

THE GENEALOGY OF THE PROSTITUTE: DEFINING AND DISCIPLINING
PROSTITUTION THROUGH JOURNALISM IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND, 1809-1886

By

©2012

Greta Kristian Wendelin

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Communication Studies and the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy.

Chairperson Dr. Dave Tell

Dr. Jay Childers

Dr. Frank Farmer

Dr. Scott Harris

Dr. Beth Innocenti

Date Defended: April 9, 2012

The Dissertation Committee for Greta Kristian Wendelin
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

THE GENEALOGY OF THE PROSTITUTE: DEFINING AND DISCIPLINING
PROSTITUTION THROUGH JOURNALISM IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND, 1809-1886

Chairperson Dr. Dave Tell

Date approved: April 9, 2012

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an exploration into the changing definition of a prostitute during the nineteenth century in Britain and the actions taken in response to that changing definition. I argue that different definitions of “prostitute” that emerge during this time correspond to the various means of control, discipline, and legislation of prostitution. Throughout the 1800s, “prostitute” meant a brazen harlot, a fallen woman, a factory worker, a capable capitalist, and an underage child. Each definition signifies a particular set of medical, social, scientific, and religious assumptions that informed political aims and disciplinary measures.

Additionally, I contend that the debate over prostitution in the 1800s demonstrates the failure of medical and scientific discourses in shaping the discourse over prostitution. While religious, medical, social scientific and sexual discourse all had a hand in contributing to the definition of “prostitute,” social scientists persistently worried over the accuracy of statistics and the veracity of their studies. Their inability to accurately depict the prostitute necessitated a different means of generating knowledge. Thus, it was the surveillance functions of journalism—manifested through the voices of anonymous prostitutes in letters to the editor of the *Times*, interviews, and the particularly sensational tactics of “new journalism” practiced by Stead—which came to have increasing influence over the rhetorical formations of “prostitute” within public discourse. Through the first-hand testimony of anonymous streetwalkers, or through the eyewitness accounts of an editor, the prostitute depicted within the pages of newsprint bore none of the uncertainty found within medical studies or reformers’ tracts. Therefore, tracing the debate over prostitution also reveals the ways in which the newspaper evolved throughout the nineteenth century as a means to shape public discourse.

For Igor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Picasso said, “Good artists borrow, great artists steal.” I think of what follows as a work of art, and if it is any good, it is because so many have been very generous in lending their input to this project. While I cannot admit to stealing (or being great), I most certainly did borrow quite a bit: others’ time, support, and insight.

If one could see the layers of revision underlying the lines of text, one would see the steady and persistent influence of my advisor. Dave Tell guided this project over the course of four years, and I am indebted to him for his intellectual contributions and friendship. Whenever this project became more focused, refined, or scholarly, it was because of his questions, feedback, and encouragement. This project has enjoyed the benefit of many other eyes, and I am grateful to have had the pleasure of sharing this with others and profiting immensely from their “two cents.” Members of my initial committee—Victor Bailey, Jay Childers, Frank Farmer, and Scott Harris—were very helpful in shaping my dissertation into its final form, and their enthusiasm for the project kept me motivated. I am especially grateful for the eleventh hour substitution on my committee, Beth Innocenti, making it possible for me to graduate in a timely manner. Individual chapters also benefited from the careful critique of Robert Rowland, Kris Bruss, and many others in the department who helped to workshop these pages.

Lydia Holz Ingram served as a remote editor over the past few years, pro bono. Her ability to secure dangling modifiers, to make peace between subjects and verbs, and to rein in renegade punctuation made this work much better. Although most would not notice her influence, I certainly do. Karen Cook, the special collections librarian at the Spencer Research Library, deserves special credit for securing photos of the “Maiden Tribute” issues. That was an incredible help to my research and getting to peruse the original pages of the “Maiden Tribute” was a wonderful highlight in the writing process.

While my faulty memory cannot recall all the individuals who helped to transform ideas into words, I will always remember the help I received from friends and family. The Rhetoric Support Group—Krista Phair, Gini Jones, Sue Novak, Jaclyn Howell, and Beth Innocenti—represents the finest group of friends that one can ask for when writing a dissertation. My thanks for all the commiseration, celebration, and libations we enjoyed together. Two families have kept me sane over the last five years. The Brusses—Jon, Kris, and Ingrid—provided the “church bus,” and for many Sundays I had the privilege of enjoying their smart conversation and sensible perspective. Final thanks goes to the Wonderful Wendelins. Daddie, Mummie, Ladd, and Rory know that I owe to them more than can be said here, suffice it to say that it is a good thing they were all within driving distance; I would not have finished grad school otherwise.

This project is dedicated to Igor Perel. I could have done it without you, but it would not have been near as much fun.

Everything in its right place.

—Radiohead, *Kid A*

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1. A Woman Made of Words: An Introduction to Prostitution, Journalism, and Power	1
Chapter 2. From “Awful Depravity” to the “Sewer”: The Evangelical Inception of the Prostitute and Her Urban Transformation, 1809-1837	27
Chapter 3. The Family, the Factory, and the Speculum: Social, Economic, and Medical Ideologies at Odds with the Inscrutable Woman, 1839-1857	60
Chapter 4. The Prostitute’s Voice in the Public Eye: Surveilling Anonymous “Unfortunates” Within the <i>Times</i> of London	89
Chapter 5. A Rhetoric of Pornography: Private Style and Public Policy in “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”	114
Chapter 6. A World Made of Words: Reading Stead Back into the History of Prostitution	149
Bibliography	166

Chapter 1.

A Woman Made of Words: An Introduction to Prostitution, Journalism, and Power

What are we faced with in the nineteenth century? An age where woman was sacred; and where you could buy a thirteen-year-old girl for a few pounds—a few shillings, if you wanted her for only an hour or two. Where more churches were built than in the whole previous history of the country; and where one in sixty houses in London was a brothel . . . Where the penal system was progressively humanized; and flagellation so rife that a Frenchman set out quite seriously to prove that the Marquis de Sade must have had English ancestry.

—John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

What is a prostitute? One might say that a prostitute is someone who sells her or his sexual favors in exchange for goods or money, a matter of a simple commercial transaction. One might also say that a prostitute is a label applied to a woman who defies conventional sexual mores; alternatively, one might say that what a prostitute is does not matter: what a consenting adult does with her or his body and for how much is nobody else's business. It is an ostensibly simple question of definition, but whatever that definition is, I argue that it most certainly does matter, and the ramifications of that definition are far from simple. Especially in the case of "prostitute," the control and legislation issuing from that definition has historically been a site of dynamic rhetorical action. My dissertation is an exploration into the changing definition of a prostitute and the actions taken in response to that changing definition.

"What is a prostitute?" and "What should be done with her?" were two of the most hotly contested, interrelated high stakes questions being asked throughout nineteenth century Britain. Moreover, any sustained attention to the documents of the era reveals that "prostitute" was never easy to define. Even over the course of eighty years, "prostitute" is defined in varying ways within British discourse. Correspondingly, those who debated prostitution attempted to ameliorate the attendant problems of prostitution in different ways.

I argue that the definitional ruptures of “prostitute” correspond to the various means of control, discipline, and legislation of prostitution.¹ Throughout the 1800s, “prostitute” meant a brazen harlot, a fallen woman, a factory worker, a capable capitalist, and an underage child. Each definition signifies a particular set of medical, social, scientific and religious assumptions that informed political aims and disciplinary measures. Additionally, I contend that the debate over prostitution in the 1800s demonstrates the failure of medical and scientific discourses in shaping the public discourse over prostitution. While religious, medical, social scientific and sexual discourse all had a hand in contributing to the definition of “prostitute,” it was the surveilling functions of journalism—manifested through the voices of anonymous prostitutes in letters to the editor of the *Times*, interviews, and the particularly the sensational tactics of “new journalism” practiced by William Stead—which came to have increasing influence over the rhetorical formations of “prostitute” within public discourse. Therefore, my intention is to not only explore these changing definitions, but to demonstrate, via the ever-changing concept of “prostitute,” how the tactics of journalism increasingly came to shape these ruptures in meaning and consequently govern the population. In order to articulate the surveilling functions of journalism, I engage the theories of Michel Foucault throughout to elucidate how journalism observes the population and shapes public discourse. At the same time, I also challenge Foucault’s theory of social science, demonstrating how it failed to accurately know and discipline the British prostitute during the 1800s.

Research Questions and Answers

¹ I borrow the term “definitional ruptures” from Edward Schiappa. Edward Schiappa, *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003).

My analysis of the rhetorical formations of “prostitute” and the corresponding disciplinary actions is guided by the following questions: What is a prostitute in nineteenth century Britain, and at what points do discernable shifts in meaning occur? Who was contributing to the discourse on prostitution? What ideologies, politics, and sciences were undergirding the formation of discourse? How did the discipline of the prostitute change in relation to the discourse? How did the tactics of journalism shape the debates over prostitution? How do the mechanisms of surveillance evolve over the course of the century? And how does mass communication change the ways and means by which people are governed?

My answers to these questions are geared around three central arguments, which are as follows:

1. *The definition of a “prostitute” was never a matter of a glib, simplistic meaning, nor is it is a matter of defining particular sexual acts. The definition of a prostitute constitutes an ever-changing matrix of social norms, political interests, ideological positions, sexual politics, economic paradigms, and/or medical discourse.* Feverish debates and investigations into prostitution took place between 1809 and 1885, but through it all, the concept of “prostitute” never was a self-evident, static entity. The varying, contested, and contradictory rhetorical formations testify to this unstable form. Those who claimed to know the “prostitute” argued from particular positions of religious doctrine, ideological beliefs, and scientific persuasions. At any particular time during this period, the meaning of “prostitute” was loaded with a political discourse. As with any robust debate, and as is particularly true for the debate that dogged the matter of prostitution, there was often a plurality of politics at play.

Just to illustrate through a few examples, the meaning of “prostitute” changed radically within a span of just thirty years. William Hale, an evangelical reformer writing in 1809 and

1812, asserted that the prostitute was a willful harlot of “awful depravity” who entrapped wholesome middle class sons with her “serpentine allurements.” Hale’s vituperative casting of prostitutes as willful sinners emerges from his strict evangelical ideology, as well as from his desire for prostitutes to be properly punished through solitary confinement, not sympathetically harbored as he thought they were by those who ran charitable Magdalen asylums. For Hale, it was important to signify prostitution as some gross infraction against society, even though it was not of particular interest to the judicial system at that time.

Just twenty-five years after Hale wrote against the sin of prostitution, a study by A. J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet altered the definition of prostitution drastically. His rigorous statistical approach to the study of prostitution, carefully detailing backgrounds, bodily habits, disease, and numbers, created a very different conceptualization of the common whore. Aroused by this new study, the reviewers in British medical journals were particularly impressed with Parent-Duchâtelet’s pronouncement that prostitutes were equivalent to “sewers,” insofar as government should adopt a regulatory, rather than punitive, stance in regards to those women who stood outside the conventional boundaries of sex and economics. The arrival of Parent-Duchâtelet’s study marked an increased concern over disease and statistical methods, which subsequent medical and evangelical researchers would utilize in their own studies of prostitution.

This new paradigm of study was borne out just a few years later in William Tait’s 1840 study of “magdalenism.” In this tract, Tait adopted a posture that befits that of an objective, distant researcher. Rather than a “sewer,” he defined prostitution as “merely an act; while prostitute is always employed to denote a person who habitually follows the course of conduct implied in successive acts.”¹ While he still talked about the prostitute in terms of her “licentiousness,” Tait and others like him were now far more concerned in detailing the

particular life and actions of the common streetwalker. Rather than being defined exclusively as an immoral being, the prostitute thus became a messy agglomeration of factors—numbers, disease rates, bodily characteristics, habits, and causes. These factors nuanced the definition of a prostitute beyond a stern moral condemnation of the practice. In each instance, the different ideologies, politics, and epistemologies of the investigator shifted the discursive formation of “prostitution” in different ways, each time making a new subject that was to be addressed by different means.

2. Throughout the nineteenth century, there was a persistent recognition that control of prostitutes necessitated surveillance. However, surveillance was practiced in different ways at different times. Several reformers spoke of “surveillance” in their tracts, in regards to the monitoring and control of prostitutes. Michel Foucault’s theorization of surveillance is particularly helpful in framing those discussions, but as I shall strive to show, surveillance is not a singularity. In fact, it is a technology that is deployed in several different ways through different means.

When Foucault spoke of surveillance in *Discipline and Punish*, he meant the technologies of observation that served a larger schema of disciplinary power, usually as situated within prisons, hospitals, or psychiatric wards. However, his conceptualization of surveillance was also developed within his discussion of social medicine. Beginning in the late 1700s, technologies of surveillance emerged as a means to partition and study the urban spaces that gave rise to disease. As he stated, “Medicine’s first objective was consisted . . . in analyzing the zones of congestion, disorder, and danger within the urban precincts,” areas which were undergoing unprecedented rates of population growth.² This type of power necessitated “a knowledge of individuality,” a knowledge that was generated within the practice of surveillance, which denoted the “social

practices of control and supervision,” on a large scale.³ The disciplinary power that emerged in the nineteenth century, in prisons and in hospitals, spread outward. The “examination was the basis of the power, the form of knowledge-power, that was to give rise” to what Foucault termed “the ‘human sciences’—psychiatry, psychology, sociology.”⁴ In any case, the key point about this form of power evolving at this time was that it was a power to *know*. It was a power that could “extract a knowledge from individuals and . . . extract a knowledge *about* those individuals who are subjected to observation.”⁵ This form of surveillance is evident in the work of Parent-Duchâtelet, for example. As one reviewer concluded after reading Parent-Duchâtelet’s 1836 study, “Moral and physical evils incident to large towns require early and constant watchfulness, but remedial measures can only be efficacious when they are the result of long and careful observation.”⁶ Much as Foucault would conclude in his own study of prisons, the reviewer emphatically stressed to the reader, “Again and again we must repeat that accurate and minute investigations are the only sure guides to remedial measures, and that in nothing so much as in the social constitution is the Baconian aphorism more strongly exemplified, that KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.”⁷ Belief that careful, scientific observation could overcome the obstacles presented by the troublesome prostitute is persistent at this time, and for the reviewers of Parent-Duchâtelet’s work, it is unquestionable.

However, my argument is that the surveilling tactics of social science failed where the British prostitute is concerned. As is evident from tracts and articles of the time, the tactics of the social scientist and doctor simply failed in getting a clear view of the prostitute; whatever statistics could be gathered were persistently dogged by a nagging anxiety about whether the numbers were even correct. At least for the British prostitute of the 1800s, Foucault’s notion of surveillance via social science fails to reflect the British reformers’ unrelenting doubts over the

information they generated on the subject of prostitution. I argue that the tactics of surveillance used in the service of disciplinary power were manifested in statisticians' reports and also in the popular newspaper. During the nineteenth century, an increasingly literate public gained access to a plethora of penny papers and dailies. Accordingly, the tactics of knowing shifted out from the medical and social institutions to the diffuse and public operations of the newspaper editor. While the journalist is at times anonymous and at other times a known individual, the means by which each journalist claimed to know prostitution were very different from the evangelical dogma or the emergent social science of before. The widely distributed newspaper afforded an editor a privileged position, and the unique, quicksilver nature of journalism from the mid-1850s onward shaped the discourse on prostitution in ways that were not available to those who composed medical studies or reformers' tracts.

For example, in the case study of anonymous letters to the editor of the *Times* in February of 1858, I argue that the anonymous voices of the two "prostitutes," identified only as "Another Unfortunate" and "One More Unfortunate," enacted a form of journalistic surveillance upon the population. Seemingly speaking directly from the streets, these two figures created a particular knowledge of prostitution, one that differed from the strict columns of figures in the studies of medical researchers. From this drama of a sad "fallen woman" and a "happy harlot," the editor offered readers a different form of control and legislation, one that did not punish so much as offered an alternative way of knowing the wanton population, as a means to discipline that which offended the public eye.

Almost thirty years after the anonymous letters to the *Times*, editor William Stead devised another scheme that would create a particular form of knowledge within public discourse. In 1885, Stead orchestrated a sensational newspaper campaign that shocked the public

and resulted in the rapid passing of the Criminal Law Amendment bill, as well as his conviction for kidnapping a thirteen year-old girl. I argue that Stead used pornographic rhetoric to define the prostitute as an underage child and consequently created a form of political power that was, ultimately, deleterious for those he professed to help.

While the systematic organization of hospitals and prisons may have produced particular forms of knowledge, so too was the newspaper a productive mechanism. Insofar as “Power produces” and consequently “produces reality,” then the paper of the nineteenth century was in the business of knowledge production.⁸ As Stead stated the year after the “Maiden Tribute” scandal, “The Press is at once the eye and the ear and the tongue of the people. It is the visible speech if not the voice of the democracy. It is the phonograph of the world.”⁹ It may not have necessarily produced the rigorous, scientific knowledge, but it did produce knowledge of a sort: the voices of those who were (allegedly) interviewed, editorials, articles, and campaigns, all of which were broadcast back to the public in the pages of print.

3. The historical debate over prostitution may also be read as the emergence of mass communication. The question of prostitution was evolving against a rapidly changing backdrop of industrial Britain. Between the lines of studies, newsprint, and legislation, one can see reformers grappling not simply with sexuality, but also with the changing landscape of industry, economics, science, and gender. In short, this debate over prostitution may also be read as the emergence of modernity. Journalism, and specifically “New Journalism,” like that propagated by William Stead adapted to the new conditions of modernity that the Industrial Revolution, high literacy rates, and the proliferation of cheap newsprint had created in Great Britain during the late 1800s. Stead’s two 1886 essays, “Government by Journalism” and “The Future of Journalism,” helps to elucidate the ways in which the modern world was already manifested in

Stead's day and also how journalistic surveillance manifested itself under changing circumstances. Stead understood that the pervasiveness of print media had transformed social structure, government, politics, and culture. Stead understood that "the masses" operated under a different psychology than that of the individuals who composed those masses. Furthermore, leading the modern masses originated neither in the pulpit, Parliament, nor the throne. The unique position of the newspaper editor was truly a seat of power in terms of the overt manipulation of the masses via campaigns, editorials, and articles.

In regards to the question of prostitution, the newspaper was a persistent factor in the public debate over prostitution. While two chapters are explicitly devoted to the overt efforts of the newspaper in changing public discourse over prostitution, the increasing influence of the newspaper is evident long before Stead's dramatic 1885 campaign. Social reformers at the time often referenced weekly mortality figures printed in the daily papers, cited articles written about women's working conditions, and praised other articles that helped to make prostitution a topic worthy of public discussion. While Stead was the one who seems to have recognized the overt and covert operations of surveillance and government deployed in the pages of newsprint, the information printed in the paper had long been generating knowledge of prostitution and helping to create a different means to disciplinary power.

Methodology

My study can be described methodologically as a diachronic investigation into the definitional ruptures of "prostitute," with special attention to the practices of journalism in shaping that definition. As a critical exploration of the meaning of prostitution and the ramifications thereof, my work follows long-standing concerns within rhetorical scholarship,

specifically as demonstrated by the work of Edward Schiappa and David Zarefsky, which explores the political implications of definition, as well as the critical/cultural scholarship exemplified by Steven Mailloux. These authors all highlight the importance of definition, critical scholarship, and the relationship between culture and rhetoric.

My work here is aptly described by what Steven Mailloux termed “rhetorical hermeneutics,” a form of analysis that focuses on the “rhetorical histories of specific interpretive acts.”¹⁰ For Mailloux, rhetorical hermeneutics “attempts to do a rhetorical analysis of the cultural conversation in which that act participated.”¹¹ In other words, rhetorical hermeneutics strives to recover and situate struggles over definition within a larger historical milieu. If, after all, no symbolic structure is independent unto itself, then locating a cultural conversation within a broader context informs that particular action and makes explicit the forces bearing upon symbolic movements. Mailloux further explained that rhetorical hermeneutics seeks to address “historical debates of particular epistemic claims.”¹² Like Foucault’s genealogical investigations of discourse, Mailloux is concerned with the ways in which the means of knowing impact symbolic transformations.

This focus upon historical debates over epistemic claims is fundamentally a focus on definitions. Both Zarefsky and Schiappa help explore the importance of definition by identifying it as an inherently loaded term. Definitions do not always entail a simple, singular meaning—sometimes, as Zarefsky said in his Alta keynote address, definitions come together “at the nexus of power, gender, politics, and language,” an observation which is most certainly true for those debating prostitution in the nineteenth century.¹³ Definitions are not shaped by empirical reality so much as by political, epistemological, religious, and ideological convictions; as Schiappa explained, definitions are often imbued with the interests of those advocating for a particular

position.¹⁴ Similarly, Zarefsky noted that a definition may implicitly or explicitly limit “what counts as data for a conclusion about whether or what action should be taken,” and it also “identifies causes and poses remedies, and it invites moral judgments about circumstances or individuals.”¹⁵

Just as definitions are inherently imbued with particular viewpoints, so too are definitions challenged on those very grounds, constituting a crisis wherein one definition is jettisoned in favor of another. The controversy over “prostitute” throughout the nineteenth century could aptly be described as a “definitional rupture,” an “issue of how words are defined.”¹⁶ Typically, stated Schiappa, questions of definition may be resolved by consulting a dictionary or by resorting to common usage, but sometimes participants in discourse “are required to employ a theory of definition, self-consciously or not, to close the rupture” in meaning.¹⁷ In other words, a word must be reconfigured, as dominant or conventional meanings may not be useful to the purposes of those who use it. For example, the political and ideological convictions that undergirded the understanding of a prostitute as an “abandoned harlot” is categorically different from the assertion that a prostitute is an urban reality on par with “sewers” and “cess-pools.” This study will not determine what a prostitute really was; obviously, she was a lot of things that cannot be comprehensively captured in a single study. But what I do want to determine is the different constructions of “prostitute” that appeared over the course of a century, with respect to epistemological shifts. Since “there is no way to escape the historical contingency of any particular definitional proposition,” my task here is understood as recovering what some argued the prostitute “ought” to be understood as throughout the 1800s.¹⁸

Careful analysis of definition is important, but Mailloux also emphasized the broader implications of this kind interpretive study, specifically as rhetorical practices “extend and

manipulate the social practices, political structures, and material circumstances in which they are embedded at particular historical moments.”¹⁹ For my own investigation, rhetorical hermeneutics reflects my focus on the shifting definitions of “prostitute,” as well as the means by which that definition was enacted within larger governing practices. Concerns for words without a complimentary attention to power is lacking, as discursive formations are generated from larger cultural, political, and paradigmatic movements, so too does discourse push back against the culture from whence it came.

The texts I have chosen for this study may seem uneven and completely unrelated to one another. Medical reviews, sociological studies, evangelical tracts, anonymous letters to the editor of the *Times*, a sensationalist newspaper campaign, and formal journal essays all play a part in my investigation of prostitution. Because this dissertation does not center on a single orator or publication, but on a matter of definition, this scattered collection of texts represent a realm that is much larger than any single orator, publication, or incident. This method, which Zarefsky described as “macro-argumentation,” “begins with the controversy, rather than the single text, as the basic unit of analysis, and proceeds all the way up to social formations and cultural practices.”²⁰ This analysis on a grand scale is what Foucault urges of the critic, as he asserts, “We must not look for who has the power We must seek rather the pattern of the modifications which the relations of force imply by the very nature of their process.”²¹

By staying grounded within the controversy, and not necessarily searching for the “winners” of the debate or the true definition of “prostitute,” we are also directed to the oscillating nature of power and knowledge, as Foucault stated, “relations of power-knowledge are not static forms of distribution, they are ‘matrices of transformations.’”²² In other words, the definition of prostitution is never stable, not only because it is subject to rapidly changing

medical, religious, and social vectors, but also because each symbolic manifestation of “prostitute” subsequently challenges the preexisting discourse. My interest in this study is to determine the relationship between what was said and how that was accomplished, while also attempting to stay grounded in the discontinuous and inevitably messy discourse over prostitution. Therefore, rather than staying within a single strain of thought or a single publication, my study necessitates a very diverse collection of texts.

Ultimately, my dissertation is based on the premise that the exercise of power is dependent on discourse. As the definitions of “prostitute” changed, so too did the means by which the deviant she (and it is always a “she”) was rendered into a governable population. Especially in the case of the prostitute in nineteenth-century Britain, knowledge and power were inextricably bound together; as social sciences, pornography, medicine, political powers, and evangelical fervor emerged within the discourse, the corresponding forces used to govern and discipline also shifted, redirected to different foci for the purposes of accomplishing different ends. The means by which prostitution and its attendant ills were disciplined changed dramatically over the decades, and these changes were reflective of alterations in the discourse over prostitution.

Following this discursive trail over prostitution also delineates the contours of a unique, emergent power: journalism. Dealing with the debate over prostitution throughout the 1800s is also a matter of dealing with the ways in which journalism restructured the governing forces of the day, and so while prostitution is the primary subject of my work, it is also a means by which to examine the new and increasingly pervasive mechanism of governance that evolved within the pages of the daily newspaper. Two chapters investigate the ways in which journalistic tactics surveilled prostitution within public discourse. My conclusion leaves the subject of prostitution

and concentrates on Stead's two essays about the role of journalism in government. These two essays are fitting commentaries that illuminate the means of journalism in shaping definitions writ large within the public. My goal here is to focus on the differences between Foucault's conceptualization of surveillance and also discuss the ways in which a new era of mass communication was changing the ways in which public discourse was marshaled by the popular press.

Contributions to Existing Scholarship

With a mass of literature on Victorian prostitution, journalism, and power, there may be doubts as to the need for one more study. However, despite the wealth of existing material, I maintain that my own work is a unique synthesis that contributes to current scholarship in three distinct areas: the history of Victorian prostitution, the development of journalistic power throughout the nineteenth century, and British public address as it is located within mass communication. First, there is a need for expanding current studies on prostitution as well as a need for understanding how prostitution was shaped by the emergence of the British press.²³ For example, the classic history of Victorian prostitution, Judith Walkowitz's *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, only goes as far back as the initial social science studies on prostitution in 1840. She neglects over thirty years of heated debate and various tracts on prostitution that were printed before then. According to my research, none have paid any attention to the initial rhetorical inception of "prostitute" within nineteenth-century British texts, some written as early as 1809. Most scholarship focuses on the controversies in the final decades of the nineteenth century. But it was the tracts from the early 1800s, largely written by evangelical reformers and doctors, that constituted the rich, discursive matrix from which sprung nearly all the resultant

debate on prostitution in the first place. The ideological, political, and sexual positions found in these initial writings were persistent, that is, they were never quite done away with by later discourses of medicine, feminism, social purity, or economics.

While my work traces the long-term shifts in the meaning of “prostitute,” from the emergent anxieties over prostitution in 1809 to the grand “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” scandal of 1885, my labor is not exclusively bound to the transformations of “prostitute.” As it stands, my discussion of prostitution is merely one frame through which to assess the increasingly extensive tactics of power employed by journalism throughout the nineteenth century. The subject—prostitution—is really a vehicle by which to explore the mechanisms of journalism that came to direct and influence the public discourse on prostitution and the legislation meant to control this delinquent population. Though I begin with prostitution, my work concludes with Stead’s essays on journalistic power, published in 1886, which focused on the broader ramifications and possibilities of the new journalism. These essays, wild and rambling as they are, expressed the fullness of journalism’s influential power as it existed in 1886 and also speculated at what else journalism might be capable of. Though Stead’s articulations are not without faults, his essays help to articulate the surveillance that emerged through journalism.

Finally, my dissertation speaks to British public address and seeks to revitalize the study of the field. As of this writing, much of the scholarship on British public address within Communication Studies is dated.²⁴ This neglect has not gone unnoticed, either. “Once upon a time,” Martin Medhurst stated in a 2001 article, “we could claim some degree of expertise in British public address. No more. We must start from the ground and build up.”²⁵ I agree, but we must first consider the ground upon which we build. I would submit that the neglect of British

public address today may, in part, be attributed to a constrained view that exclusively locates British public address to formal speaking occasions, the likes of which is typically found in Parliament. Rather than limit ourselves to the speaker behind the podium, I argue we should look to the neglected pages of newsprint. Britain experienced a vibrant age of the newspaper, an era that left an indelible mark on culture, politics, government, and law. A nascent form of mass communication, as found in the penny paper and other dailies, afforded countless editors and journalists the privilege of a speaker's platform that was within the hearing of thousands, if not millions, of Britons. While a rich state of scholarship on Victorian journalism already exists, there is much to be done in the way of rhetorically grounded research oriented toward the dynamic site of mass communication as it intersects with British public address within the nineteenth century.²⁶ Stead's 1886 essays mark journalism as a new platform for British public address. His theorizing of journalism highlights it as a place for dramatically transforming public opinion, and in doing so, indicates a fresh site for rhetorical scholars to explore.

Contested Terms: Journalism and Surveillance

Undergirding my argument is a theoretical discussion and a challenge to a Foucaultian understanding of power. I argue that the surveillance of the prostitute was evident not only within social science, but also in journalism, over the course of the nineteenth century. Though I employ Foucaultian concepts and notions of power, it is important to note that I am not adopting Foucault wholesale. My appropriation of the term differs substantially from how Foucault uses the term "surveillance," which is understood as a technology of power that divides, disciplines, observes, and categorizes. His use of the term is almost exclusively tied to the actions of prisons and hospitals. As he stated in *Discipline and Punish*, surveillance was intended to be a corollary

to justice, seeking to prevent crime or identify potential criminals before misdeeds were committed.²⁷ While elements of “surveillance” are also clearly evident in his discussion of social or urban medicine (as discussed below), his discussion of this technology is almost exclusively tied to the institutional efforts of government, medicine, and punishment.

In chapter three, I contend that the anxiety over numbers and the impenetrable subject of the prostitute (from the view of social science and urban medicine) necessitated a different form of surveillance, one that was manifested through journalism. In order to establish my working definitions, I dedicate this section to distinguishing my usage of terms, such as “surveillance” from a strictly Foucaultian sense. In the following, I outline my working definitions of “journalism” and “surveillance.” In doing so, I hope to clarify upfront how much my own appropriation of terms differs from and challenges a strictly Foucaultian interpretation of power in the nineteenth century.

Journalism

For the British prostitute and those wanting to control, discipline, and/or punish her, what the newspaper had to say mattered. Rather than limit what counts as journalism strictly as what a journalist produces, I define “journalism” as anything printed in a popular newspaper. I resist attempting to locate those agents operating “behind” the mechanism of power. Instead, I focus on the mechanism of journalism as the mere placement of text within the pages of a newspaper. I choose to focus on “journalism” rather than the “journalist” (though this ostensibly becomes the case when examining Stead’s work) for several reasons. First, anonymity was common at this time, as far as article authorship is concerned. The use of the “royal we” in most articles was, in fact, a reference to the superiority of the group mind, not merely a shield for anonymous

writers.²⁸ For a journalist at this time, he (as it usually was) wrote not as an individual, but wrote as a representative of the whole staff. It was not until the mid 1860s that the signed article became popular, thus indicating more of an individualized, rather than corporate, approach to journalism. In the case of the anonymous letters written to the editor of the *Times*, I am more interested in their verifiable presence in a paper than in the unanswerable question of their authorship. Even anonymous letters to the editor may be journalism, insofar as the editor, Thomas Delane, made the conscious decision to feature them within the pages of the *Times* where they were read by the public. Even when it is clear that an individual, i.e. Stead, is the journalist behind the journalism, the text itself is more compelling as a means of creation and control of public discourse. Therefore, journalism is not limited to that which is written by a journalist; it includes anything that appears in a newspaper.

Specifically, the texts that I am concerned with within this dissertation bear particular characteristics that distinguish them as technologies of surveillance. The material used later—anonymous letters to the editor, eyewitness accounts from an editor, and interviews—constitute a particular form of journalism that is important for the debate over prostitution. These forms are not merely reporting, but carry an epistemic charge to them that is somehow more real than any column of statistics could possibly be. One might lump these forms under the title of “new journalism,” a form that Stead borrowed from American-style reporting, which emphasized interviews, snazzy copy, and sensationalism.²⁹ However, I believe what is more important is recognizing the veracity that the public attributed to these alleged voices from the streets. As will be evident later in this study, while social scientific studies of prostitution seemed perpetually undermined by their own inability to reliably measure or quantify the hordes of mysterious women, the accounts of prostitutes in newsprint were regarded with a credulity that almost defies

explanation. Whether it was the testimony offered by an anonymous “prostitute,” or what an editor affirmed as “the facts,” the observations carried to the public through the words of first-hand testimony bore none of the uncertainty that dogged social scientific accounts. The observation that is evidenced in this kind of journalism, seemingly with an unfaltering eye, acts as a form of surveillance that was not possible within the pages of detailed records.

