THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF STRIPPING:
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SEX TRADE WORK

by

Diane Eleanor Meaghan

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology in Education and Equity Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

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The study examines how the political economy contributed to the social organization of stripping during the 1980s and 1990s in Ontario. Forty-seven strippers and a variety of other personnel in eighteen strip clubs were surveyed. Stripping is viewed as a practice which is part of the new global economy with segmented markets, diversification, work intensification and declining rates of remuneration. The experiences of strippers are seen to be socially constructed (formed by historical, material and discursive procedures), as part of a capitalist labour process, patriarchal practices and specific forms of race relations. The purpose of the study was to explore stripping as skilled and knowledgeable work, located within the service industry and subject to a gendered division of labour. A materialist feminist labour process was utilized to explicate specific aspects of the everyday working lives of strippers. Gender and race were employed as organizing categories (to be investigated as culturally constructed and materialist forces)
central to a differential labour process. Stripping was viewed as similar to other forms of unequal exchange relations which have evolved within the service industry. The defining features of the service industry of stripping highlighted a decentralized and flexible labour process, in which working class women are available to service the needs of predominantly White men with economic resources. Shifts in skills and the nature of power and resistance based on class, gender and race statuses were revealed in a labour process of stripping.
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study investigates the social organization of women's work as strippers and the political, economic and ideological processes that organize stripping as part of the sex trade industry as it developed during the 1980s and 1990s in Ontario. Women's experiences as strippers are viewed as developing in a context in which social relationships are part of a capitalist labour process. Although this study reflects some aspects of postmodern discourse within sociology (emphasizing subjectivity, phenomenology and social context), stripping is predominantly seen as it is linked to the material conditions of the stripper's lived reality. In this inquiry I was particularly interested to understand how stripping practices are socially constructed and to explain how stripping is taken up and lived out concretely by women engaged in this labour process in "men's strip clubs". The largely unrecognized and undervalued social/emotional and interpersonal work of stripping was also explored in this study. Deconstructing the experiences of participants in stripping allows for the discovery of how those experiences are formed by historical, material and discursive practices within a patriarchal capitalist framework, overlaid by specific forms of race relations. The purpose of the research is three-fold:

(1) to explore stripping as skilled and knowledgeable work, subject to a gendered and racial division of labour process within the service sector;

(2) to examine the everyday experiences of women engaged in stripping in order to understand the ways in which the expectations, values and ideals of femininity are socially and culturally constituted through the body work of stripping;

(3) to produce an understanding of the organization of
stripping in the context of capitalist, patriarchal and specific ideologies of race.

The aim of the study is to examine the everyday practices of stripping as a work process in the context of political and economic relations, to learn from strippers' experiences the ways in which they seek to take control of their working conditions and change their working lives. Conceptualizing stripping as productive work raises questions about how the political economy participates in the social organization of sexuality. In the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, stripping was restructured, changing from presentation dancing to explicit sexual contacts that led to regulatory reaction. This study explores these changes and the responses of strippers to the resulting transformations in the relations of production.

Stripping is linked with wider social processes and pervaded with assumptions arising out of the society in which such practices are located. Stripping practices are permeated with cultural norms, values and expectations of society, producing and reproducing societal norms. Everyday experiences and practices serve as a window for understanding the contemporary social world in which stripping is a metaphor for the changing relations between women and men in society. The importance of social emotional work processes performed by women and the obscurity of their gender-based origins were also investigated. Within the frameworks of ascribed gender, racial and working class statuses, stripping practices organize and integrate individuals into the subculture. Strip club practices reflect and reinforce established race as well as class and gender relations. Thus as part of the capitalist labour process, race and ethnic divisions that regulate competition among workers and give precedence to Caucasian and anglophone workers elsewhere in society also appear as divisions among strippers. Although power relations are usually analyzed in a macrosociological context (as the outcome
of historical and structural forces of the socioeconomic world), power relations between men and women are also visible and can be viewed as everyday interactions in the microconstruction of social reality in the workplace.

My only contact with stripping prior to undertaking this study was at the Condor Club in San Francisco in the 1970s when, as a young married woman engaged in a "radical chic" lifestyle (prior to my discovery of feminism, socialism and trade unionism), I watched nude women gyrating about six inches from the sandwich I was eating. I had been a serious student of ballet (classical and jazz) for three decades, but was unable by the wildest stretch of my imagination to label these activities as "dancing". My interest in stripping arose out a friendship dating from the same era. I had witnessed a close feminist friend suffer the slings and arrows of academic chauvinism by undertaking a study of stripping for her doctoral dissertation at York University (Salutin, 1970). Later hailed as a minor sociological classic, her work was initially viewed by some of her colleagues as rather too avant garde and her career choices, not unlike the women she studied, were labelled as "deviant". Recalling Joanna Russ's line: "No proper woman writes about sex; therefore, the writing is not by a woman. And if she does write, she's not a proper woman", I wanted to continue my colleague's work (Dworkin, 1976:93). I was interested to present to her (some twenty five years later) an updated feminist, labour process approach to indicate that her genre of sociological investigation constituted pioneer work in the field.

With an understanding that patriarchy and racism continue to touch the lives of all women requiring the perseverance of a strong women's movement, the claim that feminists speak for all women has, nonetheless, been challenged. In some respects, the social changes espoused by the women's liberation movement and the changes encompassed in labour laws over the past few decades
have least affected the poor, young and sometimes minority women who enter sex trade work. Fostering an inclusionary understanding of the different positions of the feminine subject in a historically specific context (while preserving overarching explanations within the framework of patriarchal, capitalist and race relations arrangements) has become a focal point for materialist feminists (Hennessy, 1993). In this study of stripping, I wanted to lift the shroud of mystique and glamour which surrounds stripping to explore some of the difficulties facing women in this line of work. Stripping is one of the ways in which sexuality, gender roles and personal identity are constituted in our society. It is an integral part of the lives of people in the sex trade industry. More broadly, stripping impinges on women's and men's lives through the ways in which it is part of the production of specific cultural images and discourse of sexuality. Popular cultural genres not only reflect images but they inform us about how the dominant culture constructs desire and social values. The project undertaken in this study is that of bringing into view the actual work that goes into the cultural construction of sexuality as strippers experience the "real stuff" of their economic survival. It describes strippers' ambivalence towards the organization of their work and the social relationships categorizing their work.

1.2. The Women's Movement and the Sex Trade Feminist Debates

This section examines the feminist debates which emerged among second-wave feminists in the late twentieth century that set the context for this study. Disputes over issues of sexuality, gender, violence, choice and diversity erupted onto the contested terrain of the feminist "sex debates" by the 1980s, presenting dichotomous and opposing positions. The radical feminist perspective repudiated sexual practices that supported male violence, calling for women to reclaim control over their
sexuality by developing sexual priorities which differ from those of men. Viewing male and female sexuality as fundamentally different and male sexuality as dangerous to women, they looked to impose boundaries on male sexuality. The distinct philosophies of feminists who identified themselves as sexual liberationists disclaimed such theoretical analyses, legal restrictions or moral judgments that stigmatized and restricted the freedom of sexual minorities. They pointed out the sexual liberation was an extension of male privilege that resonated with a conservative sexual discourse. Viewing men and women as having similar sexual needs and a sexual double standard as oppressive to women, they sought to reclaim women's sexuality by demanding to practice whatever gives women pleasure. Similar to the debates among first-wave feminists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (who both endorsed purity campaigns to free women from the degradation of sex work and argued that sex could be an area of expanded freedom for women), both camps have made definite and valuable contributions to the discussion of this controversial issue (Chapkis, 1999:172). Similarly, both sides have overly extended their arguments through polarizing discourses which emerged out of some of the positions put forth.

The central issues and positions highlighted here focused on prostitution and pornography rather than on stripping, but the issues raised by both of these related topics are also relevant to stripping. Addressing both the theories and political significance of prostitution and pornography (as aspects of the sex trade of which stripping is a part) centers stripping in the two major debates within feminism. Though they overlap, the issues of prostitution and pornography have raised rather different questions for feminism. The debates on prostitution, to which prostitutes themselves have contributed, have been preoccupied, on the one hand, concerning the violent subjection of women and its significance for patriarchal culture and, on the other, with the working conditions of prostitutes and the
possibilities of decriminalization. Feminist debates about pornography have highlighted the contribution (positive and negative) that pornography makes to the culture of sexuality and on the merits and about the advantages to censoring pornography. In taking the position that stripping is work, issues of sexuality and the cultures of sexuality cannot be ignored. Stripping, similar to prostitution, involves the presentation or performance of women's bodies as objects of male desire, hence evoking some of the same issues as does prostitution. Stripping also clearly both arises in and contributes to the production of the sexual culture of the society in ways closely analogous to the contributions of pornography as well as being influenced by pornographic images and themes.

Preceding these discussions was the earlier 1970s tension in the feminist movement between lesbian and heterosexual feminists. The debates around marginality, difference and sexual consciousness that transformed the personal to political led Charlotte Bunch (1975:29-37) to claim that "Lesbians in Revolt" reject male sexual/political domination that benefits rich Caucasian males. She described "woman-identified lesbianism" as more than a sexual preference, but rather a political choice (Bunch, 1975:30). The ideal lesbian relationship was viewed as voluntary, essentially spiritual as well as sexual in nature and based on equalitarian principles. The independence of the lesbian and her refusal to support a man emotionally was seen to undermine the personal power that men exercised over women. Since heterosexuality was viewed as separating women from each other, defining women through men and forcing them to compete for men, Bunch identified a distrust in heterosexually committed women. By validating lesbianism as one among a plurality of feminist perspectives, lesbians were viewed as the key to women's liberation in transforming a male-dominated heterosexual society.

Lesbian and gay studies exerted a profound influence on
sexuality in helping to understand the diverse ways in which eroticism, gender and intimacy were constituted. Lesbian feminism challenged twentieth-century notions of sexuality as biologically based, by establishing that sex was a biological phenomenon while gender was a cultural construct of masculinity and femininity superimposed on biology. These critiques of the 1970s rejected masculinity and challenged the binary heterosexual/homosexual model, attempting to establish lesbianism as an alternative to patriarchal culture and the model of feminism. Lesbian feminists viewed older "butch/femme" roles as antiquated and locked into heterosexual dominant and submissive behaviour. Differences including those of sexuality and desire, as well as race and class were thought to be produced by patriarchal social relations and specifically by men's oppression of women. Relations between men and women were characterized by the social construct of masculinity which prescribed that men oppressed women and by femininity that required that women were passive. Lesbian feminists argued that women's oppression was maintained by the social construction of dichotomous gender categories of femininity and masculinity and their concomitant roles that organized people according to the principles of heteropatriarchy.

The early 1980s signalled a return of sexuality in lesbian relationships, the re-emergence of butch/femme identities and the need for difference in order to create erotic desire (Carter and Noble, 1997:25). In "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality", Gayle Rubin (1984:267-73) relied on the work of Foucault to describe common discourses about sexuality that assumed that sex was natural, pre-social and a dangerous and destructive force. Ideally, "good" sex was heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive and non-commercial in nature; such encounters were undertaken in a relationship, within the same generation, occurred at home and did not involve pornography, sex toys or roles other than male and female (Rubin, 1984:280-81). A single standard of sexual
behaviour was established against which proponents, including "anti-sex" feminists judged all other sexual practices according to a hierarchal system of values. Rubin placed prostitution in the larger context of commodification of female sexuality in capitalist societies in which men exchange women as objects (Rubin, 1975). Prostitution and marriage were viewed as part of a public/private split of a patriarchal mirror image, bestowing acceptability on the woman who was a wife and rejecting the woman who was a whore. In acknowledging that feminism as a theory of gender oppression was a privileged site for a theory of sexuality, Rubin moved away from feminism and toward "progressive thinkers" and sex radicals. She claimed a feminist vanguard for lesbians, contending that "pro-sex" feminism (spearheaded by sadomasochistic lesbians, butch/femme dykes and some heterosexual women) represented radical practice because it was transgressional, articulated sexual pleasure and defined erotic justice.

The bias of compulsory heterosexuality presented lesbian experiences as invisible, marginal or deviant (Griffin, 1997:104; Armstrong, 1997:10). According to Andrienne Rich (1992), equality of women threatened the family, religion and the state which had traditionally controlled women through institutions such as patriarchal motherhood, economic devaluation and compulsory heterosexuality. She not only objected to state-sponsored discrimination against lesbians, but she also pointed to the heterosexual preferences within feminist discourses that tolerated lesbianism as an alternative lifestyle. The failure to examine heterosexuality as an institution was an obstacle for feminism (based on the assumption that most women were innately heterosexual), failing to take into account the fact that many women marry and have children to prevent social ostracism and to survive economically. She stated that preventing women from loving one another was one of the social controls of a male-dominated society, and she offered a lesbian continuum of
personal/political affiliation to re-establish same-sex loyalties in a woman-focused vision (Rich, 1992).

By the late 1980s, a shift occurred in lesbian and gay politics from political action to personal expression and from privacy to speech in the new definition of sexual identity (Turcotte, 1996:118). Splits took place between lesbian feminists and lesbians who adhere to identity politics that privileged the lived experiences of oppression as liberatory projects (McIntosh, 1997:364). Unlike the earlier lesbian theories of social construction, queer and bisexual theories began articulating a radical position with respect to conflicts around social relations surrounding gender, reproduction, sexuality and the family (Smyth, 1992:362). While affirming an independent lesbian movement, queer theorists challenged misogyny within the gay movement as well as the political incorrectness of separatist feminism (Turcotte, 1996:120; Wilson, 1997:369). They wanted to discuss issues of desire, fantasies and sexual practices and to engage in transgressional practices offered by queer politics (Smyth, 1997:363-4). They rejected the dominant feminist agenda that resulted in the construction of dualisms, hierarchies of oppression and a static concept of identity (Kemp and Squires, 1997:318). Nonetheless, while providing a forum for acts of defiance that were personally liberating, such theories were removed from a context of power relations and did not deal with the structural nature of oppression (Wilson, 1997:369).

In raising opposition to homosexuality, pornography, abortion, sex education and premarital sex, neo-conservative ideologies, practices and laws of the early 1980s represented an assault on feminism, socialism, homosexuality and commercial public sex such as stripping. That historical period resulted in an increased regulation of sex work as well as a proliferation of sexual variation. As well it raised issues about how sexual choice shaped and was shaped by social conditions (Shrage,
1994:161). In general, however, feminists and other progressive thinkers have demonstrated more ambivalence toward establishing rights for sex workers than for gays and lesbians and other social groups. Nonetheless, the sex-workers' rights movement is connected to other persecuted sexualities and the growth of other sexual liberation movements. Although lesbianism is an erotic preference and prostitution is an occupation, both have been stigmatized and governed by ideologies which classify them as inferior, dangerous and subject to legal persecution. Similar to lesbians, prostitutes were viewed as a sexual minority constructed as a deviant and alternative identity during the nineteenth century (Rubin, 1984). Both the state and the medical profession created sexual minority groups from what were previously merely sexual behaviours; and their identity as sexual minorities became established through organized resistance to individual dominant construction.

1.2a. The Prostitution Debates

There has been a long history of feminist work concerning prostitution, sexuality and more recently pornography, with various emphases emerging concerning sex work. Feminist research (which began as a response to the goals of the women's movement to achieve equality, emancipation and self-determination) had a strong activist orientation. Radical feminism maintains that the cause of female oppression in society is not a capitalist mode of economic organization (although they recognize women's inferior economic position within it), but a sexual class system of male privilege and sex distinctions out of which an economic class system arises (Firestone, 1971:11-12). Their contribution has been to emphasize that prostitution is linked as much to the organization of gender and sexuality as it is to the arrangement of wage labour. Kate Millet (1971:24) defines "sexual politics" as a relationship structured by power in which males, by birthright, come to control females. In calling for an end to sexuality in (historical forms in which it has existed),
including brutality, violence, capitalism, exploitation and warfare, she engaged in an open critique of male-dominated heterosexuality. Robin Morgan's (1970:14), famous formulation "pornography is the theory and rape is the practice", was much cited despite the fact that the U.S. Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970) did not substantiate this notion. The Commission established that no correlation existed between exposure to erotica and anti-social behaviour; it also found no adverse social effects in adults from viewing nonviolent pornography. With the advent of the sex debates in the 1980s, one of the dominant paradigms of the radical feminist critique of prostitution became the master-slave relationship, in which the sexual access, harassment and domination of prostitutes contributed to the victimization of all women (Stuckey, 1977:223, Kappeler, 1986:159).

Andrea Dworkin (1981,1987) equates prostitution and marriage in order to stress how women's subordination is fostered by men's appropriation of female sexuality in exchange for economic security. Men, by nature, are carnal, perverse and violent, using women's sexuality for their own pleasure and reproduction, while women are portrayed gentle but asexual beings. For Dworkin, male sexuality is integrally linked to violence and the subordination of women; accordingly, all heterosexual relations constitute rape. She argues that woman is constituted as and through sex; sex is synonymous with male supremacy and female objectification, and woman is synonymous with whore. In a system of male sexual control which reinforces dominant sexual roles, woman's body is colonialized in marriage and her sexuality conquered for the pleasure of power through prostitution. Consequently, women who participate in and enjoy heterosexual relations are seen as sleeping with the enemy. Men are aided by the "whore greedy for sensation, pleasure, money and men", by "right-wing ideology that claims the division of mother and whore is phenomenologically real" and by "left-wing ideology that claims that sexual freedom
is in the unrestrained use of women" (Dworkin, 1979:206-7). Since sex is inextricably bound to male domination, Dworkin insists that it cannot be used as a tool to dismantle male supremacy.

Kathleen Barry (1979) rejects the distinction between "forced" and "voluntary" prostitution. In her view, all commodification of women's bodies for sexual exchange violates human dignity and human rights. The prostitute becomes the symbol of women's abject powerlessness under conditions of male objectification and domination. For Barry, "freedom of speech" is a side issue as it relates to pornography (Barry, 1979:2). Identifying prostitution with "female sexual slavery", she states that many discourses deny victimization and equate it with sexual intercourse and liberation (Barry, 1979:118-19). The law of male right justifies prostitution as a universal cultural assumption, while defending domestic sexual slavery within the family on the basis of "family privacy" - hence the psychological and economic imbalance between husband and wife. She shares with Diana Russell (1995) the view that since the origins of prostitution are in family violence and incest (based on the statistic that 60-85 per cent of women who are prostitutes in the United States have been victims of incest or rape), it is not a natural economic alternative for women (Barry, 1986:1-6). The prostitute comes to see herself as those who abused her do, and "she may not be able to resist the slavery" due to the definitions attributed to her and her need for affection arising out of abuse (Barry, 1979:120).

According to Catherine MacKinnon, woman's sexuality is not her own--it is "a thing to be stolen, sold, bought, bartered, or exchanged by others" (MacKinnon, 1987:59). MacKinnon's feminist political theory identifies sexuality as a primary sphere of male power and the cause of women's oppression (MacKinnon, 1982:515-23). Heterosexual practices of rape, battery, incest, sexual harassment, abortion, pornography and prostitution create
male/female sexuality through the eroticization of dominance and submission (MacKinnon, 1983:49). She has become renowned for her position that in a patriarchal society, women are not in a position genuinely to refuse sex and, therefore, can never truly give consent. In *Feminism Unmodified* (1987:99) MacKinnon suggests that "the availability of contraception and abortion is part of a plot to bolster male sexual aggression to ensure that men can get laid". In *Toward a Feminist Theory of State* (1989), she puts forward the view that there is little to distinguish intercourse and rape, a position she elaborates further in her essay "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory" (1982), explaining that what is wrong with rape describes what is wrong about sex. For MacKinnon rape is the paradigmatic form of sexuality under patriarchy. She submits that even mildly explicit sexual material is linked to violence. She then extends her argument to suggest that not only does pornography encourage men to commit sexual assault but the mere visual engagement with such material is taken to be an act of sexual assault (MacKinnon, 1994).

A major contribution of radical feminists is the observation that prostitution involves more than sex and is linked to the organization of gender and wage labour (MacKinnon, 1989). Andrea Dworkin (1987) and Carole Pateman (1988) theorize female sexual desire as an expression of gender relations constructed in a masculine system that represents female sexuality for the pleasure of men. In particular, prostitution is assimilated into marriage and female sexuality is appropriated by men in exchange for various forms of economic security. Prostitution reinforces dominant sex roles in which men violently use women's sexuality for their own enjoyment (Shrage, 1989; Overall, 1992). In her famous analogy that "sexuality is to feminism what work is to marxism", MacKinnon substitutes the alienation of female sexuality for Marx's concept of alienation of labour (MacKinnon, 1982:515). In equating feminism with Marxism, she compares
sexuality with labour, desire with value and women with a proletarian class consciousness (Bell, 1994:82).14 Differentiating sex from other forms of wage labour, she presents a liberal discourse of ideal human sexuality as private and intimate, apart from a world of commodification and commercialization and oriented towards mutual power and pleasure. Since men have the power to make prostitution the fundamental condition of women, prostitution is the dominant metaphor for female sexuality. The stigma of prostitution is the stigma of sexuality and the female gender. As long as women are unequal to men and their inequality is sexualized, prostitution as an inherently oppressive practice of patriarchal capitalism perpetuates women's social subordination. MacKinnon's theories and those of other radical feminists fall back into an ideal normative discourse about human sexuality in which sex should be private rather than public, intimate as opposed to commercial and egalitarian instead of allowing for power differences. They leave no possibility that prostitutes have sexual agency and are able to exert control in commercial sexual transactions.

Since its inception in the early 1980s, a national organization in the United States, WHISPER (Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt), has educated the public concerning prostitution as a system of commercial sexual abuse, coercion and inequality that is neither a "career choice" nor a "victimless crime" (Giobbe, 1992:2). As "survivors of prostitution and pornography", the co-founders of WHISPER, Evelina Giobbe and Sara Wynters, compare the harm of sexual assault done to women and children trapped in the sex industry to the injuries of battered women (Giobbe, 1993:22). Working with Dworkin, MacKinnon and Barry to eradicate prostitution and pornography, their movement became inextricably tied to the work of Women Against Pornography (WAP). Giobbe and Wynters, both radical feminist organizers, advocate for the provision of services and shelters for "victims" who wish to leave
prostitution (State Coalition Defines Prostitution as a Form of Violence Against Women, 1991:3). It is estimated that there are 450,000 to one million adult prostitutes and a million children used in the sex industry in the United States, most are recruited prior to the age of sixteen, some have been "traditional wives" and have escaped from (or have been abandoned by) abusive husbands, and some who have taken up prostitution to support themselves and their children (Wynters, 1987:11).

The WHISPER Oral History Project has identified culturally supported tactics of power and control which facilitate the recruitment or coercion of women and children into prostitution and effectively impede their escape. These tactics include "child sexual abuse, rape, battery, educational deprivation, job discrimination, poverty, racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism and unequal enforcement of the law" (Wynters, 1987:12). In a WHISPER editorial describing opposition to strip clubs, dancers were similarly depicted as victims who had "physical and psychological symptoms . . . decreased concentration, diminished ambition, listlessness and depression and . . . feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, alienation and humiliation" (Giobbe, 1992:2). Some strippers, as well, have painted a picture of working in a "Mafia-owned strip joint as a dishonest little act" that subjects women to obscenities and unwarranted "pinches" of drunken clients, leading to a life of drugs, crime and poverty and causing the stripper to split her personality between the "real woman" and her stage personality (Lewin, 1985:17).

Carol and Barry Smart (1978) suggest that the ideology of male sexuality both supports and is supported by the structures of male dominance, privilege and the institution of heterosexuality. Sheila Jeffreys (1985:63-7) points out that the sexual revolution of the 1960s (which made women more available to men and massively expanded the pornography industry), did not eliminate prostitution. Feminists tend to withhold support from
prostitution because it presents no real challenge to male power and offers little room to criticize the institution let alone its implications for women in general.\textsuperscript{15} (Jeffreys, 1985). Prostitution constitutes the division of women into the categories of madonna and whore, serving more as a device of social control with respect to female sexuality than as a strategy of sexual liberation. Jeffreys disputes the view of sexual liberals that prostitution serves a useful social function by providing a service for the sexually repressed or for those who cannot find a partner. In fact, the majority of clients are middle-aged, heterosexual and often married men.\textsuperscript{16} Prostitution as an occupation offers little room for self-determination and inferior economic opportunities, she notes. The legal status of prostitutes is also inferior. They are a marginalized group, harassed by the police and exploited by pimps. Further, a system that places a premium on attachment to individual men, divides women who work in prostitution from other women (Jeffreys, 1987). Diane Russell (1982) suggests that male sexual violence takes many forms and operates through specific institutions including marriage. Maureen O'Hara (1985) argues that prostitution is part of a system of male sexual aggression (in which all women become sexual property), powerless to resist being bought and sold or forced into sex through verbal and sexual assault.\textsuperscript{17} Prostitution as a configuration of practices which encourages objectification, aggression, economic dependence, obsession with penetration and the ability to separate sex from emotions, mediates the male dominance that controls women in general (O'Hara, 1985).

Although there are a number of useful studies identifying issues of dominance and subordination (Chapman and Gates, 1978; Russell, 1982, 1993; and Dobash and Dobash, 1992), there has been little discussion within a radical feminist discourse about the manner in which female erotic agency could be exercised.\textsuperscript{18} Yet this sexually conservative discourse within the women's movement (with its emphasis on moralistic overtones and its view of
sexuality based on romantic love and monogamy) initially achieved hegemony in the debate\textsuperscript{19} (Eggerton, 1985). Women became critical of the pleasure and privilege accorded men and began searching for departure from totalizing theories of male domination and violence. Margaret Jackson (1985), an anti-censorship feminist, stresses the notion that in aligning themselves with the political Right to eradicate pornography, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) contributed to sexual repression by advancing censorship\textsuperscript{20}. By assuming that the consent of prostitutes reduced them to a mere reflection of male sexual desire, radical feminists fail to take into account issues of agency and control. The majority of pornography consumed is not of the extremely violent nature that Dworkin finds objectionable (William, 1984).\textsuperscript{21} According to Linda Williams, mainstream movies have become more violent, while pornographic films and videos have stressed less brutality than a decade previously. In her view, pornography is one of the few areas where women are not punished for sexual exploration. As more women produce, discuss and consume pornography, "bad" or coercive sex may diminish to be replaced by "good" or consensual sex, she contends.

Although commercial sexual relationships are perceived to be one-sided, Rubin (1984) comments that there are a variety of non-reciprocal, non-monogamous relations without love which are accepted in society.\textsuperscript{22} The dialectical character of Rubin's critique of patriarchy allows women to reclaim sexual power and establish sexual desires of their own. While Alison Jagger (1980:354) condemns sex work because it involves alienation of the self in ways which are more problematic than other forms of paid labour for women, Christine Overall (1992) states that how individuals relate to one another ought to be the criterion for judging the worth of an activity. She contends that separating prostitution from practices which are associated with disease, coercion, harassment and psychological abuse is essential. Such factors are not components of the work of prostitution but of
specific human relations. Dangerous and abusive aspects of the work are not unique to prostitution. Clean, pleasant surroundings, "well-mannered clients", mutual consideration and an absence of coercion have achieved a "civilized" exchange of sex for money in many prostitute-client interactions (Overall, 1992:710-11). The majority of women's groups that appeared before the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Committee), including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the National Association of Women and the Law (NAL), the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) advocate decriminalization of prostitution (Fraser et al, 1985). The Committee itself recommended the decriminalization of both prostitution and pornography following from the Law Reform Commission's recommendation calling for the removal of obscenity from the Criminal Code.

In opposition to MacKinnon's position, Mariana Valverde (1989:245) states that people have the right to personal sexual freedom. She argues that it is essential to separate gender and sexuality, since gender is less fixed than previously imagined and factors other than sexuality are responsible for gender oppression. Although Pateman (1988) claims that prostitution is not about sex or money but rather about power and sexual subordination, Noah Zatz (1997) acknowledges the connection between the two, nonetheless cautioning that these ideas cannot simplistically be reduced to each other in a totalizing theory. In debates about the moral implication of sex trade work the power of men as customers is exaggerated, while the power of women engaging in such work is minimalized. Further, an approach that only stresses the dangers for women in sex trade work leaves aside an investigation of pleasure and rewards as well as the extensive social-emotional and labour processes involved in this kind of work.
Sex trade work is often criticized because it involves a woman selling the most intimate aspect of herself and her sexuality in the marketplace. Although many domestic and marketplace jobs which women perform are commodified and all are commercial, sex-work is thought to be unique and degrading because it entails the buying and selling of sexual services associated with the body. This position ignores the social and economic roots of women's oppression. Many prostitutes suggest that although some aspects of the job may be degrading, in a less than ideal world where women face employment discrimination, job ghettos, low pay and sexual harassment, they are making the best choice from a pragmatic point of view (Shrage, 1994). Sex trade workers argue that there are a number of occupations apart from sex work involving the purchase of personal services. The very nature of professional service is, to some extent, detached and dehumanized. Professional athletes sell their bodily capacities as a discrete skill yet, leasing their bodies for short periods of time does not involve selling themselves (McClintock, 1992). Sex trade work is no more intimate than the work performed by psychotherapists (who listen to the inner most thoughts and emotions of their clients). Moreover, it should be questioned if a client who pays a fee for a service has the power to dehumanize. By their own admission, prostitutes also use clients as a means to an end. Being treated as an object is permissible as long as the individuals participating in the activities do so on a voluntarily basis. A number of prostitutes advocate an empowering heterosexual politics, enabling them to set the terms of the encounter and to demand proper payment for their time and skills (Alexander, 1987).

In the plethora of writings on the topics of pornography and prostitution there has been a recent effort to reflect on prostitution from the point of view of sex trade workers themselves. Feminist prostitute discourse suggests that prostitution is a career choice and a job environment in which
women can be individual and independent, unlike traditional feminine roles of the dominant culture which do not empower women (Anthony, 1992). Sex trade workers contend that since the women's movement advocates choice, prostitutes ought to be able to make their own decisions concerning the use of their bodies and the selection of an occupation. The removal of an individual's autonomy is viewed as problematic since the assessment of what is harmful and pleasurable varies among individuals and must be assessed in various material and cultural contexts. Countering the position put forth by WHISPER, Margo St. James and Priscilla Alexander, feminist prostitutes and founders of COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) argue that prostitution epitomizes women's sexual liberation because it allows the prostitute to set the sexual and economic conditions of a transaction based on her time and skills. The transaction is, therefore, mutually agreed upon and beneficial to both the prostitute and the customer. Prostitution is the embodiment of freedom because she not only has the right to exercise her sexual autonomy in deciding when and with whom to have sex, but she is free to enjoy sex (Delacoste and Alexander, 1987; Pheterson, 1989). Alexander advocates that prostitutes should have the right to work with a third party who takes care of the administration of her business, without resorting to the use of inflammatory words such as "pimping and pandering" to describe these relationships (Alexander, 1983:13). The Canadian counterpart of CAYOTE, Better End All Very Erratic Repression (BEAVER), similar to the majority of prostitute advocacy groups has lobbied to decriminalize prostitution (Mackenzie, 1978:2). The majority of sex trade workers reject state intervention and the criminalization of their work (Bullough and Bullough, 1978).

There is no single authoritative narrative of prostitution; however, many prostitutes view their activities as freely chosen work within a occupation providing a service which is not demeaning (St. James, 1987; Delacoste and Alexander, 1987; Bell,
At the International Congress of Whores (1985), the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights (1985), the World Charter for Prostitutes' Rights (1985) and the World Whores Summit (1989), a new prostitute subjectivity at the boundary of sex and work was articulated (Cabezas, 1998:82). These "new" political subjects argued that they produce their own bodies in diverse and contradictory ways, but most agreed that freedom of occupational choice and protection of health and safety were central to their struggle. "Choice" emerged as a critical issue among sex trade workers, who state that they consent to taking up their profession as well as consenting to specific acts. Prostitute discourse argues that coercion and the absence of consent also characterize women's traditional domestic and marketplace work (Pheterson, 1989). At the Second World Whores' Congress in 86 (Delacosta and Alexandra, 1986), sex trade workers expressed resentment about the assumptions of some feminists that sex work is oppressive, and that the women who engage in it need to be rescued. Working in a factory, as a domestic or an office clerk (which involves dull, repetitive tasks under strict supervision for limited wages) is far from their notion of liberation. Separating sex work from their sex lives, a substantial number advocate working for themselves; others suggest a collective where they can control their hours, set health and safety standards and establish a satisfactory fee schedule. Sex trade workers seek recognition and respect for the work they are engaged in--and identify with feminist values such as financial independence and self-determination (Scott, 1987; Second World Whores' Congress, 1986).

Prostitutes lament the fact that they are victims of laws against prostitution as well as harassment by the police in enforcing the law (St. James, 1978:178). They argue that criminalization drives the business into an underground economy that makes sex workers vulnerable to marginalization and exploitation, leaving them without legal recourse and medical
protection. Although some prostitutes lose their income and autonomy to procurers, St. James' (1987) advises that many prostitutes work independently and a number are involved with men who serve as business partners. Prostitutes argue that the work is similar to and should be subject to the same kinds of criticism as other forms of paid labour. Analysis should take into account that, for a number of women, sexual currency is their only route to security and independence. ² ² Sex trade workers continue to suffer stigmatization as a patriarchal manoeuvre to condemn and control women who assert their sexual independence (St. James, 1987). St. James states: "I've always thought that whores were the only emancipated women. We are the only ones who have the absolute right to fuck as many men as men fuck women" (St. James, 1987:84).

According to the Fraser special committee report, Pornography and Prostitution in Canada (1985), occupational hazards such as the presence of organized crime, violent customers and pimps as well as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are far less problematic in the sex trade industry than is generally perceived to be the case. Prostitutes have developed techniques to minimize danger such as working in pairs or in safe houses; the majority also undergo regular medical check-ups and require their customers to use prophylactics (Shaver, 1988). Violence against prostitutes must be considered in the context of abuse against women in the society at large--many women are beaten and raped in their homes and sexually harassed in the workplace. Without downplaying the risks to women who work as prostitutes and particularly those who work on the streets, the dangers are viewed as a consequence of their availability and vulnerability as women rather than as a choice of their profession (Shaver, 1988:846, Highcrest, 1997:102). Laurie Shrage (1992) further points out that in perceiving prostitution to be the violent appropriation of women's sexuality, radical feminists are assuming that prostitutes submit to the sexual desires of
clients in what appears to constitute subordination.

1.2b. The Pornography Debates

By the late 1970s, a radical feminist response to pornography and a critique of sadomasochistic practices gathered momentum. The social meaning of pornography (whether it constituted violence against women) and the radical feminist strategy of a campaign of censorship were the crucial issues of contention. On the side of radical feminism it was suggested that "whores" exist only in a framework of a sexual system designed to serve men. Arguing that pornography was real and central to male sexual domination, pornography was critiqued as debasing women and for using force against them (Dworkin, 1997:325-7). In contrast, sexual libertarians urged a movement away from a prescriptive and dogmatic view of pornography, arguing that such practices were ambiguous, ambivalent and complex (Vance, 1997:335). Their vision of feminism put forth a political position that disavowed violence and victimization in favour of one which supported pleasure.

In their co-authored Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day for Women's Equality (1988), MacKinnon and Dworkin advocate a civil, as opposed to a criminal, statutory definition of pornography. According to Dworkin, pornography debases women to "the lowest whore, the whore who belongs to all male citizens" (Dworkin, 1981:202). Arguing that real women and children are victimized in the production of pornography, she makes the case that pornography sexualizes racism and constructs lesbianism for the male gaze. The 1992 Canadian Supreme Court decision of Butler accepted LEAF's (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) argument that pornography is a form of gender discrimination, a response which MacKinnon and Dworkin helped to draft (MacKinnon and Dworkin, 1994:94-65). The Butler decision replaced a community-based definition of obscenity with MacKinnon's broad definition based on denigration and violence towards women.
Canada's obscenity laws criminalized sexual behaviour and provided a moral justification for censorship. Although Anne Mayne et al. (1993:26) and others call for state intervention through censorship to curb the "hate speech" of pornography, MacKinnon and Dworkin point out that a criminal obscenity approach (which puts power in the hands of the state) has been ineffective in stopping the production and distribution of pornography. It was for this reason that their Minneapolis Ordinance was drafted to strengthen women's ability to seek legal redress for those who felt they were victims of pornography. (MacKinnon and Dworkin, 1988:919-20).

Both sides of this debate have invoked the work of researchers Edward Donnerstein and Neil Malamuth to make their point. Radical feminists cite Donnerstein as suggesting that the relationship between pornographic depictions of women and real violence against women is a direct one, such that "once someone is objectified it does become progressively easy to egress against that person" (N.a. Pornography is Violence Against Women, 1980:8). In laboratory experiments, significant numbers of normal men exposed to pornography indicated that they would rape if they thought they could get away with it (N.a. Pornography is Violence Against Women, 1980:8). Donnerstein's experiments showed that men, who said they would commit rape also show an increase in their aggressive attitudes towards women after viewing violent pornography (Donnerstein, 1987). The relationship between pornographic depictions and sexual violence has yet to be established; Malamuth has recently suggested that it may be desirable to integrate aspects of the dual feminists theories into the thinking concerning pornography (Donnerstein et al, 1987:59).

Anti-censorship feminists focus on a critique of censorship that threatened freedom of speech, particularly for sexual minorities. Sex trade workers align themselves with the
anti-censorship position, arguing for greater sexual permissiveness and the primacy of pleasure. Rather than continuing to organize around what Paula Webster (1981) refers to as "victimization" and "otherness", women needed to free themselves from elements of sexual repression and patriarchal control and seek ways to express themselves authentically as sexual subjects by creating an ethics of pleasure. Negating a natural ahistorical view of sexuality, the sex radicals put aside the liberal private/public distinctions of eroticism and concentrate on desire as socially constructed. They stress choice, diversity and tolerance and give support to the prostitutes' rights movement (Rubin, 1984). The term "sex dissident" has begun to replace deviant in describing prostitutes, fetishists, gays, lesbians and others who are seen to have specific sexual tastes and a unique history of struggle to establish their rights (Weeks, 1985:187). In linking prostitutes with other oppressed sexual minorities, the emphasis shifts to viewing prostitutes as different from other workers only because of sex, thus enabling a critique to be mounted against the state's intrusion into intimate behaviour (Zatz, 1997:293).35

The Women Against Censorship position suggests that the anti-pornography and pro-censorship critique distracts the women's movement from concentrating on more important issues concerning women's inequality such as sexism in the law and economic disparity between women and men (Shaver, 1988:83). Varda Burstyn (1998a) holds that it is naive to believe that pornography causes sexism. Rather, "sexist pornography is a product of the economic and social conditions of our society - not vice versa" (Burstyn, 1985a:24). Valverde (1985:15) sees the convergence on the single issue of male sexual violence as displacing the more general struggle for women's sexual rights. MacKinnon's focus on extra-familial violence does not differentiate between actual and representational sex and
overlooks danger to women in the family in the form of wife abuse, incest, sexual demands and "plain sexual boredom" (Valverde, 1989:241). Sexuality is not an inherent, an individual or a private matter, but is socially constructed through relations with others in a specific context. Viewing sexual liberalization as male privilege, Valverde argues that Susan Brownmiller's pessimistic view of male violence as innate, neglects the significance of men's social position.\(^{36}\) Calling for a recognition that male power has been eroticized to reinforce patriarchy, she nonetheless speaks against the radical feminist position of "purifying sex and eliminating all power from erotic play" (Valverde, 1985:42). Her optimistic "sexual libertarian" position takes up a historical and political analysis of sex, and leaves the way open to explore gender relations in a transformation of heterosexual practices to incorporate erotic equality without sameness and erotic difference without domination.\(^{37}\)

In considering the tension between sexual danger and pleasure that has often been at the centre of discussions of women's sexuality, Carol Vance (1984) notes that there is an important difference between women's fantasies of submission and sexual assault depicted in pornography. She acknowledges that to focus on pleasure ignores the patriarchal structure in which women act as well as the real issue of violence and brutality in the form of rape, incest and exploitation. She cautions, however, that an overemphasis on danger reinforces powerlessness and ignores women's sexual agency that can, in turn, encourage sexual curiosity, adventure and exploration. Her work signals a shift within feminism to focus on pleasure, increase sexual autonomy and decrease male protection. In the alternative, Ann Snitow et al. (1983), holds that although pornography displays sadistic images of women and children being tortured, all pornography is part of a wider patriarchal culture, and feminists should therefore avoid espousing a politically correct sexuality based
on utopian dreams of egalitarian sexual practices.

While Canadian feminists took up the association of pornography with violence, few believed that it was a causal factor in rape and that scientific and artistic works should be included in the definition of what is pornographic. They reasoned that pornography was in opposition to the achievement of gender equality and that censorship was justified to empower women. In Burstyn's (1985b) view, individual liberal solutions which rely upon complicity with the state, substitute for and tend to displace, collective efforts to bring about social change. She rejects the MacKinnon/Dworkin proposal for city ordinances as the sexually explicit subordination of women. Almost all systematic attempts to control behaviour ignore other aspects of inequality such as class and racial imbalance. The assumptions of class privilege and minority disadvantages in the sex-service industry are often not discussed. Earlier, Angela Carter (1978) insisted that pornography demystifies sexual practices, encouraging experimentation in a non-judgmental fashion that does not discriminate on the basis of age, race and gender in pursuing desire. In failing to describe how sex trade practices are intimately linked to the marketplace by those who advocate censorship, the experiences of sex workers, club owners and customers were left untheorized. Such analyses disregards the larger social and political consequences of power and methods of control.

Rubin, English and Hollibaugh (1981) contend that the feminists who initially dominated the sex debates wanted to exclude feminist erotica, fantasy, fetishism and prostitution as part of a conservative version of what the women's movement would support. Rubin's radical sexual pluralism provides space for marginalized sexual subjects and an opportunity to produce a positive feminist position for sexual minorities. Viewed as a reflection of society at large, Rubin advocates that sexism in
the sex industry ought to be eradicated without eliminating commercial sex. Central to her theory is an ethics of sexual pluralism which attempts to shift from a bad to a good sexual ethic, while refraining from privileging one site in sexual variation (Rubin, 1984:282-7). Candida Royalle's non-sexist, life-enriching performance sex and the sexual performance art of Annie Sprinkle - in which gender boundaries are blurred - give new meaning to pornography. Pat Califia (1994) suggests that censorship feminists conflate sexual variation with violence. In justifying lesbian sadomasochism as consensual, negotiated, safe and innovative sensuality (which rebelliously challenges procreative, "vanilla" sex), she maintains that these practices serve as theatre or fantasy, allowing for authoritative/submissive roles to be reversed and rigid hierarchies of power/powerlessness to be challenged in sexual acts. Prostitutes have traditionally been viewed as "deviant", impure and engaged in inappropriate sexual activities outside of the boundaries of marriage and heterosexual monogamy (Bell, 1994). Historically, when society's attention turned to sexual variation this has often resulted in increased control of women's sexuality, making it more difficult for prostitutes to make a living. Unlike the anti-pornography feminists (who defend an expression of sexual difference and the hierarchialization of specific sexualities), Rubin (1984) calls for the development of a pluralistic sexual ethic to eradicate the healthy/pathological dichotomy of sexuality.

As a result of a decade of reprivatization and depoliticization of personal life, recent debates on prostitution and pornography have shifted to a discussion of the complex ways in which representations, production and consumption of pornography are facilitated in society (Shotes, 1998:72-7). Discussions have ensued over the meaning and function of sexual practices such as prostitution. Like other forms of commodification, some feminists suggest that prostitute practices
could be read in more complex ways than a verification of male authority (Sedgwick, 1997:339). Some women with impeccable feminist credentials speak about finding pleasure in the pornographic imagination and sadomasochistic practices, suggesting that it is a way to destabilize male power even as it reinforced it. Sex is seen as a cultural practice open to interpretation and resignification as a subversive performance. It is understood that pornography does not reside in an image; it is not a discrete form of representation apart from other forms of cultural production such as erotic photographs in women's magazines or images produced in films. It is argued that pornography is no more oppressive than other commercial and cultural institutions and that blaming sexual representation for violence against women is simplistic (Bauserman, 1998:244-6). Questioning how pornography is represented, for whom, and how it functions in a narrative context, therefore, requires a complex reading of sexual acts.

Radical feminists maintain that commercial sex is responsible for both the literal and symbolic violence against women. Dworkin (1987) insists that through mass distribution of pornography and practices of prostitution, sex is reduced to an object and woman is reduced to sex. Both must be abolished and their contaminating effect on sexual fantasy and practice must be challenged (Chapkis, 1997). Buttressing her argument concerning male violence against women, Russell (1993:68) suggests that there is a connection between the exposure of genitals and sexual images (referred to as "visual rape"), and the way in which such abuse and degradation is associated with the sexual assault of women. Sex always means male dominance and some practices such as prostitution and sadomasochism are clearer expressions than others of that phenomenon, according to MacKinnon (Chapkis, 1999). More than simply rejecting apparently abusive sexual practices, radical feminists insist that resistance must be mounted to patriarchal attempts to subordinate women through the
construction of images of desire in which women consent to oppression. Female desire can, therefore, only be reconstructed outside of the practices and symbols of contemporary culture. "Pro-positive" sex feminists such as Jeffreys (1997:47) submit that while it is possible for lesbians to provide a vision of egalitarian sexuality, it is doubtful that heterosexual relations can be reclaimed from patriarchy to produce relations of equality. She advocates abolishing practices of prostitution both to separate erotica from pornography and to free women from the oppression of sexual objectification by men.

While virtually all feminists agree that commercially produced sexual images are predominantly sexist, sex libertarians and sex radicals resist the idea that sexual meaning is fixed. Denouncing totalizing theories (including single agendas, prescriptive discourses and united audiences), recognizing otherness and celebrating difference have become cornerstones in the theory building of these feminists. Sex liberals question in what ways sexuality shapes subjectivity, viewing sex as having multiple meanings in which individuals (rather than the society) must determine for themselves if an act is acceptable. Falling under the rubric of anti-feminism, Camille Paglia (1991) offers an alternative image to that of the anti-sex radical feminists, suggesting that prostitution and pornography are the reality of sex rather than patriarchal distortions. Rejecting Dworkin and MacKinnon's reading of male power and female subjection in commercial sex practices, she suggests that female sexuality is a source of power that dominates the lives of men.

Men are run ragged by female sexuality all their lives. From the beginning of his life to the end, no man ever fully commands any woman. It's an illusion... That's what strip clubs are about: not woman as victim, not woman as slave, but woman as goddess... The feminist line is, strippers and topless dancers are degraded, subordinated and
enslaved; they are victims, turned into objects by the display of their anatomy. But women are far from victims - women rule; they are in total control.... The feminist analysis of prostitution says that men are using money as power over women. I'd say, yes, that's all that men have. The money is a confession of weakness. They have to buy women's attention. It's not a sign of power; it's a sign of weakness. (Paglia, 1991:38).

Attributing power to individuals removed from a social and political context is critiqued by hooks (1990) as an outmoded vision of female sexual agency. Although hooks is critical of the radical feminist position that views female sexuality as victimization, she is equally disparaging of the libertarian feminist position that claims power for women by inverting the patriarchal standpoint. Some sex radical feminists such as Vance (1993) understand sex to be constructed by a culture of male domination without being fully determined by it. Others like Marcy Sheiner, editor of On Our Backs, do not fully substitute an ethic of consent for one of responsibility (Chapkis, 1999). Unlike sexual libertarians, she does not perceive sex as a fixed entity concerning gender and power but a contested terrain. She rejects a politics of purification or abolition of any sexual culture in favour of one of engagement, struggle and subversion from within the sexual order. Prostitution has been recast by sex trade workers as a form of legitimate work that must be separated from stigmatization and criminalization. Jenness (1993) has placed prostitutes' rights organizations within the framework of social movements.

In summary, historical discourses of stripping focused on sin and promiscuity. Within the discipline of sociology, research on stripping routinely fell under the rubric of deviance and criminology. There are few studies on the topic of stripping and almost none which rely on ethnography and participant observation. Feminist scholars have critiqued androcentrism as a
falsely universal history in which the subjects like the authors were White, male, heterosexual and prosperous. These accounts marginalized women both as subjects of study and historical actors. Just as women's culture was seen to stand outside of mainstream culture in these discourses, second-wave feminism was critiqued as exclusionary of the experiences of a diverse group of women including lesbians, women of colour, working class women and sex trade workers. Feminists of colour suggest that sexuality does not have the same significance for all women; they assert that other forms of inequality may be more primary for the purpose of organizing against oppression.

Preceding these discussions were the debates within the feminist movement involving lesbian and heterosexual feminists. The bias of compulsory heterosexuality presented lesbian experiences as invisible, marginal or deviant. The failure of feminism to examine heterosexuality as an institution meant that lesbianism was tolerated as an alternative lifestyle. Woman-identified lesbianism became established as a political choice rather than a sexual preference. Through the validation of lesbianism as one among a plurality of feminist perspectives, lesbians were viewed as the key to women's liberation in transforming a male-dominated, heterosexual society. Lesbian feminism disputed the notions of sexuality as biologically based and challenged a binary heterosexual/homosexual model. Rejecting the construction of dualisms, hierarchies of oppression and a static concept of identity, issues of desire and transgressional sexual practices were more recently highlighted by queer politics.

Radical feminists speak of an ideal human sexuality that is private, consensual and egalitarian. They focus on prostitution and pornography in which sex is sold for money as part of a general system that allows men to gain access to and dominance over women. Concern centers around women's oppression by men
through practices of prostitution and the subordination of women to male sexual violence in pornography. It is contended that raising issues of censorship deflects away from the reality that pornography creates victimhood in women and pathology in men. Attributable to economic coercion, prostitution and to some extent stripping is regarded as inherently degrading - the claim is that, because such exchanges are essentially about power and sexual subordination that allow a women's sexuality to be appropriated, they serve to disguise oppression as work. Anti-prostitute feminists contend that the sale of sex involves the essential sale of the self, since sexuality cannot be separated from the person of the prostitute. Consent in the context of prostitution is, therefore, seen as meaningless. The prostitute becomes the symbol of women's abject powerlessness under conditions of male objectification and domination and thus male power is affirmed even as it is denounced. For these reasons, radical feminists prefer to have practices of prostitution and pornography judged on whether they have a negative impact on women.

Feminists who oppose censorship and/or identify as sex radicals argue for autonomy, commercialized sex, erotic diversity and a repeal of censorship and regulation. They suggest that not all graphic, sexually explicit depictions in pornography are instances of subordination. Recognizing that interpretation is individual and socially constructed, they give priority to individual sexual self-determination over the right of society to preserve order and impose a conservative moral model of sexuality. Due to the interpretation that sexual materials are erotic, concerned with sexual experimentation and generally viewed as harmless, only practices which result in real harm are subject to censorship and legal intervention.
1.3. Labour Process and Materialist Feminism

In addition to being a form of sexual entertainment, stripping involves processes of work and is approached from this point of view among those who have taken up the occupation within the sex industry. In emphasizing agency, feminist prostitute discourse underscores that sex work is a career choice that is not unlike a number of other occupations performed by women in domestic and labour market work. Although recognition has been given by radical feminists to the link between sex discrimination and a segmented labour force, the emphasis within this paradigm has been on the organization of gender and sexuality as it relates to wage labour. While anti-censorship feminists give credence to the importance of women's social and economic disparity, sexual liberationists' concerns about difference, power and dominance have not delineated the ways in which class and race are privileged in sex work. The inadequacies of cultural theorizing and the sex trade debates do not take into account the fact that, in the burgeoning sexual service industry, stripping has a number of characteristics of occupations in the entertainment and personal service sector, especially with respect to positions which have been culturally assigned to women. In order to provide an analysis of how stripping is organized by factors of class, gender and race relations and to detail specific aspects of the everyday working lives of strippers, a materialist feminist labour process approach has been utilized in this study.

Traditionally, the work of women involved in interpersonal relations and caring for people has been rendered invisible or viewed as personal service provided within the home. The feminist restructuring of the labour process utilized in this study dissolves barriers between public and private work, and redefines what is historically and socially constructed as useful labour. Work that provides a service is included along with labour which
produces a product and generates a profit. A feminist materialist labour process perspective provides a theoretical connection between the micro level of skills of both a technical and subjective nature (central to issues of class consciousness and gender) together with considerations at a macro level of corporate structures and the process of international production under capitalism. The defining features of the service industry of stripping in the 1980s and the 1990s are highlighted, including a labour process that is decentralized, flexible and vacillating. How stripping fits into the new global economy with segmented markets, post-Fordist diversification, work intensification and declining rates of remuneration will be explored. Shifts in skills, the nature of power, resistance and divisions based on gender, race and ethnic status are also emphasized in the reconstructed labour process of stripping.

Arising out of consciousness raising groups and the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* during the 1960s second wave of the North American women's movement, came a challenge concerning the naturalness of gender and the origins of sexual inequality.4 When questions were raised about who does and who does not profit from a gender hierarchy and division of labour, it was evident that traditional arrangements, whether intended or unintended, made men the beneficiaries and disadvantaged women. Differences between females and males are ranked in such a way that characteristics are not only different but unequal. In the asymmetry of gender, the enterprises and qualities of men are viewed as more important than those of women. As a result, males enjoy more status, access to resources, privilege and exercise more power and influence over others. A critique of mainstream sociological theory and methods resulted in the reconceptualization, in feminist terms, of ideas concerning the social world. Classical investigations of work "under represented, ignored or distorted the experiences of women and . . . served to justify differential treatment and sexual
inequality" (Wilson, 1981:5).

Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh (1987) argue that women's work in the home was traditionally seen as an act of love, which for the most part went unrewarded. Women's unpaid labour performed as necessary social labour in housework, and the work of nurturing children, the sick, elderly and able-bodied men was an invisible source of profit for capitalism (Dalla Costa and James, 1973). Arguing that the material base for women's oppression is their exploitation as unpaid domestic labour, Marlene Benston (1969) asserted that the domestic work to produce and reproduce humans was indispensable to wage work and a class system. Although there was a fledgling attempt in the 1960s to establish a "wages for housework" campaign, wages were what workers (who historically were men) received in exchange for work in the public sphere. A woman's domestic labour was not recognized for its worth and when she left the home for the marketplace her contributions were viewed in terms of her unrecognized and undervalued domestic skills (Matras, 1980, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1985). The participation of women in the paid labour force was assumed to be adjunct to her role as wife and mother; it was accepted that she entered public life to support financially the work of the primary breadwinner, the male (Petit, 1986). As a consequence, participation was constrained and women's employment was viewed as less important, skillful and rewarded than men's work (Leacock and Safa, 1986).

By the late 1970s, it became clear that gender could not be ignored or added on as a feature of social life in labour process theory; nor could gender inequality and patriarchal household relations be taken for granted. Rather, gender as an organizing category was investigated as a socially constructed cultural and material force central to a differential labour process. The question was why unskilled, low-wage and high-skilled, well-paid
jobs were differentially constructed along gender lines? Feminist studies focused on the workplace culture of women, pointing out that many of the earlier investigations of the labour process were concerned rather exclusively with men's working experiences. Inquiries by feminists demonstrated that while the labour process could be used to divide and conquer women, these employees were also able to use aspects of friendship based on gender to shape a culture of solidarity and resistance (Lamphere, 1979). Far from organizing with women and minorities in class-based struggles against capital, privileged, skilled males often excluded such groups for their own sectarian interests, and at times colluded with employers and the state (Millet, 1971; O'Brien, 1981). Eventually, inquiries such as Evelyn Bernard's (1982) studying telecommunication workers, Pamela Sugiman's (1982) investigating sales clerks and Elizabeth Beckett's (1985) examining bank tellers, took up the labour process from the point of view of women workers. Patterns of unequal opportunities, distributions of resources and control within the work setting, labelled patriarchy, were subsequently addressed by Wayne Roberts (1976), Heather Menzies (1981) and Charlene Gannage (1986). Pat and Hugh Armstrong (1984;1990) concluded that women's paid labour as a primary basis of capital accumulation was the main source of cheap labour in contemporary society.

In taking up issues within labour studies which had not previously been explored, feminists established that women work for the same reasons as men, out of an economic necessity to support themselves and their families (Briskin and Yanz, 1983). New theoretical connections between work, gender and the family were introduced based on empirical studies which located women's work both in the marketplace and the home (Armstrong, 1984, Armstrong and Armstrong, 1978; Hartmann, 1985; Duffy and Pupo, 1992). Rejecting an artificial separation of the work women do in the paid labour force and the home, a theoretical framework was established which moved away from simplistic dichotomies to a
diagnostic approach of validating links between the formal and informal economy (Borne, 1985; Armstrong and Armstrong, 1990). It was observed that women, concentrated in relatively few workplaces and reflecting traditional stereotypes of work and skill, were a key component of the labour process. Work was segmented and rewards were unequal (Piore and Sabel, 1984). Employers differentiated the workforce by gender and race to direct women and minorities into a secondary labour market based on limited security and wages. A number of studies explored how workers were prepared ideologically in the family, at school and society at large for a gender-segregated workplace (Willis, 1977; Pollert, 1981; Westwood, 1984; Knights et al, 1992). In an exploration of how experiences outside of the workplace impinge on the labour process, Paul Thompson (1983:181-7) highlighted the ways in which management exploited women's "natural" attributes of passivity, sentimentality and empathy. A number of studies including, James Spradley and Brenda Mann (1975), Christine Bose et al. (1987), Janet Muff (1988) and Allison Kaye (1994) sought to understand women's work by redefining the notion of skills to take into account the kind of emotional and interactional work performed by women. The work of gender theorists also explored the ways in which gender issues permeated concerns about skill and consent, highlighting the theoretical importance of subjectivity in an analysis of the labour process (Knights and Willmott, 1990).

Beyond women's liberation issues such as equal pay for equivalent work, feminist values challenged the underlying structures of social relations and societal institutions. While identifying a number of similarities in the lives of working women, women of colour in particular pointed out the problem of overarching theories that generalized from the situation of White women to women as an undifferentiated category. Increasingly, there was acceptance of the idea that one theory did not fit all women. When dealing with women of different racial and cultural
backgrounds, gender and race came to be viewed as a range of interweaving factors in the lives of women rather than as homogeneous categories (Ng, 1989). Rejecting stereotypes of race and culture and engaging people to find out how their lived reality was contextualized became an important aspect of gender studies (Amott and Matthaei, 1991).

Labour process represented a renewed interest in class theory that offered more sophistication than Marxist class analysis. Contemporary labour process investigations have looked at the transformation of the labour process, i.e., the connection between control and resistance as a source of gender inequality. In suggesting that gender is deeply involved in conceptualizing skills and maintaining control of skill levels, Glen and Feldberg (1982), observed that deskilling affects male and female clerical workers in different ways. Others looked at how managers constructed gender ideologies to stratify the skill and autonomy of women and men in the workplace (Tancred-Sheriff, 1989; Lee, 1993; Gottfried and Lowe, 1993). Neutral definitions of skill obscured gender-differentiated values that were historically labelled men's work as skilled and women's work as unskilled (Acker, 1989). It was noted that women and men were not only assigned by employers to gender appropriate jobs, but much of the labour process was linked with gender relations in the traditional patriarchal family, thus restricting women to unskilled and low-paid jobs. It remained for feminist researchers to respond to issues concerning domestic work in the home (Luxton, 1974, 1980), interactional work (Fishman, 1978) and informal characteristics and skills (Bernard, 1981).

There have been a number of studies of work organization in service occupations, including women's paid work as postal clerks (White, 1980), retail clerks (Sufrin, 1982), secretaries (Cohen, 1983), teachers (Abel, 1985), fast-food workers (Reiter, 1986), sex trade workers (Ronai, 1989), clerical workers (Johnson,
1989), hospital workers (Tierney, 1990) and waitresses (Cooper, 1991, Cobble, 1992). The work of Arlie Hockschild (1988) concerning the social structuring of emotions, showed how managers in the airline industry attempt to manipulate the personalities (mental processes and very material bodies) of flight attendants in order to control and deskill their work processes. By introducing the concept of emotional labour, Hockschild illustrated how these workers were required to serve the emotional needs of passengers according to the dictates of management; at the same time they were expected to suppress their own needs. She uncovered, in the control mechanisms of the labour process, a prototype for emotional work that is characteristic of service sector labour in an advanced capitalist economy. The basic notion of skill has become a political concept, more invisible and social and in danger of devaluation than technical proficiencies (Smith, 1990b; Wood, 1993). The work of Hugh Gottfried and Graham Lowe (1993) depicted how power shifted through subjective and decentralized strategies from management to structures within occupations, a technique characteristic of flexible service industry work. Changes in skill levels, both reducing the complexity of jobs and increasing the demand for skilled traits in other areas of the labour market, have also been a prevalent trend.

The links between feminism and Marxism were fashioned in the nineteenth century by first-wave feminists such as Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai and Mother Jones. They attempted to make sense out of social life under capitalism; at the same time these socialist feminists called for a politics of transformation to address the inequalities of women's lives. They took real individuals as their starting point and considered what was needed for survival, noting that the satisfaction of human needs ought to involve a system of collective and related activities. Such activities historically took place within divisions of labour and specific cultural states of consciousness. Under
capitalism, relations of production were collectively produced but were not collective owned and shared. Those who controlled the forces of production, surplus value or profit often accrued in the form of capital, did so based on the labour power of the majority. The oppression of women and people of colour through patriarchal and racist ideologies was embedded in the structures of capitalist production to benefit the owning class. Theories of historical materialism provided concepts that could explain how social structures exploited and oppressed women and minorities. The limits of Marxism in political praxis, however, led these activists to engage in a critique of a Marxist theoretical framework, in order to augment and more adequately address the different historical locations of women.

A feminist materialist position developed in the 1970s (during the second wave of the women's movement) attempting, often unsuccessfully, to marry the theories of capitalism and patriarchy in order to expand the theoretical base for understanding women's place in both systems (Benston, 1969; Barrett, 1980; Kuhn and Wolpe, 1997). Capitalism and patriarchy were viewed by Christine Delphy (1981, 1992) as dual systems of oppression for women. Although classical Marxist interpretations provided a detailed account of the sexual division of labour and the formation of gendered subjectivities, it excluded the contributions of women. Veronica Beechey's (1979) insightful assessment suggested that the issue of the subordination of women could not be addressed until Marxism itself was transformed. At the same time, radical feminist theories were also critiqued as ahistorical and inadequate in dealing with materialist conditions of life. In politicizing the personal, it was argued that capitalism succeeds, in part, because of the ways in which ideology permeates the everyday material lives of people (Haug, 1987, 1997). Seeking to find the connections between women's struggles and class struggles and to explain the relationship between sex-gender structures and class, the notion of appending
an analysis of women to Marxist theory was rejected in favour of reworking ideas to explain women's role in social reproduction and the ways in which patriarchy serves capital accumulation (Seccombe, 1973). More recently, Iris Young (1987) criticized dual systems theory and advanced her argument that a materialist theory does not reduce social phenomena to a narrowly understood economic or sexual base. In investigating the way in which patriarchy interacts with capitalism to oppress women, theory must take into account "consciousness--e.g., intellectual production, broad social attitudes, beliefs, cultural myths, symbols, images, etc.--as rooted in real social relationships" (Young, 1987:105).

Materialist feminists argue that woman's position is structurally different and the lived reality of women's lives is significantly distinct from that of men. The Marxist problematic that did not confront women's exploitation with an account of a sexual division of labour, and feminist theory which conceptualized women in essential and idealist terms, were addressed by giving priority to how the discursive category of "woman" was socially constructed. Struggles over restructuring globalized economies, the sexualization of the female body in the West and the way of understanding cultural identity are examined to explain the way social reality is shaped (Hennessy, 1993:xvii). Retaining a feminist legacy of critiquing totalizing theories of patriarchy and capitalism while emphasizing the different positions of women of colour, lesbians, working class and Third-World women, the approach stresses the ways in which power, a division of labour and the distribution of wealth operate through material practices. Materialist feminism focuses on the materiality of knowledge, exposing the method by which dominant paradigms subvert the aims of a feminist political agenda. Dispelling binary differences and hierarchy occurs by redefining the division of labour and systems of values. It is distinct from socialist feminism partly because it embraces
postmodernist concepts that disclose the relationship between the subjects, language and an unequal distribution of resources. In the project of deconstructing meaning, both signs and subjects acquire meaning in a socially context rather than through predetermined and unalterable signification. It is, therefore, possible for the subject to see the historical conditions that give rise to her social position "for example, ... between the service/consumer economy she supports and the 'feminized' industries which supply the products for her work" (Hennessy, 1993:9). Critical self-consciousness contests conservative discourses in a critique of how difference is social produced in exclusionary practices within particular social arrangements. In grounding a critical assessment of what and how things are known, who the knowers are and who speaks for and represents new forms of knowledge, an emancipatory agenda for social change is offered.

An engagement between the postmodern understanding of the multinational consumer society permeated with new subject identities and new markets, and the way Marxism understands the social relations of capitalist to be systematically produced, is anticipated in a materialist feminist framework. Shifts in the economic, political and ideological apparatus of society in the later part of this century have resulted in an increase in consumption, development of a service-based economy and displacement of industrial production to the Third World. With intensified regulation of commodity exchange and the pervasive intervention into the realm of the private fragmented subject of late-stage capitalism, workers do not freely exchange their labour in the marketplace. Rather, they are subject in new economic relations to heightened alienation with a refined division of labour, state supervision and ideological controls that intensify inequalities between women and men, the economically disenfranchised and the wealthy and minorities and dominant racial groups. Materialist feminist attention to
patriarchy as an organizing social force makes visible the previously obscured notion that, beyond rights and privileges, power operates in the economic, political and ideological practices concerning distinctive modes of production, the patriarchal family and social institutions such as the media and advertising.

An attempt is made in this study to explain the changing material conditions in the lives of strippers under late stage capitalism and patriarchy while examining the ways in which women's labour is exploited, the manner in which their bodies are appropriated and the procedures in which meaning is established through cultural practices. In breaking new theoretical ground, a tradition of feminism connected with Marxism is utilized; the theories and practices of historical materialism that explored the materiality of meaning associated with identity, body and state is linked to capital's global drive for profit. Materialist feminism shares with postmodern feminism a concern for difference, subjectivity and language while emphasizing material and historical explanations of the unequal distribution of resources and social hierarchies. As a sphere for producing knowledge, culture comes to be seen as a site for class struggle. Setting aside the label of socialist feminist in favour of the descriptor materialist feminist, these new Left theorists participate in reformulating Marxist theory and practice to include the "woman question" around key concepts such as production, reproduction, class, consciousness and labour.

By the mid-1980s, women's oppression was theorized in terms of culture, consciousness and ideology to explain the links between patriarchy and capitalism and the connections between women's domestic labour and ideology. Similar to cultural feminists in advanced capitalist countries (who emphasize patriarchy as the root of women's oppression), more consideration was given to ideas, language and culture than traditional Marxist
theory accorded. In formulating a postmodernist critique of the corporate state and the historical crises which guided the shifts in relations of production, it was observed that much of the predicament in the West is played out in cultural areas of art, film, linguistics, history, sexuality and psychoanalysis (Ehrenreich, 1997:68). These cultural changes were seen to be caused by crises in capital's division of labour and shifting production from overly developed to never-to-be-developed countries in the new world order of global free-market capitalism. Materialist feminists seek to explain how identity is linked to historical shifts in production under late-stage capitalism. Rosemary Hennessey, in particular, observed that capital's multinationals depend upon postmodernism, deeply embedded within patriarchal structures: "For example, the recruitment of middle-class women into the newly formed service professions ... has depended upon the accompanying recruitment of two-thirds of the world's women into the production lines in the maquiladora, the Pacific rim and the sweat shops of the United States. The colonization of the unconscious, promoted through advertising and high-tech telecommunications produces desire and sexuality, family and femininity in modalities that commodify women's bodies and labour as the property of men, even as some women are allowed more freedom to exert their 'independence' in the competitive marketplace (Hennessey, 1997:8-9)."

Recognizing that the Marxist problematic with its emphasis on class relations, economic determinism and capitalist production is not able to account for a sexual division of labour, theories of materialist feminism position women's oppression both within capitalism and patriarchy. They contribute to the development of theories of patriarchy and ideology, clarifying how power operates through both symbolic and material processes in society (Hennessey, 1993). What we know is not only affected by what we do; subjectivity is also seen to be constructed out of cultural knowledge which circulates through
discourse and institutional practice. Emphasis is not on the fragmented subject but on the connections between oppression and economic/political practice to produce social change. In attending to complex material forces (including economic, political, symbolic, sexual and artistic systems which structure social ways of knowing), subjectivity is seen as an important mechanism to unmask political interests in Western thought.

More recently, Gloria Josephs (1997) states that while it has become accepted that Marxism is incomplete without a consideration of feminism, both approaches are deficient and partial without attention to race relations. Just as materialist feminists argue that issues such as men's violence against women cannot be reduced to class relations, the long-standing history of suppression based on race must be integrated into a theory of Marxist feminism. Josephs notes that when feminists struggle against capitalism and male supremacy, these struggles are linked to worldwide conflicts for national liberation that are also based on race and ethnic statuses. Although oppression based on race and gender reference biological differences, the experience of Black women is not parallel to that of her White sisters, since the former is subject to the "simultaneity of oppression" based on patriarchy, class and race (Brewer, 1997:238). Hazel Carby (1997) goes further in pointing out that the predominantly Eurocentric basis of Western feminist theory is irrelevant to the lives of Black women and, further, is premised on racism; moreover, White women involved in imperialism and colonialism are reluctant to see themselves as both "oppressors" and "oppressed" (Carby, 1997:118). Concepts of family take on a different meaning, with the Black family serving as a site of resistance to racism and the ideology of Black female dependency set aside in households headed by women. In view of the fact that Black males do not possess many of the benefits of White patriarchy, Black women are dominated in different ways by men of colour. The recruitment into service sector jobs with the lowest pay (deemed
"natural" for Black women), provides a different ideology of work, similar to the construction of ideologies of Black, exotic, female sexuality contributes dissimilar concepts of reproduction (Carby, 1997).

The women's movement is premised on articulating the causes of women's oppression and putting forth strategies based upon a consent, choice and the right of self-determination. Feminists, however, have been curiously silent about stripping with the exception of the stance taken by radical feminists, who suggest that these women are oppressed, exploited and should be encouraged to leave their vocation. Such theories leave little possibility for sex trade workers' sexual agency, who seek to establish financial and personal independence through commercial working transactions similar to other women who are employed in the service industry. This study views stripping as work, sometimes performed under oppressive conditions where women are located in job ghettos, subject to sexual harassment and limited career opportunities. At the same time, sex trade work is also viewed (with all its conflicts and contradictions), as work which is freely chosen, exciting and empowering for some women and economically essential for almost all in the business. Research suggests that much that is problematic for women in the sex trade is a consequence of their gender, intersecting with racial, class and sexually constituted identities viewed in the context of the treatment of women in society at large. I identify with sex trade workers who seek recognition and respect for their work and who struggle, like most other working women, to regulate the conditions of their immediate job, who desire to set health and safety standards and who seek to establish control over the fruits of their labour. A number of prostitutes are involved in valuable political activities which endeavour to end stigmatization and criminalization for those engaged in this type of work; a number of women involved in pornography similarly seek to educate the public about the primacy of pleasure, the
separation of fantasy from reality and tolerance concerning diversity. Investigating how gender relations operate in the transformation of the labour processes of stripping, will-- it may be hoped--provide some insight into how the erotic may be, in the future, associated with equality.

The question is how to understand what women's oppression, based on sexuality, race, gender and class have to do with capitalism - how to historicize power relations between men and women. This study uses the concepts and practices of materialist feminism to make sense of the ways in which women's lives are connected to capital's drive to accumulate surplus value and the oppressive construction of difference. I will examine how capitalism as a class system is premised on race and gender categories, together with the unpaid labour contributed by women in social reproduction. Delph (1997:62-3) states:

In so far as materials have been applied to understanding the process of the production of ideas (in relation to the exploitation of the proletariat and the class struggle), so the areas of life designated as subjective - affective and sexual - have escaped it. Sexuality is an essential part of class struggle. It is one of the fields of confrontation of two groups (marxists and feminists), but the groups are not the proletarians and capitalist, but social men and social women.

I take women's location in society as a starting point for a historical materialist explanation of why women engage in stripping under capitalism. An essential feature of capital's gendered division of labour is the ideological production of knowledge, beliefs and values concerning gender and sexuality, connected to the material conditions of women's everyday lives. The purpose of this exploration is to provide the connections between women's exploitation and capitalism in a political
economy of social transformation. Such an approach makes it possible to view in a labour process investigation of stripping, issues of sexuality, gender and race linked to capitalism as a global system.

