostitution
- a) Only for another few days or within a week
  - b) Another week to a month's time
  - c) Within a month to six months' time
  - d) Between six months and a year's time
  - e) Between a year and two years' time
  - f) Between two and five years' time
  - g) Between five and ten years' time
  - h) As long as I can





## APPENDIX II

### Methodology

Two approaches to this study were made. The first was participant observation, whereby my involvement with prostitutes over the past decade as activist, welfare worker and co-founder of the Australian Prostitutes Collective has provided me with an insight into the commercial sex industry rare for those not directly involved in the daily production of sex work. Many of the comments made by me without reference to other sources are outcomes of an acquired knowledge about prostitutes and their working environment over more than ten years of closely observing the social and working aspects of the sex industry with the trained and curious eye of a behavioural scientist. The second approach was documented empiricism achieved through formal fieldwork methodology. Two methods were employed in acquiring the documentary evidence. One was the classic symbolic interactionary in-depth interviewing technique; the other, the more objective method of surveying a random distribution sample of human subjects.

The survey method employed here used the questionnaire seen at Appendix I. My object was to compare a sample of prostitutes with other samples of women to determine to what extent they are different to non-prostitute women. Because of the difficulties associated with obtaining a large and broad sample of non-prostitute women generally, not to mention the cost involved in such a project when I had a very limited budget, I chose to compare the prostitutes sample with two similar size samples of specific non-prostitution women. For the reasons already given on page 172, I preferred women with high social status for the two control groups rather than low-status women. The reason for the two groups being health workers and university students, instead of say, accountants, lawyers, actresses, secretaries, was convenience. I was working with health employees at the time and doing this research at Macquarie University in Sydney.

The questionnaire was divided into social areas in human lifestyles often associated with prostitutes in past research: sexual experiences, childhood and family relations, drug history, legal history and health history. Had either the health-workers or the

students been the focal subjects the questionnaire would have been structured differently. I chose the optional answer format because my insight into brothel (parlour) life informed me that this type of questionnaire was popular among prostitutes, who filled them in as a means of passing time between clients as they came across them in what I found to be the most popular magazine read in the workplace, *Cleo*. Thus, I designed a form whose structure was already familiar to most prostitutes.

In addition, two types of the same basic questionnaire were made: the 84 question form for prostitutes included questions on their sex work experiences and the nature of clients; the 58 question form for health workers and students included questions on their opinions about sex work. So, as well as data with which to compare responses from the three sample groups, I also acquired a body of statistical data on sex work from the prostitutes and non-prostitutes' impressions about the women who become prostitutes.

The prostitutes' questionnaire was distributed widely across the sex industry. These were left in nearly all parlours (brothels) across the Sydney metropolitan area, handed to those escorts and private (call girl) workers who expressed interest in the study, and left at venues frequented by street workers in mid 1986. Because of my long association with prostitutes, familiarity with parlour management and the relationship of trust I had developed over the years with workers, owners and receptionists, contact with the prostitution population presented no problems. Completed questionnaires were either collected from parlours or posted in between October and December of the same year. Most completed questionnaires were collected from the parlours. These came from 37 parlours—13 from the Kings Cross area, 13 from western suburbs, seven from southern suburbs, two from the North Shore and two from Surry Hills. Other questionnaires were sent by mail. In all, 128 women had taken part: 53 were suburban parlour workers, 34 were Kings Cross parlour workers, 11 were escorts, 10 bondage mistresses, five came from the little East Sydney brothels, five were street workers, four were private workers, and six did not identify the kind of sex work they were engaged in. However, due to the mobility of prostitutes, the kind of sex work most of these women had done in the past indicated a much broader range of work experiences. Eighty-six (39 per cent) of the sample had previously worked in brothels or parlours, 46 (21 per cent) had previously done escort work, 27 (12



per cent) had worked as private prostitutes (call girls), 25 (11 per cent) had worked on the streets, six (3 per cent) had been bondage mistresses, four (2 per cent) had previously worked in hotels or clubs, and 27 (12 per cent) had never worked in any place or type of prostitution before their present employment. Thus, the sample's work experiences both at the time of the study and in previous employment closely matched the proportions of "professional" prostitution mentioned on page 232: approximately, two-thirds work in parlours or brothels, a quarter in private prostitution, and one tenth on the street, at any one time.