Surveillance

Foucault’s term “surveillance” has been most useful in my analysis of the primary texts included here. However, as I have studied the particular cases, my uses of the term have stretched from its original definitions in ways that warrant explanation. It is not that I reject Foucault’s original meaning of surveillance; instead, I maintain that the mechanisms of surveillance deployed in the efforts to achieve a panoptic gaze are manifested through different technologies, ones that are fundamentally different than those he initially designated as surveilling mechanisms.

In the most basic terms, surveillance means observation for the purposes of generating knowledge. For Foucault, surveillance is inherent to the larger schema of disciplinary power. When speaking of the “disciplinary mechanism,” Foucault talked of order, observation, and power: “this enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, . . . in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed.”³⁰ This rigorous form of knowing found its place within nineteenth century schools, prisons, psychiatric wards, and hospitals. Disciplinary spaces, such as these, operate almost exclusively

under the principle of surveillance. Said Foucault, “Discipline organizes an analytical space,” one which aims “to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communication, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits.”³¹ All in all, it is a system that is “aimed at knowing, mastering, and using.”³²

This is schemata of power is precisely what Parent-Duchâtelet operated from when he studied prostitution for eight years. A man dedicated to the careful ordering of urban spaces, Parent-Duchâtelet keenly understood that knowledge garnered from disciplined, meticulous observation would serve to increase the power of the state, the health of the population, and the order of society. His own study was designed to further the ambitions of the state in controlling prostitution, which was already carefully monitored by an extensive system of police, *Bureau des Mœurs*, government archives, as well as hospital, prison, and public safety records. In fact, Parent-Duchâtelet explained that he recognized the need for further study when other heads of state began to take notice of the strict Parisian system of regulating prostitution. He stated, “My researches in the archives of the Prefecture of Police soon caused me to perceive that the happy results which had followed the sanitary *surveillance* exercised in Paris for some years had come to the knowledge of the authorities, both in the towns of France and in other countries.”³³ His own 580-page study was an effort to further organize, isolate, and generate knowledge of prostitution.

This Parisian form of surveillance was impossible for those women who walked the streets of London. At best, English reformers had to rely on their own and others’ solitary efforts of interviewing, and scattered hospital or police records. However, just as nature abhors a vacuum, so too does power: even though English reformers and physicians lacked the complex

system of medical surveillance that was in place in Paris, other ways of knowing soon bridged the gap between the serious reformer and the dark woman. While it could not systematically order the unruly Jezebels of London, the searching eye of journalism was a capable means by which the prostitute population could be surveilled and known to the public. For the industrial society of Britain, the newspaper stood as the means by which a mediated surveillance, one imbued with the material, economic, and political interests, would help to shape the public conceptualization and government of prostitution.³⁴

Within my study, I focus on the ways in which surveillance is enacted within journalism, insofar as journalism is seemingly a way of knowing—one that, unlike statistics and social science, was regarded as unquestionable. The surveillance committed within journalism—through first-person testimony or the eyewitness account of the editor—had a way of generating knowledge that was regarded as nearly unimpeachable by the public. I intend that my study should further develop this conceptualization of journalism as a surveilling tactic that generates disciplinary power. As Stead theorizes in his 1886 essays “The Future of Journalism” and “Government by Journalism,” the particular station of the editor offers a position wherein one may purview all of society from high to low. Journalism acted as surveillance as it not only gathered a vision of the public and subjects “out there,” but then offered this vision back to the public for its own consumption. As Foucault noted, surveillance generates knowledge, knowledge that inevitably generates a particular form of power. Therefore, calling journalism a mechanism of surveillance is an extension of the practices that Foucault ascribed to the surveillance committed by social science.

At the beginning of this chapter, I offered a quotation from Fowles, which posed the question, “What are we faced with in the nineteenth century?” At least as far as the debate over prostitution was concerned, all that he mentioned may be found in the following pages: sacred femininity, underage sex, stern Christian morality, penitentiaries, punishment, flagellation, Marquis de Sade, and more. If the epigram is any indication, the nineteenth century was a hotbed of politics, ideology, and sexuality, a conflagration fueled by an unprecedented surge of industry, communication, and population. My effort will be to get past the spectacle of the sensational, and into the elements that contributed to one of the most controversial questions of the day.

Notes

¹ William Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: P. Rickard, 1840), 1.

² Michel Foucault, "The Birth of Social Medicine," in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2001), 147.

³ ———, "Truth and Juridical Forms," in *Power: Volume 3*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2001), 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 83. Italics in original.

⁶ "De La Prostitution Dans La Ville De Paris. Par A. J. B. Parent Duchatelet," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 19, no. 38 (1837): 357.

⁷ *Ibid.* Capitalization in original.

⁸ ———, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 194.

⁹ W. T. Stead, "Government by Journalism," *The Contemporary Review* 49, no. 1 (1886): 656.

¹⁰ Steven Mailloux, *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 61.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹² *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³ David Zarefsky, "Definitions," in *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Frameworks, and Critiques*, ed. James F. Klumpp (Annandale: National Communication Association, 1997), 2.

¹⁴ Schiappa, *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, 69.

¹⁵ Zarefsky, "Definitions," 5.

¹⁶ Schiappa, *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, 9.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 168.

¹⁹ Mailloux, *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics*, 55.

²⁰ Zarefsky, "Definitions," 9.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 99.

²² Ibid.

²³ Generally speaking, many studies on Victorian sexuality tend to focus on representations within literature, poetry, erotica, and other medical tracts. Aside from the studies mentioned in this work, a sample of other scholarship on Victorian sexuality is as follows: Patricia Anderson, *When Passion Reigned: Sex and the Victorians* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Lesley Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Lesley A. Hall, "Venereal Diseases and Society in Britain, from the Contagious Diseases Acts to the National Health Service," in *Sex, Sin and Suffering: Venereal Disease and European Society since 1870*, ed. Roger Davidson and Lesley Hall (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); Deborah Lutz, *Pleasure Bound: Victorian Sex Rebels and the New Eroticism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011); Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Basic Books, 1966); Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1988); Ronald Pearsall, *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality* (London: The History Press, 2003); Howell Philip, "A Private Contagious Diseases Act: Prostitution and Public Space in Victorian Cambridge," *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 3 (2000); Steven Seidman, "The Power of Desire and the Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered," *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 1 (1990); Emily Wicktor, "Imbued with the Science of Venus': Female Fallenness, Sexual Pedagogy, and Victorian Pornography" (University of Kansas, 2010).

²⁴ To the best of my research, a few publications are recent, but much of the scholarship on British public address is decades old. Daniel S. Brown and Matthew A. Morrow, "Margaret

Thatcher's Sermon on the Mound: 'Christianity and Wealth'," *Journal of Communication & Religion* 33, no. 1 (2010); Donald C. Bryant, "After Goodrich: New Resources in British Public Address a Symposium," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48, no. 1 (1962); Eugene C. Chenoweth, Michael T. Dues, and Uvieja Z. Good, "The Significance of Humanistic Rhetoric in British Public Address," *Central States Speech Journal* 20(1969); Floyd Douglas Anderson and Andrew A. King, "William Hazlitt as a Critic of Parliamentary Speaking," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67, no. 1 (1981); Chauncey Allen Goodrich, *Essays from Select British Eloquence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963); J. Vernon Jensen, "Bibliography on Public Address in Britain and the Commonwealth," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1979); Joseph S Meisel, *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Robert T Oliver, *The Influence of Rhetoric in the Shaping of Great Britain: From the Roman Invasion to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986); ———, *Public Speaking in the Reshaping of Great Britain* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987); Loren Reid, "The Teaching of British Public Address," *Communication Education* 23, no. 2 (1974); James J. Rue and Alan Nichols, "A Misnomer in British Public Address," *Western Speech* 17, no. 4 (1953); Daniel E Seward, "Civic Voice in Elizabethan Parliamentary Oratory: The Rhetoric and Composition of Speeches Delivered at Westminster in 1566" (University of Texas, 2008).

²⁵ Martin Medhurst, J., "The Contemporary Study of Public Address: Renewal, Recovery, and Reconfiguration," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 3 (2001): 503.

²⁶ The following selections are useful for further investigation of Victorian journalism: J. O. Baylen, "The 'New Journalism' in Late Victorian Britain," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 18, no. 3 (1972); David Brown, "Morally Transforming the World or Spinning a Line? Politicians and the Newspaper Press in Mid Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Historical Research* 83, no. 220 (2010); Lucy Brown, "The Growth of a National Press," in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, and Lionel Madden (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990); Kate Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 36, no. 1 (2003); Derek Fraser, "The Editor as Activist: Editors and Urban Politics in Early Victorian England," in *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England*, ed. Joel H Wiener (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Mark Hampton, "Rethinking the 'New Journalism,' 1850's-1930's," *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004); ———, *Visions of the Press in Britain: 1850-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Michael Harris, "London's Local Newspapers: Patters of Change in the Victorian Period," in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, and Lionel LMadden (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990); Dallas Liddle, "Salesmen, Sportsmen, Mentors: Anonymity and Mid-Victorian Theories of Journalism," *Victorian Studies* 41, no. 1 (1997); Charles Pebody, *English Journalism, and the Men Who Have Made It* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co, 1882); J. W. Robertson Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper: An Account of the Temperaments, Perturbations and Achievements of John Morley, W. T. Stead, E. T. Cook, Harry Cust, J. L. Garvin and Three Other Editors of the Pall Mall Gazette* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1953).

²⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 96.

²⁸ Liddle, "Salesmen, Sportsmen, Mentors: Anonymity and Mid-Victorian Theories of Journalism," 54.

²⁹ For further description of "new journalism," refer to the following: Baylen, "The 'New Journalism' in Late Victorian Britain."; Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s."; Hampton, "Rethinking the 'New Journalism,' 1850's-1930's."; Richard Salmon, "A Simulacrum of Power: Intimacy and Abstraction in the Rhetoric of the New Journalism," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30, no. 1 (1997).

³⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 197.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ "On Prostitution in the City of Paris; Considered under the Heads of Public Hygeine, Moral, and Internal Police.," *The Lancet* 2 (1837): 16. Italics in original.

³⁴ Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 162.

Chapter 2.

From “Awful Depravity” to the “Sewer”: The Evangelical Inception of the Prostitute and Her Urban Transformation, 1809-1837

When William Hale wrote his study of prostitution in 1812, he matter-of-factly characterized the woman practicing the iniquitous trade as thus: “A ‘whorish woman,’ is one who ‘hunts for the precious life;’—she is one whose infamous conduct marks the diabolical depravity of her heart;—one who continues, by choice, in her abominable career, seducing hundreds.”¹ This rather uncharitable and presumptuous description of the thousands of women who engaged in full- or part-time prostitution is unmistakable—the predatory woman debauches and dispatches her victims with astonishing heartlessness, and all with willfulness and cunning. This distasteful attitude toward streetwalkers seemed unchanged twenty-five years later, when the work of French sociologist A. J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet was translated for British audiences in medical journals. In his study, Parent-Duchâtelet equated prostitutes to sewers, as he remarked, “Prostitutes are as inevitable in an agglomeration of men as sewers, cesspits, and garbage dumps.”² Unsavory comparisons aside, these two positions mark fundamentally different orientations to the problem of prostitution and its remedies. Whereas one wanted to subject wayward women to a harsh regiment of solitary soul-searching in order to correct the sins committed against god and man, the other was concerned less about the moral well-being of the population, and more about the prostitutes’ place in the urban social structure, as well as the health of the entire British population.

This brief comparison between two very different conceptualizations of a menacing, alluring, and abstruse portion of the urban population is a miniature portrait of the larger discursive history of prostitution in nineteenth-century Britain. The journey from one to the other

is by no means a continuous one. It does not smoothly progress toward a pristine, scientific paradigm of objectivity. Instead, it would be more apt to understand the discourse over prostitution as a study in fashion—a subject that adapts to changing tastes, politics, persuasions, and technologies. No single iteration, though, is a perfect representation of what existed on the streets of London. Instead, a reader is left to piece together the material into a representation of the woman that suited the needs of the one writing—whether she is a “whorish woman” or a “sewer.”

While the elusive woman of the streets was not to be clearly represented in any reformer’s tract, the woman made of words is quite discernable. This chapter establishes the initial rhetorical formations of prostitution, over the course of about thirty years between 1809 and 1837. Primarily, though not exclusively, these early nineteenth century texts on prostitution were grounded in evangelical Christian ideology, as promoted by social reformers. Second, this chapter juxtaposes early evangelical arguments with two significant developments within the debate over prostitution. The first challenge was posed in 1814 from an anonymous contributor to the *British Medical Journal*. “Scrutator” derided misguided evangelical philanthropy and instead called for a medicalized knowledge of the prostitute. With attention to her individual body, rather than punishment for her sins, “Scrutator” believed that the ills of prostitution would be better remedied. The publication of Parent-Duchâtelet’s study of French prostitution in 1836, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (hereafter *De la prostitution*), marks another shift in the definition and control of prostitution. Though never translated into English in its entirety, the reviews of his study and the considerable notice it attracted introduced the metaphor of the prostitute as a “sewer.” Rather than a sinful woman, Parent-Duchâtelet posited that the prostitute was an unavoidable reality to urban life; she was, he matter-of-factly argued, a necessary element

within the infrastructure of contemporary sexuality, in so far as the prostitute was a means to channel and control the overflow of profligate male sexuality.

The boundaries of this chapter—from 1809 to 1837—bookend what I perceive to be the initial struggle between competing ideologies and their corresponding forms of control, both of which would persist throughout the subsequent debate. The earliest iterations of anxiety over prostitution emerge in 1809 from an evangelical author, Hale. His conviction that the sinful immorality of harlotry could be eliminated through Christian patrol and punishment contrasts with the arguments of “Scrutator” and the later medical reviews of *De la prostitution*, wherein the material knowledge and classification of prostitution orients control toward the body and health of the prostitute and the larger population. While strains of all three positions will extend beyond 1837, these years represent the formation of a tension between the metaphysical soul, the individual body, and the social body.

Generating Soul Power: The 1809 Pamphlet War and the “Awful Depravity” of Prostitution

In her study of Victorian prostitution, Walkowitz claimed that evangelical doctors and laymen began to turn to a study of prostitution in the 1840s.³ However, the anxieties over prostitution, its attendant problems, and means to control perceived problems surfaced several decades before the social studies of the 1840s. In finding a starting point to the nineteenth century discourse on prostitution, one could do worse than to start with the Female Penitentiary pamphlet debate of 1809. I do not necessarily claim this as the *de facto* genesis of the century-long debates over what would become known as the “Great Social Evil.”⁴ I would maintain, though, that this debate is notable because it is an early articulation of the profound anxieties over prostitution, and also because of themes that would persist long afterward. As a distinct discursive episode, this controversy over prostitution not only revealed anxieties over immoral

women, sex, and religion, but also revealed the tactics of control that are reflective of this particular discursive formation, a means of control that I term “soul power.” After a discussion of the Female Penitentiary pamphlet debate of 1809 and Hale’s 1812 tract, I argue that the early nineteenth-century tactics of control—be they charitable penitentiaries or stern Christian citizens patrolling the dark streets—were generated within the conceptualization of prostitution as a matter of immorality and sin.

In 1809, a silk merchant and Independent congregation churchman, Hale, wrote “An Address to the Public, on the Dangerous Tendency of the London Female Penitentiary,” a small publication that denounced the Female Penitentiary⁵ for allegedly increasing, rather than decreasing, the sin of prostitution.⁶ Writing thirty years afterwards, William Bennett stated, “Had this been the production of one averse, or even indifferent, to benevolent and pious schemes for the good of mankind, it would probably have attracted little notice, and excited no controversy; but the well known piety and zeal of the author, induced the friends of the institution to come forward in its defense, which led to a war of the pamphlets.”⁷

The target of Hale’s evangelical fire was the Female Penitentiary located near Islington, just north of the city of London. According to a guide published just five years after the controversy, this particular Female Penitentiary “was established by some persons religiously disposed and whose object . . . is to improve upon the Magdalen.”⁸ Under the direction of a Dr. Pinchard and the surgeon Mr. Blair, who would later write in response to Hale’s attack, the house seemed to enjoy a measure of popular support according to a contemporary source, as “the corporation of London have so much approved of this institution as to vote a contribution towards it of £200” and “a lady of independent fortune . . . has undertaken to execute the office of matron gratis.”⁹ It is important to note that this penitentiary is not to be understood in the sense that it is today. This penitentiary was not a prison, a place to keep convicted criminals, but

rather a voluntary place of reform, as G. Hodson stated, “the *London Female Penitentiary* . . . was *established* ‘for those females who, having deviated from the path of virtue, are desirous of being restored by religious instruction, and the formation of moral and industrious habits, to a respectable station in society.’”¹⁰ At least as its proponents framed it, no one was forcibly detained as punishment; instead, this place acted more in the sense of a charity, providing support and help from those who wanted it. Furthermore, if a woman should choose to return to her life of wantonness, the Female Penitentiary had no forceful recourse to preventing this decision.

Ostensible benevolence and charity aside, Hale was not charmed by the Female Penitentiary, nor were those who responded to this tract charmed by Hale’s stern condemnation of the charitable institution and prostitution writ large.¹¹ Though far from an unbiased commentary, *The Evangelical Magazine* gave an overview of the debate and neatly summarized Hale’s attack and the subsequent responses. The magazine paraphrased Hale’s primary objections to the Female Penitentiary in this: “1st, That the result of the operation of the London Female Penitentiary will never lessen, but increase, the sum of prostitution; and 2dly, ‘That it cannot be supported by precept or example from the word of God.’”¹² In sum, Hale claimed that the Penitentiary was not reducing the number of prostitutes and the institution was not punishing the wicked women in a manner befitting their sins.

Hale’s charge that the Penitentiary did not decrease prostitution rested in his supposition that for every prostitute who took refuge in the Penitentiary, another two would fill her place. Hale surmised that the Penitentiary will “produce upon the youth of both sexes, destitute of the fear of God, especially female servants,--who will, . . . be allured to vice, by seeing abandoned prostitutes fostered and rewarded, while the preservation of their own virtue goes unrewarded.”¹³ Indeed, no matter how many entered the Penitentiary, there will be plenty more vain young

women who will, out of “a vain curiosity and a vain presumption,” believe “that they can leave off sinning when they please, thus prompting them to give full swing to their desires; and fancying, after a long sinful course, they can at any time gain admission to the Penitentiary, and have better wages and rewards than they ever had before.”¹⁴

This argument hinged on Hale’s other objection to the Female Penitentiary, that the establishment did not punish the sin of prostitution. The review quoted Hale as saying, “no society is authorized by the gospel to open an asylum for those *exclusively that have been guilty of the most flagitious crimes, without the least distributive punishment!*”¹⁵ The law weighed heavily on Hale’s thoughts as he continued to leverage a barrage of fear appeals in pursuit of his argument, claiming that “those who consult their Bibles” will find that “it requires no sagacity to foresee the awful consequences that will result from such a total violation of the laws of God and man.”¹⁶ What those “awful consequences” were was not made clear; nevertheless, Hale insisted, “it is impossible to support the *principle* upon which the Penitentiary is founded; because, in offering eternal salvation to the vilest sinners, through Jesus Christ, it blends with it the promise of the pardon of the legal punishment due to their crimes against society.”¹⁷ Fundamentally, Hale saw gross injustice committed through the charitable labors of the Penitentiary. If these women were not being punished for the evils they visited upon society, then why should they receive the comforts of a Christian charity?

The reviewer responding to Hale’s tract bore little sympathy for Hale’s position and offered a strong response to the strict moralizing and fear mongering. Hale’s assertion that for every prostitute taken into the Penitentiary, another two would take her place on the streets was dismissed out of hand. As the reviewer stated, “He has not adduced a solitary fact in support of his fanciful hypothesis!”¹⁸ Hodson, who responded to Hale in a lengthy tract, reiterated the reviewer’s pronouncement, saying, “I must be permitted to regard [Hale’s] assertion as entirely

hypothetical, and incapable of proof.”¹⁹ Even if Hale’s fanciful theory of the ever-increasing supply of immoral women were true, Hodson countered that it does not negate the benefit which may come from the work of the Penitentiary: “Even then the quality of positive good which I do to an individual, and through him to society, cannot, in the nature of thing, be affected by the bad conduct of others, and makes not the least abatement in my obligation to perform the duty.”²⁰

This early iteration of reformers’ conceptualizations of prostitution reveals an interesting contrast with later enforced legislative and medical practices. Whereas Hale issued a stern call for punitive actions against prostitution, the respondents reminded the reader of a plain reality: prostitution was not criminalized, and at least for those participating in the pamphlet war, there seemed to be no great urgency for importing the offense to the justice system, save for attendant and rather banal crimes of vagrancy or lewd behavior. Hodson reminded Hale of this in his response, stating, “The *temporal* courts therefore take no cognizance of the crime of adultery, otherwise than as a *private injury*.”²¹ At least on this side of heaven, both Hodson and the reviewer writing for *The Evangelical Magazine* emphasized that prostitution “though flagitious in the extreme, is notwithstanding a *moral* evil against which as such, there is no definite punishment by our civil law.”²² This disinterest in criminally charging the whore dovetailed with the other gap in Hale’s argument: as the reviewer noted, punishing one should mean punishing two; that is, both prostitute and her patron. Hale had called for “distributive justice” like the punishment for adultery found in the Old Testament, but as the reviewer pointed out, distributive justice calls for both parties to be punished by death, as detailed within Deuteronomy. “Therefore,” the reviewer concluded, “until Mr. Hale appears equally zealous that his own sex should not escape punishment, we trust he will see it necessary to omit the word *distributive* in the next edition of his book. If the *man* is to go unpunished, while the wretched woman is to be hunted down like the solitary hare, with the hounds in full cry, *alone* accused, condemned, and

unpitied, where, it may be fairly asked, is to be found in all this anything like *distributive justice*?"²³ Insofar as Hale seemed uninterested in pressing charges on an equally guilty party, prostitution seems to occupy a kind of punitive grey area in the eyes of the reviewers and most of the respondents to Hale's tract. Yes, it was a "*moral evil*," but not a civil one, and without grounds for criminal prosecution, what would be the point in punitively kicking a woman that was, so to speak, already fallen?

In this respect, the conceptualization of power here is not a punitive one, but a repentant one. Hodson further detailed the Penitentiary's mission in demonstrating mercy and charity, not punishment: "In accomplishing its objects, the Penitentiary conducts itself towards returning prostitutes with tenderness and kindness, as our Lord did when upon earth towards females of a similar character, although their offences were not *personal offences against himself, as a subject of the Roman Government*, but the very crimes which you [Hale] represent as the greatest *civil offences against the community!*"²⁴ Hodson's defense of the Penitentiary sought to emphasize the moral good that would come from the charity's work. Like Hale, Hodson resorted to vague conjectures about the consequences of the Penitentiary's actions. Using a metaphorical parable of "seventy reformed prostitutes" versus "thirty" who revert back to their life of sin, he ventured, "the sum of *moral good* arising from the *seventy* females who are reformed, and who, according to the supposition, *do not* relapse, must be added to the individual and social benefit which may ultimately arise from the moral and religious impressions which are made by the Penitentiary upon the minds of those who *do!*"²⁵ Besides, no matter what critique may be made of the Penitentiary, nothing could diminish whatever spiritual good it may accomplish, no matter how small. In this vein, Hodson steadfastly maintained the moral high ground: "And then, Sir, as to the *eternal good* that is obtained by those who become *genuinely pious women*, and, which, through their instrumentality, may be communicated to others also, *this* infinitely and

inconceivably transcends all the abstract calculations of mere temporary and social advantage, and must excite in the unprejudiced mind . . . not only a sentiment of pleasing approbation, but emotions of elevated delight, gratitude and joy!”²⁶

In retrospect of the contentious pamphleteering of 1809, Bennett said, “It is . . . highly gratifying to record, that this undue excitement and alienation of good men, ended in a friendly conference, in which the parties agreed to lay aside their hostility, and to leave each other to think and act for themselves on the subject of Penitentiaries.”²⁷ If the parties did not agree on how to amend the problem of prostitution, it is clear that both sides of the debate were operating from an evangelical paradigm of souls, morality, and Christian duty. However, it seems that the debate goaded Hale, who saw fit to air his lingering hostilities and objections over prostitution just three years later. While repeating many of his initial arguments, Hale’s 1812 *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution*, further elaborated his conceptualization of prostitutes and his favored means of suppression. Irrevocably, prostitution was a moral evil, the prostitute a willful sinner, and eradication of harlotry was within the realm of possibility. Said Hale on the first page of his tract, “We find no evil so extensive, so frequently repeated, or so destructive in its consequences, as the crime of prostitution. Whether we consider it in a moral, or in a political, point of view, it is fraught with the greatest calamities that can befall [sic] the individual, or the community; and any successful measures to reduce the sum of this most ruinous species of depravity, must be considered of the highest importance to the well-being of both.”²⁸

All throughout Hale’s 1812 tome, the damning tones of an evangelical prevail in his diatribe against the dark women of the streets. He stated, “A harlot is a woman who, from principles of lust, idleness, or avarice, promiscuously bestows or sells her detestable embraces.”²⁹ The words from Proverbs prove suitable for Hale’s definition of her, wherein the

harlot ““is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit; she also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increseth the transgressors among men,”” which portrayed these women as man-eating predators.³⁰ Ultimately, the end of a prostitute was an allegedly bitter one, as ““her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.””³¹ Poetic license aside, Hale’s conceptualization of prostitutes was firmly grounded in the soul, the internal, moral characteristics of wickedness that created the person she was. Hale insisted that prostitutes “pursue their desperate career from awful depravity; from idleness, avarice, shameless profligacy, unbridled lust; in a word, with their own free choice,” again imputing a willful sinning.³² Even more tellingly, Hale contrasted the evil whore to the “good and innocent men of the middle class” who fell prey to their charms.³³ To Hale’s chagrin, many “amiable and promising young man pity harlots” because they did not view “their conduct as the result of voluntary, and awful depravity.”³⁴

The focus of Hale’s venomous pen upon the devious persuasion practiced by harlots upon guileless middle class men is perhaps explained, in part, by his lack of any other evidence beyond that which was grounded in moral terms. When it came to ascribing a physical presence to the whores of London, Hale was utterly confounded. He had no doubt “that the sin of prostitution” was “awfully increasing in the land,” and would “certainly sap the foundations of the empire.”³⁵ But exactly how much it was increasing was beyond his capacity to explain. He struggled to ascribe a number to them, claiming, for instance, that “a numerous class of them (whatever may be their outward appearance) is composed of women who were once in servitude.”³⁶ While he also cited a police study from the late 1790s that put the number at fifty thousand prostitutes in the City of London, Hale still resorted to his wild conjecture first aired in 1809: “*If there were room, their numbers would more than double their present amount!*”³⁷

When prostitution was configured as sinfulness, willfully practiced by evil women, it should not be surprising where the suggested solution to this problem lay. For Hale, the remedy

for the evil of prostitution rested not with legislature or lenient penitentiaries, but with the vigilant, godly people of London. He stated, “The important duty” of doing away with prostitution “belongs to the INHABITANTS of each parish: it is THEIR place to see that no women be suffered to parade the nocturnal walks of prostitution; and if such a one were found, to take her before the magistrate.”³⁸ Should the good people and ministers of God keep watch, surely “prostitution would be rendered impracticable; our streets and purlieus would be freed from its serpentine allurements; and, humanly speaking, the temporal and eternal ruin of thousands would be prevented.”³⁹ The Word of God, imparted to the women charged before magistrates, would surely cause them to amend their ways, as would the curative properties of conscience, which Hale counted on to “arrest the progress of abandoned harlots who parade the nocturnal walks of prostitution.”⁴⁰ He believed that they should first be charged then committed “to the house of correction for a month, there to endure solitary confinement, where in spite of every effort, the mind would recoil upon itself, and force them to those reflections, which might tend to harrow up the pangs of a guilty conscience.”⁴¹ Hale’s study concluded with a reiteration of the *moral* dangers of prostitution: “That the sin of prostitution is awfully increasing in the land, there can be no doubt; and unless efficient measures are taken to stem the fatal torrent, it will eventually sap the foundations of the empire,” reminding the readers that Rome was undone by “the neglect of virtuous principles and civil duties.”⁴²

The initial pamphlet war of 1809 and Hale’s later iteration of his position in 1812 present a particular conceptualization of control exerted either in practice or in theory upon the “drabs” in the streets. Even though Hale and his detractors ostensibly disagree on whether or not penitentiaries do any good to abject women, what is important here is that all seem to be operating from “soul power;” that is, Hale, the reviewer at *The Evangelical Magazine*, Hodson, and the rest are interested in the soul of the prostitute and how best to foster its well being in

relation to the larger society. The benefits or harms of the penitentiary are framed in terms of “eternal good” or “flagitious crimes” and not in relation to the health or illness of those who either prostituted themselves, those who patronized prostitutes, or the larger social body.

Whether by voluntary or forcible means, all in this debate would have her be *penitent*, correct her standing in the eyes of God, and have her continue in a path of upright virtue. Though Hale wished to impart a civil consequence through her sin, it was primarily so that her solitary confinement may force her mind “to those reflections, which might tend to harrow up the pangs of a guilty conscience.”⁴³ In any case, whether the orientation was toward the strictness of Mosaic Law or Christ-like mercy, the means of power—the penitentiary or solitary confinement—indicate an obsession with the immaterial soul.

At this point, a Foucaultian scholar may hear familiar strains about the functions of power and discipline within the pamphlet debate. Talk of souls and punishment might lead one to assume that Foucault’s theories may act as an explanatory model for what is prescribed here. However, what Hale and his detractors indicate at this time is distinctly different from what Foucault theorized. Instead, Hale and his opponents indicate that there is a mode of power that operates exclusively on the soul, rather than the body. For the participants in the pamphlet war, the body does not register as a means of control—it is a discipline of the soul that underpins both Hale’s strict vision of control and the seemingly more merciful Penitentiary system that Hodson supported.

At first blush, Hale and the others’ discussion of souls, moral good, and flagitious crimes evokes Foucault’s provocative claim, “The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; *the soul is the prison of the body*.”⁴⁴ Foucault denied that souls are “an illusion,” and instead maintained that souls are a reality, insofar as they are produced by bodies.⁴⁵ More intriguing still, he stated that souls are “the element in which are articulated the effects of a

certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power.”⁴⁶ Out of the soul come “psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness,” the very moral foundations of humanism, human sciences, and also the salvage sought by evangelical reformers.⁴⁷

Foucault’s discussion of the soul as a basis for the machination of power is informative, but only to a limited extent, to the pamphlet war of 1809 and Hale’s subsequent tract in 1812. The Penitentiary enforcing a virtuous work ethic and Hale’s proposed solitary confinement would indicate a physical discipline necessary for the reform of the soul. However, what is not yet evidenced at this point is an explicit concern for the body. With prostitution not yet criminalized, and with most resistant to the idea of imputing legislative or civil interference, the modality of power articulated here appears to stand apart from Foucault’s theorization of prisons and houses of correction. Instead, I would propose that the modality indicated within the pamphlet war of 1809 and Hale’s 1812 tract was a precursor to the later forms of power that necessitated a different paradigm. To be sure, strict disciplinary systems within schools, hospitals, and the courts was already occurring, but prostitution in this first decade of the nineteenth century appears to have not yet been encompassed by the shift toward classification and rigorous study. Consistently, Hale and all others who participated in the debate discussed prostitution in terms of a sin against God and society. But without reference to physical descriptions of prostitutes or disease, all Hale and his interlocutors had were vague conjectures and a debate over the Bible. Ultimately, the woman, her actions, and the subsequent attempts to ameliorate her situation were framed as metaphysical: “*moral evil*,” “*eternal good*,” “total violation of the laws of God,” and “the pangs of a guilty conscience.”