Materialist feminism asserts that material life structures an understanding of social relations. When material life is organized in different ways for different groups, it inevitably produces a different and inverted vision of what is needed and required. The ruling vision is only partial; the struggle to provide a political vision available to oppressed groups represents an achievement. Because standpoint feminism involves an understanding of the oppressed that reveals the social relations between those who rule and those who are ruled, it serves a historically liberatory role. The belief that only men possessed the innate ability to participate in an emancipatory understanding of reality, has given way to a proletariat vision of social relations guided by a Marxist theory involving women and men in the class struggle. More recently, standpoint feminism in examining sexuality and institutions that legitimize sexual relations has declared women to be the ideal knowers.

Feminist labour process dissolves barriers between public and private work, redefining personal service and interpersonal relations as useful labour. Features of the service industry of stripping are examined, including a labour process that is decentralized, flexible and vacillating. How stripping is part of segmented markets producing diversification, work intensification and declining rates of remuneration will be investigated. Shifts in skills, the nature of power, resistance and divisions based on gender, race and ethnic status are also emphasized in the reconstructed labour process of stripping.
ENDNOTES

1. Treating sex trade work strictly as an issue of labour studies can obscure crucial aspects of women's sexuality and gender inequality. Conversely, focusing entirely on the sexual/social interactions of sex trade workers and clients isolates sex-trade work from similar areas of labour for women.

2. While observations were made in male strip clubs to provide a broader picture of the business of stripping (to gain insight into how stripping is similarly constructed irrespective of gender and to observe the differences which emerge due to sex stratification), this research project concentrated primarily on the occupational and social life of the female stripper.

   Although there are sex trade workers who are male (and consumers of their services who are female), the majority of sex workers are female and their customers are preponderantly male. Although gender identity relations are increasingly becoming fluid in the commodified culture of global, late-stage capitalism with transgender and transvestite sex workers performing services for both male and female customers, workers in these latter categories constitute a small number of strippers and prostitutes.

3. Marx (1904) defines class in capitalist societies as determined by the labour performed in the marketplace, based on control over the means of production and ownership of private property. His position privileges class by arguing that until inequalities (which result from these two sources) are eliminated, internalized forms of power, including the ideas in people's heads, can not be abolished.

   Contemporary sociological theory recognizes that power extends beyond economic control into the realm of the ideological and political spheres; those who rule must find ways to maintain dominance on all three fronts. Foucault's (1980) discourse theories assist in the understanding of this phenomenon, by placing power relations within the realm of the subjective in negotiated processes of social interactions among individuals.

   More recently, materialist feminists have demonstrated how culture and forms of social organization are linked to particular relations of power. Through an understanding of the ways in which systemic power affects all aspects of the social lives of individuals, this analysis endeavours to explain power relations in materialist terms.

4. Yeboah (1988:2) argues that "the ideology of racism underlies the systematic and persistent forms of racial discrimination which serve to victimize ethnic minorities". Blacks in particular, he notes, do not have access to the same jobs as Whites and are denied opportunities for training and promotion resulting in lower wages.
5. The term racism is an analytical category used to delineate a set of attitudes and behaviours towards people of another race, based on the belief that races are distinct and can be considered as superior or inferior to other racial groups. Racist beliefs assume biological differences based on factors of heredity in contrast to cultural variability termed ethnocentrism. Racism is predicated upon power and depends on the capability to supply or withhold social benefits based on race, colour or national origin (Yeboth, 1988:14).

6. Stripping, exotic dancing, prostitution and pornography are collectively referred to as the sex trades (Bell, 1987). The sex-worker's identity is based on the organization of labour as opposed to organization of desire. In speaking about the links between exotic dancing, sex work and prostitution, Johanna, a stripper, states: "The way that I perform, in theory, is sex work... It's an exchange of money for a sexual act, whether you're doing lap dancing or stage performances, prostitution, peep shows, phone sex - it's all the same type of activity" (Kempadoo, 1998:189).

7. There is little doubt that a lot of the pornography which exists in the culture is sexist. Cultural feminists such as Valverde (1989) suggest that education rather than censorship is the way to deal with objectionable material.

8. In the moralistic and separatist feminism which prevailed in the 1960s and the 1970s, lesbian sex was presented as loving and monogamous, in contrast to gay male sex which was seen to be abusive, exploitive and promiscuous. Butch and femme roles were forbidden, as were notions that lesbians objectified each other or engaged in lust (Smyth, 1997:363).

9. Walkowitz's (1992) investigation demonstrates how contemporary Western sexual practices are a historical development stemming from state intervention into the operation of brothels in Victorian England. The Contagious Diseases Acts (introduced at the turn of the century in order ostensibly to improve hygienic conditions) increased regulation and resulted in the marginalization of prostitutes and the working class. She argues that prostitution in working class communities had been fairly casual, allowing for mobility in and out of prostitution; in the social construction of "a particular class of women" for prostitution, legal intervention destroyed the private identity and social integration of these women. Observing that the production of the tale of London's Jack the Ripper was a product of competing cultural forces and social struggles, Walkowitz demonstrates how the view of male violence was socially shaped to restrict the manner in which sexuality was spoken of as both passion and danger. The dimensions of the whore/madonna dichotomy meant that "good" women had little power in society, while the courtesan with personal power was stigmatized as a result of the
social role she adopted. The purity crusades emerging in the twentieth century were dominated by themes of prostitution destroying the lives of innocent women together with tales of sinful licentiousness of men.

10. Not unlike feminists in the nineteenth century who opposed contraception and divorce as dangerous to the sexual and economic security of women, radical feminists have an exaggerated view of the abuse depicted in pornography and the amount of coercion present in prostitution. Radical feminists cite four objections to pornography, including sexist content that is degrading and depicts abuse of women, sexual stereotypes which are perpetuated in the circulation of pornographic images, exploitation of women in the production of pornography, and the exploitation of men in the consumption of pornography.

11. Overall (1992) attempts to soften this position by suggesting a moral distinction between prostitutes as sex workers and prostitution as a practice and institution, advocating support for the former while condemning the latter.

12. Segal and McIntosh (1993:78-9) suggest that it is women who gained most from the liberalization of sex, escaping from narrowing and confining views of what was appropriate behaviour for women. This is in contrast with Kappeler's (1986) position who argues that the sexual liberation movement of the sixties merely made women more accessible to men.

13. Assiter (1989, 1994), herself a radical feminist, critiques the radical feminist construction of pornography as both a theory and a method of patriarchy in which men are dominant over women. Cautioning that pornography cannot be examined as a single variable but must be seen in the context of larger social relations of power in terms of class, race and gender, she concludes that legal and state strategies cannot dismantle patriarchal practices.

14. MacKinnon claims that all forms of female sexuality (heterosexual and homosexual) are constructed by male desire and, therefore, are defined by men and forced on women. Any female who claims subject status in the realm of sexuality is viewed by MacKinnon as suffering from false consciousness. Her theory, however, cannot account for a variety of sexual identities and the concept of resistance. In attempting to quantify value, MacKinnon assumes that all types of labour can be assessed and exchanged. Nonetheless, not all desire can be measured and many forms do not manifest themselves within a male hegemonic system. In equating women with the working class, she reproduces the hierarchy of binary divisions of male construction rendering the masculine active, dominant and sadistic, while the feminine is seen as passive, submissive and masochistic. Instances where females are actively in pursuit of pleasure also undermine
MacKinnon's construction of heterosexual liaisons (Bell, 1994:85).

MacKinnon's total system theories have been criticized for not leaving women a way out of the dilemma of sexuality as a primary site of oppression through male domination. "Consciousness raising", advocated by MacKinnon, is an attempt to make women aware of their sexual exploitation rather than to contemplate other venues of female sexuality (Bell, 1994:82-6).

15. Jeffreys (1985:63) argues that most of the work on prostitution assumes biological differences between male and female sexuality. It tends to blame women for the existence of prostitution rather than focusing on why men seek out prostitutes. These arguments, she concludes, are similar to the reasons put forth by "male apologists which encourage rape, sexual murder and other forms of sexual terrorism".

Jeffreys is not alone in suggesting that the sexual revolution, while it separated sex from reproduction, was not a movement that was committed to gender equality (Jackson, 1985).

16. This gendered structuring of desire negates the position of a number of prostitutes who are lesbian and bisexual, as well as the substantial numbers of gay and bisexual men who engage in prostitution (Nestle, 1987).

17. According to O'Hara (1985), modern-day prostitution was created out of men's need to maintain control over the private property of women while, at the same time, condemning women who function as prostitutes. The dichotomy between the wife (as private sexual property) and the whore (who is public sexual property) creates a group of women who are socially marginalized and subject to abuse and degradation.

18. In the past and in many places in the contemporary world, women were socialized to believe that to be sexually active was to violate the rules of femininity. The "good" girl was to wait to be pursued by a male, then marry, engage in sex for the purpose of having children and enter the life of a sexual minimalist (few partners, limited number of positions and little pleasure). Women who were the subject and not the object of desire (who experimented with and enjoyed sex) could quickly slip into the "bad" girl category (Webster, 1981:50).

19. It has been suggested that the sexual liberation movement of the 1920s and the North American sexual revolution in the 1960s, were a reaction against Victorian sexual repression (Jackson, 1985). The emphasis, however, on love and emotional commitment in the radical feminist account of eroticism seems to reintroduce an element of conservative thought which was condemned by feminists as oppressive to women. In the past, the ideology of love served to encourage women to put love and marriage before a career, and to sacrifice in the name of love for their husbands and children.
For centuries, women have been restricted in the exploration of their sexuality and confined to having sex within the framework of marriage, exclusively or primarily for the purpose of reproduction. The assumption of an active sexuality for women was heralded by the last wave of women's liberation movement, which wanted to cast off bourgeois restraints on women's sexuality and free women from the erotic repression of the past.

20. The radical feminist position is distinct from religious fundamentalists who view prostitution as degrading and immoral. In general, conservative groups reject a feminist critique of rape, incest and child abuse in the family. In addition to controls on reproductive freedom, the New Right in the United States has been involved since the 1980s in a comprehensive range of attacks on issues that feminists support including control of sexuality, assaults on day care and restrictions of civil rights (Rich, 1986:554). Similarly in Canada, groups which favour cultural and economic conservatism endorse current cutbacks of welfare services, pay and employment equity programs and affirmative action.

21. Sobel (1986:73) found that among heterosexual men, violent pornography was the least interesting. Palys (1986) argues that there has been a decline since the late 1970s of much of the violent imagery in pornography. Empirical evidence has shown little effect on attitudes and behaviours toward women by soft-core pornography consumers, with the exception that it may lower levels of aggression (Kelly, 1988). Nor do variations in crime rates correlate with availability of violent pornography (Abramson and Hayashi (1984). Baron's (1990) work suggests that in societies such as Denmark and Sweden (which evidence a greater tolerance towards pornography), more gender equality exists for women in terms of advancement in employment, education and politics than in some cultures which restrict pornography.

22. As a way to preserve their emotional integrity, prostitutes often insinuate that sex in the context of their job is an insipid experience. Prostitutes maintain that they are engaged in a business. The majority de-eroticize their work and maintain a separate erotic life in order to differentiate the domain of work from sexuality. Although informed about the discourse of female sexuality which assists prostitutes to understand their client's needs, prostitutes claim that they often do not have the same experience as the client. Based upon personal history and erotic need, it seems reasonable to conclude that various interpretations may occur within the context of a sexual interaction. Individuals attach different significance to various acts, depending upon the meaning of such practices in their social world. Meaning may further change with time or be altered by inclusion in a new social community such as a prostitutes' rights group.
23. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Elizabeth Fry Societies advocated the removal of street soliciting from the Criminal Code, and the repeal of provisions concerning common bawdy houses (Shaver, 1988:88). Shaver comments that the Badgley Committee tended to overemphasise the role of the pimp and violence in the industry, while discrediting the testimony presented by prostitutes.

24. Although Marx has been criticized for his inability to view prostitution as sex as well as work, the radical feminist position has also come under reproach--especially from prostitutes--for their unwillingness to view prostitution as work as well as about sexuality (Zatz, 1977:292).

25. Prostitutes often speak of men encountering problems of performance, fear of rejection, ineptness and lack of satisfaction which may be overcome as more discourses open up concerning sex. Similarly, in her report concerning female sexuality, Shere Hite (1977:275) observes that what heterosexual women most desire is more intimacy and emotional support from their partners.

26. Anthony (1992), however, argues that sex trade work can only function as a "choice" of employment for women if it is decontextualized from the cultural constraints burdening women including pervasive sexism, job discrimination and inequality in law.

27. Although a number of themes emerge including choice, work, police harassment, violence by pimps and clients and issues concerning safe-sex practices, there is no single voice that speaks for prostitutes (Burstyn, 1983:163-9).

28. Engaging in prostitution is illegal in Canada; being a prostitute is technically legal. Canada continues to use the police and the courts to prosecute consenting adults who exchange sex for money. Prostitution enforcement is claimed by authorities to be necessary because these activities have serious ramifications for public health; yet women who carry more than two or three condoms in their purse may be subject to arrest. Since street prostitutes are concerned about approaching an undercover officer, they are more likely to engage in higher risk behaviour, by accepting a "date" from a customer who has been drinking or is abusive. Many prostitutes do not seek the protection of either the police or the courts in view of their stigmatized status. They worry about the fact that partners may be charged with living off the avails of prostitution, and that those who own the home in which they reside may be subject to bawdy house charges (Laframboise, 1995, A7).

29. Radical feminists propose that the term "erotica" should be used to describe sexually arousing material, and the term
"pornography" applied only to that material which objectifies women and depicts them as enjoying or deserving abuse. The dichotomizing of sex and violence and the gender differentiation of desire would seem to lead back to the Victorian ideology of innate differences in male and female sexuality (Webster, 81:49). Apart from the fact that there is no consensus in society about what constitutes pornography in television commercials, fashion magazines, videos, aspects of women's fiction and explicit, sexual material produced in some lesbian circles might more aptly fall under the definition of pornography rather than in the erotic category.

30. Kelly (1989) argues that some films, termed "snuff movies", have recorded the actual murder of women. Currently, approximately forty percent of pornography is produced in the home, particularly the "kiddie porn" variety. She cites the facts that a number of sex offenders and serial killers are consumers of pornography, that in an infamous production of Hustler magazine an Asian woman was hung in a tree for mass market entertainment, and that there is growing evidence that pornography is used by pimps to coerce women sexually. Suggesting that men sometimes cross the line between fantasy and reality, she refers to the study of Diana Russell (1982), Surviving Sexual Violence in which ten percent of 933 women indicated that they were upset when forced to perform according to pornographic displays. Pornography is also used to harass women sexually in the workplace, particularly in areas in which they attempt to enter non-traditional employment.

31. In the prosecution of Donald Butler under Canada's obscenity laws, the Criminal Code definition (section 163.8) as the "undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely crime, horror, cruelty and violence" was applied. The case involved a group of videos rented by Butler to adults that were seized because they were deemed by the Manitoba Court of Appeal to meet the criteria of obscenity. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision (Butler v the Queen, 1992, 89 D.L.R. (4th.) even though it was suggested that obscenity might be allowed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In this watershed decision that overturned two previous unsuccessful attempts (Bill C-114 and C-54) to tighten control on obscenity, the Supreme Court was dissatisfied with the permissiveness of Section (2)b of the Charter and took steps to use the Butler case to end an era of judicial liberalism based on community standards (Johnson, 1995:45). The criminal code was, therefore, upheld to be constitutional because it was used to promote gender equality and would be unconstitutional only if it sought to restrict material on a moral basis.

It was not oppressed women who were empowered by the Butler decision, but customs officials and enforcement agencies who targeted artists (Lacombe, 1994). Even MacKinnon and Dworkin argued that long, before the Butler decision, Canadian customs
authorities had a substantial record of seizing gay and lesbian reading material. They pointed out that such actions under the Butler ruling would be illegal on the basis that morally objectionable material could not constitutionally be seized. Nonetheless, their suggestion that various indictments be brought against individuals possessing sexually explicit material which did not have violence as a component was dismissed (MacKinnon and Dworkin, 1994/95:65).

32. The Minneapolis city ordinance defined the production, sale, exhibition and distribution of pornography and any damage attributed to women, as a result of being coerced into assault or performance, as actionable. Judge Sarah Evans, who ruled on the case, suggested that pornography was analogous to protection of free speech in that it made harassment actionable as a form of sex discrimination. The ordinance established a view of who women were and how they ought to interact in sexual encounters that was acceptable to the radical feminists who drafted it (Merck, 1993:63-4).

33. Since the Butler decision there has been extensive confiscation of scholarly works including publications by bell hooks and Andrea Dworkin's own anti-pornography text *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. The first obscenity case tried under Butler was the prosecution of the Glad Day Bookstore in Toronto in which Canada Customs targeted gay and lesbian books, magazines and newsletters. Califia (1994) argues that there has been no visible impact on the "straight" pornography industry and the incidence of rape has not been appreciably reduced since Butler.

34. The term "sex trade worker" is generally used to incorporate a variety of sexual acts in commercial enterprises including prostitutes, strippers and models in the pornography industry and people providing services through the escort business, in massage parlours, and by engaging in telephone sex.

35. The "normal" expression of men's sexuality is based on social power while women are encouraged to express predominantly the submissive side of the "dialectic of desire" (Valverde, 1985:13). Although sexuality is considered to be part of the female domain, there is an expectation that a woman will not exercise "active" sexual power by initiating activities, nor will she have the unqualified right to reject the erotic initiative of the male. Since eroticism depends upon sexual differences, erotic relations have largely been between individuals who are unequal. This dialectic of eroticism, Valverde suggests, contributes to contradictions between autonomy and freedom as well as rights and responsibilities. For women to express an active rather than passive sexual power, both parties must recognize each other as self-defining, independent and socially equal beings. The recognition of the other need not be equivalent at all times or devoid of objectification, since both factors contribute to
erotic appeal. Valverde maintains that through the employment of "good" objectification and dynamic change in which both partners are subject and object, a synthesis of the two aspects of human existence can be achieved in the "full human subject" to foster an eroticism that is both exciting and egalitarian (Valverde, 1985:45).

36. Valverde (1985:37-40) discusses how Western philosophical thought fosters the myth that there is a division between eroticism and the rational, with the two separate spheres assigned to women and men. Men are socially allocated the "permanent role of hunter/lover/subject while confining women to that of hunted/beloved/object" (Valverde, 1985:39). The erotic becomes the sexual, mysterious and irrational, which divides reason from passion in the dialectic of difference (Valverde, 1985:55). It is women who suffer from the ideological division of the rational and passion by being confined to the domain of instincts associated with nature apart from the rational world. Men, on the other hand, become identified with a desexualized world of politics, work and culture (Valverde, 1985:57). Reason becomes a tool, used to dominate nature, to subjugate passion and to control the female. Under certain circumstances these roles may be reversed; however, such activity represents a struggle against normative behaviour.

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38. Unhappy with the way women are portrayed in male dominated pornography, Candida Royalle founded the Femme Distribution Incorporated to produce erotic videos for women and couples. Rejecting the radical feminist position describing women as
victims, Royalle was interested in portraying women's strength and rebellion as evidenced in their sexual power. In stressing that sex is politics for women and equality includes sexual equality, her work shows women initiating sex and never servicing men. Her productions feature actors who use real-life lovers and they highlight mutual pleasure. Annie Sprinkle has also made a career out of trying to elevate pornography to an art form. In attempting to demystify pornography and present it as a liberating force with an expanded sexual vocabulary for women, her work is described as nonviolent, creative, personal and playful (Fraser, 1990).

39. In contrast, radical feminists suggest that the promotion and normalization of sadomasochistic practices, bondage, flagellation and other forms of sexual variation, (involving force and pain), are used to encourage and coerce women into acts of sexual violence (Jackson, 1985:222). Jackson submits that the progressives who support the work of Ellis, Kinsey and Masters and Johnson fail to take into account that the work of sexologists rarely deals with issues of gender and power. The effect is not only to justify male sexuality as a mechanism of control over women and to undermine a feminist challenge, but also to train women to experience their "sexual colonization as pleasure".

40. Similar to sex workers, the sexuality of sadomasochists has been one of the sites of struggle in the antipornography and anticensorship debates (Bell, 1994:74). Vance (1993:43-5) notes that many people are unfamiliar with sadomasochistic conventions, and are unable to read images which depict violence and domination. Anne McClintock (1993) observes that within the controlled situation of a commercial fantasy, sadomasochism among heterosexuals ought to be viewed as a surrender of power to women. In many such encounters, it is the female who is dominant over a submissive male. It is suggested that both genders can experience pleasure from submission and power, experimenting with the ambiguities of gender roles. In view of the fact that these images lead to diversified responses, she advocates that they should not be given a literal interpretation. It is precisely because interpretation is subjectively based on race, class, gender, sexual experience and personal history--arousing to some and revolting to others--that such images ought to be viewed as fantasy or performance.

Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin (1988) oppose sadomasochistic sex as thoroughly politically incorrect. Such practices are viewed as rooted in the hierarchical and oppressive structures of society, that assumes sexual access to and power over women (Ristock, 1994:74-6). Lorena Saxe (1992) argues that from a lesbian-feminist perspective, sadomasochism is antifeminism and antilibratory. Consent is what distinguishes this relationship from one of assault. What is initially consented to, however, may be quite different than the acts
people participate in, both for the sadist and the masochist. Based on contempt for women, sexual sadism is viewed as humiliating, degrading and an unacceptable way for lesbians to treat one another.

Saxe (1992:61) argues that such practices do not remain in the bedroom (a site of much of women's oppression), but are publically visible to others in symbols such as handcuffs and swastikas. It serves to strengthen oppression based on racism, sexism and anti-Semitism and to create a world view of lesbian domination and violence. Despite the claims of practitioners, sadomasochists are not playing with power and control, but engaged in the real-life oppression of women. The masochist is punished for past transgressions and learns to escape from and make oppression sexually arousing. Yet, little of this knowledge is useful in dismantling the real power of oppressors in the social world.

41. The recommendation of Califia (1994:121) is that radical feminists ought to turn their attention to issues of contraception and abortion, the human rights of sexual minorities and the decriminalization of prostitution, rather than being concerned about expressions of sexuality which are different from the "vanilla" variety.

42. In recognition of the importance of giving preference to labels that are self-selected by various populations in changing historical times, "lesbian" is used to distinguish women who are neither heterosexual or gay; "women of colour" is a term chosen by many women of colour in North America, and "working class" refers to women who are not independently wealthy and must work for a living.

43. According to Flax (1990), various theories have been put forth regarding the origin of women's inferior status including biology (Dinnerstein, 1976), the development of private property and class relations (Engels, 1972), male aggression (Firestone, 1971, Brownmiller, 1975), the incest taboo (Freud, 1961) and an interest in controlling women's reproduction and nature (Rich, 1976). Although Flax suggests that women's domination (by men) has been an invariable facet of history, the material basis of this oppression takes on different forms of social organization in various historical epochs (Mead, 19974, Rubin, 1975, Hartman, 1976).

44. Both feminist and postmodern critiques of difference have challenged modernity through the deconstruction of binary opposites, such as male/female, mind/body and culture/nature which inform dominant culture representations.
Chapter Two

FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

2.1. The Construction of Knowledge

The approach used in this study has emerged from a feminist critique of forms of knowing. Traditional organization of knowledge is intimately linked with attempts to control social behaviour, establish universal laws and constitute people as the objects rather than subjects of sociological research. Feminist methods of knowing call for an innovative theoretical framework which unites the theoretical with the empirical and the method with the subject. Instrumental in making social change is the implementation of feminist goals, which speak to a high valuation of women and their experiences. Feminist methods affirm women's strength, capabilities and conditions which give rise to autonomy; they reconceptualize equality between the sexes, oppose negative cultural images and practices of discrimination and oppression. Unlike traditional sociology (which tends to neglect or negate the feminine position), the female subject becomes the site of investigation, political struggle and a possible source of social emancipation and change (Smith, 1974c, 1979).

As a tool for achieving social change, the methodology employed in this study identifies the connection between the nature of social, political and economic conditions and a division of labour, a distribution of resources and attributes of power. Gender is taken to be a critical component of social organization, rather than merely a "property" of individuals. Locating men and women within different social structures provides a way of understanding how different experiences (and distinctive ways of perceiving, thinking and valuing the separate worlds of women and men) are produced (Smith, 1974b). The potential of this approach allows for the dismantling of gender
dichotomies by theorizing subjectivity within a historical context as it is affected by social experience in productive and reproductive activities.

Contesting methods that begin with theories that place women into predetermined abstract categories, Dorothy Smith (1987) advocates that investigation start with where women are located in the everyday world. Her position challenges a traditional structural-functional explanation that presents an analysis in overarching terms, standing above individuals and providing generalizations based on the experience of particular groups, to the exclusion of others. In contrast with methods which initiate an investigation of the social world through the use of descriptive procedures and concepts, a critical phenomenological approach to theory construction begins with an examination of everyday practices. Rather than reducing women to a category to be added on, or ignoring differences in the interest of providing so-called "equal treatment", gender is theorized in the context of women's subordination. Smith suggests that women's experiences, their relations to productive forces and to one another provide the products of consciousness which are part of the material activities of everyday life. Connecting practical activities in the lives of women with social and political structures provides an entry point for investigating social relations as they are informed by lived reality. In rejecting science that uses methods which reflect the interests of those with power (who are most likely to be men), a methodology which takes the standpoint of women challenges pervasive societal biases.¹ Standpoint refers to a location in society which is produced, and in turn produces, ways of knowing, power relations and procedures for allocating resources.² By advocating that women's lives and interests ought to be the central issue of feminist research in the production of social theory, Smith provides a way of doing sociology which promotes social change.
Although it can be argued that people make the conditions of their lives, the circumstances of particular lives certainly shape individuals. Material conditions (including what and how things are produced and the relationships developed both in "local and extralocal settings") are determined by the stage of development of productive forces (Smith, 1981, 1987). Human nature is seen as determined by societal forms and these structures, in turn, influence human nature. Each historical epoch, with its unique material conditions and its own set of productive forces, creates different kinds of relationships among people and with nature. These historical forms of material production arise from the individual's relations to modes of production and the connections which are forged in exchange relations with others. A materialist approach begins where people "are at" with respect to concrete conditions in their real lives, to explain how socio-political structures inform the construction of human subjectivity and to develop human society. The individual is viewed as subject to, and the subject of, social structures and processes, actively participating in the operation of defining culture as s/he is also defined by culture.

To suggest that reality is socially constructed is to recognize that ideas develop from human interactions and become social facts when they are endorsed by society. Classical history and traditional philosophy (with their emphasis on the abstract and existential), are worlds separated from ordinary life and a productive environment. In order to make a claim for impartiality and neutrality, texts as devices of the ruling apparatus are constructed in a generalized, abstract and passive mode to extract the local and individual voice. Since this is the manner in which male identity is formed, men are seen to be rational and superior while women are presented as irrational and emotional. The ideological constructs which create divisions between "mental" and "manual" labour among men and women are concealed in a world which accepts duality as natural. Theory, as part of
activities of the head, is set against and positioned to be a superior form of consciousness to bodily experience. It is from industry, commerce, production and the exchange of necessities of the real world that the basis of class relations are created.

Institutional ethnography—with its concerns about issues of knowledge and power—locates categories of sociological descriptions in the social relations of the settings it describes (Smith, 1981:313-19). According to Smith, exploitation of women is not an analytic concept—it is prevalent in the daily activities of women's lives (Smith, 1987:94-95). The body politic is literally developed and maintained through the productive labour of workers. The traditional production of theory ignores domestic work that enables this mode of work to take place through women's work of production, reproduction, socialization and consumption. In the process, women's knowledge and skills become displaced by market processes of capitalism. Nor does dominant culture theory take into account that, as the public territory appropriated by men of a distinct class and ethnicity is expanded, the local sphere assigned to women becomes constricted. Women's intuition, emotionality, expressive and interactional abilities as well as their tendencies to favour cooperation and skills needed to maintain society are ignored or devalued.

Within the sociological enterprise, a "problematic" arises when the knower is located outside of the knowledge of social relations in an abstracted ruling apparatus. This is accomplished through the use of language for referencing, which codifies and modifies what is described (Smith, 1974b,1981). Dominant sociological discourses used to investigate women's experiences are already structured conceptually. Social facts have been previously constructed through administering, governing and managing procedures separate "facts" from real events and subjectivities. While these categories are imposed on and
organize the everyday world in documentary forms (as part of institutional forms of ruling), such abstracted procedures must also fit into the actual local situations which they describe. Socially organized practices arise from breaks or divisions between the "knower" in the language of everyday discourse, and an ideological mode which serves to detach the individual's knowledge from that world. The presence as well as the actions of the subject disappear into externalized classifications as part of a discourse that organizes the social relations of individuals. The subject is located outside of herself through the organization of her experiences in a hierarchial structure, detaching her from the subjective realm of knowing.

Observations of the social world are, however, interpretative not descriptive. They are informative for both the subject participating in the events and the reader by way of providing background understandings and expectations. Accordingly, the everyday world can not be fully comprehended on its own merits. Aspects of the social organization of that world are invariably present in the linguistic and cognitive descriptions of personal and local experience. An examination of the speech of the local setting and the descriptions it intends affords an opportunity for the ethnographer to investigate the ways in which a dual consciousness of the world is created. Through structures which extract local experience into the conceptual realm, two ways of knowing originate. In making visible aspects of "background knowledge", the problematic becomes the source of sociological inquiry (Smith, 1990:92-98). By focusing on the fracture in social consciousness, it is possible to examine taken-for-granted assumptions about lived reality. The knowledge concerning how the social relations of society determine and are determined by the events of that everyday world is then made apparent (Smith, 1983).

For the most part, women do not share in the ideological
construction of social reality. Lacking symbols, images and methods of investigation, they work within discursive concepts and employ language not of their own making. The silencing of women (by men in positions of authority), results in the concerns, interests and experiences of women not informing the production of culture to the degree than men do. Relations of ruling serve to empower men, while restricting women's authority to significantly engage in the making of knowledge and culture. Presenting grand theories through selected perception deprives women of the means by which their consciousness can be raised concerning their social location. Women's ways of knowing produced through women's interests and experiences generally do not become part of the culturally accepted modes of thinking, which organize and legitimate the social order.

In a gender context, ideology sustains patriarchy and gender asymmetries while giving the appearance that the different opportunities and privileges accorded to males are not arbitrary and unjust, but natural and reasonable (Smith, 1983:316). Methods of traditional sociology produce a break in the social consciousness of women's experience in specific times and places (from social forms of thought located in modes of knowing) as part of the "apparatus of ruling" (Smith, 1983:311). Although claiming to describe and analyze the real world, the theories and methods of traditional sociology have often been founded on concepts which are unexamined. Individual and local experience is rendered impersonal, detached and objectified, in such a way that the character of social relations which constitute such experiences disappears. Experience is disregarded as a source of understanding the social world in favour of experience being reconstituted as norms, roles and social systems or structures.

Smith's approach does not require that the researcher investigate only at the level of experience. It also provides descriptions, understandings and analyses of the everyday world,
as it is articulated in larger socioeconomic organizations in which it is embedded. Ideological processes are taken to be a complex division of labour in which the production and transformation of information from the experiences of the everyday world build upon practices in organizational forms of knowledge. Developing, cultivating and revitalizing conceptual procedures employed by bureaucratic, professional and managerial organizations is a part of the theoretical work of classical social science discourse. In contrast, standpoint theory situates women as subjects rather than objects of sociological investigations; it positions women inside rather than outside the social apparatus of ideological construction. In this way, women's experiences reveal how the social relations of capitalism, constituted in market relations are put together. Taking women's experiences into account provides balance and equity, with the positions which have been produced by and for men within the ruling apparatus. Investigations from the standpoint of women call into question the manner in which traditional sociology have reflected upon society, by examining the location and social relations of participants who work within objectifying practices to conceal relations of power. Standpoint theory pinpoints the emergence of women's consciousness in gender relations as part of dominant culture structures, and supports the development of alternative ways of knowing based on women's actual lived experiences.

Class relations which characterize the Canadian economy are based on racial-ethnic as well as gender formations. Racial-ethnic, gender and class relations combine to structure women's work lives. Methodology must take into account the fact that women of colour have rarely been employed in the same manner or within the same occupations as White women. It must explore how racial-ethnic stereotyping and segregation has both reflected and reinforced racist economic practices within the workplace, revealing how jobs are segmented along racial and ethnic lines by
both White capitalists and workers. Such methods demonstrate how racial-ethnic processes are intrinsically interconnected in the labour market with class and gender hierarchies in determining and differentiating women's work lives. In particular, women of colour are often found in dead-end, low-paying jobs with few benefits and little opportunity for advancement that characterizes the secondary labour market.

Feminist scholars, who proceed from an inclusionary position concerning race and ethnicity, suggest that the ways in which difference is socially constructed maintains, rather than eliminates, inequality (hooks:1990). Women of colour and other identities challenge ethnocentric, colonialist and heterosexist interpretations which have previously privileged Caucasian, Western, heterosexual women. Concerned with establishing meanings of difference, deconstruction allows for the negation and displacement of binary opposites in order to establish an alternative and positive image of difference. This approach permits an examination of the division between the private and public, the sexual separation of labour, and the subordination of women's work, as central features arising out of a capitalist mode of production, converging with race relations and sexuality in various cultures and historical periods to produce dominant forms of desire.

2.2. Review of the Literature

With the exception of the work of Carol Rambo Ronai (1991, 1992), little attention has been paid to specific experiences of the labour process in which strippers are involved. Few studies attempt to understand, from the position of the stripper, what the lifestyle entails. For the most part, a theory of deviance, objectifying societal norms and social structures is frequently the major framework of both older and current work outside that of feminist investigations. Few of these studies, moreover,
discuss the connection of sex trade work with issues of class, race and gender relations. These often ahistorical and apolitical discussions fail, almost invariably, to treat stripping as part of complex social, political and economic processes. They neglect to take up how capitalist and patriarchal relations organize the work of stripping and its reproduction of sexuality as a performance.

Strippers do not appear in these studies as subjects but are presented unidimensionally representing their work as social behaviour constituting disorganization and pathology (Becker, 1963). With the possible exception of Julian Rosebuck's and Lee Spray's (1972:395) study of casual sexual affairs facilitated in a cocktail lounge, previous studies of stripping treat it as a form of deviant behaviour. Earl Rubington's (1987:203-5) definition of a deviant subculture as a set of beliefs, values and norms shared by people who breach conventional traditions, followed from the work of Ron Ames et al (1978). They were interested in demonstrating how working as a topless barmaid fits within a deviance framework. Viewing stripping as an exchange process under varying ethical circumstances, Jaqueline Boles and Albeno Gerbin (1974a:129) concentrate on the alliance of strippers with "other deviants e.g. prostitutes, pimps and gamblers". Charles McCaghy and James Skipper (1969) emphasize the organization of the occupation to encourage lesbianism, which they represent as a form of deviance.

In Deviance and Social Change, Jack Douglas (1978:60) compares sociology's grand theorizing of social problems to earlier efforts of conceptualization in biology and chemistry, suggesting that ideas and feelings established through indirect cultural learning are the key to change. By employing a "traditional common-sense (Judeo-Christian) theory", however, with an emphasis on individual deviance in a framework of Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton's theories, Douglas repudiates his own
insights concerning social complexity. His analysis explores how women "become deviant" by engaging in prostitution and working in massage parlours. Utilizing what can only be described as a religious, rather than scientific, analysis steeped in moral language and laden with concepts of individual responsibility, Douglas refers to a "syndrome of shame-pride-rage" to describe the ways "these women deceitfully take pride . . . in their wicked ways, . . . managing feelings of shame and guilt" with "burst[s] of aggressive counter-moralism or counter-shaming" (Douglas, 1978:83-5). His conclusion intones that "if we could rely on a high degree of centrally integrated [rational] inhibition of our flights from pains" (as he suggests "American Indians" have done, who had "the courage or willpower to put up with intense physical pain, and they could definitely take a vast amount"), society would be more "adaptive" and "happier" in the future (Douglas, 1978:84).

Drawing on a framework provided by Erving Goffman, Marilyn Salutin (1970:101) illustrates the ways strippers rationalize and "de-stigmatize" their work, by redefining the "status of sexual normalcy and morality". Stripper ideology suggests that they provide a socially useful service for "sexually frustrated" clients. This service has an educational component based on an exclusive knowledge of eroticism. Given that some stripper behaviour stands in contrast to that of other women, strippers depict the latter as hypocrites, since many women often receive payment in exchange for sex. Salutin reports that to support their newly acquired lifestyle, women remain in stripping due to the substantial earnings they receive. Although strippers differentiate between their tendency occasionally to turn a "trick" and the work performed by street prostitutes or "whores", they are aware of a loss of social status due to society's association of stripping with prostitution. Deploying Goffman's concepts (1963a;1963b;1967) of "face work", Salutin describes how strippers construct a moral front or stage image by "passing",
"skidding" and "cooling out" (Salutin, 70:14). Claiming they are dancers providing "artistic" performances, strippers speak about being in the business temporarily until they earn enough money to leave or to marry. Anticipating social disapproval and discrimination, they manage their on-stage identity to accommodate social mores, and attempt to distance themselves from negative impressions by concealing aspects of their off-stage behaviour.

Skipper and McCaghy (1970) employ a similar frame of reference with respect to the use of the concept of deviance in their investigation of stripping. Although they provide a demographic description of women to avoid the tendency of identifying strippers as the most deviant aspect of stripping, their emphasis on the stripper's background (as an etiological explanation for taking up the occupation) reifies, as opposed to negates, the deviant woman argument. Rather than examining the stripper's behaviour in an interactional framework of customers, owners and family members combined with the social relations that organize the production and regulation of stripping practices, their investigation concentrates on the construction of deviance through events which transpired in the stripper's childhood. They cite the following as causative factors in the early life of the stripper: absence of the father from the home during adolescence, a tendency to be the first-born, early physical maturity, sexual experience, independence and departure from the home. These predisposing factors interact with three "contingencies" (a proclivity toward exhibitionism, an opportune experience making stripping an employment choice and the realization of the economic gain) in order to predict entrance into the occupation of stripping. Citing the earlier work of William Bess (1969) (who maintains that women with low self-worth and self-acceptance, which fosters inadequate social relations with members of the "opposite sex", become "stripteasers"), Peter Peretti and Patrick O'Connor (1974:81) found "high self-discrepancy between the
perceived and ideal self of stripteasers. They conclude that the significant difference of self-worth is ascribed not only to the stripper's role but also to an unacceptable and deficient life style.

Boles and Garbin (1974b:137) also make use of Goffman's framework in describing the "counterfeiting of intimacy", which facilitates the exploitative basis of stripper-customer interactions. Sexual intimacy, more illusional than real, is presented to the customer as a possible outcome of the encounter, should the customer possess the requisite seductive skills to entice the stripper. Paradoxically, as the distance between the stripper and the customer diminishes, the counterfeiting of intimacy increases (Boles and Garbin, 1974c). Philip Sijuwade (1995:373) adopts Goffman's concept of a "cynical performance" to describe the ways in which the stripper engages in "counterfeiting" and "manipulative" performances in demonstrating that she is "sexually available according to the imagined preference of the customer". A stripper entices customers to spend time and money on drinks and table dances in order to get to know her better, on the understanding that such behaviour on the client's part will lead to intimacy with the dancer.

The second and more recently emerging theme examines the work setting and the work activities of strippers as an occupational category. Peter Dressel and Derek Petersen (1982a) investigated the recruitment and socialization of women who enter the profession of stripping. Few women in stripping have adequate training and skills to make as much money as they are able to secure by stripping (Carey et al., 1974). In a subsequent study, (Skipper and McCaghy, 1971) discovered that becoming one of three types of strippers (the poser who strips and strike a pose, the walker who saunters as she disrobes, and the pacer who slowly removes her clothing) does not require specific skills or a period of training prior to entering the occupation. While
these researchers conclude that stripping is "more a 'sex' form than an 'art' form", they note that, if money were the only consideration, most strippers would take up prostitution for even greater financial rewards (McCaghy and Skipper, 1969b:371). The tendency to view stripping as a route to a high salary, approval, success, glamour and excitement serves as a motivational factor for women entering the business. Strippers, correspondingly, are inclined to feel disenchanted and cynical as they grow older and find their careers coming to an abrupt end.

In one of the few published studies of men who strip for women, Dressel and Petersen (1982b) examine the performances of male strippers and the social organization of male strip clubs. They found similarities with female strippers in the role of informal recruitment, economic incentives, lifestyle advantages (easy work and short hours), and the excitement of a career in "entertainment". Two major differences between male and female strippers centre on the opportunities for men to meet women for social/sexual purposes, and their approach to the job as a part-time or temporary arrangement in order to avoid the stigma imposed by society on this line of work. Despite the predatory analogy in David Cameron's (1995) study of "Dances for Wolves: An Ethnographic Study of Men Who Strip For Men", he describes male strip clubs "while focusing on the commercialization of sexuality, as civilized and almost all patrons adhere to established rules and norms" (Cameron, 1995:31). Stripping for men is an occupation for the young, and by cultural standards the attractive. Through an examination of the demographic background and self-reported motivation of male dancers, Cameron (1995) provides a "Weberian-style ideal-type classification scheme" in which male strippers are delineated into five types--"street boy", "guy next door", "gym boy", "recent immigrant" and "straight exploiter". In three main areas of clubs, including the stage, floor and back room, boundaries exist between men who strictly dance and those who provide sexual services on and off
the premises of the club. Similar to the motivation of their female counterparts, the primary reason why men strip is the substantial amounts of money they can earn; secondary factors involve having fun, engaging in exhibitionism and addressing underlying emotional needs.

Carol Rambo Ronais and Carolyn Ellis's (1989) analyses differ strikingly from earlier work, particularly through the exploration of stripping as a work process understood from the points of view of its participants. They provide authentic and detailed descriptions of strip work and the complex and intricate interactions between strippers and clients that such work involves. They present stripping as an occupation in which women are stratified on the basis of sexual behaviour and career aspirations. Rambo Ronai, both a stripper and a researcher, describes the negotiations in which customers encourage dancers to bend the rules and go further, while dancers attempt to keep the customers in line yet still interested in buying table dances. The strategies a stripper utilizes in these interactions depends upon her personality and her perception of the customer. One common approach encourages the customer to believe that the stripper will meet with him later if he spends enough time and money, to enable her to get to know him better. Using an "honest front", some dancers encourage customers to think that each man is different and special to the dancer. This is particularly evident when a customer refuses a table dance and the dancer continues to sit with him, although he is not paying for her company. By demonstrating her sincere interest in the client rather than the financial exchange, the stripper creates a sexually intimate atmosphere in which the cultivated customer is likely to spend more money. With only a few regular customers involved in long-term relationships, however, strippers appear to be genuinely involved in these interactions (Rambo Ronai, 1991).

Equating the emotional labour of strippers to Hochschild's
work on the commercialization of emotions experienced by airline attendants, Rambo Ronai (1991:116) provides a "layered" account of dancer-customer interactions. The stripper as a good actress, is often involved in "running one of my regular routines" on a customer. As a subordinate group, women in general have responded to men's macromanipulation of societal institutions by using micromanipulation—interpersonal behaviours and practices—to influence the power balance" (Ronai and Ellis, 1989:295). In these encounters, Rambo Ronai describes the stripper as having close to total control of the interaction. Using the self-descriptor of "complete-member-researcher", she observes how strippers deal with the transition from young and beautiful to an older, less attractive dancer (Rambo Ronai, 1992:310). In an occupation which places a premium on youth and beauty, she notes that aging is a social rather than a biological construct. In view of the fact that a stripper's career begins to abate during early adulthood, the successful stripper learns to "manage" aging, by establishing a niche within the profession based on the development of alternative social skills and, often by engaging in prostitution.

2.3. The Political Economy of Stripping:
The Social Construction of Sex Trade Work

The theoretical framework used in this study to describe how stripping is organized and, in turn, organizes the lives of its participants centers around issues of subjectivity and power in the production and maintenance of capitalism, patriarchy and a specific set of race relations. Rather than being viewed as arising in a natural and spontaneous manner, stripping practices, as a specific way of structuring social interactions, are seen to be historically and socially produced. In order to locate the social organization of stripping, we begin with an examination of the concrete and material practices in the daily lives of strippers. By linking the interaction between the individual and
the experiences produced through social interactions, the analysis looks at the detailed and particular processes which construct stripping as a normal and natural part of capitalist, patriarchal and race relations. Organization through external references does not permit the stripper to grasp entirely how her life is put together, even though her normal daily activities are a crucial component of this arrangement. The effect of the social context on the individual does not adequately deal with the complex experiences of how stripping is externally structured. Nor does it explain how strippers feel about what they do; such knowledge is taken for granted and is not generally subject to investigation.

This project intends to examine the ways in which contemporary views of sexuality have been used to maintain and reproduce a masculine right of sexual access in North American society. It will also examine the manner in which women in the industry have established agency and also participate in and set boundaries in that process. Emphasis is placed on exploring the social construction of sexuality and the particular conditions of sexual work which engage women in this occupational category. The purpose is to analyze strip practices as a special case of sexuality, to argue—as Michelle Barrett (1980) does—that gender is socially constructed and sexual relations are, therefore, political in nature. I contemplate examining stripping as both a form and a representation of real-life situations—as the actual practices of what people do and want and, to a large extent, to view strip conventions as arising out of what people are made to want and compelled to do. In undertaking this investigation, I analyze a number of assumptions and mythologies which surround stripping to investigate what strip practices reveal about the sexual norms and mores of contemporary society. An attempt will be made to understand what effects the public act of stripping has on the private lives of a women engaged in the strip business, as well as to explore the relationship of strippers'
work with their private lives. It is hoped that this will result in a better understanding of the degree to which all women are affected by the social construction of sexuality within a society with gender, class and race inequalities.

In my investigation of stripping, I propose to explore the formation and transformation of the individual identity of women who are strippers by observing their social relationships with others and within social institutions. An exploration of stripping raises questions about some of the salient issues of our time with respect to work, sexuality, race relations, economic status and relationships of power. The conceptual framework of analysis presents stripping in the context of a labour process by locating it as a job within the service industry. While not losing sight of the sex in this form of sex trade work, the investigation places social-sexual practices in the context of work as an extension of the working processes which many women perform in the service sector. Focusing on work, I investigate the transformation of stripping practices from performance art to sexual acts in a labour market that is segmented on the basis of divisions between labour/enjoyment, production/consumption and intellectual/material, in an attempt to unearth something about the consciousness of women who undertake this line of work. Out of these divisions as practiced in the stripper's working life and social relations, we can examine how components of race, gender and class emerge. Although the inquiry is situated in the working lives of strippers, I also seek to understand the points of congruence and incongruence which emerge when body work is eroticized, objectified and commercialized within capitalist relations. I propose an exploration of the consciousness and the activities of women whose occupation is inherently sexual, investigating how these women are affected by the nature of their work and how the perceptions, values and behaviours of strippers originate from the concrete realities of the physical conditions of their work.
and social relations.

I will examine contemporary strip practices of table and lap dancing in the context of highlighting class struggles and the transformation of the labour process which historically took place within the profession. Through an examination of the daily lives of strippers, the organization and practices of stripping (while normally not visible) become subject to critical investigation. Employing a materialist, feminist analysis highlights the intersection of the work and the social life of strippers and the way in which stripping practices are put together by forces outside of strip. There is a requirement to explicate, rather than to mystify, how market phenomena of productivity, profitability and alterations in the labour process of strip as part of the ruling apparatus are intricately connected with the lives of strippers. Further, there is a need to explain how strippers are shaped by social pressures to be attractive, sensual and to present a heterosexual image of the feminine as well as to understand how these workers learn to be socially and sexually responsive in delivering a specific service.

This analysis will look to the social context which provides particular meaning associated with femininity in stripping practices, as well as to the processes at work to construct and maintain those meanings. Reaffirming that femininity is a historical and cultural construct, I seek to demonstrate how the particular version of femininity in stripping is put together by social, political and economic forces, operating both within and outside of strip clubs. Heterosexuality produces the boundary of gendered possibilities within a binary gender system in which the masculine is differentiated from the feminine through practices of heterosexual desire. Heterosexuality requires and produces the asymmetrical opposition of feminine and masculine, understood to express attributes of femaleness and maleness.¹⁴ It provides a
way for "men to extract unpaid sexual, reproductive, economic, domestic and emotional servicing from women" (Jeffreys, 1993:31). Gender identity is constructed from attributes of sex, sexual practice and desire, as a result of regulatory practices of compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia (Smith, 1992). This dominant cultural notion precludes other kinds of identities in which gender does not emanate from sex, and those in which desire is not connected to either sex or gender (Butler, 1997:278-85). Rewarded by the state and social incentives, the culture organizes sexual differences in a hierarchy, privileging heterosexual forms of sexuality and regulating less privileged forms through state, religious, medical and public opinion interventions.

The project poses several questions to be explored in a sociological understanding of how women enter into stripping, what they do, how they interpret their activities and the way in which they are perceived by others in interactional relations. An examination will be undertaken of how these forces serve to define and naturalize a particular version of femininity, while ideologically masking the notion that such exclusive definition is arbitrarily constructed. It is meaningful to inquire how women learn and respond to the construction of femininity presented to them in popular cultural practices of stripping. I explore in what ways strippers incorporate feminine definitions into their gendered identity and what impact this has on their social and working relations. Despite the incorporation of attributes which have not traditionally been part of a definition of the traditional female sex role (including characteristics such as ambition, independence and sexual assertiveness), I will suggest that the predominant definitions of femininity produced in strip genres are traditional in nature.

Although the meanings communicated and the implications of various interpretation are the subject of continuous debate, the
commercial media are among many sources of definitions of heterosexual femininity. As a social construct, advertising images of women are one of the several cultural references which organize our understanding of femininity. Media representations of women traditionally have as their focus a stereotypical and restrictive effect on the lives of women. Examining how contemporary messages concerning beauty and personal attractiveness are part of the definition of femininity within the world of stripping is crucial to understanding the establishment of specific strip practices. A critical analysis of some aspects of advertising which are part of the consumption of popular and pornographic culture will be undertaken to demonstrate how images, practices and values associated with stripping emanate out of the culture as a whole.

The study also examines the perceptions, feelings and the everyday experiences of those engaged in the world of strip in order to understand the social context in which these experiences and impressions are produced and reproduced. The aim is to describe how the gender, racial and class subjectivity of the stripper is constructed in Western society, theorizing about the nature of the relationship among concepts of subjectivity, knowledge, power and access to resources. How stripping practices construct and are constructed by and reproduce the interests of capitalism, patriarchy and distinctive practices of race relations (which are made to seem as if they arise from the stripper's choice) is a focal part of this inquiry. Although oriented to daily practices, the organization of the world of strip is determined elsewhere through the initiatives of others as part of the larger structure of society. It is imperative to show how the practices of strip regulate the lives of women in such a way as to reproduce the structures which preserve regulation.

Stripping, with its sense of ritualized movements, its
capacity for symbolic interaction and its ability to engage in social commentary, is a fruitful area of sociological exploration with respect to cultural issues concerning identity, desire, dominance and defiance. It provides a way through which the use of the human body can, itself, be utilized to explore the cultural construction of gender, race, class, sexuality, visual imagery, performance, consumption and popular culture in contemporary society. No study of this phenomenon would be complete without also addressing alternative concepts and value systems that stripping endorses with respect to creating a new social order of a more just and democratic nature.

Recently, feminist theory has been criticized for homogenizing women's experiences and treating the category of women as universal rather than with its own subtext of class and race. A sociology for (rather than of women) informed by a sociology of knowledge, advocates producing a radical revision in sociological theory (Smith, 1975a:367). Gender, class and race/ethnicity are addressed as social relations concerning how people deal with each other in productive and reproductive activities. In examining these three overlapping systems of domination, divergence based on assumptions of ethnicity and race are theorized to intersect with gender and class in organizing a multiplicity of women's experiences. Racism extends beyond attitudes based on stereotypes and structures of domination and subordination arising out of the historical approach to the means of production. Racist practices are viewed as systemic, developed, maintained and supported through the practices of everyday life. The experiences of women of colour, however, cannot be divided into isolated categories of gender, race and class that fragment women's experiences. By investigating how gender, race/ethnicity and class are inter-related in various historical eras, we view differing relationships emerging in various dominant modes of production.
Stripping depends upon the eroticization of the racial; the demand for women of colour is part of culturally-produced racial fantasies which appear in films, advertising images and popular music. These desires often reflect myths regarding the inhibitions or moral purity of White women. Such sexual practices may be explained in terms of power relations which reproduce notions of opposition and are simultaneously economic, gendered and racial. Fantasies of male-controlled sexuality and female passivity may also serve as a backlash against women who are independent or those who demonstrate a proclivity toward feminism. Sex may be thought to be more "natural" to women of colour with attributes of femininity and docility attributed to these women, reconfirming if only fleetingly the idealized version of sexualized masculinity. Sexualized racism may cause White, male clients to view themselves as culturally superior—the group which is privileged, exalted and to be served by women of colour. For these men, Black women are viewed as hypersexual and suitable for a debased and degrading sexual experiences (Shrage, 1992).

The work that has been done on the topic of stripping within the Canadian context is very limited, yet stripping is an important issue for feminism. I argue that strippers are at work providing a social/emotional/sexual service and their efforts to de-stigmatize and de-criminalize their labour ought to be supported by the women's movement. Their struggles to obtain conditions of work which have long since been established for some other workers in Ontario also ought to be strengthened by the labour movement. In this study, I am particularly concerned to explore stripping practices as constituted in cultural representations, to contribute to the work in sociology of labour and the debates pertaining to sexuality and gender. Both from a theoretical and an empirical viewpoint, this research proposes to study the working lives of strippers related to the phenomena of race, class, gender, power and symbolic systems in contemporary
culture. The research is intended to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between sex trade workers as historical subjects in the late twentieth century as well as social and labour issues surrounding sexual, body work. By advocating the development of a non-sexist, historically specific and critical theory of gendered subjectivity, it is anticipated that this study might make a contribution to the ongoing feminist task of redefining sociology, its discourses, methods, purposes and practices.
ENDNOTES

1. Although suggesting that standpoint theory offers an important frame of reference for explaining the relationship between knowledge, power and subjectivity, Hennessy (1993:xvi) cautions that feminism should not stray too far from its roots as practice in a critique of patriarchy, as opposed to serving as an innovative way for women to know about the world.

2. The common understanding of the notion of power, including cultural beliefs or adherence to tenets of political parties is not the way in which Smith (1987:87-88) conceptualizes power. While these factors may be facets of the manner in which power is expressed, she speaks of power inherent in the social organization of the events of the everyday world located in policies, procedures and mechanisms of ruling.

3. "Natural" categories of mental and manual work (which suggest that some people are predestined by class, gender and race to serve materially and socially the needs of others), should be questioned in light of the contribution they make to establishing and maintaining social inequality (Sayers, 1982).

4. Following Marx, an historical analysis of class relations focused on the ways in which relationships to the productive process were polarized, such that one group profitted from the labour of another group.

5. Institutional ethnography explores the ways in which experience can be extracted from the personal and local level, and generalized as part of the apparatus of ruling within the economy. It allows the sociologist to understand how social relations are put together while retaining the authentic experiences of individual lives (Smith, 1987:147).

6. Ortner (1979) maintains that women are identified with nature. Both are universally devalued in every culture. Emerging out of their biological characteristics associated with birth and the raising of children, women came to be associated with functions of nature rather than culture. In turn, women's imposed social roles (due to their bodily functions) provided them with different perceptions, values and ways of thinking apart from men.

7. Classifications of male/masculine have been constructed in binary, oppositional ways to characteristics of female/feminine, such that the latter categories become marginal discourses with fewer desirable human qualities. "The process is one that separates reason from emotion and calls the latter unreasonable; opposes the universal to the particular and then decries particularism; separates subject from object and values doing more than merely being; opposes culture to nature and order to
disorder, masculine to feminine, white to black" (Currie and Raoul, 1992:15). These authors suggest that in ideologies of Western patriarchal thinking this arrangement suggests a "natural hierarchial heterosexual order".

8. For some time, feminists have spoken against a hegemony of masculine values of reason and control through the domination of women and nature. Both eighteenth and nineteenth century maternal feminists claimed that the superior moral development of women, given to supervising the home and raising the next generation, qualified them as full citizens in their struggles to gain the vote (Currie and Raoul, 1991:11). More recently, Jean Baker Miller (1976) challenged the established sentiment of women's inferiority, by suggesting that the oppression of confinement in undertaking childbearing and nurturing roles produces skills and abilities which are positive and self-affirming for the individual. Similarly, Gilligan (1982) argues for a new morality and cultural arrangement based on feminine values.

9. Similar dilemmas have been described in connections with "taxi dancing" of the 1920s and 1930s, which was publicly perceived as bordering on prostitution. In their exploration of the 1970s revival of this form of "masculine recreation", Hong and Duff (1977:327-28) found increased opportunities for the simulation of romantic relationships in taxi dancing. Cultivated by the hostess "leading on" the customer, they observed that the woman provided continual verbal reassurance of fidelity, despite obvious contradictions, in an attempt to keep the customer dancing.

10. In their investigation of masseuses, Rasmussen and Kuhn (1976) examined the working conditions of a category of workers akin to strippers. These researchers explored how unemployed and unskilled women enter an occupation which carries the stigma of prostitution. Described as "naive" women who were unaware of the illicit activities associated with massage, they were informed on the job (by the owner of the massage parlour) that they were expected to "give a local" as part of their assignment.

In the descriptions of conflict between masseuses and bosses, the reported turnover of employees was high as a great number of women left in search of better working conditions. The recruitment of regular clients, a legal system which arrested masseuses but not clients and the practice of owners isolating themselves from knowledge about "lewd acts" performed by masseuses maintained the business. "Low pay forces the girls to cater to the customers' wishes in hopes of getting a tip. It's the same with nude modelling or working in topless bars. If you do it ... you don't have time to feel guilty" (Verlande and Warlick, 1982:66).

Bryant and Palmer (1975) suggest that masseuses who refrained from penetrating genital and oral sex rejected the occupational label of prostitute, preferring the term "hand whore" to refer to the "local" or "relief" work of massage.
11. The researcher is aware of only one club in Toronto in which female strippers cater to women as patrons. On rare occasions, a single woman will frequent men's strip clubs, if she is having or seeks to have a relationship with one of the dancers.

12. Like female strippers, males avoid the use of the term prostitute, preferring to use the descriptor lap dancer to describe activities in which they may be touched, masturbated or engaged in coitus.

13. Coinciding with the experiences of female strippers, males earn substantial sums of money, on average $800 to $1,000 a week. Surprisingly, only 15-20 per cent of the dancers in Cameron's (1995) investigation reported that they were gay, compared with three-quarters who described themselves as bisexual. Many were married to women. Only a few men reported that they were "entirely straight". Cameron suggests that the low incidence of men who strip for men reporting that they were gay is influenced by a number of social factors. Since "coming out" is a process which takes some time in a society that is critical of homosexuality, some of these men may, in future, identify with a sexual orientation which they currently rejected. He further notes that being gay relates to power and roles which operate in male strip clubs--gay is identified as a submissive position in which a dancer relinquishes his perceived dominance in relationships with gay, male customers.

Whereas very young female strippers will state they are older in order to work in strip clubs, characteristically young male strippers misrepresented their age by claiming to be younger in order to appeal to customers' tastes. In contrast to female strippers who dance exclusively for men, male strippers worked in clubs which catered either to male or female clients, although they preferred the former because female customers were reported to forego lap dancing offers from male strippers. Rarely did men travel to various clubs or dance in more than one club, in contrast to women who are required to move about on a circuit to satisfy the interests of customers for variety. Careers of male dancers were much shorter than for women, lasting on average from eight to fifteen months. Since dancing is viewed as a way to earn money which will allow men to open a business or return to school, only a small percentage of male strippers considered their work as a full-time occupation. Although many female dancers tend to work full-time as career strippers, approximately half of the men in Cameron's study (1995) were students by day, employed in other part-time or full-time jobs and were "moonlighting" by stripping to earn extra money.

14. The endorsement of the patriarchal family model obscures and penalizes other forms of coupling. The assumption that most women are heterosexual is both a theoretical and a political stumbling block to feminism, portraying lesbian experiences as exceptional and perverse. Problematic is the failure to examine the
compulsive nature of heterosexuality that is organized, managed, imposed and maintained by force. Lesbianism is on a continuum that includes sexual experiences with another woman, emotional sharing, bonding against the tyranny of men and giving and receiving personal and political support. Separated from other women, historically lesbians were deprived of a political existence through inclusion with male homosexuality. Although lesbians share a common cause with gay men, there are differences in the quality of the experiences, for example, the pattern of anonymous sex and pronounced ageism among male homosexuals. In general, gay men demand the same social rights as heterosexuals, and they profit from the privileges afforded all men (Turcotte, 1996:118). Lesbian women's lack of economic and cultural privileging is part of their female experience and needs to be addressed in radical rebellion and a struggle against powerlessness (Rich, 1986:324).
Chapter Three

EMPLOYING FEMINIST STANDPOINT METHODOLOGY IN AN INVESTIGATION OF STRIPPING

3.1. Exploring the Social World

Until recently, most approaches to social science excluded and/or marginalized women (Oakley, 1974). Jessie Bernard (1987) argues that a genetic methods concerned with hard data, quantitative methods, laboratory experiments and statistical analyses tended to be preferred by male sociologists. "Soft" data, qualitative methods, case studies analyses which recorded social behaviour were assumed to be the preferred research mode of female social scientists. The task of understanding the association between masculinity and concepts of autonomy, objectivity and the domination of nature became the focus of scholarly concern among feminist theorists. Keeler (1985) reported that the effects of an ideology of patriarchal domination can be seen in the practices and content of the natural sciences and in knowledge based on that model. An alternative vision of nature and society, rejecting sexual polarities permeating modern conceptions of science, began to emerge (Longino, 1988:565).

The important shift from discussing "the woman question" in science to a discussion of science itself (and whether it could accommodate the experiences of women) was taken up in the work of Sandra Harding (1987:18). Her goal was to engage actively in innovative research and theorizing in order to set up criteria for establishing a feminist philosophy of science. Discontent with existing scientific methodologies, she stresses the importance of viewing science as a social activity as opposed to treating it as a method of inquiry. While advocating a space for women to listen to each other, she also stressed the importance
of being able to verify observation, to test differing interpretations and to alter one's position in the face of new evidence. A feminist mode of research emerged which valued egalitarianism, respect for women, encouragement of reciprocal relationships and the promotion of practices which allowed women to speak for themselves. Rather than treating women as objects in order to translate data into statistics, feminist researchers advocate the use of methods which took the role of others and treat women as subjects in order to understand their experiences. In stressing the need to move beyond a masculine bias in science and to provide a critique of a positivist philosophy of science and androcentrism, Harding, in particular, argued for feminist standpoint theory to provide a more acceptable understanding of nature and social life in which women's experience were the basis of social inquiry.

Feminist standpoint theory was developed as a means by which an alternative and distinctive epistemology could be utilized as a method for doing science (Flax, 1981). Since women were excluded from conventional investigation, it was argued that sociological inquiry should proceed from their point of view. Scientific inquiry using standpoint methods seeks a theoretical understanding through women's lived reality. Assumptions and hypotheses are tested against women's own accounts of their experiences. According to Smith (1974c:7), "how sociology is thought--its methods, conceptual schemes and theories--has been based on, and built up within, the male social universe". Using the male as a universal subject and ignoring the woman by relegating her to the position of "other", fails to make a distinction between the social location of women and men. Taking the standpoint of women does not advocate that sociological concerns ought to be exclusively about women or subjectivity; nor does it imply that the experiences of women are universally the same. Women are usually located "outside the institutional order which governs advanced capitalist societies" (Smith, 1986:6). The
standpoint of women provides an alternative point of exploration which a social science (embedded in an institutional order claiming to be neutral, rational, objective and value-free) is incapable of bringing into view. Rather, standpoint methodology is an attempt to re-establish the credibility of women's own knowledge of themselves and their everyday worlds, and an attempt to find alternative ways of explaining how activities are organized and determined by social processes (Smith, 1977:13).

Smith argues that much of the work of sociology has been grounded in bureaucratic, legal and professional apparatuses as part of institutional processes which organize, coordinate and regulate lives within contemporary society (Smith, 1987:153). Traditional sociology is conceptually organized in the context of an "apparatus of ruling", in an assortment of textually-mediated managerial, administrative and legal discourses. It fails to demonstrate how the individual's actions are the constructions of text-based methods and formal organizations, independent of the actual experiences of individuals. Uncovering ideological practices within traditional methods of sociology, Smith shows how these traditional methods discard the experiences of the subjects who are, in reality, the active agents in the production of the social world. Inquiry should not begin from theory in sociological discourse and reshape people's experiences to fit the theoretical framework (Smith, 1986:6). Rather, inquiry ought to start with people's experiential knowledge of their everyday lived worlds and explore the social relations that shape and organize those worlds.

Smith (1987:153) contends that a feminist method of sociological investigation should originate from the experiences of women, not only because they have been excluded from topics of historical investigation and situated "outside the institutional order", but because the bodily and emotional work of women (although often unrecognized) provides the necessary support for
men in the ruling apparatus and within institutional processes (Smith, 1987:153). This is the problematic for women concerning traditional sociology (Smith, 1987:91-95). Since individual experiences harbour aspects of social relations that generalize beyond particular events or situations, an inquiry about these relations can begin from within people's experience. Daily activities, however, only partially locate the organization of the everyday world. An alternative way of doing sociology uses the everyday world as a point of inquiry in order to make visible the ways in which people's lives are defined by the ruling apparatus and its practices. Local relations are determined by social relations in a complex division of labour, which links everyday activities to larger social and economic processes both nationally and internationally. Inquiry explores the everyday world not as an end unto itself but as it articulates complex relations of social and economic processes beyond the experience of any single individual. Treating people as subjects, not objects of sociological investigations, and preserving, not discarding individual experiences, is essential in order to determine how such experiences are organized within social relations. A sociology for women starts where a woman is located outside of the ruling apparatus, and uncovers how her experience is determined by social processes which, although present in the everyday world, are not revealed. Since individuals are experts about the social knowledge which underlies their work and social relations, the everyday world is the origin for exploring how social relations enter into and organize the activities of everyday life.

3.2. A Feminist Ethnography of Stripping

This study utilized a qualitative approach to research which rejects positivist social science methods that call for the researcher to distance herself in the investigation. Although emphasizing investigation in a natural context, participant
observation methods often require the researcher to simply record and describe events by asking non-directive questions and explicitly avoiding the introduction of their own subjectivities (Agar, 1980, Mannersley and Atkinson, 1983). Such "voyeurism" gives the impression that there are no misconceptions or resistance from the subjects, who passively consent to be interviewed (Roman, 1991:282). Angela McRobbie (1982) warns against erasure of the economic, cultural and political conditions under which the work of such accounts occurs, suggesting that such labour should be presented in the arguments of the text. Rarely do traditional accounts analyze the larger material conditions and relations of power, including the fact that the ethnographer, herself, labours under material and time constraints (Smith, 1990). Ethnography, on the other hand, allows for intimacy and a mutuality of shared ideas between the researcher and the subject of the study (Scott, 1985; Opie, 1992).

In this ethnography, I use a feminist materialist standpoint approach to examine gender-specific work processes and interpersonal relations in various strip club sites. Stripping practices are theorized to be articulated to social, economic and political processes beyond the immediate encounter between stripper and audience, in the formation of gender, class and racial identities. Subjectivity and cultural experiences are valorized at the same time that underlying structures, material conditions and historically-specific relations of power and inequality are examined. Looking at the historical discursive and material processes of stripping as practices of capitalism, of patriarchy and of racism, permits the deconstruction of stripping from the subject positions of strippers. This means locating the individual stripper, the knower, in her actual experiences to enable her understanding about the way her world is put together.

To describe the social and historical organization of
stripping, accounts were constructed based on participant observations and in-depth interviews concerning the perceptions of participants' experiences in the world of strip. With the understanding that life histories are a legitimate and worthwhile research tool, this investigation drew upon strippers explaining how they entered the business, describing their lives, activities and choices in complex interactions and commenting on what they hoped to do in the future should they leave. The interview data was used to complement observations of strip clubs and stripping, to explore the social construction of stripping, and to provide a framework within which a general analysis of stage/table/lap dancing was formulated. Themes emerged through the observations and through the participants' accounts of their thoughts and feelings about the work and social life of stripping. In addition, magazines, movies, videos, novels and television programs related to stripping were drawn on to provide information about the relevant aspects of sexuality related to popular culture.

The research methods employed in this study allowed me to ask participants directly what experiences they had, what they thought and felt, and what they knew about stripping. In this way the participants told their own stories, choosing to highlight some aspects of stripping while ignoring others. I was not concerned to ask the same series of questions of a variety of people, although in practical terms that often transpired. Rather, I began with a phenomenological approach that let the participant's experience reveal itself without imposing my own interpretation. Nor was it important to select the people involved in the study on a representational basis, or to claim to know if the demographics of this sample were similar to those of other studies. The object was not to generalize to the population of strippers as a whole but to explicate experiences and practices of stripping in their context. I wanted to understand how the participants' experiences of stripping were located in
the varying work contexts of different strip clubs and, more generally, in the social relations that organize the political economy of stripping. It was particularly important to understand how notions of femininity and masculinity are embedded in relations of power in the stripping business. Although the goal was to comprehend how the personal and the social are intertwined historically in the world of strip, the process of looking at the lives of participants and the social forces which operate to maintain them, provided a valuable way of understanding how everyday subjectivities are linked to institutional structures.

3.3. The Subjects of Stripping

In this investigation, observational data were gathered during the 1980s and 1990s in Ontario from strip clubs which cater to men as clients. Observation was undertaken to examine the atmosphere of clubs, to observe strippers at work and to understand the interactions among strip club participants. Eighteen clubs were included in an attempt to sample both large and small enterprises, urban and small-town clubs as well as establishments in various geographic locations in Ontario. I categorized the clubs (as will be explained later), into normative and transgressional clubs as well as clubs which legitimated violence. The typology was based upon the kind of work/sexual activities which took place in the different settings. Visits to the clubs were supplemented by observation in similar clubs in Quebec, British Columbia, Nevada and Hong Kong, together with a few brief forays into "women's" strip clubs, where men perform for women, "men's" clubs which cater to male customers and a club where women strip exclusively for other women.

In the course of the study, I interviewed forty-seven women who are or were strippers from the 1960s to the 1990s in the province (Appendix A). Most of interviews pertained to the
experiences of women who were stripping from the mid-1980s, until the mid-1990s at a time when strip practices were being extensively restructured. Initially, I spoke with strippers and a few clients who happened to be present on any given day, as I walked into unknown clubs without contacts. I began by approaching dancers in an open and straightforward manner, careful to solicit interviews when the woman was not about to go on stage or engaged with a customer. As I became enmeshed within stripping culture by striking up relationships with some of the women, I was referred to and asked to speak with strippers, clients and managers concerning specific topics to round out my impressions of the world of strip. Overall, an attempt was made to obtain responses from a diverse group of women in strip based on their age, physical appearance, racial group, length of time in the business, salary and socioeconomic background. Of all the people approached to participate in this research, no one refused to be interviewed.

Given the requirements for the job, the vast majority of strippers were young women in their twenties; three were in their teens, eight were in their thirties and two were in their forties. Strippers are a fairly transient and mobile group. I estimate that approximately one-quarter quit or are fired within the first year of employment. Their experience in stripping ranged from a few months to over thirty years, although the average length of employment among the women I talked with was three to four years. Some fifteen of the strippers were not born in Canada; their countries of origin included Great Britain, Hong Kong, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Poland, Scotland, St. Lucia, Thailand, Trinidad, The Philippines and the United States. Thirty five were Caucasian, seven Black, three Native, and two were South Asian. Although the majority of women came from a working class background, thirteen had achieved greater educational success than their parents through high school graduation. Six women in this study had attended elementary school, seven junior
high school (or equivalent), and nine had some high school. In total, eleven women in this study graduated from high school, seven had attended college and other related postsecondary programs, two had university degrees and six had or were enrolled in college or university courses. For twenty-seven women, stripping had not been their first job; these women had been previously employed in a diversity of low-paying and traditional occupations for women such as babysitter, store clerk, model, hair dresser, dancer, waitress, bank teller, factory worker, nursing aid and prostitute. Some were faced with a shortage of jobs, others had been unable to advance in their field of employment or were dissatisfied with their salaries and working conditions, and as a result, entered stripping. Eight dancers were married, four for the second time and one for the third time. Nine were divorced. Of the remainder who suggested their status was single, the majority were living with a man. Three lived with a man and a woman, while two were involved in an extended family arrangement. In this study, only two strippers volunteered that they lived exclusively with a woman. Fourteen of these dancers had children. Most had one or two young children, although one woman had four children under the age of twelve. Three of the older dancers had children who were adults, as did two women who were retired from the business.