In conducting research among prostitutes, certain guidelines should be observed for maximising results. I think trust between the prostitutes being studied and the researcher is the quintessential nexus to obtaining substantial empirical data. Researchers with previous association with the prostitute population as advocates, welfare workers, legal advisers, or especially as prostitutes themselves are more likely to be accepted among prostitutes than strangers. In other words, the researcher should have proved him or herself as someone who can be trusted to reveal truths rather than misconceived notions. Even a trustworthy researcher needs to observe strict anonymity for the prostitutes being studied. The questionnaire should not reveal even the remotest possible chance of identifying the subject (for instance, year of birth is preferred to actual day of birth, since the former provides the least chance of exposure). I have found that distributing questionnaires with stamped addressed envelopes more fruitful than, say having respondents leave their completed forms in a common envelope at the parlour. In the latter case fear exists that managers, receptionists or other workers with access to the forms in an open envelope might identify the authors. Besides, the stamped addressed envelope method with its higher degree of anonymity encourages greater honesty with the answers.

Where interviews are being conducted the risk of disclosure is higher. The interviewer may change the interviewee's name (even working name) and alter certain demographic facts in an effort to maximise the subject's anonymity, but events and situations which are essential to the person's life history in the interview can disclose her identity to others. Fortunately, however, these are most likely to be events known only to her colleagues, who are least likely to publicly expose her.

It is also important for the researcher to explain carefully the objectives of the study to the prostitute subjects, so that they may make up their minds whether to participate or not, which is often influenced by their understanding of the study and whether it will be of value to the sex industry and to prostitutes generally. I find a written note helpful, enabling the women to absorb the information at their leisure. It is equally important to send participating parlours (or individual women if possible, although this is often impossible due to their mobility) copies of publications pertaining to the study, or, at least, advise them of the progress and result of the study. Any researcher whose results contrast with the objectives initially outlined to the women has committed an unpardonable sin in their eyes, and such behaviour is largely the reason for prostitutes' suspicions of research.

In entering a parlour the researcher must remember that this is a workplace and unwritten rules about visitors' behaviour in others' working environments should be adhered to. Firstly, the researcher should make him/herself known to whoever is in charge. The boss deserves the deference of owner of the business, since his/her permission should be gained before speaking to those employed on his/her premises. If the owner is not present then the manager or receptionist should be approached first for permission. The same general rule applies to the workers themselves. They are there to make money and the researcher should work around this. For example, if in the middle of an interview a client walks in, the researcher should cease the interview immediately, make him/herself scarce, and wait until the woman has seen her client. This can take up to two hours in some cases so the researcher is advised to return at a convenient time. The one golden rule for a researcher in any parlour is to be as inconspicuous as possible, and under no circumstance interfere with the working arrangements of the place.

Finally, it is essential for the researcher to treat his/her prostitute subjects with the respect they deserve as ordinary women. The fact that they are working as prostitutes in a brothel should in no way colour the way they are to be treated as women doing the researcher a favour. This applies most especially to male researchers who might allow the sexual atmosphere of the place to influence his conversation with the women. He should never allow himself to forget that he is in someone's else's workplace and that this is a place of work, not play, for his subjects.



The questionnaire modified for the health-workers and students was distributed in different ways. For the first group forms were left for female staff through supervisors or medical personnel in charge at two major Sydney hospitals and seven community health centres. While the ratio of returning completed forms was generally much lower than among the prostitutes, there was a 100 per cent return of forms from Bondi Junction and Marrickville Community Health Centres, and from Rozelle Hospital, where teaching staff kindly allowed me to distribute forms among trainee nurses during class recess. In a similar way to parlours, where there was a mixed response from managers, the rate of returned questionnaires depended much on the attitude of medical supervisors and persons in charge. The distribution and collection of questionnaires for health workers took place between March and June 1987. A total of 123 completed forms were returned by health-workers, but because Question 5.18 revealed that eight of them had worked as prostitutes in the past their forms had to be discarded lest they biased the sample. Thus, the final number of this sample was 115.

Distribution of questionnaires among female students was much easier. First year psychology students at Macquarie University were offered credit points (a standard requirement for students participating in university research) as an incentive to take part in my MAHons. research, which involved completing the same modified forms given to health-workers. This was achieved in two sittings, in October 1986 and March 1987, resulting in 125 completed forms. But, once again Question 5.18 revealed five of the students had worked in prostitution, and their forms had to be removed, leaving a final number of 120 for the sample.