In these early iterations over prostitution, Hale's detractors steadfastly maintained that, at least at that time, prostitution was not a crime worthy of importing into the courts and had no precedent unless it also constituted vagrancy or indecency. Of course, this is not to say that there was not an accompanying anxiety about the civic consequences of unseemly sexual relations, as the reviewer for *The Evangelical Magazine* stated, "Most sincerely we do wish that the Legislature may turn their attention to this important object, which is, undoubtedly, of great national importance: for, should the crimes of fornication and adultery continue to increase, as they have lately done, the utter ruin of our country will be inevitable."⁴⁸ This alleged ruin, like Hale's phantom prostitutes that would proliferate the streets as soon as one dissolute woman entered the Penitentiary, indicate an anxiety over the uncertainty of a threat so wicked, and so pervasive within the streets of the kingdom.

"Scrutator" Speaks: The Emergence of the Medicalized Body

This early evangelical conceptualization of prostitution saw not the body, but the immaterial soul as the site of crisis and means to power. Hale may have vehemently disagreed with the likes of Hodgson about the best way to minister to the wayward woman, yet both would have agreed that her spiritual being was both the problem and the starting place for correcting that problem. However, there is evidence of an eruption in thought just two years later, one that calls forth a space wherein the body could materialize. An anonymous writer named "Scrutator" wrote into "The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register," a London publication of miscellaneous public concerns, cultural interests, and health reports. In the November and December 1814 issues of "The Monthly Magazine," "Scrutator" posed a lively and thoughtful argument that stands as a counterpoint to Hale's ponderous condemnation of prostitution. Though the ideas represented in "Scrutator's" commentary are not much more than a nascent engagement with the

health and social conditions that compromise the state of prostitution, his remarks prefigure an important development that would come to its fullest expression just twenty-two years later, with the arrival of Parent-Duchâtelet's report.

Turning from the immaterial soul to the material body of the individual, "Scrutator" said, "That 50,000 females living in London by a state of prostitution is an evil of first-rate magnitude, will be generally admitted: that it is not only highly prejudicial to the morals and habits of the rising generation in general, but its injurious effects on the health of the community are so extensive, as hard to be ascertained."⁴⁹ Hale and the others had not even admitted the diseases wrought by wanton sex. Hale, for example, had feared the unknown number of harlots peppering London streets, but "Scrutator" recognized the health dangers posed by the evil of prostitution as a significant threat, one which was in need of concrete evidence. This lack of knowledge as to the problem ultimately thwarted efforts at correction, and "Scrutator" was especially harsh on the "religious bigots" who recommended severe police measures "with more zeal than knowledge, and just ended where they began."⁵⁰

In the next month's issue, "Scrutator" continued to argue that prostitution was not, as Hale assumed, a willful sinning, but was due to much broader material circumstances that could not be cured with the counsel of godly men. He (supposedly) reported that he had been "credibly informed by a Spitalfields weaver," who told him that "when the silk-looms were much stagnated, that he was shocked at seeing so many young girls, whom he had personally known to be industrious and of decent conduct, resorting to the streets, to seek a livelihood in this disagreeable way."⁵¹ As the case demonstrated, inveterately sinful natures did not seem to define the cause of prostitution so much as the want of subsistence. From this, "Scrutator" deduced, "if profitable employment is decreased so, that an increasing number of young people are thrown into idleness and want, in vain will be your education, and your Bible also in vain, as is manifest

in the distribution of the latter being in great measure stopped in London, because they were either sent to the pawnbrokers or booksellers, to get bread.”⁵² After all, who could blame one for the sin of pawning a Bible when hunger was a daily companion for the laborers of London? This time, it is the religious community that is damned, rather than the women of sin, as “Scrutator” impugns the motives of evangelical missionaries: “Your virtues have been shallow, and more political than real.”⁵³

Within “Scrutator’s” commentary, the body emerges as the only way by which prostitution may be truly addressed. The author set forth a metaphor that encapsulates the shifted focus upon the body: “A physician cannot prescribe with effect to his patient, without ascertaining the causes of his disorder. So with prostitution,—the first step is to investigate how these poor forlorn creatures became prostitutes. But who does this? Is there any board or committee for the purpose? No! But there ought to be one.”⁵⁴ This call for the investigation into how women became prostitutes, and not by the terms of an evangelical missionary, suggests a push against the immaterial weight of the soul. Likewise, “Scrutator” suggested that the treatment of prostitution lay in an assessment of her health and wellbeing, rather than in a judgment of her wrongdoings.

“Scrutator” held that, without a real attention to the needs of the body rather than the soul, the evangelical reformers’ efforts would be little more than a meager and failed attempt to accomplish any real good. Whereas the Bible society patrons looked to the precepts of morality in determining the cause of prostitution, “Scrutator” looked to the weekly mortality statistics printed in the newspaper. If one was curious as to the staggering rise in prostitution, “Scrutator” believed that one should look no further than the equally dismaying rise in disease. Guided by the columns of mortality figures printed in his copy of the paper, as well as estimating that “one-third of the population of the metropolis is not included within the bills of mortality,” he

concluded, “Not less than 200 *persons die in London weekly by consumption alone, which makes 10,000 deaths annually!*”⁵⁵ More often than not, those who suffer from consumption and other disease want not so much for medicine as for food, without which “they sink under their disorders.”⁵⁶ “Scrutator” pointed out that unchecked hunger and disease was a far more convincing source of the evil that gave rise to prostitution. No doubt, prostitution “is an evil without parallel, and I wish it may be found, as it thought by some, that our charity is also,” so long as it persisted in handing out Bibles to starving, diseased bodies.⁵⁷

“Scrutator” stands as a strange character in the early debates over prostitution. Anonymous and alone, his rant against misguided charity does not seem to register for other readers, at least insofar as no one cared to respond in subsequent issues. However, what makes “Scrutator” noteworthy was that he intuited a different approach to the problem of prostitution, one that would come to its fullest expression in the works of Parent-Duchâtelet, Acton, and Richelot. His willingness to take into consideration with the material systems, conditions, and health of the women engaged in prostitution challenged the bodiless soul of the prostitute conjured by Hale and his detractors. Furthermore, “Scrutator” also indicated (unknowingly, perhaps) the importance of the newspaper vis-à-vis the question of prostitution. Scanning the weekly mortality figures in the paper, “Scrutator” found truth not in the pages of the Bible, but the pages of newsprint that report on the status of the population. For him, and for many others that would follow, finding out about the population in general, and the prostitute specifically, entailed a searching glance at the reports printed in the dailies.

The progression of the debate over prostitution from 1809 to 1814 represents the nascent debate that would only intensify throughout the Victorian era. The call for morality, Christian duty, and soul saving would not necessarily diminish. But syphilis could not be cured with Sunday school, and “Scrutator’s” call for a more scientific investigation of prostitution evidences

a call for a clearer view of the body. I can make no claims that “Scrutator” was the first to disparage the sin imputed to harlots and call for a scientific approach, but I would maintain that this example serves as a remarkable and timely counterpoint to the discourse up to this point. “Scrutator” brought this position to the attention of “The Monthly Magazine’s” reading public, to whatever effect it may have had. Twenty-three years later, though, the reaction to Parent-Duchâtelet’s study of Parisian prostitution would prove in no uncertain terms that “Scrutator’s” call for a more material understanding of prostitution was dearly desired.

1837: The Year of Alexandre Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet and the Social Body

In 1837, British conceptualizations of prostitution would be dramatically changed by the work of a reclusive public health official from Paris. While never fully translated into English, the sections of Parent-Duchâtelet’s work that were translated in medical journals and other publications provoked an excitement in the major publications that seems to indicate a considerable paradigm shift from the soul of the prostitute to the social body. Far from clean break from previous thought, however, 1837 also evidenced the beginning of a messy and discontinuous blending between the knowledge generated by the body and that of souls, a muddle that would remain unresolved in the coming decades. Primarily, I regard 1837 as a flashpoint in the British discourse on prostitution—a flash that brilliantly illuminated the body, disease, and social structure of an urban population, yet one that was not a sustained illumination. That moment would, like an afterimage, color almost all consequent discussions of the prostitute, but would also have to contend with previous conceptualizations of morality. After a few brief notes on Parent-Duchâtelet, I turn to the reviews of his work within *The Lancet* and *Foreign Quarterly Review*.

A studious and dedicated member of the Public Health Council, Parent-Duchâtelet had, during the course of his rather brilliant career, studied the butchers' yards, cesspits, and sewers of Paris before dedicating his final years to the study of Parisian prostitution, which manifested itself in a massive, two-volume study entitled *De la prostitution*.⁵⁸ Published the same year of his death at the age of forty-six in 1836, it is ironic that Parent-Duchâtelet met his early end in an effort to foster life within the city of Paris.⁵⁹ Despite his truncated career, Parent-Duchâtelet introduced a persistent metaphor that equated prostitutes to sewers, an earthy conceptualization that radically contrasted with British views of prostitution. Fundamentally, Parent-Duchâtelet's posited, "Prostitutes are as inevitable in an agglomeration of men as sewers, cesspits, and garbage dumps."⁶⁰ Accordingly, "Civil authority should conduct itself in the same manner in regard to the one as to the other: its duty is to survey them, to attenuate by every possible means the detriments inherent to them, and for that purpose to hide them, to relegate them to the most obscure corners, in a word to render their presence as inconspicuous as possible."⁶¹ The work of this consummate quantitative scientist placed an "emphasis on objective social factors rather than innate depraved instincts," with the aim "to make prostitution the object of positive, quantifiable knowledge."⁶² Replete with prostitutes construed as sewers, carefully tabulated in meticulous columns, his study was a far-sight removed from the morality-laden tracts published across the Channel.

When this novel study made its way into London publications the following year, it incited nothing less than a riot of praise, intellectual curiosity, and jostling of the tired evangelical dictums on prostitution. Two notable examples, *The Lancet* and *Foreign Quarterly Review* of 1837, translated and published substantial sections of Parent-Duchâtelet's study. These two publications evidence 1., the emergence of the body through the quantifiable categories and physical descriptions of social science and 2., the emergence of the social body as

a means of government. Above all, it is important to recognize that Parent-Duchâtelet's study offered the *social body* as the means to control. As his study clearly indicated, the prostitute's body itself could be an unreliable generator of knowledge—the plump state of many prostitutes and even their own genitals could belie many years of ill health, illicit sex, and hard living. Instead, the larger system of the population, its health, and the regulation of prostitution through observation and careful cordoning was the means to control. First, I turn to *The Lancet*, particularly for the deceitful body that was presented to readers from the pages of *De la prostitution*. Second, the implications of this new knowledge are neatly encapsulated within the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, and I believe demonstrate an important development within British reformers' discourse, chiefly, the emergence of the social body as means to control via a knowledge of the body and circumstances of the prostitute.

First, and most notably, there was an effusive fawning over Parent-Duchâtelet's work. It is almost as if "Scrutator" had lived to see the much-longed-for statistics and personally wrote the paeans to the translated sections of *De la prostitution*. *The Lancet's* reviewer described the work in glowing terms, hailing it as "unique and very remarkable."⁶³ The study was "based on statistical facts supplied by national authorities, and on irrefragable evidence, collected during private inquiries, collated with unimpeachable impartiality, and embodied in their present form with the purest motives, by a historian of the finest sagacity and most comprehensive mind, presenting altogether an example of courage, industry, discrimination, and delicacy of tact, which is quite unmatched among literary productions."⁶⁴ The exhaustive strings of praise halt only briefly to condemn those British reformers who had been "compelled, in the absence of correct data, to reason upon their own conjectures, which were sometimes abstinent of all foundation," and consequently, "arrived only at the falsest conclusions, which, notwithstanding, were most

peremptory in tone, though inconsistently preceded by writing of the vaguest and most unsatisfactory kind.”⁶⁵

After the giddy praises, *The Lancet's* reviewer got down to business—the very serious business of public health. He concluded, “[Parent-Duchâtelet] has endeavoured to show what is the right policy to be adopted towards its wretched victims, with a view to the preservation of their health, and the lessening of the amount of evil which they inflict on the whole community, without at the same time giving encouragement to a vice that already prevails to so great an extent.”⁶⁶ *The Lancet* translated a number of tables from *De la prostitution*, for example, a census of prostitutes by nationality or birthplace,⁶⁷ their level of education and day job,⁶⁸ as well as their respective ages and number of years spent in prostitution.⁶⁹ Particularly brilliant, though, and most impressive to the reviewer, was Parent-Duchâtelet’s searching eye, which had focused on the very body of the prostitute. *The Lancet* fixated upon the characteristics that seemed to be most indicative of a prostitute’s health—in particular, fat and genitals. At length, the reviewer reported on the *embonpoint* state of Parisian streetwalkers: “The plumpness of many women of the town, and their brilliant state of health . . . will strike any observer who merely looks at a number of them.”⁷⁰ Mistakenly, many had “long since attributed it to the mercurial preparations of which these women . . . habitually make use” for the treatment of syphilis, but this was not so. Instead, “this stoutness . . . is to be attributed to the great number of hot baths which the major part of these women take, and . . . to the inactive life which the majority of them lead, and the great quantity of food they consume. Regardless of the future, they are eating every instant, and consume much more food than the hardest-working labouring women. Rising too, as they usually do, at ten or eleven o’clock in the morning, it is scarcely possible, that, leading such an animal life, they can avoid getting stout.”⁷¹

The outward physical state of the whore was intriguing to both Parent-Duchâtelet as well as the English audience, but what was unseen between the fleshy thighs was of even more interest, as several pages are dedicated to the sexual organs and functions thereof. Highlighted within this passage is the common assumption of the time that the appearance of the body corresponded to its usage. Parent-Duchâtelet was quoted as saying, “It is a general opinion, and as yet uncontradicted, that the genital parts in prostitutes *must* alter, and assume a particular disposition, as the inevitable consequences of their avocation; the youngest and oldest libertines . . . are unanimous in this opinion Medical men even believe more firmly in this vulgar opinion than the vulgar themselves.”⁷² However, this conventional wisdom does not stand up to physical fact, as the passage went on to state, “the genital parts of the prostitute . . . present no special alteration which is peculiar to them, and in this respect they do not differ from those of married women of unblemished character.”⁷³ Indeed, the flesh was a fickle witness to the prostitute’s profession, as he claimed, “women are found, who have lived for twelve or fifteen years by prostitution, and who exhibit in their countenances the most marked traces of decrepitude, yet in whom the vagina . . . presents not the slightest alteration.”⁷⁴ Even if a woman has “prostituted herself thirty-six years,” she still may have genitals that could “have been mistake for those of a virgin just arrived at puberty.”⁷⁵

Likewise, *De la prostitution* cited “Another common error . . . that the clitoris, being the seat of pleasure in woman,” achieves considerable proportions and “present a greater development in prostitutes than in other women.”⁷⁶ However, “if impetuous and lascivious passions were always the cause of women abandoning themselves to prostitution, this opinion might . . . be admitted; but if these be placed amongst the causes of prostitution, they are far from being the only ones . . . there is nothing remarkable either in the dimensions or the dispositions

of the clitoris in the prostitutes of Paris, and that in them, as in all married women, there are variations, but nothing peculiar.”⁷⁷

These passages are most problematic for obvious reasons; the body was not a reliable generator of knowledge as it seems, and yet, the desire for knowledge forged past the inscrutable and into the action possible on the knowledge given. Whether or not the body of the prostitute yielded up evidence as to her activities, *The Lancet's* reviewer wondered if “society has sufficiently inquired into the fate of these unhappy women, who so much need its care, and who exercise so great an influence upon the mechanism (if the term may be allowed) of a state? In this respect, many reforms and improvements remain to be accomplished.”⁷⁸

This review of *De la prostitution* in *The Lancet* made clear that this reforming and improving would be accomplished by means of getting to the prostitute to her proper place in society. However, a clear explication as to how to do this was better discussed in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* of that same year. In this publication, the lucid descriptions indicate the social body as the means to power. For example, the reviewer here highlighted the importance of the social body in government. As he stated, governing becomes most difficult when legislators “have not anatomized society” through scientific, medicalized study of the population; consequently, “laws aggravate the evil they profess to cure when they are based on loose and imperfect analysis.”⁷⁹ The metaphor of the social body persisted as the reviewer concluded that “prostitution is a vice inherent in the social system; it always has existed, it always will exist,” however, if unchecked, it rots away the social body like “a moral gangrene.”⁸⁰ This is an evil, though, that will not be halted by religious instruction or solitary reflection—instead, the reviewer urged that to “apply sanitary influence where cure is possible, and the actual cautery where sound parts are threatened with contamination.”⁸¹

Effecting a cautery of this “gangrene” would entail nothing less than a disciplining, not of souls, but of social bodies. In fact, the reviewer suggested that there was “a strong argument for subjecting prostitution to some *surveillance*, and counteracting, as far as possible, its peniculous [sic] influences.”⁸² The activity of prostitution writ large must be subjected to monitoring and control that would keep prostitution functioning as it should within larger society. To be sure, a moral tone still inflected the reviewer’s commentary on the need for surveillance, but the improvement of morals is, within this article, blended with an incipient social science. Philanthropy, for instance, must “be directed by those who have capacity and opportunity for observing the tendency of measures, which, in the present state of our knowledge, can only be regarded as experimental.”⁸³

Whereas Hale, twenty-five years earlier, had called for the eradication of prostitution, the reviewer for the *Foreign Quarterly Review* disparaged this position, and asked, “What moralist hopes to banish vice from the universe? What legislator expects to remove crime completely? What physician professes to cure all disease? In society we must be content to alleviate where we cannot change, and to do a portion of good even where we cannot wholly remove evil.”⁸⁴ In order to do so, he determined that “the moral and physical evils incident to large towns require early and constant watchfulness, but remedial measures can only be efficacious when they are the result of long and careful observation.”⁸⁵ Without surveillance, in the form of “a board of health and morals,” “there can be no systematic operations, one set of men will be working in direct opposition to another, charity may diffuse poison instead of food, and benevolence [will] produce the worst effects of satanic misanthropy.”⁸⁶

This “watchfulness” denotes the surveillance that Foucault spoke of in relation to urban medicine. Parent-Duchâtelet’s method of order, arrangement, and surveillance fits neatly within Foucault’s conception of urban medicine, “a technique for controlling and modifying those

elements of the environment which might promote that health, or on the contrary, harm it.”⁸⁷

Recollect that Parent-Duchâtelet had no intention of eradicating prostitution or of reducing its numbers. His focus was not curing prostitutes, but of making their presence within the urban space a condition of the larger public health. As Foucault clarified, urban medicine is not oriented to a “medicine of man,” but a “medicine of the living conditions of the existential milieu.”⁸⁸ Similarly, this focus on the rigorous observation and structuring of prostitution denotes the movement of disciplinary power throughout society. Especially for prostitution, which stands at the very “junction of the ‘body’ and the ‘population,’” it should not be a surprising that it is consequently “a crucial target of a power organized around the management of life.”⁸⁹

The palpable excitement over Parent-Duchâtelet’s study vividly marks the emergence of the social body within the British discourse on prostitution. Of course, corresponding with a knowledge of the social body are the means of knowing. Here, with this new way of knowing the prostitute through the methods of social science, is also the emergence of the mode of control that Foucault termed “biopower” or “biopolitics.” As he explains, “biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, this power “can only function thanks to the formation of a knowledge that is both its effect and also a condition of its exercise.”⁹¹ Simply put, the tactics, techniques, and mechanisms of governing life create a particular body of knowledge that, in turn, creates a particular form of political power.

Hence, the health of a body, its life expectancy, ability to work, and mental characteristics became the central focus to government. Fundamentally, modern government operates in two modes. Foucault claims that one of those modes conceptualizes “the body as a machine,” and governing concerns the body’s “disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into

systems of efficient and economic controls.”⁹² The other mode of government “focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary.”⁹³

It was by knowing the body that it could be rendered useful to the government, and in doing so, the body could be brought into the political, analytic realm of government. Parent-Duchâtelet’s vision of the prostitute and her place in society rendered a different vision of power. No more was power simply a punishing act, but a pervasive and penetrating system of actions that “traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse.”⁹⁴ The body is, in these terms, the *conceptualization* of the processes and functions that are useful or of concern to the large social body. Implicit with this is the way that the body was known, and the ways by which it could evade knowing. At least in 1837, those interested in controlling the prostitute’s presence in the urban centers of Britain gained, or at least got a glimpse of, the political means by which the deviant woman could be systematically categorized and consequently controlled.

Soul and Substance: Competing Ideologies and the Emergent Politics of Prostitution

The thirty years between the “war of the pamphlets” and Parent-Duchâtelet’s *De la prostitution* encompassed a dramatic shift in the conceptualization of the prostitute. Three different paradigms—one evangelical, one medical, and the other sociological—would have a bearing on the continuing discourse. For Hale and his interlocutors, the prostitute represented a matter of morality—such sinning must be dealt with, either through a meting out of righteous justice or by charitable forgiveness. No matter what though, the deviant woman remained outside the grasp of a systematized means of control. It was “Scrutator” who voiced this frustration just a

few years after Hale, offering the medicalized body as a possible means of control. If, “Scrutator” offered, the problem of prostitution may be addressed as a doctor investigates the body of a patient, then there may be some means of amending the problems of disease that evangelicalism refused to admit. The advent of Parent-Duchâtelet’s rigorous methodology and study produced an eruption of knowledge with profound political implications. Parent-Duchâtelet’s focus not so much on the individual body of the prostitute, unreliable as it was, but on her place within the collective of society would mark another paradigmatic shift, one grounded within sociology and statistics.

Before 1837, it is difficult to imagine anyone pronouncing misguided charity work as “satanic misanthropy.” Yet with the advent of a statistical and sociological study of prostitution, another standard entered into discussions of social medicine and legislation. No longer was Christian morality the sole means by which to address the “whorish woman.” If the invisible soul was already clearly seen, then what is remarkable about this time is that the life of the prostitute, her actions, environment, history, body, and place in society gained a visibility that would lend itself to legislative and disciplinary discourse. However, the clarity of Parent-Duchâtelet’s vision could not persist for long, and as consequent analysis demonstrates, soul, body, economy, and society would vie for attention as the locus of control.

Notes

¹ William Hale, *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution; and on the Most Practicable and Efficient Means of Abating and Preventing That, and All Other Crimes, against the Virtue and Safety of the Community* (London: E. Justins, 1812), 11.

² Quoted in Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 16.

³ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 33.

⁴ Ian McCormick noted several earlier tracts about prostitution in the 1700s, Ian McCormick, ed. *Sexual Outcasts 1750-1850* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-2.

⁵ Female Penitentiaries had existed since the mid 1700s, and continued to function throughout the nineteenth century. It was the founding of Urania Cottage, a house for “fallen women,” founded by Angela Burdett-Coutts and Charles Dickens, that is unique to the Victorian era (further evidence of their partnership may be found on pg. 96, n. 64) For further reading on Female Penitentiaries and Urania Cottage, consult the following: Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000); Jennie Batchelor and Megan Hiatt, eds., *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House* (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2006); Karen Chase and Michael Levenson, *The Spectacle of Intimacy: A Public Life for the Victorian Family* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 100-01; Jenny Hartley, *Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women* (London: Methuen, 2008).

⁶ McCormick, ed. *Sexual Outcasts 1750-1850*, 8.

⁷ James Bennett, *The History of Dissenters, During the Last Thirty Years, (from 1808 to 1838)* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1839), 214.

⁸ John Wallis, *London: Being a Complete Guide to the British Capital; Containing, a Full and Accurate Account of Its Buildings, Commerce, Curiosities, Exhibitions, Amusements, Religious and Charitable Foundations, Literary Establishments, Learned and Scientific Institutions* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster-Row, 1814), 259.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ G. Hodson, *Strictures on Mr. Hale's Reply to the Pamphlets Lately Published in Defence of the London Female Penitentiary* (London: Meurs. Williams and Smith, 1809), 27. Italics in original.

¹¹ James Bennett noted all the titles included in the “pamphlet war” of 1809. Bennett, *The History of Dissenters, During the Last Thirty Years, (from 1808 to 1838)*, 214-15.

¹² Anonymous, "Review of Religious Publications, &C," *The Evangelical Magazine* XVII (1809): 119.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 121. Italics in original.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 423.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Italics in original.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 121.

¹⁹ Hodson, *Strictures on Mr. Hale's Reply to the Pamphlets Lately Published in Defence of the London Female Penitentiary*, 53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21. Italics in original.

²² Anonymous, "Review of Religious Publications, &C," 121. Italics in original.

²³ *Ibid.*: 122. Italics in original.

²⁴ Hodson, *Strictures on Mr. Hale's Reply to the Pamphlets Lately Published in Defence of the London Female Penitentiary*, 16. Italics in original.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69. Italics in original.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69-70. Italics in original.

²⁷ Bennett, *The History of Dissenters, During the Last Thirty Years, (from 1808 to 1838)*, 215.

²⁸ Hale, *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution; and on the Most Practicable and Efficient Means of Abating and Preventing That, and All Other Crimes, against the Virtue and Safety of the Community*, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13. Italics in original.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34. Capitalization in original.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.*, 30. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Ibid., 29-30.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, "Review of Religious Publications, &C," 162.

⁴⁹ Scrutator, "Causes of the Increase of Prostitution," *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, November 1 1814. 304.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 305.

⁵¹ ———, "On Monopoly in the Necessaries of Life," *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, December 1 1814, 406.

⁵² Ibid. 406.

⁵³ Ibid., 408.

⁵⁴ ———, "Causes of the Increase of Prostitution," 305-06.

⁵⁵ ———, "On Monopoly in the Necessaries of Life," 407. Italics in original.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 9.

⁵⁹ Ann F. La Berge, *Mission and Method: The Early-Nineteenth-Century French Public Health Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*, 16.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 17.

⁶³ "On Prostitution in the City of Paris; Considered under the Heads of Public Hygeine, Moral, and Internal Police.," 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid.: 20.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 21.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 106.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.: 108. Italics in original.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 109.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.: 23.

⁷⁹ "*De La Prostitution Dans La Ville De Paris*. Par A. J. B. Parent Duchatelet," 338.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 340.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.: 349. Italics in original.

⁸³ Ibid.: 353.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.: 357.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Foucault, "The Birth of Social Medicine," 150.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ ———, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 147.

⁹⁰ Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador, 2003), 245.

⁹¹ ———, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1974-1975* ed. Francois Ewald, et al. (New York: Picador, 1999), 52.

⁹² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 139.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 119.

Chapter 3.

The Family, the Factory, and the Speculum: Social, Economic, and Medical Ideologies at Odds
with the Inscrutable Woman, 1839-1857

In [1851] there were some 8,155,000 females of the age of ten and upwards in the British population, as compared with 7,600,000 males. Already it will be clear that if the accepted destiny of the Victorian girl was to become a wife and mother, it was unlikely that there would be enough men to go round.

—E. Royston Pike, *Human Documents of the Victorian Era*

Parent-Duchâtelet's study posed a considerable challenge to religious and medical framing of prostitution in 1837, insofar as the study would mark the emergence of social science vis-à-vis the question of prostitution. At the same time, the British simply could not replicate Parent-Duchâtelet's *De la prostitution*—it was, frankly, impossible. British researchers lacked the detailed Parisian registries of prostitutes, records that had been critical to Parent-Duchâtelet's study. The ever-diligent quantitative scientist, Parent-Duchâtelet's work placed an "emphasis on objective social factors rather than innate depraved instincts," with the aim "to make prostitution the object of positive, quantifiable knowledge."¹ Unfortunately, "positive, quantifiable knowledge" was difficult to come by on the other side of the Channel. As William Tait, an evangelical physician noted in 1840, "In Paris, where a regular register is kept of all who are permitted to follow this iniquitous calling, . . . there is . . . little or no difficulty in ascertaining at any time the precise number that may exist in that city. In this country, however, there are no such data; and any one desirous of information on this important subject, must make diligent inquiry for it himself."²

Just as British reformers lacked the rich stacks of data from which to study prostitution, so too did they lack a Parent-Duchâtelet. Parent-Duchâtelet's final study of prostitution had been the death of him: his two-volume study was monumental in scope, exacting in its details, and

precipitated his death from exhaustion.³ British readers certainly recognized the work as a sociological masterpiece. However, it stands as a brief and brilliant flashpoint in the debate over prostitution in Britain. It indicated a new way to address prostitution, but it could not illuminate the dark streets of London on its own, and no one at this time could claim to equal Parent-Duchâtelet's critical mind, exacting scientific method, and (nearly) inexhaustible energies.

As the title of this chapter indicates, the definition of the prostitute that emerged these twenty years centered around three distinct paradigms—the social, economic, and medical. In other words, she was either a violation of familial and gender norms, a product of an increasingly industrial society, or a medical threat to the health of the population. To be sure, the years following the reviews of *De la prostitution* were characterized by an emergence of social scientific methods that explored the sociological dimensions of the prostitute problem. Following Parent-Duchâtelet's study, reformers and medical professionals tried to employ various methods to get at the body of the prostitute. The columns of figures, classifications, and descriptions that began to fill the texts on prostitution after 1837 herald a shift in the discourse over prostitution, one that Gustave Richelot said would “offer a base for legislative institutions demanded by the sounder and more enlightened population of the English metropolis.”⁴ While an undercurrent of evangelical morality persisted throughout these mid-century studies, the persistent call for a quantifiable, physical knowledge of prostitution (and the perpetually thwarted efforts to achieve this) gradually surpassed the moral condemnation of prostitution that characterized the early years of the debate. These twenty years signify a critical point in the debate over prostitution—whether viewing the problem of prostitution from an sociological, economical, or medical standpoint, the persistent pessimism that dogged researchers at this time would be important for the surveilling tactics of journalism later.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I address the volumes by Michael Ryan, William Tait, James Talbot, and William Logan, which span from 1839-1844. These publications demonstrate a move toward the economic and industrial realities implicit in the problem of prostitution, but the authors also maintain a stern moralistic stance insofar as it threatened the sanctity of femininity and family, generally maintaining that it should be a punishable offence. The second section is an analysis of tracts from 1850-1857, as written by W. R. Greg, William Acton, and Gustave Richelot. This marks a major shift from the first section, as these three authors abandon the punitive measures advocated by earlier reformers and instead offer a rationale for the legalization of prostitution, as controlled through medical surveillance. Finally, I address an overarching theme found within nearly all the texts written between 1839 and 1857: unreliable numbers of social science. Most of the authors at this time expressed a deep anxiety over the statistics gathered within their studies and admitted the impossibility of reliably counting those practicing prostitution in the absence of a registry system. Moreover, it is precisely this anxiety that functions as a corollary to the veracity later attributed to the first-hand accounts of prostitutes created within the pages of newsprint.

Home and Economics, 1839-1844: Threatened Domesticity and the Marketplace of Prostitution

Writing in 1844, the Secretary to the London Society for the Protection of Young Females, James Talbot, solemnly informed the reader of the dire state of prostitution: “the evil exists to an enormous extent—that it is witnessed in our public streets—that it has settled down into a nefarious and horrid system—that it is unblushingly forcing its hydra-head into the domestic quiet of our families—that it is counteracting and nullifying the progress of morality and education, and that it is jeopardizing the interests of Christianity itself.”⁵ Talbot’s grave anxiety is, in many ways, a hallmark of his fellow reformers: Ryan, Tait, and Logan.

Those researchers who followed in the decade after the arrival of Parent-Duchâtelet's study addressed the subject at hand with a new sense of urgency—the problem, as they came to see through their own observations and study, was most terrible and hardly an uncomplicated one. For the researchers writing between 1839 and 1844, the prostitute began to transform into a threat that reached beyond the scope of spiritual matters into a more sociological and economic threat. The two primary characterizations of the prostitute are either grounded in anxieties that the prostitute threatens comfortable family life and feminine roles, or that prostitution is an unstoppable economy of supply and demand, fueled by the ever-increasing presence of industrial life. For them, combating this problem largely through moral education and public curfews offered only some promise of improvement, a promise that seemed dubious at best. If anything, these writings carry a gloomy outlook on the problem of prostitution—with a threat so malicious and pervasive, it seemed unlikely that anything would effect any good.

In what follows, I address in turn the two sets of studies, first, Michael Ryan's 1839 study *Prostitution in London* and William Tait's 1840 *Magdalenism*; second, William Logan's 1843 tract *An Exposure . . . of Female Prostitution* and James Talbot's 1844 *Miseries of Prostitution*. For each set of studies, I consider the definition and causes that each attributed to prostitution before turning to the means by which each thought may play a part in ameliorating (but never totally eradicating) the social harms of prostitution.