Several other participants of strip were interviewed to provide an in-depth understanding of the strip world--managers, owners, bartenders, waitresses, bouncers, disc jockeys, booking agent, customers, co-vivants and spouses, spokespersons for sex trade workers, a social worker and a police officer. Three managers, one manager/owner and one owner of strip clubs were interviewed. Club managers were all White, Canadian-born men who were considerably older than the dancers, ranging in age from approximately their mid-thirties to late fifties. Each had been previously employed in several other predominantly male occupations such as construction worker, bouncer, truck driver
and manager of various entrepreneurial establishments, including a tavern, garage, men's clothing store and strip clubs. Of the four bartenders selected for the study, two who had been bouncers interviewed in other bars and strip clubs took the job to advance their careers. These predominantly Caucasian men, ranging from their late twenties to early forties, had been employed in blue-collar occupations such as miner, taxi cab driver, boat mechanic and gas jockey prior to tending bar. The five servers (who use the self-descriptor of waitress) included in the study were all Caucasian women (with the exception of one Native woman) in their twenties and early thirties. Similar to the bartenders, they had held other positions such as waitressing, cashier and working in a Women's Center prior to being employed in a strip club. Unlike the bartenders, they were all concurrently employed as waitresses in other strip clubs. Of the two Black and one Caucasian bouncers, two of these individuals had begun to work in a strip club after training in a local wrestling club and gymnasium respectively. Two disc jockeys, one Caucasian in his late thirties and the other, a young man of mixed Caucasian and East Indian origin in his mid-twenties, had held a wide variety of jobs, none of which related to stripping, including nursing orderly, carpenter, body guard, clerking in a paint store and working at a zoo cleaning animal pens. A retired stripper, a Caucasian woman in her early forties who was currently employed as a booking agent rounded out the personnel who were connected with strip club work.

Strippers describe customers as coming from all walks of life and this study seemed to confirm that observation. Strippers report that the majority of their clients are "straight", most often married men who attend "legal and anonymous" strip clubs because they are curious, they seek a sensual experience or merely wish conversation and a sympathetic listener. From the twelve male customers interviewed, the majority were between twenty and fifty, although occasionally a few male teens were
present in clubs, as was the infrequent single male in his seventies. Like the dancers, the majority of the patrons were Caucasian, although Black men are found in some of the large urban clubs and a few Native clients frequent clubs in Northern Ontario. In the years I observed in strip clubs, I saw only a few Asian male patrons.

The population of customers was more varied on a class basis than the population of dancers, consisting of men who could barely afford the cover charge and would sit and nurse a beer for a few hours, to men who were wealthy. The occupation of clients included, among others, the unemployed, student, construction worker, miner, taxi cab driver, business manager, chartered accountant, lawyer and retired individuals. Of the three spouses and partners of dancers interviewed, two were men and one was a woman. Two were younger and all were of the same race as the dancers. At the time of these interviews none of them had careers of their own separate from the stripper they lived with; all were involved in managing the career of the dancer or were unemployed.

In October 1988, I attended the International Trafficking in Women Conference in New York and was subsequently introduced by feminist friends to a conference presenter, Sara Wynter. Sara, in turn, made the introductions to Kathleen Barry who read an earlier draft of my paper, and I, in turn, exchanged Sara's PUMA (Prostitute Union of Massachusetts Association) video tape and literature to two of the strippers I had worked with the longest, Annie Ample and Candy Kane (see Appendix A). In a dinner meeting following an afternoon interview in which Sara spoke before an audience at York University in Toronto, I listened to the tale of her life as a prostitute who left the business and took up a radical feminist critique of society's views on prostitution and stripping. Her analysis includes a denunciation of the historical association of prostitution with sin and criminality, complaints concerning police harassment, misconceptions about women being
forced to work in prostitution, responsible for spreading AIDS and a plea to make a distinction between pimping and companionship. As the founder of WHISPER, an acronym for Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt, this "whore" as she openly calls herself, refused to take up society's definition as a "fallen woman", declaring the viability of sex as work and attempting to establish decriminalization, good working conditions and civil rights for sex trade workers.

I twice interviewed Jessica Freisse, a social worker at Interval House in Toronto because she had been extensively involved with street prostitutes, some of whom had been or were currently stripping. Under the mandate of her organization, she works with underage clients (thirteen to fifteen year old clients), who volunteer for a short-term stay in the Interval House hostel. If the youngster was willing, she makes arrangements through the Children's Aid Society for long-term, alternative housing arrangements and support to return to school or seek employment. I also talked with Sergeant Terry Freidlander who, as a member of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Youth Squad, was similarly engaged with young people who are soliciting sex and trafficking in drugs on the streets of Toronto. Using the short-term assessment and intake facilities of Moberly House in downtown Toronto, Freidlander attempted to secure a place for street prostitutes who were under sixteen years of age and to counsel those just over that age. Utilizing the Family and Child Services Act, he attempts to solve one of the most pressing problems of street prostitution by arresting adults serving as pimps who are "parasites destroying the lives of youngsters".

3.4. Levels of Interviews

In the initial phase of the study, approximately fifty hours of observation and eighty hours of semi-structured interviews were undertaken. Most interviews with strippers were conducted
while the stripper was on a one-time basis and ranged from twenty minutes to two and one half hours, with the average interview lasting about an hour. The majority of these sessions took place after several hours of observation in the strip clubs. For the most part, interviews were conducted on-the-job, although some took place in coffee shops, restaurants and occasionally in the participants' homes. Eight strippers were interviewed on more than one occasion for a variety of reasons. In one case, I met a young woman as she was making the transition from stripping in Quebec to taking up the same profession in Ontario. Approximately a year and a half after our initial contact, I had an opportunity to speak with the same woman, now a more assured and sophisticated stripper who had become firmly ensconced in her new location. By chance, I encountered a woman at the Carribana festivities some two years after I had initially met her in a club, and was subsequently able to follow up in a telephone conversation to find out what had happened as she left the strip scene. In another instance, I met a stripper who had authored a chapter in Laurie Bell's book, *Good Girls, Bad Girls: Feminists and Sex-Trade Workers Face-to-Face*, at a 1985 Toronto conference for sex trade workers and feminists. After a fairly extensive discussion, I made arrangements for what turned out to be a very brief interview in her home. While travelling on a strip circuit of clubs in the Hampshire region under the tutelage of a feminist friend and waitress at a strip club, I was introduced to one of the few female customers and subsequently spent several hours over the course of the next four days with this woman discussing the many aspects of strip life. I was able, at this time, to interview clients, bartenders, waitresses, club managers and a club owner.

As part of a comprehensive data collection and analysis process, I also conducted intensive interviews of approximately fifty hours with two strippers, Annie Ample and Candy Kane as well as Sara, a waitress at the Copa strip club in Hampshire.
friendship quickly formed between myself and the two strippers which continues on an infrequent basis since neither of these women now live in Toronto. Annie Ample's extensive involvement in sex trade work in North America and Europe for more than three decades proved to be most valuable in pointing out how the business of stripping works, who benefits (and who does not) in these relationships, and how events occurring outside of stripping impinged on life in strip clubs. On the numerous occasions when we spoke over a period of approximately ten years, she helped me to understand the nuances and variances of stripping practices, alerting me to the connections between recruitment procedures and newspaper pinups and drawing my attention to the ways in which criminal and police activities operate within the subculture of stripping. Being conversant with the media, she often directed my attention to magazine articles as well as radio and television programs to demonstrate the way in which articulation takes place between the world inside and outside of stripping. Between 1985 and 1987, as she was putting the finishing touches on her autobiography, *Annie Ample The Rare Facts: My Life as a Stripper*, I agreed to participate in several radio and television interviews with her concerning the business of strip.

Candy's extensive connections within strip clubs in Ontario allowed me to understand some of the daily routines and interactions within clubs and to link these with the private lives of strippers. Twice I joined her on stripping circuits travelling to Hamilton and Sarnia, spending my days and nights in the clubs, eating with her and her friends in restaurants, and retiring to my hotel to further chat with her at the end of the day. Toward the end of my research, the role of advocate as well as researcher emerged as I assisted Candy in applying for government funds for the purpose of establishing a drop-in center for strippers.
I had been friends for some time with Sara, after introductions were made by mutual friends at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association of the Learned Societies annual conference. I presented some preliminary work on stripping and Sara gave a paper concerned with the provision of social services for Native and immigrant women in Northern Ontario. An escort around Hampshire to the various strip clubs with introductions to strippers, patrons and bouncers (provided by Sara) made this working friendship very useful for the purposes of this study. Her experience working as a waitress in a Hampshire club for eight and one half years at the same time as she was a social worker for the Hampshire Community Services Agency, assisted me in making contacts within clubs as well as providing me with the benefit of her socialist feminist insights. Introductions to bartenders, bouncers, customers as well as to strippers, by this insider, helped to break the ice, leading to comments on the second day of my visit such as, "how's it going research lady?" (from one of the bartenders), to which I retorted "Fine, how's it going with you, bartender man?" It was clear from the way people greeted me and readily agreed to chat that Sara commanded respect and had some influence within this subculture. The long hours of conversation with this former director of the Hampshire's Women's Center and a doctoral candidate in Women's Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, provided an invaluable opportunity for me to elicit information, clarify my observations and validate my analysis.

The numerous sessions with these three women in which I freely discussed the many aspects of stripping, went well beyond what could be described as interviews. These women were mentors with whom I could discuss ideas more freely and in greater depth than semi-structured interviews between strangers permitted. They were knowledgable, not only about stripping and strip clubs, but also about events which occurred outside which impinged on
activities within the clubs. Beyond questions and answers, these
dialogic sessions were most often characterized not by my
questioning, but by listening to the wealth of information so
that I might better understand how stripping is organized from
the insider's point of view. Here the conflicts, contradictions,
unvoiced problems and social interactions which took place, both
within and outside of club life, could be extensively explored.
These conversations took place in clubs, restaurants, bars,
conferences, the participants' homes and mine, on park benches
and by telephone. Just as I do, all three women described
themselves as feminists or had sympathies in that direction, all
were sensitive to issues of race and racism, and two described
themselves as left-leaning politically. This made it possible to
engage in the kind of analysis which suited this project. In the
true sense of the word, these women were consultants on this
project through the provision of valuable information and
insights and by filling in gaps, interpreting and reinterpreting
events.

Often before proceeding to observe or interview additional
participants, I would confer with one of these three consultants,
who so generously gave of their time and insights. If something
arose which was not clear to me, or if I was uncertain about the
authenticity of my analysis from the strippers' point of view, I
would review with one or other of them what I had witnessed or
heard. Their input provided a frame of reference which I
incorporated at many junctures in this project. In talking with
them, I could ask questions about and delve deeper into topics
related to prostitution, drugs, biker gangs and in some
instances, women's family and sexual lives that would have been
inappropriate to explore in an hour interview with a stranger. At
times I was assisted in understanding aspects of specific
relationships or forces at work which were not obvious at first
glance to an outsider who was relatively unfamiliar with the
social world of strip. The strippers who served as consultants
had an opportunity to read various draft copies of manuscripts prior to public release and were invited to make comments concerning the authenticity of the work. They were not invariably in agreement with some other strippers I spoke with but their input was invaluable.

3.5. Areas of Investigation

A variety of areas of investigation were explored with different participants to obtain information and clarification in areas in which the participants evidenced expertise. In this manner, different parts of the story were elicited from various participants, rather than asking the same standard questions of each individual. Questioning strippers about the length of shift work, rules of the club, issues concerning remuneration and fines was standard fare. To understand the social matrix in which strip practices are embedded, queries were also raised about interactions strippers had with customers and managers, what they thought about as they danced, the benefits attached to the job and the difficulties encountered. How the dancer entered this line of work, what other work experience she had, her future plans for work and aspects of her social life were also explored. If a stripper was prepared to discuss specific techniques and practices of table and lap dancing, drugs and violence as well as issues pertaining to her personal and home life, the interview continued.

In all cases, it was important to ask what the individual thought about and felt with respect to the ways in which her work and social life was organized in the context of strip club culture. Where information emerged that placed the participant in some degree of discomfort or danger (such as sharing knowledge about prostitution, drugs, criminal and police activities), such comments were made with the understanding that they would be considered "off the record", or presented in such a way that they
could not be traced to the person in question. Also problematic was the issue of protecting the identity of specific strippers considering that the information provided could only have come from one source (for example, Miss Nude America 1987). In such cases the information was not reported.

In order to compare and contrast the working arrangements of strippers, six waitresses and a woman who was both a former waitress and a stripper, five bartenders, three bouncers and two disc jockeys were also interviewed. In addition, three interviews were conducted with managers and a manager/owner of strip clubs to explore issues concerning strip club policies and procedures, supervision, and regulations and legislation which frame the work of stripping in clubs. In talking to customers, the kinds of questions I asked had to do with the frequency with which they attended clubs, the amount of money they spent, and the kinds of activities they engaged in with the women in these clubs. Ten of the twelve customers interviewed were regulars. Many were very forthcoming with impressions, perceptions and vivid stories about strippers in the various clubs they frequented. To round out the picture of strip club culture, eight interviews were conducted with strippers who had left the business. They were currently working variously as a booking agent for strippers, a spokesperson for sex trade workers, a community worker involved with young street prostitutes and a police officer with the juvenile division.

3.6. Specific Research Issues and Concerns

Prior to coming under the tutelage of some of the women in stripping, I found that as a researcher I was not above harassment in that environment. During the course of observing in a club one afternoon, a patron offered to buy me a drink with the line "you look like a dancer". On that day I wore my researcher's uniform of a large, loosely-fitting sweater with a long skirt,
flat shoes and a raincoat. When graciously but firmly informing the man that I had never danced in clubs and did not want to entertain his company, he left mumbling something which was fortunately inaudible to me. Although several months into this study and still reeling from the shock of watching women's nude bodies presented as a form of entertainment and service, I attended a strip club with a female friend to enable me to discuss, in feminist terms, the events we both observed. Appearing as two, middle-aged, matronly school teachers (which we were), we drew some glances from patrons on a quiet afternoon. Upon leaving, the bouncer barked liked a dog and suggested that it would not be a good idea for us to return.

Initially, I attempted to obtain written consent from all participants. I quickly abandoned this procedure as impractical in a club setting in which a number of the women use stage names and the clients balk at being identified in ways which might link them to the outside world. Nonetheless, all in-depth interviews with dancers and the majority of interviews with other informants were undertaken with a signed consent form. One dancer who was typical of many I met had difficulty with a written consent form. She suggested that "information may fall into the wrong hands and signing a form might hold me to something in the future". Convinced that signing forms was not in her best interest, she suggested that we "just talk" about her experiences. When somewhat pressed by me, another dancer who indicated that she was not happy providing written consent, took her lipstick out of her bag and placed a large red "A" on the form. Oral consent was subsequently obtained from each participant, with the assurance of anonymity that would not attribute information directly to any individual. At the same time, the necessity of keeping the collected data confidential was stressed. An opportunity to withdraw from the research project at any time was also provided to all participants. With respect to the latter point, I offered my name and institutional phone number to each of the
participants, in case they wished to add or discard information. The majority of the strippers took the information. Seven called to chat further and none withdrew from the study. Not a single client or manager, however, saw the need to follow up with this information. Although it proved to be rather awkward, I did ask permission during a number of interviews to take a few notes (particularly verbatim quotations), sometimes hurriedly written on cocktail napkins. Irrespective of whether or not I took notes on site, immediately upon completing an interview I made copious notes, which became the text of the analysis. This process sometimes entailed sitting in the parking lot of a strip club furiously scribbling salient points of observation and analysis, upon which I would later reflect and rework to capture the essence of the data.

As the research unfolded, each participant was encouraged to tell a part of the tale with which they were familiar. From these narratives, the social construction of stripping emerged. By employing feminist, materialist standpoint methodology as a way of working, I had hoped to guard against the omnipresent danger of advancing theory about the meaning of stripping based predominantly on speculative interpretations. It was particularly important for me to know what women actually understood themselves to be doing when they stripped, how they interpreted their behaviour, and how the routines of work intertwined with their private lives. Where solo voices were highlighted, it was intended that they would be articulations which emerged from the ethnographic interviews, to recreate within the limited framework of discursive writing an authentic flavouring of the words and ideas of some of the key participants. Despite the fact that I did not always approve of what some of the participants did, data was reported as the women presented themselves after working out mutually consenting terms of exchange for the interviews. On a few occasions, it was also necessary to keep in touch by following up to the satisfaction of both the participant and
myself. Using standpoint method meant that I was concerned not simply to take from the participants interviewed without allowing them to ask questions of me concerning my work and life.

Even simple matters such as offering to pay (or not to pay), strippers for their time became a research issue, when I proceeded from the context of feminist materialist methods. After speaking with a veteran stripper who was incensed that I would even consider asking to interview strippers without proposing to compensate them, I subsequently offered a drink and twenty dollars for approximately an hour of the individual's time. Although I received a range of responses from delight (that I would pay a woman to keep her clothes on), to reluctance to take money and many refusals,—including one dancer who warmly pointed out that she made a lot more money than I did—I continued throughout the study to offer money for time spent in single interviews with strippers. Not once in the course of this investigation did any of the women I interviewed take up the offer of money in exchange for their time in a profession that is notoriously based on "trying to make a quick buck". I also offered information (if solicited), support (if needed) and an opinion (if requested), in the context of the interview-conversation sessions.

At the outset of this study I envisioned my role as a participant-observer and interviewer of dancers, clients and other people involved in stripping. As the study evolved in various phases over the years and particularly as I spent more time with strippers who shared the stories of their work and personal lives, I became aware of a shift in my researcher role. My initial concern (which was initially centered on gathering information) gradually changed to sharing information, understanding and knowledge in what I would describe as an egalitarian research framework—which inadvertently led to a more authentic way of understanding how the world of stripping is
constituted for its participants. By taking the standpoint of the women who strip and participating in some aspects of their work and social life in order to understand the language, thought patterns and value systems, I was able to move inside the logic of stripping rather than remaining outside of that world and caught up in observation and analysis. When asked to share my insights and analysis in a number of these informal discussions, most often I recalled from my own history of work, political and personal experiences, together with my academic interests in labour process and gender studies.
ENDNOTES

1. The critique specific to scientific knowledge is an extrapolation of a more general feminist criticism of cultural stereotypes concerning women's nature. For example, from the discipline of psychology, Maccoby and Jacklin (1978) laid the foundation for the argument that the devalued status of women in society was not a function of their inferior status in nature. They assessed the impact of socialization and sex-role differentiation on gender, establishing that the status of women is not immutable and could, therefore, be changed.

A later example with a similar analysis is the work of Fausto-Sterling (1986), who refuted some of the androcentric claims about fetal testosterone levels and brain hemisphere dominance linked to sex differences and sex-linked characteristics, by turning to models of explanation which favoured complexity and interaction of biological and sociological factors.

2. Although feminist researchers may agree about some of the causes and solutions of women's subordination, many would disagree with Harding's emphasis on a research praxis which is value-neutral (Harding, 1987:1-14). Recognizing that there is no such thing as an inquiry that is not value-directed, feminist investigations esteem subjective experiences and the knowledge of the research subjects in understanding and transforming the gender-specific experiences of women's subordination.

3. Harding (1987:51) rejects the claims of feminist empiricism which contends that feminists, both women and men, are more likely to produce unbiased and objective research results, instead making a case for the use of feminist standpoint theory. She advocates that feminist researchers ought to use existing scientific methods which are free from biases in the interest of producing quality research that is not confined to micro qualitative studies.

4. Flax (1990:37) points out the problems associated with doing feminist research in a gendered culture. For the most part, women's experiences have been excluded from the realm of the known; therefore, the concepts and language which are needed to address her situation adequately are absent.

5. Within all the sciences, problems of gender have been prevalent concerning the choice of research topics, theoretical perspectives as well as gathering, interpreting and publishing results (Smith, 1975a). Since males had the right to define what was meaningful and appropriate, topics which came under investigation were male-defined issues. Male sociologists, for example, tended to focus their attention on institutions and occupations which dealt with political, economic and military functions. For the most part, such analyses failed to address the experiences of women, or they cast women within sex-typed roles.
6. The term "straight" as used by this stripper was taken to mean that the men were heterosexual.

7. As a participant observer, I scrutinized and entered into interactions with various participants. Out of these social relations, a few lasting friendships developed with some of the strippers in the study.

8. Strippers sign contracts through booking agents to work on a circuit, travelling to a number of cities for specified periods of time. They typically spend several days in small towns and up to a month or more in large cities. Due to the extensive travel required of a contemporary strippers, these women are seldom together as a group for long periods of time.
Chapter Four

STRIP CLUB CULTURE:
ENTERING THE WORLD OF SEX TRADE WORK

4.1. The Everyday Practices of Stripping

The "subcultures" described in the previous chapter are embedded in a variety of strip club environments. Clubs differ in style of dress for strippers, permissible forms of social interaction among strippers and clients, approach to managerial supervision, sexual explicitness of the strip performance and the extent of direct sexual contact permitted. Each strip subculture has norms which regulate the behaviour of its members and contribute to the social order within such establishments. In this chapter, the different club cultures are explored, to uncover how they function for the people who participate in them.

An examination of the everyday practices which strippers engage in throughout various clubs provides an entry point for exploring the social organization of the work processes of stripping. Concepts and categories such as featuring (the select group of feature dancers), table and lap dancing which organize the complex network of social relations among strippers, clients and managers, can be pulled apart to make visible their ideological character. Evident in the descriptions provided by individuals concerning their specific activities is the organization of their working and social experiences. Occupational and social activities, which are not neutral or randomly instituted, produce specific kinds of actions as part of the production of social relations. The interest here is not in investigating individual subjectivity but in demonstrating how stripping is socially organized in the everyday world. The local and particular world of stripping, consequently, can be seen to be connected in political economy to the activities both within
and outside of strip clubs.

Similar to other subcultures such as the environment of airline hostesses described by Hochschild, 1988), stripping has its own community, acknowledged social routines, unique systems of commitment and conformity to behavioural codes. It also has its own patterns of adaptation, cluster of problems and resistance to imposed solutions. Primarily through an interactive social process, strippers learn and employ a common paradigm of behaviour in managing the task of dancing naked before an audience. Nonetheless, strippers are individuals and each has her own style and needs. They deliver a highly ritualized and, in a sense, formalized mode of sexually exciting dancing. Stripping subculture defines the knowledge and skills built into the specific act of stripping and the etiquette governing the social interactions with clients within the various clubs. It provides a paradigm for how strippers think, feel and act in the stripping environment, and of how to relate the everyday world of strip relationships in their lives off-the-job.

The first impression conveyed to the casual observer, particularly in a normative club, is that of a party scene, in an up-tempo bar, where dancers smile, chat, strut to-and-fro and seem to feel safe. Generally, these women of strip appear confident and easy-going with the patrons, assertive and relaxed, as they display their nude bodies. Patrons also seem at ease, participating in the friendly, open atmosphere of the club and fraternizing, almost exclusively with the dancers, rather than with each other. During my forays into strip clubs, I learned that stage stripping and the social interactions which followed to entice the customers to purchase a dancer's time for a table or lap dance were more complex than they seemed at first. I felt as if I were experiencing something similar to what Harry Braverman (1974) described when he became aware of the physical and psychological complexities to which clerical workers attend
in the productive processes of office work.

Strippers' performances are an illusion of sexual invitation; they play a kind of "con game" with clients and each other in an attempt to dominate and control for their own purposes. Stripping is a distinctive way of conversing, which uses specific modes of address in an attempt to forge particular social connections among people, although excluding other modes of behaviour. The strip melodrama is preoccupied with sexual, gender and race relations, and embodied in a stylized presentation of the female body. The construction of the strip is scripted so as to encourage the patrons to watch a microcosm of seduction, intrigue and drama. With overtones of intimacy, the client is enticed into a dialogue with the dancer, who is at the centre of a scriptive dialogue. The strip act itself is ordered into circuitous elements, which coerce the viewer into sharing the assumptions of the woman who is disrobing for at least part of the presentation.

From the moment you step inside a strip club you are immediately aware that dancers, exclusively women, are nude or in various stages of nudity, although others including the patrons and most other club personnel (who are predominantly male) are fully dressed in a variety of work or leisure attire. Whether you view strippers at Lipstick's in Cornwall, Cheater's in Sudbury, or the Lomotion in Toronto, all dancers are nude. For the vast majority of experienced dancers, nudity in public is not an issue; it is an integral part of the definition of strip in this era's cultural presentation. Dancers claim that they become accustomed to being naked as they strip on stage, dance at tableside several times a day, sit in dressing rooms, walk through the club, and sit and chat with customers at their tables, at the bar, or on a couch in a private booth. The performance of strippers exaggerates seduction, almost to the point of satire. Women's beautiful nude bodies in various
provocative poses are omnipresent in the clubs; the choreography, lighting, music and the structure of seating arrangements accentuate women's bodies as objects of male desire.

When the stripper is removing her clothes, it is not a matter of disrobing as one might do in a communal dressing room; the conduct and mannerisms of the dancer are laden with social-sexual symbolism. Acts of disrobing take on a whole new meaning in the context of a strip club. Each aspect of the strip act highlights the exposure of the female body in a manner that adds to the sexual pleasure of the patrons. Off-stage, the atmosphere in most clubs is also easy-going. Dancers strike up conversations with the patrons in what appears to be a friendly and casual way and then disrobe (if they are not already unclothed) to engage in table and lap dances.

Though tableside performances are presented for particular clients, they also intensify the effect of the stage act. Many women simultaneously stripping beside a patron's table, heightens the effect of omnipresent nudity and sexuality. Never fully recovering from the initial shock of viewing table dancing, I came to see it as virtual sex (that one might view in a carnival show), with many events going on at the same time--events which could not be taken in at one glance. Table dancing has its own pace, depending upon the number of songs contracted for by the client. In this presentation, the dancer quickly progresses from removing her clothing to the point where the emphasis shifts from looking at her as a whole person, to examining her genitals in a variety of sustained positions. During her performance, a stripper frequently engages in postures and gestures which (as stereotypes) signal sexual arousal and invitation--such as flinging her hair, wiggling her pelvis, rolling her eyes back, letting her tongue hang slightly out of the corner of her mouth, simulating vaginal entry and occasionally faking a look of orgasm by her facial expressions.
"I like to do a traditional strip", Samantha tells me, removing her top during the first song, her bottom by the end of the second song and performing her floor work during the third and final song. Dancing exclusively in normative clubs, she regards it as "sleazy" for a dancer to take off only her G-string--or even to first remove her G-string. Customers interpret the symbols used by a dancer and her interactions as signs concerning the nature of a potential social/sexual liaison with the stripper. Samantha attempts to coordinate her moves to the music, alternating between the two sides of the rectangular stage, giving all the customers an equal opportunity to view her charms; she also uses the pole at the side "because guys like to see me wrap my long legs around it". Before starting her floor work, she will lay out her blanket and go through her spreads and poses, each calculated to provide the best angle to the audience for viewing her body. A patron is made to feel special by establishing eye contact, talking to him in a low voice, giving him "an extra look" and asking him if he likes what he sees, in anticipation of a tip. Even while she is dancing on stage, Samantha is assessing the clientele with respect to the possibility of future table dancing encounters.

What is defined as sexuality in the strip is, for the most part, the man's experience; strip clubs are secure places for men, where women usually do not say no to men's overtures. Different club subcultures, however, set out stipulations on what men may request by way of service and to some extent, serve as boundaries regarding conduct which falls outside of club norms. In contrast to the prevailing sexual conventions outside the club, however, women take the sexual initiative. They move about the clubs approaching men, chatting, displaying their bodies and striking up the next agreement for table and lap dance services, as stage stripping is ongoing. Often, men sit rather passively, waiting to be approached and entertained. They learn the ways in which the various clubs operate through observation of how others
behave and in conversations with the dancers. In most normative clubs, the regulations are exhibited at tableside or posted on the door, indicating the cost of a table dance and the no-contact-with-the-dancer rule. In clubs permitting lap-dancing, the rules will state the cost, time limit and place to engage the stripper. Customers come to understand that the women may touch them, ruffle their hair, whisper in their ears, hang their bras on the clients' shoulders, drape their nude bodies across their torsos, but that they may not touch the dancer unless she allows it. In other clubs where overt sexual contact is the norm, no such rules exist in a more free-for-all atmosphere.

Every aspect of strip club culture is oriented to create an ambience of sexual fantasy and illusion, heightening the expectations of participants and encouraging them to take a chance on the hype, by drawing them deep into the social milieu of allure. Club life is fashionably trendy, offering the latest wave or fad in displays of body and fashion. Some provide a meeting place for prostitutes, bikers, pimps and criminals, and all are permeated with sexist and racist practices. In an atmosphere of machismo and sexual excitement, accentuated with alcohol and drugs, at times the hostility lurking just beneath the surface bubbles up at the slightest provocation. The Venetians of the 13th and 14th centuries found anonymity behind richly sculptured and decorated masks and enjoyed a period of unrestricted licentiousness during the religious celebration of Mardi Gras. In contemporary Ontario, strip clubs operate year round, fourteen hours a day, offering the same degree of anonymity, sans masque.

4.2. Club Typologies in Various Settings of Strip Work

Strip club cultures can be classified into three different types, each with its own distinctive features, social locations
and modes of interpersonal relations. I have called these three types "normative clubs", "transgressional clubs", and "clubs of legitimated violence". The cultural territory of each type of club demarcates social boundaries. Although clubs have a wide range of overlapping characteristics and social activities, the different types have unique patterns which maintain social boundaries within the larger strip environment. Club practices can be viewed on a continuum, with shifting categories and overlapping characteristics. For dancers there are recognized and marked status differences among the three club types which focus on the different practices with respect to issues of nudity, kinds of contact with clients, prostitution and drug usage. Permeable boundaries are important reference points, however, for dancers and clients participating in strip culture; women who work in clubs are able to describe the experiences of stripping within their own club environment as well as anticipating and sometimes having experienced the conditions of work in other club environments. Dancers who transgress the normative behavioural code in clubs (by engaging in activities associated with clubs belonging to subcultures outside these boundaries), reinforce the cohesion within the group. These transgressors also provide a sense of identity in each of the club enclaves. Attitudinal and behavioural differences signal to all in the clubs the way in which appropriate conduct is defined as well as who fits in and who does not. Within each type of club environment, rules demarcate (for both strippers and clients) the border between behaviour that is acceptable and behaviour that is problematic. Managers and others employees are also governed by and reproduce the norms of the prevailing club subculture. Clients are educated by the strippers, and with a knowledge of the distinctive services offered, seek out the clubs catering to their tastes. Police often approach clubs differently depending on their subcultural type.²

As mentioned above, the taxonomy used classifies the club
subcultures into normative, transgressional and clubs legitimating violence, based on the degree and kind of sexual contact. The different subcultures are more fully specified below, with descriptions of my own observations to supplement the evaluations of women who strip. Very briefly, in normative clubs sexual contact is restricted and the audience must be satisfied with watching and some touching; in transgressional clubs, private sexual contact usually takes place in booths or otherwise screened areas; in clubs of legitimated violence, sexual acts, sometimes involving violence, are performed in front of the audience. Descriptions of what I observed when I visited clubs gives a picture of the different subcultures in the various regions of Ontario, at least as far as the normative and transgressional types are concerned. As will be seen, my single visit to a club of legitimated violence was arduous and even somewhat frightening.

Club cultures also tend to differ with respect to the class, age, race and backgrounds of the audience. By cultural standards, the customers in normative clubs appear clean and pleasant-looking in appearance, with seemingly appropriate social skills to meet women. According to the dancers, most of their clients are heterosexual, married and sexually experienced. Unlike the majority of dancers (who can be described as working class in origins), the customers in these clubs appear to cut across class lines in terms of demographic characteristics. Working class men in polyester pants, wind-breakers and union caps sit next to men in three-piece, finely-tailored suits with designer briefcases and stylish European raincoats. In transgressional clubs, middle-aged men predominately appear to be less affluent than men in normative clubs. Establishments which legitimate violence are almost exclusively frequented by patrons who belong to biker clubs. They range in age from young men of eighteen or nineteen to individuals who are in their 70s, with the median age around thirty-five to forty years of age.
4.2a. Normative Clubs

Gone are the days described by Ann Corio, a world famous stripper known as the "Jungle Siren", in *This Was Burlesque* (1968), when women stripped behind a screen, engaged in "the dance of the seven veils", or employed snakes and parrots in their act. This traditional model of stripping only survives today in a few Las Vegas shows, and in the memories of older "burlesque queens." Many veteran strippers, like Annie Ample, recall with nostalgia the skills that were still required in the 1960s to perform the "tease" of strip, at a time when strippers "never took it all off" in order to leave something to the imagination of the customers. According to Annie, total nudity and table dancing were illegal and unthinkable in stripping twenty years ago; complete nudity is the established form of exotic dancing seen today in the clubs I call "normative".

Such clubs comprise the majority of Ontario clubs in the mid-1980s. Black, Native and Asian women were more likely to be employed in these clubs than in other types of establishments. The dancers covered a wide age range from young to middle-age dancers; they were outstandingly beautiful and physically flawless by contemporary popular cultural standards. On the whole, they were more polished, professional and sophisticated in their tableside manners than women in other club settings. Proud of their skills as performers and their professionally-designed costumes, they generally draw a sharp line between their work and private lives, expecting eventually to "leave the business" for careers as models or to further their education. The act of stripping, for the most part, separated these women from other professional and career women. Julie, one of my informants and a seasoned dancer, told me that many of those who evidenced independence, assertiveness and entrepreneurial skills were successful in their attempts to control the strip business, rather than be controlled by it. These dancers viewed themselves
as "normal" women who have "morals" and "know the difference between right and wrong", a coded way of saying that they either do not engage in prostitution and "sleazy sex acts", or that they would do so only in a controlled and clandestine manner as it suited them.

Patrons in normative clubs are likely to witness a wide range of strip presentations from the seasoned, professional performer with feathery finery and props--a style that has waned--to very young and relatively inexperienced women, rather awkwardly attempting to remove their underwear in public in a performance which could be categorized as dancing only by a generous stretch of the imagination. The "big sell" in such clubs is the custom of stripping at tableside for individual patrons. In large inner city clubs of the normative type, continuous stage dancing and private table dancing is ongoing at all times of the day. Table or French dancing, named for the custom of stripping for individual patrons on a small table or box approximately two feet square, declined as lap dancing later became the new presentation of strip. Light, sound and smoke displays (once popular in burlesque and in normative clubs until the mid 1980s), however, were making a comeback in the 1990s, according to Nicole, but without the costumes and scenery.

The stripper's set on stage consists of dancing to three or four songs. Music ranging from the 1960s to the 1990s can be heard, including soft romantic ballads such as "Georgia" and "Baby Be Mine" as well as music with sexual overtones in the lyrics such as "Honky Tonk Woman" and "I Want to Sex You Up." The majority of the strippers supply their own music which allows them to choreograph their steps, to anticipate the tempo of the music, and to vary their routines accordingly. Most normative clubs have a continuous strip-dance on stage, twelve hours a day, six days a week, peppered with a feature act in the large clubs and simultaneous table dancing. Stage and table dancing acts
consist of a number of loosely choreographed movements which emphasize slow, sustained and erotic gestures and a rather soft version of a belly dance as opposed to the fast, rhythmic motions of jazz or disco dancing. On stage, the stripper adds her individual impressions to a seemingly fixed sequence of moves which usually resulted in the removal of her garments above the waist by the end of the first song, the elimination of her apparel below the waist after the second song, and her floor work for the third and concluding song.

The public criterion by which stage strip is judged as successful is the extent to which it elicits clapping and, at times, whistling and shouting. Alternatively, the private emblem of a "good strip" at tableside is bestowed upon the dancer through fees, tips, gifts and compliments. It is not unusual in normative clubs to observe women engaged in flirtatious conversations and social interactions similar to male-female relationships in the population at large, despite the fact that the couple may have only known each other for fifteen minutes. From the stripper's point of view, a "good" customer is one who wishes to generously pay for the woman's time on an extended basis. This cuts down on her need to move around the club "hustling" new business. It is not uncommon for a dancer in such situations to strip, dress and strip again and again at tableside if the encounter is proceeding according to her expectations. The client may hope that the encounter will lead to sex or he may want to spend more time with the woman without payment, perhaps taking her home after she finishes work. The relationship which develops is not unlike putting money into a slot machine to continue to play the game, and despite the appearance of two people seemingly growing closer to each other as the relationship progresses, such encounters often terminate abruptly if payment ends, as the stripper moves on to the next client.

In these clubs, deejays (who are exclusively male),
sometimes highlight specific songs, engage in witty repartees with the audience about song lyrics, and associate the words of the song with a dancer who is being introduced. Such an introduction serves to relax the patrons with a facade of show business atmosphere as well as raising the level of anticipation by setting the tone and creating an aura prior to the performance. At times, the deejay extracts applause at the beginning of an act to encourage the dancer to provide a good show, and he may also enhance the reputation of the dancer by demanding deference and by commenting on her physical attributes and status to the audience, much like the comic in the burlesque shows of the past. Deejays may also build up the ego of the audience by alluding to the sexuality of the patrons, and by implying that the sight of specific men in the audience will stimulate the dancer to perform more seductively.

During the course of the first song or two on stage, the dancer moves back and forth on stage doing the stripper stroll. She may fling her hair, pull her dress up her leg, bend over to expose her derrière, wiggle her buttocks and her breasts, and slowly wet her lips with her tongue. By the end of the first song, the style of dancing changes from an individual interpretation of the music to a more uniform and formalized strip performance. Somewhere between the beginning and the end of the second song, as the woman begins to touch herself, particularly her breasts and thighs, she often moves her pelvis in a slower, circular motion. She then removes her clothing, usually commencing with her top. By the end of the second song, more explicit movements that mimic intercourse are displayed. Routinely, the dancer discards the bottom part of her costume, which may only consist of a G-string. As her bra and G-string come off, she frequently smiles in anticipation of the patron's delight, or as a signal that customers ought to feel delight at the sight of her nudity. Women who strip smile a lot; the waitresses, deejays, bouncers and patrons do not. When undressed,
the stripper often cups her breasts with her hands and indicates to the audience with her facial expressions how pleasurable this feels for her. As the act proceeds, the woman may wet her finger in her mouth and stimulate her nipples or fake vaginal entry. She may swing on a stage pole, sometimes with great athletic vigour, grasping the pole with her legs in such a manner that the phallic symbolism cannot go unnoticed. Occasionally she will use the pole to simulate masturbation and coitus.

The third and fourth songs are reserved for her floor work, which is more explicitly sexual in nature. Most of the floor work is not distinctly dance, nor is it particularly creative. Its purpose is to provide direct "shots" of the dancer's labia majora when she is lying on her back, or from the reflection in the mirrors at the back and above the stage, to contribute a view that cannot be achieved when the dancer is on her feet. This is the classic woman-on-her back pose, in a sustained spread-eagle position, with the dancer enhancing the view by manipulating her genitals for maximum visual exposure for the patrons. The floor work consists of a series of crawling and spreading movements from both the front and back positions. This is designed to draw attention to certain aspects of the woman's anatomy such as the breasts, mouth, buttocks, thighs, legs and vagina.

Whether on stage, table dancing, strutting back and forth to solicit table dances, moving to the booths at the side or back of the club to engage in lap dancing and chatting with the customers at the bar, dancers are constantly at work. To safeguard the smooth operation of the club and to ensure that the needs of the customers are met, women do a great deal of work beyond the strip act itself. Strippers who work in normative clubs report that they monitor patrons' conformity to the permissible limits of behaviour and educate those who seem unaware of them. Educating patrons may include delivering lines such as "you get one touch and you've just had it, the next one and I leave" or "touching me
will cost you a lot more."

Imagination and creativity in costumes and dance styles as well as in the selection of music and the use of accessories, are prevalent in some of the large, normative clubs in the central cores of big cities. Dancers report that some props, such as leg warmers and knee pads as well as the standard piece of the dancer's equipment for floor work (a blanket), are used to keep the dancer warm and to protect her from the dirt and roughness of the surface of the stage. At times, women will use props such as fans or fur muffs to reveal and conceal, while at other times they will elect to use a chair to display their charms in a wide-legged pose. Some stages have swings, beds, plexiglass showers and other assorted devices with which the stripper interacts in a display of sexual seduction. Despite the public presentation of sexuality, the tone often conveyed in employing elaborate stage apparatus is one of privacy--the audience is compelled to feel that they are surreptitiously witnessing a woman in an intimate moment, dressing, bathing, preparing for bed and masturbating. At the same time, the audience and the dancer are well aware that she is being watched and thus, the stripper exaggerates her movements to call attention to various body parts. A shower scene, for instance, is not an example of equal opportunity cleansing for all body parts--feet and ear lobes are not treated as they might be in the seclusion of one's home bathroom. The scene quickly focuses the attention of the spectators on the curve of the woman's back, her protruding breasts, as she spends an inordinate amount of time massage-bathing these parts of her body, sometimes stopping to simulate fast-fingered motions around her pubic area with her head tilted back and her eyes closed.

Normative club settings range from newly decorated, gentrified environments to piquant little establishments in dire need of renovation. Though some of the latter places of business may be rather rundown, the women who work in such clubs do not
see them as presenting the "sleazy" atmosphere of transgressional clubs, nor the violence which is integral to the working environment of what are called "slut" clubs. Women performing in normative clubs make it clear that they would not work in the "seedier" establishments, distinguishing themselves from the women who do so by refusing to lap dance for any but selected customers, or by "dancing clean". "Clean" lap dancers do not permit touching or they restrict it upon consent to a hand on the arm or hip. They attempt to keep the dance component going while perchng on the customer's leg. Dancers I interviewed who worked in normative clubs claim that they do not use drugs, prostitute themselves or engage in simulated and "lewd" sex acts on stage, a claim sometimes refuted by strippers in other kinds of clubs.

Establishments of the normative variety are usually bustling with sound, activity and music in an upbeat or "cooled-out" urban manner, suggesting that people who work in and frequent such places are worldly and knowledgable in social and sexual matters. The stripper is living life in the fast lane. Generally, dancing and costumes are more eclectic than in other types of clubs. "Big name" feature strippers who are attracted to the "big money" and who travel on the national and the international circuits (with much fanfare, press releases and publicity) will carefully check out clubs through "boyfriends", agents or word of mouth from other dancers, so as to avoid clubs were they might be "pawed", "hassled", or required to put on a "sleazy" show. Some of the most lavish of these clubs are large businesses located in major cities. They may employ up to one hundred and twenty-five dancers, including features, and a full complement of service personnel as well as offering lounge, restaurant and bar facilities together with pool tables and jukeboxes. The ever-present need in such a competitive environment to "hustle" table dances, as the only means available to attain the "half-a-thousand" dollar goal per day set by many dancers, brings out a wide variety of visible strip presentations and tableside
manners. Bartenders, disc jockeys and a number of strippers confirm that "a lot of money changes hands"—predominantly through salaries but also through tips and gifts and the sale of liquor. Sexual favours, drugs, "hot" jewellery and passports, if exchanged on the premises, are usually negotiated quietly and delivered privately on the "Q-T", so as to be out of sight of the "dorks" (naive customers), or police officers who may stroll in from the street.

Dancers themselves are active in maintaining the boundaries between normative and other types of clubs. The complicated taboos and prohibitions of stripping suggest that the job can quickly become problematic. In this survey, strippers who worked in "fine clubs" were aware of the delicate line they tread between teasing, stimulating and arousing, "to put on a good show", and behaviour for which there exists an ever-present demand that may be so provocative and risqué as to cause arousal to turn into aggression. The complicated dynamics between two strangers negotiating intimate moments in a short period of time (with many of the customer's needs unverbalized and with a base rate salary removed), makes "hustle work for fees and tips" a much more complicated task for the stripper than merely dancing and removing her clothing. In this context, deviance is seen as conduct which is considered embarrassing or dangerous and which strippers attempt to control by bringing moral sanctions against individual dancers who exhibit such behaviour. Deviance is not inherent in the acts of stripping, table and lap dancing, but is a label conferred by insiders on behaviour that is deemed inappropriate within their social circles. Strippers readily engage in gossip and appear to monitor the dance styles and working conduct of other strippers (as an important facet of social control to keep the boundaries between "classy" and "sleazy" clubs) within an agreed-upon standard. Although all women in normative clubs perform a nude floor show and table dance (and approximately half are said by other dancers to engage
in prostitution privately), stripping is not viewed as "vulgar, immoral or tasteless". Rather, insertion and masturbation acts, as well as "dirty" lap dancing in the form of sex acts with partners, props, animals or coitus on stage (acts mostly seen in inner city transgressional clubs in Southern Ontario) are viewed by "top-drawing" strippers as abhorrent. Such acts or perceptions of such acts establish the boundaries for women who work in normative strip clubs.

4.2a.1. Stripping in Toronto

Driving south from Bloor along the infamous Yonge Street strip in Toronto, I notice that the shops become increasingly dilapidated. Stores around the Westwood and the Grande strip clubs include a mixture of fast food restaurants, bargain clothing stores with garish lights and a few "head shops"--as they were called in the 1960s--selling drug paraphernalia. The Westwood Tavern is wedged between the Greenhouse Mission and a Stereo Man outlet, while on the other side of the mission the marquee of the Rialto movie theatre advertises four continuous shows a day--"Shaft", "Conan (The Barbarian)", "Sex Tease" and "Sex Slave." A small sign at the bottom of the billboard reads "Violence or Explicit Violence." With bright and tawdry neon lights, the Westwood stands out as an old and unattractive building by present-day standards. The exterior advertisements around the main entrance and on the windows feature pictures of young, thin and attractive women dressed in G-strings and bras, all in provocative poses with some fondling their breasts. There are two doors leading into the club, one entrance for clients and the second for strippers and other employees. Atop the entrance is a sign beckoning the passersby with the enticement of live and continuous shows; the club also advertises table dancing for five dollars and promises the prospective customer that no minimum or cover charge is applied. A sign at doorside informs customers that they must be the age of majority and that they may be asked to substantiate that they are nineteen years of age.
On my first foray into the Westwood, I wore less than provocative garb consisting of a baggy sweater, a flowing skirt and flat shoes for comfort. In the club, I kept my long raincoat on to differentiate myself from the other women and to facilitate a quick escape if the need arose. My decidedly covered-up look stood in sharp contrast to the nudity and semi-nudity of the other women I observed in the club—the strippers. In this darkened setting, punctuated by pulsating neon lights, I was conscious of the fact that I looked like the middle-aged mother that I am, surrounded by young, very young, stunningly attractive women. I attempted to present myself in a polite and unobtrusive manner and to blend in as much as possible with the surroundings. I was aware, however, that the dancers and the waitresses were part of the scenery because of their femaleness, and at a deeper level that, as a woman, a similar social construction of the feminine applied to me irrespective of my dress, age and occupation. To this day, many years after first attending a strip club for this study and after visiting several dozen similar establishments across Ontario, I remain uncomfortable in such establishments. Nevertheless, I easily struck up a rapport with a number of strippers and felt relaxed in their company.

The Westwood is typical of normative clubs in Ontario. It is aesthetically pleasing to the eye with modern decor, complete with an aura of an up-to-date and fake "classy" look, with mirrors, decorator lights, modern Italian chairs and pseudo-marble table tops. The easy-going appearance of the club is also carnivalesque, with day-glow lights and blinking stage illumination in attention-grabbing colours of red and green. The strip act appears to create a sense of instant camaraderie among some of the participants, who spend a great deal of time in close contact with one another and share a common experience in a sequestered space. A strip club like the Westwood generates a hospitable environment, providing a social reference point for its members. Rules of conduct inside the club are posted on the
tables but are also fairly readily picked up by observation of other patrons and their interactions with the dancers.

The "dancers" lack the style, the sharp clean moves and the precision of trained and disciplined performers; they remind me of elementary jazz ballet pupils, although a few seem to have had dancercise or aerobics training. Some dancers wear a small amount of tastefully displayed jewellery such as a gold watch, a locket on a gold chain or small diamond-studded earrings. Other dancers coordinate their jewellery with their costumes, while still others wear a single large heavy metal necklace, ankle bracelet or waist chain. They do not use many props; only one stripper had a cape, which she discarded early in her act. Two women wore leg warmers, perhaps to keep warm or to cushion themselves on the floor. Most strippers are well proportioned, slim and toned, in conformity with contemporary cultural standards of body beautiful. Very few women at the Westwood, or at other "high calibre" clubs, have visible imperfections; a skin blemish or scar will be concealed with make-up. Any tattoo seen on a dancer in such a club would be a small, singular design such as a butterfly discretely displayed at the ankle, in contrast to the profusion of tattoos seen on the bodies of dancers in raunchy clubs, alongside an odd scar, bruise or missing tooth. As noted by Candy, a veteran dancer, the establishments in which she works levy fines against dancers who look haggard, and some clubs will not hire a woman with tattoos prominently displayed on her body.

At four in the afternoon, there were approximately twenty-five men at the Westwood, about one-fifth of the club's capacity. The crowd increases as the night wears on and includes a wide cross section of male patrons. There are working class men with rolled-up shirts sleeves, polyester pants, sweaters and baseball caps, and businessmen in tailored suits and Gucci loafers. At one table, two elderly men, seemingly retired, are drinking quietly and talking; at another table, four men in baseball caps are
laughing and playing a portable table-top game. At the back of the club, a lone, well-dressed man sits apart from the crowd; to his right, an older man whose skin has been overly exposed to the sun perhaps through construction work, nurses a beer. A few young men appear awkward and a little shy, but most patrons are well groomed, appear to be sexually experienced and seem to have enough social skills to socialize with women. At least a third are middle aged; many are reported by strippers to be married. Although the behaviour of some men suggests that they may feel embarrassed if a stripper were to pay attention to them, others seem perfectly at ease or "on the make."

There are several doors from which to enter General G's, once you negotiate the main foyer. The door to the left leads to a large beverage room complete with pool tables, outdated Tiffany ceiling lamps and the liberal use of neon beer signs as a decorating feature. The door to the right entices patrons to a strip club in the basement where "second-rate dancers" are likely to be working, according to Chelsea, a veteran dancer of the establishment. By her definition, these dancers are women "new to strip, who are not pretty, can't dance, do not have a special act or are over the hill." She adds to this list the very young women who are inexperienced, thus narrowing the appropriate age of strippers to women between eighteen and thirty "max", not unlike the age limit set by Playboy magazine for its centrefolds. The club itself is a large, dark warehouse-like room, with an old look and a musty smell. In addition to a few pictures of strippers on the wall, it is identifiable as a strip club by the presence of a thin red velveteen curtain which blocks the view from the door at the bottom of the stairs, together with the pulsating music and a noticeable absence of human interaction. The large, rectangular shaped room is filled with elongated communal tables and kitchen-style wooden chairs. More comfortable seats await patrons who sit at the back of the club on foam-padded benches with small circular ice cream parlour tables;
these seats afford the patrons an excellent view of the elevated stage, except for the glare cast by bright stage lights which reflect off the mirrors on both walls. The focus in this as in all clubs, is the stage, which occupies about one third of the room.

The centre door at General G's opens into an upscale club with a post modern motif, sporting a newly laid grey, industrial-weave carpet underfoot. Two steps down takes you to a little greasy-spoon deli serving burgers and chili, served up by a large and friendly, middle-aged woman missing her upper set of teeth. Loud rock music entices you to take another step down into the club where you first notice a very young dancer apparently in a stupor, seated on a couch which in all probability is older than her. The club seats approximately one hundred and fifty to two hundred patrons. An unusual stage in the centre of the floor appears to have been raised approximately six inches (rather than the customary six feet), thus providing an obstructed view for many patrons. More dedicated clients who occupy front-row seats have a better view. Windows are absent, as is light and conversation on this pleasant summer day. In the early afternoon, there were almost a dozen customers present in the club, most sitting alone. The majority were seated in the front row, in what strippers refer to as "pervert's row." Music and stage lights are continuous, as is the stage show and table dancing. The latter is confined to the perimeter of the room. A steady flow of beer and a changeover of patrons every sixty to ninety minutes seems to be the standard at General G's.

The number of club patrons waxes and wanes as the day progresses - however, most clubs are crowded after three in the afternoon and until closing each day. While the crowds swell to peak capacity during "happy hour" (beginning approximately at five o'clock), the numbers do not drop off as business men appear to vacate the premises for home, only to be replaced by single
men and groups of men out for an evening of entertainment. Customers seem to have favourite clubs which they frequent and dancers with whom they socialize on a fairly regular basis. Strip clubs do not appear to take on the atmosphere of camaraderie that is encountered in pubs as centres for social gatherings and conversation. They tend instead to cater to more individualistic and passively voyeuristic activities; only at the Westwood is there a distinct aura of a group experience surrounding the interactions between some of the dancers and their clients.

Depending on the size and location of the strip club, there is usually a layer of service personnel, including bartenders, waitresses, cooks, bouncers and disc jockeys who round out the setting of the club. There is a clear division of labour; bartenders are for the most part males, clad in classical black pants, white shirt and a bow tie, while people who wait on tables serving drinks and food, are for the most part, women, sometimes clad in skimpy costumes not unlike the garb that strippers wear. Club owners and bouncers are exclusively male, rather well-dressed and most often found "hanging around the bar watching the action". Judging from the sounds emanating from the disc jockey's booth, it is clear in strip clubs that affirmative action has not been taken seriously, as only men need apply for the job.

The atmosphere in most clubs gives an appearance of dancers being in control and setting the standards of behaviour, with the understanding that, if the rules are transgressed, the dancers withdraw their services. On one occasion, I witnessed such an incident in which the sensuous mood struck between a dancer and a patron was disrupted when the dancer broke into an angry streak of foul language, abandoning her seductress persona and becoming almost instantly an assertive, exacting woman who had been offended. The customer, in turn, appeared to be rejected and embarrassed, perhaps concerned that he might be tossed out of the club. Such anger, I reasoned, must have been just below the
surface to well up so quickly. At first glance, many of the dancers appear to be in command, confidently strutting in the clubs and initiating table dances with customers. Being a seasoned feminist, I was prepared to dig a little deeper and investigate if indeed this was the case.

4.2a.2. Clubs Outside of the Metropolitan Center

In those suburban areas and smaller cities which allow clubs to operate in restricted commercial areas, the presentation of strip may not necessarily include table or lap dancing. Clubs in Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor and Niagara Falls, however, permit table dancing and transgressive clubs with lap dancers in booths are also prevalent. As well, within an industrial area of North York, a private club of legitimated violence is also in operation.

In clubs like the Highlite in Windsor, you are likely to view the full range of strip-dance genres, with more emphasis on the dance than in many other normative strip establishments. Every dancer is required to perform a full or partial strip and the vast majority also include a floor show. A feature like Annie Ample (who negotiates her working conditions individually) has a clause inserted in her contract stipulating that she is not required to strip nude or to perform a floor show. Although joking with the audience about her "44DD silicon boobs", she is quite conscious of her "most precious asset", for which she claims to be world famous and is insured for a million dollars against "theft and natural disasters" with Lloyd's of London. She strips to her pantyhose and high heels. In keeping with the vaudevillian humoresque approach to her act, she announces that she leaves a little hole in the back of her pantyhose "for the Greeks in the audience", but is adamant that she does not strip completely or table dance. Samantha, a Toronto-based dancer, put on one of the most skillful and imaginative shows I have witnessed, in which she did not remove her G-string and kept on
much of her clothing, but moved garments to the side to provide
the patrons with a revealing peek. She confirmed that her act was
deliberately planned around retaining the vital G-string, as well
as wearing more clothing on stage than most dancers are allowed.
Her attire included a top which she pulled up to reveal her
statuesque breasts, a scarf around her neck, thigh-high thick
mesh stockings, a G-string, an ankle band, hat and stiletto
shoes.

By visiting the Waverly Hotel in Kingston, one can see a
show staged by Champagne, a feature, complete with a sound and
light pageant, put together by her professional crew. Her act
involves a live leopard on stage and offers a routine of
balancing lit candles on her breasts, as well as exciting
costumes, acrobatics and dance that had the patrons and the other
dancers still raving a full week after Champagne left town. Clubs
such as the Cabaret West in Sarnia are especially demarcated by
dancers as "classy", "desirable" and "fun" places to work. The
Cabaret is a graceful, somewhat elegant club setting, newly
decorated with the latest colour-coordinated shades of peach and
green in an art deco motif. It is well and tastefully lit with
crystal pot lights in the ceiling, a large rotating mirrored
disco-ball as the centre piece near the stage, and contemporary
green glass lights on the wall (strategically placed so as to add
subtle lighting for table dancing intimacy). The club is composed
of a series of intimate little spaces, some elevated, some
sunken, all designed to provide a variety of views of the dancers
as well as to afford the illusion of privacy in critical sites
throughout the club.

At Filmore's in Hamilton, I observed a dancer being helped
onto the stage by a man with a Stallone-like physique. He
appeared to be her bodyguard and his duties included carrying her
custom-made chair and her blanket, together with fending off
unsolicited approaches. This "feature", announced by the deejay
as "the hot event of the week", was dubbed "the blonde bombshell from down under". When the dancer's set ended, she did not circulate in the club or table dance; she waited patiently on the stairs of the stage for her escort to accompany her out of the club. In viewing the patrons at Filmore's, it appeared that upon entering a strip club, men feel they are partaking in the forbidden and gaining an opportunity to explore hidden, sexual sensations and desires. The club setting provides an occasion for patrons to interact in significantly different ways from their everyday social relations, and the environment is constructed so as to instill the expectation that some of this behaviour will be excessive. Activities such as drinking, whistling, cat calling and commenting on intimate details of a woman's body and sexuality are encouraged, as the strip act signals permission to release emotions normally deemed inappropriate in public. Upon the completion of the "blonde bombshell's" act, the audience was exceptionally noisy and appreciative of her charms, jumping up and down, shouting, whistling, and stomping their feet.

I noticed an interesting display of etiquette at Sarnia's Shalimar club. If a man bumps into a woman in the aisle accidentally, he excuses himself and operates as fully clothed people do outside the club, despite the fact that the woman may be partially clad or even nude. The man does not mock or ridicule the woman, or even acknowledge that one of them is fully dressed and the other is not, as is often done when the dancer is on stage. A few women walk through the club exposing a breast or their whole body, while a number sit with customers in between their acts in various states of semi-nudity. Most commonly in these encounters, the social rules that prevail outside the club between men and women seem to be in force. For example, the patron will inquire if the dancer would like a drink and then summon the waitress; he will light her cigarette and initiate conversation. In one such interchange between an older man and a young dancer, I observed him handing her a business card and
rising as the semi-nude woman left the table.

The women at Gimlet's, a newly opened suburban club in Windsor, are by cultural standards less attractive than the "downtown" women in Toronto's Grand West. They range in body typologies from very thin to a few fairly heavy-set women, from the petite and diminutive to women who are tall and lanky in appearance. The language is more earthy, the mannerisms of some of the dancers less refined, and a number of strippers have tattoos prominently displayed on their bodies. They are not the slickly marketed, polished and professional women of Filmore's; however, the women who dance at Gimlet's classify the establishment as one of the better clubs in which to work. In many respects, Gimlet's presents a more homey, easy going, "let-your-hair down" atmosphere, according to Amanda who has worked "on and off" in the club for two years. A number of the patrons seem to know each other, the dancers and the club personnel; they all appear to converse rather easily without engaging in the type of sophisticated banter witnessed in clubs in large urban centers. Decorating the bar for much of the evening was the owner, a rather quiet, unobtrusive man, hardly the stereotype of the hard taskmaster as he stops to chat with a few dancers, puts his arm around one of the male customers and lights a cigarette for a barmaid.

On a cold February evening, I wandered into Hamilton's Club XXX to meet Candy, whom I immediately spotted sitting at the bar. The club is housed in a long rectangular room with the stage awkwardly positioned three-quarter of the way along a long wall. Most of the patrons view the stage at an angle, although judging from the paucity of clients, this was not a major problem. The showroom, although narrow, is extremely long and empties at the back into two smaller rooms with pool tables. At the other end of the club is an open lounge area connected by a long set of stairs to the side of the building in which the club is housed.
Surrounding the bar, the wall is covered with pictures of strippers; many of the photographs look dated although elegantly framed. The entire decor is rustic, with a barn board appearance which causes me to puzzle over the type of business accommodated in these premises prior to the opening of the strip club. I guess--and later Candy confirms--that the obese man standing against the bar is the club owner, Nick, who is wearing a pink shirt and sports a small pony tail and diamond earring. Although most of the upper part of Nick's body hangs out over the top of his belt, he is well-dressed in silk and wool pants, Italian loafers and a custom-made shirt with his initials sewn on the pocket. He is as tall as he is wide and looks very at ease surrounded by a small entourage of dancers, chatting with a customer and giving directions to the bartender.

Characteristic of the stripper's style in normative clubs is a customary walk, costume vogue and blasé attitude. Stylized stage dancing is seen at the Shalimar in Burlington as the dancers use the pole at the end of the stage. Early in the evening, there are five women table dancing and a stripper performing on stage in this club. The stage dancer looks exceedingly young, perhaps eighteen, as well as exceedingly tall and thin. She does not actually dance, but rather moves about in the traditional stripper's shuffle. Her body movements draw attention to her thin waist, flat stomach and her very prominent derrière. She is Black and throughout much of her act, she focuses her eyes on the only Black man in the club, who is sitting at the bar watching her. Close to the entrance is a young dancer engaged in a conversation which turns into a disagreement with the bouncer of the club. He is also an extremely large and burly man, with a pony tail, shiny suit and cowboy boots. Candy directs my attention to another dancer on stage, a new act from the United States. She points out that the dancer's pubic hair is shaved so as not to hide her genitals. Additionally, she is wearing makeup to redden the interior parts of her vagina and she
applies a cream or jelly "to make her pussy look moist and soft". In her act, the woman bends over, and as she speaks to an audience, she pulls her inner labia away for the benefit of the patron closest to her at the edge of the stage.

Strippers at the Grand West in Kingston appear cognizant of the behaviour which attracts severe censure from other strippers and falls outside the range of activities defined by the behavioural standards for normative clubs. As Celena was performing, a man in the audience reached to touch her pubic hair. Celena quietly, but firmly and audibly said "no", carefully removing herself and her blanket back to the centre of the stage out of reach of the client. When her act was completed, a patron wished to show his appreciation by holding up a rose and a five dollar bill for her to retrieve, Celena carefully and fleetingly stretched out her hand from a squat position at stage centre to provide her with a centre of gravity so that only the tips of her fingers made contact. It was evident that she understood what lay beyond the boundary of the social space she had mapped out for herself, and was careful to avoid contact with the patron that might transgress that boundary. In moving out of reach of the patron who attempted to grab her, she drew attention to the dividing line between watching and commenting on her strip, and reaching out to touch and interfere with her. Celena was thereby marking the outer edges of social life in her occupation, setting out expectations and teaching skills and appropriate attitudes to the patrons. In this instance, she was attempting to communicate the uniformities, rather than the divergencies, of strip life; to inform people how to view the act of stripping, to accept a norm of group morality and, ultimately, to know what to expect from one another. In a complex division of labour, Celena was establishing a code of conduct and a cultural vocabulary for proper and improper sexual conduct in this kind of strip club. "No", not a word strippers are supposed to use with patrons who are expressing sexual interest, was employed in this instance to
set out the limits of behaviour from the stripper’s point of view. The word and the accompanying act of withdrawal were used by Celena when the patron’s behaviour threatened to go beyond a level of engagement deemed appropriate in normative clubs.

4.2a.3. Northern Style Clubs

Normative clubs in Northern Ontario, while categorized as "good places to work" by the majority of strippers, seem coarse when measured against tastes in the southern part of the province. As I entered the Copa in Hampshire in the company of Sara, a waitress for eight and a half years, I was told that the club had recently been extensively redecorated. A pool table and a large bar against the wall were evident, with a blackboard to the side on which the dancers are expected to chalk up the order in which they will perform. The club was embellished with a wall-to-wall see-through refrigeration system stocked exclusively with beer, a beverage which the majority of the patrons order. The tables were made of utilitarian formica and the chairs were uncomfortable wooden structures with pseudo-leather backing. To complement the decor, the tables were decorated with flimsy aluminum ashtrays, used extensively and filled quickly with cigarette butts while the patrons sat and watched the women dance. The carpet covering the floor may have been of medium quality when originally laid, but was showing its age due to the accumulated debris and heavy traffic as well as a less than fastidious approach to cleaning. There was an overall beer-hall look to the Copa, which seemed to suit the predominantly working class men who frequented the establishment. The dancers entered through the door from the lobby of the hotel wearing costume parts and high-heeled shoes, carrying props and blankets for their stage work. They sat or stood at the side of the stage until the bartender popped their music into a cassette tape deck, turning up the volume to indicate that the twenty-minute hiatus between acts had ended, and that it was show time for the next dancer.
Patrons at the Copa enjoyed a full, strip-entertainment show performed by Amber Starr, a feature daringly dressed in black leather boots rising over her knees, a black, leather bra and G-string with matching accessories of cap and gloves, highlighted by metal studs and a fringed, leather bracelet. The ensemble was topped off with a whip which Amber cracked frequently, attracting and retaining the undivided attention of her audience. She was extended a significant build-up by the bartender in a carnie-like voice adapted for the club scene, using glowing adjectives, including the "mysterious", the "disciplined" and the "rivetting Miss Starr". Amidst smoke rising all around the perimeter of the stage, dimmed lights and a loud drum roll, Amber leaped onto the stage to the tune of a Germanic beer-drinking song. Her expression during the performance was a hard-edged aggressive pout, an unyielding look lacking in warmth. She stood with a hand on her hip and both legs spread apart in an assertive stance. Occasionally, Amber released a karate-like yell that startled some of the patrons at stage front. Stripping nude, there was nothing unusual in the remainder of her act, which ended without a floor show as the last crack of her whip punishingly descended onto the stage when the lights were suddenly extinguished. Patrons who stayed for her last show of the day, at midnight, were privy to view Amber perform her tour de force, a "trap-door number" in which she selected a man from the audience, stripped him down to his underwear and tied him to a chair on stage. In the spirit of her previous job as a "carnie" for the Barnum and Bailey circus, she dropped the trap door of the chair in an exalted finale, leaving the man tied and suspended in the chair.

While I waited in between strip sets to interview Brie, a waitress and former stripper in the club, I was reminded of the different texture and tone of some of Northern bars and strip clubs, compared to establishments in the larger metropolitan areas of Toronto and the Niagara peninsula. When Brie informed me that I would have to linger until her break, I mistakenly volunteered to do so in the adjoining pub. The pub's decor was
not unlike the strip club; I would have refused to pay the decorator who renovated both locales. In view of the fact that in early afternoon the bar was filled to capacity, making it difficult to find a seat, I was persuaded that my tastes in decor were not widely shared. It was a substantial room with a capacity for a few hundred people and the walls were covered by Miller, Stroh's, Black Label and Budweiser neon signs. A sign above the entrance announced "no club colours allowed". Despite the sign over the door, many patrons appeared to be members of motorcycle clubs, as evidenced by the predominance of jackets crested with the words "Satan's Choice". The floor was extremely dirty, spotted with spilt beer in various stages of evaporation, cigarette butts and potato chips. Men and women alike were wearing a standard uniform of blue jeans, T-shirts and boots or running shoes. The noise level was loud and there seemed to be a lot of traffic, with people leaving their seats to join others, and some remaining seated but yelling across the room or throwing straws and bits of paper to garner the attention of their neighbours.

As the rock band was tuning up, I retreated to the washroom at the back of the pub. The doors to both the men's and women's washrooms were propped open and neither door in the two stalls of the women's washroom had locks. The toilet seats were the kind that your mother told you never to sit on as she made you rehearse covering the seat with paper prior to use. As I left the restroom, one of the four rake-thin, long-haired band members was at the microphone yelling "Welcome to the Zoo", while at the front of the stage a young man with visible emotional problems was dancing and conducting an imaginary orchestra. I was later to learn in a brief conversation with his mother that he provided a similar form of entertainment for the crowd each Saturday. The sound was projected through the largest concert-hall-sized speakers I had ever seen, and I had the benefit of four sets of them within ear-splitting range of my table. Half way through the
first number, "Down and Dirty", I tried to recall the literature I had read on the decibel level required to shatter the eardrums. The band was local, loud and loved by the audience, and I inferred that I was the only one who did not fully appreciate their talent, in addition to being the sole individual who was sober and not having a good time.

The audience was predominantly Caucasian, although I noticed four Native men present in the crowd, two of whom I had previously observed in the Copa next door. The band went on and on in what must have been the world's longest set, spurred on to ever greater levels of loudness by the audience. The drummer, the bass guitar player and the singer rotated positions after almost each song, without any noticeable improvement in the quality of the music. The lead singer was briefly replaced by two local females who harmonized off key, attempting to compete with the guitar and drums. A local male singer, coaxed on stage from the back of the club, performed his version of "You've Got Another Think Coming", an interesting little misogynist tune concerning a "girl" who left "her man", prompting him subsequently to seek revenge for this betrayal. A somewhat more polished rendition of the long version of Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Lovin'" mercifully served as the denouement of the set. Seated next to me was a party of eight people in their late teens and early twenties. In overhearing their conversation (which I found impossible to avoid) I learned that the five men were members of a band from California and the three women were local strippers.

At Hampshire's Lido, you encounter strippers like Sandy, who entered the business partly because she was "coming out of a bad relationship" and partly due to her love of dancing. Currently in her early forties and retired for a number of years after a short career in strip, she claimed that (when she worked) she "had a trunk full of wigs, costumes, makeup and all kinds of gimmicks" to excite the imagination of the audience. Aware that she was
ordinary looking and rather "butch" in appearance, she introduced "tricks" into her act, citing as her reason the well-rehearsed line of older strippers, "you have to have a gimmick". She remarked that the importance of this notion seemed to have eluded the current crop of dancers. In one of her performances, she appeared nude on stage and dressed during her act; on another occasion, she emerged in a sweatsuit dressed as a jogger, "to show how erotic the normal can be".

Similar to the Copa, the Lido cries out for renovations, but seems to fit well with the majority of the male customers, who were attired in very casual working class garb. It was filled predominantly by Caucasian males, with a few Native men, but no Blacks or Asians present. The clients range from a few young college men to a dozen or so senior citizens. The majority appear to be middle-aged, business men with a sprinkling of "suits" during lunch hour. This is the epitome of strip club stereotype: a raucous, smoky room, with the smell of greasy French fries assaulting the nostrils and adding to the omnipresent strong aroma of draft beer. The Lido is darker than most clubs and at two in the morning is crowded, with perhaps a hundred men and three women who are patrons. A large operation with a fully equipped kitchen, a lounge and pool tables in the basement, it is the fourth such club to be recently opened by the owner. The blaring noise level made it virtually impossible to sustain a conversation--but perhaps this was intended. There is no table dancing at the Lido or at any other club in Hampshire, and I later learned from a patron that an attempt to introduce it failed for lack of interest and the expense associated with private dancing. A patron conjectured that buying a "few rounds for the guys and paying for table dancing can easily set you back a hundred dollars in an afternoon"; most men in Hampshire are not willing to spend such an amount. The majority of clients will have a few beers at $3.25 a bottle, watch the strippers and go home--a sign of the economic times, even though Sara observed
that the economy of Hampshire is not as depressed as that of other cities in Northern Ontario.

May's Tavern is a rundown version of the Copa and the Lido. In larger metropolitan areas, this converted restaurant, with a makeshift plywood platform set in the middle of the room to serve as a stage without regard to aesthetics, would be a place where only very young, inexperienced or older dancers would work. Most strippers working in Hampshire dance at May's during part of their one or two-week stint in the city, although judging by the clientele, it is doubtful that this establishment could afford feature acts. The stripper on stage is a heavy-set woman with hardened facial expressions, an uninspiring costume and matching dance set. The atmosphere is "dead", in club lingo; the nondescript music blends well in an environment in which a few older men sit alone while nursing a beer, with a look of overwhelming boredom on their faces.