Data from the three groups was stored in a Magnum spreadsheet system, or MAGCALC, and recovered for transcriptions as per the tables found throughout this book. Instead of including both quantity and percentages on the tables, for convenience and simplicity I entered the percentage figure only and indicated numbers so that the reader may do his/her own calculations. Where bar graphs are preferred over a table format the data is simpler and only one group's responses are considered (except for Fig. 4.4).

The interview method used two techniques. One required jotting down comments by individual prostitutes in the course of my years as a participant observer. These were mainly vocal responses to a situation or were part of a conversation about various aspects of



the sex business. Most of these have been used in the historical and earlier sections of the book. The second technique was the in-depth interview, requiring a lengthy time with the subject, acquiring detailed information on her personal history, her methods of working and her thoughts about herself and the type of business she is in. The in-depth interviews were done with twelve women. Extracts from these interviews provide the personal commentaries found throughout the bulk of the text and used as evidence in the chapters on the social and working lives of prostitutes.

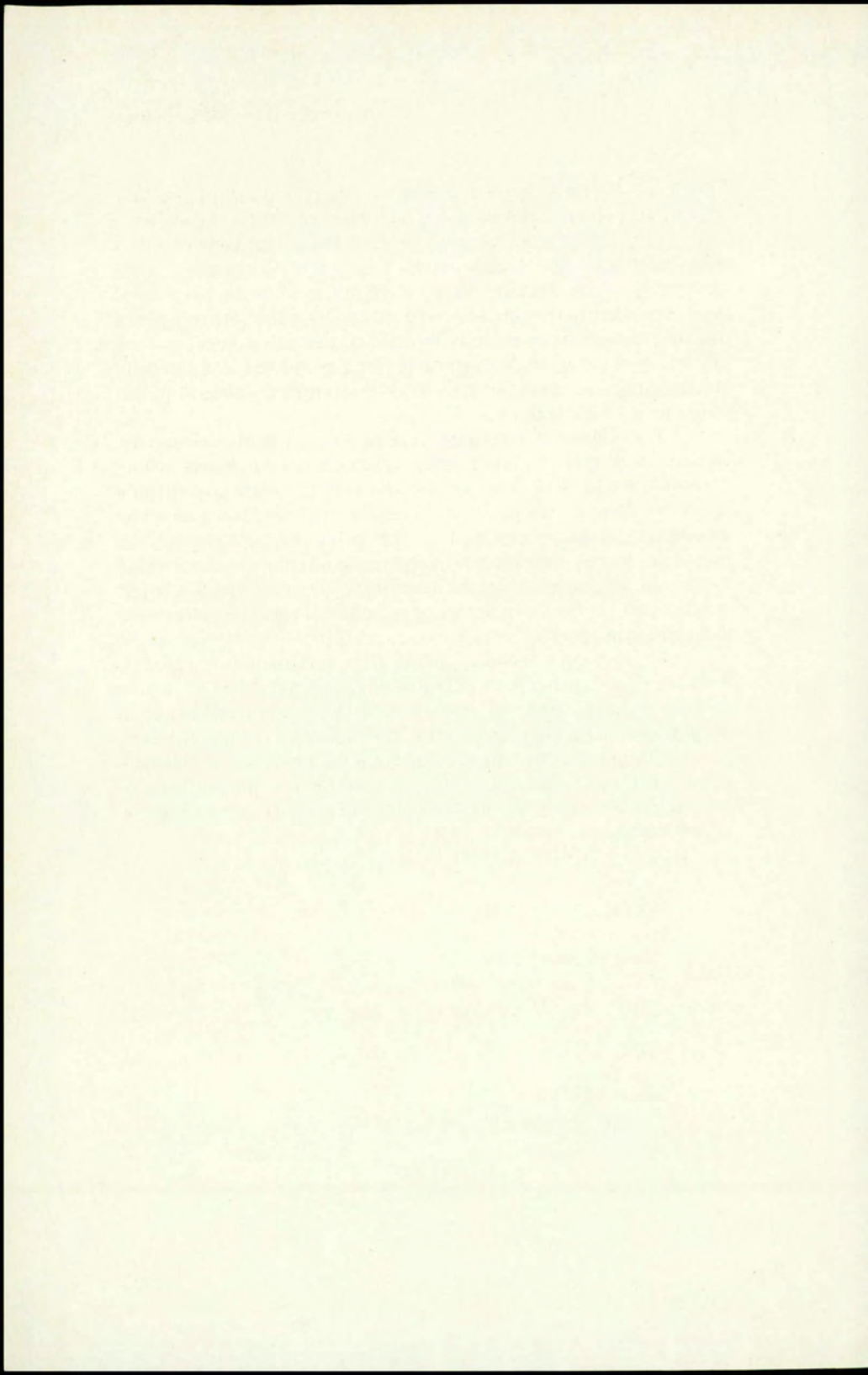
In selecting subjects for the in-depth interviews, I sought qualities about these women which were essential for providing the reader with a good cross-section of workers in the sex industry, as well as personal views about working as prostitutes that are simply impossible to obtain through a questionnaire. The subject needed to be articulate, prepared to open up about herself and her work, ready to speak the truth, and feel at ease with me asking questions of a personal nature. I not only sought women who could best represent various kinds of prostitution, but who were also different in personality and had different experiences of life and work. The task of finding a diverse group of women willing to be confronted in interviews among a small population of prostitutes was far from easy, in spite of my long association with the industry. After noting women in the industry likely to be good subjects for interviews, I asked them if they were prepared to undergo a long interview session in their own time. The twelve presented in this book all agreed at my initial request, thus indicating an eagerness to talk and being at ease with me. Four of them agreed to be interviewed at their workplaces, taking time off to do so. Five preferred to do the interviews in their homes, and three met me at a venue of my choosing. The time taken with each woman varied from an hour to two and a half hours, with those at work being the shortest interviews and those in their homes being the longest.