During this time, the definition of a prostitute began to form within an agglomeration of characteristics and habits, as each author seized upon various categories, conditions, and anxieties. Compare Hale's somewhat overwrought definition of the prostitute as “this most ruinous species of depravity” to Tait's, which deployed rather dry terms: “prostitution is understood merely [as] an act; while prostitute is always employed to denote a person who habitually follows the course of conduct implied in successive acts.”⁶ Here, “prostitute” is

characterized by an act rather than a sin, at least momentarily divorced from the taint of spiritual ruin. However, this is not to say that Hale's evangelical fire was completely extinguished, as Tait also emphasized her moral shortcomings. He added, a prostitute is "a person [woman] who openly delivers herself up to a life of impurity and licentiousness, who is indiscriminate in the selection of her lovers, and who depends for her livelihood upon the proceeds arising from a life of prostitution."⁷

Though the evangelical discourse over prostitution was still present, the common streetwalker became not so much the awful "harlot," but instead was reconstructed in regards to the threat she posed to femininity and the proper family roles. Investigators began to perceive a being not formed solely in response to moral depravity, but started to construct a character that was remarkable for the ways in which she violated the supposedly natural state of womanhood and family. For example, Tait paid attention to the behavior of prostitutes, especially in regards to imbibing: "When speaking of the causes of prostitution, . . . its ranks are supplied in some measure from those who have been trained from infancy to drinking—who imbibed with their mothers' milk the desire for intoxicating liquors, and unconsciously formed a habit which their riper years only confirmed and rendered more inveterate."⁸ If evidence of drink was not apparent, Tait also observed that the loathsome woman was marked by unsavory language: "The habit of swearing and speaking obscenely, is still more common All do not drink to excess—all do not lie—all do not steal—but almost all swear. It is one of the initiatory accomplishments of their profession, which all prostitutes early acquire; and they make use of it on all occasions."⁹ Funny as some of his descriptions may be, these off-color observations suggest an understanding of prostitution that was not exclusively found in Scriptures. Instead, the prostitute was also she who violated the socially acceptable roles and boundaries of females—all those who fell outside of the docile, sober strictures of femininity risked her reputation.

Ryan's 1839 study also mirrored Tait's assessment of streetwalkers in terms of a violation of normal family relations. While his evidence may be regarded as a social scientific effort to know prostitution through material circumstances and bodily characteristics, it is offered also as evidence that these women were not women who obeyed the unwritten law of familial roles. Regarding the fertility rate of prostitutes, he said, "It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of children borne by prostitutes in London; but there are 71,000 illegitimate births every year in the United Kingdom, of which there are 7,000 in London."¹⁰ The matter is further complicated by Ryan's assertion that "prostitutes are not prolific; but most of them, when pregnant, resort to criminal foeticide, as the care of children would interfere with their vocation."¹¹ This sinister speculation over abortion and/or infant murder touches upon a particular angst common to these authors, that of threats to sound family structure. Clearly, infanticide violated the typical expectations of ideal motherhood—no decent woman would kill her child—and so marked prostitutes as a deviant population.

Ryan's shock over the perceived violation of sacrosanct family bonds and femininity is also evident in the studies of Logan and Talbot, but in their estimation, the faults of the deviant woman were caused by something much larger than either drink or bad language. The new industrial landscape of Britain had rapidly transformed social structures, and this new order bore some blame for the rampant proliferation of prostitution. Just as factories produced goods for markets of the world, so, too, did factories feed into the domestic marketplace of prostitution. Logan noted, "*Factories are a fruitful source of evil,*" in no small part because they contribute to the "intermixture of the sexes."¹² This unseemly mixing did not stop at the factory—as industry boomed, so, too, did the population. Talbot located many-a poor girl's demise in the overcrowded rooms of the worker, wherein there was a "herding together of vast numbers of human beings of both sexes, in close and confined apartments, [which] have a tendency to

increase the evil of prostitution to a fearful extent.”¹³ Talbot further gave weight to the economic realities in determining the root of ruin for so many British females. He reported, “The public papers have, of late, teemed with the most appalling statements in reference to female labour. . . . thousands of females, dress-makers, seamstresses, &c. are labouring for 3s., 4s., and 5s. per week,” which would amount to approximately \$20 or \$30 per week by today’s standards.¹⁴ “Might I not ask,” Talbot indignantly exclaimed, “whether this is not a premium to vice? Is it possible that these females can exist honestly, and creditably, and virtuously, upon so paltry a pittance?”¹⁵

This recognition of forces and structures much larger than one’s own constitution or moral fiber seems to be a move beyond the sin imputed by Hale to the masses of British women laboring under a grinding economy. However, whatever progressive sentiments may be read into Ryan and Talbot’s study must be tempered with their evangelical insistence on the moral shortcomings of those who engaged in prostitution. Both Logan and Talbot were fixated on the socially deleterious effects on the soul of both men and women, and whatever blame might be attributed to extenuating circumstances, these could not overwhelm the internal faults of a woman that led her to ruin. Even though Talbot seemed shocked by the horrific conditions of the laboring classes, he still defaulted to a position wherein the prostitute’s miserable lot was her own damn fault. Talbot stated, “The great majority who become prostitutes do not become such from what may be called necessity—that is, by being, in the first instance, reduced to such privations as to oblige them to seek their subsistence in this way. . . but it is a necessity brought on by themselves, through misconduct,” along with the “culpable remissness of parents and relatives, who allow improvident and idle habits to be formed, tending to give a loose rein to the passions, and leading to the formation of dissolute connexions [sic].”¹⁶ Logan similarly affirmed the reprehensible faults found in the prostitute, as he observed, “Girls in the first-class houses

spend the whole of the day in *idleness*; they seldom breakfast before 11 or 12 o'clock.”¹⁷ Clearly, both persisted in constructing the harlot as a creature of social habit rather a victim of circumstance.

The economic paradigm of prostitution loomed large for these reformers, and at least for Talbot, he impugned both men as well as women for taking part in illicit commerce. Talbot’s study is notable in respect to the stern condemnation he levied on women as well as men. Whereas his fellow reformer Hale had only seen the evil Jezebel who led the good sons of middle class astray, Talbot had harsh words for the other sex as well. “Who is it,” he asked, “that supports the brothel . . . that devastates families—that destroys domestic peace and happiness? Who is it that consigns young souls to hell—that brings on society the long train of evils traceable to uncleanness?—THE PATRONS OF PROSTITUTION. These are the men who supply the fuel of that vast conflagration which is consuming the vitals of our national prosperity.”¹⁸ Though he was not remiss in finding an abundance of faults with the fallen woman, Talbot also questioned the double standard by which “the male is allowed to pursue his course of iniquity and impurity with unbridled freedom, . . . while the unfortunate victim of his brutal lust is banished from the pale of virtuous society.”¹⁹ For Talbot at least, the whore is made not only from her own iniquity, but also from that of those who pay her.

Given the characteristics and causes attributed to prostitution, each reformer seemed to sense an obligation in offering some way of improving the problem. The means for controlling prostitution, as proposed by Ryan and Tait, are rather muddled. Both were emphatic that prostitution was a wretched problem and that something had to be done, but the seemingly unstoppable force of the marketplace threatened to make any attempt at amelioration ineffectual, at best. Ryan insisted, “The horrible system is rapidly advancing in all directions, and among every class of society, and is so subversive of morality and religion, as to arouse every good man

and professor of Christianity to activity in the cause of virtue.”²⁰ That is, when one set of females violates the strictures of proper domestic behavior, it is a threat to all of society. Tait also believed that prostitution must be controlled, in large part because he believed that prostitutes were in fact not, contrary Parent-Duchâtelet’s position, inevitable or necessary for order within society.²¹ He argued, “It is impossible to conceive in what manner the existence of prostitution conduces to the maintenance of order and peace in society.”²² Those who would argue that prostitutes are necessary for order are “directly at variance with the whole tenor of the sacred writings,” and he quoted germane Scripture passages at length to further shore up his pious position.²³ For both, the prostitute’s vocation inherently carried a venom that would taint the family, and as a deviant she represented a violent rejection of the natural femininity upon which the order of society relied upon, and unless corrected, would doubtless have dire ramifications for all.

However, despite the vehemence of their calls to action, neither had much faith that something *could* be done. Both Ryan and Tait advocated several means, all of which concentrated on the correction and discipline of women—moral education for females, curfews, and stricter enforcement of laws against procuresses—but they both despaired as to the effectiveness of any particular method. Those that were evident center on control of female bodies or morality, either through moral education, imposition of curfews, or stricter punishment of brothel-keepers. Ryan claimed that education was “the *best* means of preventing crime and immorality,” such that it would prevent young ladies from falling into the hands of scheming procuresses.²⁴ Nothing was said about the moral education of boys or men, but in any case, both Ryan and Tait believed females would benefit from a moral education that would protect their own virtue and that of others.

For those females who had already forfeited their honor, Tait speculated that so long as they were kept out of sight, they would not tempt vulnerable young men, as though demand would evaporate in the absence of availability: “Were prostitutes prevented from exercising their calling on the streets, the evil of prostitution would soon be greatly diminished; and no plan that may be introduced for the abolition of this evil will be attended with success, unless this object be kept specially in view.”²⁵ Men fall prey to prostitutes because, Tait reasoned, they are visible to the susceptible man’s eye, and “it is from meeting with them on the streets in the evenings, that young men are induced to accompany them to their lodgings.”²⁶ For those who perpetrated evil through the seduction and ruin of women, Ryan suggested that procuresses and brothel-keepers “can only be restrained by the law” and through stricter enforcement, prostitution could be considerably controlled.²⁷

In spite of the myriad of controls and preventions, both always seemed to default to the position that no matter what is done—and much *must* be done—prostitution will always exist. Education cannot stop it, the penitentiary system was “ineffective, as a great number of those rescued from prostitution by these means return to iniquity again,” and whatever laws existed were easily evaded or lightly enforced.²⁸ Tait dismally reckoned, “It is probable that, after every method has been adopted which the human mind could suggest, the vice will still continue to a certain extent.”²⁹ No matter how much missionaries, Lock Hospitals, penitentiaries, or laws may achieve, “it may be safely affirmed, that, although there were a kirk [church] and a school situated at the entrance to every brothel, prostitution would still exist.”³⁰ This dour conclusion seems like a fitting pronouncement of the times. Although the discourse on prostitution had reached a new intensity, the profusion of discourse only served to reveal how little was actually known; consequently, it seemed as though little could be done. For both Ryan and Tait, the

proliferation of prostitution lay within inherent sinfulness—though moral education, curfews, and punishment may stem the tide, it could not stop it all together.

While both recognized that overcrowding contributed to poverty, Logan and Talbot favored improving public morality as the best means of mitigating the harms of prostitution. At least for Talbot, legalization of prostitution was out of the question (although it would happen just twenty years afterwards in 1864). Talbot steadfastly maintained, “The principle, ‘that evil must be legalized in order to effect good,’ is much to be deprecated. Neither can any legislative enactment abolish prostitution, but a summary process in reference to the keepers of brothels, would certainly take away the enormities which are now perpetrated in connexion [sic] with it.”³¹ To be sure, the laws on the books at that time were lenient on brothel keepers, who, at worst, faced light punishments or could easily dodge the law.³² Nevertheless, Talbot believed that the evils of prostitution would flourish far more as a legalized activity than as an illicit one.

If the law could foster stricter punishments, then it was also the duty of upright citizens and police to faithfully search the streets for iniquity. Logan remarked, “The *appearance* of harlots on the street has an unfavourable influence upon the mind, and almost every person turns their eye towards them—females not excepted. Their language is most polluting.—Their idle appearance has a tendency to foster indolent habits in young people.”³³ Therefore, the remedy for appearance was absence. Logan suggested, “Police might be authorized to prevent prostitutes from parading the streets at night, and to a certain extent in the course of the day.”³⁴ Talbot urged, “All means, moral and religious, should be adopted to discountenance licentious habits,” a means which included the seemingly indelicate suggestion that “virtuous females should form themselves into societies for the purpose of denouncing those of the other sex who are addicted to the vice of prostitution, and thus improve the tone of public feeling on the subject.”³⁵ Despite Talbot’s attempts to helpfully suggest ways to improve the ruinous state prostitution imposes on

society, he maintained, “The vice of prostitution is so gigantic, and so deep-rooted, that no measures, however good in themselves, can be effectively carried into execution, either by individuals, or by societies influenced by right principles, and supported by pure benevolence. . . . its total abolition may be impracticable.”³⁶ Compared to Hale’s insistence thirty-two years earlier that vigilant patrol could render prostitution “impracticable,” Talbot had a far less optimistic view of what those same efforts could effect for the whole of society.³⁷

For the reformers who wrote in the aftermath of Parent-Duchâtelet, a new version of the prostitute emerges. Rather than a facile creature of sin, they begin to see a subject that was a different threat to different realms of society. For Ryan and Tait, the prostitute troubled female and family purity—her violations of stereotypical femininity stood to threaten the whole of womanhood. Talbot and Logan perceived a subject that was made of the environment she inhabited—dirty, cramped, and impoverished conditions lent themselves to the creation of a class that was dependent on wages that could not be earned solely on the factory floor or in the sweatshop. All four especially worried about the resistance the prostitute posed to statistical study. In light of the fatalistic pronouncements cast upon the prostitute at this time, it is fitting that Talbot’s iconic, sentimental trope of the “fallen woman,” prevails over this period:

The one fatal step which has brought shame upon her head, has banished shame from her heart. The first false movement leads to crime; crime blunts the feelings, and hardens the heart; and, afraid to return to the home she has forsaken—no friendly hand being extended to save, the whole moral principle speedily becomes obliterated; she plunges deeper and still deeper, into vice and iniquity, until she is irrecoverably lost.³⁸

This “fallen woman” represented a core anxiety of the time, but it should not signify solely a moral shortcoming—she was “fallen” insofar as she was divorced from the safety of family, the wholesomeness of femininity, and engaged in the black market of sexual trade. Through the

writings of Ryan, Tait, Talbot, and Logan, the prostitute becomes a nuanced figure, shaped by paradigms of both gender and economy. Though the “fallen woman” trope would last far beyond Talbot’s career, the pessimism of the time would not persist for too much longer.

1850-1858: The Marketplace and Movement Toward Surveillance, Health, and Legalization

After the sterner tomes of the 1840s, those published within the 1850s treat prostitution with a decidedly different tone. Whereas Talbot and his contemporaries had been reluctant to consider a streetwalker in sympathetic terms, Greg begged to differ. The aim of his 1850 article was to “induce those who have hitherto thought of prostitutes only with disgust and contempt, to exchange these sentiments for the more just and more Christian feelings of grief, compassion, and desire to soothe and to save.”³⁹ Acton, too, hailed his sharpest criticism in 1857 on those “monstrous, un-Christian-like, un-Englishmen” persons who would “empty the vial of social wrath upon her who is vulgar and obtrusive, while merely fairylike chastisement is considered enough for the notorious sinner of good breeding and position.”⁴⁰ Both Acton’s and Greg’s calls for a more compassionate stance towards prostitution marks a shift that would lead prostitution towards legalization (which would follow in 1864 with the Contagious Diseases Act).

I address three major works in these seven years between 1850 and 1857. They are Greg’s “Prostitution,” printed in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* in 1850, Richelot’s *The Greatest of our Social Evils: Prostitution*, and Acton’s *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects*, both of which were published in 1857. Significantly, these authors broke from previous discourse and advocated for the legalization and medical surveillance of prostitution. Between Greg, Richelot, and Acton, the prostitute became a woman almost solely determined by her circumstances of poverty and disease. The increasing focus on the medical also marks an important development—that of the prostitute as part of the

population, rather than a deviant. Recall that earlier reformers, such as Hale, believed that prostitution could be eradicated. Now, the reality of the marketplace was all-too-present and the dream of prohibition had vanished. When goods cannot be banned, then they must be regulated. Consequently, these three called for legalization of prostitution, as monitored through medical surveillance in order to mitigate the harms of disease upon the population.

Like Logan and Talbot, Greg ascribed poverty to the prostitutes' plight, but unlike those two, Greg sympathetically construed them as "the victims of circumstances; and therefore must on all hands be allowed to be objects of the most unalloyed compassion."⁴¹ Women "who were born and bred in sin" had little recourse to any other resource beyond their own bodies in order to make a living.⁴² Consequently, Greg posited, "She is driven into prostitution by the weight of all society pressing upon her."⁴³ He also refuted earlier claims that the whore was what she was because of her own lasciviousness. Whereas Hale had supposed that harlots "give full swing to their desires,"⁴⁴ Greg countered that the hypersexualized female was all but nonexistent, saying, "Women's *desires* scarcely ever lead to their fall," and only when "they *have* fallen" do these women have any at all.⁴⁵ He explained that while men's "sexual desire is inherent and spontaneous," women's "desire is dormant, if not non-existent, till excited Those feelings which coarse and licentious minds are so ready to attribute to girls, are almost invariably *consequences*."⁴⁶ Both of these stances on class and female sexuality served to reinforce Greg's sympathetic regard for those engaged in the sorry commerce of illicit sex.

Richelot's view of prostitution was similarly deterministic, though slightly more distasteful. Reiterating Parent-Duchâtelet's famous metaphor, Richelot pronounced, "Prostitutes are as inevitable in vast collections of human beings as are sewers, sinks, and cess-pools."⁴⁷ Like his French predecessor, Richelot was primarily concerned with prostitution insofar as it was a public health hazard, and much of his book is dedicated to considering the probabilities and

extent of diseases spread by the “great social evil.” To demonstrate the dire situation, Richelot supposed “that in 100 prostitutes in health, one alone contracts every 24 hours venereal disease,” and so “it follows that in 50,000 prostitutes, there are always 500 daily who are diseased.”⁴⁸ Of course, this was a problem not only for the women who became diseased, but also those who had “connexion” with them. Again, Richelot hypothetically considered the consequences of just 500 infected women in the following illustration:

Let us suppose that the faculty of transmission in these 500 women, be limited to 12 days, and that in each group of six individuals, who in the ratio of one every twenty-four hours have connexion [sic] with these women, five will undergo contagion, and the consequence will be, that 4000 men will be affected every night, and 1,500,000 in the year. But these men will communicate the disease to 4000 prostitutes daily, and this gives 185,500 annually. To sum up, there will be produced in England, annually, 1,652,500 cases of venereal diseases.⁴⁹

For Richelot, the prostitute was the primary carrier of contagion within society, just like the infectious sewers that wound beneath the city.

If Richelot saw the streetwalker as a banality of city life, Acton went a step further and posed that the allegedly deviant woman was far more normal than others were led to believe. To this point, an astounding state of perilous disease, poverty, and abnormality had been attributed to the typical prostitute. However, it was Acton who saw not so much an anomaly, but rather a temporary variation within larger society. He said, “Far from perishing in hospitals, workhouses, or obscure degradation, she generally . . . amalgamates with the population.”⁵⁰ The process of her “amalgamation with the population” was, “notwithstanding all our contrary impressions . . . so regular, so extensive, and to all appearances so much upon the increase.”⁵¹ The gaudy stereotypes were, according to Acton, just that. He explained, “It is a little too absurd to tell us

that ‘the dirty, intoxicated slattern, in tawdry finery and an inch thick in paint’ . . . is a correct figure in the middle of the nineteenth century. If she is not apocryphal, one must at least go out of the beaten path to find her.”⁵² Most popular imaginings of wayward women are mere fancy that misleads and misrepresents what was in actuality banal. Rather than the garish Jezebel, Acton insisted that there was “a numerous band, who, unlike the magnificent virago of the supper-shops, rarely see the evening lamps. Sober, genteelly dressed, well-ordered, often elegant in person—such girls have the taste and the power to select their acquaintances from among the most truly eligible men.”⁵³ Just as these women blended with the general mien, so too did they resemble the larger population in respect to mortality causes. Whereas Richelot had been quick to point to the rampant venereal disease within the prostitute population, Acton emphasized that these diseases were usually not fatal. In fact, she was just as likely to perish from maladies that any “decent” person may suffer.⁵⁴

This push towards an increasingly sympathetic view of prostitution as a commonplace reality of industrial society places all three—Greg, Richelot, and Acton—in a different position than previous reformers. As to attending to the management of this sector of the population, Richelot matter-of-factly asserted, “This is a question of public safety; the question of public morality, and how it is affected by prostitution belongs to quite another category.”⁵⁵ Acton reiterated Richelot’s hesitancy to enforce public morality, as he spoke out against punitive measures visited upon women who temporarily practiced prostitution, saying, “We must no longer hold them outlaws during their passage through their furnace of purification.”⁵⁶ Greg, too, shunned prohibition against prostitution, as he stated, “It is a common mistake with many excellent men, to suppose that, because any action is wicked and mischievous, it necessarily follows that it is desirable to proceed against it by legal means, or forcible repression.”⁵⁷ If the

mass of diseased women should not suffer moral condemnation, then she should be subject to means that can allay the epidemic of syphilis and other maladies common to her condition.

Should the unobtrusive prostitute not warrant punishment for her actions, these three authors chiefly contended that medical surveillance and intervention ought to be imposed on this population. For Richelot, surveillance made sense insofar as prostitutes were like the sewers of London. The authority of the state “must be the same as regards the one, and the other of these inevitabilities;” accordingly, it must “watch over them, diminish, by all possible means, the inconveniences which are inherent in their nature, and with that view, conceal them and confine them to corners the most obscure.”⁵⁸ This surveilling of the population was not only limited to watching, but also as a tactic of inculcating practices within the population. Acton believed that police should not only enforce public health laws, but also “be charged with the diffusion of information upon the value of decency and private sanitary precautions. He would find abundant opportunities of inculcating personal cleanliness, the importance and means of self-defense against venereal disease, the steps to be taken in the case . . . of her contracting it, and the immense advantage of immediate action.”⁵⁹ Acton’s prescription for both enforcement and active management of a population’s wellness indicates a reflexive power that regarded prostitution not so much as a threat, but as a resource to be managed and productively controlled.

One of the main concerns of all three authors revolves around the lacking facilities available to those infected with syphilis and other diseases. Although Acton maintained that the prostitute was unlikely to succumb to venereal disease, checking the spread of the disease was of utmost importance to these later reformers. Both Acton and Greg proposed medical interventions that would prefigure the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864. Acton touted the invasive procedure central to these acts as an unmitigated good when he proclaimed, “Every venereal prostitute should be examined with the speculum for her own sake and that of her medical attendant.”⁶⁰

Though it would prove difficult to determine who was either venereal or a prostitute simply by outward appearances, this dogged insistence on the unchecked power of the state to inspect and quarantine is key to the new control of prostitution. Similarly, Greg argued, “Subjecting of all prostitutes . . . to a periodical medical inspection, with the prompt sequestration or removal to the hospital of all those who were found diseased . . . will, to a certain extent—probably to a great extent—mitigate the evil of prostitution, and diminish the number of its victims.”⁶¹ Ultimately, this orientation to disease and its arrest was the new locus of control and management of the prostitute. If the prostitute could hide and blend in with the more genteel population and evade detection by statistics, she could not escape detection by the doctor assisted by the speculum, at least in theory.

Unattainable Knowledge: The Uncertainty of Numbers within Social Science

It would seem that a measure of confidence came in these later studies. Surely the medical inspection of prostitutes would manage to curb the problems that accompanied the pervasive practice. However, it is important to recognize that for all the researchers at this time, from Ryan to Richelot, a single question undermined each and every study: exactly how many prostitutes are there? If, after all, control of the prostitute population necessitated a reliable and fairly certain knowledge of how many there were, where they were, and what they were, then absolutely no single researcher at this time could claim to truly have a verifiable account of the mysterious streetwalker. In short, the estimates of the prostitute population are wildly variable and consistently named as such by each researcher. Not one author fully endorses the figures culled from others’ research with any certainty, and each of them regarded his own work suspiciously. As Talbot grimly admitted to his readers, “Difficulties of no ordinary kind present themselves in the way of an accurate detail of the facts,” and he is not incorrect in this

assessment.⁶² Ultimately, each study at this time testifies to the inability of social science to know the problem at hand—it was too elusive, simply beyond the scope of the methods available.

The most fundamental objective and also the biggest obstacle to statistical research on this subject was simply getting a headcount. Both Talbot and Tait acknowledged that counting prostitutes was one thing, but counting the ones that evaded all detection as such was another. Speaking of prostitution in Edinburgh, Tait reckoned “the number of sly prostitutes together will amount to 1160 and upwards.” But in his next sentence, Tait admitted, “This calculation rests in a great measure on supposition; but were the truth precisely known, it would perhaps present this in still a more unfavourable aspect.”⁶³ Likewise, Talbot concluded that there are those women “who deliver themselves up *partially* to the life of a prostitute, and who are exceedingly reprehensible in their conduct and polluted in their morals, although professedly following other avocations. . . . This class is, doubtless, more numerous than the former, but its number can never be correctly determined.”⁶⁴

Regardless, numbers—as dubious as they were—were bandied about as reformers attempted to quantify the monstrous evil of prostitution. As Michael Ryan demonstrated, most figures were no sooner offered than they were retracted: “About the year 1793, the late Mr. Colquhoun, a magistrate of police, concluded, after tedious investigations, that there were 50,000 prostitutes in this metropolis [London]. . . . But only the present commissioners of the metropolitan police has assured me, that no reliance could be placed on the accuracy of Mr. Colquhoun’s estimate, and that even now, when the new police is much better organized, no certain results can be arrived at.”⁶⁵ Fifty thousand sounded high to some, and so others offered an alternative estimate: Logan ventured that “there may be about 15,000 unfortunate females in London,”⁶⁶ while Talbot advanced a more conservative figure of 8,000 London unfortunates.⁶⁷

Greg seemed taken with the original 50,000 figure, but it better fit the national estimate, as he stated, “The impression among the best informed is, that the number who live by prostitution, whose sole profession it may be said to be, cannot be under 50,000 in Great Britain. This of course does not include those women of loose character who follow also some ostensible and honest occupation.”⁶⁸ Even this was not to go uncontested. Richelot believed that this generous estimate was even too low: “This figure of 50,000 prostitutes for all Great Britain, is in contradiction with all that is known about English prostitution. It must then be doubled, tripled or quadrupled.”⁶⁹ Even if it was possible to get an accurate estimate, Acton speculated that even “the estimates of the boldest . . . would be thrown into the shade,” should the reality of the situation be determined.⁷⁰

Whatever Greg might have believed the number to be, he declared, “We have no adequate statistics, and we are not disposed to present our readers with mere fallacious estimates.”⁷¹ Greg’s frustration can be heard elsewhere: “Many English writers,” said Richelot, “fancying that figures mean statistics, regardless alike of their number and value, have deservedly been accused by a gentleman of the highest ability (Mr. B. Disraeli) of converting a science which ought to be one of facts, into an imposture.”⁷² The numbers generated over the study of prostitution appear to be liable of precisely that, and yet Richelot seemed to be speaking for himself and many others when he said, “It were most interesting to know, even approximatively [sic], the number of prostitutes to be found habitually in the capital of England, whether in order to compare in this respect London with the other capitals of the civilized world, or to offer a base for legislative institutions demanded by the sounder and more enlightened population of the English metropolis.”⁷³ “But,” he continued, “this knowledge cannot be obtained. The small number of official documents on this subject, as well as the estimates of authors, present on this point enormous divergencies [sic].”⁷⁴

This persistent anxiety over unattainable knowledge is telling. While the speculum unfailingly allowed a doctor to see disease, it could not solve the most vexing problem of all: who exactly they should be using the speculum on in the first place. The Gordian Knot that researchers faced at this time—exactly how many prostitutes were there?—could not be satisfied by any of their attempts to count, survey, or measure the population. At its core, the means of knowing this mysterious population was perpetually undermined by its own shortcomings. And it is this unrelenting worry over the findings of social science that poses a stark contrast to the veracity later attributed to the prostitute who appeared in the pages of newsprint.

Fictitious Fallen Women and the Undisputed Disease

At the beginning of this chapter, I offered an epigram from Pike wherein the gap between the sexes simply precluded a number of women from fulfilling the highest calling of the Victorian woman. This snippet, I believe, epitomizes the conflict facing the reformers at this time: when sheer weight of numbers contradicts the moral objections to prostitution, the flimsier of the two is eventually going to give way. Likewise, Greg had asked his readers, “Can Prostitution be eradicated?” Unlike his predecessors, he concluded, “certainly not.” It simply could not be done “in a state of society like that which now prevails in England,” where wages were low, where marriage was increasingly delayed because of such low wages, and where poverty, disease, and hunger ran rampant.⁷⁵ It was Greg and his contemporaries who represented a fundamentally different orientation to prostitution from that of the staunch evangelical who came before: disease made visible by the speculum was now the reigning force which drove the means of control and accordingly, what would soon become law. Grounded in a paradigm of the unstoppable market force, these reformers looked to medicine and regulation as a way of abating

prostitution, rather than hoping that arresting the supply and demand of sex trade could amend prostitution.

After Parent-Duchâtelet, those who addressed the “great social evil” faced a different evil altogether. Gradually, the disease, body, and circumstances attendant to prostitution began to compete with the concerns for social morality. While the French statistician had introduced a new methodology of numbers, charts, and categories, the British reformers struggled to utilize social science when faced with an inscrutable subject. I argue in this chapter that these twenty years of reformers’ tracts demonstrate a significant shift, one that spans social norms, industrial economics, and medicine. During this time, the diseases carried by those engaged in prostitution came to pose a greater threat to the population than the demoralizing sinfulness that wanton women visited on the better sets of society. While researchers regarded their work on prostitution with a progressive spirit, the unsettling doubts over the veracity of their work plagued every author during this time.

These twenty years of tracts made tremendous headway in making prostitution a public concern, it seems. Acton said as much in a letter to the editor of the *British Medical Journal* on January 16, 1858. In his estimation, “It is a great step to have made in advance when we consider that [prostitution] is discussed at all.” However, he was not speaking solely of the abundance of medical and evangelical tracts on the subject. It seems that it was discussed quite frequently in the newspaper, as Acton observed, if one should “even cursorily read the public papers,” it is apparent that “the great social evil has become one of the questions of the day. . . . and yet to-day no less than two leading articles, and several letters, have appeared in the public journals, thus most satisfactorily proving the interest taken in the subject by the press of this country.”⁷⁶

Acton’s observation could not have been more timely. In less than a month from this issue of the *British Medical Journal*, the *Times* published a serial of anonymous letters from alleged

prostitutes, voicing their own positions within view of the English public. While the previous twenty years shifted the question of prostitution from a moral issue to that of a public health issue, Acton unknowingly observed that yet another sea change in prostitution was already taking place. No longer would prostitution be the sole domain of reformers' studies, but would be fashioned before the eyes of the public. After all, Greg noted in his own work that changing prostitution would be a matter of changing "public opinion—that general *résumé* of the judgment of the great bulk of educated society." And this labor, specifically, belonged to "the silent and unostentatious efforts of those sensible and right-minded men of the world, who give the tone to general society," a tone that would be imparted within the scores of black and white newsprint.⁷⁷

Notes

¹ Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*, 17.

² Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 2.

³ Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, 9.

⁴ Gustave Antoine Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents* (London: H. Bailliere, 1857), 19-20.

⁵ James Beard Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution* (London: James Madden and Co., 1844), 4-5.

⁶ Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 49.

⁹ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰ Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function*. (London: H. Bailliere, 1839), 184.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² William Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil* (Glasgow: G. Gallie, and R. Fleckfield, 1843), 13. Italics in original.

¹³ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 34.

¹⁷ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil*, 29. Italics in original.

¹⁸ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 36. Capitalization in original.

¹⁹ Ibid., 42.

²⁰ Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function.*, 209.

²¹ Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 199.

²² Ibid., 200.

²³ Ibid., 203.

²⁴ Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function.*, 202. Italics in original.

²⁵ Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 218-19.

²⁶ Ibid., 219.

²⁷ Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an*

Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function., 203.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 202-04.

²⁹ Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 268.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 70.

³² *Ibid.*, 56.

³³ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil*, 33. Italics in original.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁵ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 77.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁷ Hale, *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution; and on the Most Practicable and Efficient Means of Abating and Preventing That, and All Other Crimes, against the Virtue and Safety of the Community*, 35.

³⁸ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 44.

³⁹ W. R. Greg, "Prostitution," *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* 53, no. 2 (1850): 470.

⁴⁰ William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils*. (London: John Churchill, 1857), 5.

⁴¹ Greg, "Prostitution," 458.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Ibid.: 471.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, "Review of Religious Publications, &C," 120.