4.2b. Transgressive Clubs

In the second stratum of clubs with a working class edge, the kind of rules which limit contact in normative clubs, particularly contact involving the genitals, are transgressed. The emphasis shifts away from dancing and stripping to nudity and an opportunity to extensively view the genitals of strippers. By way of contrast with the normative clubs (where stripping is built into dancing), in these clubs stripping begins before or as soon as the woman appears on stage. In normative clubs, legal restrictions are displayed on the walls or at individual tables as the rules regulating sexual contact. In transgressive clubs, such rules are disregarded even when posted. To maximize the enjoyment of the exclusively male clientele, the body of the stripper is displayed to expose her genitals so as to permit a sustained gaze. The stage and table strip is of a "rougher" variety; clients are permitted to touch strippers' genital areas;
such touching may be part of the service or occur by way of "tipping" the stripper. Some of the elaborate "foreplay" of sex talk and general conversation which may proceed and even substitute for table dancing in normative clubs is rarely seen here. "Instead", as Laura X noted, "you just get down to it". Such presentations would be "too raunchy" for the dancers, and perhaps even for some of the patrons, in normative clubs.

Transgressional clubs are often small, quiet and have fewer staff employed in servicing the customers. The setting is decidedly not "up-tempo", nor are the clients' tastes in clothes or apparent socio-economic status likely to gain them admission into some of the normative clubs. The decor in many clubs is reminiscent of the nostalgic days of grand burlesque that have passed these establishments by, resulting in a downgrading of the physical facilities and of the women who work in them. Gone are the elaborate costumes and props, along with attempts to link stripping and the larger scene of "show biz" and entertainment with strippers' acts featuring comedy or cultural commentary. Patrons appear less interested in flirtation, social chitchat and sexual entendre, than those in normative clubs. Interactions between patrons and strippers are generally less physically restricted than in normative clubs. Clients often stare at close range, and it is not uncommon to witness verbal harassment, abuse and stalking of the strippers. At times, men sit together and whisper, grinning, pointing and engaging in obscene gestures and jeers.

Transgressional clubs present a more homely stage strip. They do not have the large production and the costs of a feature act. One of the distinguishing characteristics of transgressional clubs (which separates them from normative establishments) is the provision of lap or couch dancing services, particularly of the "dirty" variety. Although lap dancing has been part of the strip scene since the mid-1980s, it did not proliferate until a
decision was rendered in 1994 by the Ontario Supreme Court judge, Hatchborn that legally condoned such acts. Candy lamented that "the customers expect us all to do these things in VIP lounges and private customer booths because the judge said it's okay".\textsuperscript{5} Subsequently, a substantial number of clubs in Ontario converted from normative to transgressional conventions through the construction of private booths for lap dancing. By 1995, strippers could no longer compete with the prostitutes who came into the clubs when lap dancing began to supplant table dancing as the new presentation of stripping. In view of the Hatchborn decision, "anything goes at some of these clubs now ... masturbation, fondling, fingering and sex. It's become legalized prostitution", according to Detective Barry Watkins, a member of the Metropolitan Toronto police force morality squad.\textsuperscript{6}

"Dancing dirty" requires the woman to sit crotch to crotch with the customer, grinding her genitals, and at times reaching into the patron's pants to stimulate him. The breasts, buttocks and genitals of the dancer are often touched as part of the lap dance, whether it is performed on the customer's lap or while seated on a chair or a couch. It is not uncommon for customers to masturbate and ejaculate while watching the dancer, to perform oral sex on the dancer, and to engage in acts of penetration using the patron's finger or genitals. Such activities, which all women in transgressional clubs perform, can last for a song or two or can stretch into a half hour or more. Sexual contact and activities most often take place in the booths which occupy an area marked off from the rest of the club, usually at the back of the club. Some dancers complain that some of their colleagues lap dance and perform sexual acts on the open floor. To discourage such "freebies" and vicarious voyeurism, club rules restrict access to the booth or couch area. Patrons buy a ticket or contract with a dancer in order to enter the booths for "private dancing". Having abandoned all pretence of dancing, the "VIP" or "champagne" lounges provide privacy for the patron and one or two
dancers, who have negotiated for specific activities based on a set period of time.

Some dancers in these establishments are new to the strip scene and unfamiliar to many dancers in normative clubs. In the booths, this contingent of new dancers welcome the opportunity to control their own conditions of work free from managerial interventions, and to advance their earnings over the meagre salaries earned in stage dancing and the less lucrative table dancing. Since those dancers who object to such practices quit or attempt to work exclusively in normative clubs, the women who work in transgressional clubs are forthright as consenting adults about their right to engage in body contact and sexual activities. On the whole, they are adamant that they are not victims who are harassed and assaulted by patrons; nor do they support the view that they are forced by physical circumstances to perform activities to which they have not consented.

The Roxy is typical of the Toronto genre of transgressional strip clubs; it is a seedy old club that might be described as the dinosaur of stripping establishments. Gypsy, the first act, was using a hat as a prop and was dressed only in her hat as she came to and left the stage. Serving as a model of the limited number of transgressional clubs left over from another epoch of strip, the Roxy continues to have a large clientele and a steady stream of dancers throughout the fourteen hours a day that it is open. Patrons enter off Yonge Street next to a McDonald's and climb the stairs, beckoned by an array of strobe lights. I was greeted at the top of the stairs by a friendly woman at the ticket counter, reading How To Live Life And Enjoy It. She advised me that I should go right in--"we let women in free". Patrons mill around at the back of the club, frequently getting up, pacing or going to the washroom, and then returning to their seat. Despite the rather constant shuffling and movement, some of the men sat in the dilapidated and sticky theatre seats, facing
the stage. Patrons brought newspapers and raincoats to place on the chairs, as well as to afford themselves a bit of privacy while masturbating, although some men masturbate openly without benefit of *The Sun*. The stage was like most of the burlesque period with theatrical lights placed around the perimeter, with the exception of the foam-rubber tacked around the rim.

The continuous show involved very little stripping; the exclusively White strippers came out rather scantily clothed and within a minute or two dispensed with their clothing and were lying on their backs, for the duration of the show while on stage. There was no question that the women at the Roxy were strippers; little dancing was required and none was evident in the ongoing parade of gynecological exhibitions. The decided lack of rhythm as the women moved about on the stage seemed to go largely unnoticed by most of the patrons, whose frayed and faded clothing would probably not meet the minimum dress code of many bars and restaurants in Toronto. There was little build up by the deejay and no array of pictures at the front door to announce the current week's line up of entertainers. The Roxy does not have feature dancers; everyone is a "star" according to the announcer. On stage, the woman moved from patron to patron, legs spread apart, on her back or stomach, to provide a sustained view of her genitals and to allow the customers to watch her flex the floor of her pelvic and sphincter muscles. Each woman spent most of her time crawling, lying and posing with legs wide open, since the theatrical set-up was not conducive to stripping at table side. Strip work was, therefore, confined to the stage and private sessions to the side of the stage cordoned off with a screen. It was the explicit and sustained poses to reveal the inner depth of the vagina while the woman is on her back, or sitting on the foam-padded lip of the stage with her legs opened and up-stretched that was the pinnacle of the stage performance at the Roxy.
All strippers wore thigh-high nylon stockings with a garter belt. The men at stage front stuff money into the top of their stockings, surprisingly close to the entrance of the vagina to show approval. Patrons are not discouraged from touching the dancers by rubbing their thighs as they place money in their stockings. In the mid-1980s, the vast majority of the bills were in the $1 denomination, but occasionally a $2 or $5 bill was surrendered, usually bringing a smile or a few words of appreciation to the lips of the woman. One elderly Asian man came equipped with a plain brown paper bag filled with dollar bills, watched the show carefully for an hour, filled the stockings of the strippers, sat silently picking his nose during the intermission and left when his funds were depleted. In the tradition of Carrie Fimel, the "comic cooch of burlesque . . . with the $100,000 legs", one young stripper at the Roxy displayed a marvellous sense of humour and put on an exceptional show, despite the dismal surroundings. Dawn came on stage wearing a short frilly skirt, picked up the hem to display her genitals, sans underwear, and went through a mock-shock routine. To the tune of "Twist and Shout", she began to twist and twirl her nipple ends and then faked plucking public hairs and blowing them out to the audience.

One woman, Cheyenne, who was very popular if judged by the round of applause and the numbers of bills stuffed in her stockings, was pushing the limits of stage dancing by placing her legs on the shoulders of patrons. With her back against the stage, she braced herself and brought her genitals within a few inches of the customer's nose. To maintain such a position required that she keep her head on the stage and from the client's point of view, only her genitals were visible, a dismembered pornographic image of womanhood. Following her display, the lineup at the screen for private services would have amazed and delighted the officials of the Canadian National Exhibition. Candy surmised that only "desperate" women dance at
the Roxy--very young, inexperienced women, women supporting men as well as drug habits. As I watched the faces and the bodies of the strippers in this club, I did not detect any physical or aesthetic reason why these women could not dance at the more "uptown" clubs, as Candy labelled Club XXX where she danced. It was evident that the more dilapidated décor, the more sombre mood of the audience and the token pretence of dancing both on the stage and behind the screen, seemed to contribute to a more depressing atmosphere than the glitz, the pulsating lights, the high level of chatter, interaction and the colour and costuming of the Grande and other normative clubs. The strip act itself took on a different appearance--the purpose was to strip as quickly as possible, to stay nude for as long as possible, and to present a view of female genitalia that was as close as possible to the customer's eyes.

Since the establishment did not serve liquor, a cover charge was levied at the front door--nine dollars for general admission and three dollars for senior citizens. There was also an opportunity for patrons to purchase a yearly membership, which interestingly enough was the same as the lifetime membership fee of $35 plus tax. Throughout the stage presentation, men silently went behind the poorest excuse for a screen I have ever seen after purchasing a separate ticket for private lap dancing. Candy, who has been stripping for six years and whom I consulted about this practice, informed me that the women in the private sessions wore a robe and they danced briefly or stripped, if they were not already nude under their vestments. Sometimes included in the private dance ticket and sometimes purchased as an "extra" from the woman at the cash, the stripper would sit on the patron's lap, allowing him to fondle her breasts and at times, to insert his fingers into her vagina. According to Candy, women also engaged in "oral sex, more likely receiving than giving" in these encounters. "Pussy eating" was more prevalent a few years ago, although it can still be purchased for the "right price", 
she explained. Candy is not certain why "sucking off dancers" is not as popular an activity today; she suspected that the advent of AIDS has made customers more cautious. She assured me, however, that the temporary drop in popularity of this kind of service was not, however, an issue of morality. At times, vaginal intercourse took place, but never in the supine position for there were no beds at the Roxy. The patron did not undress, but merely removed his penis from his pants and inserted it in the woman sitting facing him, or in a "doggie style", to complete the "personalized service". Faithful to the behaviour code of prostitution, it was considered a "big no-no" to attempt to kiss a stripper on her mouth and customers were cautioned about this activity. The entire event, using my best guess-estimation in a small time motion study that I conducted, consumed, an average, twelve to fifteen minutes per session.

Stripping in this club is a discourse on the eroticism of the explicit and the aesthetics of race. Cheyenne's role was constructed in opposition to discourses that present Caucasian women as frigid and indifferent to sex. Male desires are teased with racial and gender difference to inform the clients about the nature of various women and particularly Native women like Cheyenne. As part of a traditional fantasy of the feminine, her performance was based on racial assumptions about her sexuality. The continuing myth of the sexualized women of colour contributed to Cheyenne's appeal; she was the exotic, sexually available and licentious "other". Nor did Cheyenne dispute gender relations; she offered anonymity to engage in relatively inexpensive sexual relations with a woman of colour. To escape from the pressure of egalitarian relationships or feminist demands, stripping in this club offered men the opportunity to indulge in and live out specific fantasies where masculinity was affirmed. The interracial sexual encounters provided a context for the liberation of masculinity with women whose sexual prowess was prominent. It also provided an opportunity for Caucasian clients
to act out their fantasies by experimenting with the power that being White elicits.

Although the audience is subdued compared to the more raucous behaviour one might witness at the Copa, the patrons become more interactive with the strippers on stage during the performances. Explicit comments that call attention to and emphasize the stripper's body parts are common, without even the pretence of going through formal social conversation and niceties. Crude comments such as "let's see more pussy", "nice ass" or "shake those tits" are a common way for the audience to participate and demonstrate approval through linguistic dismemberment. On one occasion, I witnessed two men at stage front making particularly lewd comments to a Black dancer, Cinnamon, informing her how and in what positions they would like to "fuck" her. Patrons will at times critique the various body parts of dancers, commenting that a stripper's "ass is too small" or that "she doesn't move her ass enough". On the rare occasions that this might happen in a more "upscale" club, a verbal fight is likely to ensue between the dancer and the offending patron, and if the event is fractious enough to cause the dancer to feel embarrassed or humiliated, she may abruptly end her act and storm off the stage. At the Roxy, Cinnamon says nothing to her hecklers, merely moving to work another part of the stage in order to seek a more positive response to her bodily features.

As opposed to some of the more sophisticated and gentrified normative clubs, women do not frequent the Roxy and there is, therefore, no washroom for women patrons on the premises. Indeed, the woman at the door was rather surprised and delighted to see me on the occasions that I frequented the establishment. I was greeted by her in an extraordinarily friendly manner, a reception that I often did not experience at Cheater's or the Sundowner. The theatre appeared to be used by the customers not only for the traditional purpose of viewing strip acts, but equally as a
refuge from the outside world. In this "cooled out" atmosphere, you could observe men sleeping and snoring in the theatre, reading a newspaper and conversing with their eyes or by hand gestures with other patrons, paying no attention to the stage act in progress. In addition to the absence of dancing, the costumes of the Roxy strippers were limited to baby doll pyjama tops without bottoms, or G-strings without tops when dancers first appear on stage. Jewellery, props, gimmicks, suntan lines, hair and nail extensions are not much in evidence in this presentation of strip. On one occasion, I witnessed a man fondling a stripper when she was on stage with one leg draped over his shoulder, the other extended into his lap. As I re-emerged from the theatre into the comparatively clean air of Yonge Street, the man who left ahead of me proceeded to the car with two bumper stickers which read, "Be Kind To Animals, Don't Wear Fur" and "He Lives", together with a baby seat in the back of the car.

4.2c. Clubs of Legitimated Violence

The distinguishing characteristic of the third category of clubs, of which there are very few in Ontario, is that violence may be part of the stripper's interactions with patrons. It is the seedy appearance of the clubs, together with the explicit kinds of sex and the potential for violence, that separates these clubs from the variety of establishments which the majority of dancers deem desirable as a working environment. These private underground establishments have an admit-by-membership-only policy for their limited and select customers. Typically, these clubs restrict entrance, do not advertise except in limited circles, and are off limits to the police, according to one dancer. Issues of consent seem less important than providing performances with elements of shock and surprise to delight the audience. Although some are located in the inner core of large urban centers, such clubs are also situated in suburban, industrial areas, "out of the eye of the public" and in small
towns. Drugs are a prevalent, and at times a preferred way to alter one's state of consciousness, although alcohol, mostly beer, also flows freely.

None of Goffman's (1967) "front stage, back stage" distinctions are to be found in these clubs, which present a raucous, ribald version of strip. In this environment, explicit sexuality, including public acts of sexual contact and involvement with the clientele, sans simulation, are presented as an integral aspect of strip. In normative clubs, the climax of the performance is reached when the woman is totally nude and exposing her genitals, often in sustained though somewhat discrete poses for the visual enjoyment of the audience. In transgressional clubs, sexual contact occurs in closed-off spaces behind a curtain. Stripping and exposure are merely the prelude rather than the finale of the strip act. Moving at a fairly rapid pace, the strip act proceeds to live, public sex acts, often of a "rough sort" in clubs which legitimate violence. Patrons participate for all to view are cheered on by the audience. Although female patrons are an anomaly in the other two kinds of clubs, they do attend these clubs as customers, eagerly participating in the activities of joking, drinking and cheering the dancers on to new lewd levels of performance.

In this tertiary kind of establishment, the patrons all appeared to belong to biker clubs as evidenced from their club jackets and their black, leather attire, including boots with steel toe plates, black T-shirts and jeans. Many of the male customers wore club tattoos emblazoned on their arms and chests; these were often matched by similar displays of body art on the torso of the female club patrons and strippers. In contrast to the Grande, where female patrons are usually escorted by a date, and in contrast to the Roxy where female patrons are noticeable by their absence, approximately one quarter of the customers at The Select Cafe were "biker mommas". In the spirit of equal
opportunity, they sat with the men laughing, drinking, smoking and applauding the strippers. The status of the strippers in such clubs is directly proportional to the shock value of their performances, rising with the number of sexual taboos that were broken. Costumes, dancing, stripping and nudity paled in comparison to the excitement which was generated when a stripper pushed her "muff" into a patron's face, or sat on his face for the length of a song, while he appeared to perform oral sex on her.

The Select Café is, in the vernacular of the stripping business, a "heavy" club that legitimates violence towards strippers. Reportedly owned and run by bikers, the establishment is piquant, dirty, deteriorated and a rather "nasty little place", according to a downtown stripper who remarked that she would never work there but that I "must see that one". I was greeted at the door by a man three times my size, sporting a scar on his forehead and a T-shirt inscribed with the slogan "Born To Ride". With a degree of amusement, he inquired what I wanted and with the greatest degree of contrived naïveté that I could muster, I told him that my boyfriend had come to the club and raved about it and I, therefore, wished to see the dancing, just once, for myself. The doorman conferred with the bartender and I was ushered in and carefully seated at a distant table at the back of the club. Before sitting down, I literally had to use a Kleenex to wipe the blood off the chair. Ordering a beer seemed to be a safe though unnecessary first step, as several glasses of beer, then a pitcher of beer, and later patrons arrived at my table, all unsolicited. Two fights broke out in the course of my brief visit; both rather spontaneously seemed to simmer down just as quickly as they erupted. Table dancing was of a more "raunchy" variety than I had previously seen; one woman sat on a man's face during her act, guzzling beer. Later, two dancers kissed and rubbed each other and the patrons at nearby tables, as part of their act. At one point, I went to the washroom to survey the
The club was a small space, hidden in the basement of a warehouse in a North York industrial park. A boisterous, lively and interactive atmosphere permeated this smoke-filled café. It would have been the kind of atmosphere that caused Blaze Starr, the infamous paramour of Governor Earl Long of Louisiana, to declare that "five years ago, I finally stopped stripping because it got to be so raunchy. There was no more burlesque. Anybody could get up and wiggle and get totally nude" (Starr, 1974:56). The parking lot was inundated with bikes, mostly Harley Davidsons of the 1000cc. variety, many with fancy equipment such as stereos, and some with side cars. In contrast to the relatively shiny bikes in the parking lot, the club had an old, wooden floor that creaked when walked upon, perhaps lubricated from the beer that was awash in spots. The older formica tables with chrome chairs appeared to be early modern-Canadiana, circa the 1950s. There was no attempt to decorate the walls with paint or wall coverings; most of the money for the decor seemed to be invested in a "bitch" sound system, which served as a personal toy for the deejay as he continually cranked up the volume. On one occasion, a stripper took a swig from a female patron's beer bottle; another time a female customer offered a dancer a T-shirt when she finished her set and the dancer showed her appreciation with a passionate kiss on the lips.

Although the private, sexual, bathroom rendezvous between
two dancers left no doubt that they were involved in a lesbian encounter, the other lesbian presentation, displayed in the context of this machismo, heterosexual club, most likely did not represent women's authentic desire. As part of public anxiety and fascination with the secrecy and disclosure of lesbian sexuality, "the sex that dare not speak its name" was brought out of the closet as another example of breaking taboos (Sedgwick, 1993:47). Invoking lesbian images as a desirable aspect of foreplay was significant, not only for what the strippers did but also for whom the display was intended. It is doubtful that the women in question were enacting their own desires, but rather going through the motions aimed at pleasing their viewers. Visual pleasure may have involved an ability to identify with a passive woman receiving pleasure as well as an active woman providing pleasure. Lesbian behaviour presented a rehearsal for the better and more satisfying number which served as the climax in the coital coupling of the dancer and a male patron. Instead of challenging a male supremacist construction of sexuality, the message was that even lesbian women can be brought under the control of patriarchal and heterosexual norms.

The body types of the young strippers showed more variance than in "classy" clubs. An extraordinarily thin woman with a dripping nose was equally appreciated by the audience as an overweight, buxom brunette spilling out of her bikini. Although there was almost no table dancing for individual patron--and every stripper conducted a floor show as the focus of her act--the creative sequence that the dancer added toward the middle or end of her two or three-song presentation was in the form of "shock sex". These events were greeted with a tumultuous round of cheers, whistles, clapping and foot stomping on the part of the patrons. Disagreements, arguments and flare-ups among male patrons were common occurrences, behaviour that would have caused these men to be evicted at most other strip clubs. The rougher and freer atmosphere of the club appeared to contribute to the
camaraderie among the patrons.

After some grilling and flirtation by male patrons who settled at my table, I was informed that I could have beer or any kind of drugs that I desired without charge. As the afternoon wore on, the men demonstrated a mixture of curiosity, attraction and contempt for me. Uncertain if my story concerning my boyfriend was believed, the attitude conveyed by some of my new acquaintances gave the impression that I was a toy to play with and someone interesting to talk to, given that I had conjured up some degree of respect by demonstrating that I "had guts" to come into the club. In addition to drugs, I was offered sex, a ride on a motorcycle, a tour of a bike club, and an invitation to a party that evening. I declined these offers, informing the enthusiastic patrons that my boyfriend and his male friends had planned to pick me up at the club door in the early afternoon. I was also invited by two of the patrons to return to the club. Although I never felt safe in The Select Café, I did not feel in such imminent danger as to rush for the door. At no time did a patron touch me, force invitations or drinks on me, or interfere as I left the premises. As I drove home that cold wintry afternoon, I reflected on the differences between my life and those of the women I had observed in the club, concluding that the greatest dissimilarity was the fact that I could leave the club.

The context in which strippers experienced their working and social lives varies widely. Their experiences are shaped by the attitudes of clients, managers, club personnel and other participants such as the police, as well as dominant cultural narratives of desire, work and business transactions. The subcultures of strip clubs can be classified into three distinct categories according to the appearance of the establishment, working conditions for strippers, kinds of clients who frequent the clubs, permissible forms of social
interactions and the type of sexual contact permitted. Clubs loosely classified into three different types including normative, transgressional and clubs of legitimated violence, provide the context for how the stripper understands, interprets and explains her social world. Prior to the advent of lap dancing, most strippers worked in normative clubs, viewing their work as empowering and associated it with a "fast-track life" of fun. Beautiful, professional strippers presented a range of stage and table dancing exhibitions, complemented by costumes, props and choreography. Deejays and a full complement of service personnel, including bartenders, waitresses and cooks were standard fare. Clients were explicitly informed by dancers about club rules regarding the degree and kind of sexual contact to demarcate the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. In the second classification of transgressional clubs where the emphasis has shifted from dancing to sexual intimacy, stripping is characterized by explicit sex acts on stage and "dirty" lap dancing in private. Clients are permitted to touch and verbally harass the dancers, and to engage in fondling, masturbation and coitus in private booths. The distinguishing attribute of the third category of clubs involves violence and sexual assault, which form part of the stripper's interactions with patrons. These private "biker" clubs emphasize performances with elements of shock appeal provided for public viewing to a self-selected, restrictive audience.
ENDNOTES

1. It is reported by Editrice (1988:15) that during a celebration in 1773, Venetian city fathers imported some 5,000 attractive women to boost tourism. By including naked women on their gold coins, these pillars of society hoped to enhance the city's reputation as the world capital of pleasure. The tradition with respect to relaxation of sexual restraints has a modern counterpart in the annual carnival festivities during the Mardi Gras period in Brazil and, to a lesser extent, in New Orleans.

2. Rubington's (1987:203-5) definition of a deviant subculture as a set of beliefs, values and norms shared by people who violate conventional traditions has been used to describe practices of stripping. He demonstrated under what social conditions various subcultures emerge, how they function for the participants and how individuals within such groups differ from others who behave similarly. Referring to the work of Cohen (1955), Rubington remarked that all behaviour is problem solving, and subcultures emerge as a solution to commonly experienced social-psychological problems.

3. Some mementoes of that era are preserved at Exotic World in the Burlesque Hall of Fame, located in Helendale, California, ninety miles east of Los Angeles. The museum, run by Dixie Evans, the "Marilyn Monroe of burlesque", displays "feather boas, breakaway sequined gowns, with elbow length gloves and tasselled pasties, from the golden age of burlesque earlier in the century" (Hamann, 1992). Also on display is Gypsy Rose Lee's black velvet shoulder cape and faded photographs of Lily St. Cyr, Blaze Starr and Tempest Storm. Miss Evans believes that stripping has become debased and déclassé, and she nostalgically recalls the days when exotic dancers did more than "just take their clothes off. That has no purpose. It has to be done with rhyme and rhythm".

   According to this president of the Exotic Dancers League of America, an organization of six hundred retired burlesque stars and active night club dancers, "there is very little showmanship in topless go-go dancing; which is what most club owners want. The 24-year olds hope for a return of big costumes, themes and a story to each act."


8. Sidney Wire, a writer for *Billboard* who has traced the origins of burlesque to the legitimate theatre, points out that in London's Gaiety Theatre all that seems to remain of those origins is the idea of "gaiety" (Zeidman, 1967:21).
Chapter Five

LOCATING STRIPPING WITHIN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

5.1. Stripping as Service Industry Work

By 1989, 71 percent of all workers in Canada were employed in the service sector; 56 percent of these employees were women, the majority of whom were hired on a part-time basis (Economic Council of Canada, 1991:57). Reputed to be the fastest growing segment of the labour market, service sector work currently accounts for approximately 70 per cent of the economic activity in advanced capitalist societies. As social organizations move into what Bell (1973) describes a postindustrial society, Toffler (1980) and Menzies (1996) have suggested that these trends will continue with a steady decline in the number of jobs in the primary and manufacturing sectors which have traditionally been male-dominated. The vast majority of workers in this sector of the economy are young women, although increasingly middle aged and older women are taking up service industry work, as "downsizing" and "mergers" from career jobs work their way through the economy. Often, their positions in the many marginalized sectors of service work are derived from positions vacated by men. It is in the service sector, often unencumbered by organizations which represent workers collectively and with conditions approximating unfettered rights of those who control labour power, that workers are most likely to be treated as commodities.

Much of service industry employment is in the form of shift work, in temporary and part-time positions; the majority of the employees and the fastest growing segment of this work force are women. The service industry has conventionally functioned as a job ghetto for women, visible minority workers and the young.
This sector of the economy is characterized by routine and repetitive work, speedups, low wages, limited benefits, employment insecurity, high rates of turnover and a lack of an in-built career ladder—features often associated with domestic work involving nurturing and serving others. Part-time work in the peripheral service sector often leads to occupational marginalization and the economic segregation of women from men. There are significant differences in the hiring practices of female and male workers in the use of their labour, and in their rates of pay in this sector of the economy. Pay and privilege inequities are created between workers who have full-time jobs with substantial benefits and occupational security, and workers who struggle with dead-end, poorly paid jobs, often of a temporary nature. Supply-side economics with its emphasis on human capital, fails in a number of instances to take into account specific characteristics of employers and work organizations which lead to discrepancies in status and income for employees. Women in the labour-intensive service sector experience the largest pay gap, earning, on average, half of what men command in these jobs. The differentiation of tasks based on gender gives rise to a smaller range of occupations open to women. Also problematic is the status attached to the work which women perform in most occupational categories of service work. Despite "equal pay" and "equivalent value" legislation, women receive lower pay, coupled with lower job expectations and restrictive working conditions in service sector work.

As a feature of late-stage capitalism, new market ideologies obscure the ways in which innovative working conditions and subjectivities are produced. Alienation and the intensification of capital remove knowledge from both the subject and traditional service. Under the deregulation of laissez-faire capitalism,
service is a commodity, added to a new division of labour in exchange relations. It forms part of the ideological structure which produces fractured identities. In commodity relations, when people and their labour are treated as objects to be exchanged for money, the activities of people disappear in the social relations that constitute commodity exchange. Since capital does not have a conscience, little consideration is afforded the personal needs and working conditions of the service providers. The underlying concepts of service work are conceived in terms of inequalities between people who own and consume in such businesses, as opposed to the majority working in the industry who lack a career structure, suitable working conditions and appropriate compensation. As many forms of private and community life have contracted, the market has become identified with providing personal services. The provision of femininized sexual services functions as an important aspect a commodity consumer culture in an expanding market. It is no accident that some of the fastest growing services provided in the culture are sexual in nature. Although appearing to be an autonomous free agent engaging as an entrepreneur in exchanging her labour on the open market, the sexual service provider is often engaged in intensely regulated labour and a commodity market exchange.

Following World War II, the titillation and tease associated with burlesque was revived in Western theatres and nightclubs. In the United Kingdom, Europe and America, a burgeoning new sex industry arose to both shape and respond to consumer expectations and sexual scarcity (Jarrett, 1997). In response to what Michel Foucault in his History of Sexuality calls the modern compulsion to speak about sex, the growth of markets capitalized on desires and fantasies within a highly sexualized culture. The socioeconomic changes which made sex commercial and widely available fit well with the prevailing
medical and scientific discourses of sexuality, which privileged sex as fundamental to individual identity and happiness. The creation of new markets in late 20th century based on principles of competition, acquisition, choice and instant gratification, resulted in sex becoming a commodity of international capitalism. A multi-billion dollar sexual entertainment industry developed during the last few decades to mass produce consumer services and cultural products in innovative occupational specialities including escort services, adult movie houses, telephone sex, massage parlours, pornographic video and book stores, cyberspace sex, and stripping (Freidman, 1995c:416-420). Certain kinds of sexuality became prevalent and encouraged by mainstream culture while other sexual possibilities were discouraged or concealed. Commercial in nature, stripping was made accessible in public places and introduced to large numbers of people steeped in a sex-obsessed culture of Barbie dolls, Baywatch television productions and internet pornography. Accompanying the democratizing of culture, stripping provided an opportunity for the masses to consume for a brief moment a beautiful woman like those featured in the tabloid press, fashion magazines and pornographic videos. Presenting stripping as a stage or private performance not only made commercial sex acceptable and impersonal, but it also augmented cultural voyeuristic tendencies. With their custom-made costumes and designer clothes, strippers, like other sex trade workers, became paragons of conspicuous consumption. Equating liberation with sexual service, stripping practices were structured to serve a integral role in the economy. 17

The stripper's services became an essential part of what was bought and sold in a context which assigned worth and meaning to the physical body, similar to the way in which lingerie, books and toys sold at Toronto's Lovecraft have become part of the
genre of adult pleasure and entertainment. With its portrayal of distinctive female and male sexual roles, stripping provides a commentary on cultural ideologies in which women are seen as different from men and eager to accommodate masculine sexual pleasure. Despite women's struggles to assert their rights to sexual equality, what is defined as sexuality in the strip is for the most part the man's experience of pleasure. Within stripping, a variety of sex acts and an interchangeable choice of women are presented to heighten the consumer's desire for variation. Interactions in strip clubs reflect part of the socially acceptable process of negotiations like those employed by sellers in other reputable service occupations. Similar to other business transactions, both the buyer and the seller of services become accustomed to assessing interactions in terms of the time and money invested in the relationship in order to obtain a pay-off for the encounter. Stripping interactions also reflect the dimensions of power seen in society at large in which sex is a currency of exchange between those who are differentially empowered. By appearing in pleasurable ways to meet the needs of customers yet skillfully manoeuvring to get some of their own needs met, women with few resources and occupational opportunities are able to provide a substantial economic lifestyle for themselves.

Organized by capital to appeal to individual libertarian and market-oriented interests, these sexual services and the service providers became interchangeable as products of consumption. On a daily basis, consumptive tastes and behaviours, shaped by advertising slogans suggesting that the individual "must have it" and "treat yourself today", have become part of the prevalent cultural ethos of indulgence and immediate gratification. Consumerism constructs human desires as boundless in order to promote increasing levels of consumption of goods and services.
Buying and selling anonymous sexual services as exchangeable commodities without emotional commitment is presented as a way to obtain a social service for which there is a demand and to legitimate such exchanges in terms of contractual market relations.

Faith Popcorn (1992:35), the American guru of popular culture, has declared that one of the "hottest" future trends is the "Fantasy Adventure", in which "risk-taking is risk-free. You cavort through your favourite exotic... or dangerous... or wicked... or luxurious... or mysterious world, confident that you're guaranteed a safe return". Well beyond the sexual permissiveness of the 1960s, voyeurism has become the erotic and safe experience of the 1990s, in the era of AIDS. Within the entertainment industry, stripping provides aspects of "fantasy adventures and small indulgences", similar to a number of other services offered for fun and pleasure in the culture (Popcorn 1992:115). Stripping promotes and glamorizes itself as one of the little luxuries of life such as eating Haagen Dazs ice cream or leafing through a Victoria Secrets catalogue, "without worrying about paying the price" (Popcorn, 1992:115). The theatre sex of stripping serves to arouse the audience with an explicit representation designed to invite the patron, with little effort, into the delightful world of sexuality. It informs individuals that sexual satisfaction can be purchased, and that there are instant solutions to life's complex problems to be magically solved with a little sex therapy. For the bored, rebellious and experimental, there are many elements of strip which are deliberately contrived to provide appeal based on shock value. As part of the panoply of passion, stripping offers erotic fantasies with a variety of hands-on sexual and emotional services to compete with the prurient strains of voyeurism accommodated by magazine pin-ups and video models, and the more recent
interactive, sex "chat" lines on the internet.

In stripping, the disadvantaged by way of gender, class, race and age sell services to those who have the disposable income to spend on sexual gratification. A continuum of sexually gratifying services for those who can afford them are provided by the sex labour of those who could be described as poor prior to stripping. Within the confines of legal ordinances and by-laws, the sexual service industry creates a unique occupational speciality where the young offer erotic fantasies to those generally older than themselves. Race stereotypes are prevalent in sexual servicing; often people of colour serve the needs of an almost exclusively Caucasian clientele. Such stereotypes rely for the most part on a generalized and unfavourable image that is developed and projected onto people of colour without adequately taking into account individual differences. Stripping practices also offer heterosexist images and fantasies for a predominantly heterosexual male audience. Similar to other new forms of service industry work which provides an intimate service of contact with clients, women provide bodily pleasure for men, some of which they also supply in the private sphere.

Characteristic of other service industry operations, strip clubs are predominantly owned and operated by men, although much of the work is performed by women. The feminization of service industry work serves capital's accumulation of profit in two ways: it relies upon the smooth supportive work of women and it plays upon the gender assumptions prevalent in the culture. Sexual work is gender work, premised on an imbalance of power. It is similar to the work performed by women in the home and the workplace for the benefit of men and others in tasks of cooking, child care, nursing and clerical work. Within capitalist patriarchal ideology, it is anticipated that women will exchange
their sexual labour; the acquisition of sexual services, on the other hand, is part of what it means to be a man in the culture. It is assumed that women's sexuality is constructed differently from that of men, and that male sexuality is the sexual standard for human activity. Stripping is dependent on the cultural construction of gender roles, in an industry where women are expected to service men's sexual desires and men are expected to pay for such services. At the same time, the ideology of modern twentieth century sexual practices (that "discovered" women's sexual pleasure) provides an expectation of pleasure for women, as well as men, within heterosexual relations.¹⁹ The contradictory effect on the lives of women in stripping gives rise to new pressures to provide a more up close and personal service of sexual athletics, to manipulate skillfully the feminine role with the appearance of pleasure while granting and withholding consent.

As service industry work, stripping exemplifies segmented labour market theory. The flexible utilization of categories of dancers enables the employer to reduce the core work force when needed and to lower significantly the cost of wages, thus numerical and functional adaptability is translated into financial flexibility tied to a two-tiered system of remuneration and concession bargaining (Jenson and Mahon, 1993:7). Unlike jobs in the primary sector -- which are more likely to be characterized by high wages, good working conditions and employment security--secondary sector jobs are apt to be poorly paid, with limited opportunity for advancement and little job security.²⁰ Within the stripping business, dancers also confront a labour force which is differentiated and based upon the preference of employers to provide a phenotypical variety of strippers to meet the expectations of clients. More technical and functional flexibility is seen for one category of dancers,
features, who comprise a relatively small number of full-time, skilled, well-remunerated and predominantly Caucasian women. Representing a sizeable investment in human capital, features are accorded the privilege of having their own dressing rooms. Regular dancers are more likely to encounter limited earning opportunities, irregular patterns of employment, intensive competition and greater difficulty controlling some of the problematic aspects of their work. Features differ from the regular coterie of dancers, who are more apt to be women of colour, unskilled, generally more poorly paid and, as a consequence, lack job security and are more easily replaced. Visible minority women are set apart from White women by quotas, excluded from certain categories of work, experience increased pressure to perform in an explicit manner and, often, are forced to work under more difficult conditions which include problems associated with racial harassment.

Women in the home who perform the socially necessary work of nurturing and servicing, form the backbone of the service/consumer economy; this has given rise, in part, to feminist critiques of the public/private and work/family divisions. Women contribute unrecognized and undervalued labour in public sector transactions which resemble services performed in the home, often using their social-emotional, intellectual and sexual skills to mediate the alienation of the cash exchange. It is not only the woman's physical and intellectual abilities which are useful, but also her social and emotional skills (linked to the ideologies of feminine nature and domesticity learned in the home) that are at the service of capital. One consequence of the changes in stripping practices is that the new job requires more social skills and more emotional work than previously required. Owners have not found ways to rationalize all the necessary skills needed to be a successful stripper, including aesthetic,
sexual, physical and social faculties--often characterized as part of feminine traits. Similar to an investigation of flight attendants which found that their training consisted of learning ways to manage the emotions of passengers and co-workers in order to increase profits, the unrecognized skills of strippers in handling a large number of clients have gone unrecognized and unrewarded (Hochschild, 1983).

Although consumers are led to believe they reign supreme, there are no money-back guarantees in the service business of stripping. Aspects of the market—including bartering and negotiating—are omnipresent in the strip world. The young, attractive and cooperative stripper, ever mindful that she must not display feelings of boredom, impatience or anger, seeks to entice the curious, lonely and needy customers into a relationship which bypasses some of the conventional social/sexual norms. Exchange relations operate within the interactive boundaries of reward and reciprocity. Marketplace concepts (which emphasize that if there is a benefit, there must be a cost) encourage the customer to feel a sense of entitlement about the service provided. Controlling the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is part of the constant and ongoing work of providing strip services, often with little support from either club personnel or the state. By virtue of the fact that strippers render intimate services, in some instances the demand is for more attention than contracted for with the service provider. Whether the requirement is to access the stripper's private life or unwarranted touching, some clients misinterpret or deliberately transgress boundaries based on the understanding that by agreeing to strip, a woman often relinquished her rights to fair and ethical treatment accorded individuals in other work settings and the society at large.
Choosing currency rather than time and service as the basic unit of exchange is neither natural nor a social given. An economy based upon the exchange of money values the things men do. The domestic economy, with the largest number of Canadian workers (representing 3.5 million people and generating half of the wealth created in Canada), is not included in the official calculations of the gross domestic product (GDP) as a representation of productivity. For the most part, studies in the sociology of labour have focused on activities which supply tangible products or services in mainstream work settings for the marketplace. When one thinks of a work site, the image of a factory, an office or occasionally a home usually looms large; a pleasure palace where women take their clothes off may not initially be visualized as a place of work. Although strippers, who dress and undress continuously, are involved in a work process which is different from the labour performed by women who wait on tables and clerk in stores, they share with other women working in the service sector many of the same conditions under which they supply their labour and contract for remuneration. In a number of ways, stripping is characteristic of the work which many women perform in society; they provide social, emotional and sexual nurturing for others, including the young, the old, the sick and able-bodied men. By failing to recognize that stripping is one expression of the labour which women perform, albeit a more explicit and at times dangerous job, some in society have tended to look upon strippers as deviant pleasure seekers, rather than working women.

Although the hierarchial and segregated structure of the work force has its roots in capitalism, it is also premised on a racial and gendered segmented labour force. Despite the strides made by feminists in the past hundred years in bringing attention to women's limited employment opportunities and in calling for
wage parity, stereotypes abound concerning appropriate jobs for women and men with differential rates of pay. Segmented labour markets are created and maintained through the process of socialization at work and in all the major institutions in society, including the home, workplace, educational institutions, organized religion and the media. The growth of female employment in service work such as child care providers, waitresses and sex trade workers, reflects an extension of the household work traditionally undertaken by women transposed into gendered work in the marketplace. As women attempt to find solutions to the structural barriers encountered in the marketplace, as well as to fit their paid labour together with their familial responsibilities, a gendered segmented labour force is formed. Women make decisions to work in service sector jobs, often on a part-time basis, for many reasons including the structure of the labour market, availability of jobs, financial necessity, levels of education, skills attained, the state of race relations, segmented labour in the domestic sphere, power relations with men in the private sphere, the availability of child care services, family values and personal considerations. Many women, and significant numbers of those who are young and members of ethnic and racial minorities, are excluded from highly skilled, high statused and well remunerated jobs in society. These workers who represent a source of cheap and flexible labour, tend to be over-represented in service work.

The service industry work of stripping is implicated in the production of class relations. Under capitalism and patriarchy, the sexual relations of stripping have both an economic and a power basis, such that lesser statused people entertain, titillate and sexually service the needs of wealthier and higher-statused individuals. As a consumer-oriented business in an affluent society, stripping is the ultimate trivial pursuit
which serves as evidence of relative wealth and power. The "dirty
work"—a term which applies to a stripper's floor work and forms
of lap dancing—is relegated to specific individuals in society,
assigned along racial lines, to be performed for another group of
predominantly Caucasian and almost exclusively male patrons. The
pleasures that are offered to men in strip clubs are tied to
structures which require women to work, at times under
unfavorable conditions, to provide services of an intimate
social and sexual nature.

In contrast to the initial expectations of enhanced job
opportunities, fast-track life and good economic prospects voiced
by the majority of women who are attracted to the business, many
strippers through on-the-job experience come to the realization
that they are required to service men in intimate ways, leaving
many women wondering how long they will remain in the business.
While strippers do voice the notion that they gain status,
money and power over men in these relations, they rarely express
the idea that men socially and sexually service them, or even
meet them half way in such relationships. Like most working
women, a stripper makes rational choices; "I do the best I have
with what I've got", says Annie Ample. Similar to other employed
women, they face problems of discrimination and harassment and
they continue to work; similar to other women, under patriarchal
and capitalist constraints, they must support themselves and
contribute to their family finances. They also believe that they
can gain control over some aspects of their careers, they seek
solace from the isolation and boredom associated with domestic
work, and they search for affirmation that they are worthwhile
and contributing members of society. Many would choose not to
be employed in service sector jobs which have inherent
occupational disadvantages but, given the context of their family
responsibilities, gender, age, educational and skill levels and,
in some instances, their racial status, service industry jobs--
including stripping, are one of the few opportunities available
to them.

Within the hierarchial, gendered and racial divisions of
labour in strip clubs, the pleasure experienced by the
overwhelmingly male clientele partly derives from the display of
nude female bodies. At times, stripping is also intimately linked
to a demonstration of power in which strippers are required to
perform in ways in which there is little authentic interest or
desire on the part of the dancer. With an air of "retro" sexism,
practices of stripping (which link pleasure with servitude) give
credibility to the mythology of stripping that suggests that one
group of people, women, enjoy themselves while willingly serving
the most intimate needs of another group of people, men. Most of
the dancers spend their working day anticipating the spoken and
often unspoken needs of their clients and providing intimate
sexual and psychological nurturing; many, as well, endure lurid
comments, rejection, and humiliation when a heckler does not like
a dancer. They also experience "pawing" and other forms of
physical harassment from customers, who continuously pressure
dancers to have sex, all in the course of a normal working day.
In this way, the social construction of the job of stripping is
used to rationalize acts which would be construed as sexist,
sexual harassment or sexual assault in another context.

Women are likely to continue seeking such work as long as
they are not equally remunerated with men performing the same, or
substantially the same work elsewhere, and their average earnings
remain less than those of men. Women will also seek such
employment as long as they continue to be confined to occupations
thought to be suitable to their sex\textsuperscript{31}, and which feature
conditions of work that include restricted opportunities for
advancement and limited security. In the past, experienced strippers like Sally Rand with her fan dances and Gypsy Rose Lee with her scarf tricks ruled the clubs, according to Laura X. "They refused to drive themselves" in the pursuit of ever greater output and profit, and they were able to resist the pressure from club owners and clients to perform in a more risque manner. Compared to the stripping business of the past, contemporary strip clubs have a more formal structure to administer human resources. The business is characterized by a high rate of labour turnover and has been pursuing cost-saving methods of sexual service delivery, based on the use of cheap "immigrant" labour from Quebec (in the 1980s), and to some extent South East Asia (in the 1990s), to offset the falling demand for the old burlesque style of stripping and declining profit margins.

5.2. The Colour of Desire

A materialist feminist analysis demonstrates how the working and social lives of strippers are interpreted, based on factors of race, class and gender. An inclusionary analysis does not present a unidimensional, White male view of the world, but instead reflects the experiences, histories and cultures of other groups. In understanding how a class and racial division of labour structures women's material experiences, differences make visible social relations in complex and contradictory ways in the construction of knowledge. Standpoint, as opposed to a world view, structures epistemology in particular ways in order to revalue female experience and to critique concepts of hierarchy, dualism and patriarchy. It focuses on structural factors, including economic and political considerations as well as social practices that propose benefits of discrimination to the dominant group and deny, or exclude, minority groups from equal access
By definition, racial discrimination depends on the power to be able to confer or withhold social benefits, services and opportunities. In going beneath the surface of the distorted social views presented by dominant groups, real social relations are uncovered in the experiences of women of colour. It is from oppressed groups who suffer most in a system that a deeper, less distorted and more liberatory understanding of the social world can emerge. In contrast to a view that stresses opposition and separation, the liberating potential of women's experiences values the concrete, the everyday life and the sense of connectedness to other people and the natural world.

A recognition of differences which exist for various women (and determine the ways in which the job of stripping is experienced) is generated from a materialist, historical and dialectic analysis. Individual and different groups of women may not view classism or sexism as their major difficulty. They may regard the centrality to their lives of issues of race and racism as they negotiate the historical construction of the dominant culture identity as racially "White". An examination of the political economy of stripping reveals that such practices are set in the context of a series of unequal relations between capital and labour, men and women, as well as White people and those of colour. In addition to providing a theoretical framework that captures the complexity of women's experiences and acknowledges strength in differences, a racial inclusionary analysis examines how racial constructs (and concepts of dominant discourses concerning class and gender) operate to shape the working and social lives of women.

This inclusionary methodology applied to stripping begins with dancers as a primary source of knowledge in an examination
of various stripping practices. Differences in strippers' experiences are produced in the intersection of various work and social processes as well as through individual encounters based on their ethnic and racial identities. Strippers' experiences are validated through an examination of the ways in which their experiences are socially constituted as well as the complexity of interaction among racism, sexism and class oppression. Starting with strippers' subjectivities, including their many voices and their multiple meanings, an entry point is provided in understanding their social world. By examining the experiences of strippers as they are lived out in multiple categories of difference (through the structuring of a class, gender and race nexus), the theoretical groundwork is established that reveals how the lives of strippers are put together. In contrast to treating race as an abstract concept, dimensions of race relations and incidents of racism are utilized as an analytical tool to understand the life experiences of strippers. Beyond a model of oppression and subordination, this approach demonstrates the ways in which women of colour resist categorizations based on race and attempt to establish a sense of personal power in the environment of strip.34

Racism has two interrelated dimensions: structural factors that are manifested in economic and political arrangements which deny or exclude minority groups from equal access, and social practices that are expressed in prejudicial attitudes influenced by racial/ethnic beliefs. Individual and social differences that result from alterable cultural factors are repudiated in favour of biological differences based on factors of heredity. Institutional racism, which differs from individual racism that focuses on specific attitudes and behaviours, refers to discriminatory effects of institutional operations which systematically reflect, produce and sustain racial inequalities.
Structural factors such as institutional and cultural arrangements are critical in understanding racial inequality. Discrimination arises from unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups. It is most blatant when sanctioned and formalized within the institutional framework of the state against racialized groups. It is manifested in socio-economic disadvantage and deprivation, as well as under-representation in power structures, including political institutions, financial organizations, educational institutions, law enforcement and the judiciary, and trade unions. Irrefutable evidence exists that there is a considerable degree of discrimination against minorities in recruitment, on-the-job training and promotion in employment (Yeaboah, 1988:22). The approach of political economy interprets racism as historically linked to forms of capitalist exploitation through the application of exclusionary laws and policies. The emphasis is on split labour market theory that racializes groups as a source of cheap labour in the accumulation of capital (Li, 1988). The problematic is not race, but the economic arrangements that maintain a differential wage between the labour of two or more racial groups. This structural perspective considers racism as a means of justifying inequality and differential treatment of racial minorities. It involves a form of exclusion in which dominant groups prevent subordinate groups from equal access to economic, political, social and cultural life in a manner that appears as natural and justifiable.

North American society was founded on racial as well as sexual and class imperialism. Embedded in patriarchal and class relations, the historical development of race relations was derived from mercantile expansion predating the European industrial capitalist mode of production. Colonialism and imperialism restructured patriarchal practices to include race as
an exclusive category in a manner similar to the way capitalist class relations advanced slavery through the commodification of humans (Davidson, 1980:53, Muszynski, 1989). As many pre-capitalist societies outside of Europe were conquered and their populations were indentured or enslaved, race oppression (rooted in the mercantile phase of capitalism) became closely linked to the social and economic interests of a capitalist mode of production. In addition to establishing class relations of exploitation, European capitalist expansion also imposed race and gender divisions that resulted in specific and interrelated forms of oppression. The elaborate ideology of racism which sprang from the colonization of the Third World by Europeans and coincided with the development of capitalism, served to divide the world into the privileged and the deprived (Bolaria and Li, 1985). A pseudo-scientific, hierarchal rank ordering of racial groups came to be established to justify practices of White slavery. In what Smith (1987) calls a bifurcated consciousness, the dichotomy which treats men and women as opposite (and unequal) was applied to people of colour who were judged to be inferior. Divisions along class lines similarly produced racial separation, redefining a male/female dichotomy through class and race exploitation.

Similar to Western culture at large, the last wave of the women's movement was critiqued for the production of an analysis which led to the exclusion of women of colour. There was a presumption that the women's movement did not need to address racism; it was assumed that sex and race were two separate issues (Bannerji, 1987:1-12). By ignoring the different experiences of sexist oppression and attempting to highlight a common oppression of women, the nature of the relations among women in a White-dominated, social hierarchy (that privileged White men [and women] and subordinated women [and men] of colour based on their
race), left issues of race and racism unexamined. Women of colour maintained that their history, culture and experiences were different from those of Caucasian women, and that these differences needed to be recognized and analyzed in their own right. They suggested that although all women were oppressed, they were not equally dominated. Varying degrees of material privilege provided benefits to White women and burdens for women of colour, irrespective of gender and class oppression. As part of the dominant group in that racism did not impact negatively on their lives, hooks (1984:14) argues that White women had the luxury of ignoring different experiences of oppression. Obscuring differences in the interest of common bonds between women was not merely the result of ethnocentricism, as Kline (1989:48) explained, but reflected, justified and perpetuated racism in Western society. Excluded from the theoretical analysis was the complicit role played by Caucasian women in subordinating and exploiting women of colour. White women were called upon to understand that, in certain situations, the oppressed could become the oppressor by using race, class, education and other means of privilege to subjugate other women of colour (Thornhill, 1989:29). It was recognized that a genuine movement of sisterhood must acknowledge the stereotypes and negative assumptions concerning non-White women, and must oppose the injustice perpetuated against women of colour (Stasiulis, 1987:7).

Marxist feminists studying the connections between historical/economic changes and gender divisions have typically proceeded in the absence of a theory of sexuality other than to view it as a part of reproduction. Where they have examined sex trade work, it was framed in the same deviant context as society's legal, political and medical discourses and added little to an understanding of women's experience of heterosexual sex. A classic Marxist understanding of prostitution followed
from the notion that it was a specific expression of the universal prostitution of workers. Employment was a contract of prostitution; prostitutes were exploited in the same way as workers since neither owned property and were obliged to sell their labour power. This view held that contracts favoured people who owned property such as owners, husbands and clients, and that the capitalist had no interest in the body of the worker other than to produce commodities. Ignoring how power relations were gendered, an incomplete account of domination was presented. Materialist feminists argued that woman's position was structurally at variance with that of men, and that the lived reality of women's lives (including their sexuality) was profoundly different from that of men. Although feminists of colour such as Lorde (1984:122) have criticized Black men for sexualized aggression and evidencing a heterosexuality bias, and have criticized Black women for ignoring or discounting the existence of Black lesbians, she contends that "we must recognize differences among women who are our equals".38 Feminists of colour have further suggested that sexuality does not have the same significance for all women; they assert that other forms of inequality such as racism may be more primary for the purpose of organizing against oppression.

Racial and gender stereotypes are important aspects of the way desire and power are constructed in stripping. The encounters of predominantly Caucasian clients and women of colour reproduce dominance based on factors of racial/ethnicity as well as male dominance and female subordination. Eroticizing women of colour is the other side of the coin that condones racial harassment and discrimination. The assertion of racialized masculine power is premised on an ideological construction of relationships that portray women of colour as exotic, licentious and promiscuous. Quotas in stripping operate to provide a few women of colour for
the interest of clients, but also serve as a visible reminder of racial subordination. When strippers are hired because of their race and encouraged to play up their ethnicity through presentation and costumes, the meaning is conveyed that women of colour are sexual uninhibited and available. The message of sexual excess for women of colour is in contrast to the presentation of some Caucasian strippers and particularly features, who often claim that they do not engage in coitus with the customers.

Carin, a mixed Cree and Caucasian stripper, reported that although she had not personally experienced any racial incidents, she had witnessed a few such events in the months since she began dancing. On one occasion when a client lost his temper, the derogatory term of "lazy squaw" was used to keep another dancer in her place. The manager who witnessed the event dismissed it as a "minor incident", chastising the friend of Carin for "being too sensitive". When he explained to Carin that she had to "put such comments out of her mind" because she needed the work, this caused Carin some consternation in that she, too, might face such hostility. The subjugation of Native women is one of the ways in which race and gender relations are organized to assist with capital accumulation. Racist ideology is utilized to establish a clear demarcation between Caucasian and Native women by assigning the most difficult work, insecure conditions and the lowest pay to a particular ethnic/racial group (Stasiulus, 1987; LaChapelle, 1982). As the capitalist economy impacts on the everyday lives of Native women, they often lack the security and mobility to exercise choice in job selection (Poelzer, 1989:197). Negating the enormous contributions made by Native women as hosts, guides and companions to the early European voyageurs, the term "squaw" evokes the memory of Native women's loss of status, and whose effort and work was supplanted when European women were brought
to Canada. The gender oppression experienced by Native women
reinterpreted femininity through racist ideology to reduce them
to fort prostitutes. By employing stereotypes of Native women as
idle and indolent, a racist ideology justifies inequalities
arising from capitalist relations, at the same time assuring a
cheap, wage labour pool.

The Native woman in question experienced various forms of
oppression simultaneously, making it difficult to separate
experiences attributed to gender and class apart from those
ascribed to race. Her experience of racist oppression was
enmeshed in, and could not be considered as independent from, her
experience of sexism and class oppression. She was in Lorde's
(1984:117) term, the "outsider" whose experiences were difficult
for others to comprehend. Given the divisions which exist among
women, this example demonstratively gives meaning to the idea
that there is no universal theory of feminism to explain and
prioritize women's experiences. Carin's co-worker experienced
oppression that was not only sexual but also racist in nature.
Positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy and often
excluded from the paid labour force, she was subject to
exploitation based on racism, classism and sexism that allowed
for no "other" that she could exploit within the institution of
stripping. Dividing women along lines of race, class, ethnicity,
sexual identity and other differences is a technique employed to
mitigate against the possibility of women coming together to
oppose exploitation.

The subjugation of Native women has been a lengthy and
complex process. Their oppression as part of Aboriginal people's
history was linked with the development of capitalism, in which
Native societies and their modes of production were destroyed, a
complicated state system of segregation was established, and
class, gender and race divisions were instituted. The invasion by European voyagers which began in the fifteenth century not only subordinated and sometimes exterminated aboriginal peoples, but it also undermined much of the equality and independence of native women (Amot and Matthaei, 1991:37). Scientific and social racial theories constructed natives as innately inferior and in need of the "civilizing" influence of Europeans. Once enjoying autonomous status as part of the clan of elderly women, Native women became subordinated as class and race divisions were imposed on them by European men. Their labour power and sexuality were exploited as part of capitalist social relations (Bourgeault, 1989:98). Native women's subordination to Native men arose out of commodity production and the fur exchange under early British colonialism (Bourgeault, 1989:87). As capitalist relations of production were imposed on these communal societies, egalitarian and collective relations were replaced with class, race and gender divisions which had not previously existed. Relations of exploitation took precedence over cooperative relations in order to gain control over the labour power of Natives. Gradually, as Native men became the prime agents in exchange relations and as communal relations were fragmented, the status of Native women was transformed. Whether on or off the reserve, the daily struggles of native women are surrounded by problems of poverty, cultural extinction and unemployment as well as high rates of infant mortality, diseases such as tuberculosis and alcoholism and wife abuse (Amott and Matthaei, 1991:58).

Annie Ample, another stripper with the same racial background, felt that her looks were "too ethnic" when she entered the world of exotic dancing in the late 1960s. She chose to copy her idol, Jayne Mansfield, and become a platinum blonde to minimize her Chickasaw and Italian features, although later
she played upon Native stereotypes (by wearing a buckskin costume while dancing to the tune of "Cherokee Nation") at a time when race relations were more relaxed. Until recently, woman was synonymous with White women; women of colour were identified as "other", leading to the most limited job opportunities and low-wage positions being reserved for the latter category (Lorde, 1984:117-20). Since the dominant group had the power to make it appear as if their experiences were universal and spoke for all people, racial identities were until recently repudiated. Although women like Annie immigrated to Canada (drawn by a labour market that demanded semi-skilled and unskilled workers), and significantly gave of their time, energy and labour, their contributions were largely unrecognized (Ng, 1986:1991). To fit in and make her way in the world of stripping, the coping strategies adopted by Annie at various stages of her career varied from minimizing to highlighting and playing upon her racial differences.

Assumptions and stereotypes of the ideology of racism function to inform perspectives and construct a reality for clients prior to their contact with "ethnic" women. When Asian women are present in a club, they are often hired because of their ethnicity, and they are expected to cater to the stereotypical fantasies of clients. Although Pearl of the Orient does not speak Chinese and has never visited the birthplace of her grandparents, over the years she has come to accentuate her Asian features with eye makeup, to feature a mini-style Mandarin dress with a long slit up the side, and to feature Chinese rock and roll music in her act. The occupational expectations of the young and poor Pearl emigrating from Hong Kong were in three main areas: working in a private home as a domestic, factory work and a waitress in the service industry. Without Canadian experience, Pearl began her working life as a coffee-shop waitress although
she found the wages low, the fringe benefits limited and the job security nonexistent. She did not perceive that she had opportunities to access other employment or educational programs, and she reasoned that her Canadian working experience was too marginal to permit her to take up other kinds of work. Nonetheless, she was not interested in working as a cleaner or a cafeteria worker, the only other positions that were available to her. As a reflection of historic patterns of racism and sexism, she moved on to another part-time job as a strip club waitress. To improve upon her marginal labour status, night employment and minimum-wage job, Pearl decided to join the women on stage in taking off their clothes.

The overwhelming majority of strippers observed in this study were Caucasian women, with at most one or two Black, Asian or Native women performing in some of the larger urban clubs. Strippers are segregated on the basis of racial factors; the entrenched hierarchy which operates in most normative clubs places women of colour at the bottom. Race and gender relations develop according to distinctive processes, with separate dialectics and with different outcomes for women of colour than for the majority of Caucasian women who are strippers. Unlike their White counterparts, all of the Black dancers I interviewed unfailingly complained of racism in their interactions with club managers, clients and some of the other dancers. Incidents of racism reported by Black dancers included a poor selection of shifts, being frequently "hassled", occasionally addressed with racial epithets and perceived as more likely candidates for prostitution and to be fired than White dancers. All Black dancers were aware of tacit quotas enforced by club managers which limited the number of non-White and especially Black women to one or two working in a club at any given time. In the many months I spent touring strip clubs in Ontario, I never once, in
the spirit of affirmative action and employment equity, encountered a Black feature.41

Black dancers are not merely excluded and occupy inferior positions in the hierarchy of strip, but racism and sexism operate as authentic material forces fractionalizing the entire cadre of dancers. Within stripping, occupational segregation concentrates them in the lowest paid, most insecure sectors with the highest rates of unemployment. The effect is to control the conditions of strippers' work, while strengthening the hand of employers through divide-and-conquer tactics.42 Race/gender hierarchies in the workplace perpetuate the exploitation of the cheap labour of Black women. Discrimination operates not only to exclude these women of colour from employment, but also to influence the kinds of jobs they are offered and to determine whether they work on a full-time or part-time basis. Sherrill's personal solution to this problem has been to pair with Kamada, a White stripper, who "sneaks" her into a club.43 Once inside, Sherrill, an exotic Black dancer, exerts her considerable personal charm to ingratiate herself to the club manager. On occasion, the two women offer to work as a duo to bypass the quota on Black dancers. Even when Black women are hired, they are hassled more often than White women by owners, who watch for the slightest infraction of the rules as an excuse to fire them. If there is a hint that Sherrill may be dropped from a club's roster, the pair threaten to leave together. These "race hassles" and the ever-increasing limits of "raunchiness" in lap dancing are forcing Sherrill to consider leaving the business in the near future.

The actions of these women typically meets with resistance followed by equivocation, and then absorption and assimilation of the Black dancer into the strip culture. Although one employer
was prepared to hire Sherrill on her own merits, he made it clear that he did not want her to gain full and equal access to various sources of privilege available to Caucasian dancers. The harsh and prejudicial treatment of Sherrill lends credence to a colonial history which maintained that Blacks were to be cordoned off from dominant White society and subject to oppressive control. In contemporary society, racial inequality continues to be used to justify status quo practices. The broadminded Kamada initiated a countermove against systemic discrimination not only out of friendship, but also because she felt that Sherrill had been excluded unjustly. Although their protest did not result in reorganizing the strip club around race quotas, Kamada's gesture helped Sherrill to gain entrance and served a source of support to the marginalized dancer. Understanding that the racial imbalance in the work force is a result of discrimination that required remedial action, the two women forged a working class and gender coalition across racial lines rather than perpetuating a competitive struggle among dancers.

Inequality of opportunity among strippers demonstrated that racism plays a crucial part in fuelling and regulating the oppression of strippers. In this example a White male manager, in a position to exercise power, attempted to control the working life of a woman of colour. For most Black strippers who suffer oppression, separatism is a privileging practice of White women. Coalition politics favoured in this instance serve the interests of challenging and destabilizing the master's categories. Large collective efforts to transform oppressive historical structures were rejected in favour of the struggles of individual workers to gain workplace justice. In terms of shop floor politics, the stratification of stripping by race contributed to a problematic supervisory role for the manager. What emerged was not a picture of quiescent workers captive to management desires that wielded
culture as an instrument in top-down control, but rather women who were creative social actors negotiating realities based on historically contextualized factors. As these strippers produced culture at work and generated a set of practices that ran counter to hegemony, they established alternative ways of making sense of their environment. Such resistance disrupted and undermined the objectives of the manager directed toward the reproduction of status quo power relations in the workplace in terms of hiring and promotion.

These strategies of adjustment, with strippers functioning both as collaborators and antagonists, are firmly rooted in the material reality of women's lives to enhance their ability to secure a livelihood. Consciousness and craft power were used to usurp the manager's authority concerning racial quotas and to redirect attention along a skill-enhancing path. The struggles of these women over job assignments and racist practices are an important example of the way strippers engage in job actions and mobilize support along gender lines against the patent unfairness of management. It demonstrates how resistance is used to oppose unfair club practices and to negotiate cooperation on their terms. In reacting against the manager's unilateral imposition of a decision concerning race quotas, collective resistance enabled the women to thwart the implementation of racist workplace practices. Such race struggles, however, have a limited transformative effect because they fail to challenge the overarching rules of racist, capitalist production.

Under the conditions of slavery in North America, Black women and men were held as chattel and viewed as "profitable labour units" (Davies, 1983:5). Their oppression was indistinguishable with respect to the requirement to engage in productive work and being beaten by slaveholders (Genovese,
The Black woman was regarded as a full-time worker, functioning as a cook, maid, nanny and field hand (Fogel and Engerman, 1974). Although the ideology of femininity that separated public and private work for White women more firmly established their inferiority, it also gave support to their role as wife and mother. Black women, on the other hand, were excluded from a social construction of their role as homemakers and companions to their husbands, but conversely were not debased by domestic functions in ways similar to White women because they were workers like men (Lerner, 1972, Davies, 1983). A sexual division of domestic labour did not appear among Black women and men as the labour of both was equally important and valuable to the survival of slave families (Genovese, 1974). Black women, however, suffered in ways that were different from Black men as victims of sexual abuse, forced reproduction and a loss of legal control over their children (Wertheimer, 1977, Naylor, 1988):
"Rape was a weapon of domination, a weapon of repression, whose covert goal was to extinguish slave women's will to resist, and in the process, to demoralize their men (Davies, 1983:23-40)."

Black people as a group were also socio-economically disadvantaged under industrial capitalism based on indices of level of education, occupational attainment, earnings, ownership of property and private wealth. Under this new system of production, new social relations required that Black workers (similar to White workers) had to sell their labour power to capitalists to procure wages for their livelihood. Adding to these difficulties, Blacks were also under-represented in political, financial and educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, employers' associations, trade unions and the judiciary (Yeboah, 1988:8). When jobs, income levels and employment rates are compared, there is a consistent pattern of discrimination evidenced against Black people in the labour
market. Although some of the differences in job levels between Black and White people can be attributed to formal qualifications, the substantial difference in the proportion of the workforce comprised of these two groups cannot be ascribed to qualifications (Yeboah, 1998:24). Racial discrimination continues to exert a powerful influence in the lives of Black workers. It operates in ways that verify the practice of recruiting Black workers for some jobs while prohibiting them from acquiring other positions. An additional disadvantage faced by Black people in the workplace customarily does not take into account cultural differences between groups with disparate ethnic origins.

The justification for such practices can be traced to the "doctrine of inherent Black inferiority" in which the intrinsic inferiority of Blacks did not correspond with equality of treatment (Williams, 1964:24). Arising out of specific social relations, racist beliefs and assumptions are intended to explain and rationalize specific social practices (Sumner, 1979:6). Such practices, including economic, political and cultural conventions, require certain activities to be carried out on a regular basis that favour Whites, to the exclusion of practices which involve people of colour. The rationale for deprivation and unequal access to resources is vindicated by defining Blacks as lesser or inferior people. Social stratification in which Blacks had a different relationship to the means of production in time led to diverse economic lifestyles and consumption patterns (Yeboah, 1988:49).

Stereotypes of being "lazy, emotionally childish, intellectually stupid and sexually licentious" have historically been ascribed to Blacks. Black men were thought to be possessed of remarkable sexual prowess, while Black women were deemed more desirable—both were viewed as endowed with and indulged in an
animal inclination towards "promiscuous intercourse", according to Yeoboah (1988:61). The juxtaposition of limited intellectual ability in contrast with the propensity towards licentiousness informed a pseudo-scientific racist discourse. This ideology constructed a reality that was intended to be stereotypically informative about the nature of Africans, in particular, hierarchically rank ordering the human races (Yeoboah, 1988:68-70). By the end of the nineteenth century the legacy of slavery meant that the ideology of racism permeated every facet of society, becoming deeply embedded in the social perceptions, attitudes and social practices in Europe and the Americas. During the following century, the assumptions about innately determined Black inferiority became part of the "natural" understanding of social world (Amott and Matthaei, 1991:17). Blatant racial discrimination and a denial of equal opportunities for development in political, social, economic, educational and cultural matters served as evidence of biological inferiority (Yeoboah, 1988:71).

Once in a police raid on a Sarnia club, Amber Starr recalled, "three cops, two men and a lady came running into the place looking for some guy who was a murderer that they thought had slipped into the club. When they didn't find the guy, they seemed irritated, so they busted a dancer for being nude. She was a Black girl." When the dancer returned to the club the following day, she informed Amber that twice previously she had been involved in similar incidents. "The police always go for the Black one because they are often looking for drugs and they suspect all Blacks." Amber noted that two other White dancers were not wearing clothes at the time the Black stripper was arrested, including a nude dancer on stage and another nude dancer sitting with a customer. When the police returned to the club, the dancer involved in the altercation approached them to
provide information, a tactic which is generally a "no-no", Amber suggested, if the individual does not want to be labelled a "snitch". However, the dancer's sardonic tone of voice, her impatient stance of hand on hip, drumming the floor with her foot were unmistakable signs of defiance as she suggested, "as the only Black in the club, I'll come to you because I know you'll be coming to ask me questions".

Although she is twenty years my junior, Amber's favourite music, like mine, is 1960s Black-American, rhythm and blues. After reviewing a number of famous artists of that era such as the Temptations, Aretha Franklin and Marvin Gaye, I lost her when I attempted to get a bit more nostalgic on the subject by referring to the music of The Dells and Esther Phillips. This young Caucasian woman is aware of the problems Black people face in society, in view of the poor service afforded her Black "boyfriend" in restaurants, movies and at border crossings. Amber believes that club managers think that the predominantly Caucasian clientele do not want to see Black strippers, and, therefore, a quota is imposed in most clubs to limit their numbers. When a Black dancer secures a job, she is usually assigned the least desirable shifts, forced to work in basement bars where she earns less money and, at times, is exploited economically by the club's management by not being paid or by being pressured more than White dancers to have sex with customers. She remarks that Black dancers are ghettoized in the occupation into the low-paying, demanding and insecure areas of stripping. Amber advocates that dancers who are discriminated against ought to report club managers to the Ontario Human Rights Commission to seek redress. In small work settings, solidarity between dancers is weakened in so far as they perceive themselves as individuals rather than as part of a group. Such a trend dilutes
the strength in numbers that comes from collaboration, while encouraging people to look for personal solutions to their problems.

Suzette believes that "her boss doesn't like Blacks and everyone says so". The predominant pattern of employment she has experienced has been that of White men hiring and supervising her work (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1991). The level of hostility directed at Blacks predisposes many of the Black dancers that she knows to reject White culture. In contrast, she did not encounter the effects of racism while growing up in Halifax, but subsequently had her first taste of discrimination when she left home in an attempt to make a living in stripping. She has been labelled a "trouble maker" because she often confronts club owners and managers who try to "rip me off by not paying my full salary". She is convinced that Caucasian dancers, in particular, do not experience as much harassment as their Black co-workers; nor do they endure the racist comments which she has heard on a number of occasions from clients. Once, when she was dancing in Peterborough, a man called out "move your Black ass, honey; we know you Black girls like to get nailed deep and hard". Instead of being tossed out, the man was asked by the bouncer to move from stagefront to the back of the club, prompting Suzette to stop at his table after her act and lean over, abruptly telling him "if you ever bother me again, you White honky, I'll get my two brothers to kick your ass". She laughed heartily at the memory of that event, noting that one of her brothers is a hairdresser, while the other is studying to become a minister in the Salvation Army and neither was prone to engage in such chivalrous acts. The abusive patron glanced up at her as she spoke "with a glassy look on his face", then put his head on the table and fell asleep, snoring loudly. Only then was he was asked by the bouncer to leave the club, since sleeping on the premises
violated one of the club rules.