The interviewing method followed an order not unlike the questionnaire, beginning with demographic information, then talking about their families, their earliest sexual experiences, and finally into lengthy discussions on their experiences in sex work. Where necessary I probed with questions into related areas of experience and expanded on certain aspects of business that might have been mundane for them but would be of great interest to readers. In all cases, whatever slight reservations these women might

have had in the early stages of the interviews, within a short time they spoke freely about themselves and their lives as prostitutes, showing little inclination to conceal parts of their lives I am sure very few other people, if any, know about. I began to worry about their anonymity. Their working names were not used in the interviews, being replaced by freshly invented names by either themselves or me, and certain facts, such as birthplace, parent's names, or their present workplace, were disguised. But I wondered if there were certain aspects or events in their lives, or even their expression, that might reveal their identities.

The stigma of prostitute, fear of losing friends and family, anxiety over their safety if they revealed certain incriminating evidence, are all real concerns for sex workers when asked to do interviews, and a reason why most decline and why the truth about prostitution remains distorted in the public consciousness. The researcher has an obligation to maintain the interviewees anonymity even if she reveals herself in the intensity of the interview. If scholars want to uncover the truth they must be prepared to protect those with the courage to speak it.

So, through a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods I put together this study in the hope of providing the reader with both a broad spectrum of sex industry work and workers and an insight into the intimate spectrum of sex industry work and workers, and an insight into the intimate feelings of many of the women. Together I hope that this study has brought a human side to prostitution too rarely overlooked in the bid for the more sensational appeal to public voyeurism.





## APPENDIX III

### PROSTITUTES ORGANISATIONS

#### Australia: (telecommunication country code: 61)

SQWISI (Self-Help for Queensland Workers in the  
Sex Industry)  
P.O. Box 689  
West End 4101  
QUEENSLAND  
Ph: 07 8444565

PROS  
(Prostitutes Rights Organisation for Sex Workers)  
c/- School of Sociology (Att'n: R. Perkins)  
University of New South Wales  
P.O. Box 1  
Kensington 2033  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
Ph: 02 6972398

SWAN (Sex Workers Association of NSW)  
P.O. Box 1100  
Double Bay 2023  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
Ph: 02 3899852

SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project)  
P.O. Box 1435  
Darlinghurst 2010  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
Ph: 02 2122600

WISE (Workers in Sex Employment in the ACT)  
P.O. Box 229  
Canberra 2601  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
Ph: 06 2572855

## Working Girls

Prostitutes Collective of Victoria  
10 Inkerman St,  
St Kilda 3182  
VICTORIA  
Ph: 03 5348319

Scarlet Alliance  
National Forum of Sex Workers Rights Organisations  
247-251 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne 3000  
VICTORIA  
Ph. 03 6506797