⁴⁵ Greg, "Prostitution," 456. Italics in original.

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 457. Italics in original.

⁴⁷ Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*, 301.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 133.

⁵⁰ Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils.*, vi.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4.

⁵² Ibid., 53.

⁵³ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁵ Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*, 142-43.

⁵⁶ Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils.*, 4.

⁵⁷ Greg, "Prostitution," 489.

⁵⁸ Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*, 301.

⁵⁹ Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils.*, 149.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁶¹ Greg, "Prostitution," 502.

⁶² Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 10.

⁶³ Tait, *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*, 7.

⁶⁴ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 12. Italics in original.

⁶⁵ A reader may notice that this 50,000 figure is most persistent. Both Hale and "Scrutator" cite the 50,000 number from the 1793 Colquhoun study, and Greg also mentions it in his own 1850 essay. It is particularly remarkable that for at least fifty years, this was the most reliable number to be had concerning the prostitute population. Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function.*, 89.

⁶⁶ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil*, 10-11.

⁶⁷ Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution*, 11.

⁶⁸ Greg, "Prostitution," 475.

⁶⁹ Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*, 133-34.

⁷⁰ Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils.*, 18.

⁷¹ Greg, "Prostitution," 461.

⁷² Richelot, *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*, 3-4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁵ Greg, "Prostitution," 479. Capitalization in original.

⁷⁶ "Public Prostitution," *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 55 (1858).

⁷⁷ ———, "Prostitution," 502-03.

Chapter 4.

The Prostitute's Voice in the Public Eye: Surveilling Anonymous "Unfortunates" Within the
Times of London

Acton's tart reply in the *British Medical Journal* indicated that another force, journalism, was already weighing in on the debate over prostitution. It is this point, the late 1850s, which represents a tipping point in public discourse over the "great social evil." This chapter argues that the pervasive surveillance by a kind of journalism was able to do what the efforts of statisticians could not: generate a conceptualization of the prostitute and place it before the public eye, on a grand scale. Unlike the efforts of medical reformers, social scientists, and evangelicals, the prostitute offered up within the medium of mass communication would bear none of the uncertainty that accompanied statistical research, nor would it be limited to the select readership of reformers' tracts or literary journals. Within a set of anonymous letters to the editor of the *Times* of London in 1858, the "fallen woman" of evangelical tomes is replaced with another kind of prostitute: the capable capitalist, who fit neatly within the industrial milieu of Britain and prescribed a policy of tolerance, rather than outright punishment. Through the prostitutes' voices within the pages of the *Times*, the *Times* generated a different definition that would eventually contribute to the legalization of prostitution in 1864.

In order to further this argument, I first review the limitations of medical surveillance and research at this time, insofar as pervasive anxieties over inaccuracies within statistical studies hobbled reformer's efforts in generating a faithful representation of prostitution. The worries over social science, however, were concomitant with the rise of the popular press, which was gaining readership at an astonishing rate. In the second section of this chapter, I address journalism as it existed as a means to observe the population and render a new observation to the

public: whereas the statistician, moralist, and doctor had struggled to accurately depict the inscrutable prostitute, journalism at this time could generate and present a conceptualization of prostitution derived not from numbers, but from ostensible first-person testimonies which vividly depicted the plight and opinions of two “unfortunates.” To demonstrate this, I first use Foucault’s notions of police and panopticism to clarify the role of surveillance within journalism. I then use a case study and analysis of letters to the editor allegedly from two anonymous prostitutes, published in February 1858 in the *Times* of London. Finally, I reflect on the implications of these letters in generating a new definition of prostitution within public discourse that would lend itself to the legalization of prostitution just six years afterwards.

A Sign of the Times: The Failings of Statistics and the Rise of the Newspaper

Up to this point in my study, the studies of the evangelical reformer, medical man, and social scientist have figured most prominently into the debates over prostitution. As noted in the end of chapter three, reformers already had come to the conclusion that prostitution, in order to be effectively governed, must be legalized and dealt with in terms of disease and public health rather than a moral calamity. This opinion certainly won out when British Parliament passed the first Contagious Diseases (C. D.) Act in 1864, an act which provided “for the sanitary inspection of prostitutes” to prevent the spread of syphilis and remarkably enough, initially failed to provoke any considerable public opposition.¹ This act marked a change in public discourse, which had ostensibly abandoned the tragic “fallen woman” who haunted melodramatic fiction and evangelical campaigns in favor of another figure, the woman found in the reports of the statistician. In an effort to grasp the nature of “the great social evil,” researchers generated immense reports on prostitution garnered from data in police files and their own fieldwork, reports that were later instrumental to the C. D. Act of 1864. But when one realizes, just as the

statisticians did, that accuracy in their investigation of the common harlot was impossible, the fall of the fallen woman to the drab masses of part-time, working class prostitutes within public discourse simply cannot be credited solely to the deceptively neat columns of figures.

To credit urban medicine alone with the shift in public discourse would be to ignore the uncertain confidence that statistics inspired, offering only an obscured image of the common prostitute and ultimately limiting access to the individual. Examination of urban medicine reveals that the methods of investigators bore a debilitating flaw. Anxiousness is pervasive in the statistician's reports on prostitution: what if the numbers are not quite right—and certainly, how could they be? Mary Poovey stated, "Prostitution challenged anatomical analysis because prostitutes were so difficult to count," to the point that both "exaggeration and underestimation presented equal dangers to the would-be statistician."² Powerful as they were, the confessions of the investigators themselves testify to the stunted power of scientific method when applied to the common prostitute. While numbers struggled to assess the health of the social body, this was not the only social concern and locus of control: keeping up appearances of public morals was just as important as maintaining public health. Maintaining the moral façade of the public body was a concern distinct from maintaining public health. As Greg concluded within *The Westminster Review*, prostitution "must not be interfered with, unless carried on in such a manner as to outrage public decency or endanger public health."³

The public eye that looked after common decency had much less difficulty spanning the distance between government and prostitute than the statistics of urban medicine. The task of viewing the population and guiding public discourse fell, in part, to the keen gaze of the journalist. Journalists, who constituted the very public eye of Victorian society, enacted the role of police in generating a new definition of prostitution within public discourse. The prostitute's voice within the pages of a popular newspaper generated a new version of the shady

streetwalker: one who was part of the social body and who should be disciplined with respect to common decency. Insofar as she did not offend the public eye, the prostitution should not constitute a punishable offense.

For Victorian London, there could not have been a better police force than one of the largest newspapers, the *Times*. While the urban medicine reports on prostitution had a limited audience, a publication like the *Times* certainly had a much wider readership. In 1850 its readership was four times that of four other major London newspapers combined, and in 1855 circulation was estimated at 62,000.⁴ Critical to my analysis is Foucault's conceptualization of panopticism with respect to the function of police within disciplinary power. After an overview of these concepts, I will briefly examine the police function inherent within journalism at this time before turning to an exemplary case of surveillance, a set of letters to the editor of the *Times* in February 1858 from two anonymous prostitutes, along with the editor's reply.

Surveillance and Journalism: Panopticism in the Pages of Black and White Newsprint

While I argue that tactics of surveillance are evidenced within these letters to the editor, it is important to elucidate how surveillance manifested itself within journalism. Primarily, Foucault is helpful in understanding how certain tactics of journalism acted upon the population as surveillance, vis-à-vis "panopticism." While he never explicitly tied panopticism to the functions of journalism, the concept helps to clarify the ways in which journalism created a particular knowledge of the population, consequently shifting public discourse over prostitution.

Foucault noted that disciplinary power arose during the 1700s, during the widespread decay of monarchies across Europe. Up until the end of the eighteenth-century, monarchical sovereignty had produced a "spectacular, unlimited, personal, irregular and discontinuous power," in effect, a power that allowed pockets of illegality to flourish unchecked.⁵ When the

monarchical and Christian governments of Europe declined throughout the eighteenth-century, ways of governing had to function differently than before.⁶ The aforementioned development of urban medicine was just one tactic within the “synaptic regime of power,” power that was exercised “*within* the social body, rather than *from above* it.”⁷ In effect, it was the body of the individual, with all its “acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behavior” that became the source of power, rather than the divine mandate of the monarch.⁸ As Thomas Lemke asserted, in this form of government, power is not merely politics plus knowledge, but a crafting of “political knowledge,” with an eye toward maintaining population.⁹

Generating this knowledge was a task of the police.¹⁰ Of course, it is important to recognize that police is not a static conceptualization for Foucault. At times, he describes police as a part of a wider regime of security, as he does within “The Political Technology of Individuals.” As originally conceptualized in the eighteenth-century, the police were an administrative body, the individuals that worked to ““see to everything pertaining to men’s happiness”” and the preservation of life essential to the stabilization of the state.¹¹ Foucault noted that “police” bears the negative connotation today because productive functions of police dissolved into other institutions, such as health care, social welfare, economic and population controls.¹² Like Foucault, Jacques Donzelot recognized that police or policing is not necessarily the repressive enforcement of laws, “but encompassed all the methods for developing the quality of the population and the strength of the nation.”¹³ Once the means of encouraging a healthy population were generated, government devised tactics by which they could “reduce the most unfavorable, deviant normalities in relation to the normal, general curve.”¹⁴ Therefore, population becomes a means to an end, in effect, “the instruments of government,” upon which “a range of multiform tactics” operate.¹⁵

The police are also aligned with disciplinary power, as administrative bodies that seek to normalize a population, primarily through surveillance. Of course, as observation is a necessity to discipline, the constant demand for watchful attention to a population is one of the critical problems of a disciplinary government. When Jeremy Bentham conceived of the Panopticon in the late 1700s, he demonstrated the pervasive capacity of disciplinary power. While the Panopticon was originally a prison plan, Foucault noted that the primary function is surveillance, a type of power that examines a population.¹⁶ Panopticism includes those police tactics of careful observation, generating documents such as dossiers and case studies.¹⁷ Rather than the meticulous imposed order of discipline, panopticism sought to take police power down to an even more diffuse level, in order to “grasp [phenomena] at the level of their nature” through observation.¹⁸ This panopticism is precisely what constitutes “the formation of a disciplinary society” in that it supersedes the boundaries of “enclosed disciplines” and seeks to interconnect the sites of power, “making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements.”¹⁹

Panopticism spread; “The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body.”²⁰ “The Panoptic system [were] . . . these apparatuses [on] which rested on the basis of small-scale, regional, dispersed Panoptisms,”²¹ which Foucault also called “centers of observation disseminated throughout society.”²² Both disciplinary tactics and surveillance “spread throughout the whole social body, the formation of what might be called in general the disciplinary society.”²³ This is a critical point, as this kind of power must be “a productive network which runs through the whole social body.”²⁴ So when those who governed had only limited access to the body, as was the case when statistical study was applied to prostitution, there had to be another means of gaining access to the bodies of individuals. Foucault seems to have understood that journalism was just this kind of

tactic, although he never elaborated. For instance, in response to an interviewer's question about Bentham's confidence in the sobering influence of the panoptic gaze, he briefly commented, "It was journalism, that capital invention of the nineteenth-century, which made evident all the utopian character of this politics of the gaze."²⁵

Foucault speculated that Bentham "dreamt of transforming [disciplinary power] into a network of mechanisms that would be everywhere and always alert, running through society without interruption in space or in time."²⁶ I contend Bentham was doing precisely this, not only when he drew the plans for the Panopticon, but also when he founded *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*, a publication dedicated to commenting on public affairs, not the least of which included prostitution.²⁷ Upon examination of this publication and others, it becomes clear that, as Foucault said, whatever limits may be fixed on juridicism, "universally *widespread* panopticism enables [power] to operate, on the underside of the law, a machinery that is both immense and minute, which supports, reinforces, multiplies the asymmetry of power and undermines the limits that are traced around the law," so that "the panopticisms of every day may well be below the level of emergence of the great apparatuses and the great political struggles."²⁸

The common prostitute may have confounded the statistical apparatus of urban medicine, but for the journalist, she could be seen clearly. It is not difficult to see the disciplinary forces of police playing out in Victorian journalism. Seemingly imbued with a power that was greater than police or the legislature, journalists of the day viewed prostitution as a problem that only they could properly grasp. Greg declared, "Statesmen see the mighty evil [prostitution] lying on the main pathway of the world, and . . . [dare] not examine its symptoms or probe its depth;" therefore, "it is from a strong conviction that this is not worthy behavior on the part of those who aspire to guide either the actions or the opinions of others, that, after much hesitation and many

misgivings, we have undertaken to speak of so dismal and delicate a matter.”²⁹ And yet, it is important to remember how those who chose to speak of such “dismal and delicate” matters fashioned their alleged observations. Even Henry Mayhew, who famously observed the lower classes within the pages of the *Morning Chronicle* and in *London Labour and the London Poor* during the 1850s and 60s, stands as a prime example of how the journalist appropriated and constructed the voices of those who “spoke” to the larger population via newsprint. As Barry Reay explained, “Mayhew ‘relayed’ the life stories of the people as seamless histories, when they were in fact narratives crafted from a series of questions and responses.”³⁰ Thus, it is important to remember that these newspaper accounts are not a facile import of individual voices to the larger public. Rather, the prostitute’s voice, seemingly coming directly from the streets to the pages of a popular London newspaper, was offered to the public, in part to fashion a new definition of prostitution: one that would in part send the C. D. Act of 1864 through Parliament with little objection.

In examining the surveillance tactics of journalism, I focus on an exemplary case study. In February of 1858, a set of anonymous letters to the editor appeared in the *Times* of London. A letter from a sad, fallen woman who called herself “One More Unfortunate” appeared on February 4, wherein she bemoaned her fallen state and entreated society to kindly regard her as a warning. This was followed by a plea from “Amicus” on February 6, begging “One More Unfortunate” to please send him her address, so that she might receive his charitable help. “One More Unfortunate” wrote again on February 11, reflecting solemnly on her swift recovery from her former life. It might have ended there were it not for a letter on February 24 from “Another Unfortunate,” who sternly repudiated “One More Unfortunate.” She presented herself as a successful prostitute, content with her lifestyle and harshly critical of bourgeois society. The next

day, the editor added his commentary to reflect on the perspectives of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate.”

There are doubts as to whether these letters are really from “anonymous” prostitutes and not a clever journalist.³¹ What is known is that these letters were printed under the supervision of editor John Thaddeus Delane, (fawningly) described thus: “He was the *Times*. You could trace the man in every line...for hardly an article appeared in the *Times* that did not pass under his supervision, and very few appeared that did not bear the traces of his pen.”³² Certainly, any editor could bear some influence over the content of a newspaper, but there is no way of telling to what extent in these letters. As though he anticipated a measure of incredulity from the audience as to the identity of the two “unfortunates,” Delane assured the reader in his reply on February 25, “We are not endeavouring [sic] to palm off a cunningly executed literary imposture upon our readers,” and yet, despite the facile disavowal of ulterior motives, it is difficult to forget that “there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives.”³³

What is ultimately more compelling than questions of authorship are how these letters functioned as a tactic of journalism in order to create a shift in public discourse. While anonymous letters to the editor may appear to be inconsequential, there is strong evidence that testifies otherwise. The lengthy column space afforded within the paper itself indicates that Delane thought it important enough to be featured so, as well as offering his own headliner response the following day, February 25. If Delane had intended to get a response, he was not disappointed. Charles Dickens immediately wrote Delane to inquire as to the author of “One More Unfortunate.”³⁴ Acton stated in his hefty study of prostitution published in 1870, “My readers may recollect the effect produced by the letter of a brickmaker’s daughter, when published in ‘The Times’ for Feb. 24, 1858.”³⁵ He reprints substantial portions of the letter, but he does not elaborate on exactly what “effect” the letter of “Another Unfortunate” had on the

public. Yet, if the public reaction to these letters is partly obscured, the impact and power inherent within the letters certainly is not: when even a leading researcher of the day cited the letter of “Another Unfortunate,” and had little doubt as to whether or not his audience would remember it over ten years after it was initially printed, the policing by a journalist and its role in shifting public discourse seems as immediate and clear as the voice brought into focus within the eye of the *Times*.

As even a respected authority took this letter seriously even a decade after publication, so did others. Through these letters, the very confessions of “unfortunates,” sought a knowledge that subverted the opacity of numbers. Like statistics, the letters argued for a revised understanding of prostitution, as an inextricable part of society.³⁶ These letters accomplished this by first doing away with the fallen woman stereotype and offering a more common harlot to the reader, which I address in the first section of my analysis, “From the ‘Fallen Woman’ to the Common Harlot.” Next, within “Generating Numbers Through Names,” I contend that these letters seek to quantify prostitution via pseudonyms, which denote the productive nature of prostitution. Finally, in “Common Decency as Control—Regulation with Regard for the Public Eye,” I argue that given the nature of the typical prostitute, these letters offer the public eye as the enforcer of common decency and the power by which to curtail prostitution.

From the “Fallen Woman” to the Capable Capitalist

Like the statistics of urban medicine, the letters printed in the *Times* addressed a common misconception about prostitution: the romantic myth of the suffering fallen woman.³⁷ As Mayhew said four years after these letters, “it is a vulgar error, and a popular delusion, that the life of a prostitute is as revolting to herself, as it appears to the moralist sternly lamenting over the condition of the fallen.”³⁸ While he endeavored to do away with these misconceptions with

his painstaking fieldwork, there was yet another means by which to amend this misconception, for example, through the drama of “One More Unfortunate,” whose first letter was printed on February 4. She neatly fits the fallen woman stereotype: in her letter, she established that she was once of decent status, whose parents had taught her by “precept and example,” and before her descent into vice, she had been an ex-governess of a “highly respectable family.” “One More Unfortunate” bemoaned that she was “cut off from the moral, social and religious worlds,” whose best hope is that she may serve as a moral object lesson for those good people she passes in the street. Her shame was so deep that she explained in the P.S., “I cannot give you my name, having so disgraced it, nor my address, as it is disreputable.” Just two days later, on February 6, a brief reply from “Amicus” asks “One More Unfortunate” to remember that “no mortal on this side of the grave need call herself ‘lost,’ however far gone in sin.” This kind benefactor offered to lend “One More Unfortunate” the help she needs if she “will communicate her name, however ‘disgraced,’ and her address, however ‘disreputable’” to him. “Amicus’s” offer did not go unheeded, as “One More Unfortunate” explained a week after her initial letter on February 11: “‘Amicus’ reminds me that One, than whom no greater ever trod this earth, was most solicitous about the least deserving . . . I beg him to accept my thanks.”

This exciting drama of “One More Unfortunate” is not just a cliché tale of kindness from strangers. The romantic tragedies of popular moralizing fiction must be done away with, as it neither reflected the reality of prostitution, nor was a useful conceptualization in which to base governing tactics. If “One More Unfortunate” was just this type of woman, it only makes sense that some generous reader should respond to her tragic story and “‘take her up tenderly,’” just as “One More Unfortunate” urged the public to do for her kind. Therefore, “One More Unfortunate” once again becomes part of society as she muses on February 11, “Although society is dead against us, we are not all incapable of being lifted out of the mire of reprobation,

and becoming, as many are now, wives and mothers of exemplary behaviour, whatever be passing within." This drama suggested that while there may be suffering fallen women out in the streets, they would be saved by the kind Christians within society; in effect, removed from public concern.

Of course, it seemed that very few women on the streets were part of the romantic, abandoned sisterhood. Another anonymous letter written by "Another Unfortunate" was printed the following February 24. At face value, the story of "One More Unfortunate" stands in contentious opposition with the letter from "Another Unfortunate." "Another Unfortunate" holds no sentimental notions about her lot in life. In testament to her lower class upbringing, she explains, "My parents did not give me any education; they did not instill into my mind virtuous precepts nor set me a good example." They were drunks and laborers, who offered "Another Unfortunate" nothing except the "freedom" to become a prostitute.

This freedom was partly due to a complete lack of moral upbringing, as "Another Unfortunate" "knew nothing of the laws of God but by dim tradition and faint report." The absence of moral education, along with her views on sex, further confirmed her opinion that she was just "one of those who, as Rousseau says, are 'born to be prostitutes.'" "One More Unfortunate" talked of sex in terms of "ruin and degradation" in her first letter, but "Another Unfortunate" spoke of sex as a natural and ubiquitous element of lower class life. By the time she was thirteen, she reported:

I had larked [had sex] with the boys of my own age . . . I had seen much and heard abundantly of the mysteries of the sexes . . . such things had been matters of common sight and common talk.

Whereas the wickedness of “One More Unfortunate’s” sin troubled her deeply, “Another Unfortunate” had no such affinity for the melodramatic. In contrast, her story reaches a rather anticlimactic point when she describes her sexual initiation:

I lost—what? not my virtue, for I never had any. That which is commonly, but untruly called virtue, I gave away. You reverend Mr. Philanthropist—what call you virtue? Is it not the principle, the essence, which keeps watch and ward over the conduct, over the substance, the materiality? No such principle ever kept watch and ward over me, and I repeat that I never lost that which I never had—my virtue.

Without any qualms as to her amorality or lower class origin, “Another Unfortunate” represented in persona what investigators struggled to represent in numbers. The frank testimony of “Another Unfortunate” counters the fallen woman narrative of “One More Unfortunate,” a lower class prostitute boldly confessing her amoral upbringing. The editor further recognizes this unromantic nature of prostitution in a reply the following day on February 25: “The great bulk of the London prostitutes are not Magdalens either in *esse* or *posse*, nor specimens of humanity in agony...nor preparing to throw themselves from Waterloo-bridge, but are comfortably practicing their trade, either as the entire or partial means of their subsistence;” there is no point, then, to “attribute to them the sentimental delicacies of a heroine of romance.”

Generating Numbers Through Names

Not only was it important for political knowledge to articulate who the prostitute was, but also how many there were. Even without the numbers of a statistician, there were other means by which to quantify the common prostitute. Here, it is their very names that indicate the pervasiveness of prostitution within society. The authors of these letters call themselves “One

More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” names that imply replication, identifying themselves as only one of many unfortunates, or just another and another and another. They each spoke as one for many more. Society did not merely contain pockets of bad women, but was positively rife with them, inasmuch as prostitution was a natural offspring of industrial society. “Another Unfortunate” offered the most vivid images of this condition, as she metaphorically constructs prostitution as some sordid crop springing from the fertile beds of industry:

“[Prostitutes] are the natural growth of things, and are constantly ripening for the harvest.” More gruesome still, she asks, “If I am a hideous cancer in society, are not the causes of the diseases to be sought in the rottenness of the carcass?” Cancers cannot exist outside a body, but grow out of it; if prostitution is a cancer, it can only be assumed that it was fostered by the larger social body.

These two metaphors clearly depicted prostitution as an inevitable part of society. Even though “One More Unfortunate” employed conventional sentiments expressing a separation between the fallen prostitutes and good society, her call for gentle treatment of “lost mortals” in the February 4 letter was rooted in an awareness of the productive nature of society: “Recollect it was man who made us what we are,” and not only does man make prostitution by patronage, but it is also man who makes women into prostitutes when he “employs us on starvation wages.” From this perspective, society is a veritable prostitute factory, making the women who make the goods for consumption into prostitutes, making prostitutes through patronage, and making prostitutes into “the Great Social Evil.” “The Great Social Evil,” in turn, made possible a colossal body of discourse, fixated on prostitution as “an object of fascination and disgust,” proliferating discussion not only in legislation and evangelical social work, but within “novels, manifestos, letters to the editor, and police reports.”³⁹ Evil must be converted, eradicated, or at least controlled, and as “the Great Social Evil,” prostitution became the single greatest threat to men, women, and the family. However, through the drama presented within the *Times*, “One

More Unfortunate” became reintegrated into bourgeois society as a reformed prostitute, thanks to “Amicus,” and “Another Unfortunate” was every inch a self-made success: she frequented all the decent places of entertainment, her clothiers warmly and knowingly accepted her patronage; she was nothing less than a shining example of Victorian consumerism. Despite the demonized fantasies of prostitution, when one recognizes, through the voices of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” that “the Great Social Evil” was produced by society itself—plentiful and happening in plain sight—the label “the Great Social Evil” becomes incompatible as a description of what is really quite normal. Of course, just because something is normal does not mean that disciplinary force is foregone. As with any activity of the population, it is not enough to simply observe, but the disciplinary force inherent in this act of observation also bears a role in shaping this reality into a more useful one.

Common Decency as Control: Regulation with Regard for the Public Eye

The editor of the *Times* was right to conclude on February 25, “We have long since outlived the days when ‘Scarlet Letters,’ indicative of their shame, could be attached as marks of ignominy to those who had gone astray. We cannot import this offence as a crime into our Penal Code.” After all, pinning a scarlet letter on “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate” would have proved difficult, as they were not the kind of prostitutes that could be easily picked out of a crowded London street. But just because moral law could not be imposed without destroying society did not mean that infractions against discretions should continue unchecked. Let the public eye determine what is punishable. Appease bourgeois sensibility by enforcing outward decency as advocated within the letters of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” but respect the prostitutes’ right to exist within the society that made them by prudently restraining the extent to which prostitution is suppressed.

The letters maintain that decency should be preserved. Moral law could not be imposed, but flagrant displays of vice should be punished. In reference to the blatant displays of immorality on the streets, “One More Unfortunate” exclaims in her first letter, “there is a scandalous eye-sore and annoyance existing; remove it!” The editor was clearly in agreement: “outward decency” should be enforced. Prostitution may not be a disease that can be expunged from the body, but visual offenses should still be curbed. “Why should it be tolerated,” asks the editor, “that any of us cannot take mother or wife, sister or daughter, for a walk in Regent-street, or pass them in and out of a theater or other place of public amusement, without being compelled to bring them into contact with what they had better not see?” This concurred with “One More Unfortunate,” who solemnly accepted responsibility for her actions in the letter on February 4: “If I parade my iniquitous trade so as to commit a public outrage, I must expect to be checked in such openly vicious courses, for I believe the liberty of the subject should end where injury to others begins.” Even “Another Unfortunate,” proud as she was, did not “use bad language” or “offend the public eye by open indecencies,” as she, too, was aware of the societal pretenses of morality.

Generated through the testimonies of “One More Unfortunate,” “Another Unfortunate,” and the editor’s commentary, this surveillance of prostitutes on the streets in part constituted the disciplinary force that would control the extent to which prostitution could flourish. As “sex became a matter that required the social body as a whole, and virtually all of its individuals to place themselves under surveillance,” these letters enacted this keen awareness of the common prostitute: she was the observed and the observer, and she prudently circumscribed her actions according to the order that society demanded.⁴⁰ Of course, while prostitution offended public decency at times, it could not be suppressed in accordance with a morality that was not there, as “One More Unfortunate” warned in her first letter, saying, “While you gentlemen seduce, keep,

abandon, and then patronize us indiscriminately . . . be careful how you legislate for the oppression of one portion of your victims.” Prostitutes warranted a degree of protection from society, as individuals who also compromised the state. They were part of the state not only as a product of its sexual morality, but also as producers in a capitalistic system. After all, “Another Unfortunate” viewed prostitution simply as an opportunity to put her natural desires to “profitable use.” Similarly, the editor constructs them as partners in their capitalistic society:

They consider the calling an advantageous one, and they look upon their success in it with satisfaction . . . In fact, as it would seem, the great bulk of these persons look to their calling, as others do to their success in various kinds of trade or business, without misgiving, or shame, or anything of the sort.

Prostitutes, if understood as entrepreneurs, are then placed under the same strictures as other businesses. Let them conduct their business as necessary, argued the editor, with control “pointed at the preservation of outward decency; to aim at any other result by legislation or police regulations would be absurd.” Morality is not the aim of government, reasoned the editor, but instead “peace and order;” government must maintain decency, yet permit a large portion of the population to practice their trade as they must or want to do. The sinning woman must not be told, “Go and sin no more.” Instead, the confessor reasoned, a certain measure of sins are most useful, yet only to the point at which both individual and society benefit.

“Another Unfortunate” argued that “to subject us in mass to the pressure of force—of force wielded, for the most part, by ignorant, and often by brutal men—is only to add the cruelty of active persecution to the cruelty of the passive indifference which made us as we are.” Along with “One More Unfortunate’s” initial plea to “pray tell those good gentlemen who are bent upon ‘putting us down,’ that theirs is not only a delicate, but a difficult undertaking, and they should be careful lest they have more to answer for than they dream of in their philosophy.”

Prostitutes must be controlled, as are other members of society, in order to maintain the state. However, this should be done in an artful manner, without hypocritical brutality or undue persecution.

In response to “Another Unfortunate,” the editor remarked, “This is certainly a new view of the ‘Great Social Evil,’ and worthy the attention of all persons who are endeavouring [sic] to deal with it in a more complete manner than we can venture to recommend in the present state of our knowledge.” Obviously, “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate” were more than just “anonymous” prostitutes writing to *The Times* to be heard. They articulated political knowledge, advancing “the present state of our knowledge” from eradication of “the Great Social Evil” to upholding “common decency.” By doing away with the useless conceptualization of the sad “fallen woman” and offering the politically useful definition of prostitution as a part of the industrial landscape, “Another Unfortunate” offered a new kind of prostitute, a capable capitalist, who must be held accountable for violating public decency.

The Voice in the Public Eye: Surveillance Generating Discipline

The ostentatious transparency of letters from anonymous prostitutes may give a reader pause, but when the common woman from the streets spoke, articulate and familiar with Rousseau as she was, people listened. Aside from the off-handed doubts of Charles Dickens (see note 44), the letters offered a perspective that rang true for readers. Journalistic surveillance may operate “without the full awareness of the people,” hidden behind anonymous letters to the editor, neatly disguised as a candid voice from the streets.⁴¹ The truth about the authorship of these letters, whether really by “unfortunates” or by someone else, may never be revealed; nevertheless, these letters do reveal the subtle “multiform tactics” that the surveilling tactics of journalism employed to shape discourse and create a new definition of the prostitute. In the space

between the vitriol of evangelical writers and the sanction of prostitution through the C. D. Act, public discourse was wrenched from one understanding to another: prostitute as fallen woman to common whore. Viewing the letters of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate” as an exemplar of surveillance exercised by journalists demonstrates the means by which the voice of the prostitute was appropriated to generate a useful political knowledge of the population.

Insofar as prostitution as “the Great Social Evil” inherently limited discourse, superseding these limits required a shift from morals to the business of the body that proliferated industrial Britain. Countless documents, hours of government deliberation, and social science were critical in shifting discourse from the view of prostitution as an evil that could be plucked out of society to grudging acceptance of individuals produced and productive in society. Yet, despite the power of numbers, it seems that the voice of the common prostitute offered to the common reader of the *Times* bore considerable power in turning “the Great Social Evil” into just “Another Unfortunate” reality of industrial Britain.

Surely, the works of sociologist such as Parent-Duchâtelet, Tait, Talbot, Logan, Mayhew, Greg, Acton, Richelot, and others guided public discourse when they offered a scientific perspective of prostitution through numbers; but numbers simply could not penetrate the inscrutable prostitute who walked about in plain sight. It was also the watchful eyes of the *Times*, offering the voice of the prostitute to the population, that helped to generate a new political knowledge and disciplinary force. Journalism could surveil any dark corner of the streets, hear the individual’s testimony and subsequently offer this voice to the thousands who read newsprint everyday; this constituted a powerful, knowledgeable relationship, as “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge.”⁴² In this case, both the individualizing force of discipline and the fostering of life within the larger population are generated between the “Unfortunate” and entirety of the *Times* readership. Here, the prostitute

could clearly be seen, and her own testimony positioned her within the larger social milieu. Should she violate the bounds of common decency, she readily accepted any punishment that her behavior warranted. However, as part of the population, she also merited a measure of tolerance. If the prostitute was inherent to the conditions of society, then attempting to eradicate or unnecessarily punish this sector would not benefit the larger population.

Almost thirty years after “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” the surveillance offered by popular journalism continued to outshine the sober numbers. The *Pall Mall Gazette* printed “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,” a scandalous exposé of child prostitution carefully orchestrated by editor William Stead in 1885; while circulation had been around 8,000 just two years earlier, the story and ensuing outrage increased circulation to 12,000.⁴³ Walkowitz stated, “‘The Maiden Tribute’ became a component of political culture, the everyday culture of work, family, and gender relations; the mass culture of the new journalism, the official culture of the law, and the high culture of intellectuals,” a knowledge that was “taken up by different social constituencies and revised for a variety of political purposes.”⁴⁴ While the repercussions of the “Maiden Tribute” resounded far beyond what Stead could have anticipated, investigation of the episode itself is an exploration into the peculiar definition of prostitution generated from a pornographic text.