Suzette has encountered problems of sexual harassment, stalking and an attempted assault that dancers experience from time to time, but her difficulties are often replete with racist stereotypes and name calling. Ongoing racial harassment and racist slurs victimize Black women like Suzette in their daily lives. Reminiscent of a time when scientific racism was used to establish a hierarchial order of superiority for Whites and inferiority for Blacks, Suzette has been discriminated against because of the dark tone of her skin. "Based on the notion that the lighter the skin the nearer to the natural order of the ideal, and conversely the darker the skin, the more degenerate", she has been categorized as inferior on the basis of the immutable characteristic of skin colour, rather than on the basis of ability, talent or intellect (Yeboah, 1989:59). Although she has learned effective tactics to counter racist jokes and harassment, she volunteered that such incidents "take a toll on you". The "dirtiest" work in the basement is reserved for her. Although management plays features off against table dancers in the clubs in which she works, it is Black strippers like Suzette who suffer the most when managers use race as a strategy in providing differential working assignments. Although the "polite talk" of her Caucasian agent and club managers is meant to assure her that "race quotas don't exist and aren't legal in Ontario", she is often unable to find work. When there is another Black dancer in the club, Suzette tends to gravitate towards her to form a kind of sisterly bond. This obvious gesture of cooperation has caused at least one manager to feel threatened by remarking, "they got all you Black girls together", a comment never said when White women congregate. Struggling to make sense out of her life, simultaneously undermining and engaging in procedures which reproduce forms of racism, Suzette makes a clear statement about
the life of a Black woman in strip, when she indicates that she does not want her daughter to strip "as her mama did before her".

Race is utilized in the unequal social relations of stripping to provide an advantage to employers. Women of colour are expected to internalize and abide by the capitalist notion of a racial hierarchy in paid employment. Employers take advantage of differences as a means of dividing workers and extending greater control over the workforce (Gallagher, 1987). Black, Asian and Native women dominate in entry-level jobs in stripping, and their presence rarely advances the cause of fair employment practices and employment equity (Gannage, 1986; Brand, 1987). "I am fed up with being treated as a second class citizen because I am a part-timer", Suzette complains. She would like to take up stripping full-time; however, to date she has not been able to secure such a position. Similar to most working class women, financial urgency is cited as the most important reason for undertaking paid work outside of the home (Westwood, 1984). She works at a waged job out of necessity, making it clear that she cannot afford to stay home and take care of her daughter. As a single parent, Suzette juggles paid work with domestic labour and childcare responsibilities. This double burden leaves her with little time and energy to upgrade her employment and educational qualifications in order eventually to leave stripping. Black women are often deterred by economic and practical considerations from being able to stay home and care for their home and children. Gender roles are frequently reversed, as many Black women provide economic security and stability for their families.

I work because I have to in order to support my child. I come from a long, proud line of women who worked; ain't nothing new to us. Sometimes we can count on men and sometimes we can't, but the bills still have to be paid. I'm glad I've got some women who can help me. I've had some bad, minimum wage jobs in past, and stripping beats
most of them. I would eventually like to move on
and get a trade or something, but that takes time
and money to go back to school. Right now my
number one priority is my child.

In the past, Black women were devalued, exploited and
suffered as a result of colonial, racist and patriarchal
sentiments. White North American society on the other hand,
idealized White women. Rather than praising the courage and
stamina of Black women like Suzette, such women are surrounded by
stereotypes and myths rooted in racism and sexism that depict
them as physical strong, able to endure hardship, domineering,
aggressive, slow, submissive, immoral and promiscuous (Thornhill,
1989:32). Due to the effects of racism, there has been a long
history of the Black woman assuming non-traditional, "masculine"
roles, becoming breadwinners and sole-support providers for their
family. Many could not rely on men for support in the manner in
which middle class Caucasian women were supported. The majority
were forced to work as labourers and domestic workers while also
serving as a nurturing figure within the family. Many also
contended with violence and hatred towards themselves and their
families stemming from racism and, therefore, saw the need for

An understanding of the lives of strippers like Suzette
stems from a theoretical framework which does not merely add race
as a further category for sociological investigation, but looks
at racially constructed, gender roles in stripping to determine
how they affect individual women. The complex interactions
between oppression based on gender and race is particularly
evident in stripping. Although Annie Ample was fortunate to be
able to work within the racial strictures of stripping, Suzette
found her career opportunities limited and her working life
arduous, prompting her to consider leaving the business. The
cultural stereotype of the Black woman as promiscuous was used to
justify a different and demeaning kind of treatment for her in the context of strip clubs. What we hear in the problems and frustrations faced by Suzette as a woman of colour are the complex ways in which gender and race come together to stratify working class women. Black dancers speak openly about how their experiences of strip are different from those of White women; they view the root cause of their difficulties in qualitatively different ways and they offer different solutions to their problems as a result of the consciousness they have gained through their experiences.

An advanced capitalist system attempting to increase profits in the 1990s generally does not work to the advantage of minority groups and the disadvantaged. Transformations in global production have resulted in layoffs in secondary manufacturing industries, downsizing of secure employment in the private and public service sectors, job insecurity due to introduction of new technology and the export of work to places that are non-unionized and provide cheaper labour. With an emphasis on marketing and privatization, the post-Fordist economy has threatened many of the social policies of the state upon which women depend for income redistribution, including health, education, social assistance and services as well as public sector employment. With these changes, political and economic systems have shifted to more conservative discourses, causing affirmative action programs and the needs of racial minorities to be declared passé. Racial oppression is one of the mechanisms that is increasingly utilized to exclude people of colour from economic, political and social rights of citizenship. The growing underclass of women of colour represents the large group of those women whose employment is in the secondary market (with poor working conditions, limited job security, wages and benefits).
5.3. Remuneration and Benefits:

What the Market will Bear

When I first observed table dancing, one of the many things which shocked me was the cheap price of the act. Here was unfettered capitalism at its most gaudy, which required a woman to undress and expose the most private parts of her genitalia for a mere five dollars. As traditional stripping was supplanted by a more individualistic, competitive and entrepreneurial spirit (emphasizing "sexplicitness" and encouraging increasingly closer contact with customers), the rates of remuneration varied considerably and inevitably reflected what the market would bear. Strippers are quick to mention the large amounts of money they earn in contrast with other ghettoized jobs for women.47 At a normative club such as the Fantasia, Candy has observed a wide variation in salaries among dancers, ranging from the features, who make $2,500 a week to a "couple of new, young freelancers working for table dancing tips".48 Candy herself is not a feature; she makes about $1,500 a week, but points out that she has an arrangement which allows her to leave the club after her set as well as being able to choose her shifts. She rarely travels out of town and avoids expenses such as publicity and payment for a booking agent. Lately, her mother has helped sew her costumes to keep her expenses in check, thus Candy feels she is on target in her saving plans, expecting to leave stripping in the near future.

In addition to booking strippers, agents in the 1970s and the 1980s helped to boost a dancer's career by staging strip competitions such as "Miss Nude Canada" contests. "Initially some of the contests were legitimate and the girls really did have titles", I was informed by Annie Ample, whose former agent, Tony Mangiano, initiated these events in Canada. Later, Mangiano and other promoters concluded that organizing these competitions was
too much trouble and they began registering titles for fifteen dollars, sending the "girls" on the circuit with phoney titles such as Miss Nude Lakes. Dancers went along with the "gig" because titles were important if a stripper wanted to be a feature. After a while promoters did not bother with registration, choosing instead to give the strippers instant titles in what Annie colourfully described as the "Canadian skin scam."

Beginning in 1981-82, dancers in transgressional clubs engaged in table dancing on a voluntary basis to increase their wages; others suggested that it was the owners who demanded that women dance in this manner and circulate continuously in clubs. Despite the lower salary or in lieu of salary, some strippers were eager to take up the new genre of dance with the understanding that they would increase the amount of money they made in table dancing fees and tips. Annie Ample pointed out that it was the predominantly young and naive women, encouraged by the spirit of free enterprise who were most willing to "freelance". Breaking down the older dance style of the stage into a more discrete, simplified and standardized presentation of strip, table dancing--while requiring more work of almost continuous stripping--afforded the dancer more opportunities to augment her earnings through fees charged to the clients. Many dancers affirmed that the new presentation of strip also substantially increased profits for the establishments in which they were employed. According to Laura X, some strippers danced strictly for fees and tips and were required to provide a commission or "kick-back" of up to 50 percent to management. She also verified that fines were levied against dancers who were uncooperative, causing some dancers to be "blackballed" or dismissed for refusing to table dance in this transitional period.

There was a growing trend toward encouraging dancers--
especially women starting out in the business who were perceived by the club manager as unattractive or unable to dance—to freelance or to "come and go as you please" in a club. Without receiving a salary from the club, many worked exclusively for table dancing fees and tips. Kalaui Lay voiced her pragmatic approach to dancing and money. Five or six times a day, she looks for a customer "who is good for sixty to eighty dollars for a half hour of work"; once she has made those contacts, she is "half way there" for her day's earnings. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1979) documented the fact that women earned substantially less money than men across all job categories and experienced more restricted opportunities in employment, including being "last hired and first fired" and receiving limited on-the-job training, promotions and pension provisions. The Council determined that little change, let alone progress, had been made in the lives of the majority of Canadian working women like Kalaui Lay since the release of the fifteen-year-old report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1964).

In the mid-1980s, at the top of the stripping hierarchy were feature dancers like Annie Ample. She claims that there were four big names in old-style stripping: Candy Samples, Chesty Morgan, Morgana and herself, all making $4,000 a week. Annie had several fan clubs in the United States, Canada and Europe and she delights in talking about them extensively. In a telephone conversation, she told me of the fans who travelled the club circuit to take pictures with her, "at $5 dollars a shot", following her shows. Fans met her in clubs and at airports and most--"97 percent", she claims--were "honest, lonely respectable guys". In addition to her salary as a feature, she would net as much as $3,500 a week from posing for pictures. "That's 700 pictures with flash a week", I noted; "yes, that's hard work", she replied deadpan.
Similar to Amber Starr, most features performed three shows a day in that era, earning approximately $2,000 to $2,500 a week, "$3,000 if it's a big club and you are lucky". Amber worked six days a week, most of the year. During her first year stripping, she took her mother to Hawaii for a three-week holiday and she planned to go to Jamaica for two weeks with her "boyfriend" the following year. In addition to expenses for her costumes (which ranged from a few hundred to fifteen hundred dollars), Amber complained that she "went through a pair of shoes a month". I joked with her that her rate of shoe use put her in the same league as dancers with the National Ballet. It is little wonder that when dancers supply their own costumes, pay fines, travel expenses, bar and restaurant bills, as well as support their agent, club personnel, "boyfriends" and children, many, like Amber, remark "I need all the money I can get." Sunday is "the worst day of the week because you're bored and can't make any money" and the day is, therefore, reserved for packing and travelling, Amber added.

In order to attract customers, by the late 1980s, most normative and transgressional clubs no longer required a minimum cover charge. Dancers increasingly hustled table and lap dances; in clubs of legitimated violence, strippers also sold drinks, drugs and "fenced goods, to make a living", Laura X suggested. In most transgressional clubs, the stripper kept her fees from table and lap dancing in lieu of a minimum, base-rate salary; in some clubs, "the house" took a percentage of the table and lap dancing tips, or charged the dancer a minimum fee "for the privilege of dancing in the club". Similar to other areas of the segmented labour force, there was a growing division between dancers (particularly features) who made "fabulous money" and the young, new and naive dancers who earned seventy dollars a shift and ten to twenty dollars in tips. On the whole, unlike most ghettoized
occupations for women, stripping is not poorly paid, although like other jobs, undertaken by women it is labour intensive and has many elements of harassment associated with it.

The introduction of a piece-rate and a bonus system of payment made an increasingly large portion of the dancer's salary dependent upon the number of customers she served. With more women entering the business, wages declined in the 1980s to $35-70 a shift, which amounted to an hourly rate below minimum wage of approximately four dollars for those dancers able to secure wages from the clubs. The steadily declining basic wage for stage dancing compelled strippers to rely on the piece-rate system of table and, later, lap dancing, for their economic survival. T notes that some of the younger, inexperienced "girls" brought in by the owners, "don't know any better--they will dance for $100 a day or a few hundred dollars a week, plus their table and lap dancing fees and they think it's big money". With fees and tips from clients accounting for most or all of their income, and with competition among dancers intensifying, the new women of strip were forced to hustle more, work longer hours and offer a more sexually explicit services than the salaried stage strippers of a bygone era, or risk earning less money and being fired. Like sales personnel on commission or service sector workers dependent on tips, the income of the table and lap dancer was determined by how fast she worked, the number of clients she engaged, and the kinds of sexual services provided. In contrast to other service industry jobs, the stripper increasingly provided a more explicit, "hands-on" sexual service for clients in order to secure her money.

Charging the standard ten dollar fee for a three to five minute table dance, Dawn allocates five minutes each for
conversation, negotiations and dancing. Working in a private room at the back of the club with three or four patrons and other dancers, she sits on the leg and upper thigh of the client grinding her genitals into his. "Most customers want to suck your breasts and I will give a hand job for fifty dollars. Some girls are willing to do more." Her manager informed her "to charge what you like for a straight lap dance", but she is mindful that she must compete with other dancers charging $10 to $20 for a lap dance. She pays a $10 to $50 dollar freelance fee to the club and performs an unpaid stage show and a free lap dance in each shift of five shows. "If you kiss the owner's butt, you don't have to pay the fee." Customers rarely tip, she insists. On a "good night" she makes five hundred dollars for eight or nine private and prolonged lap dances. After stripping for eight years Dawn would like to quit, but despite obtaining a high school diploma, she suggests she is unable "to get a job" and does not qualify for unemployment insurance. In 1995, at the height of lap dancing, a number of polished and seasoned strippers "in big city clubs" were fond of saying they did not undress for less than a "half a thousand" a shift. There remains, however, a large number of very young women, new to the business, working in small town clubs on a part-time basis, who receive no salary from the club and very minimum fees and tips from clients.

One of the most intriguing dancers I interviewed was a nineteen-year-old woman, Lisa, who was enrolled in my Introduction to Women's Studies college course. As a freelancer who works one or two nights a week in Brampton, she performs five shows in a shift, pays a ten dollar house fee and provides a free table dance to make a forty dollar salary. This former OAC Honors student claims that lap dancing results in "easy money for just letting a guy touch your knees, legs or hands". Charging ten dollars for a three minute, lap dance nets her approximately $300
in fees and tips from clients per night. "Kissing and touching a boob" is an additional charge which on "a good night" will result in her walking away with $400 and feeling that she is "special". She gets along well with the bouncer because she makes his job easy in a club which recently received a $25,000 fine for "dirty dancing". Her preference is to freelance as opposed to being a "house girl", who may charge twenty dollars a dance, but is "in competition with lots of other women doing a lot of drugs and whoring for that money."

When Lisa spoke about stripping, I witnessed the transformation from a quiet college student blending into the milieu in her sneakers, bluejeans and a leather jacket to a vamp, sweeping her hair back to reveal a glint in her eye, accompanied by club-smart language. She plays up her best features of a "fresh look, long blonde hair and long legs"--she does not like men, but caters to elderly males "because the older they are the more money I can sucker out of them. I stay away from young guys. They get drunk and can be weird when they try to show off for their friends." She loves dancing and "the money makes it better". Sauntering up to clients, she inquires if they saw her dancing on stage. If a client appears concerned that he is being "hustled", she replies that "sitting is free". She uses her "college line" telling the customer what she is studying to "work the customer up into saying that I have a good head on my shoulders". She looks into his eyes, whispers in his ear, lightly touches his arm, flirts, sits and "talks a lot so he won't think I'm greedy", but after two songs if she does not get a lap dance, "I'm gone". Always teasing the customers with lines such as, "I'm not as nice as I look" and "If I get to know you better we could go home together", she looks for "a guy in his sixties or seventies "with a big wad of money who will fall for my line that I have to pay my tuition". Threatening to leave "to earn some
money with that geek over there" often causes the client to invite her to stay for a fee. She has learned to hold the line with customers with instructions from co-worker Brandy, described as "a 6 foot 2 inch transsexual with a blonde wig and surgery." Recently, Brandy bought herself a house and a car, "after she gave up nursing to dance". When a customer is rude by displaying an erection or if he attempts to grab her, Lisa retorts "I'd like to do this, but if you want a slut, get her", pointing to other women in the club. "Playing the guys", she "pulls the smiling thing", never drinks on the job and puts up with small talk about a customer's bad hip, his stint in the army and "can I take you home", knowing she always goes home alone with "no less than $300-$400 in my pocket".

To provide a niche in the market separate from the service of prostitution, Lisa has geared her lap dances towards catering to the fantasies of some of her clients. "One guy who came in asked what size my shoe was. He was fascinated by my high heels so I started selling them to him, one shoe at a time. By the time our little thing ended, he had spent a couple thousand dollars on the bags of shoes I brought from home. Towards the end I even brought in old tennis sneakers and he still paid me eighty bucks a pop." Lately, Mistress Lisa has been calling one of her customers "a worthless piece of shit" for twenty dollars a lap dance, to the customer's delight. To heighten his enjoyment and her control of the situation as well as her earnings, she has kicked him in the scrotum, hit him on the head, tied him up and "pissed on him while every one in the club watched. I have him grovelling, begging for more, paying me big bucks and the whole club roars". Lately, she has taken "to doing stag parties" at $300 for a two-hour evening, even though she realizes the situations may be dangerous. Breaking my interviewer objectivity and speaking as her instructor, I caution that she must be
careful in an all-male atmosphere, to which she retorted that she specializes in "banquet hall gigs for religious Portuguese families with lots of servers". Her major in college is accounting—she has been on her own financially since the age of fourteen, has put herself through school and has managed to buy about $5000 a year "in GICs". Lisa stated that she has learned a lot of things from the course I taught, particularly aspects of ancient women's history. To allow her to demonstrate her gratitude, I accepted her invitation on one occasion to watch her dance and meet her friends, although I remain convinced that I can live quite well without ever frequenting another strip club.

"Your price depends on a lot of things", Suzette informed me. Currently, salaries are individually negotiated with managers by dancers and agents themselves on the telephone prior to coming to the club, or at the club door "if you are sent over that same day". A few dancers, mostly features, have pre-printed "spread sheets" with their pictures, vital statistics, titles and a list of the clubs where they have worked. Suzette confided that "hiring is done exclusively by the manager. If he likes your looks, if he thinks you are a good worker or, in a lot of cases, if you sleep with him, you get hired." A dancer's income and security thus becomes regulated by financial arrangements dictated by supply and demand, and sensitive to the power of buyers and sellers in the marketplace. The commodification of titillation and sexual servicing is part of what is bought and sold in strip clubs. It is the concern for profit maximization as part of the larger process of capital accumulation which is the driving force in decision making, rather than factors of human relations, equity and a proven track record of work. Wages, fees and tips are viewed as part of the costs of production and purchasing of such services. In strip clubs, capitalist economics dictate that the buyer's rights of consumption and the owner's
rights to dictate the terms of service provision take precedence over the stripper's right to provide a service under conditions she deems desirable. The stripper often has the right to say "no" to engage in a specific service, but she risks losing a customer to the competitive services provided by another dancer. The new organization of strip practices ensures that prices and profits become the compelling forces in decision-making in the political economy of stripping.

Despite the fact that legislated provincial employment standards cover working conditions, minimum wage rates, hours of employment, overtime pay, statutory holidays, vacation periods, maternity leave, union organizing, pensions, health and safety factors and termination of employment, dancers, unlike the majority of workers in Ontario, are not guaranteed many of these conditions and benefits. Terms of employment in strip clubs do not include legal protection for all dancers with regard to hiring, recall after layoffs, dismissal without just cause and the right of appeal to a labour tribunal for disputes which arise on the job. The plight of dancers who are not covered for extended health and dental care, long-term disability and life insurance was the subject of a brief discussion I had with Annie and a number of other dancers, sitting in a club on a slow afternoon. When Annie Ample first began dancing in the United States, much of the money she made went to pay for medical expenses for her son, who was severely brain damaged in a car accident.

According to T, owners of strip clubs do not contribute to unemployment insurance or worker compensation schemes; therefore, "if the dancer is sick and can't work, she is out of luck; if she falls or is injured, she has no protection". Sherrill complains that dancers do not get benefits such as time off for injuries;
"even during my period, I just cut the string down, so it can't be seen and I keep on dancing". Suzette needs a bridge on her upper teeth and crowns on some of her lower teeth, but she has held off having this work done because of the high cost. Asked about pensions, she retorts, "I guess that I am my own pension" as the club's management does not make contributions for her retirement.

A number of strippers interviewed in this study suggested that owners and managers of clubs are perpetually looking for ways to augment profits. Sherrill mentioned that clubs will charge a patron "top dollar" for a coffee or a drink ordered by a dancer while sitting with a customer, compared to the discounted rate she enjoys as an employee of the club. "It's a big business, but most of the profits don't go to the dancers", T noted. "If you add up the salaries and advertising, the payola to people not to wreck the joint, or for selling booze, overhead such as lights and rent, there is still a profit of thousands a week even in a small club", she estimated. According to Liza, a well-established feature, clubs charge five dollars for a beer and many of the large establishments "make $20,000 a day in profits". She added that protection money must be paid to the police if the club is a "small-time operation", or to "elements of organized crime and political people" if the operation is large scale or sells a lot of liquor, drugs or handguns. Even when a club is charged "a fine of fifteen hundred dollars once in a blue moon for lewd performances, it isn't going to break anyone", Lisa added. Strippers sometimes speak of the times when they were not paid for work, or the lawsuits they had to instigate when contracts were not honoured.52

Most dancers are booked through agents who require the dancers to pay for this service, while in other cases the club
owner will pay a fee to the agent. In some instances, the agent is working both for the dancers and the club in a direct conflict of interest. Dancers are also expected to pay the disc jockey approximately five dollars per shift in some clubs, and occasionally to provide a "tip" for the bouncer should he be needed to assist a dancer, "in a tough spot. Greedy owners who own suntanning booths also insist that girls use them, for a fee", according to Annie Ample. "The sessions usually cost the women forty five dollars; however, with only 12-15 watt bulbs, you can lay under them forever and still never get a tan." When travelling, dancers are expected to pay for their transportation and food, except for top-name strippers who may be able to negotiate airfare as well as "decent" accommodation. Most dancers on the circuit share with as many as eight women a "free" hotel room which is often barren or poorly kept, consisting in some cases of mattresses strewn on the floor. Annie contends that "the manager is able to keep better control of the women to ensure they will show up for work if the hotel room is provided, so a deal is worked out with the manager and the money comes out of the girl's fees".

Despite the fact that club owners and managers stress the need for punctuality, loyalty and regularity, the nature of strip work provides little inducement to embrace stable work patterns. Strippers, therefore, incur a number of fines for a large variety of infractions; these fines are implemented in a heavy-handed and often arbitrary manner by management to reduce lateness, high rates of turnover, labour disputes and attempts by the dancers to organize--in essence, they set out terms of "punishment" of the manager's definition of "insubordination". A number of dancers complain about the fines levied if a stripper is late or misses a shift. The fine is usually fifty dollars for lateness and may be as high as one hundred dollars for a missed shift. Some
Dancers may feel like the coal miners of Glace Bay at the turn of the century, working in a company town in which control over their lives and working conditions was exercised through credit buying in the company store. In a system described as "vassalage", miners would purchase goods from the store owned by the company; when they inevitably fell behind in paying their debts, they were forced to accept pay cuts. Some dancers with large bar and drug needs who are extended a draw against their salary similarly find that most of their pay cheque is depleted by the end of the week. Sara, a waitress at the Copa, notes that these fines quickly add up if a dancer is late a few times a week. Amber, who once slept through one of her afternoon shows, is careful not to do that too often "because you can end up working all week for free. That's why some girls quit on Friday and don't make their Saturday shows--they owe so many fines throughout the week, there's nothing left of their pay."

Dancers are also fined for being improperly dressed, fighting, drinking too much, being "cold" toward customers, or for not getting along with other people. Improper clothing, according to Suzette, is too much clothing. "Some girls want to keep their G-string, pants or tops on. On the floor, if you wear a sweater, a cover-up top or a long flowing dress, they will let you go. Usually the manager will give the dancer a warning and then the next time you are told not to show up for work the next day." Dancers must generally remain in the club, although not necessarily in the showroom, during their shift, to ensure that they are on time and present for their act. Features often negotiate a clause in their contracts allowing them to come and go between shows as they please, as long as they let the bartender knows when they will return. Regular dancers often slip out of the club for lunch or for shopping, Suzette reveals, but if a stripper is caught leaving the club without permission, she
may be fined $25-50 depending on the manager's mood, just as if she were late for work. Suzette remembers that a dancer in Cornwall missed a lot of shows but was never fined because she was "sleeping with the boss; otherwise, you gotta work hard and keep your nose clean".

In a scathing indictment of the strip business, The Survivor, a woman who left stripping as a result of the abuse she suffered at the hands of her "pimp", managers and clients, wrote about her experiences in a 1995 personal communiqué to me:

The economics of the sex-trade sex-bar business can get quite complex. Everybody gets a piece of the action, a piece of the pie, a piece of the woman's ass.
- owners get a fee from the girls for the privilege of dancing in their bar
- some table and lap dancers free lance and pay the club manager a fee to let them dance and live on the tax-free tips
- since clubs do not keep employment records for the government, illegal immigrants are allowed to work without work permits stealing jobs from Canadians
- the club owners make money from private parties and sex shows where the girls are pressured to do lesbian shows, insertion and crotch shots.
- pimps/managers/agents get a % cut from the club owner for providing pretty girls
- they also get a % cut from the girls for lining up bar jobs
- they get a % cut from the girls for lining up stag shows and hard core sex shows
- they get a % cut from the girls for setting up escort sexual services apartments
- they get a % cut for her personal management and for protection fees
- the pimp/manager/agent usually is also the girl's personal designer drug dealer, so he gets a big chunk of their hard earned money back from them to pay for their drug addictions and pain killers
- the pimp/manager/agent are not afraid to use their team of girls to launder his drug money, to act as drug couriers, to deliver his secret messages and orders, to fence hot gold, jewellery and deliver stolen goods
- and if the women gets caught the pimp/manager/agent gets off scott free
- these scum bags have unlimited use of the woman's capital and are untouchable.

All this tax free money is used so that a pimp boyfriend can live in style while he watches over his totally nude table dancing slaves like some red rooster or some big lack cock in a henhouse. Not only do the men have built in clients of victims, addicts, their girl-consumers are giving their money and their freedom away to him and their pussies! The stripper-escorts pay no federal income taxes, no provincial taxes, no municipal taxes, no GST for services rendered, but the average street vendor has to! In return the strippers get no federal-provincial benefits and they get no government assistance or protection. Once they get kicked out of the sex business they become the lepers of society. Basically they are like docile sheep which are fed to the wolves and the sharks who call themselves businessmen, club owners, managers, agents, boyfriend pimps, customers or even to serve and help themselves policemen.

In a life dominated by male chauvinist pimps, to add insult to injury, in addition to agency fees, manager fees, club owners fees, pimp-protection fees, the girls must also pay non-tax-deductible
- late fees $50.00
- refuse to stage dance fines $50.00
- refuse to spread wide fines $50.00
- refuse to do crotch shot fines $50.00
- refuse to do private sex show fines $50.00
- refuse to do bisexual stag shows $50.00
- refuse to do insertions at stag shows $50.00
- refuse to turn tricks at stag-private parties $?????
- too much touching or oral sex fines $?????"

With the contraction of many forms of private and community life, services associated with domestic work and the nurturing of others have come to be seen as a commodity to be added to the new division of labour in exchange relations. The majority of workers in Canada are employed in the service industry, many on a part-time contractual basis. A substantial number of women are segregated in low-paying service jobs as clerks, waitresses and child-care workers. The fastest growing segment of the labour market has conventionally served as a job ghetto for workers who
are young, female and part of a visible minority population.

The provision of sexual services is a growing and salient aspect of a consumer society preoccupied with commercial interactions, desire, competition, acquisition, choice and instant gratification. This study repositions the stripper from social deviant and victim of oppression to sex worker performing under conditions not unlike other forms of service work. Stripping is a means of survival for many women with limited education, job skills and economic resources. Within the service industry of stripping, pay and privilege inequities are created among women who work full-time and obtain substantial benefits, and those who work part-time with limited benefits, employment insecurity and high rates of job turnover. Managers often take advantage of increasing unemployment and labour-market segmentation, resulting in the strippers becoming more casualized.

Racial stereotypes prevalent in society predominate in stripping work processes, as young women of colour provide intimate services for predominantly White and almost exclusively male patrons of some means. Operating under multiple categories of difference, Black women in particular are set apart from White women by quotas, in terms of hiring, supervisory and firing practices. Black women are also more likely to experience increased pressure to perform in a more explicit manner and to encounter harassment by club owners, clients and the police.

All strippers speak about the large amount of money they earn as a motivating factor for entering and staying in the business. There is great variation in strippers' salaries ranging from the money earned by full-time features to dancers who freelance and receive most of their money through fees and tips
provided by clients. Fines are levied in an arbitrary manner against strippers who are uncooperative for such things as being late, being improperly dressed, being insubordinate to a manager and failing to provide intimacy in client interactions. Unlike many workers in Ontario with legislated employment standards covering working conditions, minimum wage rates, hours of employment, overtime pay, vacation periods, maternity leave, pensions, health and safety factors and conditions pertaining to termination of employment, many strippers do not have the most basic of these benefits. For the most part, strippers have not been able to secure protection in hiring practices, recall after layoffs, dismissal without just cause and the right of appeal to a labour tribunal regarding disputes. Nor have the majority of dancers necessarily been able to garner coverage for dental care, extended health benefits, life insurance benefits and pension plans.
ENDNOTES

1. The Economic Council of Canada (1991:58) states that between 1979 and 1983, there was an average annual increase of 6.9 per cent for part-time work, compared to a 2.7 per cent increase in full-time positions. According to a Statistics Canada report Where Women Work (1991), more than 20 percent of workers chose part-time work because full-time work was not available. The majority of part-time workers are women.

Broad (1992:23-4) documented the over-representation of women in part-time work noting that in 1988, 25 per cent of women were involved in such work compared to 8 per cent of men. During that same year in Canada, 30 per cent of single women and 25 per cent of married women worked part-time, in contrast to 20 per cent of single men and just 3 per cent of married men.

2. Statistics Canada data (1992:147) suggests that in 1981 only 7 percent of the Canadian labour force was employed in the primary sector, 26 percent in secondary industries and 67 percent in the service industry. The majority of service industry workers were married women between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Bell (1973) contends that in a modern era, jobs in manufacturing and processing replaced jobs in agriculture and were in turn replaced by service sector work; this trend represents a clear break with modernity. Barrett and Meaghan (1990) argue that such a tendency merely represents "capitalism in a hurry", ushering in another phase of market mechanisms in which power is concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals.

Toffler (1980) and Menzies (1981,1996) suggest that these changes are likely to persevere and to be exacerbated within work organizations in the future. New technologies will continue to have an impact, eliminating jobs. Work hierarchies which favour senior, skilled and entrenched workers who are more likely to be male, will be maintained. The Menzies/Toffler thesis is disputed by Naisbitt (1990,1994) who takes the position that the production and dissemination of information and knowledge cannot be accumulated in the hands and minds of a few individuals. Thus, he proposes that the post-industrial information society will usher in a new era of democracy.

3. One out of every twenty workers in Canada earns minimum wage or less according to a most recent Statistics Canada survey (Wright, 1998:E2). Approximately 55 per cent of these jobs are in retail, factories and the restaurant sector, areas dominated by women. More than half of low-wage earners are youths aged 15 to 24, while another 25 per cent are women 25 to 54 years of age.

4. According to Statistics Canada (1990:223), 20 percent of workers were involuntarily engaged in part-time work because they could not find full-time employment. Between 1975 and 1986, full-time employment grew by 15 percent. In comparison, however, voluntary part-time employment increased by 41 percent and involuntary part-
time employment increased by 375 percent (Akyeampong, 1986:144). Women were significant in their over-representation in these ranks. In 1975, for example, 20 percent of women worked part-time compared to 5 percent of men; by 1988, almost 70 percent of women worked part-time, although only 8 percent of men were occupied in this manner of working (Broad, 1992:24). Duffy and Pupo (1992:11) suggest that women workers are "contained and constrained by the socio-economic structure in which they live ... where part-time work figures prominently as both an expression of the impact of structure (limited, segregated employment opportunities) and agency (the struggle to create more manageable options) in women's lives".

5. Cross (1990:23) notes that over 80 percent of women are employed in service sector work. Women concentrated in the trades, community work and personal service businesses increased from 55 per cent in 1971 to 61 per cent in 1986. By 1989, almost three-quarters of women employed outside the home were engaged in clerical, service, sales or health-related occupations (Broad, 1992:18).

6. Armstrong and Armstrong (1990) suggest that market segmentation based on gender has been invisible in sociology of work studies until recently. These theorists argue that traditional methodologies (which were assumed to be objective and gender neutral), were in fact androcentric. They contend that women's work cannot simply be added into data collected within such frameworks, suggesting that differences in working conditions for women, racial and ethnic groups and class locations must be explored in different historical eras in order to provide a more innovative frame of analysis. Importantly, in moving this agenda forward, they argue for the construction of theories which articulate an interaction between the domestic work women perform and their participation in the paid labour force.

7. Status quo ideas have proven to be very compelling in reinforcing sexual stratification in the workplace, suggesting that the wage differentials which exist between men and women are due to differences in skills acquisition and training which favour men. Dominant cultural ideas also present men as the breadwinners of the family, while women who work to supplement the family income are drawn into the labour force when men are not available and compelled to return to the home when men seek the same jobs. Joekes (1987) points out that, in reality, the actual skills levels in female jobs are often higher than those in highly paid male jobs, that females have lower rates of absenteeism (despite their domestic responsibilities), and that they express less happiness concerning their inferior working conditions in the marketplace. She suggests that the gap is closing between the lifetime participation rates of women compared to men in the labour force, partly as a consequence of the employers' ability to define the nominal rather than the real skill level of jobs as lower and more in line with the pay scales offered to women. She makes the point that it is women's double burden of family and marketplace
responsibilities, their accommodating manner and their concern that they may be dismissed if they complain that is the basis of their differential pay. These contributing factors make women reluctant to confront commonly held patriarchal ideas concerning their work, thereby participating in the perpetuation of the division of labour.

8. Krahn and Lowe (1988:45-55) maintain that women are concentrated in a few occupational categories, including 30 percent in clerical work and 18 per cent in service industry work. These two figures account for approximately half of the women who constitute the paid female labour force. They point out that approximately 90 percent of the part-time jobs created during the past two decades in the service industry are held by women, including retail work, entertainment and work in the food services industry. In contrast, only 9.5 percent of workers who are classified as managerial or administrative are women, compared to 13.8 percent of employed men.

9. Waitressing in a strip club is a prime example of how human capital theory fails to explain that such well-trained and highly motivated workers earn less than men, who are in substantially the same kind of work in the clubs as bartenders. Hunter (1986) suggests that a very casual relationship exists among occupation, income and education, such that some groups are less likely to achieve a return on their investments in education for example, or they may do so only within the context of specific kinds of jobs with particular employers. He demonstrates that factors other than skills and training enter into occupational remuneration including gender, age, social class, racial or ethnic origin, patterns of immigration, geographical locale and the status and cultural currency of the family unit. Hunter makes it clear that equity of access to desirable jobs simply does not exist by illustrating that the wealthiest individuals in society (who often obtain the better jobs) simply do not possess skills and levels of education which exceed those of the population at large.


11. For approximately the past one hundred years in North America, women have earned on average 50 percent of the salaries of men across all job categories (Statistics Canada, 1985:103). By 1985, women were earning 58 percent of what men earned and, by 1994, that figure had risen to 72 percent. Given the current conservative economic climate and a move towards the political Right, it is predicted that women will not be able to advance further on the front of pay equity until well into the next century, despite the existence of both equal pay and equivalent value legislation.

12. Occupational overcrowding of women in the informal and poorly paid jobs of domestic service, retail and entertainment positions (in which personal service is provided), is on the rise in many areas of the world. This trend can, in part, be attributed to the
recent necessity to adopt the dual income family model, the decline in personal income and real purchasing power, and the increase in female-headed households with dependent children. Joekes (1987) cites the example of the dramatic rise of prostitution in Thailand, in which one girl in every three families is currently engaged in prostitution or domestic work either at home or abroad.

13. The work of Hunter and Manley (1986) demonstrates that status is one of the extrinsic rewards of work, generally associated with jobs that require considerable skill and offer security, responsibility and high rates of remuneration.

14. For instance, in the greater metropolitan area of Toronto there are currently 25 large escort agencies, some employing up to 100 women each. It is estimated that within this large and highly competitive business, there are hundreds of listings to be found for 24-hour a day escort services in Metro's Yellow pages, tabloids, magazines and newspaper advertisements. Approximately 4,000 female escorts earn from $20,000 to $80,000 a year, while customers may be spending from $500 to $650 million dollars a year (Pron, 1997a:B4).

15. Stage burlesque tended to ridicule the elites of the upper class, while simultaneously elevating the aspirations, ideas and values of the working class. So-called bawdy vaudeville associated with the obscene, clowning and striptease arose from the roots of satirical songs, political farces and other forms of stage ridicule (Perkins, 1985:81).

16. Foucault advises that it became possible for people to not only satisfy their curiosity about sex, but to extend their "knowledge of pleasure" through the multitude of voyeuristic opportunities which arose in the culture (Foucault, 1977:177).

17. Haste (1981:272-5) argues that equating liberation with "obligatory performance sex" simply resulted in replacing older restrictions with new coercions of "master tyrannies" concerning performance and orgasm. "Whereas once it was cheap to say Yes, now it is rude to say No", contends Haste (1992:275). As a result, the penetration model was repudiated and replaced in a number of sex therapy sessions with models of intimacy and touching, without genital contact in order to discover the power of the sensual. The problematic of detaching sex from love was exhorted as stress was placed on the quality rather than the quantity of the experience, commitment and even celibacy. Sexual choice was based on freedom from both disease and pregnancy. Although the pill initially served as an emblem of women's sexual freedom, with the discovery of a number of adverse side effects, sexual encounters were again viewed as physically unhealthy. With the knowledge that herpes, a sexually-transmitted virus, and AIDS, a killer disease, were sexually transmitted, fears mounted akin to the concerns surrounding venereal diseases
of the past.

18. The traditional nuclear family model, based on the breadwinner husband and the dependent wife not only proved unsatisfactory to many women but is no longer economically feasible. With increasing economic pressures resulting from inflation and rising costs in the past two decades, the family wage model has been replaced by necessity with the dual income family model.

19. Viewed as natural, unproblematic and, therefore, socially desirable, heterosexuality was historically removed from the realm of political economy and history (Valverde, 1985:50). One of the crucial building blocks of heterosexuality is the idea that a natural difference exists between male and female sexuality. The erotic attraction between men and women premised on biology or an urge to reproduce, substantiated the myth that the vagina is a natural receptacle for the penis, and intercourse is the most pleasurable and natural kind of sexual activity.

Men are viewed as sexually predatory, jealous and obsessed with sex. Reluctantly, a man forms nurturing bonds with a woman and children in order to obtain exclusive sexual access to the woman. Seen as having little sexual desire, women were thought to exchange sexual favours for protection from a man. Gender differences were, therefore, eroticized and the emptiness of women's sexuality meant the real power was with the phallus. The sexes were also viewed as opposite and attracted to each other because of difference. The process of eroticizing sex differences suggested that society did not have to eroticize equality or recognize homosexuality. Further, concepts which viewed sex as a separate category collapsed into reproduction, fostering dehumanization by reducing individuals to their sex organs (Valverde (1985:52-3).

20. Traditional theories of labour and economics do not address the historical reasons which have resulted in women and men being paid differently for performing the same or substantially the same jobs. Nor do they account for the historical persistence of job segregation. Dual labour market theory takes up some of the issues left unexplored by theories that took the segregation of the marketplace, based on sex, to be a given. This theory suggests that employers hire based on group characteristics for a segmented labour market, thereby providing few choices for women. In earlier versions of the theory, space was afforded for worker resistance and collective action. Women, however, were not held accountable for their plight. In updated versions, attempts have been made to explain segregation based on legislation which favours elite males, trade union activities which are meant to protect members from encroachment from outsiders, social sentiments which excluded women and minorities from favourable jobs and the role which capitalists played in attempting to divide and conquer the workforce.

Although dual market theory offers an explanation of gender segregation, (in terms of employers searching for increased profits by devaluing or ignoring the skills of specific workers), exerting
a downward pressure on wages (through job restructuring, the introduction of technology and the creation of part-time positions which may attract women to the workplace), it does not deal with how gender divisions arose. Nor does it explain why women as well as visible minorities are assigned to the secondary sector, while men predominate in the primary sector of work. More recently, Armstrong and Armstrong (1990:60-1) have pointed out that dual market theory does not adequately address the connections between labour market and domestic work for women, or why women fare more poorly than most other working groups and have done so for a very long period of time.

21. Gannage (1986) discusses the application of dual labour market theory to an examination of garment industry workers, pointing out the "double day and double bind" which these women face with responsibilities to perform both in the factory and at home. She stresses that such conditions discourage women from being able to participate to the same extent as men in work and union activities. These conditions pressure women to accept the piece-rate over time-rate pay systems in order to maintain some flexibility in the conditions of their factory jobs which allows for the performance of their domestic duties. Such a situation exacts an extremely high physical and psychological toll on the women who engage in such activities.

22. Feminist theorists such as Smith (1977) contend that the state works in complex and contradictory ways with respect to issues of gender and class. Although, at times, it will serve the interests of individual women, or a class of women around some aspects of pay and employment equity issues, the state is not a neutral arbitrator mediating between competing forces; thus the needs of women, for the most part, engender reluctance and resistance on the part of the state.

23. The supportive and integrative work performed by women in the home and the marketplace is similar; both domains of work predispose and restrict women to routine, repetitive work, often with limited remuneration and benefits (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1978:160).

24. As a corollary to the introduction of his concept of private property, Engels (1972) discussed the issue of sex exchanged for money. In view of the fact that a man cannot know with absolute certainty who his progeny are and, in order to ensure that only his children are the rightful heirs to his property, woman was made the property of man under patriarchy. Engels maintained that a wife, therefore, differs from a courtesan only in the manner in which she sells her body, in a single act rather than on a piecemeal basis.

25. Armitage (1981) maintains that stripping has a number of factors in common with other professions based on sexuality, including prostitution, domestic work and motherhood. Although the
latter categories may not be based on sexual exchange, they have traditionally involved elements of exploitation. Such work is an outgrowth of the traditional social and sexual activities which women are expected to perform, and as a consequence have come to be seen as "natural". The social, emotional and sexual work which women execute is often not viewed as skilled work requiring special training, even though aspects of the job may require a high level of both skill and training.

26. In a similar manner, Seccombe (1973:88-90, 1993) contends that housewives and mothers provide a host of emotional, social and sexual services (including that of educator, cook, chauffeur, therapist, social worker, nurse and sex worker), which are often not referred to in formal job descriptions.

27. See Krahn and Lowe (1988:88-90) for a discussion of the barriers to the primary labour market which exist, including factors of age, gender, race, credentials, informal information networks, attitudes of employers, work experience, history of employment and geographical location.

   According to Beechley (1979:112), women have been excluded from the skilled and better-paying positions in the labour market on the basis that they do not possess the ability, skills, experience, physical strength and emotional fortitude to perform specific jobs. This dichotomous position constructs gender arguments based on the largely false picture of women's inabilities, in contrast to the skills, technical knowledge and rational behaviour of men in order to create and maintain job segregation. Viewed as part of their nature to acquiesce, women consequently have been relegated to perform the domestic and menial jobs of society.

28. A preliminary summary of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women suggests that the federal government must adopt and implement a national action plan to eradicate sexist attitudes (which pervade all facets of Canadian life) in order to achieve a goal of zero tolerance of violence against women. The report recommends the implementation of a national, compulsory, educational equity program to address the historic problems women have faced in "schools, the justice system, religious institutions, the military, government, the workplace, the media and on Indian reserves" (Vinneau, 1995:14).

29. We are reminded by Williams (1989:26) that since the 1970s, women have been entering the sexual marketplace as consumers to seek pleasure. She suggests that the sexual revolution ushered in a decade earlier has resulted in the "feminization of sex" which has not just been for the benefit of men.

30. Advocates of the resource theory of family relations suggest that women who work outside of the home are happier than those engaged in full-time domestic work, for the express reason that as
wage earners, their power in the home increases (Duffy and Pupo, 1992:129).

31. Statistics Canada (1981), *Survey of Consumer Finances*

32. Joekes (1987:18-19) points out that women's experience of employment is inferior and their rewards in paid employment are more limited than those of men, due to the significant and perpetual wage gap across all job classifications, the unequal distribution of men and women in different jobs, the inferior ranking of occupations predominated by women and the fact that gender-based wage differentials increase with higher educational qualifications. Chesler (1977:240) writes: "no one is poorer than poor women. Not even poor men. Women of all races and ethnicities consistently earn less than White men. Women of all races earn less than men of their own racial-ethnic group, and less than White women. Earnings of women of all races are significantly lower than White men's and that of minority group men, with the exception of native American and Filipino men".

33. The term "race" has been closely associated with "ethnicity", as a way to categorize people based on alleged genotypical differences. In everyday discourse, the term "race" is assumed to have a scientific basis that sets aside one category of people from another, based on phenotypical characteristics which are slightly dissimilar. In the development of racial ideology, people of colour are seen as inferior. Although race is a social construct and has no basis in biology, social importance became historically attached to differences ascribed to race, to produce and justify differential treatment and access to material resources. (St-Onge, 1989:117).

34. The term women of colour, as opposed to visible minority, is the term that is preferred by many non-White women. It generally refers to Black, Native, Asian and all non-White women. Some women of colour may also be immigrants, although not all immigrants are women of colour. This term, however, can also be problematic in that it assumes unity of experience among different women. It also sets up a dichotomy in which such women are in a category that is in opposition to Caucasian women (Baca Zinn and Thorton Dill, 1994).

35. This process of dichotomization helps in understanding how Europeans, in the later periods of colonialism, came to construct race as a social category and to use it to classify people as superior and inferior. Arising out of imperialism, notions of first and second nature were developed by European colonizers. Civilization became a European phenomenon with the mission of White men to bring civilization to the "savages" that were brought under domination (Miles & Finn, 1989:20). Interaction with indigenous people was increasingly structured by competition for land, the introduction of private property rights, a demand for an enslaved
labour force and the obligation of conversion to Christianity, all
in the name of "civilization". According to Miles and Finn (1989),
the "other" was not just different, but became inferior as a result
of the development of the concept of scientific racism that
occurred with colonization.

36. Jaggar (1983:370-71) suggests that the ruling class has an
interest in concealing and distorting the ways in which domination
of the rest of the population occurs. The exploitation of
subordinate classes is characteristically ignored, described as
enjoyment, justified as freely chosen or viewed as inevitable.
Protected from the experience of oppression, the ruling class comes
to view society from their own experiences in a way that justifies
the system of organization.

37. Stereotyping is a generalized image of a person based on
characteristics of limited abilities projected onto a group,
without regard for individual differences among that group of
people (Yeaboth, 1988:19).

38. Black is an analytical category used to describe people of
African origin (i.e. Africans, Caribbeans, Afro-Canadians),
together with those of African/European or African/Asian parentage
(Yeaboth, 1988:13).

39. Edwards (1997) observes that Black urban males, with an
unemployment rate twice that of White workers and other working
poor in the U.S., are treated in a distinctively different way in
the labour market than White urban males, by generally being paid
less in the same position. Furthermore, education does not
necessarily lead to better jobs or provide an adequate return for
these "secondary labour market" workers. Ringer and Lawless
(1989:68-69) are of the opinion that real changes for people who
suffer from oppression based on factors of race and ethnicity
will require more than the implementation of state policies such
as affirmative action. They suggest that it will be necessary to
reorder fundamentally the political priorities, reallocate
resources in the system and expand government intervention in the
marketplace.

40. The viewpoint of Black women is established and maintained
from their perspective at the "margin", and not the "centre" of
society. It is in contradiction with the views expressed by White
women who dominate feminist discourse, contends feminist writer
bell hooks (1984:1-37,1988). Class struggles can only be
understood by incorporating an explanation of how racism
functions within capitalism. Racism does not merely provide a
different set of experiences for non-White women; like sexism, it
also functions as a system of institutionalized domination
through systemic practices which limit the choices of Black
women. In order to move toward a "liberatory feminist theory" and
praxis and to better understand the politics of domination, it is
essential to recognize the interconnections of sex, race and class as they function in systems of domination. Beginning an analysis in the centre, hooks argues, centralizes the experiences of women most marginalized in society.

41. Henry and Ginzberg (1985) found that members of visible minorities were more likely to be excluded from employment opportunities in Canada. Specifically, in some two hundred job openings, Black candidates obtained fewer job interviews than White applicants, and employers showed a preference for White applicants in job offers in 25 percent of the cases. Some 50 percent of employers contacted engaged in some form of discrimination against visible minority applicants.

42. For a more detailed presentation of this idea see Bowles and Gintis (1975).

43. Although a large difference in job levels between White and Black people may be understood to be due to differences in formal qualifications, a considerable difference in job levels between these two groups can also be attributed to substantial levels of discrimination against minorities in employment recruitment. This is most often manifested in inferior positions in the labour market and a low level of wages for the latter group. Systematically comparing rates of employment, kinds of jobs, income and housing, there is a consistent pattern of racial disadvantage and discrimination that has a powerful impact of the daily lives of Black people (Yeboah, 1988:22).

44. With the growth of Western science, differences in race and ethnicity and the consequent inequality were attributed to biology. This emerging scientific secular view of the world saw humans divided into biologically distinct and unequal races. By nature, Whites were at the top of the racial hierarchy, deemed superior and with a right and obligation to dominate people of other races. Differences in language, custom and culture were attributed to biologically based race differences that often led to interpreting people of colour as "savage" and in need of the "civilizing" influence of White people. In order to justify the economic processes of colonization, racial theories rationalized economic and social practices which rendered the "races" unequal. Racist practices perpetuated inequality by proclaiming people of colour inherently inferior and then subordinating them socially, economically and politically (Amott and Matthaei, 1991:18).

45. The President of Canadian Association of Burlesque Entertainers (CABE), Diane Michaels, points out that in the early days of stripping dancers could be charged under Section 179 of the Criminal Code for performing nude, or presenting themselves in such a way as to offend public decency or order. Through her organization, she sought to obtain clarification of the laws under which "exotic dancers" worked. See Brissenden (1980:77).
46. The true nature of sexual harassment cannot be understood unless it is placed in a larger socio-political context where it is viewed as a systematic violation of women's economic and political rights, contends Angela Y. Davis (1989: 1-52). The most serious of these incidents take place against working class women and women of colour, leading Davis to conclude that the social conditions which give rise to sexual violence also perpetuate racism. Throughout the history of Afro-American women in the U.S., sexual abuse has always been perceived as an occupational hazard, as the body of the Black slave was accessible at all times to the slave master. In contemporary society, Black women are still frequent victims of sexual assault by White men, particularly in homes in which they work and, to this day, the number of Black women raped by White men far exceeds, in absolute and in relative terms, the statistics of Black men raping White women, Davis contends.

Buchanan (1992: 8-11) argues that visible minorities are constructed as "other" in the discursive space of White culture. "Whiteness symbolizes goodness, health, purity, civilization and high culture; blackness represents evil, pathology, corruption, the jungle and the baser human needs." Racism is sexualized in European ideology, which views Africans as animalistic, more sexual than Whites and closer to nature. Within this "racist-sexist framework . . . black women [are] promiscuous, loose, fast, hot-blooded, wild types who like our sex raw and like it often."

47. In commenting about sexual economics in a "whorehouse", Chesler (1977: 206) states that it is a myth that women can sell sex to men for large gains, either financially or emotionally. She maintains that most women do not attain adequate economic, emotional or professional rewards whether they sell, or refuse to sell, their reproductive services. Indeed, it can be said that most women who remain in the home--as well as those who enter the paid labour market--face a number of structural barriers, with the resulting division of labour creating wage differentials in favour of men. These wage differentials, in turn, further accentuate the division of labour.

48. By their own account, features earn "fabulous" money, substantially more than most working women and men in Canada. Their average earnings place them in the rarefied company of some male-predominated professions, including judges and magistrates ($102,646 with 78% men), physicians and surgeons ($102,370 with 77% men), dentists ($95,776 with 89% men), lawyers ($76,966 with 75% men), senior managers ($67,997 with 81% men), other managers ($64,893 with 75% men), airline pilots and flight engineers ($64,316 with 95% men), chiropractors ($63,566 with 88% men) engineers ($63,566 with 88% men) and university professors ($62,064 with 78% men). Although such earnings separate features from other club dancers, they also separate them from most other women in Canada, who are employed in traditional female areas,
including textile workers ($16,540 with 91% women), farm workers other than livestock ($16,227 with 55% women), bartenders ($16,067 with 54% women), cleaners ($15,718 with 87% women), housekeepers and servants ($14,479 with 92% women), food and beverage servers ($14,100 with 78% women) and child care workers ($13,518 with 97% women), according to Statistics Canada (1990).


50. The purpose of the Commission was to review the impact of federal laws and state practices on the lives of women, including criminal law, labour law, federal tax law, marriage and divorce laws, education, job skills and the status of women in the workforce, together with immigration and citizenship policies.

51. Human capital theory suggests that people are rewarded in the marketplace based upon their individual abilities, skills and initiatives. As early as 1848, when a Women's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York to take up women's grievances concerning child custody, marriage laws and pay equity, it was established that when women had the same credentials and the same amount of training and responsibility on the job, they were not paid equally (Nunes and White 1972). Considering that women in Ontario are better educated than men, and taking into account such factors as the number of years in the labour force and their productivity (a concept which includes resource availability and approaches to supervision as well as the individual's productive capacity), there remains a substantial wage gap between men and women. Gaskell (1989, 1992) suggests that the concept of equal pay for work of equal value is difficult to enforce, in view of the fact that the gender of the worker plays a substantial role in determining the socially accepted understanding concerning the skill level of a job. Women's work is generally perceived as less skillful than would be assessed in an objective appraisal, and it is the differentially defined and valued skills of men and women which, in part, accounts for wage differentials favouring men.

52. Such practices appear to have been common for some time, as evidenced by Yvette Paris' (1990:96) description of an incident in the early 1960s. Paris and another dancer, Subway Suzie, were asked to work on New Year's eve, a holiday Yvette judiciously avoided because the patrons characteristically were drunk and unpredictable:

At the end of this very dull and fruitless night, the only thing we had to look forward to was the double pay we'd been promised. We lined up for our money. Sal paid us our usual piddling salary. We reminded Sal that he'd promised us double pay. He laughed and said we must have misunderstood him. He had never promised any such thing, and we should be glad we'd gotten what we did. I took the money and got my coat, mad as hell but
a wiser person for it.

53. Armstrong and Armstrong (1978: 81-3) claim that women's absences from work are related to the very nature of low-paid routine jobs as well as a result of child care responsibilities, illness, fatigue and stress due to the double role taken up of marketplace and the home.

Chapter Six

CHANGES IN THE CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY
AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR REORGANIZING
THE LABOUR PROCESS OF STRIPPING

6.1. Transforming Canadian Political Economy

One of the most important developments in the Canadian labour force has been the mass entry of women into the workforce after the Second World War, the unparalleled expansion of the service sector and the rapid increase in part-time and temporary work. By the mid-1960s, approximately 35 per cent of the workforce were women. The figure of women's workplace participation was closer to 45 per cent in the mid-1970s; in 1980 it was 50 per cent, and it rose to 68 per cent in 1996 (Status of Women Canada, 1998:1). Women currently earn approximately 73 per cent of what men earn, partly as a result of engaging in more part-time employment. Due to their disproportionate amount of unpaid domestic work, women spent more time working than men. As the number of women living with a spouse declines, more women are living alone or with their children. Current estimates suggest that 87 per cent of single-parent households are headed by women. Almost 39 per cent of women who are single and over the age of 65 live at, or below, the poverty line (Status of Women, 1998:1).

The trend of women working outside of the home became widespread during the past half century and was influenced by marriage, education, employment status, socioeconomic status of the family and the presence of children. As the economy demanded more women workers, both single and married women were occupied in gainful employment in the public domain. An increase in the numbers of women in the paid labour force was due to the expansion within the service sector of "clean" indoor jobs requiring feminine skills. As
divorce rates soared and many women became heads of households, a number of those positions allowed them to earn a salary, although continuing to be primarily responsible for domestic work and childcare. Laws relating to maternity benefits, parental leaves, legalization of birth control, together with changes in gender roles, added to the increasing presence of women in the paid labour force.

Historically, much of the work carried out by women in the paid workforce was viewed as supplemental to the work performed by men. A gendered concept of work based on the separation of home and the marketplace prevailed, assigning primary responsibility for the domestic sphere to women. Promoting the idea that a woman's place was in the home was essential in establishing the "natural" aspect of a gender division of labour. This social construction served to distinguish between men's and women's work in both the public and private spheres (Hartman, 1976; Barrett and McIntosh, 1980). The social and historical development of the concept of work, based upon the unpaid domestic work of wives and mothers, meant that it was acceptable to use women as flexible workers in the marketplace (Luxton, 1980; Armstrong and Armstrong, 1990). Arising out of deeply embedded ideas in the culture, women's paid and unpaid work was systematically overlooked; when women participated in the paid labour force the pliant use of women workers was often taken for granted. They were expected to be adaptable to work in the public sphere, willing to accept short-term, working contracts and employment strategies (which were aligned with the interest of employers) and to bypass long-term costly and restrictive union contracts. Often work flexibility was favoured by women in order to fit their marketplace work around domestic responsibilities, which were ideologically determined to be their primary and most important job. More likely to be the family's sole breadwinner and unable to call upon a woman's flexible work in the family, explains
why women accepted whatever work was available and often at poverty-level wages (Leach, 1992:4-5).

Unequal legal, social and economic relations within Canadian institutions were important determinants of the status of immigrant women, although government officials and community social workers attributed problems of immigration to issues of cultural differences and difficulties of adjustment (Cohen, 1987). International migration was spurred by development associated with European colonialism and imperialism, which resulted in the massive accumulation of capital and production in some countries such as Canada and high levels of unemployment, limited opportunities and low wages in underdeveloped countries. Canada's immigration policies were designed for the purpose of directing demographic growth and meeting economic and labour market demands. The requirement for specific kinds of skills and trading relationships with other nations historically shaped policies, which favoured British and European immigrants filling the technical and professional niche of the labour market. At the same time, Chinese men were encouraged to emigrate as indentured labourers, and more recently West Indian and Filipino women came to Canada as domestic workers (Ng, 1991:20). A compelling case can be made concerning the spurious benevolence behind Canadian policies concerning the way domestic work was constructed as "women's work", demonstrating the inter-connections between colonial ideology, immigration policy and material conditions (Bakan and Statsiulis, 1997). Ng, 1991:21) argues that racism and sexism are systemic features of Canadian society, constructed and reproduced particularly among women as "immigrants", to include women of colour, women from the Third World, poor women in low status jobs and women who have an accent.

Although the system of assigning people to categories (in terms of eligibility for Canadian immigration) did not formally
discriminate on the basis of race, class and gender, the way in which classes of immigrants were designated and the selection of immigrants was problematic. Immigration processes structured sexual inequality within the category of the "family class", usually by designating men as household heads and wives as legally dependent on their spouses. Newly arrived families often relied upon the labour force participation of wives, structured by the requirement to provide cheap female labour in marginal sectors of the economy (Ng and Das Gupta, 1981:83-5). This subordinate status disadvantaged immigrant women in educational and employment advancement because they were ineligible for various government-sponsored language, employment training and state-assisted programs.

Not only were there marked differences in levels of economic activity among ethnic women, but the pattern of employment for White women of British origins cannot be generalized to other ethnic groups (Holdsworth and Dale, 1996:436). Immigrant women were often assigned to unskilled and low-paying jobs in factories, in the service industry and in domestic work, while patriarchal biases encouraged their husbands to attend school acquiring competence in English, permitting them entry into job training programs (Ng, 1991:22). Problems in gaining recognition for educational and professional credentials, upgrading their training and skills and acquiring Canadian work experience were some of the many obstacles faced by immigrant women. In the 1980s, Black nurses from the Caribbean for instance, complained about biased performance evaluation, barriers to promotional opportunities, differential work assignments and disproportionate dismissal from their jobs. In 1991, the Ontario Human Rights Commission found in favour of a coalition of Black nurses, uncovering systemic discrimination and recommending reinstatement, retroactive pay, punitive damages, fair assignments, and the establishment of an employment equity program.
and an anti-racism advisory committee at a particular Toronto hospital (Calliste, 1993:86).

The stereotype of the immigrant woman based on biases in Canadian immigration policy, Canadian institutions and the marketplace that racially constructed gender ideologies and images of visible minority women as naturally suited to the lower stratum of the labour market presented a barrier to the participation of some female newcomers as equal members of society. The result is that immigrant women were often forced to accept work of a temporary nature, with irregular hours, frequently under difficult conditions and with few fringe and pension benefits. Economic and political advantages were accumulated by the state, which economized on the reproduction of labour and benefitted from this low-paid workforce. As well, benefits accrued to employers who were extended a greater degree of control over labour power among workers who lacked basic political rights, were vulnerable to exploitation and often unable to organize to improve their working conditions.

By the 1960s, it became increasingly evident that the typical employee was no longer the male industrial worker. Large numbers of women entered the labour market; however, the positions open to most were confined to traditional female occupations in the new service economy. As employment in the goods-producing sector of the labour market declined from 56 per cent in 1951 to 40 per cent in 1989, service sector work increased. The media became preoccupied with the high-achieving "superwoman", who although exhausted, juggled a career and her domestic responsibilities. Nearly 90 per cent of the employment created during the past forty years in Canada (representing 70 per cent of the country's labour force) was in the service sector (Economic Council of Canada 1991:1). Comprising the majority of the workers who earned a low wage and
were in insecure positions, the majority of Canadian working women were engaged in service sector work by 1991 (Armstrong and Armstrong 1990:23-24). As non-standardized forms of work emerged, many businesses used sub-contracting to achieve flexibility. In contrast to Fordist employment and productive norms, the labour intensive service sector economy required small sites of operation and flexible cheaper labour, designed, in part, for the 3.5 million workers employed in this sector of the labour market of which 70 per cent are currently women (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994:31).

Working in a complex and contradictory manner, the state both reproduced social relations based on gender and also worked for the benefit of women (Smith, 1977:25). Historically, the Family Benefits Plan, for example, reinforced women's dependency as well as men's financial responsibility. With the rapid development of the welfare state, a redistribution of income from employed males to unemployed males and females took place, and many of the expanding positions in health, education and administration began to be occupied by women. Responding to the collective strength of women workers, the state introduced workplace legislation to ensure a floor of basic working conditions, together with regulations dealing with employment and pay equity. Within the public sector, women were more likely to be unionized, to become managers, to achieve job security and to narrow the wage gap.

During the recession of the 1980s, women's economic position deteriorated. As the recession spread and job opportunities diminished, it was apparent that political will was lacking to deal with male privilege and female subordination. Policies and structures of the state, for the most part, did not support the advancement of women's rights. With cutbacks in public expenditures and a diminishing social safety net, it was clear that women, in
particular, were disadvantaged by the recession. Family and marriage patterns were rapidly changing as people cohabited and had children outside of marriage. Many marriages ended in divorce. By the early 1990s, the Vanier Institute on the Family reported that dual-income families, single-parent families, reconstituted families, child-free families and gay and lesbian families had replaced the traditional nuclear family, consisting of breadwinner and housewife (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1993). With a significant increase in the numbers of women who were unemployed and underemployed, and a growing number of women supporting unemployed men or heading single-parent families, many women and their families were living at or below the poverty line.

With the expansion of public sector jobs in the 1970s and 1980s, important gains had been made by some women through education and training for those employed in relatively "good" jobs. As a result of such employment, these women had been able to decrease the pay gap with men. In 1989, women earned 73 per cent of what men earned, up from the 1969 figure of 66 per cent (Crawford, 1998:1). It is the work which women do in female-dominated workplaces--including nursing, social work, teaching and clerical work—that came under attack in the newly restructured Canadian economy. For some time the private sector had casualized jobs; now the public sector was also under siege. Since 1996, 26,000 jobs have been eliminated from the provincial civil service. In view of the fact that women are often "last hired and first fired", many women were losing "good" jobs, similar to the way in which men in the early 1980s lost a number of jobs in the manufacturing sector. These women found that they were being marginalized into casual, temporary and part-time positions. A number of textile workers in the garment industry of Toronto, for example, have had their $12-an-hour wage replaced by minimum wage or less when they took up the same work in their homes (Crawford, 1998:1). Currently, some 24
per cent of women work part-time compared to only 5 per cent of men; however, as many as one in three women working part-time want full-time work (Crawford, 1998:L11). Women earned an average of $28,800 in 1998 and men earned $44,900 in the same period—even when self-employed, women earned approximately three quarters of men's salaries (Crawford, 1998:L11).

Displacing the family wage economy, the participation rate of women in the labour market rose from 30 percent in 1961 to 56 per cent in 1991, a figure which is expected to climb to 70 per cent by year 2000 (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1990:61-62). In 1967, 32 per cent of families had dual incomes, but by 1990, that figure had risen to 62 per cent (Ghalam, 1993:s). Moreover, the participation rate of mothers in the labour force with children under the age of six rose from 49 per cent in 1981, to 69 per cent in 1991 (Ghalam, 1993:7). In view of the drop in real wages (on average 15 to 20 per cent), during the past twenty years in one out of every three Canadian families, 40 per cent of the family income was contributed by women (Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, 1994:7). Women worked in this new economy for the same reasons as men, out of economic necessity to support themselves and their families. The century old wage gap of fifty cents to the dollar was replaced by a gap of 36 cents in 1987, and then increased in 1996 to 73 cents to the dollar earned by men across all job categories. A substantive amount of the narrowing of the difference in gender earnings was, however, attributed to a decline in male earnings and an increase in the participation rate of women, rather than higher earnings for women workers.

As corporate profits fell, male unemployment rose, the strength of unions declined and the Canadian state demonstrated resistance to women's claims for equality. Federal and provincial governments hesitated to intervene to enforce pay equity in the
private sector. Armstrong and Armstrong (1990:119) suggest that recently "there has been a significant shift in distinctions between the public and private sectors as the state deregulates the formal economy, reduces the state sector, and increasingly regulates private households." Similar to the initiatives taken by the private sector, the federal government cut back funding and services. National government policies called for downsizing and privatizing. They demanded increased productivity and they enacted back-to-work legislation for public sector workers, many of whom were women. Struggling to secure maternity leave, to protect working conditions, and to instill policies of prevention against sexual harassment proved to be both beneficial to women and to reinforce their subordination and inequality. Labour legislation dealing with issues such as minimum wage, hours of work, health and safety issues and pensions were found to impact in a differential manner on women than men. Fundamental problems of poverty, violence and discrimination were dealt with in an individual framework, around which small adjustments in state practice were undertaken. Increasingly, women's access to resources was regulated by the state, perpetuating a sexual division of labour and maintaining women's primary reproductory and nurturing roles. There was no recognition of women's oppression as long-term, systemic and induced, at times, by state policies. (Ursel, 1986:163).

Although the presence of social programs and union contracts in Canada moderated some of the extremes in income which were present in the United States, pronounced economic polarization became a significant facet of the new market economy. Between 1973 and 1989, most of the mobility in Canadian society was occurring among the lower-middle class who were on a general downward spiral (Morissette et.al., 1993:7). These changes were marked by an increasing number of workers who experienced a drop in real earnings and with a significant decline in the numbers of workers
who were earning middle class salaries (Morissette et al., 1993:7). Forty eight percent of the Canadian labour force earned less than $20,000 per year in 1981; by 1990 that figure was 51 percent and is projected to escalate by year 2011 to 65 percent of the working population (Meyer, 1995). As a substantial number of middle-aged workers voluntarily and involuntarily left their employment, if they were replaced, it was with younger people who were willing to accept lower wages. It is among young workers entering the labour market that the greatest polarization of income has occurred. Jobs paying below $8 an hour, constituted 78 percent of all jobs created between 1981 and 1990. Since 1977, real wages declined by 25 percent among workers under the age of 25, the same population that is three times more likely to draw unemployment insurance and to remain unemployed longer than workers who earn $20 an hour—facts symptomatic of an emerging low-wage market with requirements for fewer skills (Meyer, 1995; Human Resources Development Canada, 1994:23).

By the 1990s, unemployment was four times as high in Canada as it was thirty years previously, with 1.6 million people out of work and millions more settling for part-time jobs or giving up looking for work (Winston, 1995). As employers increasingly began to turn to capital investment to reduce labour costs, the majority of new jobs created were part-time, short-term contract or self-created jobs, and only a minority of these positions offered significant benefits and security. Despite the fact that Canadian corporations posted record profits of $66 billion in 1995, and substantial salary increases for CEOs became a familiar announcement in the daily news, companies continued to downsize their workforces (Walker, 1996c:Al). Paradoxically, benchmarks suggested that as corporate balance sheets soared jobs disappeared, and as consumer spending bottomed out, interest rates fell. When an infamous 1994 Wall Street Journal editorial postulated that "it's not
inconceivable that Canada could hit the debt wall and...will have to call in the International Monetary Fund to stabilize its falling currency", the fetish of low inflation together with debt and deficit reduction politics took hold with a vengeance in Canada (Camp, 1996:A9)\textsuperscript{10}\textsuperscript{11}

Finance Minister Paul Martin prepared yet another round of steep spending cuts, despite the fact that, when the Liberals were in opposition, they argued that the tough monetary policies of the Bank of Canada were exacting too high a price in terms of rates of unemployment and an explosion of the Canadian public debt.\textsuperscript{12} Ordinary citizens were forced to cope with falling standards of living, joblessness, cutbacks in social, health and educational services, weakened labour and environmental regulations and the need to generate finances for privatized services and their own retirement.\textsuperscript{13} When the promise of jobs and the good life did not surface in the new global economy, the disquieting docility of the labour force, grateful for their jobs and fearful about the growing reserve army of the unemployed, settled in and accepted redundancies with a degree of resignation which had not been witnessed for several decades in Canada. The public clamouring of some extreme elements of reform in the populace who scapegoat "welfare bums" and immigrants as the source of economic woes, while embracing concepts of lower taxes, privatization and a smaller government, further exacerbated the ability of ordinary people to mount a successful fight-back campaign.

The characteristics of a changing economy, including an expansion of non-standard work, smaller work sites, cheaper labour, unemployment and a greater utilization of women workers did not necessarily provide labour market conditions that were favourable to working women. It was a labour market highlighted by substantial instability, increased competition and diminished job security. As
workers entered and left jobs frequently, the tendency of employers to underinvest in skills training was linked to the high rates of labour turnover (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1993:119). Although Canada created more jobs than other Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development countries, it also experienced more job loses, higher rates of underemployment and an expansion of the labour force (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1994:13-17). By its nature, non-standard work was more insecure, small businesses tended to be less stable with a higher rate of failure and women were predisposed to experience less job security than men (Economic Council of Canada, 1992:23; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1993:120-23).

Many Canadian work sites required flexible workers who could perform a variety of tasks, interchangeable workers who could work alone or on teams, and workers who could be integrated as generalists or specialists into an atmosphere of intensified work. These changes compelled employees to learn new skills quickly, to acquire a wider range of adeptness and to adapt to a broader range of tasks. Although the demands of contemporary jobs were expanding and intensifying, the goal of capital was to utilize but not necessarily recognize (especially through compensation) changing skill requirements. In view of the fact that skills are socially constructed, the recognition, evaluation and compensation of women's skills remained particularly problematic. Many non-standard forms of employment, which required specific skills such as social and communication skills (that were readily available in female populations) were specifically designed to target women. The women who entered these occupations, however, had limited employment alternatives and bargaining power and often experienced both a lack of recognition of their skills and a downward pressure on earnings and benefits.
Similar to the Liberals and New Democrats who were concerned to contain costs, to cut government spending and to downsize the public infrastructure, Mike Harris (in his Tory pin-striped suit greeting an exuberant crowd in North Bay, Ontario) rhetorically called for a "Common Sense Revolution" in a campaign which set the province in June 1995, on a breathtaking turn to the political Right. Not content to tinker, the comprehensive reforms of the Progressive Conservative party clamoured for reductions in welfare benefits, eliminating employment equity, repealing pro-labour legislature and reducing government spending and taxation. The same ideas had previously been advocated by Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain, who caused deep class divisions, broke the coal miners' union and promoted the demise of public education, as well as Ronald Reagan in the United States, the champion of a trickle-down model of economics, which led to a redistribution of wealth to the already wealthy, a decrease in the lifestyle of the middle class and a tripling of the national debt. Harris' flawed paradigm had also been advocated by Alberta's Ralph Klein, who waged a war against social assistance, injured workers and the aged as well as deregulating aspects of public health, education and the environment in the interest of redistributing wealth. Using terms such as "bankrupt", "on the skids" and "down the tubes" to describe the state of the province, and armed with his New York Wall Street, Standard and Poor's debt rating, Harris claimed that the solution to salvage the economic health of Ontario was to provide a 30 per cent tax cut designed to stimulate economic activity. In challenging the concept of creating jobs through the destruction of public service employment, Gord Wilson, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour stated that "Mr. Harris talks about job creation but ... the greatest job destroyer in this province is Mike Harris and his gang of hooligans at Queen's Park" (Wilkes and Kaley, 1995:A20).
One aspect of the well-documented shift from manufacturing to service sector jobs was the emergence of contingent workers who were part-time, temporary or self-employed subcontractors, together with the steady increase in permanent large-scale unemployment. As large corporations and governments continued to restructure their operations through mergers and "downsizing" following four decades of official economic expansion, approximately one quarter to one third of current employees in North America were classified as contingent workers (Gwyn, 1996e:F3; Parker, 1994:76-79). The Canadian Council on Social Development (1997:16A) reports that although the economy had improved, 2.4 people competed for every new job created. The link between productivity and wage increases, economic growth and job creation had been severed.26 Many seeking to enter and re-enter the work force, ended up in low-wage, dead-end service jobs now dubbed "McJobs", in less skillful work in other areas of the service industry and in non-union shops as temporary, "outsourced" and free-lance workers.