PASA (Prostitutes Association of SA)  
P.O. Box 7072  
Hutt St, Adelaide 5000  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
Ph: 08 2236944

SIERA (Sex Industry Employees Rights Association)  
P.O. Box 170  
Mount Lawley 6050  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
Ph: 09 2276935

PANTHER (Prostitutes Association of the NT for  
Health, Education and Referral)  
G.P.O. Box 2826  
Darwin 0801  
NORTHERN TERRITORY  
Ph: 089 411711

## New Zealand:

New Zealand Prostitutes Collective  
P.O. 11-412  
Manners St,  
Wellington  
NEW ZEALAND  
Ph: 4-828791 (country code: 64)

**Asia:**

Women's Centre  
Nehru Rd, Vakola,  
Santa Cruz (E)  
Bombay 400055  
INDIA  
Ph: 22-6140403 (country code: 91)

Women's Information Centre  
P.O. Box 7-47  
Bangkoknoi 10700  
THAILAND  
Ph: 2-4230903 (country code: 66)

Empower  
Silom Rd,  
Bangkok 10500  
THAILAND  
Ph: 2-2340398 (country code: 66)

Gabriela Nacional Adul De Lean  
41 Timog,  
Quezon City  
PHILIPPINES  
Ph: 2-985140 (country code: 63)

**Canada:**

CORP  
(Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes)  
P.O. Box 724  
Toronto MST IR5  
ONTARIO  
Ph: 416-9640150 (country code: 1)



## Working Girls

### Latin America:

ISER  
Lago do Machado 21—Co  
Rio de Janeiro 22211  
BRAZIL  
Ph: 21-2054796 (country code: 55)

### United States of America: (telecommunications country code: 1)

COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics)  
National Task Force On Prostitution  
P.O. Box 6297  
San Francisco  
CALIFORNIA CA 94104-6297  
Ph: 415-5580450

HIRE (Hooking Is Real Employment)  
Munroe Dr.,  
Atlanta  
GEORGIA GA 30308  
Ph: 404-8761212

PONY (Prostitutes Organization of New York)  
Lexington Ave.,  
New York City  
NEW YORK NY 10016  
Ph: 212-8892354

U.S. Prostitutes Collective:	
P.O. Box 86681	P.O. Box 14512
Los Angeles	San Francisco
CALIFORNIA CA	CALIFORNIA CA
90086	94114
Ph: 213-221 1698	Ph: 415-558 9628

P.O. Box 11795	P.O. 33133
Philadelphia	Tulsa
PENNSYLVANIA PA	OKLAHOMA OK
19101	74153
Ph: 215-6689886	Ph: 918-2991070

**Europe:**

ICPR (International Committee of Prostitutes Rights)

Postbus 725

1000 AS Amsterdam

NETHERLANDS

Ph: Netherlands: 20-168597/594 (country code: 31)

France: 67-966483 (country code: 33)

Verband de Prostituierten Österreichs

Backermuhleweg

A—4020 Linz

AUSTRIA

Ph: 732-81854 (country code: 43)

Hydra

Kantstrasse 54

D—1000 Berlin 12

GERMANY (WEST)

Ph: 303-3135999 (country code: 49)

Centre International de documentation sur la  
prostitution

Griselidis Real

24, Rue de Neuchatel

CH—1201 Geneva

SWITZERLAND

Ph: 22-328276 (country code: 41)

Comitato Per I Diritti Civili Delle Prostitute

Caselle Postale 67

33170 Pordenone

ITALY

Ph: 434-625940 (country code: 39)

Rode Draad

Postbus 16422

1001 RM Amsterdam

NETHERLANDS

Ph: 20-243366 (country code: 31)

## Working Girls

PLAN (Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense)  
42 Thornhill Square,  
London N1  
ENGLAND  
Ph: 1-6071960 (country code: 44)

English Collective of Prostitutes  
P.O. Box 287  
London NW6 5QU  
ENGLAND  
Ph. 1-8377509 (country code: 44)