Like the alleged confessions of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” Stead’s own version of prostitution offered in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette* created a vast public outcry, as well as a dramatically different conceptualization of the prostitution. Unlike the anonymous letters of 1858, though, Stead’s “Maiden Tribute” did not cast the prostitute as a banal worker in industrial Britain, but instead sensationalized the prostitute into a maiden whose sexuality was divorced from the material conditions of her environment. Unlike the capable capitalist set forth in the example of “Another Unfortunate,” the “maiden” of the “Maiden

Tribute” demonstrated the epic confluence of mass communication and a pornographic imagination. In a sense, the “maiden” found in Stead’s pornography would seem even more real than “Another Unfortunate.” However, this seemingly fitting mode of construction would effectively wrench the prostitute out of reality and create a fantastic, pulpy version that undermined the political leverage Stead sought.

Notes

-
- ¹ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*, 1.
- ² Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 89.
- ³ Greg, "Prostitution," 448.
- ⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson et al., *English Traits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 336.
- ⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 88.
- ⁶ Michel Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 150.
- ⁷ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 39. Italics in original.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.
- ⁹ Thomas Lemke, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique," in *Rethinking Marxism Conference* (Amherst2000), 7.
- ¹⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 141; ———, "The Political Technology of Individuals," 153.
- ¹¹ Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," 157.
- ¹² Michel Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78* (Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan : République Française, 2007), 354.
- ¹³ Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 6-7.
- ¹⁴ Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*, 62.

¹⁵ Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 95.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Power*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 3, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 59.

¹⁷ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 71.

¹⁸ Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*, 46.

¹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 216.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

²¹ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 72.

²² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 212.

²³ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁴ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 119.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

²⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 209.

²⁷ F. Rosen, "Bentham, Jeremy (1748–1832)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison, and Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

²⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 223. Italics in original.

²⁹ Greg, "Prostitution," 448.

³⁰ Barry Reay, *Watching Hannah: Sexuality, Horror and Bodily De-Formation in Victorian England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 23.

³¹ John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (New York: Signet, 1969), 235.

³² Pebody, *English Journalism, and the Men Who Have Made It*, 120-21.

³³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 95.

³⁴ Dickens's correspondence with Delane was on behalf of Angela Burdett-Coutts, one of the wealthiest women in Britain at the time. A close friend of Dickens, she requested that he write to Delane, expressing her concern for the well-being of "One More Unfortunate," the alleged former governess who contritely pleaded for society's clemency on behalf of the pitiable fallen women. While this brief correspondence between Dickens and Delane answers none of the questions of authenticity that hound the case of both "One More Unfortunate" and "Another Unfortunate," their letters provocatively offer a latter-day reader their rather sexist views of women and authorship. On February 25, Dickens wrote, "Miss Coutts (no doubt with a kind object) has asked me to try to find out for her, who wrote the one more unfortunate letter in the *Times* of yesterday. Of course she proceeds on the assumption that it is really written, or prompted, by such a person as it purports to originate with."

Delane replied the same day, "I am bound under the most solemn adjurations not to reveal the name of the 'Unfortunate' but I will call on her in the course of a day or two and ask if she is willing to be revealed to [Miss Coutts]. What an admirable letter it was! Except for Curren Bell [pseudonym for Charlotte Brontë] or Mrs Gaskell [author of *Mary Barton*], I know of no woman who could have sustained such a tone through nearly two columns." The entirety of Delane and Dickens's correspondence may be found in the following: Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson, eds., *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, vol. 8, 1856-1858 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 524-25. Italics in original.

It should be noted that Dickens is technically referencing "Another Unfortunate's" letter on February 24, but Miss Coutts was inquiring after "One More Unfortunate," who wrote on February 4 and 11. While Dickens and Delane's letters answer none of the lingering questions over authorship or authenticity, the letters impugn themselves by virtue of their timely publication. Indeed, they are ever so coincidental as to suspect some manner of orchestration, however unproven it will remain. The *Times* had just finished reporting on the "Great Social Evil" via the meetings held by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, from December 31, 1857 to January 28, 1858. These meetings, attended by London clergy, chiefly called for prostitution to be punished by means of government intervention. Given the *Times* coverage as of late 1857 and early 1858, the neat, sentimental drama of "One More Unfortunate" and the fierce call for tolerance and legalization voiced by "Another Unfortunate" would have been quite fresh to the readers of the *Times*. Storey and Tillotson, eds., *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, 524, n. 3.

³⁵ William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns.*, 2nd ed. (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), 183-85.

³⁶ Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," 149.

³⁷ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*, 13, 34, 39.; Nina Auerbach, "The Rise of the Fallen Woman," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35, no. 1 (1980).

³⁸ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, vol. 4 (New York,: Dover Publications, 1968), 212.

³⁹ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*, 32.

⁴⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 116.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 100.

⁴² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 27.

⁴³ Alison Plowden and British Broadcasting Corporation, *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1974), 104.

⁴⁴ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, *Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 11.

Chapter 5.

A Rhetoric of Pornography: Private Style and Public Policy in “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”

Through the letters of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate,” I argued that the surveilling tactics of journalism created a significant shift in the discourse over prostitution, one that challenged the “fallen woman” conceptualization with that of a capable capitalist, a woman who constituted an inextricable part of the population and demanded a measure of respect in the actions taken to discipline her and her kind. Though the exact influence of the letters as well as the identities of the speaker(s) behind the letters are all but impossible to determine, the narrative presented between the fallen woman and the happy harlot still offers a different definition, one apart from the statistician’s reports. Within the pages of the *Times*, a surveillance of the alleged voices from the streets was placed before the eyes of the public.

As I have offered an example of journalistic policing, I now move to a more dramatic example of journalism marshalling the public discourse over prostitution, one that cast the prostitute not as a willful harlot or fallen woman, but as a violated virgin. Whereas the author(s) of “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate” are unknown, the “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” offers a known author with explicit motivations. Whereas the previous chapter focused on anonymous “confessions,” this chapter investigates the impacts of journalistic policing through a specific rhetorical form, pornography. Whereas the anonymous letters to the editor of the *Times* offered the reading public a version of prostitution that sought to normalize a endemic practice, Stead’s version of prostitution offered within the “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” did just the opposite—it sensationalized, scintillated, and sexualized the public discourse over prostitution in the summer of 1885. That Stead carefully committed a journalistic

surveillance of the underworld is not in question. In this chapter, I turn my attention to the stylistic turns and tropes of the “Maiden Tribute,” which warrant attention insofar as a particular form—pornography—may create a particular political knowledge. Therefore, this chapter seeks to focus less on the tactics of policing and surveillance, and more on how the definition of prostitution created through such rhetorical tactics gave rise to potentially dangerous politics.

Pornography in Public: The “Maiden Tribute,” Politics, and a Problematic Form

On July 4, 1885, Stead, editor of London’s *Pall Mall Gazette*, issued “A Frank Warning” on his front page. “All those who are squeamish, and all those who are prudish, and all those who prefer to live in a fool’s paradise of imaginary innocence and purity,” had best not read the newspaper the following Monday and subsequent three days. Those who would read had better brace themselves for a “story of an actual pilgrimage to a real hell.” Unpleasant as the story was, he assured his readers that it is “an authentic record of unimpeachable facts . . . and its publication is necessary.” Publication was necessary, he believed, because of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill stalled in Parliament’s House of Commons. Stead felt the bill, which proposed raising the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen, would only pass with the assistance of his investigative muckraking.¹ With the intention that his report would rescue the bill from its anticipated extinction, Stead thus vowed to “publish the report of a Special and Secret commission of Inquiry . . . dealing with those phases of sexual criminality which the [bill] was framed to repress.”

As promised, the four-part “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” was published on July 6, 7, 8, and 10. The “Maiden Tribute” exposed the bribery system safeguarding brothels from prosecution and the entrapment of young females into prostitution, and it also featured a scintillating account detailing Stead’s purchase of a thirteen year-old girl, Eliza Armstrong (alias

“Lily”). The four-day serial dramatized Stead’s investigation of child prostitution, beginning with the “Lily” episode, which was featured in the July 6 edition. The July 7 installment described how young women were recruited or scammed into prostitution. July 8 further detailed how young women from the country or abroad were entrapped within prostitution, while explaining how the law and police facilitated this. On July 9, the newspaper’s articles reflexively considered the scandal created by the “Maiden Tribute,” wherein Stead further explained the motivation behind the report, defended his work from detractors, and printed several pages of letters that both praised Stead’s brave undertaking and condemned him for printing such gross material. The final installment, on July 10, levied a number of accusations against the police force, which Stead viewed as complicit with those who engaged in pimping young girls.

All told, it was an unprecedented journalistic endeavor, one that quickly generated one and a half million reprints of the article.² Letters to the editor published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on July 9 registered the public’s praise, like that from “a Liberal peer” who determined that it was “necessary that the iniquity should be proved, exposed, and denounced in trumpet tones.” For this feat, Stead “deserve[d] honour and gratitude from all who have [had] at heart the promotion of the cause of humanity.” The brassy acclaim heralded the immanent consummation of Stead’s express wish. The bill, which came to be called “Stead’s Law,” was revived in Parliament on July 9 and passed on August 10, 1885,³ all of this following the uproar over the “Maiden Tribute” and nearly 400,000 signatures gathered by the Salvation Army in support of the bill.⁴ Stead assured the passing of the bill in less than a month, but the power of “Maiden Tribute” was far from spent. In two month’s time, Stead would find that the “Maiden Tribute” had made him a criminal, convicted on charges of kidnapping thirteen year-old Eliza Armstrong.⁵

Stead's highly publicized heroism and subsequent criminality are just two manifestations of the "Maiden Tribute's" intriguing effects, and much scholarship already attests to this tempestuous episode.⁶ However, I am interested in neither its facile effectiveness in passing the Criminal Law Amendment Bill nor the virulent backlash against Stead. Rather, I believe the infamous episode of the "Maiden Tribute" offers a rich case study of power and knowledge. This incendiary exposé offers an opportunity to investigate the spectacular but little understood interplay between politics and pornography, a relationship that has gotten scant attention within the discipline and is long overdue for a more thorough and grounded investigation.

Primarily, the "Maiden Tribute" represents a major rupture in the definition of prostitution—at least in part, the outrage prompted by the "Maiden Tribute" lies in the sensational version of the prostitute that Stead presented to the public: the innocent virgin, violated by the terrible figure of the profligate gentleman. Yet, this episode also demonstrates the political implications of a literary form. The political power generated through Stead's pornographic text was destructive to Stead's long-term cause because it isolated sexuality from the material economic structures that shaped the lives of the young British maidens Stead was so intent on saving. To advance this thesis, I turn to the rhetoric of pornography. In doing so, this essay highlights the particular knowledge—and ignorance—that Stead created and unleashed upon the London public in July of 1885. I first offer a discussion of pornography in rhetorical terms: ideology and aesthetics, power and knowledge. Second, I describe the political tensions that served as impetus to Stead's writing the "Maiden Tribute" before turning to a reading of the text as pornography. Finally, I address the political implications of Stead's pornographic definition of prostitution. Through a close examination of both the text itself and circumstances of the scandal, I intend to examine how the pornographic definition of prostitution shaped a particular form of political power.

In light of this argument, my analysis of the “Maiden Tribute” illuminates the politics implicit within a particular stylistic mode, that of pornography. As Stephen Browne deduced from his study of the incendiary *American Slavery As It Is*, “Ideology is style,” meaning that “when it comes to ideology . . . there can be no ‘behind’ and no ‘beyond’ the style in which it advances its claims on the public consciousness.”⁷ If this is the case, then I would contend that the “Maiden Tribute,” which bears the hallmarks of a pornographic aesthetic, also carries a peculiar political ideology. This concern for the interconnections between a pornographic style and a particular ideology seeks to provide an alternative theorization of pornographic rhetoric. To date, the only sustained analysis of pornography in rhetorical criticism is the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* exchange between Lawrence Rosenfield and Robert E. Sanders.⁸ While I appreciate this initial debate, the definition of pornography put forth by Rosenfield and Sanders’s subsequent challenge are not instructive to the case of the “Maiden Tribute” because of the limited view of pornography. Rather than starting with the assumption that “pornography is consumed by society’s victims,” which is neither true nor applicable to the “Maiden Tribute,” I have chosen the work of Susan Sontag as a starting point.⁹ Not only was she educated by rhetorical scholars Richard McKeon and Kenneth Burke, both of whom she cites as profound influences, but her essays “The Pornographic Imagination” and *Regarding the Pain of Others* provide a better rubric by which to assess the “Maiden Tribute” because both are focused on the aesthetic and psychological dimensions of pornography.¹⁰

Carnal Knowledge: The Ideology and Aesthetics of Pornography

My decision to call the “Maiden Tribute” pornography is grounded primarily in the public reactions of Stead’s readers, which I found in the July 9 issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Amid the praise for Stead’s endeavor, a number of people called the “Maiden Tribute” “the vilest

of vile brothel literature,” and a “mass of disgusting detail.” It should be noted that the objections to the “Maiden Tribute” lie not only within the “disgusting detail” and sexualized content of the article, but also within the very public nature of the piece. Some readers believed that the “Maiden Tribute” was truly smutty literature because it was placed within the view of the young and morally weak. As Lisa Sigel explained, the Victorian conceptualization of pornography “hinged upon access. It was presumed that certain people could look at [sexual] representations with limited emotional, social, and legal consequences while others could not.”¹¹ This anxiety over access is clearly evidenced within the reactions to the “Maiden Tribute” and is a strong indication that this work may profitably be read as pornography.

For example, the Plymouth *Western Daily Mercury* leveled the charge of pornography against the “Maiden Tribute”:

With the object of the print in question all must deeply sympathize. Its object is to arouse public attention so as to compel the Government to pass certain measures affecting the legal age of childhood. . . . But what about the means adopted? Does the end justify the means? Probably not. While righteous indignation might be awakened, morbid tastes are gratified and an immediate stimulus is thus given to evil that a subsequent good may come.

While the upright may respond appropriately to Stead’s clarion call for action, morally weaker persons were offered nothing but an invitation to degraded gratification.

These “morbid tastes” were most objectionable to a fair portion of Stead’s reading public. The same issue also printed a number of protests from readers who failed to see the argument for the obscenity that was placed before the public’s eyes. One objector, J.T. Levett, asserted that “it must be evident to anyone that no good purpose can be served by the publication of the mass of disgusting detail which pollutes your pages, and renders your journal unfit to be received in any

respectable or decently conducted family.” Likewise, Lewis Miles fittingly ascribed the very pitfalls commonly associated with pornography to the “Maiden Tribute”: “while recognizing and appreciating the motive, I feel assured you underestimate the enormous influence you possess, and fail to realize the fact that, by the minute details and facilities you so graphically describe, you will strengthen and stimulate and encourage the very vices you abhor!”

Mr. Charles R. Warren added in the same July 9 edition that he was terribly worried about the young paper delivery boys he saw at his office, who had been behaving very strangely.

For the past two days these juveniles have been seen eagerly perusing the columns of your paper, which once had the reputation of being written by gentlemen for gentlemen. Much, of course, they failed to understand. . . . But when they did light upon a passage whose meaning was glaring and palpable, a beam of intelligence overspread their youthful countenances, and they speedily hastened to invite their companions to partake of the fair feast provided by your generosity and enterprise. In these days of advance we have witnessed strange sights; but perhaps none have equaled the spectacle presented of small boys traveling on their errands intent on a paper they never perused before . . . and informing their own undeveloped minds by striving to spell through column after column of what old-fashioned folk might foolishly term the vilest of vile brothel literature.

Clearly, a portion of the “Maiden Tribute’s” audience did perceive a pornographic text that gratified the “morbid tastes” of society’s weaker members. But, to dismiss pornography as mere obscenity, and therefore unworthy of examination, is to do so at the expense of ignoring a rich message.

While the reactions of Stead’s more conservative readers are certainly helpful in reading the “Maiden Tribute” as pornography, the theories of Sontag, Foucault, and Maurice Charney serve to shore up their indignation and advance a more fruitful discussion of pornography’s

aesthetic dimensions and political implications. First, the “Maiden Tribute” is pornography in that sexual themes are the obsessive focus of this work: virginity, sexual intercourse, rape, prostitution, lust, perversity, abduction, sadism, and the body of the pubescent female all constitute the foci of Stead’s narrative. Certainly, the sexual is a precondition of pornography, but beyond the smut is a more important function. Second, pornography is concerned with dislocating a reader from her or his previous understanding of reality by privileging and exploiting the secret taboos of a society. I realize that many would ascribe a more explicit function to pornography, but my interest in pornography is rhetorical, not prurient. As Sontag recognized, some pornography aims for that which lies beyond the ostensible task of smut. She noted, “Pornography that is serious literature aims to ‘excite’ in the same way that books which render an extreme form of religious experience aim to ‘convert.’”¹² Maurice Charney further explained, “[Pornography] stimulates feelings and excellences of its own that are different from either comedy or tragedy. The most important of these differences is the powerful evocation of a sexual, eroticized reality.”¹³ Therefore, it is incorrect to think that the sole purpose of pornography is to sexually arouse, as Sontag claimed when she said, “The singleness of pornography’s intention is spurious.”¹⁴ Instead, serious pornography “is one of the branches of literature—science fiction is another—aiming at disorientation, at psychic dislocation.”¹⁵ This dislocation within sexual fiction takes the reader from the conventional and relocates him or her to the forbidden margins of experience.

Third, perhaps the most intriguing and telling characteristic of the pornographic is that it can elucidate *what* a society deems secret, or more precisely, forbidden. The secret within pornography is that which dominant ideology places outside the realm of condoned sexual or social practice, yet in doing so, paradoxically charges it with eroticism. For example, both child molestation and flagellation are prominently featured in Victorian pornography.¹⁶ James Kincaid

offered one explanation for this in *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*: “By insisting so loudly on the innocence, purity, and asexuality of the child, we have created a subversive echo: experience, corruption, eroticism,” an echo that reverberated throughout the Victorian era, especially within pedophilic sexual fiction that was “brought into being by and coordinate with the eroticizing of the child.”¹⁷ To illustrate further, Karen Halttunen noted that “changing attitudes toward pain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” in Britain coincided with a proliferation of sadistic pornography, to the point where flogging and other sadomasochistic practices like those associated with the writings of Marquis de Sade were labeled “the English vice.”¹⁸ This correlation encapsulates the relationship between pornography and the secret: “If pornography is best defined as the representation of sexual behavior *with a deliberate violation of moral and social taboos*, then the growing violence of it in this period is attributable to the new shock value of pain within a culture redefining it as forbidden and therefore obscene.”¹⁹

“Without secrecy,” D. H. Lawrence succinctly speculated, “there would be no pornography.”²⁰ This point is precisely what makes the “Maiden Tribute” a captivating study: as Stead went to work on the “Maiden Tribute,” he perceived that “sex [was] repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence;” consequently, his boldness in writing a pornography had “the appearance of a deliberate transgression.”²¹ Consequently, he positioned himself as a privileged voyeur—knowledgeable of the city’s most terrible secrets, and, as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, more than capable of disseminating those secrets all over the city. As Foucault stated, those who presume to speak of sex frankly invoke a “speaker’s benefit” upon his or her discourse, and the person who does so “places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom.”²² Stead no doubt believed that he placed himself beyond the conventional knowledge and correspondingly,

outside the confines of conventionality, free to speak a truth that spotlighted the horrors of illicit sex and exploitation.

Just such a pornographic knowledge, though, risks an alienation from larger political circumstances. Sontag stated within *Regarding the Pain of Others*, “For a long time some people believed that if the horror could be made vivid enough, most people would finally take in . . . the insanity of war.”²³ However, even with the most graphic depictions of destruction, “to read in the pictures . . . only what confirms a general abhorrence of war is to stand back from an engagement with . . . history. It is to dismiss politics.”²⁴ In other words, Sontag argues that when we myopically focus only upon the lurid details of human suffering, whether in the context of war or child prostitution for that matter, we often hazard a kind of blindness—we fail to recognize that such suffering, terrible as it may be, is born of material circumstances, history, and conflicts that make human atrocities not only possible, but also all too common.

As Lawrence recognized the relationship between pornography and secrecy, so too did Stead realize that exploiting pornographic secrecy can result in something volatile on a grand scale; as the first line of the *Pall Mall Gazette* read on July 6, “The Report of our Secret Commission will be read to-day with a shuddering horror that will thrill throughout the world.” Moreover, Stead fully intended that people should act upon this “shuddering horror” and mobilize to push the Criminal Law Amendment Bill through Parliament. While his carefully crafted report of a horrific sexual underworld would, in fact, “thrill throughout the world,” it did so in ways that Stead and his Secret Commission could have never predicted, even to the extent of undermining the potential for deep reform.

Context and Controversy: The Making of the “Maiden Tribute”

The circumstances that would create a perfect storm on the front pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in July of 1885 were hardly an overnight happening; the political tensions over the governing of illicit sexuality had been brewing for at least twenty years prior to the release of “The Secret Commission’s Report.” The impetus of the “Maiden Tribute” would come from the Contagious Diseases (C. D.) Acts of 1864, 1868, and 1869 and the bitter opposition to these laws posed by feminist groups. Rather than making prostitution illegal, the C. D. Acts attempted to curb spiraling venereal disease rates within the military by screening prostitutes and mandating treatment in a lock-hospital for prostitutes carrying venereal disease. The three acts passed with minimal opposition, bolstered by supporters in favor of regulation and aided by the ignorance or apathy on the part of others as to the legislation affecting two socially marginalized groups, soldiers and prostitutes.²⁵

However, once the C. D. Acts were passed, a steady and increasingly vocal anti-vice campaign mounted an opposition against the legislation. One of the most vibrant crusaders for the anti-vice cause was Josephine Butler, a British philanthropist who had worked for years with “fallen women.” Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, Butler desperately and unsuccessfully lobbied Parliament for legislation that would criminalize prostitution, rather than sanction it as the C. D. Acts did in a brutal and invasive way.²⁶ Butler argued for the repeal of the C. D. Acts in her 1871 essay, *Constitution Violated*. In this tract, she posited that the C. D. Acts infringed upon a number of the rights guaranteed within the Magna Carta by denying the right to a trial, creating a slave-class out of women, and unfairly targeting the urban poor. Quite correctly, she pointed out the grievous wrongs perpetrated by a government without women’s suffrage, so aptly highlighted by these discriminatory laws: “It cannot be expected that due attention will ever be paid to the interests of any class which is not duly represented in the government of the country. If women had possessed the franchise, the Contagious Diseases Acts could not have been passed.

. . . These Acts secure the enslavement of women and the increased immorality of men.”²⁷ As clear and concise as her argument was, she also recognized the deeply entrenched attitudes against her cause. She quoted a writer who frequented one of the “fashionable London Clubs,” who had said, “these women [prostitutes] ought to be ‘treated as foul sewers are treated, as physical facts and not as moral agents.’”²⁸ Butler countered this with her own criticism: “Sewers have neither souls nor civil rights; by admitting into their [C. D. Acts supporters] political theory the idea that any class of human beings . . . may be reduced to the level of an inanimate nuisance for political purposes [demonstrates] to us very clearly the intimate connection between a gross materialism and the most cruel and oppressive despotism.”²⁹ Even nearly forty years after his death, Parent-Duchâtelet’s influence echoed beyond his own time. Yet, the dehumanizing politics that accompanied such a position are evident, which Butler challenged with her own vibrant counterpoint.

Butler and her anti-vice allies doggedly petitioned Parliament to overturn the C. D. Acts. When not lobbying for the repeal of the C. D. Acts, the anti-vice crusaders channeled their efforts into the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. This bill, first proposed in May 1883, focused on child prostitution by raising the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen, as well as targeting solicitation and loitering.³⁰ While it initially had some support within Parliament, those uninterested in bending to the demands of anti-vice campaigners soon managed to stifle the bill. The bill was redrafted, dropped from debate in 1884, and reintroduced a third time in 1885, only to be met with “an atmosphere of profound lethargy, and bad-tempered, end-of-term bickering.”³¹

The escalating opposition to the C. D. Acts and the stalling of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in Parliament coincided with the slap-on-the-wrist sentencing of Mary Jeffries in the spring of 1885. Mary Jeffries was a wealthy woman who ran several brothels that catered

to up-scale clients who had a proclivity for “assorted perversions” like that English vice, flogging.³² She had, up until early 1885, avoided prosecution by extensively bribing law enforcement. While the police were hesitant to charge her, the anti-vice campaigners were not.³³ By early 1885, they were able to mount a damning case against her, but even then the law sided with immorality. Jeffries was instructed to plead guilty in the May 1885 trial; in doing so, she was fined £200 and charged to “keep the peace for two years,” a feckless sentence that infuriated the anti-vice campaigners.³⁴

The Jeffries trial only proved to the anti-vice movement the seemingly impenetrable dominance posed by politicians and law enforcement and served to feed the movement’s growing discontent. This, coupled with the on-going struggles of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, induced Butler and her anti-vice proponent Benjamin Scott to play their only trump card: William T. Stead, the dynamic editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.³⁵ Butler’s campaigning initially caught Stead’s attention in 1876 after he read *The New Abolitionists*, Butler’s tract against the evils of prostitution. Impressed, Stead responded to Butler, offering to write something that would give prostitution its “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” though she did not take advantage of his offer at that time.³⁶ Nine years later, Benjamin Scott watched the bill flounder in debate from the strangers’ gallery on May 22, 1885, and despaired over the increasing apathy and frustration of Parliament.³⁷ The next day Scott visited Stead at the *Pall Mall Gazette* office.³⁸ After explaining his and Butler’s labors to pass the bill, Scott hopelessly cried, “The Bill is practically lost. . . . You are the only man in the country who can save it.”³⁹ Apparently, Stead’s initial offer to write in support of Butler’s cause was still standing—he needed little time to consider Scott’s plea. Two days later, on Monday, May 25, he began writing. In just a few weeks, Stead wrote a piece that took a private form, pornography, and boldly affixed it before the eyes of London on the front pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to a most devastating effect.

The investigation of the “Special and Secret commission of Inquiry” began in a conventional way. Stead relied on existing evidence, interviewed police and public officials, and verified stories of young girls forced into prostitution. However, a particularly poignant episode turned the investigation into an entirely different entity. Stead asked Scott if he could interview children who had been victimized. Scott took him to see two young girls. One girl,

who was aged four-and-a-half, had been lured into a brothel one evening and had been raped twelve times in succession. Her assailants, though brought to court, had been discharged absolutely. On seeing the huge, bearded figure of Stead approaching her, [the child] began to scream hysterically, imploring him not to hurt her, and calling out one phrase again and again which he could never bring himself to repeat. Arrogant, flamboyant and sensationalist he may have been, but his compassion, and his love for children, were genuine enough. He broke down. “I’ll turn my paper into a tub!” he roared through his tears. “I’ll turn stump orator! I’ll damn, and damn, and damn!”⁴⁰

From this episode, along with his inability to get evidence damning enough to shake the Criminal Law Amendment from the grips of Parliament’s increasing indifference, “[Stead] concluded that the only way to prove that children could be bought and sent into enforced prostitution was to do the deed himself.”⁴¹ He fairly coerced a former procuress, Rebecca Jarrett, to play the part of sex broker in his narrative; it was she who arranged the purchase of Eliza Armstrong, a thirteen year-old girl from the Marylebone slum in central London. This exchange would constitute the climactic “Lily” vignette of the “Maiden Tribute.”

To be sure, the “Maiden Tribute” managed to overcome in days what years of arduous campaigning had failed to do: decisively mobilize the public and government towards passing a bill which raised the age of consent and enforced stricter control of prostitution. Given the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill the following month, one might conclude that

Stead succeeded admirably in his purpose to save the bill from defeat.⁴² However, the far more intriguing contribution of the “Maiden Tribute” to rhetoric lies in its demonstration of pornography as public address. Stead generated within the “Maiden Tribute” a particular rhetoric that would portend a far more complex political power and troubling public reaction.

The Minotaur, the Terror, and the Maiden: Sadistic Shock in Pursuit of Policy

In order to leverage the debate over the Criminal Amendment Law bill out of its torpor, Stead went much further than the role of reporter called for at that time. Indeed, as the self-proclaimed creator of “New Journalism,” Stead unapologetically advanced his personal agenda in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, making a bold display of his politics through sensationalism, personal interviews, and his own commentary that made no concession to impartiality.⁴³ In this respect, the particular affair of the “Maiden Tribute” stands as the high-water mark of his unique showmanship and activism.

Throughout Stead’s investigation of child prostitution, he was thwarted by what he perceived as collusion between law enforcement and those who would exploit young girls for profit. As he stated on July 6, “These crimes flourish on every side, unnoticed and unchecked—if, indeed, they are not absolutely encouraged by the law, as they are certainly practiced by some legislators and winked at by many administrators of the law.” It was, apparently, up to the noble journalist to do something about it, a view that he tartly articulated the following year in his 1886 essay *The Future of Journalism*: “Impersonal journalism is effete. To influence men you must be a man, not a mock-uttering oracle.”⁴⁴ There is no doubt that Stead desired to influence the public, and he was willing to ignore, or rather exploit, cultural taboos to do so. At this point, I turn to the text of the “Maiden Tribute,” which ran on July 6, 7, 8, and 10, 1885, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Class disparity, sadomasochism, and the innocent child represented formidable topoi within the

Victorian pornographic imagination. Intersections among these sites presented Stead the means to create a vortex of ravaging emotion within his reading public. In sum, Stead assumed the role of the profligate minotaur; in doing so, he created an overwhelmingly sexual definition of the “maidens” of London that highlighted their sexuality, innocence, and ignorance.

Sontag asserted that one function of pornography is to dislocate the reader to the margins of experience, into the realm of taboo. It is fitting, then, that the pornographic setting is often a site that is removed, “a world apart” that is “hidden, impregnable, self-sufficient, where everything is permitted.”⁴⁵ Stead found this world in London: the home of propriety and a godly queen, but also the location of a sadistic pornotopia, wherein young women were blithely bought, sold, and ruined beyond repair. Those whom Stead believed should care the most knew of these dreadful goings-on and were fairly unconcerned about stopping it. In the July 6 edition, Stead printed an interview with a police officer, wherein Stead asked if it was a fact that, should the right inquiries be made, he could purchase a genuine maiden. “‘Certainly,’ [the policeman] replied without a moment’s hesitation,” and furthermore, he had “no doubt it is frequently done all over London.” Stead was appalled: “‘Why,’ I exclaimed, ‘the very thought is enough to raise hell.’ ‘It is true,’ he said; ‘and although it ought to raise hell, it does not even raise the neighbours.’” The unwillingness of police to interfere was further indicated in the last installment of the “Maiden Tribute,” on July 10: “‘The police are the brothel-keepers’ best friends,’ said an old keeper to [Stead] sententiously. ‘Cos why? They keep things snug. And the brothel-keepers are the police’s best friend, ‘cos they pay them.’” Within this lawless place, without regard for any moral strictures, the horrors of virgin abduction and rape were commonplace. If the police would not thwart this indecency, it was up to Stead to do so.

Central to the horrors Stead laid before the public was the “minotaur,” the mythical beast that Stead positioned as modern-day seducer of young girls. The “minotaur” is a prominent

feature in the “Maiden Tribute. In fact, the opening lines of the first installment on July 6 were dedicated to the myth of this dreadful beast. “In ancient times, if we may believe the myths of Hellas, Athens . . . was compelled by her conqueror to send once every nine years a tribute to Crete of seven youths and seven maidens.” This unwilling tribute of flesh was to be “devoured by the Minotaur, a frightful monster, half man, half bull, the foul product of an unnatural lust.” Typical of a pornographic antagonist, the minotaur was a perverse creature with a voracious sexual appetite; but particularly salient to Victorian pornographic imagination, this minotaur also represented the unchecked privilege of the upper class. The minotaur was to be found in the form of modern man: he walked the streets of London in the guise of gentility and with the security of wealth, both of which afforded him the means to sate his licentious desires with impunity. As Stead proclaimed on July 8, “Here in London, moving about clad as respectably in broad cloth and fine linen as any bishop, with no foul shape or semblance of brute beast to mark him off from the rest of his fellows, is Dr,———, now retired from his profession and free to devote his fortune and his leisure to the ruin of maids. This is the ‘gentleman’ whose quantum of virgins from his procuresses is three per fortnight—all girls who have not previously been seduced.” The minotaur could even be men of the cloth, as the July 6 installment told of a procuress who had “once sold a girl twelve years old for £20 to a clergyman.” Money and status afforded unchecked revelry in perversions with the daughters of the lower classes; if the prices paid for maidens did not shock, the numbers should, as Stead proffered on July 8, “It is possible for a wealthy man to ruin not merely hundreds but thousands of poor women. It is actually Mr. ——’s boast that he has ruined 3,000 women in his time,” at an expenditure upwards of £5,000. At the end of that day’s article, Stead was firmly convinced, as should his audience be, that “The blindest unbelief must admit that in this ‘English gentleman’, we have a far more hideous Minotaur than that which Ovid fabled and which Theseus slew.”