As Canada's manufacturing sector shrank and the service sector grew, relatively high-paying jobs were being substituted for low-paying positions. Even if workers currently retrained every five or six years, there would simply not be enough jobs for those who need to work. The Information Revolution is profoundly different from the Industrial Revolution which went before. It is youth, women, the disabled, elderly, minorities and the poorly educated who have become overly represented in these "just-in-time" forms of service delivery and production processes. As business and governments sought a highly flexible and interchangeable work force through the deployment of a small core of permanent workers, together with a large and growing number of contingent workers who could be hired and fired at will, there was little incentive to provide suitable salaries, working conditions and benefits such as vacations, pensions and sick-leave plans to other than a minority of workers.21
Increased job insecurity, deterioration of the skills, content and wages in many positions, coupled with an individual tendency to quit jobs as a result of a deep sense of dissatisfaction with working conditions, emerged as a demand-side dimension to the growth of contingent workers. Turbulence and unpredictability, the cornerstones of chaos theory and the most pronounced characteristics of work in the 21st century, were predicted to become the predominant modus operandi of the Canadian labour market in the future.

The Canadian economy shifted from a system characterized by mass production, economies of scale, detailed labour divisions and a separation of execution and control in the workplace, to a new system of economic organization distinguished by flexible forms of accumulation. Despite the changing acceptance of women combining family life with outside employment, women continued to experience low pay, limited employment opportunities, and an undervaluation of their work. In 1991, 65 per cent of mothers in two-parent families were in the labour force, a figure even larger than the 52 per cent of single-parent mothers (Baker, 1996:24). Canadian statistics indicate that currently, three-quarters of mothers with children under 12, work outside the home.

In future, capital's flexible use of workers will be enhanced as governments continue to invoke supply side economic policies and shift the cost of economic adjustment onto individuals and public services. Labour strategies will move workers on demand in and out of the marketplace, polarize the labour force, generate wage competition, weaken the hand of labour, and transfer some of costs of doing business to society at large through programs of unemployment insurance and social assistance. The balance between employee and employer will be tipped in favour of the latter, due to the fact that flexible labour market strategies demand high
rates of unemployment and large pools of cheap labour. Some long-
term government investments will be directed toward employers,
despite the fact many tend to underinvest seriously in human
resource development. Problems for workers will continue to be
exacerbated as governments shift the allocation of resources from
social support and educational systems to individual responsibility
in skills acquisition and training. Much of blame for being unable
to secure employment depicted in government discourses will be seen
to be the result of the individual failing to secure the proper
training, possessing the appropriate motivational and work
attitudes and making the right choices. In future, responsibility
will rest with the individual to seek education, retraining, engage
in lifelong learning (at the individual's expense), and to acquire
knowledge and skills as preparation for numerous career shifts
anticipated in the future. According to Shields, "the current
trajectory of public policy 'reform' will come at the cost of
growing levels of income differentials, the continued decline of a
core labour force and its replacements by a growing army of
contingent workers and the persistence of mass under and
unemployment" (Shields and Russell, 1995:20).

6.2. The Changing Labour Market and the
Transformation of the Labour Process of Stripping

Restructuring the Canadian state to privatize, marketize and
transform government services took place in the mid 1970s to
coincide with a period of economic and political transformations.
The period was characterized by slow economic growth relative to
post World War II standards, the introduction of multilateral trade
agreements and slack labour markets (measured by rising levels of
contingent, substandard employment and unemployment). With respect
to distribution policies, the Canadian state began dismantling
becoming less responsive to the needs of citizens, while favouring
private ownership of productive resources, primacy of a market economy, self-employment and the free movement of capital both domestically and internationally (Meager, 1992:127). All levels of government tackled the problems of deficit and debt by reducing income support programs such as Employment Insurance, social assistance and other social programs that predominantly benefited working families, single parents, the young, elderly and the poor. With stagnant and declining wages, insecure and low-wage jobs, the disappearance of full-time work and rising taxes, most working Canadians experienced a decline in their standard of living. Average family income adjusted for inflation decreased by approximately four per cent between 1989-1999, at the same time that the social wage affecting middle-income Canadians was deeply cut (Centre for Social Justice, 1999:6).

The rapid and massive corporate restructuring of private sector employment along the lines of global, neoliberal interests transformed class relations, dramatically giving rise to a plethora of new concepts of work and new forms of the labour process (Schor and Il, 1995; Frenkel and Royal, 1997:5). Depending upon how it was aligned with particular types of corporate and industrial interests, the state played a central role in setting the new framework for new labour relations. Government policies of high unemployment, retrenchment of income support, deregulation of wages and working conditions created the conditions which produced a dual labour market with increased growth in temporary and part-time work (Allen, 1993:115; Parker, 1994:112; Walsh, 1999:179). Changes in the political economy shaped the way production and the nature of work were organized and altered workers' skills, power, authority relationships and the interactions of employees and employers. Innovative management strategies that redistributed wealth and power changed the structure of the working class, giving rise to a decline of industrial work and the increase of low-cost work in the
service industry through the development of a universal market. Commodification of many aspects of life, increasing commercialization, monopolization and the development of mass consumer industries became part of the political economy of popular culture (Laxer, 1998:454).

During the past few decades, the transformation of global competition, technology and the organization of the labour process have resulted in the growing power of capital over labour and a decline of radicalism within the labour movement (Wood, 1989; Drache and Glasbeek, 1992). Such an approach highlighted the relationship between the labour process that was particularly associated with market transformations and the reorganization of the state. Transformations in the political economy (reflecting changes in rates of profit, surplus value and the pursuit of flexible labour) resulted in the reorganization of production and occupational structure, defined in terms of social relations built around ownership and control of different forces of production such as labour power, capital and skill or knowledge. Restructuring effected substantial changes that widened economic and social divisions, shaped the way production and the nature of work were organized and raised skill levels demanded by employers (Reinhart, 1987:74-79; Ashton, 1990). In these politically conservative times, capital gained uncontested ascendancy, as the decline of overt protest from workers decreased with respect to workplace control and from citizens regarding the erosion of democracy. In view of the crisis of the Fordist accumulation regime, new assaults on the working class manifested themselves in the form of export of production to low-wage areas, a reorganization of work processes and the rapid growth of contingent work. Managerial initiatives in modernization, competition and rationalizing production interpreted as a version of lean production were introduced. Without major capital investment, productivity was intensified and labour costs
were decreased in many occupational sectors. Occupational culture emphasized hierarchical and incentive structures, workplaces were both conservative and innovative and workers were urged to preserve and "dismantle cultural material through a multiplicity of interpretations and a clash of understandings and interests" (DeRoche, 1987).

Some claimed that the emerging work systems meant that capitalism was on the verge of a golden age; others viewed a workerless world dividing people into elite "knowledge workers" and an underclass of underemployed or unemployed. As an alternative to mass standardized production, customized production with diversification (where benefits derived from production differentiation, niche markets and flexible specialization) took hold (Sengenberger et al, 1990:114-16; Hirst and Zeitlin, 1997:221). New production methods called for the development of skills previously thought unimportant in a Fordist model. A key factor in the crisis of Fordism was the lack of worker autonomy -- a few workplaces enlarged employee involvement, job scope and self-regulation as central features of emerging models to harness the gains of efficiency and flexibility (Murray et al, 1999:17). Increasingly, attention was focused on skills with some employers investing more in training and skill development, while others favoured low-cost production models with little incentive to contribute to skills advancement. Post-Fordism gave rise to changes in the mode of production, enabling shorter production runs without additional costs to take advantage of more diverse consumer tastes. The hidden aspects of multiskilling, in terms of being unrecognized and unrewarded, was also a growing trend in new models of production. Generally, however, there was no simple shift toward more highly skilled or enriched jobs, but rather a movement toward a polarization of skills and labour market segmentation with some workers acquiring more skills while others lost skills (Murray et
An examination of gender stratification in the workplace unequivocally demonstrated that women not only earned less than men, but their employment was also more precarious and geared to part-time work, they lacked occupational status and promotional opportunities and they exercised less control at work (Baron and Bielby, 1986; Crompton, 1996). Given that labour markets are gendered prior to occupations being differentiated, and gender decisively shapes the division of waged labour and the structure of work, changes in the political economy of business and industry were linked to the reorganization of gender-based work (Baron, 1990:387). In this context, power relations between a global capitalist class and the labour market with respect to systems of rewards within workplaces and patterns of disadvantage (particularly for low-waged or unwaged women) were illuminated (Edwards, 1994:273). A complete assessment of women's subordinate position in capitalist organizations cannot, however, be understood without considering patriarchal domination. Women have been less successful than men in acquiring capitalist and managerial positions and they have been more likely to be entrenched in non-supervisory and working class positions (Reza, 1996:525).

The highly contested concept of skill has been used to make distinctions between "clean" mental work and "dirty" manual labour, to justify, reinforce and perpetuate differences in resource allocations and status associated with class, race and gender divisions of labour. The history of discrimination in hiring practices and the manner in which employers select certain types of labour, suggests that labour is not treated as a homogeneous factor in production (Edwards, 1994:274). Gender role socialization and stereotypes are utilized in the interest of capital to accomplish the goal of expanded accumulation for the extraction of surplus
value (Davies, 1990:400). Women, particularly if they are young, are virtually absent from most of the highly-paid and secure jobs in the core economy of the primary labour market (Payne and Payne, 1993:514-16). Women of colour are most notably located in the peripheral economy and continue to dominate in secondary labour markets with high rates of turnover, low wages and few prospects for advancement (Ringer and Lawless, 1989:52). As well, gender differences in cultural expectations of employment and domestic responsibilities create a different orientation to work for women, including a preference for part-time work, an inability to work overtime and a lack of geographic mobility (Davies, 1990:394). Many elements of the labour process reflect a culture that is learned in the larger community and brought to various work sites, requiring women to function in nurturing roles and as sexualized workers. Within the growing service sector of the enterprise economy, a number of work sites have taken advantage of feminine skills in organizing and facilitating workplace routines; tacit skills developed in the private sphere are also undervalued in paid service work (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996).

These factors had direct implications for transforming the labour process and the labour relations of stripping. Analyzed in a particular historical and political context, the new labour process of stripping reflected contradictory demands of labour process control and shifts in production knowledge and management ideology. Consequently, horizontal job enlargement and work intensification took place. Managers in strip clubs remained concerned with organizing and maintaining basic technical and skill requirements of service delivery at a specific cost. They became interested, as well, in finding ways of achieving improvements in productivity and cost efficiencies. As a secondary concern, managers sought to establish and reproduce the required relations of consent with their labour force, thus requiring the introduction
of new mechanisms and strategies to achieve production and cost objectives. The emerging discourse of stripping was understood as a strategic effort to deny and conceal the conflicts between production demands and the interests of individual strippers.

The extensive reorganization of the labour of stripping that occurred during a particular historical phase in the 1980s and 1990s corresponded with a growing managerial concern with cost containment and profit maximization as new practices of table and lap dancing became embedded in club practices. Production costs were reduced by maximizing operating capacity, intensifying work and achieving market flexibility with a greater use of a contingent workforce. Creative labour became more routinized, as speed-ups and wage premiums in the form of the accumulation of tips from numerous customers were the locus of concern. The innovative labour process had a paradoxical impact of increasing management's technical control over strippers while intensifying the importance of labour consent and compliance. Control of work outcomes and pacing were, in part, extended to management; production that became worker-regulated relieved managers of the obligation directly to squeeze labour. Some skills of strippers were being dissolved while others were being upgraded (as the boundaries between performance dancing and prostitution continuously shifted). These changes, however, did not result in the professionalize of stripping work. In rapidly fluctuating markets, the new division of labour, with higher wages and fringe benefits for some strippers, was intended to increase productivity, control work processes and divide strippers while lessening their opposition.

Nonetheless, some strippers such as features gained more control over their work processes. The effect of this internal labour market was to alter the direction of conflict from vertical (managers and dancers) to lateral, as strippers competed among
themselves especially on the basis perceived beauty, race and interpersonal skills. Internal labour markets discouraged collective action, promoted individual autonomy and coordinated the interest of strippers with management by drawing women into this system of competition. The new work practices both deepened and lessened gender differences. Strippers were able to challenge feminine stereotypes of sexually passivity and economic dependence at the same time as new forms of gender skills (associated with women's domestic and sexual life in the wider culture) emerged. Recognition of innovative, relational interactive aspects of sexual servicing activity (formulated as part of a culturally-acceptable feminine identity) did not, however, necessarily take place. Within the new labour process of stripping, many strippers lost substantial control over working conditions, there was an increase in stress and conflict between strippers and in some cases a decline in the stripper's ability to counteract management dictates.

Table and lap dancing radically altered the daily routines of strippers; many of the older strippers felt threatened by the new demands for explicit sexual contact and tried to forestall changes in the labour process. A number of clubs encouraged strippers to engage in job recomposition (of continuous intimate, work-flow process) by gaining new social/relational and entrepreneurial skills that increased autonomy and protected some dancers (who were mostly Caucasian feature dancers engaged in high performance work practices) from arbitrary managerial power. These dancers had more authority to make decisions which directly affected how they worked, and to improve the quality of their work life. Although these highly skilled strippers were often expected to help the club atmosphere run more smoothly and productively, they found their jobs more challenging than the ordinary cadre of dancers. Flexible modes of regulation were introduced in some clubs that maintained
centralized control, while using decentralized tactics to secure strippers' identification with the aims of the enterprise. In other clubs, managers identified behavioural and attitudinal difficulties among "problem" strippers, and increased the pressure to comply with the reorganization or leave the business. Fostering cooperation between strippers and managers obscured class relations but was only partially successful in gaining the collaboration of strippers. Although resistance was present, especially among Black strippers, managers attempted to win the consent of White strippers and defuse militancy by institutionalizing an internal labour market in matters of promotion, career development, flexible work organization systems and contingent compensation practices.

Labour market and labour process flexibility were little more than employer strategies designed to cut costs and extend managerial control over production (Pollert, 1992). The economic gains associated with flexibility were won at the expense of strippers who experienced work intensification, increased work standardization and a shift in the balance of shop floor control towards capital. Managers attempted to reduce production costs through intensification of continuous process stripping and by instituting greater flexibility over production organization and procedures. Through the use of a part-time, temporary work force and labour sub-contractors, strips clubs were able to achieve numerical flexibility by closely tailoring the size of the labour force to utilization, and by expanding and contracting the number of dancers in response to adjustments of the fluctuating demand for service. In the emergence of a two-tiered workplace, the ability of strippers to perform a wider variety of sexual service tasks also enabled strip clubs to institute functional flexibility, by varying the dancing and sexual tasks of a core of permanent full-time strippers to suit the changing criteria of service. It required the new group of strippers to have multiple skills and to be trained to
perform a broad range of tasks - when service requirements changed, strippers were required to switch tasks although the total number of hours remain unchanged. Flexibility of working time in the form of short-time working schedules provided immediate adjustment, as compared to the time lags associated with layoffs and rehiring normally associated with full-time employees. By commonly having a pool of relief workers, flexibility within clubs was also achieved with respect to issues of absenteeism. Finally, financial flexibility was also established by replacing across-the-board pay structures with a performance-linked system of reward, and by externalization through the use of strippers who were not bound to the clubs by way of employment contracts.

6.3. The Transitional Process of Becoming a Stripper: No One Ever Says I Want to be a Stripper When I Grow Up

The process of acclimatizing to sex work begins long before a woman enters a strip club. From a very early age, the sense of self develops as part of a constellation of dependency and power within a specific family and societal context. Feminist research has illustrated the process of development for females, demonstrating that traditionally girls are brought up to seek love and approval from others and especially from males. Females feel pressure to conform to externalized images of femininity in order to avoid being ostracized. To this end, some are prepared to accept inequality in relationships, as demonstrated by their enthusiasm to marry and to stay in relationships which are unacceptable. The objectification of women in advertising images and the portrayal of women as sex objects in advertising and pornography further contributes to a woman's understanding of who she is and who she ought to be.

Strippers also enter the business because, like most women,
they do not have equal access to the training, education and job opportunities available to many men and to some women in other sectors of the economy.\textsuperscript{24} In contrast to the motives often attributed to the stripper's involvement in the profession including promiscuity, exhibitionism, childhood sexual abuse, addiction to drugs or the lack of a social conscience, strippers are well aware that there is a demand for their services and they anticipate earning a lot more money than they would be able to make in other jobs (Limoges, 1967). Although many young women may not select sex work as their initial occupational choice, neither do they necessarily want to work as "char ladies", factory workers or waitresses. Strippers explain getting into the business in economic terms: most view their lack of education and skills as a barrier to their ability to earn adequate money in other jobs.\textsuperscript{25} Women with children are attracted to the flexible hours with some control over the conditions of their work, which allows them to take care of their domestic responsibilities as they work outside of the home. Often they say that they plan to continue to strip until something better comes along such as another career or marriage. Some women suggest that they are attracted to the job as an "ego boost" with the accompanying glamorous life, while a few suggest that they enjoy "sex games". The novice wants "to learn the ropes", to be successful and to make a great deal of money. Yet, she may be compelled by forces both within and outside of the clubs "to keep on dancin'", long after she thought she would move on to another occupation.\textsuperscript{26}

The introduction to stripping makes a memorable impression on many strippers and often establishes the framework with respect to future expectations and experiences. The initial phase of stripping--lasting from a few weeks to several months--is described by some women as somewhat akin to the loss of virginity. Keeping in mind the relative youth of strippers, the majority of women report
feeling nervous in anticipation of an interview with a club owner to secure their first job and then dancing nude in front of customers. As novices, they express concern that they might look "silly", they may not be able to dance well or that they might not be seen as attractive, sensuous women, an essential characteristic of this occupation. Reminiscing about "the first time", some women speak of a societal image which they harbour of strippers, associating nude dancing with the risqué and viewing the women who perform in strip clubs as "loose females". This stereotypical portrait is at odds with the vision the majority of seasoned strippers hold of themselves as "ordinary" women with conventional values, as in the case of Annie Ample, who views herself as a "moral person". Although fulfilling her dreams of achieving fame and fortune, she doubts that many women in childhood envision themselves growing up to become a stripper.

In serving as a consultant on this project, Annie presented a picture of a young single parent struggling to raise two children. She entered exotic dancing for the purpose of making money that she could not earn with her limited education and a learning disability. She spoke about her condition of dyslexia, which was only labelled and understood by her and others when she was an adult. Throughout her school career she was told that she was "retarded"; only recently has she learned to read. She avoids writing, or asks her current husband to assist with the grammar and sentence structure in her compositions. Yet she speaks with authority and strength, "which comes from using the mind and the body together. I'm going to exploit myself all the way to the bank", she says. It would appear that Annie had a very successful career, spanning two and half decades, of acting, modelling, stripping and mixing burlesque with comedy and singing (of a poor quality by her own admission), for the express purpose of entertaining adults. In her autobiography, published by Key Porter
Books, she details the saga of how she left home at thirteen and became one of the leading strip acts in North America, fulfilling her material dreams through a successful career which included a large fan club, magazine photographs, shows in Las Vegas, trips to Hugh Hefner's Playboy mansion, the Cannes film festival, and brief stints as an owner of two strip clubs. Nonetheless, Annie doubts that many young girls envision themselves becoming strippers, but "once you get started, its hard to stop". Typical of a few older women who find themselves in a steep career decline, Annie expresses disillusionment and cynicism after a relatively long career in stripping.

It was clear to Annie that she was recruited initially based on criteria related to physique and dance performance (as functional requirements of the job), as well as non-specific criteria including attitude, manner and social skills. Common assumptions that strippers are chosen based on a level of skill has proven to be without foundation. Labour market discrimination based on the idiosyncratic criteria set by managers became much more salient. Managers were most often concerned with predictability and acquiring "manageable" workers. Maintenance of control over the labour process in the daily routines of stripping was also presented in terms of the existence of explicit and implicit racial/ethnic characteristics. According to Annie, interviews were not focused on competence as much as perceived cultural attitudes towards aspects of the stripper's physical appearance, including skin tone. Desirable characteristics were embedded in requirements and preferences about a range of personal and social attributes, often based on racial/ethnicity profiles. Such attributes were influenced by cultural stereotypes, establishing a close interaction with managers' racial "pigeonholes of acceptability" in the recruitment process. The "taste for discrimination" evident to Annie (that led to core/periphery distinctions among strippers) was
reflected in racially related selection processes that limited opportunities for promotion and led to the acceptance of shift work at low wages among qualified women of colour. Annie was concerned to refute these stereotypes as well as to use them to her advantage. At times, her Native characteristics were problematic in gaining employment--she downplayed these characteristics by dyeing her hair platinum blonde and enduring facial surgery to insert cheek implants intended to enhance her Caucasian features. On other occasions, when it was clear that racial preferences were regarded as being important for the successful performance of the job, managers played on her "Indianess". She obliges by emphasizing those features through costumes and jokes on stage, making it clear that she had Native ancestry.

Candy and Sherrill report that they resorted to taking up stripping to feed their families. Shona and Sandy were interested in upgrading their education through university enrolment; they saw stripping as an opportunity to secure the financial resources needed to fulfil their ambitions. Attracted to stripping by the perceived occupational benefits, Samantha was able to negotiate her hours of employment to pursue her interests in acting. A number of dancers in this study were young mothers with children under the age of ten. They chose to take up stripping to combine employment with family responsibilities, noting that they were able to obtain maternity leaves and flexible working schedules. Although Candy's refusal to travel out of town on the strip circuit has limited her career opportunities, being a stripper allowed her to generate an income "to keep the whole family going" as well as to spend time with her young daughter and her male companion.

The advantages of being Caucasian are not dwelled upon or even consciously contemplated by these women. Yet the production of strip images is structured by race and gender relations. A Weberian
model of selection based solely on technical competence does not apply in most instances. The frame of reference utilized by many managers is informed by assumptions about the ideology of racism, that bases decision making in employment upon negative stereotypes and assumptions (Yeboah, 1988:281). Processes of globalization are based in part on the search for profits through a ready supply of cheap labour, that in many instances is both feminine and racialized. Being locked out of some forms of employment continues to result in Caucasians being favoured in employment opportunities and income levels. A critical analysis takes into account the important ways in which economic practices create and sustain racial/ethnic/gender class conflicts, differentiating the sexes and ethnic groups and, in many cases, making them unequal.

Suzette recalls being interviewed for her first job by a Caucasian manager who emphasized the importance of having the "right attitude for the business". It was her impression that there was little interest in her qualifications and performance however, concern about compliance to the rules set by manager was paramount. Treating Suzette differently from other dancers highlights the intersection of gender and racial factors, perhaps leading the manager to feel that he could patronize her without resentment or resistance. The emphasis on the Suzette's submissiveness equated with femininity, pressured her to acquiesce in her own exploitation, reproducing forms of racial discrimination that she has struggled against. Underscoring patriarchal and supremacist notions, she was evaluated on the basis of the need to preserve a racial-gender hierarchy. With the power to hire and fire strippers, the manager made unreasonable demands and held higher expectations for Suzette to guard against confrontation and ensure cooperation with this Black dancer. Such behaviour can progress to more serious harassment that speaks to historical patterns of reinforcing deference and servitude while rendering Black women subordinate.
Such tactics also take the pressure off the employer to have a racially representative workplace, allowing White male managers to reproduce the workplace in the image of the dominant group.

Like other strippers at the Waverly in Toronto, Debbie is caught in a life cycle squeeze with few prospects for employment beyond her current position. She initially took up stripping "for the money", and while she may not be cognizant that wages adjusted for inflation have been declining in the past decade, she is aware that she must push lap dancing on a continuous basis in order "to keep ahead of the money game" (Economic Council of Canada 1991:23). Concern about poverty loom large in her thought processes. Although she intended to dance for only a few years upon leaving high school, moving on to "hairdressing, bartending or something like that", she expresses the idea that after ten years in the business it would be very difficult for her to make the money she currently earns in another occupation. Painfully, this woman in her early thirties volunteers, "who's going to hire an old stripper who hasn't worked at anything else with all the unemployed people out there? I'm not qualified to do much else. Hell, I can't even drive a car"!

Describing a transformational process she went through in her introduction to stripping, Heather began as a timid, ingenuous exceptionally young woman and became a sophisticated seasoned stripper. Years after her initial experience of stripping, she reported that she felt blase about nudity and unconcerned about whether others approved of what she did. In fact, her thinking had evolved to the point where she views stripping as just another job. Like a number of women who enter the business, she was encouraged "on a dare by her boyfriend" to audition. A male friend often serves as an agent initiating contacts with club owners, sometimes without the woman's consent. Prior to her first audition, Heather
was provided with support, encouragement and advice by her companion-cum-agent. In an effort to help her relax and display her potential as a future performer in line with the club owner's expectations, her boyfriend attended the initial interview. In contrast to her mother (who was also a stripper), Heather views stripping as problematic; when pushed by a male friend to dance, she remembered feeling frightened and "running off stage". Vividly recalling that she cried while removing her top for the first time, she subsequently attempted, on several occasions, to leave the business by taking jobs as a cook and a factory worker. The "poor money" she earned together with the fact that she missed "the excitement, but not the hassles of stripping" made her wander back into stripping.

Reminiscing about the first time that she danced in the early 1980s, T felt very nervous at the prospect of being nude on stage. She remarked that she did not mind being "topless" but felt strange about appearing "bottomless", reasoning that customers "could see fuzz anywhere" so she was determined to keep her legs closed. Uncertain as to whether she would go through with the strip, her hands and feet were sweating as she sat in the dressing room doing a version of "will I or won't I?" by pulling on the petals of a flower. T could not recall how the flower petal strip ended, but when she heard her name being announced she told herself, "I guess my number is up". Considering herself a good dancer she decided "to move as you do at a disco, wiggling my hips, wearing only a bra and a G-string". She recounted in vivid detail the first day she clocked in with the manager at a club, took an empty stool in the dressing room and despite feeling "quite alone", introduced herself to the other women. When asked about the clubs in which she had previously worked, she "faked it by pretending that I had been up North, so they wouldn't know it was my first time". She recalled a little "ditty" from her childhood and sang "toyland, toyland,
beautiful girl and boy land, once you pass its borders, you can never return again".

There was a poignancy in T's description of her rite of passage and the loss of innocence she felt when she first stepped onto the stage, musing that "things will never be the same again". She likened the experience to a sacrifice on an altar - "the kind where the virgin is offered to the gods, like in a bad Tarzan movie". Laughingly, she remarked how her nervousness caused her foot to get entangled in her G-string, almost causing her to fall on stage. "It's tricky to dance in high heels and take your G-string off gracefully with people watching you", she remarked. Her rookie status was further revealed when she forgot her costume on stage and wrapped herself in a long quilted housecoat which she had brought to the club for the occasion. "Most strippers redress in their bra and G-string or a small wrap, or just walk nude in the club, but they never bring a coat from home!" When she ran back to the dressing room, she was the only dancer wearing clothing; the other women were semi-nude or nude and did not seem to notice each other or the owner, who appeared unannounced in the dressing room from time to time.

According to Samantha, in addition to body type, size, appearance and presentation style, in normative clubs the initiate is assessed on her tableside manners, her ability to conform to club rules and regulations and the interpersonal skills she demonstrates in order to interact effectively with the owner, the customers and the other dancers. A number of dancers report that, in retrospect, they were also assessed on their willingness "to sleep with the boss", or to demonstrate a potential for such activity in the future. Samantha's initiation into stripping consisted of a two-hour audition in which she was required to strip, dance nude, dress and repeat the procedure many times for a
club owner and his male friends. Other women were invited by the owner to dance alongside Samantha under the pretext of enabling her to copy their dance steps. Currently, she sends out her "bio" to clubs, or she has her agent call, thus eliminating "freebies" which she maintains constitutes working without pay. Like Heather, she has also attempted to leave stripping, but found that she missed "the good money and the razzle dazzle" of the business.

Laura X contends that in burlesque, the forerunner of modern strip, most novice strippers were taken into a mentoring relationship with a seasoned stage veteran. They learned the "tricks of the trade", including the selection of costumes, how to deal with booking agents, ways to protect yourself from "pawing" as well as the all important "bump and grind" routines of dancing. The young dancer of today can only long for the initiation ritual which Yvette Paris, the self-described queen of burlesque, underwent with her mentor's assistance. "She was not what I expected -- not very pretty, with bad skin she covered in thick, orangy makeup. But she stripped right in front of me ... She asked me if this was my first time dancing. I said 'yes', then added 'well, I haven't danced in a long time'. She gave me some pointers. 'First, never tell anyone that you're new to dancing. They'll take advantage of you, and the other dancers will tell you what to do. The men at the bar will look for flaws and give you their expert advice. The barmaids will eat you alive. Go out there and act like you've been doing this all your life. Then they'll leave you alone. She continued throughout much of my career to be an advisor and a good friend'."

When Candy broke up with her covivant shortly after the birth of her child in 1989, she had a difficult time supporting herself and her daughter. One of the men in her circle of friends suggested that she try exotic dancing, to which she replied "take off my clothes, are you kidding"? Her reaction was similar to that of the
Candy spoke of her first meeting with Ginger, "a girl in big trouble" who had been beaten by her male companion, remarking "I guess you could say that she was a lot like me". She befriended the "scared, little waif" when she found her "crying her guts out in the toilet, whining that she didn't want to dance, but her boyfriend insisted that she had to do it". In contrast, Amber Starr's tale suggests that, on the whole, she likes stripping; "the money and fame are fabulous, but I don't need the hassles". She performed her first "spread act" in a "heavy punk-rock biker club" in Oshawa; "a guy sitting close to the stage could see I was nervous and he kept telling me 'just a little more, let me see more..."
"pussy, honey'. Then when my legs were spread, he said 'there you go girl, now you're a whore'. But that was as bad as it got, and its been uphill all the way after that".

Brie uses a gambling metaphor in describing her brief life in stripping which has taken her to North Bay, Sarnia, Kitchener, Chatham, Oshawa and Toronto: "You pays your money and takes your chances". She was introduced to stripping by her best friend, Nicole, a makeup artist who suggested that she should try dancing when she was unemployed. The slender, red-headed young woman remarked that dancing was to be "a temporary thing to get by on, of course for the money, until something better came along". Upon discovery that she "had to work 12 hour shifts and put out sexually for the guys", she put aside her dreams to make it "bigtime", earning $10,000 from Playboy spreads" and became a waitress in a strip bar. I inquired if waitressing was that "something better" she was waiting for, and she laughed and said no. A woman with a fine sense of humour, she kept me chuckling throughout the interview. Indicating that if I came to hear that she "goes out with midgets from the circus and is the sister of the bartender who fucks dogs because her parents kicked her out", I would be disappointed. "I'm rare perhaps. I love my parents". She attempted unsuccessfully to inject her sense of humour into her act by wearing a false nose on stage and by introducing the personalities of Roseanne Barr and Margaret Thatcher into her act. Brie added:

Strippers have to take on an air of being relaxed and enjoying it; in acting that way they fool themselves. Otherwise, you look yourself in the eye, get fed up and quit like me. Dancing is acting, you play at sex and it's lots of fun. But you have to recognize that there are some nasty people in this business. There are lots of dancers doing coke lines to sit on a guy's lap, wishing they were somewhere else, and there's some lonely guys who can't tell fantasy from the real thing. You've got to have fun in stripping, but
you've also got to run your own life. In stripping, my life was running me.

Sherrill, a veteran stripper who quit the business because she was continually harassed and refused to partake in lap dancing, prostitution and drugs, told the story of how a number of young women, some underage, entered stripping. Many of these "girls", she claimed, ran away from homes where little caring was in evidence. Initially introduced to stripping through newspaper advertisements in large urban centres, some viewed stripping as an escape from unemployment and poverty. Some saw it as a step up from the boredom of waitressing and babysitting in a small town, or to a glamorous life of "easy money" in contrast to the difficulties of street prostitution in large cities. Others were encouraged by boyfriends or agents, or they were brought into the clubs by pimps or by biker gangs "running a fleet of girls across Ontario", according to Annie Ample. The initiation into stripping through family problems--particularly sexual and physical abuse at home--was upheld by strippers in this study as well as by a police officer and a social worker from juvenile services. Valerie, a waitress at the Copa in Hampshire, however, noted that some strippers also come from seemingly "stable homes" and make their own choice to enter this occupation.

Not all strippers report "turning out" as a negative experience. Taking up a challenge issued by her friends, Carin, who worked as a welder and then a secretary in a book publishing company after graduating from high school, entered an amateur nude dancing contest. The first time she danced she "just let the music get to me", almost unaware that she was taking off her clothes. The reaction she experienced was so positive that she "got hooked on dancing"; the next few times were easy, spurred on by the encouragement given to her by the audience. She maintained that "glamour, fame and the bright lights seduce young girls" into the
business and result in many taking up a career; "civilian life", in comparison, was described as "dull, slow and will keep you poor".

6.4. From Novice to Professional

The career of a dancer can be characterized by three phases, including the initial period of initiation to exotic dancing, a second stage of skills acquisition and acculturation, followed by a third phase of acquiescence and acceptance. After her admission into strip, the dance typically begins to redefine stereotypes of a stripper, to look for and to accentuate the positives in her situation in which she can enhance her job prospects and her opportunities to make money, while safeguarding her self image. A process of normalizing stripping is then undertaken in which she rationalizes to herself and others the act of nude dancing. Characteristically, she comes to view stripping as just another job. In response to inquiries from friends who disapproved of her new career, T commented that "dancing all the time means that stripping is tough work, but it is hard honest work for your money". It is at this time that the dancer will enthusiastically try to improve her presentation and performance. T recalls that several dancers watched her maiden performance "as they always do with a new girl", to establish her place in the dance skill hierarchy of the club; she described the next few days as "nerve wracking, but nothing as bad as the first time". During the subsequent months after she began to strip, T spent a substantial amount of time scrutinizing other strippers, disregarding aspects of the performances she did not like, and replicating specific movements at home in front of the mirror which she felt would enhance her act. She noticed that men in the audience responded favourably when the dancers were friendly, smiling and flirtatious as well as when they moved around a lot on stage, singling out a few men to whom they would "show off" their bodies. As her stage
act progressed, she likened stage dancing to skating "that you see on television" with a thematic presentation. "You start out with a fast number which you dance to, you slow it down for the peel and then you have a real slow sexy number with low lights for the floor work."

Following initiation, Samantha began to "learn the business" in the next stage of adjustment, dancing nude in front of strangers. Strippers often relate feelings of apprehension concerning their appearance and their performance which are assuaged when they receive their salaries and tips. Attention of a positive nature from the clients in the form of compliments about their bodies and their dancing abilities, offers to buy them drinks, gifts and overtures of encounters outside the club, go a long way in making the newcomer feel like "part of the family", Samantha added. When Laura X began dancing in a club in Montreal approximately fifteen years ago, waitresses were required to substitute as strippers. She was carefully taught by an older stripper, whom she described as a motherly figure and a confidante, how to walk on stage, "peel off" her costume, take care of her garments and her personal hygiene as well as being instructed in "the fine art of being on time". In those days, "dancers were proud of their costumes" and she fondly remembers the pair of red satin shoes she owned at the time. She was advised by her mentor to "give them a peek and then quickly close your legs; men are very caught up in sex and this makes the stripper's job that much easier". She learned how to replace zippers with velcro, "because zippers can get stuck".

Speaking about her experience dancing on stage the first time, Candy remarked that she was unable to relax. She took sleeping pills for several nights prior to her first day of work, although generally she never uses drugs, including liquor or aspirins. At
present, she prefers not to think about what she does while she is dancing and, upon completing her act, she leaves the club promptly for her much cherished, staid home life. She remarked that "it took several months, years really, to adjust to being naked in front of strange men, flirting, showing off and trying to turn men on. Most of my life has been spent trying to keep sex under wraps and turning guys off as a good Catholic girl, and now here I was in the reverse situation." Concentrating on her dancing and accentuating the training she acquired in jazz and aerobics classes in her routines helped her to deal with the "shy and inhibited" feelings, which she claims to feel to this day.

In the working environment of contemporary strip clubs, the mentoring period is very short if it exists at all. Dance skill requirements are relaxed for all but feature performers, and the need to hone interpersonal skills and techniques of flirtation and sexual performance are left entirely to the dancer's individual initiatives. Exceptionally beautiful women or those with acrobatic and performing talents may be directed by agents to highlight their attributes and skills to assist in promoting their careers. The majority of the women entering stripping today are likely to imitate impromptu the moves of more seasoned dancers, to discuss methods of client management informally in the dressing room and to learn through a process of trial and error how to market and promote themselves. Like the women of burlesque, the strippers of the 1990s must master at least a minimum repertoire of performance skills. In contrast, they must also acquire a substantial number of interpersonal skills, sexual techniques, marketing and promotional abilities and a beauty regime in order to continue to compete successfully in the business and maximize their earnings.

Most strippers watch other dancers and attempt to model their styles—the only on-the-job training many ever acquire. As I
listened to T recount how she had learned the stripper's walk, I silently queried if Betty Friedan (1963) and Germaine Greer (1971), who set the stage for the last wave of the women's movement in the 1960s, envisioned stripping as an emancipatory working experience. In their seminal works, they spoke to the need for women to participate in the public realm to escape cultural traditions and economic dependency on men. With respect to the work of stripping T remarked:

You learn to move, to strut up and down on stage, to grind your hips, stick out your bum and your breasts. The walk is a kind of heel-toe movement, you move your hips from side to side, stand with a hand on your hip, legs apart and one knee bent like a model. You also learn to show pussy, to open and close your legs and cross them in the air, rolling over gracefully, to bump and grind on the floor and to use props; like your G-string, to pull it through your snatch. These are important tricks to learn. At times, a stripper will take a moment to instruct a new dancer, however, more often than not, you're on your own. Men like it if you seem to enjoy your work. They also like big breasts and lots of tease. They want to see a dancer touching herself, holding her boobs in her hands, trying to lick her nipples, stroking her pussy, rubbing her thighs, grabbing her bum with her two hands and hitting her cheeks.

A third phase of adjustment and adaptation occurs after dancers have performed their routines for several months or years. Amber Starr describes dancing at this stage as boring, remarking that "you go on stage, you single out a guy to tell the same lines to, you take off your top at the same place in the music, the guys whistle and hoot when you show your stuff in the same way in all the clubs, you finish, and do it all again for the next show. Many times now I don't give it my all." Despite all the discussion in the past few years about job enrichment and quality of working life, few of the benefits of these concepts have trickled down to Amber. Initially, she anticipated meeting many new and interesting
people and she was excited by the prospect of travelling across the country. During the past year, all the faces have begun to look alike; "the small talk is always the same" and she complains that there is nothing new to learn about her craft. In describing the changes she has undergone and the way she feels about herself and her work, she remarked that dancing extracts an "emotional price", which she was unprepared for as a young dancer. She used to view the men in the clubs as interesting individuals, believing that her interactions with them might develop into more meaningful relationships. She describes herself as being "harder and colder" than when she began in the business, and now she considers any man in the club as just another "john" to whom she might "sell a fantasy".

When Amber initially took up dancing, she disliked being propositioned, describing herself as uninterested in sex. After stripping for several years, she has become blase and remarked that "I am easy going about the whole thing; I don't care what the men think of me, if they like my body or if I turn them on. Well, hardly ever", she laughed. She does attempt to present a good show because she takes pride in her job as well as recognizing that her career depends to a considerable degree on how she meets "the competition out there". Her unenthusiastic commentary on stripping includes the remark that she not only "doesn't get turned on" when she dances, but she is often "turned off". She added that there is a substantial difference between the emotions she displays in her act and her true feelings; "I get turned on by my boyfriend, not by these guys". Noting that she is not interested romantically in the men in the audience, she claims that she must "fake it, but the guys don't know the difference". She enjoys "the game of stripping, coaxing the men for money" as quickly and efficiently as possible. Her approach to her work fulfills the job requirements "because the men are satisfied with so little--a look at your tits, a little
flash of pussy, a smile, some more pussy, you blow them a kiss and they're happy".

In confirming some aspects of Amber's observations, Candy noted that nudity and the dance routines become tiresome after a while, so she often thinks about her laundry or her grocery lists while on stage. Like a number of other dancers who have gained skills, poise and confidence, however, Candy also gets a "confidence boost"—as Annie Ample describes the sensation—when Candy is told on a daily basis how beautiful and desirable she is to men. Having settled into her job and long ago ceasing to grapple with her self-perception as a stripper, she separates her personal life from her public life as a dancer, "so as not to cause problems for my family". After five years of stripping, the division brings her peace of mind, knowing that she "makes more money than most women", confident that she has job security and assured that no one in the building where she resides is aware of what she does for a living.

After many years of stripping, the Divine Miss D, has learned that while good looks, dancing skills and "the ability to hustle business by sweet talking men" are important, club owners are looking for women who will fit into the routines of the club and who will not create trouble. Early in my interview with Miss D, I asked if she would allow me to take notes while she spoke, to which she replied "go ahead, honey, you have your job to do and I have mine". She believes that "a dancer must be a chameleon and a little like a psychiatrist, to analyze the needs of a lot of people and cater to them", she adds. "It's a job that requires a lot of acting. You go on stage cold, without lines or props, in the sex theatre, and that's what makes stripping different from acting. You are required to be creative and to improvise on the spot, because there is no one to back you up, especially if the crowd is rowdy or
a guy gets out of hand. You're on your own with only your wits. Dancing has never been the central part of stripping. You take your clothes off, men stare and clap and that's what it's all about." She finds a curious attitude among some patrons (whom she describes as having a "love-hate relationship") that causes some of the clients to be both attracted and repulsed by strippers. For the most part "men are more captivated than women by looking at their favourite sex objects; it's a visual turn-on. And when the woman appears to be provocative and tries to seduce the guy, this is a great aphrodisiac that men can't resist".

Although the initial entry into dancing may cause apprehension, embarrassment or exhilaration for the novice, once into the routine of strip none of the women in this study described themselves as feeling sensuous as they danced. Strippers concur that the look of sensuality (which is intimately linked with the perception that the stripper is enjoying herself) is a necessary prerequisite for the audience to appreciate the performance. Arousal is, however, not genuinely felt by most dancers when they perform. Women of strip are "good actresses", according to Sandi, feigning excitement, desire, physical and emotional pleasure, while reporting objectively that for the most part, little of this is present for them in their day-to-day performances. "Teasing and pleasing comes with the occupational territory" for Sandi. It becomes part of the definition of "good stripping", which most dancers pick up quickly and incorporate into their act, this seasoned dancer reports. Although the audience is aware that arousal is feigned, much like the aggression in wrestling performances, Laura X believes that men become involved in the acts. She added that men wish to believe that the smile on a dancer's lips and her eyes rolling back as she fondles her breasts signals genuine excitement, especially in the presence of select men such as themselves in the audience.
ENDNOTES

1. Between 1978 and 1992, Canadian companies that employed less than 50 employees were responsible for one third of the employment and most of the job growth (Government of Canada, 1994:25).

2. Although Statistics Canada uses the 3.5 million figure for non-standard workers (some 28 per cent of all those engaged in limited, sessional, temporary and self-employment), the Economic Council of Canada suggests that the real figure is closer to 34 per cent of the labour force (Economic Council of Canada 1991,81-2). Only half of all the new jobs created between 1979 and 1993, can be described as "full time", and a substantial number of those jobs were less secure with lower pay than the jobs which they replaced.

By 1993, the number of full-time jobs in Canada was at the same rate as it was in 1987; in contrast, part-time employment increased by 17 per cent to 2.15 million jobs. Despite the fact that one in three part-time workers would prefer full-time positions, since 1992 job growth in Canada has been stimulated by the expansion of 164,000 part-time positions compared with the decline of 95,000 full-time jobs. Approximately, 78 per cent of job growth have been in less stable, limited skilled and low-waged work (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994:31).

3. Brock (1998:44) observed that street solicitation among prostitutes increased as women lost their jobs due to the recession.

4. The 1991 Statistics Canada census reported that women were more frequently employed as secretaries than in any other occupation. By 1996, retail sales was listed as the most frequent women's occupation and for the first time, babysitting was included in the ten most numerous jobs which women perform.

5. Even highly educated knowledge workers are not immune from the changes which are occurring in the labour market (Meaghan and Casas, 1998:9). Engineers and computer programmers have recently seen their work exported offshore to India, Singapore, Malaysia, Ireland and what was the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc of Europe. With the worldwide glut of educated people and skilled workers, high levels of global unemployment and lower international wages serve as a drag on the ability of workers in developed countries to retain their employment and bargain for better working conditions.

Added to this, the magnitude of worldwide unemployment is staggering. The International Labour Organization has estimated that 47 million additional job seekers enter the overcrowded labour market each year. Within the next two decades, more than 750 million women and men will reach the age at which they start work, adding to the 700 million currently unemployed (Meaghan and
6. The highest rate of unemployment is among youth; some 25 per cent of young people ages 16-24 cannot find even entry level jobs. Since the early 1990s, about 18 per cent, or 400,000 people aged 15 to 24 are unemployed, accounting for one in every three unemployed persons in the country. The $4.5 billion price tag for unemployment insurance and welfare payments to youth does not begin to assess the cost of lost opportunities as young people complete schooling and attempt to enter the labour market. Inflation-adjusted pay for teens and workers in their twenties has fallen below what young workers were paid in the previous generation; 20 per cent on average lower for full-time male workers under age 30, in comparison to earnings of a comparable age group in the late 1970s. When these issues are taken into account, Canada's true national rate of unemployment is between 15 and 20 percent, or one in five or six adults in the population (Ferguson and Crane, 1996:11).

7. The Ontario government's "Common Sense Revolution" promised radical cuts to the welfare system, removing $2.2 billion from an annual budget of $6.3 billion. At the helm of the Conservative government, Harris pledged to take $2 billion out of the budget for deficit elimination and $2 billion for "job-creating tax cuts". Those figures quickly changed to $5.4 billion to fight the deficit (when the Dominion Bond Rating Agency suggested that the province had not been able to generate the amount of revenue the Tories had predicted prior to the election), together with another $4 billion for tax rebates. Harris further pledged to require all able-bodied social assistance recipients, with the exception of single parents with young children, to engage in workfare in order to qualify for benefits.

Vowing to repeal legislation introduced by the New Democratic Party, Harris permitted the use of strikebreakers in labour disputes and repealed the Employment Equity Act, which had established hiring targets for visible minorities, aboriginals, disabled people and women. Cuts to social assistance and new welfare rules have made it more difficult in Ontario for the homeless, poor and youth to get assistance. Recently, the government also threatened to revoke rent controls. The pro-business conservative government, which championed individual rights and decreased government services, is supported by far more men than women, older rather than younger citizens, rural versus urban constituents and White as opposed to minority people (Toughill, 1996:A11).

Although federal contributions to health, higher education and social services were declined by $2.2 billion in 1995, these reductions have been exacerbated by supplemental provincial cuts. Further straining the social fabric of Ontario due to reduced spending, a number of social agencies have eradicated important services such as preventive child welfare and home care services. In clear violation of election promises not to trim spending on
classroom education and police services, these services were also cut. Similarly, $1.3 billion has been eliminated from health care, despite the fact that a 1995 Environics poll showed that the majority of Ontario residents were opposed to health care cuts and wanted government spending on hospitals to remain the same or increase (Vincent, 1995:A10). According to a 1995 survey conducted by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the province lost 9,000 child care subsidies for low-income families and 30 child care programs (Toughill, 1996:A11). The government is also contemplating 20 per cent cuts to the Ontario Provincial police force, has already trimmed the number of prosecutors in the province and is preparing a list suggesting that one-fifth of the province's 260 courthouses may be closed.

8. Statistics Canada data reveals that the unemployment rate during the period 1980-1991 fluctuated from a low of 7.4 percent in 1980, to a high of 11.8 percent in 1983. One quarter of all families had a member who lost a job in 1996; one-third were concerned that they were about to lose their own job, while two-thirds believed that the demands of their job had increased (Carey, 1996c:D1). Currently, the federal, provincial and municipal governments account for 20 per cent of the shrinking labour force (Ferguson, 1996b:C16).

As a result of all levels of governments in Canada eliminating jobs, together with downsizing by many large companies and small businesses, the national (official) level of 10.1 percent unemployment is unlike to drop significantly. The 1996 figure of 10 per cent unemployment minimizes the scope of the problem. This rate does not take into account the fact that 100,000 Canadians dropped out of the labour market in 1996 without hope of finding work. Underemployment, which includes some 845,000 Canadians who are unable to find full-time employment and are working in part-time jobs, is on the rise. One in three of those aged 20-24 are still in school, compared to the 1980 figure of one in five. Large numbers of older workers have retired early or have left the workforce involuntarily; only one in three males age 60 or older continues to work full time (Ferguson and Crane, 1996:C16).

9. The very successful Bell Canada announced an increase in profits of 36 per cent in 1996, partly as a result of laying off 3,000 employees (Walker, 1996c:A1).

10. In 1995, Canada's inflation rate was less than 3 per cent of the gross national product (GNP). According to the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Canadian budget deficit was smaller than that of most Western nations and less than 2 per cent of the country's gross national product (GNP). Exports increased by a substantial 37 per cent in a single year (1995), putting Canada at the top in this category within the Group of Seven (G-7) nations. Among nineteen countries, only seven were in better economic shape than Canada, including Japan
which was struggling with proportionately higher budget deficits. Given the current projections based on the latest figures released by the federal government, it was estimated that Canada would achieve a balanced budget in the year 1999-2000 (Gwyn, 1996A23:). In a mere four years, Canada has emerged from what the Wall Street Journal labelled "an honourary member of the Third World", to having the smallest budget deficit relative to its economy among the Group of Seven (G-7) nations. According to the OECD, the growth in Canada's economy in 1996 pulled ahead of both the United States and Japan, emerging at the top of G-7 countries. This caused speculation that the Canadian business and economic establishment were incorrect, or had alternative motives, when they imposed punitively-high interest rates on so-called debt-ridden Canadians.

The tight money policies of the Bank of Canada have recently produced a first class bond rating for Canada at the cost of high rates of unemployment, instability and severe reductions in Canada's social safety net, including announced cuts to the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Canada Health Act (Speirs, 1996:A19). Proposed changes include dramatically higher premiums over the next five years for some of these social services. Despite serious reservations from Tom Kent, one of the architects of the Canada Pension Plan, the federal government has taken steps to lower the cut-off point from $83,500 to $52,000 for an individual and $83,000 for a couple. As a chief policy adviser to Liberal Prime Minister Lester Pearson, Kent's counsel to alter economic policies which sustain high interest rates in Canada, and to support the Canada Pension Plan with an increase of 14 per cent by year 2030, seem unheeded by a government intent on saving $8 billion from the benefits paid to senior citizens (McCarthy, 1996e:A2; Clark, 1996:C4).

11. Despite the Liberals' Red Book promise to focus on "jobs, jobs, jobs", rather than deficit reduction as part of their 1993 election platform, Ottawa's right-of-center economic policies have resulted in 45,000 people being released from the federal public service. In view of Canada's poor record on training to prepare for the so-called knowledge economy, the Liberals also campaigned on the promise to "invest in people" and to target training and apprenticeship programs, particularly for the unemployed. Instead, Ottawa has phased out direct funding for apprentice classroom training under the unemployment insurance program, causing Jim McCably, President of the Canadian Federation of Labour, to worry that changes may do irreparable harm to the country's apprenticeship system. Similarly, the Liberals failed to deliver on abolishing the North American Free Trade Agreement unless significant concessions could be won, and they ignored their pledge to abolish the Goods and Services Tax. Currently, the federal Liberals are contemplating implementing a plan to shift responsibility for mining, forestry, tourism, social housing and environmental protection to the provinces. Yet, the single move of keeping the Bank of Canada interest rates
at American levels in 1995 would have produced 400,000 jobs, generated $5 billion in taxation and reduced the official unemployment statistics by one third (McCarthy, 1996f:A4).

12. The same Paul Martin, the wealthiest finance minister in Canadian history who is worth an estimated $30 million, suggested to the development committee of the World Bank that poverty presents the global economy with "perhaps its greatest challenge". He called upon rich nations, despite their budgetary constraints, to make poverty "an overriding priority" (Crane, 1996b:E2). Yet, federal spending cuts took approximately $5.6 billion out of unemployment insurance in the first spring budget of 1994, and an additional $1.6 billion in 1995.

Despite the fact that the Conference Board of Canada has warned that government spending cuts pose the greatest threat to economic growth, in the fall of 1995 the Chrétien government revealed its plan to scale down 45,000 public service jobs over a three year period. In addition to the $7 billion extracted from social programs in 1995, Canada's $40 billion social safety net continues to be radically reformed (Israelson and Crane, 1996a:E2). Martin's deficit-reduction budget in the spring of 1996 lacked measures to create jobs, turning away from government to private sector responsibility for such initiatives (Ferguson, 1996b:C1). With a shortfall of $227 million, CBC president Perrin Beatty, for instance, anticipated that 600 to 1,000 people would lose their jobs in 1996-97. These cuts, which he described as taking the CBC "to the edge of the cliff", would reduce funding from $1.1 billion in 1994-95 to $839 million in 1997-98 (Zerbisias, 1995:A1).

13. Back-to-work reforms in Canada have taken hold with British Columbia's New Democratic government joining the reforms initiated by Ralph Klein, the Alberta Tory Premier, the Liberal government of Frank McKenna in New Brunswick and Premier Harris' brave neoconservative world of work in Ontario. South of the border, Democrats and Republicans alike have embraced the shift from welfare to workfare systems, despite the fact that Maurice McTigue, New Zealand's former employment minister has declared the same experiment a failure in his country. The scheme has a fan in Brad Wright, however, an Edmonton spokesperson for a small business consortium who commented "Yes, we've got the right economic essentials of small government, low taxes and workfare" (Gwyn, 1996d:F1). His sentiments were echoed by Ralph Klein, boasting that he has achieved his target of a balanced budget in two years, amassing a surplus of $540 million between 1995-1996, reducing the civil service payroll by one-third and privatizing and innovating in areas of debt collection, labour mediation and liquor store operations (Gwyn, 1996d:F1).

The Canadian government's retreat from full employment, in favour of tackling inflation and its pursuit of policies which promote deregulation and free trade, are part of a larger picture to drive wages down and to reform welfare and minimum wage
policies. Recently, the attention has focused on the workfare debate, as governments attempt to subordinate welfare policies to the demands for flexibility in the labour market. Despite the fact that there is growing evidence to suggest that workfare programs will only serve to subsidize workers in dead-end jobs, a number of Canadian politicians continue to rhetorically insist that workfare will lead to job creation opportunities which allow people to relinquish welfare for good jobs. Taking people off welfare and entrenching them at the low end of the job market will not upgrade skill levels and assist individuals to move out of workfare ghettos. Such policies will force welfare recipients to work at less than minimum wage jobs, and will result in those individuals competing with people who already perform a number of minimum wage jobs in the labour market.

14. As seen in Canada, high rates of labour turnover do not encourage employers to invest in human resources through skills acquisition out of fear that employees may leave and take their skills to a new job (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1993:148). Labour markets, with a reduced number of core workers and a growing number of sessional or part-time workers, similarly do not offer incentives for training. The federal government spends $1 billion and employers spend $1.4 billion, or one half of one percent of their payroll on training to reach approximately one third of the labour market. On-the-job training in Canada directed toward long-time employees, centers around a specific work-related agenda and endeavours to integrate workers into the culture of business.

To maximize investments in skills training, core workers are more likely to be offered overtime work, thus exacerbating the situation of hours worked and the distribution of wages with those who are unemployed. During the past two decades, overtime work has substantially increased, especially among full-time male workers, such that during the recession of 1991, 800,000 Canadians, or 6.5 percent of the workforce were engaged in overtime work (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994:19).

15. More than half of the population aged 16 to 64, including one out of five workers aged 35 to 54, changed jobs--an average of 3.3 times each--during the period of 1992-1994. This phenomenon lends support to the view that changes in the Canadian economy have accelerated training needs, particularly among those already in the workforce (Meaghan and Casas, 1994:5).

16. There is ample evidence to suggest that the Canadian labour market is well educated and has substantial skill levels. Further, there is a surplus of educated people employed in positions lower than their levels of educational expectations (Livingstone, 1999). In 1951, 52 per cent of the population over the age of fifteen had less than a grade nine education; by 1991 that figure dropped to 14 per cent (Rashid, 1993:16).

Statistics Canada substantiated the fact that a reasonable
estimate of the proportion of young people who finish high school is 82 per cent, significantly below the 30 per cent figure still widely cited by the media. In an OECD study of educational attainment, Canada ranked fourth in 1989 (with 28 per cent), among twenty nations in Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand in terms of the proportion of the aged (25 to 64) population who had not completed high school. Only the U.S., Switzerland and Germany outperformed Canada, while Japan's noncompletion rate stood at 30 per cent (Meaghan and Casas, 1995:39).

Since 40 per cent of the new jobs created in the 1990s will require more than sixteen years of education and training, there is no reason to examine exclusively the high school completion rate as an index of a nation's level of educational achievement. Canada's achievement at the postsecondary level is even more impressive, with Canada ranking second (behind the U.S.), with 15 per cent of the adult population holding a university degree, ahead of third-ranked Japan (13 per cent), and sixth-ranked Germany (10 per cent). Quite significant is the fact that while 13 per cent of Canadian adult females have a university degree (compared with 17% of adult males), the corresponding proportion is 7 per cent for German women (versus 13 per cent for men), and 5 per cent for Japanese women (versus 21 per cent for men) (Meaghan and Casas, 1995:40).

17. Livingstone (1999) suggests that while we live in a knowledge society, we are not witnessing the rapid growth of a knowledge-based economy. Human capital theory (based on neoclassical economics of supply side theory), claims that workers are unemployed due to the fact they lack the necessary skills to fill jobs, and they are underemployed because they are similarly unqualified for emerging jobs in the "new economy". Unlike the position advocated by Human Resource Development Canada alleging an education gap that has produced a shortage of skilled workers, it is the job gap in which "most of us continually learn much more work-related knowledge than we ever have a chance to apply in paid work places" that Livingstone views as problematic (Livingstone, 1999:10). Based on empirical evidence that Canadians have "achieved unprecedented levels of formal credentials and these levels have continued to increase rapidly" and, that most people have adequate or greater education than is required for existing jobs and that no more than 10 percent of workers are classified in knowledge-based jobs, Livingstone argues that phenomena of underemployment, downsizing, technological change, denigration of work and the proliferation of the service industry represent a "skills-job gap" (Livingstone, 1999:31).

Restructuring has served to decrease rather than increase the knowledge and skills requirements of contemporary jobs. As a result of individuals utilizing a "learning for earning" strategy to gain a relative advantage in a limited labour market over the past four decades, there is currently unprecedented credential
inflation and a general surplus of labour in almost all skill categories. Rather than a major restructuring of education and training for occupations and the economy, there is a need for job creation to utilize existing skills as resolution to the problems facing the Canadian labour force.

18. Many of the country's largest and wealthiest corporations have engaged in restructuring activities, resulting in tens of thousands of people losing their jobs. General Motors of Canada employed 43,871 workers in 1989, and 37,519 in 1994. Stelco Incorporated engaged 16,147 people in 1989, and 11,768 in 1994. Canadian General Electric utilized 10,406 workers in 1989, and 6,200 by 1994. The large utility, Ontario Hydro, employed 34,076 workers in 1989, and 22,000 in 1994: the Hudson Bay Company's 65,000 workers employed in 1989, were reduced to 56,500 in 1994. Since 1994, Bell Canada anticipated eliminating or contracting out 10,000 jobs, while the Canadian National Railways planned to eliminate 2,500 positions (Ferguson and Crane, 1996c:C1). In the past, productivity gains were conveyed to workers in the form of increases in wages and benefits, but in 1994 (despite a 3 per cent rise in productivity) wages fell by 2 per cent (Kennedy, 1996:A21). Concentrating exclusively on the bottom line in the boardrooms across the nation does not give due concern to the welfare of workers, citizens and the need to solve social problems. As Walter Reuther, president of the Auto Workers' union remarked sixty years ago, "robots don't buy cars". A shortsighted approach of laying off large numbers of workers and driving down wages, negates the fact that Canadian workers are also consumers.

Handelmann (1996a:F1) suggests that the average head of an American corporation makes approximately 135 times more than the average American worker, a gap larger than in any other Western industrial democracy. In an apparent dysfunction of the free enterprise system, corporations that once reduced their workforce when profits dropped are currently doing so as sales, profits and stock market prices soar. It would appear that the large corporations have broken their social contract with American workers, reinstating and exacerbating confrontational politics in the workplace in order to squeeze more concessions from workers.

19. In following the lead set in Alberta, the Conservative government in Ontario announced that 14,000 government employees would be laid off, a scheme that, in part, would finance a 30 percent income tax cut. Under the Harris plan, a person making $20,000 would receive a tax dividend of $1,324 at the end of three years, and an individual making $200,000 would realize a tax benefit of approximately $11,000 (Laxer, 1996b:F3). As critics on the Left point out, these figures do not reflect the fact that the Tories plan to deregulate industries allowing operations to license and monitor themselves as well as to privatize for profit, a number of operations such as Hydro, TV
Ontario and the Liquor Control Board. Ontarians are most decidedly expected to pay more through the initiation of user fees, and to receive less by way of services in future.

The introduction of $6.5 million in user fees was anticipated to impact more harshly on the poor than the rich, and means that much of the tax savings may never be realized. As cutbacks are implemented, many decreases in services are anticipated, creating a situation (which may lead to decaying urban cores) similar to events taking place in major American cities. Nor does the proposed tax structure address the fact that 15 to 20 per cent of Canada's children live in poverty; one in five children who are poor live in single-parent families (Laxer, 1996b:F3). Despite this blatant contradiction of terminal Reaganomics, the Tories plan to risk deflating the province's economy by extracting billions of dollars and eliminating 100,000 jobs in order to satisfy the demands of the special interest groups of the affluent and business associations.

20. According to the American economist Jeremy Rifkin, automation rather than foreign competition and cheap labour from developing countries is responsible for the current trend to create high-end and low-end service jobs. He explains that new technologies are the harbinger of an era of workerless production, cutbacks and "corporate re-engineering" as part of the new jobless recovery (Rifkin, 1995:54). Three out of four workers, ranging from clerks to surgeons, will be replaced by computer-assisted machines, according to this labour economist. Similar to a number of other analysts, he forecasts that secretaries, receptionists, sales clerks, bank tellers, librarians, middle managers, clerical and blue-collar positions will all but disappear in the future (Rifkin, 1996).

Even Henry Ford, who was no friend of the working class, understood that it was essential to pay workers enough so they would be able to buy the cars rolling off his assembly line. By year 2020, predictions include the demise of most traditional blue-collar work, and a sharp decrease in the number of people employed in white-collar jobs. The continued downsizing and delayering of the workforce is unlikely to spark the recovery promised by the economic elites, as John Porter labelled them forty years earlier. Indeed, the evidence suggests that if an economic recovery occurs, it is likely to be slow and modest and will result in permanently entrenching an underclass.

21. The income gap has added to the strain imposed by the new economy in Canadian society. A large gap separates those who have been forced out or have been unable to enter the job market, from those who are employed in full time positions. Between 1969 and 1994, the average annual earnings of the top five percent of Canadian households climbed by 40 per cent to $157,000, according to Statistics Canada figures. In the same 15-year period, the income received by working and middle class Canadians declined by three and five per cent respectively (Statistics Canada, 1992).
Real income has not increased in fifteen years, despite the fact that it now requires the wages of two people working in the marketplace to maintain many families. In the past twenty years, 85 per cent of the wealth generated in Canada has been appropriated by five per cent of the population at the top of the wealth producing hierarchy (McQuaig, 1995:24-6).

As a result of the massive structural changes taking place in the labour market, some people have been unable to find work, while other full-time employees are working long hours of overtime. Contracting out and part-time work are seen by employers as a way to reduce labour costs and to avoid paying benefits. The costs of benefits to employers, including paid vacation, sick leave, severance pay, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance contributions and donations to the Canada Pension Plan have continued to rise more rapidly than the wages of full-time employees. In the 1980s, the hourly wage rate was $13.70 and the benefits paid by an employer were $5.50 an hour on average; the hourly wage rose to $23.25 in 1996, and the benefit costs to $16.60 per hour (Donner, 1996:A21). This has persuaded many employees to lean more towards overtime work rather than hiring new employees.

22. A recent Chicago Tribune poll suggests that 64 percent of Americans interviewed believed that a good education and hard work--once the cornerstone of the American dream are no longer a guarantee of "the good life". Many feel alienated by the corporate drive for profits, and expressed pessimism about rising class barriers to success. Some 73 per cent indicate that it is harder to get ahead today, than ten or fifteen years ago (Handlemann, 1996b:A27).

23. In the movement toward increased labour market flexibility and state retrenchment (which favours supply side economic policies), governments attempt to provide an explanation concerning why fundamental initiatives of restructuring ought to take place. Limiting and directing scarce resources toward increasing the nation's competitiveness to adjust to the global economy provides this kind of ideological justification for change. In order to recast public policy as part of the construction of a political argument, it is necessary to argue that health, welfare and educational services are inefficient and wasteful. The focus is on individual failure with respect to the acquisition of skills and the ability to find employment. The position is put forth that governments have overspent, revenues are shrinking and tax increases are unacceptable, making cutbacks necessary.

24. For a more complete analysis of the segmented market for women in the Canadian labour force, see Armstrong and Armstrong (1978,1990). They argue that while women's participation in the paid labour force has dramatically increased since 1944, the kind of work which most women perform has not substantially changed.
In the past, women functioned as a "reserve army of labour", taking with them a devalued status when they left their home for the marketplace, and employed primarily in labour intensive repetitive jobs with limited salaries and fringe benefits.

Having established that gender is a primary variable for the analysis of labour force segregation, Armstrong and Armstrong (1978:20) explain that the part-time, piecemeal and the seasonal nature of women's work developed as a response to the demands of a changing capitalist economy. Women's domestic work is not peripheral to their lives, their families or the capitalist system, but functions as an integral component of the labour market. They argue that women who work outside of the home are additionally required to devote much of their "leisure time" to taking care of their own needs and those of their families.

The interests of capital are served by sex-segregated work in which one segment, women, perform predominantly low-skilled jobs for essentially low salaries which do not lead to promotions. Despite the fact that 70 per cent of women over age fifteen are in the labour force (comprising 55 percent of all workers in Canada), the nature of the work women perform has not substantially been altered over many decades (Statistics Canada, 1988). Women's wages and working conditions continue to compare unfavourably with those of their male counterparts, despite legislative attempts to introduce progressive policies of affirmative action, employment and pay equity during the past four decades in Canada.

Similar to the structural changes taking place in all advanced capitalist nations, the restructuring of Canada's labour market has resulted in job losses, intensification of work and demands for higher productivity. Armstrong and Armstrong hold out little hope that conditions will therefore improve for women who work in segregated areas of the labour market.

25. Deem (1980) and Gaskell (1992) point out that despite protests for more than four decades from feminist quarters, females continue to be streamed through socialization and educational practices into traditional jobs which mirror, in the marketplace, the functions they serve in the household.

26. Except for a recent, small turnaround in 1998, Canada's rate of unemployment has been escalating since the 1970s, such that the number of people seeking work far outweighs the numbers of jobs available. Women, in particular, have faced high rates of unemployment for decades. More recently, the rate of unemployment among youth has been 16 percent, or greater than the rate of 12 percent when compared with all age categories (Krahn and Lowe, 1988:56-8). Edwards (1978) concurs that youth, immigrants and women have the highest rates of unemployment. These trends contradict the arguments put forth by conservative political and economic pundits, who suggest that those who are unemployed lack ambition or do not wish to work.
27. Until recently, educational achievement and accreditation together with work skills and experience, made a difference for a number of individuals in the labour market. Women with high levels of education were more likely to attain higher salaried positions, yet those occupations were apt to be paid less than men in equivalent positions. According to Bergmann (1986:73), the salary differential in 1986 between women college graduates and women who completed high school in the U.S. was $6,000 a year, with a corresponding $10,000 differential among males.

Livingstone (1994:69-73) points out that capital-labour relations are more closely connected with productivity/profitability as opposed to the capitalist control of labour. He predicts that, while educational systems will continue to be linked to the requirements of capitalist production, in the future they will likely become more vocational in nature.

28. Despite the great influx of women into the paid labour force after the Second World War, little change occurred in the division of household labour that restricted the amount of time women had for paid employment, education, training and skill upgrading (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1983:132-6). Domestic responsibilities constituted structural obstacles which influence the choices and options of women in the labour force (Oakley, 1974:213-48). As a result of the pressures of their primary job as homemakers and mothers, women were often confined to work which was menial, part-time and temporary in nature (Kome, 1985:137-96). Benston (1969:36) examines how the relations of women and men to the organization of paid employment differed, based on the assignment of housework and childcare to women. Due to economic factors, women with children often could not afford to stay home. Women remain concentrated in gender-segregated jobs in the labour market, in part, because they continue to be predominantly responsible for domestic work (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1990).

29. With the introduction of industrial capitalism, women were assigned roles in the private as opposed to the public domain of society based on ideas and practices of gender role socialization. As Nunes and White (1972) suggest, such ideas did not preclude generations of English working class women from labouring in coal mines and in smelting and iron ore factories. Nonetheless, the majority of men and women incorporated the "ideology of motherhood" into their thinking concerning women's paid employment and the adjustment of the career demands of women to meet the needs of the household. The consequence of these constraining social ideas limited employment opportunities for women (Baber and Monaghan, 1988:189-203).

Changes in prevailing Canadian values have occurred with respect to working women. As a result of the participation of 69 percent of women with children under six in the labour market,
prevailing economic conditions, the declining size of the family, marginal provision of childcare facilities and the influence of the women's movement on people's consciousness, a number of women have achieved economic independence. There remains, however, an interconnectedness between segregated, market-place work and a gendered family structure, which has resulted in women continuing to be primarily responsible for familial duties as they increasingly take on more paid work (Statistics Canada, 1990:18).


32. Twenty years earlier, Blaze Starr was informed by her mentor that "there ain't nothing to it. All you've got to do is get out there and shake your tits and wiggle your ass, and everything else will take care of itself". In her autobiography (coauthored by Huey Perry), Starr writes (1974:62-3):

She [her mentor] made it sound so cheap, she frightened me all the more. I had never heard a woman talk in such vulgar terms. I refused to look at myself in the mirror for fear that I would not go through with it ... It all looked simple enough as far as the dancing was concerned. The problem was having to undress in public. Rather than watch the other strippers, I went back to the dressing room and attempted to imitate Tiny's dancing step. By that time I was really scared, and the longer I waited, the more the tension mounted. Just before the second stripper finished, I went back to the stage door and watched her complete her act.