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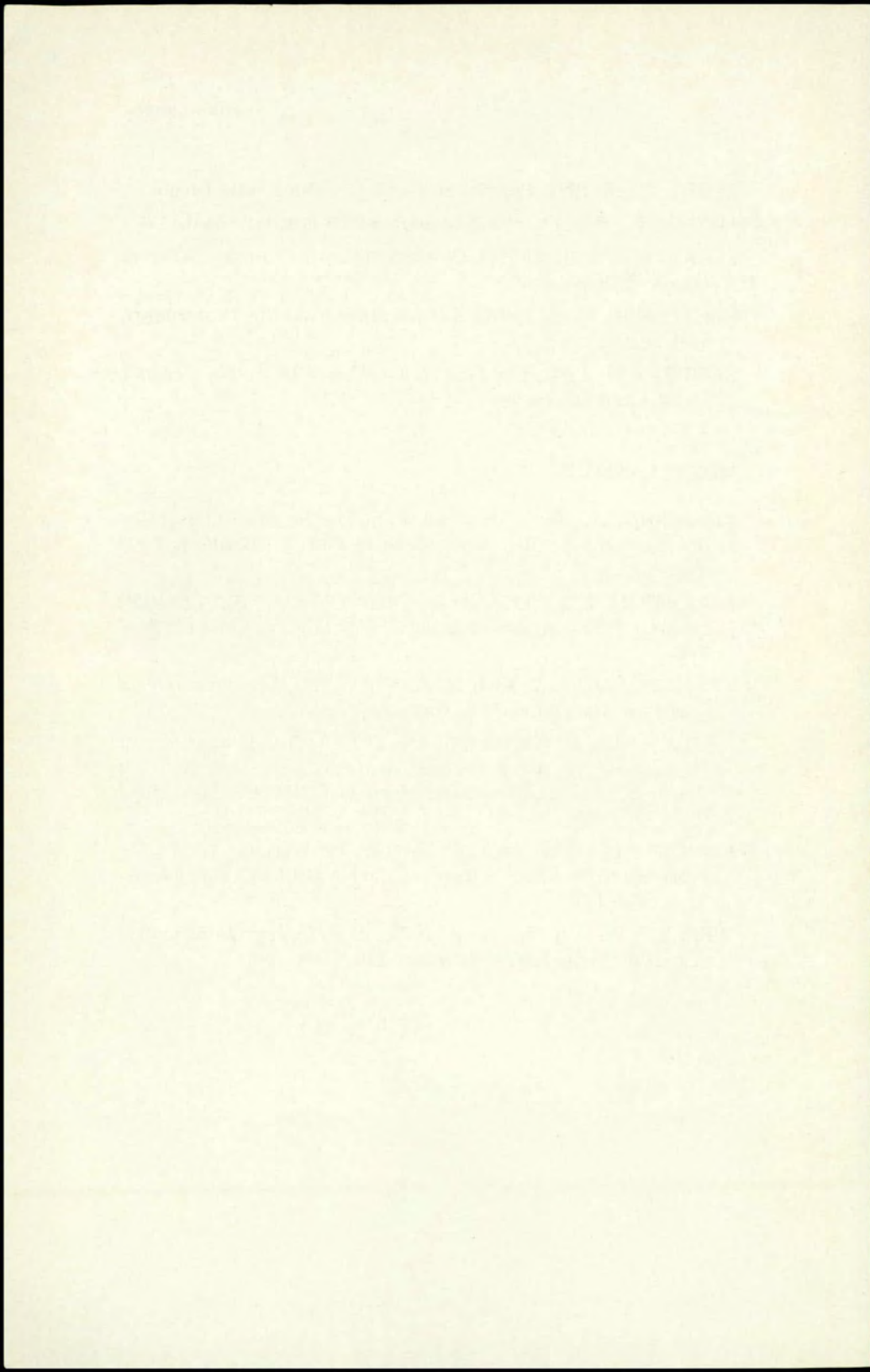
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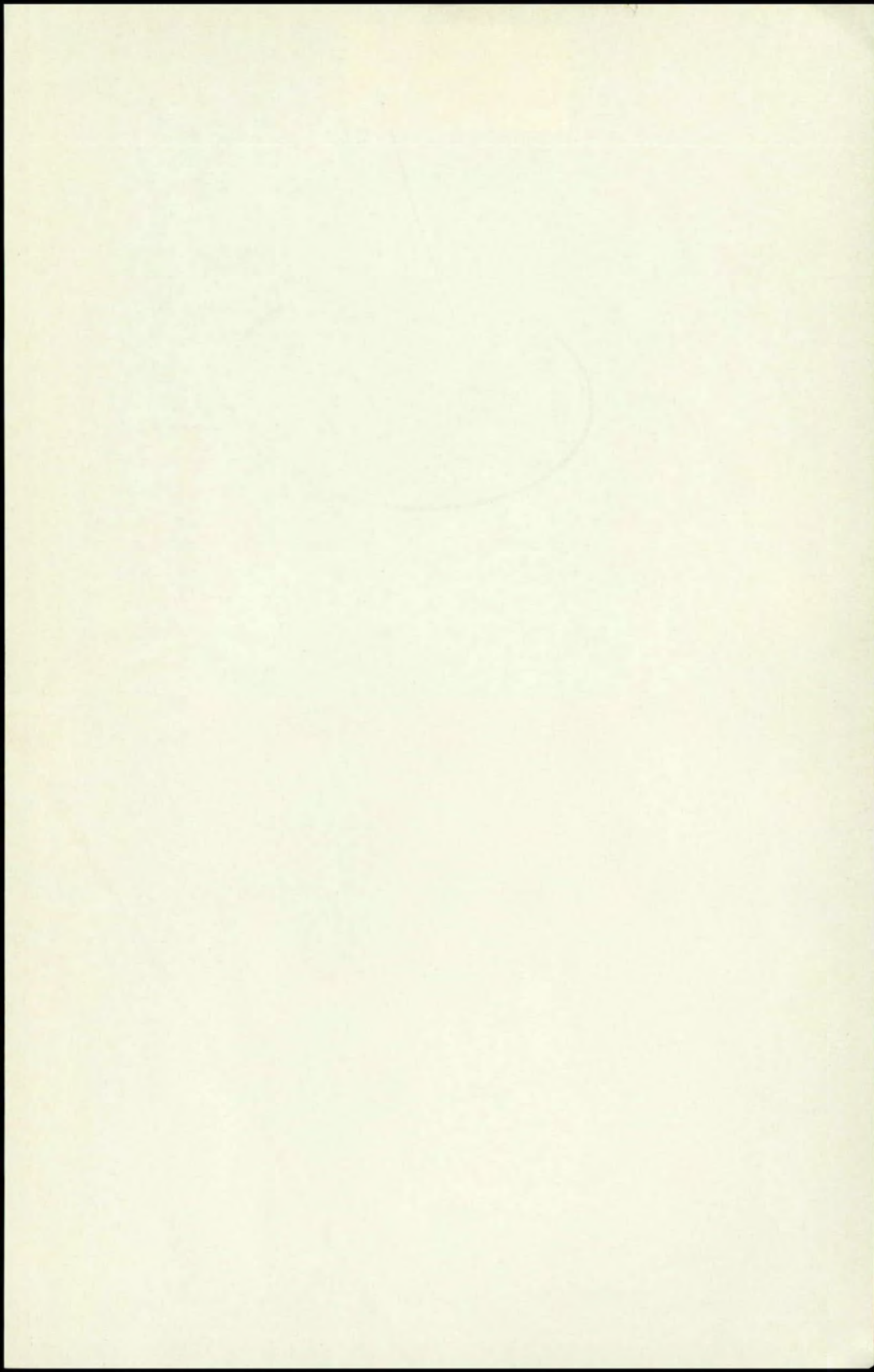
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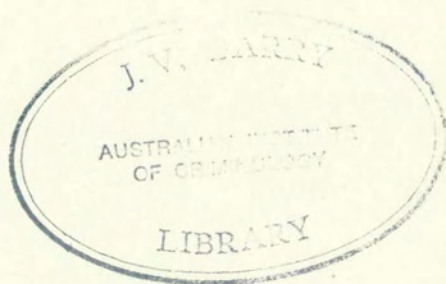




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Working girls : prostitutes,  
their life and social control (   
Australian studies in law, crime  
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*Working Girls* is a major contribution to the literature of the issues surrounding prostitution. It presents an analysis of prostitution laws throughout Australia and includes detailed findings from a survey of Sydney prostitutes. Excerpts from in-depth interviews are included, giving a new insight into their lives. Apart from this original material, the author reviews a vast literature on the subject of prostitution.

*Working Girls* is an invaluable source of information for those with an interest in the issue of decriminalisation. Furthermore, the author explodes many of the myths surrounding these women and their work. This book will be of interest to the general public as well as those working within the criminal justice system.