In a classic pornographic trope, these wretched monsters are not given over to indulging their sexual proclivities in a loving way; the intercourse between the terrifying minotaurs and meek maidens typified the long-standing conceit of wealth, privilege, and pain. For instance, Marquis de Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, first published in 1795, tells of the depraved aristocrat siblings, Madame de Saint-Ange and Le Chevalier de Mirvel, who terrorize the maiden Eugenie out of her virtue. As Charney characterized de Sade's writings, "The strong take their overpowering pleasure at the expense of the weak. It is not surprising that in Sade, sexual fulfillment comes through pain, oppression, torture, and victimization."⁴⁶ Likewise, Stead capitalized on the dread that pain and torture, in conjunction with sex and affluence, could incite in his audience. This particular combination resulted in a fertile opportunity for the gruesome flair of sensationalism: Stead's narrative is thick with screams, pathetic emotion, and agony of innocents. For instance, an entire section in the July 6 article is titled "Why the Cries of the Victims are Not Heard." In this, he informed his readers that the padded rooms familiar to the Continent are also to be found in Britain. "'In my house,' said a most respectable lady, who keeps a villa in the west of London, 'you can enjoy the screams of the girl with the certainty that no one else hears them but yourself.'" Stead did not stop at the terror of delighting in screams; he also incorporated descriptions of pain within his text. The same article reports that flogging is a common occurrence, and, for some men, "the shriek of torture is the essence of their delight." The same July 6 article also offers a scene typical of any de Sadean writing: the restraint of the unwilling females. "To oblige a wealthy customer who by riot and excess had impaired his vitality to such an extent that nothing could minister to his jaded senses but very young maidens, an eminently respectable lady undertook that [the girl] should be strapped down hand and foot to the four posts of the bedstead, so that all resistance save that of unavailing screaming would be

impossible.” Stead assured his readers that this gluttonous depravity knows no limits; after all, “anything can be done for money, if you only know where to take it.”

Despite the graphic reports of brothel madams and police officers, Stead was not satisfied with mere second-hand knowledge of brothel hearsay. Those writing pornographies are “making forays into and taking up positions on the frontiers of consciousness...and reporting back what’s there.”⁴⁷ If Stead was “a freelance explorer of spiritual [or sexual] dangers, the artist gain[ed] a certain license to behave differently from other people . . . [in order] to advance one step further in the dialectic of outrage.”⁴⁸ Engaging “the dialectic of outrage” was one end result of Stead’s excursion into the dark underworld of London and pivotal to the rhetoric of pornography; central to achieving this was the July 6 installment, which detailed Stead’s purchase of thirteen year-old “Lily” and stands as the *pièce de résistance* of the “Maiden Tribute.” In this episode, Stead contracted the sale of the thirteen-year-old through Rebecca Jarrett, had “Lily” certified as *virgo intacta* by a midwife, and then had her taken to a brothel in order to prove the ease by which young women could be bought and ruined.

Striking about this vignette is Stead’s way of telling it, in that he fully committed to a position of “psychic dislocation.”⁴⁹ He did not tell the story of “Lily’s” abduction in first person, but couched it in third-person narration. He began relating this incident toward the end of the July 6 article, prefacing it with, “Let me conclude the chapter of horrors by one incident, and only one of those which are constantly occurring in those dread regions of subterranean vice in which sexual crime flourishes almost unchecked,” a horror which he “can personally vouch for the absolute accuracy of every fact in the narrative.” In this subtle move is Stead’s renunciation of his own position as the evangelical, pious newspaper editor for that of the libidinous minotaur. He first described the midwife’s examination of “Lily” for a certificate of virginity, and included her grim assessment that ““the poor little thing”” is ““so small, her pain will be extreme. I hope

you will not be too cruel with her’—as if to lust when fully roused the very acme of agony on the part of the victim has not a fierce delight.” “The innocent girl” was then conveyed “to a house of ill fame . . . where, notwithstanding her extreme youth, she was admitted without question.”

Using chloroform to sedate her, “Lily” was put in a room to await her part in the climax of Stead’s tale, a scene that merits full quotation:

All was quiet and still. A few moments later the door opened, and the purchaser entered the bedroom. He closed and locked the door. There was a brief silence. And then there rose a wild and piteous cry—not a loud shriek, but a helpless, startled scream like the bleat of a frightened lamb. And the child’s voice was heard crying, in accents of terror, “There’s a man in the room! Take me home; oh, take me home!”

And then all once more was still.

That was but one case among many, and by no means the worst. It only differs from the rest because I have been able to verify the facts.

The “purchaser” was, of course, Stead, and “the facts” were a carefully orchestrated pantomime of abduction. This pathetic interaction of a helpless girl cornered by the lustful stranger, told in the sensationalist language of screams, peril, and domination, demarcated the limits of Stead’s own pornographic imagination. Furthermore, “the facts” imparted to the reading public through the graphic drama carried a same measure of veracity that imbued the testimony of the “unfortunates” nearly thirty years earlier.

It is important to remember that Stead supported a bill that would change the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen, and the text of the “Maiden Tribute” is constructed to reflect the objective of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. As he stated July 7, “The law at present almost specially marks out such children as the fair game of dissolute men. The moment a child is thirteen she is a woman in the eye of the law, with absolute right to dispose of her person to any

one who by force or fraud can bully or cajole her into parting with her virtue.” While she cannot sell her possessions until sixteen, the current law “insists upon investing her with unfettered freedom to sell her person at thirteen.” Therefore, it was critical to Stead’s purpose to emphasize these young women as incapable of possessing the faculty of consent, both physically and mentally.

Consequently, the maidens within Stead’s prose were a shocking inverse of the minotaur’s depravity. The aforementioned “Lily” episode deployed these themes of physical immaturity, which Stead reinforced with medical opinion on July 8. A doctor recommended to him by Cavendish Bentinck (a major opponent to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill) assured Stead that puberty in English girls does not commence “till long after thirteen years of age.” That may be, but even more startling is the titillating ignorance that a girl, deemed a consenting adult, professed in the face of her seduction. Devoid of education or any knowledge of what sex entailed, Stead related on July 7 that

one of the most touching instances of [ignorance] and the most conclusive was the exclamation of relief that burst from a Birmingham girl of fourteen when the midwife had finished her examination.

“It’s all over now,” she said, “I am so glad.”

“You silly child,” said the procuress, “that’s nothing. You’ve not been seduced yet. That is still to come.” How could she know any better, never having been taught? . . . Even when an attempt is made to explain that there will be some physical pain, the information is so shrouded in mystery that . . . if the man had run a needle into the girl’s thigh and told her that she was seduced, she would have believed it.

The extreme ignorance displayed by the child counterbalanced the degenerate wisdom and experience of the seducer. Stead was bent on proving, in a most sensational manner, that

thirteen-year-olds could not possibly have the mental capacity to give sexual consent.

Simultaneously, Stead's insistence on the innocence of the young girl was in keeping with the unwavering focus on the sexual.

The obsessive focus on the sexual through the dreadful minotaur, innocent child, and the terrible intersection between the two, thick with screams, violence, and secrets, was to further Stead's belief that this kind of sex should be lawfully punished, accomplished through the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Through the "Maiden Tribute," Stead created a particular definition of the prostitute that aimed to support a particular politics.⁵⁰ Stead did more than just write a provocative story. He created a pornographic vision of prostitution that would incite an unprecedented reaction. From the text, I turn now to the public. To further chart the rhetoric of pornography, I offer the swift and fractured reactions of Stead's reading public as evidence for the troubling consequences of generating politics via pornography. It is this reaction, though, that helps to elucidate both the knowledge and ignorance that Stead created through the "Maiden Tribute."

"Modern Babylon" Hot and Bothered: Implications of a Private Form in Public Action

On July 10, the front page of the *Pall Mall Gazette* boasted, "Disaster has now . . . been decisively averted, and in the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in the House of Commons last night her Majesty will see . . . the harvest of good that is certain to be reaped whenever the truth is spoken courageously in the cause of the helpless and oppressed." This "harvest of good" happened in short order, as Walkowitz stated, "Popular indignation forced the government to act," and act it did when it passed the bill the following month.⁵¹ Save for a precise target—a stalled bill within Parliament—Stead's "Maiden Tribute" may have gone the way of Theodore Weld's anti-slavery tract, *American Slavery As It Is*, and resulted in much to-

do, but little to show for it. Both texts, after all, elicited a powerful emotional reaction through sensationalist aesthetics and grotesque imagery, yet Weld's story did nothing in terms of legal reform.⁵²

However, this marked difference between these two episodes does not negate the similarities. Walkowitz noted that Stead "produced an unstable text and a contradictory, obsessive discourse around sexuality," an instability which is evident within the conflicting readings aired within the paper itself and elsewhere.⁵³ First, such texts as the "Maiden Tribute" hazarded an uncontrollable interpretation—not only did some within the public miss Stead's message and get mired in objections to the smutty style, but the text would also turn on Stead as he was charged and convicted as the very criminal he sought to expose. Second, and I believe more importantly, the aftermath of the "Maiden Tribute" demonstrated the volatile and destructive power of pornography in public. It is critical that the corresponding ignorance of his definition of the prostitute be recognized as a significant break from the previous conceptualizations. Unlike Parent-Duchâtelet, Acton, Greg, and Richelot, Stead's text ignored virtually all other factors that shaped the lives of young women living in industrial Britain, aside from the precarious state of her maidenly virtue. Rather than a woman made from the circumstance in which she lived, Stead insisted that the prostitute was a solely sexual being, in this specific case, the defiled youth.

First, the "Maiden Tribute" generated a wave of enthusiasm and support for Stead's grave undertaking. This was evident in the July 9 *Pall Mall Gazette*, which took a break before the last installment of the "Maiden Tribute" to dedicate an issue to the public furor. For example, a bishop wrote, "At present my feeling is one of unmitigated horror and disgust. The facts . . . are worse even than I had been able to imagine. But I know that horror and disgust will not do any good; and the question is, what can be suggested in the way of amelioration?" Others, such as

Josephine Butler, wrote expressing that the dreadful scenes Stead depicted warranted harsher punishment than the Criminal Law Amendment Bill afforded. Butler essentially advocated for mob justice to be brought down on the minotaurs of London: “The great end which I personally desire to see, arising out of your courageous unveiling of these horrors . . . is that the rich and aristocratic culprits in this matter should be judged by the people—that public opinion should measure them and pass sentence upon them.” Despite Stead’s express objection to police force, as he stated on July 6 and reiterated on July 10, a Mr. Spurgeon believed that greater police force was exactly what the situation warranted. He wrote, “Spare not the villains, even though they wear stars and garters [members of the knighthood]. We need to set up a Committee of Vigilance, a moral police, to put down this infamy.”

Blustering outrage aside, the publicity and energy generated did produce decisive political action when the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, now “Stead’s Law,” passed Parliament on August 10, thus accomplishing his expressed goal. Ironically, Stead himself became one of the first criminals punished under the newly enacted Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Stead recounted: “I publicly stated on the platform of St. James’s Hall that I had abducted Eliza Armstrong, and that she was very well cared for. This led to me immediate prosecution.”⁵⁴ Once charged with kidnapping and indecent assault, Stead knew that he had no chance of appeal. While he had fairly purchased Eliza from her mother for £5, he had not gotten her father’s consent: “The judge ruled that the consent of the mother was nothing, that the consent of the father was everything, and . . . the case against me was so clear I wanted to plead ‘guilty’ the moment that the judge ruled the consent of the father was essential.”⁵⁵

The thirteen-day trial in October 1885 was the capstone to the “Maiden Tribute” affair. Even the sentencing pronounced by Justice Lopes on Stead was riddled with the same confusion and emotion expressed by those who had read the “Maiden Tribute.” Justice Lopes told Stead: “I

am prepared to give you credit for good motives from your point of view, but at the same time, I cannot disguise from my mind that you have acted throughout recklessly.”⁵⁶ He believed that Stead’s experiment with abduction and fictitious account not only failed to prove what he had intended to prove but had harmed the country’s young people through exposure to pornography: “I regret to say that you thought fit to publish in the *Pall Mall Gazette* a distorted account of the case of Eliza Armstrong, and that you deluged, some months ago, our streets and the whole country with an amount of filth which has . . . tainted the minds of the children that you were so anxious to protect, and which has been . . . a disgrace to journalism.”⁵⁷ After this strange blend of admiration and accusations of churning out filth for the masses, Justice Lopes sentenced Stead to three months of incarceration. While Stead celebrated his imprisonment until the end of his life, it did not end so well for those he used to construct his narrative.⁵⁸ Rebecca Jarrett, Stead’s procuress, was also imprisoned and subjected to far harsher conditions than those that Stead tolerated. Louise Mourez, the French midwife who certified Eliza Armstrong’s virginity, was convicted of indecent assault and died in prison.⁵⁹ The pornography of the “Maiden Tribute” was, in short, devastating and paradoxical. The enthusiasm and consternation of his audience would contribute to the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, Stead’s conviction of kidnapping, and the death of Louise Mourez. One may agree with Plymouth’s *Western Daily Mercury* assessment printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on July 9: the ends do not appear to have justified the means.

Reflecting on the case of the “Maiden Tribute,” there is no doubt that Stead was passionate about saving the young maidens of Britain from sexual depravity and ruin. But I have doubts as to whether Stead’s bold pornography actually rescued any maidens from the fearsome maw of the minotaur, a view which others in Stead’s reading public also held. For example, Dr. John Harvey commented on July 9 that after having read the “Maiden Tribute” articles, he

deemed “them of such ‘prurient nature’ that they will do more harm than good, and although no doubt written with every good intention, cause the ruin of many they propose to protect.” I happen to agree with Dr. Harvey: this proved true for the “Maiden Tribute,” as Stead’s unwavering focus on the sexual blinded him to the other factors that contributed to prostitution at that time.

For Stead, the maidens of London offered up to the minotaurs were most certainly women whose honor and virginity deserved legal protection. However, Stead did not recognize that these same women were also those who labored for their living in the industrial milieu of Britain. To illustrate, in the July 7 installment, Stead recounted an interaction with a sixteen-year-old maid who had been procured for him. Acting as a determined charity worker, Stead tried to tell her all that unsavory consequences that would come of being “seduced”—pregnancy, loss of virtue, loss of money—and promised her £1 if she would simply leave with her virginity intact. Yet, the girl insisted on being seduced for the £2, and with that, “she burst into tears, ‘we are so poor.’” Stead asked, “Could any proof be more conclusive as to the absolute inability of this girl of sixteen to form an estimate of the value of the only commodity with which the law considers her amply able to deal the day after she is thirteen?” What he did not consider is that this pitiful interaction could also be proof that the young woman was, in fact, very capable of estimating how a quick £2 might ameliorate the equally deleterious circumstances she faced working in a millinery sweatshop for five shillings a week.

It is difficult to overemphasize the significance underlying this particular passage; in short, this neat vignette is an about-face from the previous decades’ studies that strove for a social scientific understanding of prostitution. Whereas Parent-Duchâtelet had tried to situate prostitution within the *mêlée* of industrial life, Stead lopsided vision of prostitution made it into a mawkish fantasy of gullible maidens and grotesque monsters. Nearly anyone up to this point—

Acton, Greg, Richelot, Talbot, Logan, or “Scrutator”—would have roundly dismissed Stead for his stupidity; of course an impoverished young girl would prefer £2 to £1, no matter what the trade-off. Yet, I surmise that none of them would have denied the powerful, compelling version of prostitution that Stead created within the “Maiden Tribute.”

Ultimately, Stead’s refusal to engage the concrete history, systems, and culture of Britain alongside the maidenhood of its young women marked what Sontag deemed a dismissal of politics. Even when Stead saw the poverty of industrial Britain, he continued to treat sexuality as a discrete entity, and his advocacy reflected this. While Stead’s deployment of pornography in service of an agenda was effective in the sense that it quickly rushed the bill through Parliament, the changes failed to truly affect the system that made young women prefer a £2 seduction over a £1 gift. Under the steady gaze of the concerned editor, the sexuality of the pubescent female was removed from the rest of her being. The economic reality of the day was such that young women opted for prostitution either by their own volition, or by virtue of their birth they were made easy pickings for those who would profit from the sale of impoverished bodies. Middle- and upper-class Victorians grappling with the heady intoxication of industrialization would have been fairly uninterested in eradicating the very poverty that fueled their factories. The young woman who insisted on seduction (though very likely was sent along un-seduced, £1 in hand) undoubtedly led a life that was complicated by economic and societal forces much larger than the state of her virginity. Addressing those factors really would have been, as Stead promised of his report on July 6, a “social revolution” “strong enough to wreck the Throne.” It probably would have gone unheeded, as well.

Commenting on the outrage already blustering through London by the third day of the “Maiden Tribute,” Stead declared on July 8, “If we had only committed these crimes instead of exposing them not one word would have been said.” Of course, Stead chose to write about it

instead, and in a form that deployed the rhetoric of pornography. He could have predicted the ensuing fury—indeed, he, Benjamin Scott, and Josephine Butler counted upon it. However, the problem with pornography in public is not that it may be obscenity, but this: the “Maiden Tribute,” as serious pornography, brought about a new and destructive understanding of reality, a new knowledge. This is certainly true on the level that certain readers strongly objected to the printing of the “Maiden Tribute.” The response from Rev. Frank Soden in the July 9 issue spoke most clearly to this, remarking, “I cannot sleep since I read the revolting story—the faces, the voices, of those children haunt me.” A few pages later in the same issue, Dr. Harvey wrote, “It seems a pity that innocent people who know nothing of these crimes should have them brought prominently before them.” In effect, the “Maiden Tribute,” at least for a vocal portion of the audience, represented a perilous exposure to the destructive knowledge of the forbidden, taboo, and sexually unseemly.

As Sontag argued, “There’s a sense in which *all* knowledge is dangerous, the reason being that not everyone is in the same condition as knowers or potential knowers. . . . It may be that, without subtle and extensive psychic preparation, any widening of experience and consciousness is destructive for most people.”⁶⁰ While dramatic, Sontag has a good point—all knowledge is dangerous not just because it may evoke a visceral reaction, but because it is complicit with its own corresponding ignorance. In Stead’s case, this danger of the pornographic prostitute clearly manifested itself within the pages of the “Maiden Tribute.”

The Aftermath of a Tempest: Political Consequences of Literary Form

We knew that we had forged a thunderbolt; but even we were hardly prepared for the overwhelming impression which it has produced on the public mind.

—*Pall Mall Gazette*, July 8, 1885

Powerful and problematic, the “Maiden Tribute” and its aftermath offer a dynamic exemplar of the paradox of pornography deployed for political purposes: there exist simultaneously both a terrible effectiveness of pornography in service of legislation and a destructive politics of pornography. Just as Sontag cautioned, if viewing the atrocities of war does not prevent war, then neither did Stead’s obsessive focus on sexuality of “Modern Babylon’s” maidens foil their prostitution. This case potently demonstrates that pornography deployed on behalf of politics may be destructive to others, insofar as it myopically ignores other systemic factors inherent to material conditions and risks a deleterious psychological odyssey to the margins. Stead may have won the battle, but he lost the war against the minotaurs of London—both the text he constructed and the legislation he supported was ideologically blind to the grinding poverty and industrial reality that the “maiden” inhabited. In short, Sontag’s aphoristic assessment of pornography—“it oversimplifies”—also seems a fitting judgment of the implications of the “Maiden Tribute” and the bill it supported.⁶¹ Seeing only the underage girl as sexual prey for London’s “minotaurs” meant not seeing the same girl working in factories, sweatshops, and mills of Britain. Much like Hale, who only saw the prostitute only as a sinful whore, Stead’s sensationalized version of the prostitute as the violated virgin committed similar myopic maneuvers. While Stead’s brand of journalism could present a vision of prostitution that engaged the public (and public) in ways that the more measured accounts of social science never could, the oversimplified definition also failed to accomplish the more comprehensive reform for which sociological and medical studies had striven.

Stead’s text also teaches us that a pornographic definition of prostitution offered a potent, yet immoderate and potentially debilitating politics. Moreover, the “Maiden Tribute” episode vividly illustrated the aesthetic dimensions of pornography. The political power generated through this case is found in the aesthetic maneuvers of pornography, and I have intended that

my analysis should advance a profitable definition of pornography. Through an obsessive focus on the sexual themes generated from societal taboos, pornography constitutes a psychic dislocation for a reader. Not only was this clear to a majority of Stead's readers, but for Stead himself, who took the role of the minotaur upon himself, "the powerful evocation of a sexual, eroticized reality" through the "Maiden Tribute" demonstrated the dramatic consequences that may be accomplished by foray into the margins of society's psychological and sexual limits.

Until the end of his life, Stead regarded the "Maiden Tribute" as his ultimate political, journalistic, and personal triumph. In his assessment, he secured the passing of "Stead's Law," altered the field of journalism thereafter, and celebrated his subsequent fame until his legendary demise within the hulk of the *Titanic*. As critics, we must temper Stead's grand self-assessment with a more troubled understanding of the wild destructiveness possible when pornography is unleashed in the service of the political agenda. Sontag was right—serious pornography *does* do more than just excite a lone auditor into orgasm. It can also be rhetoric that engages a collective audience, incites a new understanding of reality, rouses a public to action, and imparts a political knowledge. As demonstrated by an article printed in the London summer of 1885, Stead managed to create a knowledge that generated a feverish public campaign, effecting Parliamentary action, and forever changing popular journalism. But the subsequent knowledge generated from the "Maiden Tribute" did not bear unmitigated good: people were injured in body and in reputation and an illiterate French midwife would pay with her life for the part she played in Stead's pornography. Moreover, the reform so quickly wrought by the "Maiden Tribute" probably did not make seduction any less appealing or unlikely for the maiden working in the factory. Effective as a "thunderbolt" may be in shocking the masses, the unintended and devastating effects rendered in the subsequent tempest generated by this particular case indicates that, at times, knowledge and its corresponding ignorance is sometimes better left un-forged.

Notes

¹ To note several significant sections of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, the legislation made sexual intercourse with a girl under thirteen years of age unlawful and punishable by life imprisonment (section 4). Section 4 also admitted that children under thirteen did not understand the nature of the oath, but still permitted testimony given in court without the oath, a point that had previously allowed for acquittal in rape cases. It is also important to recognize that the law was overwhelming concerned with violation of women: male sexuality was addressed in a very brief section 11, which made any act of homosexuality a punishable offense, though far less severe than crime committed against women: "any male person, who in public or private, commits . . . any gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour" (Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, 48 & 49 Vict., c. 69.). For further reading on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, see: Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 60-64; Ann Stafford, *Age of Consent* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1964).

² Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴ Trevor Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain* (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1995), 70.

⁵ Plowden and Corporation, *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"*, 135.

⁶ Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s."; J. Shoshanna Ehrlich, "You Can Steal Her Virginity but Not Her Doll: The Nineteenth Century Campaign to Raise the Legal Age of Sexual Consent," *Cardozo Journal of Law & Gender* 15(2008-2009); Deborah Gorham, "The "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 21, no. 3 (1978); Salmon, "A Simulacrum of Power: Intimacy and Abstraction in the Rhetoric of the New Journalism."; Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.

⁷ Stephen Browne, "'Like Gory Spectres': Representing Evil in Theodore Weld's American Slavery as It Is," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 3 (1994): 290. Italics in original.

⁸ Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "Politics and Pornography," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59, no. 4 (1973); Robert E. Sanders, "On Rosenfield on Pornography," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1974).

⁹ Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "A Note from Rosenfield," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1973): 374.

¹⁰ Edward Hirsch, "Susan Sontag, the Art of Fiction No. 143," *The Paris Review*.

¹¹ Lisa Z. Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 4. This same anxiety is found in Greg's 1850 article in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*: "We are aware that mischief is risked by bringing the subject prominently before the public eye, and that the benefit to be derived from the discussion should be so clear and certain, as unquestionably to overbalance this risk" (see pg. 56-57). This perception that "mischief" would result from broadcasting texts about prostitution is precisely what signifies the Victorian conceptualization of pornography.

¹² Susan Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Picador, 2002), 38.

¹³ Maurice Charney, *Sexual Fiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), 11.

¹⁴ Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will*, 47.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Michael Perkins, *The Secret Record: Modern Erotic Literature* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976), 32.

¹⁷ James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4-5.

¹⁸ Karen Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69. Italics in original.

²⁰ D. H. Lawrence, *Sex, Literature and Censorship*, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York City: Twayne Publishers, 1953), 78.

²¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, 6.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵ Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*, 20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁷ Josephine Butler, *Constitution Violated: An Essay* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871), 153.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*, 52-53.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

³² *Ibid.*, 58.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁶ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 96.

³⁷ Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*, 55.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁹ Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (New York & Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925), 160.

⁴⁰ Glen Petrie, *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler* (London: Macmillan London Ltd, 1971), 245-46.

⁴¹ Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*, 64.

⁴² Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 103.

⁴³ William Stead stands as the representative of the "New Journalism," a moniker coined by Matthew Arnold to disparage Stead's unique, sensationalist, and politically liberal style of reporting that evolved during his time at the *Pall Mall Gazette* and came to its fullest expression in the "Maiden Tribute." Many sources detail Stead and his particular brand of reporting, but a few helpful ones may be found in the following: Baylen, "The 'New Journalism' in Late Victorian Britain."; Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s."; Robertson Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper: An Account of the Temperaments, Perturbations and Achievements of John Morley, W. T. Stead, E. T. Cook, Harry Cust, J. L. Garvin and Three Other Editors of the Pall Mall Gazette*; Salmon, "A Simulacrum of Power: Intimacy and Abstraction in the Rhetoric of the New Journalism."; Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.

⁴⁴ W. T. Stead, "The Future of Journalism," *The Contemporary Review* 50, no. 1 (1886): 663.

⁴⁵ Charney, *Sexual Fiction*, 48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁴⁷ Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will*, 45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 28.

⁵¹ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 103.

⁵² Browne, "'Like Gory Spectres': Representing Evil in Theodore Weld's American Slavery as It Is," 278.

⁵³ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, 85.

⁵⁴ Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead*, 183.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵⁶ Plowden and Corporation, *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"*, 134.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶⁰ Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will*, 72-73.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

Chapter 6.

A World Made of Words: Reading Stead Back into the History of Prostitution

Eighteen eighty-five was a busy year for Stead. In July of that year, the feisty editor printed a remarkable exposé on child prostitution and consequently rallied a tremendous wave of public support to pass the Criminal Law Amendment Bill through Parliament the following month. This bill raised the age of consent to sixteen and made trafficking young girls for sex punishable by law. No sooner did the bill pass than Stead became one of the first to be convicted under the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. In October, he was charged with the abduction of thirteen-year-old Eliza Armstrong, an act that was the *pièce de résistance* of the “Maiden Tribute.” For Stead’s crime, Justice Lopes sentenced him to three month’s incarceration.¹ By November, he was in Holloway prison,² relishing his meteoric rise to fame and what he perceived as his saintly martyrdom for his cause.³

During his imprisonment, Stead had some free time on his hands. Still, the energetic editor did not while away his court-imposed leisure; he wasted no time in composing two essays reflecting on journalism, government, and the workings of modern society.⁴ *The Contemporary Review*, a literary journal hosting articles by popular intellectuals, printed the fruits of Stead’s incarcerated labor shortly after his release; “Government by Journalism” was published in May 1886 and “The Future of Journalism” in November of that year. While full of Stead’s trademark braggadocio, these two essays yield a complex and personal insight into the state of journalism in a new age of mass communication. These essays articulate a modern understanding of the public, persuasion, and government. Furthermore, Stead’s two essays help one to understand how journalism developed a knowledge of prostitution that would help to shape both the public’s perception of it and the action taken to control it.

I close this project with a final reflection on the nineteenth century. As I argued earlier, tracing the debate over prostitution is also a means of tracing the emergence and development of the newspaper as a tactic of surveillance. When Stead wrote his two articles in prison, he reflected on what journalism had become and what it had the potential to be. As far as the debate over prostitution is concerned, Stead's reflections show how journalism made surveillance of the shady prostitute possible for a social system that lacked access to Parent-Duchâtelet's version of power. First, I review the changing definitional ruptures over prostitution. Second, I turn to Stead's essays as an answer to the void left by Parent-Duchâtelet. If the prostitute's body found in the columns of figures of the statistician and social scientist was at best a chimerical representation, then the prostitute's voice presented in the pages of newsprint was a paragon of veracity, as real and palpable as the woman herself. As "Government by Journalism" and "The Future of Journalism" demonstrate, the surveillance committed within the newspaper was a modern tactic of government, responsive to the new conditions of society, calibrated to public opinion, and orchestrated by those sensitive to the changing forces of the masses, politics, and media. In short, these essays help to articulate how journalism was a means to illuminate the unknown for the public eye.

The Genealogy of the Prostitute: A Case Study of Power in Print

Beginning with publications from 1809, I traced the different rhetorical formations of prostitution. As before, I maintain that there never was a singular prostitute—instead, and far more interesting, are the different incarnations of "prostitute" that took shape according to the different paradigms, politics, and technologies that came into play. Early in the debate, the evangelical conception of prostitute located the essence of prostitution in a woman's soul. Hale constructed the prostitute as a deviant from God's word; accordingly, the whore was to be

severely chastised so that she might reflect on her wickedness. This focus on the soul of the prostitute failed to ring true for others, however. “Scrutator,” who challenged the evangelical characterization, called for an embodied knowledge of prostitutes. Rather than the instruction and punishment doled out by pastors, “Scrutator” believed doctors needed to determine the real problems of prostitute and prescribe a remedy to the attendant ills.

If “Scrutator” summoned forth the body, it was the social body, created by Parent-Duchâtelet, which loomed large after 1837. Rather than the individual, the larger social system, and the prostitute’s function within it, held sway for Parent-Duchâtelet and the British medical reviewers of his study. The problem with prostitution was not the soul, but keeping her in her proper place within society. Likened to a sewer, the common prostitute was not a moral problem, but a resource to be carefully managed and watched over. Following the revolutionary study of Parent-Duchâtelet, researchers struggled to balance a moral conception of the prostitute with the prostitute born of poverty and the ever-swelling market of young girls that filled a burgeoning industrial landscape. This troublesome prostitute could not be addressed with the typical solutions of Sunday school or sanitary measures. And as a threat to both femininity and the middle-class home, the single girl in the factories, sweatshops, and mills of Britain seemed more of a monstrous problem than the wanton Jezebel of Hale’s tracts.

The means of knowing the prostitute would not happen solely through the columns of figures in the statistician’s study. In 1858, the *Times* offered the alleged first-hand account of “unfortunates.” Through the two voices of “Another Unfortunate” and “One More Unfortunate,” the common prostitute became an unabashed worker of industrial Britain, owning her own success or failure, and asking for not punishment, but tolerance insofar as her actions did not hurt others. Finally, in 1885, Stead advanced a radically different conception of the prostitute. No longer a wicked harpy or a threat to the secure family, the maiden of “the “Maiden Tribute”

offered the London public a sensational image of the prostitute as virginity violated at the hands of profligate minotaurs. Though by no means exhaustive, this overview of the changing prostitute over the course of eighty years highlights the volatility of meaning, ever-changing with the flux of politics, social science, and ideologies.