Red was now motioning for me to take off the top. Even in my half-conscious state, it struck me that he appeared more eager than the audience. I danced to the opposite end of the stage and, with my back to the audience, unfastened my brassiere and threw it over my shoulder just as Tiny had done. Then I turned to face the audience with my bosom exposed. I was through the hard part. Again there were whistles, yells, and loud applause. Red was also clapping his hands. As I left the stage and ran to my dressing room, I could hear the audience yelling and applauding. It was a good feeling. I knew that they had liked me.
Chapter Seven

HISTORICAL CHANGES IN THE LABOUR PROCESS OF STRIPPING

7.1. Reorganizing Stripping From Performance to Personal Sexual Service

Stripping has undergone a radical reorganization, changing from an emphasis on the dancing performance and disrobing on the stage (with its burlesque associations) to an emphasis on sexual display and interchange between the stripper and members of the audience. Important factors compelling an increase in the numbers willing to take on this kind of work include (a) changing sexual mores (b) growing unemployment among young women and (c) increasing opportunities for work in the sex trade. The supplanting of dance skills and the demand for new interpersonal and physical contact skills in the "no-collar" work of stripping was not unlike the changes which were taking place for some of blue-and white-collar workers in other sectors of a transforming economy. In order to maximize profits while eliminating the high costs of elaborate stage shows, club owners viewed these changes as necessary to provide services, which customers were able to obtain outside of strip clubs at prices the clients could afford. Owners were often able to exercise an unfettered right to manage in the absence of any countervailing forces of resistance representing the interests of strippers. A number of dancers viewed management practices as patently unfair, degrading and dangerous. Without an organized collective defense, most women of strip were unable to secure the most fundamental protection of job descriptions, benefits and security stated in contractual language and, therefore, they were forced to press for these conditions on an individual basis.

By turning their attention to the work routines of strippers, club managers began, in the 1970s, to exert more
control over the labour process of stripping. A number of managers implemented techniques of supervision, coordination and discipline which enlarged control over the labour process and resulted in stripping practices becoming more tightly controlled in the service of capital.¹ By putting into place an innovative organization of stripping, employers were able to extract more work from dancers without incurring additional costs, while generating increased revenues from the sale of liquor and commissions from table and lap dances.² Strippers became free agents working on their own merits to boost sales—if successful, they earned larger fees and tips from the clients (although some were required to pay the owner a percentage of their tips). If they were unsuccessful, they could no longer expect a guaranteed salary. The new strip techniques provided the patrons with more exposure to the women at tableside and in private booths and was coupled with more time, the tease, allocated for socializing prior to the meter of the strip starting to tick. The nature and explicitness of the services became a matter of individual negotiations. Services were regulated on the basis of time spent with the clients, based upon the number of contracted songs. Fees charged took into account the degree of custom-designed and explicit service by employing a staggered price structure designed to encourage mass consumption. In order to cope with the increased workload demands, strippers engaged in a more simplistic dance style for the table and the lap. The new job essentially required that the dancer strip as quickly as possible and remain nude for as long as possible, in contrast to the way dancing and stripping in the past were an integral part of a performance which ended with a brief foray into nudity.

In contrast to strippers of the past, who often performed a few stage shows—enjoyed long breaks between sets and job security through many years of employment in the same club—the contemporary stripper performs several stage shows a day, continuously table and/or lap dances, moves on a club circuit and
may only secure employment for a few years. New strip practices emerging in the late 1970s altered and intensified the work, reflecting the changing relations of production of stripping. The conditions under which the job was rationalized to restructure the labour process required the stripper to work continuously, except for a few breaks, for an eight-hour shift a day and often working a six-day week. The work of the modern-day stripper is more fragmented, requiring her frequently to move between clubs and cities (across the province and occasionally across countries) serving the demands of the market. The majority of dancers travel between clubs every few weeks to satisfy the customers' desire to view "new girls". Most strippers work for a two- or three-week period and then take a few days off, returning home if they have been travelling on a circuit. The transient nature of the workforce of strippers can be attributed, in part, to the fatigue factor which results from circuit work. It is also due to the boredom cited by dancers, the need to continuously engage in "hustle work" for remuneration, the lack of an built-in career ladder, problems of stalking and harassment, and the fact that dancers can so easily be replaced by younger women who want to enter the profession.

The need to "hustle" table and lap dances is a direct consequence of the change in the pay structure from one in which the stripper received her entire salary from management for stage dancing, to one in which her income was derived, in part, from a limited salary attached to stage dancing and, in part, (or entirely) from the fees and tips paid by patrons for table and lap dancing. The surplus labour and the competition which arose among dancers meant more "hustle work", with no guarantee that the dancer would earn additional money, according to Candy. Skills associated with stripping in the past were diluted through the presentation of a new method of stripping (i.e., table and lap dancing). Some managers took advantage of a segmented labour force, recognizing that a large number of unskilled workers were
more amenable to increasing control and discipline. As work processes became standardized, routinized and rationalized, the need for skilled dancers was reduced among the general category of strippers. These women were rendered more vulnerable to managerial supervision. The allocation of assignments, the pace and flow of the work, work schedules and methods of payment, became firmly subject to the dictates of individual club owners and, to some extent, clients. Employers were attempting to control labour costs by reorganizing and subcontracting strip work, to pressure strippers to work harder for reduced salaries and to minimize discretion over working conditions which strippers had previously controlled. By the mid-1980s, club owners were able to reduce the wages paid to the strippers, to control their labour and to establish monitoring and accountability practices within the myriad of normative clubs which emerged.

A two-tiered system consisting of a few full-time, highly-statused, skilled and salaried strippers, together with a large number of part-time, unskilled dancers working for fees and tips was put in place, transforming the structure of the stripping business. Dancers vied with each other for the opportunity to move up in the hierarchy of stripping. Feature acts earned substantially more money, including travel and living expenses, enjoyed more favourable working conditions (such as the use of a private dressing room), were often not required to table or lap dance and had the ability to negotiate work shifts and choose the clubs in which they worked. Amber Starr maintained that to become a feature, "you have to go away; even if you work on your dancing and the costumes, you'll never be allowed to feature in your own home town. If people think that you're from somewhere else, you're exotic." When negotiating her contracts, she makes it clear that hotel and meal expenses for herself and her entourage (who take care of her sound and light show and double as bodyguards) are covered by the club. "Many women new to stripping
are naive about the salary and rank differences between dancers. Managers hold out the promise of stardom, by comparing a dancer to the underlings who are just making peanuts because they can't dance and aren't sexy and beautiful", Candy remarked. She has been approached by managers with promises that they will make her a star, noting that "the same line has been tried on me on several occasions. Each girl, at some time, is brought into the manager's office and told how special she is, how she has real talent or potential to go somewhere and how the manager could take an interest in her career if she would do something for him, namely, go to bed with him."

What is also obscured in the construction of featuring is the fact that this division among strippers upholds privileged status among Caucasian women. White women much more than women of colour are found as features, adding to the differences and inequalities found in stripping. Black, Asian and Native Women, for the most part, occupy the bottom rung of the stripping hierarchy and are most likely to experience racism together with sexism and class oppression. The denial of inequality based on ethnicity and race prevents solidarity among strippers. The struggle to obtain the same working conditions for all strippers that features enjoy would require that the advantages afforded White dancers would be transferred to women less privileged.

Strippers suggest that in table and lap dancing sessions, all efforts are focused upon seducing the customer into believing that the dancer is willing to sexually service the client exclusively and for an extended period of time. Although the dancer usually views these sessions as a job in which seduction is present to entice the client into an entrepreneurial encounter, patrons view stripping as a form of entertainment; they see these encounters as pleasurable and relatively anonymous sexual experience and at times, entitlement (for fees-paying customers). In expressing why he attends strip clubs on a regular
basis, Danny succinctly stated that his wife frequents bingo games and he visits strip clubs as "another form of escape". Ray, on the other hand, "goes three or four times a week" and since he "spends big bucks", he expects "to get my money's worth". Although there is usually a component of intrigue and seduction in the table and lap dancing sessions, often there is also a display of distinct elements of power, dominance and submission at work. Some men, it is reported, have difficulty distinguishing between the fantasy presented by the strippers and the reality of demanding that dancers act out the desires suggested by these men. In lap dancing interactions, some dancers speak openly about a struggle for control with the clients in which men use money to enable them to touch women's bodies or be touched, and dancers, in turn, who use their bodies to extract money from the clients. For the most part, the "game of stripping" appears to be rewarding for all parties concerned--generating a win-win situation for its participants. A number of strippers readily admit that they control the game and are able to manipulate men for money, while a substantial number of clients suggest that they are able to view and touch the dancers without, as Ray states, "giving up too much cash".

Conflicts in the labour process allowed for increased capital accumulation as a substantial number of large scale normative clubs (often owned by a consortium) were established during the 1980s across Ontario. The more experienced dancers negotiated their hours, pay and working conditions, although they were not always successful in obtaining their requests. "Some of the new girls, especially the younger ones who have come from the North, will dance double or triple shifts and play themselves out to please the boss and move up", Candy noted. She added that "it's pathetic because in stripping there is really no place to go. If you are a stripper, that's all you are. You don't become a manager or an owner of a club in this business by working your way up, as you do in some other jobs." The absence of control
over their working conditions and the lack of an in-built career ladder, in part, accounts for the high turnover in this occupation, and for the often expressed desire by strippers to leave the business.

Aspects of the craft of a bygone era in the form of performance skills and knowledge were retained by a few experienced features. Some strippers enjoyed the closer contact with clients, which provided an opportunity to develop their interpersonal, flirtatious and sexual skills as part of their performing personae. Increasing productivity and extending control over some aspects of the working behaviour of the general coterie of dancers was, however, initiated by mangers and clients. At the same time, dancers were encouraged to set their own boundaries in personal sexual encounters with clients. Although a significant number of dancers complained about the explicit and more hazardous nature of table dancing initiated in the early 1980s (and lap dancing in the mid-1980s), the introduction of a new method of stripping was not without benefits for strippers. Inventive interpersonal and social/sexual capabilities were added to the stripper's skills repertoire, and although often unrecognized by managers and clients as a form of skills upgrading, the new talents and knowledge resulted in many strippers making more money than in the past. Dancers could substantially increase their earnings through fees, tips and gifts as they scrutinized and educated their customers about acceptable behaviour throughout their performances. Many were conscious that the on-the-job skills they acquired were highly job-specific and consequently were not easily transferable to other occupations. As a result, a vocal minority of strippers welcomed the changes and endorsed the right of strippers to have sexual contact and intimacy with clients in order to maximize their earnings.

The new style of stripping reorganized more than the various
sites of work; it also altered the relationships among people. Older strippers commented that they became more isolated and even hostile toward one another in contrast to the way strippers used to sit together backstage between shows, smoking and joking. The emergence of a class of features created schisms between dancers, giving way to a new consciousness which made strippers less amenable to cooperative social interactions with each other. Annie Ample suggested that it became difficult to strike up friendships with dancers due to the large number of women circulating in the clubs and the competitive feelings displayed toward each other. She also pointed out that as dancers became cognizant of the potential for women outside of clubs to undermine their job security, strippers became increasingly less supportive within the clubs.

A number of dancers, including Annie Ample and Laura X, believe that the unilateral decisions of managers which extended control over workers, their skills and the pace of work, undermined the quality of the strip and rendered dancers more vulnerable to abusive treatment at the hands of patrons. Annie regarded these changes as representing a decline in the calibre of work she performs, which took on an added element of danger. Samantha also complained that the ever increasing limits of "sleaze" pushed stripping further away from its roots of art and dance, as competition pitted as many as a hundred or more dancers in a large normative club against each other--compared to the five or six dancers who populated such establishments two decades ago. For the most part, dancers who refused to adjust to changes requiring table and then lap dancing were "blackballed", dismissed or left the business. Those who survived the transition and the more recent entrants into the business faced a more demanding and, at times, a more dangerous work environment with bouncers, owners and the police, each for their own reasons, reluctant to intervene in the harassment which had become a part of the stripper's job description.
The restructuring from stage strip tease to table and lap dancing was undertaken with limited opportunity for the dancers to contribute to the decision making process. Some women left the business, others went along with the reorganization, a number protested and some welcomed changes that allowed them to increase their earnings through customer contacts which emphasized volume. As more women circulated in the clubs to meet the demands for table and lap dancing--and as competition between strippers and the pace of the work intensified adding to the labour process of stripping--many dancers became aware that they were working under increasingly adverse conditions. Owners like Sam, at General G’s in Brampton, were not concerned about the lack of camaraderie between strippers, the increased level of sexplicitness or the potential dangers arising from the modifications of the work, Annie Ample contends. Dancers were pressured to take up the new genre of strip or risk being fired and losing their source of income. Managers relied on new forms of organizing the work, supported by arguments of an ideological and cultural nature to persuade strippers that it was in their own self-interest to make changes to increase their earnings as well as reflecting social/sexual transformations in the culture at large. The reorganization was carried out over the protestations of a number of dancers in the early 1980s as table dancing was introduced and again in the mid-1980s with the advent of lap dancing. That trend continued in the 1990s, as club owners and patrons pressured dancers to increasingly engage in more pornographic performances such as duo, insertion acts and live sex performances on stage, or in the "VIP rooms" in the more sexually permissive clubs.

7.2. From Burlesque to Contemporary Strip

Older strippers, the majority of whom are in their thirties and a few in their forties as well as a some younger dancers like to talk about "the good old days of stripping", in the time of vaudeville and burlesque. A number of these women speak from
personal experience; others merely pass on visions and tales of a bygone era which have been recounted to them. On the whole, they stress the skills and knowledge which were needed in days past, when stripping was a craft learned through a lengthy mentoring process. Seasoned, experienced women working in the trade enabled new dancers to gain some discretion and control over their work processes. These women also depict the life of strippers of the past as glamorous, filled with fun, fantasy, flashy costumes and show routines, positioning the stripper in the world of entertainment more than in the sex trade. In contrast, contemporary stripping is sometimes presented as less skillful and interesting, both for the performer and the spectator, practised mostly by very young women without training in the art of the "tease" which gave this form of dancing its name, and increasingly associated with lewdness, violence and drugs.

Contemporary striptease dancing began in North America when the first topless show was produced in 1964, at San Francisco's Condor club. Nudity in stripping came to Toronto in the late 1960s, in clubs like Starvin Marvin's. At Le Strip, go-go dancers were replaced by strippers; at the infamous Victory Burlesque, the pasties and then the G-strings were removed. During this period, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario exercised superintendence over the entertainment industry. When the Supreme Court of Ontario ruled, however, in 1981 (in the case of MacLean vs. MacLean) that the LCBO had no jurisdiction in defining what constituted entertainment, nude dancing began to evolve in Ontario.

When Julie began dancing in Montreal more than twelve years ago (a relatively long career by stripping standards), her act followed that of a stripper who was two hundred and fifty pounds. "Quebec people are more with it and easy-going than people in Toronto. Everybody loved that woman and no one cared that she was fat or that the place was a mess; we all had a good time", she
stated. Julie nostalgically recalled working in a club which had a standup comic, a juggler, singers, and a "fire-eating lady", all performing between the strip acts. "We didn't work so hard and we all got along pretty well. When the G-strings came off in Montreal, a lot of strippers were arrested, but the club managers bailed them out immediately." Touching yourself or playing sex games with customers was a 'no-no', although Julie maintained that a few strippers broke that rule.

The strict demarcation ended between public consumption and what was intended to be private at the point where intimacy became the center of public discourse. With the rise of the personal confessional, stripping became a consummate medium to flaunt the private, delivering requisite secrets for public consumption. During the sexually liberated 1980s, in a market in which consumers enjoyed higher disposable incomes than previous generations, club owners were attempting to bring stripping into the mainstream of middle-class Canadian entertainment, reproducing the way in which Las Vegas-style entertainment was restructured and repackaged for a mass American audience a few decades earlier. By October 1985, a Toronto bylaw which required dancers to wear a G-string was struck down, although dancers were legally required to wear an article of clothing on stage such as a scarf around their neck. Thus, the controls on the act of stripping were substantially lessened, and table dancing came into full force as the new presentation of the strip. As the field opened up to a more entrepreneurial spirit of individual competitiveness and explicit expose for its own sake, strippers were brought into increasingly more intimate contact with customers. The rates of remuneration varied considerably, and inevitably reflected what the market would bear.

I was fortunate to meet Annie Ample after reading about a one-woman crusade in which she hoped to reach out to youth with a film entitled Wake-Up and a school programme. She was determined
to educate young people about the streets, drugs and violence—particularly violence directed toward young women and children, which had caused her to retire from stripping. In my initial telephone conversation with this very energetic woman, she reported that many mothers who were concerned about the whereabouts of their young daughters and contacted her since she went public through television, radio and newspaper interviews. She revealed that several mothers and strippers who had been scheduled to attend a forthcoming television show with her had backed out after receiving threats; however, Annie was determined to see the project through despite also being threatened "for telling all". She agreed to meet me only after carefully checking my identity, concerned that "people who wish to do me in might use female agents".

Looking back on her many years in stripping, Annie concluded that standards had dropped considerably.\[11\] Pink Champagne, who danced in the same era as Annie, expressed a similar sentiment when she remarked that "you don't walk into clubs looking like a douche bag. You got to walk in looking like a star. When I worked Thunder Bay, Bruce, my husband and MC, hired a white limo for me the first day of work. They put the red carpet outside. They gave me roses. Of course it's true, Bruce told them I was a fucking star! . . . I had men propose to me all the time. Women asking me for beauty tips. What can I tell them? I don't try to be beautiful, I just am!" According to Annie, strip clubs used to be "fun places" with lounges where the dancers could watch television and they had dressing rooms with lockers. Strippers were not allowed to fraternize with customers between shows so they would sit around backstage, sewing sequins on their costumes while talking about their husbands and children. Dancers did not "fool around", by which she meant that they did not engage in prostitution, and there was camaraderie among the top-billed stars such as Chesty Morgan, Helen Bedd, Blaze Starr, Lotta Luv, Lusty Lisa and Tempest Storm. When Annie danced at the Pom Pom
Room in Toronto fifteen years ago, "everyone was friendly and the girls just stripped and we all had a good time; now you can find girls seventeen years old and younger, who can't dance and who are often stoned in clubs". The turning point occurred when criminal elements from Detroit came to Toronto in the early 1970s and opened body rub parlours as a "front" for prostitution. Annie recalled with distress the murder of the young shoeshine boy, Emmanuel Jacques, as a seminal event which marked the beginning of the "downslide of Toronto". She also became increasingly alarmed at the amount of drugs sold and consumed in strip clubs, particularly cocaine. Reflecting on the impact of table dancing, she claimed that it had done irreparable harm to the standards in her profession and she expressed deep concern about the fact that table dancers are "younger and sleazier" than women who danced previously.

Annie complained that stripping is no longer "good clean fun." The pedophiles sit in perverts' row and men are not content to just look any more; they want to feel and have sex. There are many fights in bars and the bouncers are too busy selling drugs and soliciting dancers for the customers to bother to protect the women. There are two ways of seeing stripping; the old fun-and-games version and the new bad, spaced out approach." She recently witnessed a fourteen-year-old stripper shooting drugs between her toes so that the needle marks would not show. She also commented on an act she had seen recently in which the stripper, "Pearl of the Orient, inserted pearls and ping pong balls into her vagina on stage and had darts shot at her from near the stage." In contrast, Annie tells of Madame A, a feature many years ago in Las Vegas who used to sign autographs with three kisses. Her act drew a lot of couples and served as a model for Annie's own show. Although Annie attempted in many ingenious ways to make as much money as possible, she claimed that she had always drawn the line at prostitution and lewd performances."
Although she was born and worked in Montreal strip clubs in the predominantly French east end of the city, Laura X is Polish and English. This tall, willowy and deeply tanned woman confesses to having chain smoked since she was fifteen years of age. An intelligent, philosophical but not a very affable woman in her late thirties, Laura has a bawdy attitude and an air of confidence which only comes from age and experience. As I listen to her, I imagine myself as a pupil who is conversing with a wise woman to learn the secrets of her trade. She spoke affectionately of the puns, the seductive themes, the "wisecracks and gags, risqué monologues and introductions by the masters of ceremony in burlesque", as she knew stripping in Montreal during the sixties. At clubs like the Fanfare and the Moulin Rouge, the immortal can-can could be seen, together with high-wire acts, fire and sensuous belly dancing, with several women gyrating their hips as the audience clapped rhythmically to spur on the dancers to move faster and faster. Comedy was a large part of the appeal of burlesque, as was "leaving something to the imagination in strip acts", sometimes performed behind screens or shadowgraphs. Striptease numbers with fans, veils, shawls, nude-like body suits or shoulder straps which accidentally broke, only added to the deception of the act and the pleasure of the audience. "And the strip was slow, real slow, to provide more sensuality." Laura recalled that in her first large show, she wore a negligee in a boudoir number, teasing the audience by partially removing and playing with the garment, which she believes was sexier than exposing herself completely. The "shimmy, bump-and-grind and tit twirling" became her trademarks and demonstrated the power of sex by packing the customers into the club each night.

"I had a regular customer who would slip into the back of the club about once a week, and I didn't know he was a priest until my girlfriend saw him saying mass in a church where she had taken her daughter for communion." Laura relates that this nice, quiet man always ordered one glass of sherry while visiting the club, but never returned after
being recognized. She maintains that clubs try to "make a lot of profits off the girls any way they can, but this spoils stripping for those who want to demonstrate art in dancing. Younger and younger girls are brought in for table dancing. They get a standard rate for stripping on stage and in between sets, they table dance for five to ten dollars a dance. If the guy touches you, he has to pay more, depending on the part of the body touched.

Laura X described the finest strip acts she had ever seen as "intellectual strip", including a mood piece with a stripper dressed in a blue, "Eskimo" outfit and an igloo stage prop bathed in blue light. The stripper undressed, chanted, meditated and dressed again by the end of the act. What constituted a stimulating treatise designed to engage the emotions and the genitals of clients, however, was not necessarily enlightening. In view of the fact that Laura was not Inuit, the symbols of the parka and the igloo were meant to evoke a stereotypical image of who native women are and who they ought to be. Such symbols are a crucial part of the construction of racism in Western reality, invoking biology as an immutable distinction in an oppositional duality of Native and non-Native people. These inappropriate and racist images eroticized and sexualized Native women, rendering them as "other" and a member of disadvantaged minority.

Poverty remains as much a fact of life for Inuit and Natives today as it has in the past. Systemic barriers to permanent, well-paying jobs confine Aboriginal women to gender-specific work, often in the service sector. Native women's work is devalued and racist ideology is utilized to justify employing them predominantly in part-time and insecure positions. Capitalism and colonialism have reduced this population of people to destitution and poverty, although the state has recently attempted to placate Native dissatisfaction through transfer payments. In reorganizing the relations of Native communities, the monetary economy left many women doing volunteer labour which further obligated them to a capitalist economy. It was difficult
for Native women to resist the domination of capitalism, due to their dependency on the state in times of increasing unemployment. Unlike a number of White women, they could not necessarily depend upon an employed male partner to share financial responsibilities. When they were drawn into the economy, Native women often brought with them a devalued status based on racial characteristics (defined in terms of the worth of the people who employed them) as well as gender characteristics (associated with the private realm of work).

Another act witnessed by Laura X involved a dancer engaging a television set with a McLuhan-like appearance that was designed to comment on the lonely and solitary effects of interfacing with technology. These were the philosophical and political acts of strip that used striptease as an arena to include nude, suggestive images which dancers believed that customers wanted to view. Such presentations often combined theatre, dance, performance art and cabaret in the presentation. These performances must have rivalled Blaze Starr's act, in which she brought a two-foot wide settee on stage with a switch wired to it to blow smoke and bright pieces of Chinese silk up through the hole as the dancer reclined nude. The act was an attempt to frustrate Captain Rizzo of the morality squad in East Baltimore. Even today on occasion it is possible to witness this type of show, as in the acts I viewed in which a stripper dressed in army fatigues and talked with the audience about the evils of war, the life-is-a-carnival number by a clown stripper, or a Little Red Riding Hood scenario in which the dancer explored childhood sexuality and triumphed over the big bad wolf. This latter act was followed by a strip presentation involving a poor woman in rags leaping from the audience to reveal an expensive G-string and diamond-like bracelet, who then reverted back to her pauper state when the strip was completed.

Laura argued that the metamorphosis from a young, naive
teenager to a mature dancer and entertainer no longer exists, as "you move right from being a child to an adult". Laura went on to describe some of the "class acts" she had seen in the past, including one performance that had a dream motif with a gossamer costume in which the dancer, a blonde goddess, came out of a large, white, pearl shell. "It was breathtaking; she had them eating out of her hand and she knew she had power." Another "hot number" consisted of a dancer carrying a teddy bear adorned with red ribbons and accompanied by a lone tenor saxophone player. As the woman stripped under red lights (which enhanced the ambience), she gave each man in the audience a red ribbon. She surmised that the decline of stripping began when elements of organized crime infiltrated the business and started to pressure the women to hustle drinks. "Then the young girls started to come in and a lot didn't stay because they didn't see it as a career. The guys also changed. They used to be polite and gentlemanly, holding the door and helping you with your coat. You were treated like a lady and if there was a troublemaker, we had the bouncer after the guy. Men were generous and some of my best customers were sailors, businessmen and married men from the "burbs".

There were downsides to the life of a stripper even in those early days, but not many, according to Laura. Degrading acts and abuse from customers were not a common phenomenon, nor was prostitution which was performed by a separate group of women except when a stripper became involved with a "pimp". Laura remembered the sad story of a dancer who had broken a few rules as a teenager by staying out late, wearing a tight sweater and acquiring a reputation in her home town. After her parents complained to the authorities that they could no longer handle her, the young woman ran away from home and "fell into the clutches of a smooth-talking man in a fast car". He promised to take care of her, bought her "flashy clothes" and got her hooked on heroin. Shortly thereafter, the pimp revealed that he had financial problems, and asked the young woman to help both of
them by dancing in a club "for a short while". He arranged her bookings, paid the fines to get her out of jail, but shamelessly exploited her. The woman was ultimately left penniless, homeless and ill; at thirty she committed suicide. Laura and three other strippers attended the funeral at which the boyfriend and the woman's family were conspicuous by their absence.

If dancing in the clubs was fun, the nightlife of parties, drinking and going to "fine" restaurants after the shows was even better. "Men were gentlemen; they would bring you flowers and ask you out and we were treated like stars." The dancers knew they looked good on the arm of a man going into a "swanky place", but they also knew "when to call it quits". Stripping was an "innocent, good clean business", according to Laura. A woman "could do herself proud" with her wardrobe and makeup, the latter sometimes consuming an hour to apply before a show. Some of the costumes were very expensive, and Laura travelled with her props, spending many hours practising her routines. "It was the attitude of strippers that made the difference. Now, skinny kids who can't dance and who are strung out on drugs are in the clubs, whether they want to be there or not." She recently saw a sixteen-year old dancer with "ripped chiffon baby-dolls as a costume, hair on her legs and underarms and yellow rotten teeth".

In the past, there was a clearer demarcation between strippers and prostitutes, both inside and outside the clubs. A number of strippers would perform at stag parties, but most confined their professional life to stripping. "We used to joke with the audience--the old thing about the bald guy in the front row, and stealing a guy's glasses, pretending to clean them between our legs--everyone knew it was a joke. Burlesque queens knew that sex was their business, and they were good at it. They learned that a good stripper can't be too loud, too suggestive or too lewd." Laura used to practice her stripper walk because it was important to "strut your stuff"; it was also important to
"show off those tits and to stand with one leg bent in order to stick out your bum". She always wore high heels, going as far as having high-heeled slippers custom made. She boasted that "my man never saw me without high heels, makeup and my hair done". She was instructed to be modest, flirtatious and titillating, but never coarse or vulgar. "Leave them excited and smiling" became her motto. Stripping was to be conducted with taste and standards, and the dancers themselves had the responsibility of maintaining the artistry and the regulations of their craft.

When Laura reported that customers in strip clubs do not have as good a time as they did in the 1950s and 1960s, I inquired whether her opinion was a function of her age. She readily admitted that "it is partly due to my age that I think this way, but now the men just sit there in the club, stone-faced and the women fake a little smile, if at all, and they look like dolls or robots. Many women can't dance, they have no skills and they don't want to take the time to learn. Strippers used to help each other and copy each other's acts, but it wasn't really stealing, and sometimes they would work on routines together after the show ended." She recalled practising her splits with folds in her dress, while another dancer supervised her and taught her how to roll over and "give a peak". Now the girls just stand around or take their clothes off so fast that they turn the men off. Many girls lie on the floor and show everything. Some don't move much and they don't make it look like fun. Today strip is not sexy, it's vulgar." She remarked that strippers seem bored and have no grace or poise; "they are losers, loners and druggies, who like to do their own thing, but it's not creative".

Laura X is characteristic of many of the older strippers who had difficulty making the transition from presentation and performance to personalized sexual service. She complained that the skills of stripping and the ability to perform have been downgraded and she voiced her dissatisfaction with a number of
the changing trends in the profession, including the lack of apprenticeship and training that she observed among young dancers. The minimalist stage presentations devoid of costumes and props represented a loss of the excitement and glamour associated with burlesque stripping of the past. Demonstrating a talent for incorporating creative narratives into stage shows, this group of strippers viewed themselves as artists. Not unlike skilled craft workers who were replaced in factories by semi-skilled and unskilled workers as the industrial revolution took hold, these women claim that patrons enjoyed a creative, artistic and erotic performance, but that most contemporary acts were, in comparison, too simplistic and mundane. Viewing herself as a "star", she had gained status and personal power through her stage work as well as through the various relationships she cultivated with particular clients. The separation of prostitutes willing to perform sex acts and strippers who were erotic performers, firmly entrenched strippers like Laura X in the world of entertainment.

Typical of the current cohort of dancers, Heather thought that stripping would be "fun, nice costumes and free coke" when she took on her first job three years ago. After witnessing a number of violent incidents, she has changed her mind because she finds that the standards in the business are rapidly sinking. She believes that French dancers from Quebec are a problem, picking a lot of fights and performing increasingly suggestive acts such as the mother-daughter duo Heather recently encountered. A few weeks earlier she walked into the ladies washroom in a club and found a "girl giving head to a customer in the toilet". She also had to pull a needle out of the arm of another dancer who was stoned; when Heather attempted to inform the manager about this incident she was told to mind her own business.

The stripping business has changed a lot in the past five years, Suzette maintains. Her show used to be glamorous with more
props and flashier costumes, "but guys don't really want to see a big show and managers don't want to pay for it". She recalls watching some very creative and artistic dancers, including her friend Holly, who imitated well-known television personalities. Suzette was also fascinated by Sabina, a Las Vegas stripper dressed as a construction worker coming home, taking a bubble bath on stage and then pretending to masturbate on a bed with mood lights and music. "The audience loved it -- the glamour, the costumes, it was real fucking art. Now a lot of girls can't dance and they don't know how to tease, some can't even strip and you end up with a lot of sleaze and crudeness." I asked Suzette if only the women who cannot dance resort to such acts, but she admitted that other dancers engage in these performances as well. "The guys egg them on; they come looking for a cheap thrill, they shout and offer the girls money and the next thing you know she's got her cunt up their faces. Managers, too, are part of it. They hire girls and promote them, like the French girls, if they take risks. That means more business and everyone is happy."

7.3. The Changing Work of Strip

The burlesque dancers of the 1960s performed three or four stage shows per shift and then rested in the dressing room, repairing their costumes and joking with the comedian (Salutin, 1970). These dancers sold their services to theatre owners but retained control of the craft aspects of the strip. They adhered to a mentoring system with more seasoned dancers and opposed, for the most part, the introduction of more sexually explicit performances which took stripping away from its roots of dancing and show business (Hamman, 1992). By having input into the establishment of some essential changes in their workplace culture, this system allowed dancers to control the pace of the work, to exercise considerable licence through job skills over sexual presentation and to retain knowledge of the art of theatrical performance. As increasing levels of risque and
competition were introduced through other venues of the culture, large theatrical productions became tame by the standards of the day and the burlesque palaces were gradually emptied. The practice of patrons watching several hours of comedy, stripping and chorus-line dancing for a single admission price stood in the way of increasing profits for the theatre owners as well as for some of the dancers (Salutin, 1973). By the sexually liberated 1960s, the comedian, the fire-eating act and the orchestra in the pit had all disappeared, leaving only the stripper on stage with her G-string, and occasionally her pasties, as seen at the Victory Burlesque in Toronto. As clubs replaced theatres, owners sought to offer the strip club version of provocative sexual acts which would lure customers back to the entertainment world of strip, prior to the advent in the 1970s of liquor licensing. Club managers began to pressure dancers to engage in a more sexplicit performance which would increase profits and decrease costs, eliminating additional personnel, scenery and elaborate costumes.

Each aspect of the new stage stripping is scripted, including the music which is chosen to highlight themes of sexuality ranging from bawdy music with suggestive lyrics and a usual rock beat for the first song, to romantic ballads during the stripper's floor work. The music essentially serves as a background for the visual image presented by the dancer and it engages the emotions of the patrons. It also regulates the time the dancer spends with the clients. Together with the music, the dancer's style of dress, hair and makeup, cue the audience as to the type of performance that will be presented. Since it is the dancer who preselects the music, costumes and arranges the choreography (minimal though it is in some cases), a whole series of messages concerning class, race, personal taste and occasionally sexual orientation can be read into her choices.

A new approach to dancing for patrons at their table was introduced in the early to mid 1980s, to engage individual
clients more actively with strippers with whom clients were increasingly having more contact. The innovative presentation of table dancing impacted on approximately 5,000 women working as licensed burlesque dancers and entertainers in 150 clubs in Ontario (Brazzo, 1995:11). Dancers began to "hustle" clients by "talking sexy", highlighting their particular features of long hair or legs and attempting to provide an individualized service to meet the perceived diversified sexual fantasies of their clients. The new mode transformed the work of stripping in four ways: (a) the work intensified as the stripper danced continuously on stage and provided a privatized show for tableside; (b) stripping became less demanding in terms of technical skills for all but the features; (c) social and economic relations were reorganized and augmented the labour process; and (d) the explicit and hazardous aspects of stripping became more pronounced.15

Table or French dancing (so named due to the custom of stripping at tableside for individual patrons) takes place on a small table or box approximately two square feet in size, which for all practical purposes is clearly too small a surface upon which to dance. Table dancing was introduced in Canada in 1981-82; some dancers claim that women from Quebec initially engaged in this type of dancing on a voluntary basis to increase their wages. Other suggest that it was club owners in Ontario who demanded that women dance in this manner and circulate continuously in clubs. According to Laura X, fines were levied against dancers who were uncooperative; some dancers were "blackballed" or dismissed for refusing to table dance in this transitional period. By breaking down the older dance style of the stage into a more discrete, simplified and standardized presentation of strip, table dancing (although requiring more work of almost continuous stripping) afforded the dancer more opportunities to supplement her earnings through fees charged to the clients. For the most part, fees were split between the
dancer and the house and provided increased profits for the establishment in which the dancer was employed. Although some women may have been eager to take up the new genre of dance, Annie Ample pointed out that women have been encouraged by the spirit of free enterprise to freelance as table dancers (for a lower salary, or in lieu of salary), dancing strictly for fees and tips. Despite the fact that the salary paid by the club for stage work was often substantially reduced, or in some cases the dancers paid a fee to the club for the "privilege" of table dancing, tips given by the clients for "good service" increased the possibility that the dancer who "hustled" could considerably augment her earnings.

Table dancing further reduced the craft aspect of stripping from a characteristic artisan system (which encouraged the novice dancer to learn from some of the more experienced strippers) to a more simplistic and routine series of unskilled movements. This new form of stripping was designed to be sexually explicit rather than artistic in nature. The requirement of a different kind of competency became crucial, including physical stamina, interpersonal abilities, sexual skills associated with pornography, marketing and financial negotiations. Many dancers registered their complaints that the previous job (which formerly emphasized performance art) was more creative, less physically taxing, had a fixed salary and did not require explicit poses and close contact with the customers. A debate exists within stripping subculture concerning whether strippers were reluctant and coerced by owners and customers into providing a more sexually unreserved performance, or whether they were encouraged and volunteered to, as Annie Ample states, "show it all, close-up", in anticipation of increasing their income. Depending upon the kind of club, the approach to supervision and the status of the dancer, the new arrangements afforded a number of strippers more autonomy, increased control over some aspects of their working conditions and provided an opportunity to enhance their
remuneration. The entrepreneurial atmosphere in which partial or total remuneration was established through table dancing fees and tips, based on individual effort and merit, was clearly a driving force in this change.

Offering privatized, individually-tailored, explicit nude performances and an ever-changing roster of young women was viewed by owners, managers and some strippers as a more lucrative venture than putting on a stage show. Annie Ample remarked that a young girl could be on the street one day and dancing in a club the next. Prior training and dancing skills were no longer regarded as qualifications for the job. Nor was incurring expenses for on-the-job training and the upgrading of performance skills when the degree of sexual explicitness became the predominant criterion by which a stripper was judged. In most clubs, the music dictated the pace of the strip and the simplistic routines that a dancer acquired early in her career were rarely substantially altered. A few ambitious women who were promoted by agents or managers—or who aspired to be feature acts—took it upon themselves to elevate their skills by taking dancing lessons or doing aerobic workouts. Through the incorporation of dance, tumbling and magic routines, together with an adopted stage personae and elaborate costumes, persona and props in their act, these dancers hoped to reach the top of the stripping hierarchy as features. In the world of strip, features make substantially more money, have their own dressing and hotel rooms, at times demand coverage of their travel and meal expenses and are not required to table dance, although no doubt these women put in many hours on top of boxes or at tableside in striving to become stars. A very few other women, like Samantha, through personal negotiations with management, dance very little, if at all, at tableside.

Although some controversy surrounds the way in which table dancing was introduced by the "French girls", it is apparent that
it is a significant and entrenched form of stripping in all clubs today. Fifteen years ago, table dancing separated the "sleazy", racy and risk-taking dancers from other strippers. Later, the line was drawn around lesbian acts, mother-daughter duos, insertion acts, "dirty" lap dancing and prostitution, since all dancers, with the exception of features, are currently required to table dance. Many of the English-speaking dancers to whom I spoke associated table dancing with strippers from Quebec. Some Ontario dancers expressed sympathy for these women, many of whom were compelled to table dance prior to coming to Ontario in order to avoid losing their job. Among those dancers employed in the mid-1980s in Ontario, however, the majority were rather hostile toward French strippers, blaming them for pushing the limits of sleaze to a new level through the introduction of table dancing.

Thus, the strip scene demonstrated similar restructuring tendencies to the culture at large such as underscoring competitiveness and supplying individualized and diversified services. These trends altered the nature of the work, providing stripping with the necessary facelift to compete with proliferating market in commercialized sex, including explicit movies and pornographic video productions, escort services, "phone" sex, a variety of "girlie" magazines which had exploded onto the market as well as the availability of inexpensive flights to Las Vegas and the Caribbean which emerged as part of sex tourism. Sex in the 1980s was aimed at male arousal for the purpose of penetration. Rather than passive and submissive, the new approach to female sexual was to portray women as eager and available. Similar to other forms of capitalist enterprises, sex was made commercial and commodified through the use of women. Voyeurism as spectacle analogous to television shows such as the Jenny Jones and the Jerry Springer were the postmodern equivalent of Gypsy Rose Lee and her fan dances. Stripping could be read as a cultural mirror for North American social relations in which individuals stripped down to reveal who they were (increasingly
across gender, race and to some extent class lines), dressed and then moved on to the next encounter.

The new, explicit genre of stripping with only the G-string provided for little discretion in the scheduling and pacing of the work and increased managerial and client control over some aspects of the job. A pecking order among dancers emerged with some accompanying status and benefits26, especially for the most famous of features21. By the mid-1980s, the training and skills that were necessary for a full-scale stage performance were almost completely eroded. The profession was opened up to many more women of an increasingly younger age. The innovative performance required the stripper to demonstrate skills in performance titillation with some reliance upon the ability to dance, however, it was more important that the dancer be willing to engage in sexually lewd performances and for long hours at a time. The increasing levels of explicitness contributed to a remarkably high turnover of dancers, who quit or were fired within the first year or two after they entered the business. Job descriptions, time clocks and contractual arrangements began to take hold as part of intensification of work, although such practices are normally associated with the industrial sector or more organized areas of service industry work. The increasingly formalized working conditions were not necessarily accompanied by an extension of many of the benefits and legal rights gained by workers in other segments of the labour market.

The demands for increased productivity from dancers and the competition among clubs resulted in strip presentations which featured fewer dance skills and specialized in prurient performances of sustained "gynaecological" displays on stage. Laura X, reminiscing about the early days of stripping, suggested how she was taught by her mentor to remove carefully the long gloves she wore with her full-length gown, rolling them slowly down to her wrists, before "teasing" them off, one finger at a
time, with her teeth. Dancers like Laura X, who survived the transition from burlesque to the new mode of performance complained that stripping was no longer as skillful or as interesting as in the past, and it was "a lot more raunchy". The majority of strippers had no formal training in dance, theatrics or performance; the job became increasingly undertaken by unskilled workers whose human capital was augmented with specialized skills in explicit sexual performances, marketing abilities and interpersonal skills acquired on the job. It would be misleading, however, to view changes in the requisite skills of stripping as a linear progression from skilled to unskilled. The evolution of stripping skills was a complicated process of decreasing and eliminating some abilities and capacities while rewarding new sets of skills and talents. During the period in which older strippers were gradually replaced by a myriad of much younger and considerably less adept dancers, the new cadre of strippers exhibited considerable talent in "talking sexy", posing provocatively and in skillfully transacting business to meet the changing demands of their profession.

Although the new style of stripping required considerably fewer technical skills, table dancing, with its necessity to socialize almost continuously with patrons, dictated the acquisition of skills which were not demanded of strippers of a bygone era. Dancers' narratives describe complex changes in the nature of the work forcing them to augment and heighten their interpersonal, sexual and financial negotiating skills. In what Donald Trump refers to as "the art of the deal", bargaining, "reading people" and catering to the social-sexual needs of men became paramount over dancing ability, "good looks" and, at times, even the level of explicitness of the performance. Each interaction, although routine and repetitive from the point of view of many dancers, was recognized by successful strippers as having its own unique history which could be exploited. Candy acknowledged that she "sizes up" the needs of the clients and
"teases out" their wants, even while she is deciding which patron to approach. This imperative results from the fact that table dancers derive most of their remuneration from the fees and tips provided by individual clients. The closer proximity of dancers to patrons redefined the job to include voyeuristic activities, intimate exposure, sexual contact, and at times, sexual harassment as part of the covert occupational description. Although in normative clubs, the rules dictate "no touching" and are required by law to be posted and regulated by managers and bouncers, it is the stripper who is expected to educate and monitor the patron's behaviour in order to set acceptable limits. Interacting with the needs of the client are the unvoiced and frequently unmet needs of the dancers which, on occasion, have to be addressed out of necessity. Upon pulling a leg muscle, Heather reported that for a few days she did not bend over in her act and therefore, the men "got no bum action" until her leg healed. The earlier presentations of table dancing involved the stripper touching the arm of the client, draping herself across his body and playing with his hair, while she danced close to him. Within a few years in transgressional clubs, the client was seen touching the dancer, most often after he had contracted with her to do so--although a number of strippers persistently complained about wandering fingers and hands that were not anticipated or welcomed.

7.4. New Styles, New Skills, New Conflicts

After a few years, even table dancing did not satisfy the growing desire for the risqué. With the introduction of lap dancing in the mid-1980s (which removed the last vestiges of theatrical performance), stripping was more firmly established in the category of prostitution. For eighteen months after the 1994 decision of Judge Hatchborn (which stated that the conduct of lap dancers was not indecent and did not breach Canadian community standards of tolerance), table dancing began to wane and to be
replaced in large urban-centered establishments by private lap dancing (Brazzo, 1995b:A8; Brazzo, 1996:A3). Many normative clubs were physically transformed into transgressional clubs by constructing private booths for lap dancing on the premises. Only in the Northern part of the province and in some small towns where lap dancing was not introduced, did table dancing remain a popular presentation of strip. During a lap dancing performance for a (single song) fee of ten dollars, the dancer sits on the knee of a client, bumping and grinding and allowing the customer to stroke her thigh or breast. Such activities usually occur within individual or communal private booths; occasionally they take place "on the floor", for all to see. Some dancers, pushing on the limits of "clean dancing" in this manner, drape themselves across the customer to afford him some privacy as they fondled the patron's genitals. Other clients hardly notice the stage activities because they were too busy observing the show in their neighbour's lap. A decade earlier such explicit activities would have been unthinkable.

A great number of dancers currently engage in such practices as a necessary condition of employment. The duos and occasionally trios engage each other "on the floor", while strippers are on couches at the side of the club, or in booths "moaning and groping in fake sexual ecstasy with no foreplay because you just get to it", Debbie elaborates. She suggests that the more sexually tumescent and cost-conscious clients will perform their own preparations for lap dancing, coming to the sessions with a "hard-on". The stripper's job entails "reaching down into the guy's pants and jacking him off", although the client might also want "to fondle and finger" the dancer prior to, during and occasionally after "he comes". Her descriptions of assembly-line masturbation and ejaculation sessions and dealing with "secret sexual weirdness" prompted her to consider leaving the business. She characterizes the clients as "lonely, curious, too young and the constantly sexually turned-on crowd". This put a different
spin on stripping for this veteran dancer, compared to the time when she entered the business ten years previously as a "strictly no-touch table dancer".

During my interview with Candy, Simone left the stage and went to the back of the club to join a patron for a lap dancing session. As reported by Jenny Silverman (1993:281), a journalism student at the University of Houston and a part-time stripper at Rick's Cabaret, all the stripper's efforts are focused on seducing the customer, moving from one song to the next so there is never a break in the excitement for the client. Candy explained that the man wanted to appear "cool" and detached, but was in fact excited by Simone and made that known to the deejay and two other dancers who approached him. Simone was not wearing the wedding band she sports outside the club. Dancers are forbidden by club rules to wear such jewellery; "it discourages the customers" one club owner told her. Although Simone was aware of the client's interest in her, she was uncertain about how much he was prepared to spend, and she also knew that another customer was waiting. The eager customer not wanting to share Simone's attention with other patrons, requested that she dance exclusively for him. When asked what kind of dancing the patron wanted to view, the man remarked "just the usual stuff". Simone reported that she "did a lot of slow dancing, stripping, getting dressed and stripping again, to save myself", while perched on the patron's knee. At times she faced him; later, she laid against him, gyrating in his lap. The customer asked if he could touch Simone's breasts and thighs, a privilege which was quickly granted. When it was clear that the customer was "prepared to go further", she negotiated a price for the act of mutual masturbation. The two then moved to a booth spending thirty five minutes together, from which Simone emerged with a towel in her hand as the customer adjusted his pants.

Within the confines of the booths at the back of clubs, lap
dancing progressed to the "dirty" variety of mutual fondling, masturbation and/or intercourse, according to Cindy who has lap danced in Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor and Niagara Falls for approximately four years. Like the furore which ushered in table dancing some years earlier, strippers fell into one of two camps-those who would and those who would not engage in lap dancing. Strippers who wanted to stay in the business had little choice but to take up the new genre of lap dancing, as many of the normative clubs closed or were rapidly converted into transgressional establishments featuring lap dancing. Candy remarked that many women left the business in 1994, or were replaced by prostitutes who were accustomed to sexually explicit performances and to making deals with customers for sexual services. In the summer and fall of 1995, as some municipalities in the metropolitan Toronto and Hamilton areas moved to ban sexual contact and lap dancing in booths, "clean" lap dancing consisting of gyrating in the customer's lap without touching began to make a comeback. Presumably, there was also customer demand for clubs providing less intimate sexuality. The vast majority of strippers working in clubs in Ontario today continue to perform stage dancing, although floor work has been supplanted by the contemporary requirement of some variation of table and/or lap dancing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre 1980s</th>
<th>Post 1980s</th>
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<tr>
<td>A variety of skilled</td>
<td>A more simplistic</td>
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<td>theatrical performances, with</td>
<td>standardized form of</td>
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<td>singing, dancing and comedy</td>
<td>stripping with a decrease in</td>
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<td>associated with burlesque</td>
<td>dance skills</td>
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<td>Emphasis on aesthetic</td>
<td>Emphasis on explicit nudity,</td>
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<td>performances ending in semi-nudity or nudity on stage.</td>
<td>physical touching and</td>
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<td>Dancing required by law that an article of clothing be worn on stage</td>
<td>prostitution on stage, at</td>
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<td>Stripping is based on a visual presentation</td>
<td>tableside and in booths</td>
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<td>The show is the same for all members of the audience</td>
<td>Services are customized to</td>
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<td>Strippers perform two or three shows per shift and rest back</td>
<td>meet the needs of the clients</td>
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<td>stage between performances</td>
<td>Stripping is ongoing on</td>
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<td>stage, at tableside and in booths. The work is</td>
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<td>continuous circulation with</td>
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<td>clients to &quot;hustle&quot; dances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time career strippers</td>
<td>Two-tiered workforce consisting of a core of full-time, highly skilled strippers who are well paid and receive benefits, and a large group of part-time, unskilled strippers with limited wages and benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strippers work predominantly in one club</td>
<td>Strippers travel on a circuit through cities, provinces and countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most strippers are White</td>
<td>Women of colour have entered stripping, but with a division of labour based on race and ethnicity they are more likely to be harassed and utilized for prostitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salary paid by the club</td>
<td>Remuneration ranging from salary and tips, to freelance dancing fees and paying a house fee. The opportunity exists to increase earnings through fees, tips and gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses for dancers associated with costumes and props</td>
<td>Expenses for dancers associated with costumes and body surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal approach to supervision</td>
<td>Increased managerial control over the labour process with a greater emphasis on formal arrangements such as time clocks and contracts</td>
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Casual relations among strippers and manager/owners

Control of client intimacy regulated by club rules and enforced by club personnel

Dancers range from the age of consent to middle age

New strippers spend time apprenticing and are often mentored by seasoned strippers

Strippers have a standard look of a buxom woman who is made up and with costumes

Strippers used a stage name

Clients could stay for continuous shows for the price of a theatre ticket

A few theatre presentations mostly in large cities

Greater importance placed on strippers' compliance to club norms and rules through the imposition of fines

Control of client intimacy left to individual strippers who enforce rules concerning interactions

Dancers are getting younger with some underage. Most are forced to retire by age 30-35 years

New strippers are not required to apprentice and are rarely is mentoring provided

A wider variety of phenotypes of strippers is provided including buxom and flat-chested women. The emphasis is on a more natural look with fewer costumes

Strippers use stage name as well as their own names

Clients contract for private sexual services based on fees

Numerous small and large clubs in urban, suburban and rural areas, many owned as part of a consortium
Liquor was not allowed in theatres. Club owners increased revenue through the sale of liquor. A high rate of drug usage by strippers and some clients exists.

Dave is one of the regular customers who described himself in a newspaper feature as a friend of Abe Cohen, the owner of the Golden Horseshoe in Toronto (Brazzo, 1995b:A3). On a visit once or twice a week to clubs, it is not unusual for him "to drop $150 to $200, depending on the girls who are in town" (Brazzo, 1995b:A3). Since Dave is a recovering alcoholic, most of this money pays for private table and lap dances rather than drinks. "I often treat myself well", he says, by paying a dancer $60 for admission to a "VIP lounge" (Brazzo, 1995b:A13). He is aware that "the management takes a $20 cut. I indulge myself, and for ten bucks I can suck a woman's breasts and get her to stick her vagina in my face. What goes on in private booths is anybody's guess, but Abe gives his assurance that no one is forced to do anything against their will in his bar (Brazzo, 1995b:A13)."

While Dave suggests that dancers can make up to $150,000 in gross pay in a year, he points out that "management's take can range from 10 to 90 per cent, depending on the savvy of the girl" (Brazzo, 1995b:A13). At other clubs in the Toronto area, Dave will buy poker chips from the bar that are later retrieved for a private lap dance. The Zambizie Tavern near the Eaton's Centre on Yonge Street is his "favourite hangout", because it advertises and delivers "Live Sex Show on Stage". He especially enjoys the lesbian acts on a platform hydraulically elevated above the stage, with a dozen or more, mostly Asian women lap-dancing near the stage.

A vocal minority of young strippers claim that lap dancing
allows them to make considerably more money than was previously possible, by providing a more intimate sexual performance for many more customers. Although Suzette must "watch the time" on her lap dances (maintaining a schedule of one dance every five minutes and splitting her substantial fees with "the house"), she maintains that "it is the dancer who is in charge of the dance, not the client and not the boss". Although the sex and the work have intensified for this stripper, Suzette is adamant that it is her decision as to whether or not she lap dances. Veteran strippers, who have witnessed many changes within their profession in a short period of time, protest that these innovations no longer distinguish stripping from prostitution, and bring with them problematic aspects of working in an atmosphere where the expectation exists that the stripper will engage in sexual contact with clients. Currently, some club owners in Toronto regularly travel to Thailand, the Philippines and Costa Rica to recruit women "to be fondled" for more money than they could earn in their own country, according to Suzette.

As table dancing was augmented by lap dancing, dancers altered their work processes "in order to survive in this business", according to Laura. The transformation of strip work aimed to increase the regulation of the pace, method and procedures of stripping. Both table and lap dancing practices compartmentalized abilities, narrowing down some of the traditional craft skills, training and knowledge, and transferring aspects of the control over the pace and presentation of the work to management dictates and client tastes. By the early 1990s, Eatmores, a transgressional club in Toronto advertised one hundred and twenty five "of the hottest lap dancers in the world" on a large marquee facing King Street. At the bottom of the sign, rooms were advertised for forty dollars at this hotel which was decidedly past its prime. On-the-job training and the provision of physical protection by bouncers was no longer extended to dancers, according to a club
manager, "because what the girls do in the booths is their own business". Dancers were expected to acquire new skills used in socializing and negotiating with customers, and it was also anticipated that strippers would gain human relations techniques to handle customers and protect themselves while performing a number of innovative social-sexual services.

Stripping dramatically changed from sexual fantasies and visual performances of the burlesque era and the gynaecological displays of table dancing prevalent during the previous decade. Candy expressed sympathy for the dancers who left the stage and engaged in table dancing: "It's like they never stop dancing; table dancing goes on all day and you don't get a chance to sit down much." Interestingly, she prefers it that way because, as she puts it, "the worst thing about dancing is sitting around the club all day being bored and broke. Dancing on a box is really very limited; there is little dancing and tease. The guy has paid to see you stripped, not stripping. With lap dancing, the guys get to pick and choose the girls they want and the girls pretty well have to dance for ten to maybe twenty bucks." "Is it only ten to twenty bucks?" I asked. She remarked that "it's never ten to twenty bucks; the guy will usually give a tip if he likes the girl". Although she does not view stage and table dancing as distinctly different, she commented that "lap dancing is the place where you are most likely to be grabbed and pinched. On stage, you have to play to the whole audience, the music is important to keep time to, you have three songs to get down to it, but you no longer do a floor show. All the girls now must give one free lap dance a night to encourage business; I usually save my freebie until last call to make it more meaningful."

Table and lap dancing rationalized and specialized the labour process of stripping, resulting in a substantial transformation of the nature and organization of strip work. As a result of the intensification of the pace of the work and the
fragmentation of craft knowledge (which produced a more simplistic method of strip), a narrowing down of skills occurred which had formerly associated stripping with the art of teasing and dancing. Although dancers entering the business may not have comprehended the changes undertaking more in their work processes they nonetheless experienced a restructuring of the labour process as the planning and timing of strip presentations became regimented by time clocks which produced shortened, standardized and sexually explicit sequences of body work. Similar to other workers, strippers displayed their discontent in a multiplicity of ways such as refusing to dance in "the French way", showing open hostility toward dancers who engaged first in table and then lap dancing, failing to show up for work, or taking up the new routines while placing personal strictures in place.

Strip clubs offered a little more discretion and protection from arrest than street prostitution. A law enforcement officer suggested that his job was made easier when people congregated in a strip club rather than working in a more dispersed and public manner on the streets. To comply with public ordinances concerning keeping a bawdy house under statutes of the Criminal Code, managers volunteered that they instructed dancers not to engage in forms of prostitution or soliciting. Prices quoted and fees collected were to be strictly for various forms of dancing in order to avoid legal entanglements. A few more candid managers volunteered that prostitution may be occurring in private booths within their clubs. They suggested that strippers who functioned as "free agents" rather than employees however, regulated their own behaviour. As a result, strippers developed considerable sensitivity to the nuances of the law, familiarizing themselves with the legal boundaries of activities and becoming cognizant of who would likely report such infractions.

A number of the strippers I spoke with in the Sarnia area, who felt compelled to take up lap dancing, voiced their criticism
that the new strip practices had turned their workplaces into "brothels". They also complained that their livelihood was being undercut by less inhibited competition from an influx of local street prostitutes. As well, Asian women who ignored the going rate of ten dollars, were accused of lap dancing for as little as a dollar and "screwing" for five dollars, according to Debbie. Sessions with these women involved extensive and intimate touching and fondling in private cubicles. Women like Debbie were successful in garnering the attention of a number of municipal politicians, who increasingly wanted to place restrictions on lap dancing. In an effort to control the number of "foreign" strippers entering Canada (many of whom were alleged to be prostitutes), the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada announced that as of July 1998, exotic dancers with a job offer would no longer be issued a temporary working visa at the border (N.a., "Foreign Strippers Face Tighter Visa Rules", 1998:A8).  

Simplifying some work practices allowed club managers to gain control over specific facets of the working conditions of stripping. Table dancing took on a standard appearance and tempo, with dancers doing similar things at the same moment in a song, and being undressed at approximately the same point in a sequence of songs. As some of the craft aspect of stripping was sacrificed by imposing a criterion of efficiency emphasizing timing, planning and standardization, the evolving approach to labour relations produced a more predictable, controlled and regularized service performed by strippers. Time clocks were introduced for the first time, not only to regulate shifts but also to keep track of the amount of time dancers spent in the clubs. The evolution of stripping skills was a complicated process in which some performance skills became less important or disappeared altogether, while new skills came into play. During the period in which older strippers were gradually replaced by a myriad of much younger and considerably less adept dancers, the new form of
stripping demanded a set of more complex skills in the realm of interpersonal, sexual and financial relations.24

Club owners sought to keep labour costs down and to mitigate against labour militancy by using casual labour and by rendering employment insecure. Club owners and managers made dancers very conscious of the "reserve army of the unemployed" waiting in the wings, by the extensive use of part-time workers selected from a large labour pool, the option to lay off employees during periods of "down time", and flexible scheduling during peak periods. They were able to extract long hours of continuous performance from dancers, to enforce desired work habits against dancers' inclinations and to impose on them a continuous pacing of the job. They also insisted on the importance of attendance, punctuality and adherence to club rules. Fines were levied against uncooperative dancers (who were replaced by freelancers) or terminated without just cause, long after most workers in Ontario had successfully fought against such an antiquated system of labour relations. Stratifying employees by favouring those who were "cooperative" with management and providing additional pay to dancers who were provocative with clients, produced a system in which dancers were encouraged to pursue their individual interests, thus stifling the impulse to struggle collectively.

To serve the customers more personally, explicitly, and (in some clubs, more privately), new forms of strip called for imaginative and inventive skills very different from those of traditional stripping performance. The proficiency of skills required by strippers was not necessarily viewed as competence, nor was it reflected in the remuneration attached to the job. Although treated as part of the natural, hidden and unrecognized skills by managers and clients, Annie Ample suggested that many strippers sought to "exploit their abilities all the way to the bank". Although table and lap dancing provided more control over work processes for managers (including shift and circuit
schedules, as well as the implementation of fines in the provision of some of the immediate services provided through table and lap dancing and the fees charged to clients), strippers also gained some discretion. Perhaps this is what made the transition possible for dancers inclined to provide a more explicit sexual service. It also made the demarcation more visible between those who remained and took up table and lap dancing and those who left the business. Undertaking a more unreserved dance for individual customers, however, afforded many strippers more control over the services they provided and the charges they levied. Since the majority of dancers increased their earnings by allowing patrons to touch them, the manager and the bouncer tended to ignore such activities unless the club was under inspection, or if other dancers complained about a stripper who was rate-busting by dancing "dirty".
1. By the mid-1970s, body rub parlours in Toronto were controlled in numbers and required by a city bylaw to be licensed. Politicians and the police curtailed street solicitation among prostitutes. The bodies of women engaged in indoor sex trade work such as massage or stripping were scrutinized for indecency and became sites of regulation by the state. Strippers, in particular, were required to be both licensed and to wear an article of clothing (Brock, 1998:33).

2. The historical process of extracting and devaluing workers' skills is one of the primary ways in which the employer is able to enlarge managerial control over workers. What is destroyed in the process is the educational, technical and cultural values of crafts as well as the ways in which these social skills are acquired (Levidow and Young, 1981: 60).

3. Robert Allen, a professor of radio, television and motion pictures at the University of North Carolina, affirms that burlesque began in 1868 when a troupe of British actresses parodied high-brow theatre and conservative social mores. In a New York show, dancers for the first time wore abbreviated costumes (Hamann, 1992). Zeidman (1967:1-37), however, suggests that burlesque appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, as a "riotous whirligig of clumsy entertainment, coarse and elementary, with intimate glimpses of immodest girls". The salient characteristic of burlesque was the "old-fashioned hootchie-kootchie, which to burlesque aficionados was a bump and grind interpretation of the sex act, as performed by blondes, Oriental dancers, classic dancers, interpretative dancers, shimmy shakers, tassel dancers and exotic dancers" (Zeidman, 1967:9). Similar to burlesque, American vaudeville took its cue from the circus, minstrel shows, beer and dance halls as well as the "honky-tonk with the behind-the-tent" or "cooch" shows, as a central theme.

Mille De Leon's trial was the Kentucky "belle" who started the trend of the Salome dancers wearing tights on stage and who was accused of disregarding a city ordinance in Lexington. At her 1904 trial, it was said that she did not mind being arrested--especially when she tossed her garter to the audience and found it returned with a five-hundred dollar bill and a dinner invitation. Nor was Lydia Thompson, a robust soubrette, adverse to adding a little zest to her performance, staged in a sheath dress that revealed a little leg, by adding a song whose lyrics had a delicate double entendre (Zeidman, 1967:13). Some dancers would perch above the audience on trapezes and swinging devices, borrowed from beer gardens and brothels for these "turkey" shows. At times undressing in the process, they revealed a leg or a thigh through lingerie dresses that exposed champagne-coloured tights (Zeidman, 1967:15). These and many other women minstrels were surrounded by music from a live band, comedic acts, songstresses, performances with dogs and monkeys, dancers,
ballerinas and gymnasts.

4. Carlos Hamann (1992) contends that the heyday of American burlesque, which occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, had begun to fade after World War Two. He quotes Dixie Evans as tracing the origin of striptease to Hinda Wassau. "In the roaring 20s, Hinda Wassau's bra came tumbling down along with the stock market and an American original was born (Zeidmann, 1957:136)." Zeidman notes that Wassau was a pioneering figure, who as far back as 1926 was asking the audience at the Follies if they wanted "to see a little more of me" in an act described as "sex-teasing seductiveness" where striptease becomes strip-please" (Zeidman, 138). He contends that "the strip act is as old as burlesque itself, and it is just about all that is left of burlesque today". He observes that the appeal of the strip does not centre exclusively around the nudity of the women, but also involves the "gestures, winks and cooch movements" that accompany the strip and serve to titillate, thus setting the strip apart from other presentations of nudity in different venues of society (Zeidman, 1957:138).

A contemporary of Hinda Wassau, Ann Corio, abandoned the provocative "cooching" and took up the more cosmopolitan display of "shimming", increasing her salary at Chicago's Irving Place Theatre, from $150 to $1500 a week during the depression. Gypsy Rose Lee, the teaser with the wink, billed as a singer, author and television personality, began like most chorus girls during "garter night". Revealing her thigh and red garter, she allowed a lucky audience participant the privilege of removing the garter and at times, the accompanying black stockings. According to a 1936 issue of Variety magazine, all runway girls pranced up and down as nude chorus girls, clad only in a G-string. In this era, the exposure of the leg gave way to the exposure of the whole body and the "shake" was replaced by the "strip" when Anna Smith, a minimum wage stripper, lowered her elastic tights, rolling them down to her hips to reveal the all-American ribbon of rhinestones in a Broadway show (Zeidman, 1957:139-43).

5. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat of 1915 described Miss De Leon coming on stage wearing a ruffled gown and carrying a parasol, removing the gown, one row of ruffles at a time, and leaping into the audience to plant a kiss on the forehead of patrons, while intoning the old strippers' song "Clap Your Hands and I'll Take Off a Little Bit More" (Zeidman, 1957:139).

6. Emma Thomas, professor of dance history at UCLA, explains that burlesque began to fade in the 1950s, as television kept people at home and changed their attitude towards theatre. When theatre operators could not support large numbers of employees, sets and elaborate props, X-rated movie theatres and sex-oriented clubs took over in the market-place. As society's attitude towards the body underwent a sweeping change, by the 1960s, nudity was no longer shocking (Hamann, 1992). According to Misty (1973:188-9):
As time progressed and the theatres became more and more purely sex-oriented. The expectations of the audience seemed to change. I always had the feeling that people came because they thought they would see something really extraordinary, some sort of super sex-show. Many went away feeling let down, I am sure. After all, what was being done on stage, and more, could be seen in any sex movie. This, I think, will be the downfall of the strip theatres; the promise of more than they delivered, the growing number of inexperienced girls who didn't know how to put on a show and don't care, and the fact that the shows have become, for these two reasons, boring.

7. See Delphy, 1975:A.

8. Similarly, Blaze Starr (Starr and Perry, 1974:164) recalls:

Stripping, exotic dancing and burlesque in general began to decline in the mid-1960s as a result of the new permissive attitude towards sex and nudity that was developing in the United States. A man didn't have to go to the strip club or a burlesque theatre to see a pair of tits. He could go to one of the new restaurants opening all over the place and feast his eyes on a topless waitress while he ate his lunch or dinner. Then came the X-rated movies, and in many cities the next step was that exotic dancing turned into displays of total nudity as many once-respected strip clubs had their girls throw away their G-strings in order to keep up. Like the steam locomotive trying to compete with the new diesel trains, there was no doubt that burlesque was giving way to total nudity. But just as there were those who would walk ten miles to view a steam locomotive or even pay two dollars to make a two-mile trip on it, there were those who would still patronize traditional burlesque shows and places like the Two O'Clock Club that featured old-style stripping.

9. Glynis, a young dancer at the Victory Burlesque theatre in Toronto, describes the impact on her approach to dancing when the G-string law was struck down (Feindel, 1988:41-2):

There, finished the g-string. Mind you, the shows have gotten pretty gynaecological these days. To think I was arrested for taking my g-string off. It was when the g-string was on one week and off the next. The club owners told me if I didn't take it off they'd fire me. I was on stage when the cops came to the club and the owners ran out the back door. Then they got us this sleazy lawyer who told us to plead guilty. So I
switched and went to Jerry Stein; top notch criminal lawyer. He's never lost a case. I had to appear in court ten times. Finally, I was called to the witness stand . . . The prosecutor said, "Were you nude at the time of the arrest?" I said, "no, I wasn't". "What were you wearing?" So I pulled out this little pink see-through camisole from my purse and said, "this". The whole courtroom broke up. I got off and my court case set a precedent for yet another interpretation of the law. You could take your bottoms off if you kept your top on, and you could take your top off if you kept your bottoms on. It's so ridiculous. So is the amount of time I spent in court. Fortunately, Morgan didn't charge me ... he's fascinated by strippers ... I didn't sleep with him. Well... about a year later we had this little affair. At first I really enjoyed it. Then he started to take it for granted. He came over one morning and just wanted a quickie before he went to court. I said, "At least you could have brought me a take-out coffee." I started to feel like an unpaid hooker, so I dropped him.

10. Dragu and Harrison (1988:40) state that in 1982, Toronto city council members decided that they wanted the thirteen strip clubs in the city closed. "They didn't have the legislative right to make a clean sweep of it, but they managed to get rid of the smaller clubs and increase restrictions on the larger ones. The mayor of the area was quoted as saying: 'It's not a substantially moral way to make a buck'."

11. The decline theory of stripping is challenged by Margaret Dragu and A.S.A. Harrison as reflecting a nostalgic view held mostly by seasoned strippers. Dragu, a former Toronto stripper in the 1960s and 1970s, had herself expressed support for the view that stripping had begun to deteriorate prior to Montreal's Expo '67 and substantially increased the decline during a gang war in the seventies and during the 1976 Olympics. In the evidence cited in support of the decline thesis, Harrison (Dragu and Harrison, 1988:21) writes:

Dragu had picked up this theory from the older strippers and the aging doormen and bartenders she met in clubs. But her most particular source, it turned out, was the woman who sold her g-strings at Johnny Brown theatrical supplies."You should have seen this town before Expo '67" . . . Ann Corio, an American burlesque queen of the thirties, was horrified by the luridness of sixties strippers. She saw stripping in her own days as a kind of Elysian romp, all innocence and fun. Fifties stripper Josephine, who worked in Montreal, began to complain towards the end of her career that stripping had deteriorated in her time. Strippers had forsaken all art
and tease, she believed, and now did nothing more than file across the stage with vacuous smiles on their faces, peeling off a few wisps of garments. Fonda Peters says much the same thing, complaining that there is no art or tease any more and that strippers used to be voluptuous and full of fun, but have become toylike and vacuous. But Fonda thinks the decline happened between the mid-seventies when she first started stripping and 1980 when she quit.

12. Marky, a dancer at the Cabaret Circus, expresses similar thoughts (Feindel, 1988:16-7):

Because that's what we were ... ladies. We had shows, costumes, class. That's what I want to teach my daughter; to have some class! These days, the girls run around the clubs half naked. I say, "Rosie, wear a cover-up off stage". Some of these girls will do anything for a dollar. You get a couple of sluts like that and they give us all a bad name. Where's the glamour, where's the glitter? Guys go to the clubs to escape, for fantasy. You got to give them something they don't see at home. A customer wants to buy you a drink between shows, what are you going to say, "Fuck you"? No. You act like a lady and you talk to them with respect and that's the way they'll talk to you.

13. In describing the old Victory Burlesque theatre in Toronto as "something else", Marky, a Toronto dancer in the 1960s, remembers that:

Those were the days of wine and fucking roses . . . . You still had the pasties and the g-string. Had to be totally still once you took everything off. Stand on these ramps for thirty seconds as they turned. Something to do with the law. Pretty tame by today's standards, eh? Checked out any of the table dancing lately? Now they're not happy unless they're looking up to your tonsils. (Feindel, 1998:47).

14. Pink Champagne, a fabulous feature of the 1960s, remarked about the separation of stripping from prostitution in that era: "You know, I like Petal Rose but I'm glad she's quitting the bars because every time you working with her, everybody is thinking you are hooker! I'm not a hooker! I am a feature stripper! I am an artist! I am a star!" (Feindel, 1988:57).

15. The concept of race was developed to deny the "other" personhood. To oppress Natives more easily, the myth of the biological superiority of white, Anglo-Saxon people created a discourse in which Natives were biologically connected to nature. Through the brutalizing practices of colonialism, however,
indigenous populations were rendered silent and devalued.

16. Mills (1956) describes the working conditions and satisfaction derived by craft workers of the past as they were able to retain control of significant aspects of production, including conceptualizing the tasks, selecting the tools, performing the tasks and following through to the end to supply a finished product or service. This enabled workers to stand back and recognize a completed piece of work in which they were involved, both intellectually and physically from inception to completion. He argues that while all workers prior to the rise of the factory system did not enjoy such working conditions, as industrial capitalism developed, a significant number lost control over their work and working processes. He also suggests that the simplification of work, which broke labour into smaller and simpler tasks, resulting in a more specialized division of labour (as occurred in assembly line operations), gave rise to the breakdown of craft industries and skills possessed by individual workers.

In the early history of industrialization, Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1976), outlines in his example of a pin factory how an extended division of labour was used to increase productivity. Braverman (1974:79-84) details how, in 1832, Charles Babbage applied Smith's ideas to demonstrate for captains of industry, the way in which the subdivision of tasks would limit the skills of workers and thus the costs of production, for it was well known that workers with fewer skills simply could not make the same economic demands which their more skilled counterparts had demanded in the past. Similar contemporary examples exist in the area of blue-and white-collar clerical work (Attewell, 1987; Paules, 1991; Colough and Tolbert, 1992; Leidner, 1993).


18. Fincham and Rhodes (1988:30) define skill as "time served, or the ability of an individual qualified to carry out a craft or trade". Christensen (1988) notes that in earlier stages of capitalist development there was an increasing separation of public and private work, which resulted in women being segregated in the home, performing a labour of love which was unpaid and deemed unskilled. In contrast, sex work, which was earlier confined to the temples, homes and brothels is now performed as work in the public domain in occupations such as stripping, pornography, telephone sex, escort services and prostitution.