Just as the meaning of “prostitute” changed, so too did the different tactics of surveillance. Parent-Duchâtelet advocated for medical surveillance—monitoring prostitutes’ activity, cordoning them off to certain areas, and keeping careful records. This form of surveillance, however, was impossible for British researchers. Ever anxious about the elusive prostitute who proliferated the streets, reformers admitted that even their efforts at Parent-Duchâtelet’s particular brand of social science failed. While statisticians and social scientists could not get a clear view of the streetwalker, the journalist had far less difficulty. Whether presented to the public through the voices of the anonymous “prostitutes” “One More Unfortunate” and “Another Unfortunate” or conjured into a vivid reality through the graphic pornography constructed by Stead, the prostitute in the newsprint seemed to “palpitate with actuality,” more real than the numbers offered in the studies of physicians and statisticians.⁵

Reading Stead Backward: Journalistic Surveillance and Emergent Modernity

Following the spectacular drama of the “Maiden Tribute,” Stead certainly had much on his mind. He had marshaled public support to pass a bill through Parliament, he was judged guilty of a crime outlined in that same bill, and he had overwhelmingly garnered public support for himself.⁶ Yet when he was cast into Holloway prison, the first thing he did was to craft two essays that reflected on the nature of journalism and government. This is telling; his essays, though full of his typical brag and bluster, are a reflection on what journalism had become. Understanding the unique brand of surveillance offered in the newspaper can certainly be found

in case studies of anonymous letters to the editor of the *Times* or in a sensationalist campaign, but a clearer vision of may also be found in “Government by Journalism” and “The Future of Journalism.” For the purposes of my own work, Stead’s essays represent a moment wherein the forces that had been shaping the debate over prostitution come into focus.

Undoubtedly, the woman made of words within the pages of the newspaper had a way of sticking in the public consciousness. Acton was certain that his readers remembered the “bricklayer’s daughter,” “Another Unfortunate,” twelve years after she appeared in the pages of the *Times*. Mayhew’s vivid portraits of London’s grittier inhabitants in the *Morning Chronicle* exposed a different side of urban life. And most notably, the public violently responded to the “maiden” and the “minotaur” in the summer of 1885. Throughout the nineteenth century, the newspaper imprinted particular images and information into the public discourse. As Stead most certainly knew, the paper held a special sway over the rapidly modernizing landscape of Britain. It could arrest the public’s attention, spread information throughout the country within a day’s time, and influence the workings of Parliament. Newsprint seemed to constitute the pulse of public consciousness, and the question as to why that was loomed large for Stead in the aftermath of the “Maiden Tribute.”

Stead’s reflections within his two essays provide an answer as to why journalism came to be such a powerful form of surveillance for the problem of prostitution. First, journalism was a distinctly modern information technology, one that could respond to the rapidly changing conditions of Victorian Britain. Second, journalistic surveillance entailed both gathering knowledge of the population and manipulating that information as a way of refashioning public opinion. Finally, Stead’s essays demonstrate that journalistic surveillance entailed a different understanding mass psychology. By offering information to the public in the form of interviews, eyewitness testimony, and sensationalism, journalistic surveillance operates upon an audience

that, collectively, is different from that of the individual. If the previous two case studies are any indication, the way the public processed the information offered in newspapers was changing rapidly. Stead clearly understood that the changing constitution of the public mind was key to the innovation of journalism and its ability to govern the population.

Much distinguishes the nineteenth century as a time of rapid modernization, not the least of which was the boom in population and technology that was in full swing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, just shy of nine million people lived in England and Wales, a majority of whom occupied rural areas. One hundred years later, over thirty-two million inhabited the same space, although they were now concentrated in London and other major industrial cities.⁷ As Stead wrote his essays, he was just one English subject among approximately twenty-five million others, according to census records.⁸ While other English cities to the north, like Manchester or Liverpool, were surging in industrial development and population, London was undergoing a particularly spectacular transformation all its own. Infrastructure that would proliferate the city of London by the 1890s—gas pipelines, telephone and telegraph wires, bridges, railways, thoroughfares, and subways—simply did not exist when the century began.⁹ Goods, ideas, people, and information from within and without flowed through the city at unprecedented volumes. It was, without parallel in its day, the capital of the world.

Center-point of information that it was, an astounding volume of printed material circulated daily within the city. Of course, newspapers were the core of the communication network that pervaded public life in Britain. Even before the arrival of the radio, a media-saturated society was already a reality of daily life in 1880s Britain, and consequently, had transformed the socio-political relations. Stead remarked, “The telegraph and the printing-press have converted Great Britain into a vast agora . . . in which the discussion of the affairs of State is carried on from day to day in the hearing of the whole people.”¹⁰ Through readily available

and widespread media, the reports of political and social goings-on were accessible to nearly the whole of Britain.

Furthermore, a culture of popular literacy had pervaded British life. Stead remarked on the fervor of information consumption, saying, “We have to write afresh from day to day the only Bible which millions read.”¹¹ He was most certainly not exaggerating. Much research testifies to the staggering amount of newspapers, weeklies, quarterlies, journals and other print material that proliferated popular culture in his time. In 1870, the combined circulation of just seven morning newspapers totaled 522,500.¹² The *Daily Telegraph*, a conservative paper, stands as just one example of the rapidly increasing readership—in 1880, its circulation was 250,000, increasing up to 300,000 just ten years later.¹³ The numbers do not necessarily impart the whole story, though. The *Pall Mall Gazette* circulation only climbed from 8,000 to 12,000 following the “Maiden Tribute” scandal (not withstanding the million and a half prints of “Maiden Tribute,” of course), but even then the paper bore a greater influence on political and social life than much larger papers.¹⁴ As Geoffrey Cranfield related, the *Pall Mall Gazette* possessed an “influence out of all proportion to its modest circulation.”¹⁵ Certainly, “for the common people” of Britain, the newspaper had “no rival” as an informational, cultural, and political touchstone.¹⁶

This boom in population, communication, and information marks the primary condition of journalistic surveillance. At the most basic level, surveillance entails access to a subject. For the scores of dailies and periodicals of nineteenth century Britain, access to thousands (if not millions) of readers was a daily reality that created an unprecedented connection between journalists and the population. For the likes of Stead, having the critical circulation numbers or the right audience created a system of political power, a system that may have been relatively new, but had already had a profound impact on the shaping of the population and government. As Kate Campbell put it, “Political authority rested on symbolic power outside the framework of

reason,” and especially at this time, journalism was the means to this transformation from more traditional forms of government to a modern version.¹⁷

Access to the public is one element of journalistic surveillance, but Stead was keen to emphasize another factor, namely, the interrogation of society and the manipulation of public opinion. Just as Campbell pointed out that journalism was changing the government of Britain, so too did Stead see the Press as a means to govern the population, not simply to passively feed it information. As he stated, “I am more concerned with the direct governing functions of the Press. And foremost amongst them, unquestionably, is the Argus-eyed power of inspection which it possesses, and which, on the whole, it exercises with great prudence and good sense.”¹⁸ This ability to inspect the population denotes the prime activity of journalistic surveillance, that of interrogation. Stead was, at least in print, unscrupulous about his information sources—all and any stood as a person of interest to the journalist. As he stated, “A journalist is, or ought to be, a perpetual note of interrogation, which he affixes without ceremony to all sorts and conditions of men.”¹⁹ In the “Future of Journalism,” he further elaborated what interrogation entailed for the ambitious journalist: “He ought to be able to get at, or know some one who can get at, every one, from the Queen downwards, in order to be able to ascertain what they are thinking about the topic of the day.”²⁰ This intense focus on the population, the readers as the very substance of the paper, seemed to turn on its head any notions of an objective, balanced inquiry. The facts were not longer the just research and findings of the experts, but the opinions of the people. Fed back to the public through the lines of newsprint, public opinion became an exercise in inspection—a gathering of sentiments, attitudes, and beliefs that the daily newspaper reified into a force that challenged the weight of any single authority.

Clearly, Stead recognized that the power of the paper came from the population. As he stated, the editor “better than any man is able to generate that steam, known as public opinion,

which is the greatest force of politics.”²¹ However, this is not an aimless monitoring of public opinion, but an active effort to inculcate certain opinions within the public. Journalistic surveillance is not “accurate and scientific gauging of public opinion in order that blind obedience should be paid to its decision.”²² Instead, this tactic of government denotes an active cultivation of attitudes, beliefs, and information, imparted through the intimate and seemingly authentic knowledge generated from interviews and first-hand testimony. To wit, Stead pointed out that politicians often make the mistake of waiting for the tide of public opinion to turn in their favor, “But” he added, “they forget that public opinion is the product of public education, and that the first duty of a statesman is not to wait on public opinion, but to make it.”²³

Making public opinion rather than waiting on it might be read into the efforts of the columnist(s) who penned the letters to the editor in the February 1858 issues of the *Times*. The neat drama of a sad, fallen woman, “One More Unfortunate,” and the spirited opportunist, “Another Unfortunate,” may stand as an exemplary episode that prefigures Stead’s own notions of how journalism should operate, not only for the vibrant representation of voices from the streets, but also for the response generated from it. Recalling Dickens’s and Burdett-Coutts’s inquiries to the editor for the identity of “One More Unfortunate” and even Acton’s recollection of the works twelve years afterwards, Stead’s assertion that the journalist may “provoke public impatience, or convince people that no one need worry themselves about the matter” seems to have been an indication of what many already knew.²⁴ When Acton observed in early 1858, “The great social evil has become one of the questions of the day,” he was looking at the contents of the daily papers. Thirty years prior to Stead’s observation that the journalist could administer either a “stimulant or a narcotic to the minds of his readers,” there is little doubt as to the ability of a journalist to set the tone and subject for public discourse.²⁵

Stead's use of "stimulant" and "narcotic" is rather telling, insofar as it is reflective of a new understanding of the masses of and mass psychology. Just as Stead and many others understood the changing composition of government, economy, and society, so too was Stead keenly aware of another modern manifestation, the masses. Rather than administer to the population through reason, the masses required stronger stuff. The cool, objective argument simply did not capture the public's attention, not when they were inundated with material. So, Stead concluded, "When the public is short-sighted—and on many subjects it is a blear-eyed public, short-sighted to the point of blindness—you need to print in capitals."²⁶ The overblown, overstated, and overtly emotional tenor so disdained by the likes of Matthew Arnold were, in Stead's eyes, necessary for a society that was distinguished by the proliferation of print.²⁷ While the "Maiden Tribute" stands as an extreme example of this, the same elements of scintillating details told in first-person are evident in the letters of "Another Unfortunate" and "One More Unfortunate." Thirty years afterwards, Stead's willingness to exploit this mode of sensationalist, first-hand accounts does not reflect poorly on his own choice so much as it acknowledged how the public processed the accounts printed in the newspaper. Simply put, the masses operated through different channels than that of the individual, and sensationalism was one of the primary means by which to capture attention and make one's message clear.

Numbers and columns, like the mortality figures that "Scrutator" had perused in his own treatment of prostitution, simply did not ring true for the masses, at least not like the lively voice of an anonymous prostitute from the streets did, or the scintillating description of an abduction within the "Maiden Tribute." Those living in a world mediated by newsprint required different hallmarks of veracity. As Stead opined, "A newspaper must 'palpitate with actuality;' it must be a mirror reflecting all the ever-varying phases of life in the locality."²⁸ One could no longer count on the facts to speak for themselves. Instead, the journalist must strive to present the "facts

with such vividness and graphic force as to make a distinct even although temporary impact upon the mind.”²⁹ This perspective indicated that the masses were not simply a collection of individuals, but instead was a collective, sensing organism. In fact, sensationalism was simply a recognition that “it is solely by sensations experienced by the optic nerve that we see, and that without a continual stream of ever-renewed sensations we should neither hear, nor see, nor feel, nor think.”³⁰ Stead’s emphasis on the responses of nerves, signals, and sensations highlighted the inner workings of the crowd mind. If nothing else, sensationalism was a means to “arrest to eye of the public and compel them to admit necessity of action.”³¹ When it failed to do so, “it must be exchanged for some other and more effective mode of rousing the sluggish mind of the general public into at least a momentary activity.”³² Bombastic showman he may have been, but Stead understood that sensationalism represented something more crucial than just lurid details in capital letters. The masses were not simply a collection of individuals who would patiently listen to reason and measured argument; by the very virtue of a mediated culture, galvanizing the attention and collective energies of the masses increasingly necessitated the use of the shocking, the emotional, and explicit editorial bias. In other words, making the world vivid for the readers of a daily newspaper meant eliciting the emotions, imagery, and experiences that lay outside of the careful columns of figures.

Stead’s discussion of government and journalism highlights the changing vectors of modernity, power, and psychology. Recall for a moment the troubled reformers writing after Parent-Duchâtelet—the persistent anxiety over numbers, the undetected prostitutes, the faulty methods, and second-guessing of any existing research. In contrast, Stead’s vision of what lay beyond his editor’s desk seems lucid, unbounded, and certain. The meticulously ordered records and spaces of Parent-Duchâtelet’s world were not available to the researchers who craved the rigorous discipline and certainty of numbers, diagrams, and charts. However, a new way of

seeing the world would emerge through the dingy text of newsprint; though it would not observe the world through clinical investigation, the ability of journalistic surveillance to span the distance over the unknown is unmistakable. Furthermore, journalism was not to supplant science, but amplify the will to power. Stead keenly understood this and remarked, “There is need of a new representative method, not to supersede but to supplement that which exists—a system which will be more elastic, more simple, more direct, and more closely in contact with the mind of the people.”³³ At least with the development of “New Journalism,” Stead believed he had found that system, one that could offer a voyeur’s vision to the masses of Britain.

What is a Prostitute?

Back in 1839, Ryan had speculated that prostitution might be amended with the diligent efforts of “the collective wisdom of the nation” and the “Melbourne administration,” although even that mighty institution was plagued by “every possible kind of impediment most foolishly thrown in their way by their opponents.” “But,” he added, “a much stronger power than either, A FREE PRESS, will effect the object so much desired by every enlightened citizen. I most cheerfully commit the cause of virtue and morality to that great engine, and I fear not the result of its powerful exertion.”³⁴ While Ryan could not have anticipated the machinations of Stead’s “great engine” of reform, both Ryan and Stead recognized the ability of journalism to shape the meaning and government of prostitution.

My goal within this work has been to show both how the definition of “prostitute” changed over the course of the century and how the newspaper increasingly came to influence that changing definition. Even though I concentrated on the overt effort of journalism in shaping public discourse over prostitution in chapters four and five, the careful reader would notice that newspapers had long since played a role in creating a knowledge of the woman in the dark

streets and alleyways. As I noted within chapter two, “Scrutator” was looking at mortality figures printed in the daily newspaper as early as 1814 in his own search to determine causes of prostitution. In 1844, Talbot recounted the appalling stories of underpaid female labor circulating in the papers, and thirteen years later, in 1857, Acton credited the efforts of newspapers with leveraging prostitution into public discussion. While I focused on larger case studies in chapters four and five, these passing references prior to anonymous letters to the editor or Stead’s grand campaign indicate the capillary-like relationship between the press, the public, and the questions of the day. In particular, Stead’s 1886 essays also help to articulate this particular brand of power, highlighting the pedestrian, pervasive vision that permeated the pages of a paper.

As “Government by Journalism” and “The Future of Journalism” indicated, the question of prostitution was evolving on a backdrop of a rapidly changing society. Over the course of eighty years, a boom in technology, population, and industry forged a modern society, a change that also bore with it a change in power. As the debate over prostitution suggests, it was the tactics of the newspaper that came to dominate the changes in public conceptions of prostitution. The crafty, surveilling eye of the journalist brought the prostitute to the public not in the columns of the statistician, or as the sinner of the evangelical, but as an entity who (allegedly) spoke for herself, who played upon the emotions and sensations of the public writ large. As a harbinger of modern mass communication, Stead especially recognized how the public had transformed into the “masses,” how persuasion happened through impulse, and how the journalist stood to effectively operate as ruler over the inert masses of Britain.

At the beginning of this work, I asked, “what is a prostitute?” At this point, I should hope that a reader’s answer to this question would not begin with, “someone who...” Instead, the answer to this question should be a whole slew of questions—“to whom?” “when?” “where?” and “for what end?” While prostitution may be regarded as a very old profession, it has never

been an uncontested one. Moreover, what prostitution is is a matter of by what means it is known. As this work demonstrates, those who practiced prostitution were not the ones defining it in within public discourse. Like many other practices of the poor, or women, or politically disenfranchised, the prostitute is spoken of by others. While this may seem like the standard battle cry of the critical/feminist scholar, this condition of being spoken of was something that a very smart, anonymous “prostitute” pointed out in the pages of the *Times* over one hundred and fifty years ago:

Gentlemen of philanthropic societies and members of the Society for the Suppression of Vice may build reformatories and open houses of refuge and Magdalen asylums, and ‘Amicus’ may save occasionally a ‘fallen sister’ who can prevail on herself to be saved; but we who never were sisters—who never had any relationship, part, interest, or communion with the large family of this world’s virtues, moralities, and proprieties—we, who are not fallen, but were always down—who never had any virtue to lose . . . what do they propose to do with us?

This poignant critique of earnest British efforts at reform struck at the very core of the disconnect between subject and speaker. For the likes of “Another Unfortunate,” “she” and many others existed under conditions not created of their own making, and they surely knew this. It was a matter of what “they” would decide, not what the countless throngs who constituted the “Great Social Evil” might decide for themselves. Those who were “not fallen, but were always down” were constantly made and remade over thousands of pages of text, created by the evangelicals, social scientists, and editors. Especially for those living in nineteenth century Britain, it was the quotidian production of knowledge within the newspaper that helped to create the prostitute, a woman made of words.

Notes

¹ Plowden and Corporation, *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"*, 139.

² *Ibid.*, 135.

³ Stead refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing in the Eliza Armstrong case and proudly bore his prison sentence, stating, "I was charged with conspiracy. What I did was to expose a conspiracy of vice and crime by a combination with the friends of law and virtue." Quoted in Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain: 1850-1950*, 127, n. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵ Stead, "Government by Journalism," 665.

⁶ Many of the reader's reactions printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on July 9, 1885 are a good indication of the widespread, positive regard that the public held for Stead's work. The praise, of course, was tempered with a fair bit of criticism. Along with some of the letters printed in the same July 9 issue, two of his most famous detractors were Matthew Arnold and George Bernard Shaw. Arnold, a renowned critic of the period, remarked acidly of Stead's work, "We have had opportunities of observing a new journalism which a clever and energetic man has lately invited. It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault that it is *feather-brained*. It throws out assertions at a venture because it wishes them true; does not correct either them or itself, if they are false; and to get at the state of things as they truly are seems to feel no concern whatever" (Quoted in Matthew Arnold, "Up to Easter," *The Nineteenth Century* 21, no. 123 (1887): 638. Italics in original.). Shaw, the Irish playwright employed at the *Pall Mall Gazette* under Stead's editorship, assessed Stead far more bluntly than Arnold did. He recalled Stead as "an utter Philistine. . . . outside political journalism such as can be picked up in a newspaper office he was a complete ignoramus. . . . he was unteachable except by himself. . . . it was clear that he was a man who could not work with anybody; and nobody would work with him" (Quoted in Robertson Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper: An Account of the Temperaments, Perturbations and Achievements of John Morley, W. T. Stead, E. T. Cook, Harry Cust, J. L. Garvin and Three Other Editors of the Pall Mall Gazette*, 85.).

⁷ Robert Woods, "The Population of Britain in the Nineteenth Century," in *British Population History: From the Black Death to the Present Day*, ed. Michael Ball (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 298.

⁸ Julie Jefferies, "The UK Population: Past, Present and Future," http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compedia/fom2005/01_fopm_population.pdf.

⁹ Michael Ball and David Sunderland, *An Economic History of London, 1800-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 264.

¹⁰ Stead, "Government by Journalism," 654.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: 663.

¹² Alvar Ellegård, "The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain: II. Directory," *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, no. 13 (1971): 4.

¹³ Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), 73.

¹⁴ Plowden and Corporation, *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"*, 104.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Alan Cranfield, *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe* (London: Longman Group United Kingdom, 1978), 212.

¹⁶ Stead, "Government by Journalism," 673.

¹⁷ Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s," 21.

¹⁸ Stead, "Government by Journalism," 673.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 669.

²⁰ ———, "The Future of Journalism," 666.

²¹ ———, "Government by Journalism," 661.

²² ———, "The Future of Journalism," 664.

²³ ———, "Government by Journalism," 660.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 662.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 671.

²⁷ See note 6.

²⁸ Stead, "Government by Journalism," 655.

²⁹ *Ibid.*: 671.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 670.

³¹ *Ibid.*: 671.

³² *Ibid.*: 672.

³³ _____, "The Future of Journalism," 678.

³⁴ Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function.*, 210-11. Caps in original.

Bibliography

- Acton, William. *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils*. London: John Churchill, 1857.
- . *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns*. 2nd ed. London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870.
- Anderson, Patricia. *When Passion Reigned: Sex and the Victorians*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Anonymous. "Review of Religious Publications, &C." *The Evangelical Magazine* XVII (1809).
- Arnold, Matthew. "Up to Easter." *The Nineteenth Century* 21, no. 123 (1887): 629-43.
- Auerbach, Nina. "The Rise of the Fallen Woman." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35, no. 1 (1980): 23.
- Ball, Michael, and David Sunderland. *An Economic History of London, 1800-1914*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Bartley, Paula. *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Batchelor, Jennie, and Megan Hiatt, eds. *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House*. London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2006.
- Baylen, J. O. "The 'New Journalism' in Late Victorian Britain." *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 18, no. 3 (1972): 367-85.
- Bennett, James. *The History of Dissenters, During the Last Thirty Years, (from 1808 to 1838)*. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1839.
- Bernheimer, Charles. *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Brown, Daniel S., and Matthew A. Morrow. "Margaret Thatcher's Sermon on the Mound: 'Christianity and Wealth'." *Journal of Communication & Religion* 33, no. 1 (2010): 33-55.

- Brown, David. "Morally Transforming the World or Spinning a Line? Politicians and the Newspaper Press in Mid Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Historical Research* 83, no. 220 (2010): 321-42.
- Brown, Lucy. "The Growth of a National Press." In *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, edited by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990.
- Browne, Stephen. "'Like Gory Spectres': Representing Evil in Theodore Weld's American Slavery as It Is." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 3 (1994): 277.
- Bryant, Donald C. "After Goodrich: New Resources in British Public Address a Symposium." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48, no. 1 (1962): 1.
- Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Butler, Josephine. *Constitution Violated: An Essay*. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871.
- Campbell, Kate. "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s." *Victorian Periodicals Review* 36, no. 1 (2003): 20-40.
- Charney, Maurice. *Sexual Fiction*. London and New York: Methuen, 1981.
- Chase, Karen, and Michael Levenson. *The Spectacle of Intimacy: A Public Life for the Victorian Family*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Chenoweth, Eugene C., Michael T. Dues, and Uvieja Z. Good. "The Significance of Humanistic Rhetoric in British Public Address." *Central States Speech Journal* 20 (1969): 115-21.
- Corbin, Alain. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Cranfield, Geoffrey Alan. *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe*. London: Longman Group United Kingdom, 1978.
- "*De La Prostitution Dans La Ville De Paris*. Par A. J. B. Parent Duchatelet." *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 19, no. 38 (1837).
- "The Delicate Question." *The Times*, February 11 1858.
- Donzelot, Jacques. *The Policing of Families*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.

- Douglas Anderson, Floyd, and Andrew A. King. "William Hazlitt as a Critic of Parliamentary Speaking." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67, no. 1 (1981): 47-56.
- Ehrlich, J. Shoshanna. "You Can Steal Her Virginity but Not Her Doll: The Nineteenth Century Campaign to Raise the Legal Age of Sexual Consent." *Cardozo Journal of Law & Gender* 15 (2008-2009): 16.
- Ellegård, Alvar. "The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain: Ii. Directory." *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, no. 13 (1971): 3-22.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, Joseph Slater, Robert E. Burkholder, Philip Nicoloff, and Douglass Emory Wilson. *English Traits*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Fisher, Trevor. *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*. Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1974-1975* Edited by Francois Ewald, Alessandra Fontana, Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni. New York: Picador, 1999.
- . "The Birth of Social Medicine." In *Power*, edited by James D. Faubion. New York: The New Press, 2001.
- . *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- . "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- . *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- . "The Political Technology of Individuals." In *Technologies of the Self*, edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- . *Power*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. Vol. 3, The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984. New York: The New Press, 2000.
- . *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-1976*. New York: Picador, 2003.

———. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-1976*. Edited by Mauro Bertani, Francois Ewald and Alessandra Fontana. New York: Picador, 2003.

———. "Truth and Juridical Forms." In *Power: Volume 3*, edited by James D. Faubion. New York: The New Press, 2001.

Foucault, Michel, and Colin Gordon. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Foucault, Michel, Michel Senellart, François Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*. Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan : République Française, 2007.

Fowles, John. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. New York: Signet, 1969.

Fraser, Derek. "The Editor as Activist: Editors and Urban Politics in Early Victorian England." In *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England*, edited by Joel H Wiener. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Goodrich, Chauncey Allen. *Essays from Select British Eloquence*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963.

Gorham, Deborah. "The "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England." *Victorian Studies* 21, no. 3 (1978): 353-79.

Greg, W. R. . "Prostitution." *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* 53, no. 2 (1850): 58.

Hale, William. *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution; and on the Most Practicable and Efficient Means of Abating and Preventing That, and All Other Crimes, against the Virtue and Safety of the Community*. London: E. Justins, 1812.

Hall, Lesley. *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Hall, Lesley A. "Venereal Diseases and Society in Britain, from the Contagious Diseases Acts to the National Health Service." In *Sex, Sin and Suffering: Venereal Disease and European Society since 1870*, edited by Roger Davidson and Lesley Hall. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

- Halttunen, Karen. *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Hampton, Mark. "Rethinking the 'New Journalism,' 1850's-1930's." *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 278-90.
- . *Visions of the Press in Britain: 1850-1950*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Harris, Michael. "London's Local Newspapers: Patters of Change in the Victorian Period." In *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, edited by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel LMadden. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990.
- Hartley, Jenny. *Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women*. London: Methuen, 2008.
- Hendrick, Harry. *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Hirsch, Edward. "Susan Sontag, the Art of Fiction No. 143." *The Paris Review*.
- Hodson, G. *Strictures on Mr. Hale's Reply to the Pamphlets Lately Published in Defence of the London Female Penitentiary*. London: Meurs. Williams and Smith, 1809.
- Jefferies, Julie. "The UK Population: Past, Present and Future."
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/fom2005/01_fopm_population.pdf.
- Jensen, J. Vernon. "Bibliography on Public Address in Britain and the Commonwealth." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1979): 220-38.
- Kincaid, James R. *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Koven, Seth. *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- La Berge, Ann F. *Mission and Method: The Early-Nineteenth-Century French Public Health Movement*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Lawrence, D. H. . *Sex, Literature and Censorship*. Edited by Harry T. Moore. New York City: Twayne Publishers, 1953.

- Lemke, Thomas. "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique." In *Rethinking Marxism Conference*. Amherst, 2000.
- Liddle, Dallas. "Salesmen, Sportsmen, Mentors: Anonymity and Mid-Victorian Theories of Journalism." *Victorian Studies* 41, no. 1 (1997): 31-68.
- Logan, William. *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil*. Glasgow: G. Gallie, and R. Fleckfield, 1843.
- Lutz, Deborah. *Pleasure Bound: Victorian Sex Rebels and the New Eroticism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011.
- Mahood, Linda. *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Mailloux, Steven. *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Marcus, Steven. *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*. New York: Basic Books, 1966.
- Mason, Michael. *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour and the London Poor*. Vol. 4. New York,: Dover Publications, 1968.
- McCormick, Ian, ed. *Sexual Outcasts 1750-1850*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Medhurst, Martin, J. "The Contemporary Study of Public Address: Renewal, Recovery, and Reconfiguration." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 3 (2001): 495-511.
- Meisel, Joseph S. *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Milner, Andrew. *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Mort, Frank. *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Nead, Lynda. *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*. New York: B. Blackwell, 1988.

- Oliver, Robert T. *The Influence of Rhetoric in the Shaping of Great Britain: From the Roman Invasion to the Early Nineteenth Century*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986.
- . *Public Speaking in the Reshaping of Great Britain*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987.
- "On Prostitution in the City of Paris; Considered under the Heads of Public Hygeine, Moral, and Internal Police." *The Lancet* 2 (1837).
- Pearsall, Ronald. *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality*. London: The History Press, 2003.
- Pebody, Charles. *English Journalism, and the Men Who Have Made It*. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co, 1882.
- Perkins, Michael. *The Secret Record: Modern Erotic Literature*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976.
- Petrie, Glen. *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler*. London: Macmillan London Ltd, 1971.
- Philip, Howell. "A Private Contagious Diseases Act: Prostitution and Public Space in Victorian Cambridge." *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 3 (2000): 376-402.
- Plowden, Alison, and British Broadcasting Corporation. *The Case of Eliza Armstrong: "A Child of 13 Bought for £5"*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1974.
- Poovey, Mary. *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- "Public Prostitution." *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 55 (1858): 56-57.
- Reay, Barry. *Watching Hannah: Sexuality, Horror and Bodily De-Formation in Victorian England*. London: Reaktion Books, 2002.
- Reid, Loren. "The Teaching of British Public Address." *Communication Education* 23, no. 2 (1974): 91-100.
- Richelot, Gustave Antoine. *The Greatest of Our Social Evils: Prostitution, as It Now Exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin; an Enquiry into the Cause and Means of Reformation, Based on Statistical Documents*. London: H. Bailliere, 1857.

- Robertson Scott, J. W. *The Life and Death of a Newspaper: An Account of the Temperaments, Perturbations and Achievements of John Morley, W. T. Stead, E. T. Cook, Harry Cust, J. L. Garvin and Three Other Editors of the Pall Mall Gazette*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1953.
- Rosen, F. "Bentham, Jeremy (1748–1832)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison and Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: OUP, 2004.
- Rosenfield, Lawrence W. "A Note from Rosenfield." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1973): 374.
- . "Politics and Pornography." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59, no. 4 (1973): 413.
- Rue, James J., and Alan Nichols. "A Misnomer in British Public Address." *Western Speech* 17, no. 4 (1953): 241-44.
- Ryan, Michael. *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York, as Illustrative of the Capitals and Large Towns of All Countries; and Proving Moral Depravation to Be the Most Fertile Source of Crime and of Personal and Social Misery; with an Account of the Nature and Treatment of the Various Diseases, Caused by the Abuses of the Reproductive Function*. London: H. Bailliere, 1839.
- Salmon, Richard. "A Simulacrum of Power: Intimacy and Abstraction in the Rhetoric of the New Journalism." *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30, no. 1 (1997): 41-52.
- Sanders, Robert E. "On Rosenfield on Pornography." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1974): 371.
- Schiappa, Edward. *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.
- Scrutator. "Causes of the Increase of Prostitution." *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, November 1 1814.
- . "On Monopoly in the Necessaries of Life." *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, December 1 1814.
- Seidman, Steven. "The Power of Desire and the Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered." *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 1 (1990): 47-67.
- Seward, Daniel E. "Civic Voice in Elizabethan Parliamentary Oratory: The Rhetoric and Composition of Speeches Delivered at Westminster in 1566." University of Texas, 2008.

- Sigel, Lisa Z. *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- . *Styles of Radical Will*. New York: Picador, 2002.
- Stafford, Ann. *Age of Consent*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1964.
- Stead, W. T. "The Future of Journalism." *The Contemporary Review* 50, no. 1 (1886): 664.
- . "Government by Journalism." *The Contemporary Review* 49, no. 1 (1886): 653.
- Storey, Graham, and Kathleen Tillotson, eds. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Vol. 8, 1856-1858. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Tait, William. *Magdalensim. An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh*. Edinburgh: P. Rickard, 1840.
- Talbot, James Beard. *The Miseries of Prostitution*. London: James Madden and Co., 1844.
- Walkowitz, Judith. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, *Women in Culture and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Wallis, John. *London: Being a Complete Guide to the British Capital; Containing, a Full and Accurate Account of Its Buildings, Commerce, Curiosities, Exhibitions, Amusements, Religious and Charitable Foundations, Literary Establishments, Learned and Scientific Institutions*. London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster-Row, 1814.
- Whyte, Frederic. *The Life of W. T. Stead*. New York & Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925.
- Wicktor, Emily. "'Imbued with the Science of Venus': Female Fallenness, Sexual Pedagogy, and Victorian Pornography." University of Kansas, 2010.
- Woods, Robert. "The Population of Britain in the Nineteenth Century." In *British Population History: From the Black Death to the Present Day*, edited by Michael Ball. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Zarefsky, David. "Definitions." In *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Frameworks, and Critiques*, edited by James F. Klumpp, 1-11. Annandale: National Communication Association, 1997.