19. Rueschemeyer (1986:7) argues that domination in the labour process can be used to impose a division of labour. "It can allocate people to disagreeable work--to dirty work, in the literal and in the figurative sense, or to work subject to tough discipline--and it can make people work on disadvantageous terms." He contends that power and domination are important
factors which shaped, but did not cause a division of labour in early competitive capitalism, leading to a delimiting of tasks, a separation of simple from complex assignments, specialization of work and a reduction of chores to their most elementary level. Structured inequality in society, however, based on factors such as gender and age, developed out of a division of labour. Both material and non-material benefits accrued to those with skills and knowledge employed in dominant and coordinating positions, compared to the more impoverished lives of those cast in subordinate and executing roles in society.

20. For a more extensive treatment of this topic, see Rinehart. (1987:1-21) Rather than being inherent in the human condition, alienation that characteristically provides little control over the labour process is described as arising out of the nature of the immediate job, the social relations of production and the organization of the workplace. Borrowing from the work of Marx (1977) and Braverman (1974), Rinehart argues that the relationship between wage labour and capital is exploitative and results in the unpaid effort of workers being appropriated by employers as surplus value (the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the wages paid to the workers). Exploitation also arises out of social relations which do not afford workers the ability to control production in order to increase their skills, to participate in the design and implementation of tasks and to benefit from the rewards of work. Rinehart states that "what workers want most, as more than 100 studies in the past 20 years show, is to become masters of their immediate environment and to feel that their work and themselves are important - the twin ingredients of self-esteem" (1987:9).

21. A dominant form of discourse in the sociology of labour literature views alienation differently from the analysis of self and role developed by Mills (1956) and Goffman (1963a). When examining aspects of the social and technical organization of work, much of the labour process literature presents work as a social problem and uses the idea of alienation to explain the perils posed to the individual's autonomy through discipline, mechanization, specialization, hierarchy and the social relations of working environments. Some of this work borrows from Marx (1961) highlighting the concept that it is the loss of the self identity that is at stake when workers are treated like commodities under capitalism. "Labour ... is external to the worker, it does not belong to his essential being; ... in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself. ... His labour is ... merely a means to satisfy needs external to it; it ... is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of self" (Marx,1844:500).

22. In his analysis of the trends toward feminization and casualization in the Canadian labour force, Broad (1992) concludes that these tendencies have resulted in increased
degradation of labour, including work that is cheapened, deskillled and provides less security for workers, particularly women. Using the work of Braverman (1974), his thesis posits a global erosion of labour's strength, reflected in Canada and elsewhere, through trends of downsizing, privatization and contracting-out, resulting in increased alienation, exploitation, deskillling and segmenting of work and workers.

23. Rumours are currently circulating in strip clubs that "foreign" dancers who return home for a summer vacation may not be permitted by the federal government to re-enter Canada. In an attempt to close a loophole, immigration officials insist that strippers apply for visas at Canadian missions abroad, where their credentials as professionals dancers and the validity of Canadian employment contracts are examined. A spokesperson for the New Horizons Entertainment Agency suggests that such changes function to control agents and put more "squeeze" on strippers by "corrupt brokers" (N.a., Foreign Strippers Face Tighter Visa Rules, 1998:A8).

24. To meet the changing demand in the new economies of scale which are emerging, management in some areas of manufacturing have adopted Theory Z, or the Japanese approach of involving workers in production decisions and technical improvements, in order to manufacture consent (Ouchi, 1981) Although the multi-skilled worker who can fit into the "just-in-time" production of small runs is deemed most desirable, Shaiken (1984:156-7) warns that these work processes often intensify and become more boring than that which proceeded them. Reinhart (1987) also cautions that the human relations approach is only a partial solution to alienated labour and does not address the issue of workers' control over productive processes.
Chapter Eight

THE PERFORMING BODY AS WORKING CAPITAL

8.1. The Body at Work in Stripping

Articulating everyday experiences to abstracted methods of ruling is characteristically seen in the performance work of strippers. Conceptual and complex practices of ruling depend upon the world of local experience. Making the world of the everyday invisible is part of relations of ruling requiring work that is in turn, made possible by the concrete, particular and bodily work of others. Such work suppresses the organized division of labour and the material focus of consciousness that produces and maintains both the local and the concrete world together with a world of abstraction. Being absorbed within the ruling methods with respect to the organization of work produces double consciousness. Since the body can be understood according to the prevailing social norms, one way of knowing is located in the everyday experiences of the body and the other in the realm of abstraction. Meaning is also imparted in social relations of power in the world produced through gender, class and racial processes. It is from the standpoint of women that the organization which divides these worlds is made visible. By locating the subject from the standpoint of women, the exploration of social life is initiated from the local, body and material world and articulates this world to administrative, legal and managerial apparatuses to make apparent this dual consciousness.

The female body has been a site of obsession in Western culture, making women the bearers of a series of physical preoccupations concerning issues of beauty, gender and sexuality. Representing fecundity, health, pleasure and productivity, the female body has occupied a central position in modern
representational practices and discourses that has become a source of value in the productive processes of the marketplace. Female attractiveness, popularity and concern for appearance are the cornerstones of feminine psychology. Every cheerleader, beauty contestant, and popular girl learns from an early age that attention to "primping" is a key factor in establishing herself as an attractive and feminine person. Beauty is a vital part of the social construction of the self for a woman, mixed with reward and pleasure (if the socially accepted look is achieved), but also permeated with fear and a sense of failure if she is viewed as unattractive by prevailing cultural standards. Women learn through social rewards and sanctions that they must achieve a certain look to be loved and admired; a woman's self-image therefore, becomes enmeshed with desirability, comfort and security.

In Western culture, many women feel compelled to engage in activities to make themselves attractive and to adopt appropriate social-sexual practices which model ideals of femininity. Through these activities, a woman's body becomes inscribed with prevailing social ideals. She discovers early on that she is questioned, explained and scrutinized as a member of an assigned gender category. Naomi Wolf (1971) suggests that standards of beauty keep all women in a state of apprehension and deflect attention away from aspects of gender-based subordination. Most women understand that appearance is a crucial way in which an opinion of her is fashioned. Fairy tales, television soap operas, romance novels, popular songs and fashion magazines entice young girls to set aside developing skills and acquiring power on their own merits by taking up the work of beauty. Seventeen magazine provides techniques and images of young ingénues surrounded by cosmetics and fashion to attain the most up-to-date look of beauty. In the pages of Harper's Bazaar (targeted mostly at older and more de rigueur women), the extravagant and fantasy world of fashion is displayed. A picture illustrating a bare-breasted
model with her face portrayed as a mask, exotically clothed and mingling with animals serves up gender-appropriate popular cultural images for potential consumers. Accompanying the photographs and advertisements are articles which link resplendence, youth and adventure with comments about the lifestyles of rich and beautiful people.

A stripper's body is her working capital, socially constructed to be concerned, in part, with the pure pleasure of looking. Considering the work involved in the active production of the body, bodily display is more than a passive exhibition. Constructing the body as an aspect of performance often carries cultural meanings of idealization, sexual difference and naturalness. The masculine subject position is constructed through fetishistic observation designed to be seduced by the power of the woman being observed. The presence of desire, excess and the potential to transgress social norms suggests, however, that the subject of the look may resist normalizing powers of presentation. In such encounters, power is not imposed on the subject of the gaze from outside, but rather is a process of interactive and contradictory relations.

In the 1990s, femininity became "unfixed" and now more than ever, there is greater flexibility and uncertainty about what it means to be a woman (McRobbie, 1992:408). Some of the current postfeminist debates discuss issues of gender construction, identity formations, and the changing impact that popular culture has on shaping choices for women and their self-perception in everyday social life. It has been suggested that media texts which target young female consumers are potentially empowering and provide a positive alternative to traditional femininity because the reader is an active producer and not a passive recipient of meaning (Fiske, 1987). It is argued that the consumption of cultural products by young women provides a framework characterized by the claim that equality for women has
been achieved. One consequence has been that some young women have failed to identify with the goals of the women's liberation movement as a number of women of past generations have done. Some women believe that the greatest power of women is sexual power; others collude in moulding themselves to men's desires. With the increasing sexualization of culture, mass media representations work to structure social relations and processes—including the social construction of femininity and desire. The consumption of products of cultural industries such as fashion magazines, enter into and organize the everyday activities and practices of women across multiple sites (Smith, 1990). The positioning of women within social relations through a gendered identity (which is also mediated by race and class relations) has implications for the opportunities available to women and the expectations and choices they make for themselves concerning family, school, work, fashion and beauty.

Beyond the biological, taken-for-granted status of a woman's body is a social construct, structured by discourses which articulate social, medical, legal, media practices and belief systems. Although it is not always evident, the social and historically constituted practices of sexuality, their meanings and social regulations, together with the lived reality of the individual's life, establishes a framework for understanding how she perceives and uses her body. It also explains why a woman engages in specific processes of beautification related to job requirements and the ideals of femininity. Such practices vary across cultures and within various historical eras and are therefore socially constructed in the context of a specific society's gender, economic and political relations. Although social-sexual customs, financial interests and media presentations may serve at times to objectify and commodify the female body, a woman is not merely a passive recipient of such messages; rather, she participates in shaping her body through personal, social-cultural and work relations. Hegemony is not
rigidly imposed through bourgeois media attention nor by male sexual interests, but involves a more complex and dynamic set of negotiations which define and redefine value systems and behavioural outcomes.

The requirement that women market sexual attractiveness is a part of the economic reality for most women. Given that many women are in segregated low-paying jobs, they acquiesce to the fact that sexuality has become a part of the qualifications and job description in numerous female employees' work lives. Most women who undertake jobs which highlight beauty, labour under conditions not of their making; many who work as actresses, models and hostesses find that a fashionable, provocative and sensual appearance is a vital part of the contemporary presentation of the feminine self in their everyday world. For centuries women have been socially persuaded to accept that improving and perfecting their bodies will achieve personal and public rewards. Historically, women have also been encouraged by the culture to believe that they were unsuited to intellectual labour. Eroticizing dominance defines an essential aspect of masculinity, while submission is eroticizes through an association with the definition of femininity. Whatever defines women as different demarcates their sexuality from that of men. Many women accommodate practices of ideal femininity and heterosexuality to maintain their livelihood, establish their sense of self-worth and achieve social acceptance. Strippers are some of the women who learn to use their bodies as a way to achieve success and financial gain.

Although strippers are presented as objects for viewing, they are also subjects who exist in the world of strip in a multiplicity of complex and interactive relationships. Like other women, strippers respond to the societal messages of beauty, success and adornment as a means to achieve fame and fortune and maximize their gains. In this respect, strippers have a great
deal in common with models, singers, movie stars and beauty
queens who are remunerated for their beauty. Although strippers
submit to a number of decorative and surgical procedures to
achieve the body beautiful for professional and personal reasons,
they are not mere repositories of sentiments of the ideal
feminine but are active social agents, honing and shaping the
body as a way to insert themselves into the social-sexual
dialogue concerning culturally constituted practices of
stripping. They demonstrate complicity in an effort to be
attractive and desirable in order to engage men's sexual
fantasies. It is to the social tension between object and
subject, between being controlled and taking control over one's
body and conditions of work, and between the usage and the
establishment of political and economic power that negotiations
of body work take place.

The stripper must be her most attractive and often slender
self in order to compete with her peers and captivate the
attention of clients. In the political economy of strip clubs, if
she should fail to reproduce the contemporary look of appeal from
popular and media images displayed on television, in fashion
magazines, and on record jackets, her economic survival may hang
in the balance. From the perspective of a feminist inquiry, the
stripper is an active agent attempting— as Annie Ample says—"to
do the best I can with what I have". We also view how the
stripper strives to include some of her own ideas concerning
creativity, attractiveness and control into the situation.
Contradictions are inherent in strippers' participation
concerning practices of feminine beautification designed to
enhance their opportunities to obtain a better-paying job than
most women secure.

William Yeats (1950:57) declared that "we must labour to be
beautiful". The actual work processes however, which enable a
woman to become attractive and maintain her beauty are generally
not visible. The work entailed in a stripper becoming a redhead, preserving a flawless complexion or enlarging her bustline adding value to her service, is rarely considered as necessary and time-consuming labour to achieve the desired outcome. The glamorous facade of strip life disguises the work of beauty as women's work and keeps it hidden from view. Effort, knowledge and the material base to construct such beauty are concealed. The look of beauty is part of the stripper's performance, including creating a cleavage or hiding a blemish with makeup tricks. Striking and dramatic appearances of the femme fatale stripper with dramatic makeup, fashionable extensions added to her hair and well-manicured nails are deliberately produced, requiring many hours of work to achieve a look that is anything but natural.

Cultural idealizations of feminine beauty and stereotypes concerning heterosexual pleasure play an important part in the construction of strip images. The discourse of the body as beautiful, fashionably slender, preoccupied with firmness and fitness is inextricably intertwined in a pleasure nexus with that of the nude body presented in sexually explicit poses. The idea of working at becoming beautiful (which operates in the culture at large and particularly in media advertisements for cosmetics and fashion) is magnified in stripping, where the focus intensively concentrates on the physical attributes of the worker. The variety of body types and styles of costumes serves as a forum for the aesthetic tastes of clients and owners and provides for the creative expression of strippers. Similar to workers in other occupations who need to maintain the tools of their trade in peak operating condition, the presentation of the body and body work is an essential component of a stripper's job. All strippers recognize the need to display their bodies in a visually pleasing manner that goes well beyond learning the technical movements of strip and the art of costuming. Today's strippers work at dieting, exercising, tanning, and include makeup, manicures, pedicures and hair styling as essential
elements of what is required to successfully compete in the business. The majority of feature dancers (seen exclusively in normative clubs), include more substantial measures to maintain and enhance their appearance. Some resort to tooth capping, hair weaving, breast augmentation, liposuction and other forms of cosmetic surgery, to set them apart from the crowd of young and eager women, whom one owner described as "flocking to the profession".

8.2. Beauty as Business in the Working Life of a Stripper

A working day in Amber Starr's life begins when she wakes up at 8 a.m., has a cup of coffee and turns on her television to check the local weather. She watches a talk show or glances at a newspaper before heading out for breakfast if she is on the road. Claiming that I would not recognize her in jeans, a sweatshirt and without makeup, she puts no effort into altering her appearance in her private life. Ever mindful of her diet, she has eggs and toast or pancakes without syrup with a second cup of coffee. Following breakfast she attends to various chores, including stopping at the post office to send out her curriculum vitae for future dates, making an appointment for costume fittings and shopping for clothes and shoes for her act. Back in her hotel room, Amber spends about an hour washing and blow drying her hair, unless her hair is styled once a week at a beauty salon, adding two hours to her schedule. On the days she has her nails professionally manicured, she adds an hour and a half to her routine. She applies her makeup, including false lashes to her top and bottom eye-lids which generally consumes an additional twenty minutes of time. Since she had some of her personal effects stolen from a dressing room the previous month, Amber no longer leaves her possessions at the club. After gathering her costumes and props in three large bags with locks, she carefully inspects her body for hair and blemishes prior to
dressing.

After checking in with the manager or punching a clock, Amber usually goes backstage to touch up her fingernails, to rearrange her hair and to dress for her show. She attempts to be polite to the other dancers, asking about their activities, catching up on the gossip and acquiring tips concerning problematic customers in the audience. A few minutes before her first show, she carries the blanket used for her floor work to the showroom and hands her previously recorded and labelled tapes to the bartender or the deejay. "Some girls give the deejay their music for the day or even the week, but I wait to the last minute to be sure he plays the right music and doesn't get my tapes mixed up with another girls' music", she reveals. As she waits at the back of the room to be introduced on the public address system, she quickly surveys the scene to determine how many customers are in the room. She is particularly interested to see if she recognizes anyone and to pick out men she might use in her act by "playing with them"--for example, men who are bald, wear glasses or don special caps or clothing.

Her act takes about fifteen to twenty minutes and at its conclusion, Amber puts her top, bottom and shoes back on before gathering her props, returning to her dressing room and occasionally stopping at the bar for a brief chat with a customer. Following her performance of two or three shows a shift, she changes to go out for a light lunch of a diet cola and a salad, perpetually trying to lose weight. Back at the club, she will usually do a "walk through" to be noticed or sit at the bar, making certain that she is wearing a costume she thinks will project an image which specific customers may find appealing. As a feature, she does not have to table dance, spend hours at the bar, or sit and drink with customers. To command a feature's salary and status, however, "heads must turn" as she parades by both the customers and the manager. Beginning at 12:30 p.m. she
performs six shows a day, at intervals of an hour to an hour and a half. She may play pool or listen to the band for short periods but, similar to other members of the new stripping aristocracy, she believes in noblesse oblige. She tries, therefore, not to stay in the showroom too long because "customers wouldn't think of me as special if I sit around drinking with them". Most of her time between shows is spent in her dressing room, playing solitaire, arranging her costumes, doing her nails, looking through fashion magazines or making phone calls to her agent. Amber usually has dinner outside the club, or she may have a pizza delivered to her dressing room; three nights a week she will head off to a gym instead of eating dinner.

Occasionally Amber will "party" with the deejay and band members (when her work day ends at one a.m.) to avoid appearing aloof with the manager and other club personnel. Shift work also provides her with few options for socializing outside the club. Most evenings she takes a cab back to her hotel room immediately after her last shift. She is pleased to pull off her false eyelashes, remove her makeup, let down her hair by removing the extension of tresses and abandoning the polished and sophisticated persona which is so important to a feature act. Her feet often hurt from wearing high heels all day, and sometimes she must relax a muscle she pulled on stage by elevating her feet. She enjoys taking a bath, even though "hotel bathtubs aren't clean". She has a shower while standing on a towel and waits until she gets home to have a luxurious bubble bath. Unwinding from the tensions of the day by calling her "boyfriend", eating a snack and watching some late night television are her main sources of enjoyment at the end of a work day. In preparation for the following day, she often must plan, press or stitch a costume as part of her homework assignment. When she is in her home town, she earns extra money by "moonlighting" for a stripgram company. Since she does not have sex with anyone other than her boyfriend, she does not have sex
at all while on the road. "It's funny that I'm a sex symbol twelve hours a day and I live the life of a nun." Working hard in the sex trade causes her to complain that the last thing she thinks about at the end of her work day is sex: "It's probably a good thing that my boyfriend is in the States."

Amber has gained financial independence and social status through her work as a stripper. She views her arduous work in stripping as worthwhile in elevating her from working class roots and providing a lifestyle of glamour, freedom and security which she doubts she could obtain in other occupations. Much of what she has learned concerns aspects of Western culture, femininity and capitalism relating to sex trade work, positioning herself through body work and boasting about making more money than most people in the club and many people in Canada. Although she acknowledges that her lipstick and lingerie lure men in the clubs, she admits that she often indulges in beauty and glamour to please herself and to "feel sexy". Her economic independence has afforded her the opportunity to own an apartment, live apart from her family and choose her lover based on affection and mutual respect. She claims that she is in no hurry to settle down but might think about marriage when she is thirty. Far from being treated as a commodity, Amber has come to expect men to treat her well and show respect. She muses that she is not interested in "selfish men" or accepting "whatever a man dishes out"; she appreciates her "boyfriend" because "he makes me feel beautiful through constant attention and thoughtful things like regular phone calls and little gifts".

Strippers who work in normative clubs are very fashion conscious, devoting a substantial amount of time to acquiring and caring for their costumes--one of the tools of their trade. Amber Starr's costumes are made "by the best in the business," one of a few seamstresses in Canada who caters exclusively to strippers. Like many dancers, she spends a great deal of money on
costumes "because you have to spend money to make money in the business," she remarked. I watched her performing a strip number in a short-pant, letter carrier outfit to the tune of "Please, Mr. Postman", admiring the professional quality devoted to the garments down to the detailed gold braiding on the shoulder epaulets. Given the amount of time currently committed to club work and travelling, she is unable to visit her dressmaker in Oakville and has recently asked her seamstress to call on her for fittings at various clubs. Feature dancers like Amber devote a substantial amount of time to planning, selecting and shopping for lingerie, bathing suits and shoes, and preparing for shows by spending considerable time on other paraphernalia of body decoration including "bikini waxes", massages and body tattoos. In Amber's case, she has resorted to having her eyebrows, eyeliner and lips permanently enhanced by a tattoo procedure.

Some of Amber's very creative costumes include an elegant evening gown with a slit far up the right side, a short version of a Carmen Miranda dress complete with a banana hat, and a safari outfit with a pith helmet and a stunning pair of brown leather boots emblazoned with metal clips on the heels. Under each of these outfits, she wears a bikini-like costume and a G-string to assist her strip act, which consists of peeling away successive layers of clothing to reveal more and more of her body. What differentiates these garments from costumes worn by other entertainers are the "little surprises", she points out, which are designed to reveal and feminize. For example, the garments do not have conventional zippers and buttons, but are fastened with velcro for a quick and easy exit on stage. Many garments include pull-away strips down the front of a jacket, up the entire side of a pair of pants and down the back of a skirt. One jacket has a lift-up breast pocket to allow a nipple to peek out, while another has a "trap door" in the seat of the pants in the motif of children's pyjamas. Most of these outfits have been designed by her, including her "pussycat" costume (complete with
a tail which I later learned is used to erotically stroke inside her thighs, and then the top of a customer's head). This bevy of showbiz finery is complemented by a dresser full of makeup, hats and matching capes as well as an umbrella, cane and a feather boa.

Amber loves the novelty, the drama, and the self-importance of dressing up as a member of the profession of the performing arts. She introduced herself to me saying "Amber Starr is my name, stripping is my game". As a professional entertainer she is well aware that her costumes—which both reveal and conceal—accentuate sexual interest as part of her business investment. She uses appealing symbols of music, equipment and costumes that signal a performance frame which sets her apart from regular women and other strippers.

The costumes of a feature must be articulated to the sexual preoccupation of the culture and must speak to power dressing to garner attention. Part of the appeal of her apparel is its non-utilitarian function; garments which are not worn for protection, but serve to allow the child in the adult customer to socially express an interest in a woman dressing up to play sex games. A jacket with a lift-up pocket to expose the breast is used precisely because it is unusual; it is a surprising and humorous parody of the serious matter of uniforms, making a deliberate statement about eroticism and the unchaste nature of the wearer. These cherished items are a rich store of capital goods and useable art forms, yet rarely is the audience aware of the considerable investment of time and money involved in the work of Amber's costuming. Equally treasured by Amber are her Charles Jourdan shoes and her Louis Vuitton bags, which she has purchased with her salary. Such items serve as indicators of "class" from a "poor kid's perspective" when she steps out of the strip club.

Following an extended lunch with Amber, she repairs her makeup while we sip ginger ale on the rocks in the lounge of the
Copa. I later observe more of her stage act which makes extensive use of the two poles at the front of the stage as well as the mirrors on the back wall. During her initial routines (which include little dancing), she uses high kicks to display her long legs to the fullest advantage. Long, slow sustained movements of spreading, holding and teasing--affording individual patrons a peek--are included in her floor work, accompanied by her seductive comments at stage front. Toward the end of her act, a customer throws two red carnations on the blanket she uses for the floor performance. Seemingly accustomed to such displays of admiration, Amber carefully removes the flowers to complete her act and then leaves the stage with a warm round of applause. As I watched this exceptionally beautiful woman on stage, I could not avoid thinking that in our culture, she could have been a Vogue model, a media personality or a matronly woman married to a wealthy man; although I subsequently realize that I, who use the self-descriptor "feminist", have cast her in traditionally feminine roles in which, not unlike stripping, she would be selling her looks.

8.3. Working Hard for her Money in Strip Presentation

Quoting Donna Summer's popular song of the early 1980s, Julie reports that "she works hard for her money". It was not difficult to notice Julie's long red hair some of which consisted of hair pieces, her beautifully applied makeup and her numerous rings; in many ways she looked similar to the character played by Joan Collins in the television series Dynasty. When I asked how long Julie had been dancing, she indicated that she had been "in show biz all my life". Later she revealed that she recently entered her second decade of stripping. She grew up on a farm near Orillia, the fourth of eight children, leaving school at fifteen with the approval of her parents. "Nobody came after me, so it must have been all right." She did not like school,
describing it as boring and her teachers as too strict, exposing the rebellious child in her. "Education is a game, like strip; learning is more and more bullshit, piled higher and for what? Does it save anybody? Does it change the world? Is anything ever improved by reading books, spouting off and asking questions of people?" Her conventional wisdom led her to take up stripping for the expected financial rewards and the glamour she views as associated with the job, rather than continuing with a more traditional education.

Julie has learned well the lessons of presenting herself in strip in a most attractive and amiable manner. She is very popular in the clubs, knows how "to work a room", and likes the attention she generates, according to the bartender at Pandora's Box. As we speak, she is looking around the room, paying attention to who comes into the club and to the appearance and movements of the other dancers on stage. She waves to the deejay and, at one point, breaks the interview to speak to a newly-arrived customer. She leans over the man provocatively, sticking her derriere out, one leg straight and the other bent, in a sequined gold, very short skirt with a slit. Her hair and breasts generously fall near the man's face. Five minutes later, they break up by kissing each other European style, and Julie returns to my table, explaining that "he's a good old customer I knew years ago in Toronto who thinks I'm the most sexy and beautiful woman in the place. We're going to meet later." On this occasion the customer donates lingerie and a bathing suit as a "tip" to encourage Julie to model the gifts in the club. When modelling, she appears as though she has just stepped from the pages of the swimsuit edition of Sports Illustrated magazine. Her instruction in teasing and pleasing customers is facilitated through such encounters, and her wardrobe reflects some lessons she acquired early in her career. When I offer to buy her a drink, she laughs loudly, flicks her hair back sensuously and exclaims "you couldn't afford me".
Suzette claims that she arduously works to maintain her looks; she sports ten, long blood-red and perfectly manicured nails. Her left pinky finger has a diamond permanently encrusted in the nail, while the other hand shows a 24-carat gold-emblazoned band on her index finger nail. She indicates that she changes the colour of her nails frequently, with the help of a friend to match her costumes "like people change their underwear". Her acrylic nail wraps are "filled" every three weeks; sometimes she adds flare by painting each nail a different colour. At times, she attaches jewellery to her nails for a dramatic effect. "If you are going to wear real jewellery", she advises me, "they have to drill into the nail to anchor it". Her weekly manicure and her monthly pedicure are a chore which must be built into her busy schedule as a single parent. When pressed for time she may sacrifice a hair appointment, but her nails are a necessity because they are perceived to garner constant attention. Her beauty regime could have been taken from the calendar prescribed currently for women in Vogue:

Aside from the impracticality of reproducing the runway looks - beautifully buffed and bedecked fingernails may titillate, but they don't type; stilettos may streamline calves, but they'd probably stumble out of boardrooms - there simply isn't time. A makeup lesson with Nars takes an hour, as does a single-process treatment from Licari (necessary every four to six weeks), as does a manicure from Lippmann (minimum: once a week), as does a pedicure (once a month). When you throw in the rest of the variables - depending on your definition of glamour, massage, facial, workout, waxing and/or styling may be considered indispensable - an eight-hour workday becomes a nine or ten-hour one. At least. And then there's the price: $300 for Nars, plus $100 for Licari, plus $21 for a Lippmann manicure and $45 for a Lippmann pedicure. In the end, everyone has to perform her own cost-benefit analysis (Friedman, 1995a:268).

As a child growing up in a predominantly Black district in Halifax, Suzette did not experience racism; "there were drugs and..."
fights in our neighbourhood, but no one put you down for the colour of your skin". Her mother worked in a "macaroni factory". Raising four children on her own with financial assistance from welfare, Suzette's mother provided a home described as "neat and tidy". Suzette attended church every Sunday and believes that she still knows right from wrong. "People think because I'm a stripper, I'm a pushover and a bimbo, that I'll sleep with anyone", a common perception rejected by Suzette. She adds that most dancers are "nice girls" with moral standards. Although there was "lots of food and lots of love" in her home, there was very little money for luxuries such as painted nails and extravagant hairdos. She wanted to be a nurse; instead she trained to be a hairdresser taking a more pragmatic route to obtaining a job. When she became pregnant she moved out of the house, not wanting to add to her mother's financial burdens. For a short while, she lived with her "unemployed boyfriend" whom she described as "a nice guy who wasn't responsible; maybe we were too young". Leaving her schooling and her interest in the beauty business behind, she found a job through her aunt as a cashier in a landscaping business, and a few weeks later moved to a similar job at Woolco. When she took up stripping after the birth of her daughter, Kamala, her primary concern was to make babysitting arrangements with her mother or her cousin Doreen when on the road. Although her daughter is her foremost concern, Suzette has always been interested in her appearance; fortunately a choice between these two interests does not have to be made with the job requirements and the money she earns in stripping.

Her decision to "freelance" was driven by economic necessity, unemployment and redundancy. Suzette's previous jobs had none of the benefits of "fame, fortune and glamour" that she described attached to stripping. Stripping was one of the few means for her to participate in the economy, since a lack of education, skills as well as racial and gender discrimination limited her opportunities to succeed in the mainstream economy.
Unlike independent professionals, artisans and farmers whose work is largely determined by anonymous market conditions, Suzette does not have autonomy in the labour process nor does she own the means of production. She experiences many of the disadvantages without enjoying the rights typically associated with wage employment. Taking up stripping was an attractive alternative to low income and unstable employment with few opportunities for advancement in marginal businesses.

In the past, Suzette indulged in fancy cars and designer clothes. She continues to devote a great deal of attention to (and spends a considerable amount of money on) her personal appearance believing that it is important to do so to maintain her earning potential. She stresses that she also likes to be thought of as "feminine" by others. Her nail treatments cost her a minimum of fifty dollars a week; in addition she spends money travelling and eating "good food" in restaurants while on the circuit, hundreds of dollars on costumes and lingerie every few months, and approximately sixty dollars a month to have her hair braided. Her medium-long hair is a work of art, made up of perhaps two hundred or more extremely small corn-row braids all over her head. The braids do not fall from the top of her head to the nape of her neck, but are intricately crisscrossed, intertwined and double and triple-braided in an unusual pattern, which provides a "messy braided look" so pleasing to the eye. She has recently started saving some of her money hoping to return to Halifax, adamant that her daughter will become a nurse rather than a dancer "like her mama because the life is too hard for a Black woman".

The strenuous life for this woman is partly attributed to the fact that her skin colour, generous lips, heavy-set body and her corn-row hair style, stand out as different in the predominantly White club atmosphere. In the hierarchy of beauty which operates among strippers, it is difficult for Suzette to
compete on a level playing field of aesthetics, when beauty is
defined in terms of Caucasian standards of flowing blonde hair,
delicate facial features and slim, lank limbs. Being proudly
Black, Suzette sports corn rows, never contemplating bleaching or
straightening her hair or surgically reshaping her nose as some
Blacks did in the past to move up the White hierarchy of beauty.
In strip clubs, Suzette's hair is creatively laced in beads
swinging back and forth in a style many White, Canadian women are
currently eager to acquire. However, Suzette's corn rows have a
very different impact from those of Bo Derek, a Caucasian starlet
who made the hairdo popular in White, middle-class circles, long
after it was fashionable for African-American women. The
difficulties Suzette experiences in the clubs concerning her race
creates a tension for this young woman who is working hard at her
craft, attempting to fit into the predominantly White world of
strip so as to make a living that will enable her daughter to
avoid such cultural conflicts.

The definition of an ethnic/racial group is primarily a
function of the ways in which the dominant group seeks to impose
its definition in relation to a subordinate group. The pressures
for Suzette to conform and cooperate, suggest the disparity
between the ideals of individual achievement and equality and the
practices of racial discrimination and inequity. The dominant
group seeks to establish its own brand of beauty and to require
adoption of its values and styles by those who wish to gain
acceptance in the larger society. Such a social structure is
built on the racial creed of Black difference and inferiority.
Those in subordinate positions often find the channels to
privilege and power blocked through arbitrarily-imposed sanctions
of discrimination and exclusion. The life chances and
opportunities for Black women like Suzette to acquire an
education, establish a career and secure a substantial salary are
significantly less than for many Caucasian people. The lack of
meritocracy in the allocation of position, reward and privilege
demonstrates that institutional arrangements in stripping are permeated with racial injustice. In maintaining positions of power, elites will utilize any device, including dividing the working class along racial lines, to monopolize labour and other resources in the political-economic order. Ethnicity and race function in stripping transactions as part of the bargaining arrangements however, institutional inequality suggests that expectations and opportunities are more fixed and immutable for women like Suzette.

Even when the panoply of strip displays a wholesome appearance, as is Samantha's preference, the presentation often requires hours of work in planning and the allocation of considerable resources to achieve the right look. Samantha's appearance, mannerisms and makeup are all contrived to present an excessively robust and healthy image as part of her act. She confirms that she strives for a "natural look" to help in her presentation of self because she is in her late twenties and has been stripping for several years. She is typical of the well-toned and tanned "jockettes" who display nudity and an athletic body image as a lifestyle statement. Although she dislikes exercise, Samantha recognizes that you cannot have "fat and flab on the stage; that won't pay the rent". On a daily basis she walks a half hour, religiously works out in the gym and attempts to make time to ride her bike or swim "to maintain my body in peak form".

Samantha favours the look of good health exhibited by a year-round, tanned appearance. Although a light-skinned woman, she chooses to ignore the information she has read concerning the increasing rate of skin cancer and premature aging from tanning, noting that she is very careful to use high-block sun screens and to remain only for short periods of time outdoors or in tanning salons. Contending that beauty is defined by health, fitness and intelligence, she also works hard to maintain a "positive outlook
on life". The poise and confidence she has achieved may be a result of the many other skills she possesses. She is a professional dancer, has clerical and carpentry skills, has worked as a draftsperson and, recently, she purchased a home computer to enable her to publish her creative writing. Her husband, a university graduate, encourages her to view herself as a person with ability and talent, some of which is currently being developed in an upgrading course in English literature at the University of Toronto. Her academic ambitions include obtaining a degree in psychology in order to become a psychotherapist.

Earlier cultural definitions of feminine beauty as fragile, thin, or buxom have been, to some degree replaced by new definitions within strip in which sweat and muscular development are viewed as sexy. I complimented Carin on her physique; it was apparent that, beyond the advantages of youth and stripping she also works out. Her well-toned body is enhanced by using a great deal of cosmetics, all in subtle shades, designed to display the look of little or no makeup. Her petite frame of five feet two-inches, with a weight of one hundred and eight pounds is pleasantly noticeable in part, due to her very small waist and the delineation of the muscles in her shoulders, arms and upper torso. Carin has been lifting weights for three years, toiling in the gym on a daily basis when she is not on the road. She also jogs to build up her leg muscles, concerned about "keeping in shape", not only to enjoy the benefits of good health, but also because she is aware that "a stripper must have a good body". At home in British Columbia, she goes to the gym every day and has a set routine of running, stretching and weight-lifting exercises. Toting a set of weights in a gym bag wherever she is on the stripping circuit, she remarks that just carrying her training equipment around gives her a workout. On the road, performing five shows a day from noon until one in the morning, it is difficult for her to get to the gym, so she performs a special
exercise program in her hotel room of stretching and weight lifting which she has designed herself.

Pleased that her hard work is noticed by others, Carin believes that her efforts helped her win the Miss Nude Ontario contest earlier this year. She acknowledges the fact that many such titles are phoney, but maintains that she won hers in a legitimate contest. Her male companion, who travels with her and serves as her manager, entered her in the contest in Niagara Falls, Ontario; all the women had to strip simultaneously on stage in a club before the judges announced the winner with the assistance from applause of the audience. In the style of the Miss America beauty pageant, Carin was promised a trip to Las Vegas and a wardrobe of bathing suits; however, she has not yet received her prizes three months after the contest took place. Nonetheless, she remains convinced that she "stood out from the crowd" because of her dedication to a physical training and weight-lifting regime.

Carin was not always interested in building a strong body. Earlier in life, she became proficient at building a "good eye" in shooting pool. This was one of the few activities open to her and her siblings as Natives growing up in a small town in Northern British Columbia. Her concern about health issues, however, does not extend to food; she describes herself as "eating like a pig", especially hamburgers, French fries, Kentucky Fried chicken, chocolate cake and pizza. If she did not work out regularly, she suggested that her weight would balloon to a hundred and fifty pounds and she would quickly be out of the stripping business. She "doesn't do drugs," but after shooting pool in the club between her dance sets--an activity at which she is an expert as a result of playing with her two older brothers for many years--by early afternoon she is often "pissed", by her own account. On the day I interviewed her, she was quite high, presumably on liquor, at approximately one in the afternoon.
Annie Ample's interest in her appearance began at a very young age along with her introduction to surgery--some of which was medically necessary and some cosmetic in nature. At age seven, she was attacked by a Doberman who chewed off her upper lip. She required a series of operations to graft skin from the back of her leg to her mouth. Describing herself as "all nose, boobs and legs", at age twelve, she had a large 34B chest and a nose that made her look like a "kiwi bird". The summer of 1963 was characterized by Annie, a young teen at the time, as the summer of the bikini. She went to the Goodwill store and bought a bathing suit for seventy-five cents, cut out a bikini bottom and covered one of her bras with the remaining material to complete the ensemble. "This skinny kid with the giant chest in a bikini -- what a sight! No wonder I had such a great summer. All the other girls were stuffing their bras with falsies or stockings and I didn't need either." This event led to her rapid acceptance by the "in" crowd, and she began modelling her creations and charging two dollars to make bikinis for her girlfriends. Her father however, would often throw things at her in a drunken rage, yelling "how dare you walk that way and swing your hips around". Annie suggested that she was five feet seven-inches tall, weighed ninety-eight pounds, and "didn't have any hips to swing around".

Beyond the ambivalence most adolescents face in seeking approval from both girls and boys (at an age where acceptance is often based on a restricted definition of good looks), Annie had early and painful memories of being ridiculed and rejected for a variety of additional reasons. All avenues to success seemed blocked for the young Annie coming from a poor and dysfunctional "ethnic" family. She was unsuccessful in school, due to an undiagnosed learning disability, and was considered by her father and peers to be an "ugly duckling". Substituting hard work, creativity and humour for conventional good looks to win
acceptance and the occasional prize in amateur talent contests, was Annie's only way of converting the duckling into a swan. Her book *The Bare Facts: My Life As A Stripper* displays a series of before and after photographs; the pictorial transformation is from a thin, dark-haired and pleasant-looking adolescent to a vivacious, platinum blonde icon like her idol, Jayne Mansfield. In the photographs, she evokes the epitome of glamour lifted from the pages of a Frederick of Hollywood's catalogue in a short tight dress with a plunging neckline, and displaying the most fashionable look in cosmetic surgery with her thin, aquiline nose and breast implants. In a culture which continually emphasizes aspects of femininity in everyday appearance, it is no accident that Annie's image and adornments accentuate a traditional, feminine demeanour, accenting and exaggerating differences with the masculine. The things Annie does for beauty—spending time, money and enduring pain to achieve the supreme characterization of feminine attractiveness and sensual glamour—is at the extreme end, but nonetheless, is on a continuum with the cosmetic, diet, piercing and surgical procedures most other women undergo in strip culture.

As a novice stripper in her early twenties, Annie went to a "filthy" clinic in Tijuana and had silicon injected into her breasts in the hope that Jake, her husband at the time, would find her more attractive. Dazzled by big breasts, Jake would often remark about the beauty of women in strip clubs who were large-chested, suggesting that as the club's manager, he was going to make them stars. "He bugged me to have my breasts enlarged; I entered a 34B and came out a 36C - you stand up and instantly you have bigger breasts." She went back the following week for further injections to make her breasts even larger. "It shocks me when I look back on it now that I could have seriously thought of changing my body to make a man love me. A girlfriend who accompanied me was shot with silicon in a vein, developed an embolism and died, due to an incompetent doctor." Annie remarked
that she panicked because she had not thought much about death until that incident, nor had she associated silicon with pain and recurrent health problems. Within weeks the silicon in Annie's breasts was leaking causing her right arm to go numb; "it was painful and frightening". Finding a surgeon followed a year later. "He informed me that I would need a mastectomy to remove the silicon and that he would put implants in and I would be larger. When I woke up after major surgery, I didn't have big breasts, I had giant breasts, 44DD."

In her mid-twenties, Annie broke her nose in a car accident and returned to a plastic surgeon. At that time, Jake told her "you were exotic before, but now you look like a dog". Annie added that "one of the strangest things about plastic surgery is that other people can see that there's a difference, but all you can see is your old face. Maybe that's why people become real junkies and keep asking the surgeon for more changes, just to see the difference in themselves." She was involved in another car accident in 1985, suffering a "smashed" leg and a concussion. In hospital, she developed an embolism after surgery which left a long unsightly scar down her right leg. Shortly after she returned to stripping, Annie decided to have new cheekbones added to improve her appearance—"something that would change my looks altogether. It's the kind of surgery that is popular with lots of models in New York and Hollywood." In 1988, she formally and publicly retired from stripping, only to return a year later. At that time she discussed with me her plans to fly to California to consult with her plastic surgeon about having a face lift and liposuction performed on her thighs, remarking that "agents push girls to have nose and boob jobs because it will bring them a higher fee".

Annie Ample and Kamada Lee Foxx have picked up the cultural message that perhaps more than any other part of a woman's body the breasts, as visually distinct from what men do not have,
accentuate gender differences. This part of a woman's body, symbolizing warmth and generosity (as in the saying concerning the milk of human kindness), serves as a sign of erotic benevolence and abundant sensuality. Both women are aware that to please men and remain a "big name" in stripping, they must buy into male fantasies and provide the reality of pleasure at the sight of provocative breasts. It seemed a natural progression for Annie from posing in a bikini as a teen, receiving payment in emotional and social currency, to alter her body surgically to please her husband, and later move on to exchanging body work directly in cash transactions. Despite Annie's "boobie" jokes, she comprehends that when she jiggles and bounces her enormous chest in the interest of accommodating masculine sensuality, she has moved far away from the vulnerable and sexless little girl of her bygone days, to being a very big star in the world of strip with a most successful international career.

Kamada Lee Foxx has a strikingly natural beauty, with her tall and thin silhouette, flawless complexion and beautiful, blonde curly hair. This stunningly beautiful young woman who turns heads whenever she walks into a room has the looks of a high fashion model. She is a "pro", meaning that she is a serious business woman who understands that her appearance is an integral part of her service. She devotes hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars to cultivating herself to look as she does. She is naturally blessed with the quintessential traits of today's features, namely, long, flowing beautiful hair, a five-foot eleven-inch frame, elongated thin legs and shapely thighs that are all evident when she strips, highlighted by costumes and mannerisms designed to draw her pristine beauty to the attention of the viewing audience.

Like Annie, Kamada has resorted to surgery to have hair extensions hand stitched to her scalp, breast augmentations twice, surgery to her nose and liposuction performed on her
thighs (the latter described as extremely painful but "necessary" because she had heavy thighs all her life). Speaking about her sense of feminine pride and gender identification, Kamada regards her decision to tolerate her painful and expensive breast enhancements as one of the most important decisions in her life which "has paid off ten times over". Diligently, she works at keeping her body in top form through dieting and exercise, establishing a beauty regime regarding hair and skin care which requires considerable time and money. It is her firm belief that her attention to beauty details has enabled her to dance as a feature throughout Ontario as well as at other normative clubs across Canada and the United States for six years. It has also brought her considerable attention by "some wealthy men", including her current paramour who owns a chain of pizza franchises across Ontario.

In addition to paying abundant attention to her demeanour, music plays a large part in setting the correct tone to highlight Kamada's body moves; she prefers 1960s rhythm-and-blues, especially the Black American version of this genre even though she was only a child when much of this music was popular. Her salary of $1,800 a week as a feature affords her the opportunity "to buy all the music I want" with the realization that "if my looks go, I'm out of a job". Kamada understands that her fashionable looks are intimately connected with aspects of her conspicuous lifestyle, which would not necessarily be available to her in another line of work. The inspiration for many of her acts comes from her previous job as a carnie in the Barnum and Bailey circus, described as "hard work, a rough life and for not much money"; in contrast, stripping is distinguished as easier, the life more glamorous and the money much more substantial.

Dominating her face and attracting an interlocutor's eye like a magnet is Shona's big red mouth. Thinking that I am examining her teeth, she immediately revealed that she had her
lips enhanced with collagen. All her teeth have been extracted because they were soft and full of cavities, so that "you now only see these pearly whites". Shona too is not a surgical virgin, having had three "breast jobs". She is planning a fourth at a cost of eighteen hundred dollars. When I rather naively inquired about the purpose of the latest operation, Shona looked at me rather annoyed before replying, "to make them bigger of course". Considering that her current bust size is an eye-catching 40BB, compared to a more modest 34C eight years earlier, I found it interesting that she would contemplate augmenting her already abundant figure while simultaneously proclaiming that she might quit stripping in the very near future. She would like to have a "tummy tuck" in the future, pointing to a little round belly protruding over the top of her costume. "And, of course, I need a nose job as well." As a woman in her mid-thirties, she is resolved to intervene surgically upon her body to avoid a look of female maturity, a process to be avoided in women at all costs but to be accepted and sometimes celebrated in men. Well aware that she has reached the upper age limit of acceptability of what managers in strip clubs contend that customer's will pay to see, Shona has spent (and will continue to spend) a substantial sum of money on body surgery. She works hard to get the money she needs to buy the look she wants as a stripper, bringing her body into conformity with the societal ideal of female youth and beauty.

Shona confessed that she would like to leave stripping because she is tired of being "anorexic". Similarly, Annie complained that she must watch what she eats, often having a green salad and a bottle of Perrier for lunch. While on a sabbatical from dancing for a year, Annie gained forty pounds and subsequently went on a strict eight-hundred-calories-a-day diet to lose weight when she re-entered dancing. She mentioned, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, that she has only two regrets as a result of dancing, and "they weigh about ten pounds between the pair". A very thin dancer at the Lido was described by Sara--a waitress in
the club for eight years—as taking speed and cocaine to keep her weight in check. Both Sara and her friend Sasha, one of the few female clients of strip, noted that as strippers get healthy, meaning "they get off drugs", they subsequently start to eat and rapidly put on weight. Conversely, T indicates that she lost weight and tightened her derriere after she began stripping. "In a shift of eight to ten hours, you dance five times or more, and I've done as many as forty table dances in a day." She was grateful for losing the weight but felt tired at the end of each working day, her calf muscles aching and her feet hurting from standing and dancing for long periods in stiletto heels.

The female body is where Western society inscribes sexual and gender messages. The seductive images, the concern for bodily improvement and the battle over the body among strippers, transform strip clubs into forums of popular cultural iconography for the display of feminine body artistry, heterosexual allure and the establishment of gender boundaries. Historically and contemporarily, high-heeled shoes, corsets, bikini bathing suits and handcuffs have signalled female restriction and oppression; in the context of contemporary strip clubs they are to be viewed as signs of sexual liberalism and nouveau female emancipation. The body and the clothing of the stripper become her language within the theatrics of performance; the stripper communicates as part of her act, messages which are inscribed on her body. Women of strip are the defined sex who also actively participate in defining and redefining themselves through body work. Although the bodies of strippers exhibit some of the incessant pressure towards a display of cultural definitions of stereotypical feminine appeal and heterosexual enticement, these women use such devices as tools of their trade and make them work for them, sometimes adding new meaning in humorous parody. Discarding the costume, make-up and hair pieces also seems relatively easy and the norm for most strippers when their shift ends. Many emerge from the clubs looking like any other women on the street, in
jeans, boots, often with a pony tail and no make-up.
1. Adams (1987) investigated cultural stereotypes with respect to "attractive" and "unattractive" people, illustrating how the perception of beauty influences behaviour towards others. In general, both women and men are more drawn to people perceived to be attractive. Teachers and students judge attractive individuals to have more positive personality traits in areas wholly unrelated to physical appearance (such as academic performance), and parents expect attractive children to succeed more than unattractive children in work and personal relations. These stereotypes reinforce assumptions that comely people are more congenial, competent, virtuous and deserving of friendship than individuals identified as unattractive by the culture. Since attractive people receive more positive feedback from others in social interactions, they often display more confidence and self-acceptance in what Rosenthal (1966) labels a self-fulfilling prophecy.

2. In a conversation with Kathy Rockhill, professor of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, she commented that the female image is often refracted through a male gaze.

3. Vance (1984) questions whether sexuality can be said to be socially constructed when attempting to explain sex at the level of lust, fantasy and physical experiences. In borrowing from the work of Wittig, she argues that sexuality is constructed by more than social forces. The sexual body is forged by culturally-determined ideas of biological sex (i.e., a social understanding of the biological female and male). The female is constructed as the opposite and subordinate sex partner of the male, premised on a gender system with a formula for compulsive heterosexuality and a hierarchy of needs and desires.


5. For a theory of the erotic allure of long fingernails, see David Kunzle's Fashion and Fetishism (1982).

6. In the 1920 heydays of Harlem, some fashionable Black women used creams to lighten their skin and solutions to straighten their hair in an attempt to emulate the look of beauty of Caucasian women. Among Blacks there was considerable disagreement around the issue. Those who supported Harlem in New York as the hub of the Black cultural renaissance rejected such practices, opting for the natural beauty of African queens as a forerunner of the 1960s "black is beautiful" movement (Anderson and Gunderson, 1970).
7. The researcher believes in labelling people in the way in which they wish to be identified. Suzette calls herself "Black", while Toni Morrison (1970) uses the self descriptor African-American. In the ongoing debate about whether the politically correct label is Black or African-Canadian, Devo Jaiikoah Dyette (1995:A21), a writer, describes himself as a Black Canadian. Believing that he is primarily a Canadian who happens to be Black, he refuses to be labelled an African-Canadian, based solely on "fictional kinships" and the colour of his skin. Although he longs for a social space where skin pigmentation will be marginally relevant, he advocates the use of the term "black" for descriptive purposes. Understanding that the elimination of racial inequality will not come from the practice of "racelessness", nor from a preoccupation with "continual difference", he advocates that Blacks invert the negative stereotypes imposed by White culture into "positive and functional attributes".

8. It is suggested by Wilson (1985:127-130) that the tan was part of the aesthetics of ugly, associated with agricultural workers as a sign of rural life, until Caucasian Americans invaded the beaches of the Riviera in the 1920s and redefined the look as one of affluence, health and urbanity. She contends that the issue of tanning was part of a extended debate concerning the natural and the artificial in Western industrial society. The first generation to leave rural communities and take up residency in towns close to factories longed for open spaces and the healthy life associated with nature and the country. By the nineteenth century, the ugly and unnatural aspects associated with industrial and city states became the new norm of beauty. In the 1920s, naturalism devoid of bright eye shadows and crimson nails became the standard fare of feminine beauty.

9. For a discussion of the evolution of the swimsuit, see Claudia Kidwell's Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States (1968) in which she describes how the daring French bikini revolutionized the fashion industry in the 1960s. It swept aside prudent American values and reshaping the female body, necessitating a more streamline appearance.

10. Sexual polarization may be one of the major reasons that breast augmentations are perceived to be a form of beautification. Nashner and White (1987) argue that in view of the fact that women are encouraged to be slender and lose weight, the bust, especially if enlarged, is one of the significant ways in which women can be distinguished from men.

11. The experience of strippers has been mirrored by tens of thousands of women in North America, who unwittingly risk physical health and comfort by undergoing surgery designed to enhance the size of their breasts. According to the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery, more than $8 billion dollars is
spent annually by American women on surgical procedures designed to alter their bodies in order to conform to perceived standards of beauty. The Canadian figures for cosmetic surgery procedures are approximately $30 million a year (Brazier, 1992:46).

This extremely common form of cosmetic surgery results in complications for up to 60% of women, some of which are fatal, even when the surgery is performed under ideal circumstances with competent professionals (Nashner and White, 1987). Whether by silicone injections or gel implants, since the 1960s a number of "side effects" have been detected—including hardening of the breasts, pain, formation of scar tissue, distortion of shape, increased sensitivity, infections and gangrene. When such complications ensue, they require the surgical removal of the breast; and silicone migrations, or blindness and perhaps death due to pulmonary edema, may result.

12. As early as 1295, women in Florence adopted the badges of yellow veils of the prestigious courtesans who were highly valued because they were well educated, usually spoke several languages, and were often accomplished musicians. Rudofsy (1965:31-32) suggests that the contemporary parallel to the adoption of "whorish dress" by ordinary women is the practice of wearing tightly fitting high boots, an accoutrement of streetwalkers, who in the past catered to religious men of asceticism.
Chapter Nine

THE MAKING OF THE SOCIAL WORLD OF STRIP

9.1. Social-Emotional Work as a Gendered Phenomenon

An examination of the everyday practices which strippers engage in provides an entry point for exploring the social organization of their work processes. Concepts and categories such as featuring, table and lap dancing, which organize the complex network of social relations between strippers, clients and managers can be pulled apart to make visible their ideological character. Descriptions contributed by individuals concerning their specific activities are not neutral nor randomly instituted; they provide meaning concerning specific kinds of actions embedded in the production of social relations. The interest here does not consist of investigating individual subjectivity, but rather demonstrating how stripping is socially organized in the everyday world. The local and particular world of stripping consequently can be seen to be connected to the political economy both within and outside of stripping.

Although not immediately visible nor necessarily apparent to all participants, stripping practices are discursively organized in local settings through interactions between actors. At the micro level, an investigation of stripping practices provides a way to conceptualize how relations among individuals are organized and are part of a larger framework of social relations outside of this subculture. Examining social practices discloses how the world of stripping is put together, and how social relations organize power and people's activities through participation in the ordinary practices of everyday life (Smith, 1987). The social relations of stripping can be examined through the use of methods grounded in individual consciousness consisting of what individuals think, feel and actually do as
they engage in social activities coordinated with others. Such an inquiry provides a moment when knowledge provided by scientific discourse departs from knowing resulting from experience. Through extralocal practices of ruling, outside interests and values can be seen to organize social practices within strip clubs and remove control, intentionality and ways of knowing from participants.

From Aristotle to the present, reason rather than emotion was regarded as the requisite faculty for acquiring knowledge. The two faculties were often contrasted one with the other, associating reason with the mental, cultural, public and masculine, and connecting emotion with the irrational, nature, private and the feminine. In the Western positivist tradition, emotional responses were viewed as irrational urges associated with passion which could sweep over one. Consequently, emotions were distrusted, subordinated to reason and had to be controlled by reason. Feminist epistemology has shed a much more positive light on emotions, viewing them as part of a paradigm of genuine knowledge as well as fulfilling a necessary and useful function for human survival. Some have pointed out that androcentric theory is not devoid of emotion, but "expresses emotions characteristic of males including "separation anxiety, paranoia, obsession with control and fear of contamination" (Jagger, 1997:190). Women are both permitted and expected to be more emotionally expressive and to have a greater range of emotional responses than men (Chesler, 1972b). Individuals who cross the gender line in the form of unexpressive females or emotive males have, in the past, been subject to social sanctions. Although traditionally feminine people can express joy, sadness and excitement but not anger--the only emotion reserved for men--the traditionally masculine personality is expected to be composed, reserved and emotionally stultified.

In the past, knowledge was considered to be a fixed entity,
translated by specific individuals (with little room for interpretation) and was presented as neutral and value-free. It was intended to construct a particular world view in which the privileges of some were as "natural" as the disadvantages of others. Historically categorized in a dichotomous fashion, knowledge was constructed to include concepts such as hard/soft, rational/emotional, good/evil, dark/light and science/nature. These polarities frequently were aligned with gender dimensions--qualities of hardness, rationality and science became associated with masculinity while the feminine was connected with qualities of softness, emotionality and an attachment to nature. Such dichotomous constructs were inherently gendered and provided a gendered way of viewing the world as an adjunct to the way in which knowledge was constructed and embedded in language.

The social constructionist perspective suggests that knowledge and knowing originates in social interactions, such that learning proceeds from the social between individuals (appropriation), to within an individual (transformation) and back to the social world (conventionalization) with the support of knowledgeable members of the culture (Harre, 1984).¹ Through communication and negotiations, participants are drawn out of their private worlds and establish a shared social world. The experience of each individual is shaped, developed and reworked in interactions with significant others, filled with the thoughts, speech and values of both the individual and the other(s), in double-voice discourse.² Signifying and discursive systems--including ways of speaking, thinking and interacting--give meaning to the individual construction of experience. The social world is continually shaped by interactions with others and therefore, assumptions about human nature and issues of power concerning gender, race and social class continually come into play.

The position put forth in the domestic labour debates holds
that unpaid work within the household contributes in a number of ways to value in the productive economy, emphasizing that women's marginalized position in the market place can be attributed to a lack of recognition and value placed on activities within the private sphere. Although a lack of identity of women's abilities and skills can be associated with the valuation placed on activities in the private domain, recognizing that interruptions in labour market participation (due to domestic responsibility) and social perceptions (which assess work based on gender rather than on qualifications and productivity) account for women's devalued status in the paid labour force. Feminist political economy focuses attention on issues of reproduction as well as production. This analysis makes visible the work involved in reproducing human labour power. Maureen Mackintosh (1981), in particular, argues for an expansion of the social meaning of reproduction to include the activities of maintaining, socializing and consuming (which are necessary to create and perpetuate productive relations in society) in addition to the work associated with child birth. She contends that the concept of social reproduction not only produces and preserves the wage labour force but is also involved in reproducing capital through procedures which construct the social relations of the productive process.

9.2. Engaging in Social-Emotional Work in the Service Industry

A number of traditional studies in the sociology of labour have demonstrated masculine biases, expectations and values evidenced in the society at large. Such work contributed to the social invisibility of women and a disregard for emotional labour as facets of gender work as opposed to gender identity. In particular, men in ruling classes reserve the right to perform certain kinds of labour involving intellectual and cultural activities, and they assign other forms of labour involving
emotional and manual labour to women and working class men. These studies neglected the importance of the labour attached to emotional maintenance and interactional work in the everyday world (which supports the social construction and maintenance of male-female relations of power).

Through processes of socialization, the patriarchal family has historically enforced heterosexual romance and marriage. As a social institution it establishes the meaning of sexual difference and legitimates specific gender relations which are related to love, marriage and reproduction. Personal identities, such as femininity/masculinity and heterosexuality/homosexuality are not exclusively the products of biology, but are shaped by social and political forces over time. The sexual division of labour encourages females to learn a feminine set of cultural rules and expectations in preparing psychologically to become women, while males are preparing to become men through a process of masculine socialization (Chodorow, 1978). Many families continue to have different expectations and to treat sons and daughters differently, encouraging boys to be physically aggressive, to compete, to win and to control others, while girls are encouraged to be physically reserved, sensitive to relationships, deferential and unselfishly concerned about the needs of others.

The female body in contemporary stripping is presented to explore and expose the excitement, mystery and dread associated with sexuality and the female; stripping which is obsessed with physical beauty and sensuality is presented as the art, craft and mystery of women's body work. Erotic stimulation by women is sometimes exalted, sometimes degraded and often presented through the use of intensely gender-specific techniques for the world to see the hidden pleasures, to uncover forgotten secrets and to tell the hard truth about desire. Dominant themes of narcissism, masculine and feminine pleasure, sexual power, erotic pedagogy
and the control of women's bodies make up the modern day narratives of strip. Linda Williams (1989:27) writes in *Hard Core: Power Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible* that "the erotic and the pornographic interact in hard core. The one emphasizes desire, the other satisfaction." A similar analysis--emphasizing desire and satisfaction--can be said to explain the attraction of the male gaze in the modern visual form of strip, which takes many of its structures and performance cues from pornography. Women who strip are at work performing sensually for men. Although stripping is female-focused, it is not necessarily female-centred. It does not express women's sexual pleasures as women experience them, but women's sexual pleasures as expressions of male desire.

It is becoming increasingly common in advanced capitalist societies for people employed in selling goods and services to personalize the delivery of standardized services, by producing the simulacra of private emotions into commercial transactions. Attending a movie and buying popcorn is likely to find the contemporary patron drawn into a verbal exchange, beginning with the confectionary seller saying "Hi, my name is Suzie, how may I help you?" After filling the customer's order in an ersatz public performance (in contrast, at times, to the way workers speak and joke among themselves in what Erving Goffman (1967,1969) terms "backstage behaviour") the transaction ends. Suzie may display interest in the patron's pleasure beyond the purchase of confections at the candy counter and suggest, "Enjoy your show". The patron may be taken by surprise by the introduction of the vendor by name, wondering if etiquette requires an exchange of first names in order to buy popcorn, pondering if the person is unusually friendly or merely wishes to chat. If the patron lingers for awhile, he/she is likely to witness the same procedure with the identical phrases used to draw in and then end the transaction with the next patron. A repetition of this experience with a waiter in a restaurant who introduces himself
by name and then checks back throughout the meal to determine if the culinary experience is enjoyable, highlights some of the recent changes within the service industry. The invitation to "have a nice day", conveyed by a woman who deliberately maintains eye contact as she takes in the laundry at the dry cleaning establishment, will leave the distinct impression that service industry workers are required to engage in the emotional labour of pseudo-customizing and personalizing service to engage the client and move the entrepreneurial interaction along in a smooth and regulated manner.

Hochschild (1988) details how the private management of flight attendants' feelings is socially engineered and transformed into emotional labour in the airline industry. By rewriting job descriptions, these workers were persuaded to view themselves as individually employed in sales. As part of the extensive training and monitoring of service, flight attendants learned that the emotional style of delivery was part of the service (in a competitive industry in which a market niche of profit was captured through personalized and "individual" attention). Despite the fact that customers may have perceived the smiles, warmth and extra effort as a facet of on-the-job rather than spontaneous behaviour, appearing to enjoy their work and serving the customers (in a professional and effortless manner) became as important for these workers as the physical labour of serving drinks and conducting safety demonstrations. Emotional labour required flight attendants to construct a proper state of mind and suppress their feelings, even when fatigued or irritated, in order to enhance the status of the customers and promote corporate sales. Although emotional withdrawal caused them to suggest that they felt insincere or mechanical, they were required by company policy and training sessions to engage in such behaviour. Taking into account the unequal distribution of power and authority between flight attendants and customers, this group of (predominantly female) workers detached themselves
mentally from their feelings to preserve some sense of self. It was only when the workload substantially increased throughout the 1980s, that they were forced to limit their emotional involvement with customers to surface or ritual behaviour.

Whether through phrases, gestures or smiles, the engagement in socializing and managing customers (by responding on the basis of feelings) is part of the active but often invisible emotional work - which is rarely recognized as important in the provision of service. Viewing emotions as belonging to private affective relationships obscures the ways in which the marketplace is structured by desire to privilege groups who demonstrate rationality, while failing to recognize or undervalue work performed by other groups (usually women) which is seen as a private expression of affection. It also ignores the employers' encouragement of specific employee attitudes and the manipulation by employees of their own feelings to achieve presentational predictability designed in the interest of management control and service uniformity (Leidner, 1993). One crucial element of interactional service work is the production of meaning for customers based on factors of race and ethnicity. Overall, the highly stratified and economically segregated workforce of strippers reveals that lower level and contingent jobs are predominantly filled by minorities. When socially engineered, emotions of hope, desire and anticipation are transformed into emotional labour for a wage. As an integral part of commerce, many of the behavioural patterns employed are socially reconstructed from private interactions, delivered repetitively and at times almost mechanically but with a critical air of authenticity that is emphasized during formal or informal training sessions. Such interactions do not represent genuine and egalitarian exchanges because service workers are expected to hold their own emotional needs in suspension. Anticipating and reacting to the needs of clients who may at times be unclear, uncommunicative or unreasonable and attempting to set boundaries
for emotional closeness and personal involvement, contemporary service workers are cognizant that a growing part of their job involves doing emotional work. Through workplace culture and a variety of management techniques, a new form of cultural regulation in the workplace has been introduced to blur distinctions between work and non-work and the identification between employee and organization.

Service industry workers, in particular, are expected to contribute the social glue for the system by providing a smile, pleasant conversation and individual attention analogous to the emotional and nurturing work performed by secretaries, nurses and elementary school teachers, jobs conventionally undertaken by women. Not only do women predominate in numbers in the service industry, but the social-emotional component of human interactions are viewed as part of women's work. This arrangement reproduces class relations, according to Smith (1975b:76), such that class is a determinant of the deployment of social-emotional skills in labour. Women, more than men, deal with people as part of their job requirements. When women leave the private domain to work in the public sphere under capitalism, employers expect them, to behave as men, separating the responsibilities of their home and working lives. At the same time, they are also expected to transfer feminine attributes from the home to the work of the marketplace. Such expectations require that women bring with them from the home worksite, the skills and attitudes required to undertake emotional work in the marketplace precisely because they are women. Traditionally more competent in managing feelings in the private domain (due to socialization processes which teach and reward females for such behaviour), women are encouraged to offer emotional labour and do relational work. As part of the hidden agenda of gender in work, women may not however, expect to exchange emotional skills for material resources or status benefits in the marketplace. For those who do, emotional repayment which affirms, magnifies and glorifies the rank of
others (and particularly men on whom they are often dependent for money and positions) is seen as a "fair trade" between the sexes.9

9.3. Social-Emotional Work as an Integral Component of Stripping

Hochschild's exploration of the effects of the commercialization of human feelings among flight attendants can be applied to the emotional services extended by strippers. Social-emotional work is an important aspect of the labour of stripping. "If the guys think that you are an amateur or a pushover, that's when trouble starts", Samantha declares; "I always try to appear confident and let them know that I am in charge". In contrast to her jeans and T-shirts, which she wears in her hotel room, the costumes and makeup assist in her transformation to a glamorous performer with the poise and confidence to manage the club clientele. Prior to her stage act, Amber carefully inspects the customers in "pervert's row" (the first two queues of seats at stage front in normative clubs), to check for "oddballs", groups of men, a drunk who may cause trouble and to confirm how many glasses and bottles are on the tables. "It's difficult to size up the troublemakers; they can be well dressed or dirty, they can be brash or shy. Sometimes, it's the shy ones who are a real problem; they are loners who have had perverted ideas for a long time. The losers demand more, shout, haggle about the price of drinks, play pranks or make catcalls during the show. These guys have to be reassured that they are men and calmed down."9 Ambers prefers well-dressed businessmen: 

Guys who come in have a beer and watch the show quietly. Some guys want sympathy, others want physical stuff and some want to be pampered. Some guys are a pain in the ass--they want to date you, tell you their life story, or save you from stripping.
You know like what's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this? There are guys with mental problems, guys who won't take no for an answer, those who are lonely, the stingy ones who want to get every penny of their money's worth or who want to get things for free, and the weirdos who don't really like women.

It is her assumption that she has avoided many of the difficulties encountered with customers because she is able to command more respect than other dancers. Her "drop dead good looks", as one bartender put it, her concern to scrutinize the audience and her skilfully controlled interactions have assisted in escalating her from an entrance level dancer to a "top flight" performer in three years. Well aware that she engages in performances and is selling the illusion of "exciting and naughty sex", she takes her job seriously, but employs a level of emotional detachment by disengaging from her "true feelings" as she works. Describing herself as "Miss Feel Good", Amber views the emotional labour of her job as essential in helping the clients to enjoy themselves. She credits some of the seasoned dancers who have gone before her, a few helpful clients and the odd tip acquired from bartenders and agents as part of her successful mentoring experiences in learning how to handle the social-emotional components of her job.

Like many experienced dancers, Amber claims to be the architect of social/sexual relationships, appearing more knowledgeable than her clients concerning the use of flirtatious techniques and demonstrating a great versatility of methods in displaying sensuality. She enjoys the autonomy of (and the opportunity to make a lot of money from) table dancing fees and tips that were not part of her employee package when she stripped exclusively on stage. Her standard fare of managing techniques are altered to fit the occasion as she continuously assesses her immediate customer, potential clients, and the larger club
atmosphere. She engages in relational work by helping the clients to relax and to "open up" through banter and a well-developed sense of humour. Part of the art of flirtation suggests that her rehearsed repertoire, staged "come-ons", topics of small talk and sensitivity to cues of attraction are crafted to appear genuine, improvisational and geared to the individual client.\(^{10}\) She may posture and stroke a customer more on a "slow day", or spend more time with an individual who is "difficult", than on a day when the club is crowded and there are a number of men eager to have her dance for them. As a professional, her efforts are directed toward engineering profitable interactions. Her in-depth understanding of sensuality is prominent as she takes in information from her social world to engage the customer in fantasy and desire. By her own admission she "hustles", and does so with the full use of all her interpersonal and creative skills.

Although many club personnel are apprehensive about conversations with people outside of the business, this clique-like atmosphere works to my advantage when my friend Sara uses her connections at the Copa to make contacts for me. She is a vital link in the network as a result of her eight and a half years of employment as a strip-club waitress. Her feminine and feminist manner in dealing with people in strip clubs, produces effective results in terms of convincing bouncers, bartenders, managers and some dancers to overcome their mistrust and apathy and agree to be interviewed. Her quiet, firm and assertive manner is prominently displayed when occasionally dealing with the sexist behaviour of clients and challenging managerial control. Although most strippers conspire in reproducing the stereotypes of woman as sex object, this waitress does not. She gives substance, as well as style, to the notion of resistance to casting women in traditional gender roles especially in strip clubs.\(^{11}\) Sara is clearly in command in the club, and the other employees are cordial and respectful with her. After "hanging in
there", attempting "to be cool to allow for the checking out process", as Sara advises me, I am able to partake in the rather friendly atmosphere as only an outsider whose credentials have been affirmed by a local might be allowed. I soon discover that the friendliness of the people at the Copa stems in large part from the small-town environment of Hampshire; many of the women and men in the club are connected in some manner and a number have relationships outside the club. When Sara later takes me for another round of introductions to May's Tavern (a rather run-down version of the Copa), she looks at the heavy-set dancer on stage for a while before recognizing her as a woman who attended the same high school. On a number of occasions, she also mentions that some dancers and lesbian patrons of the Copa frequent the women's center (of which she is the director).

9.4. Stripping Away the Body Language of the Smile and the Stare

Desire which contributes pleasure to people's lives is constructed and organized within social practices to regulate behaviour, to restrict access to alternative ways of knowing about the world and to sustain the status quo. Despite the historical and contemporary constraints placed on the body, the struggles over definitions concerned with the production and regulation of desire can serve as a means to resist restriction and appropriation. Some popular cultural theorists suggest that the body is less colonized than the mind, because the latter serves as the location for social control in Western societies. The body as taken up in popular culture has the potential to operate as a focal point to oppose restriction, serve as a contested site against oppressive practices, and function as an agent through which political consciousness can be attained. This "politics of the paradoxical" has important implications for women who are located in unequal relations of power and are to some extent, defined and controlled through the body, and who
struggle to control their lives even while consenting, contesting and refusing to be part of hegemonic practices.

Shaped by a cultural definition of sexuality, many of the customs and norms of stripping prescribe feminine and masculine roles. The mind/body split materially based in the dancer's narrative reproduces the discursive dichotomies as part of cultural ideology which separates men, (associated with male/mind/reason/culture) from women, (identified with female/body/intuition and nature) (Caplan, 1987). Dancers seem to smile more than other people while they work; certainly much more than the patrons who watch them. In fashion magazines, store windows and rock videos, the trend towards a display of sexuality with a hint of kinkiness is quickly picked up and reproduced in normative and transgressional strip clubs. The look of the pout appears to serve the new ideology of sexual assertiveness that is in vogue these days for fashion models and strippers; it is a tough look that is both inviting and combative. The novel, the unique, even if at odds with conventional standards of beauty and socialization may be a way to edge out the competition, corner a niche of the post-capitalist market and advance a dancer's career.

If indeed William Blake is correct and the eyes are the windows of the soul, the many looks of a dancer, ranging from amusement to unresponsiveness, must be examined individually and within a specific context to understand their meaning. Some dancers do not interact with the audience, but choose instead to relate to the music, lip-syncing a song as they dance. One dancer dryly remarked that she thought about her laundry and other household chores as she performed. The pout as a look is most likely to be seen as a woman table dances--particularly if there is little verbal and social interaction between her and the client. Although the look is intended to signal a state of sexual arousal or readiness, i.e., "fuck me", some dancers express the
idea that they can think what they like when they dance, and the look may, therefore be read as a form of sexual mastery, i.e., "fuck you" (directed toward an individual customer or the collective audience). This pouty look is remarkably similar to the looks that have become dominant in pornography, signifying that sex is a serious business. Indeed, the looks of the women of strip (who need no training in assertiveness) can be read as political, as these women attempt to establish financial, sexual and emotional control in strip clubs.

Looking is not a neutral activity; humans do not gaze at all things in the same manner. Men adopt a body language different from women, including the habit of staring--which can be read as a signal of intrigue, dominance or threat in North American culture. Nowhere is staring made more permissible than in the act of watching a woman strip; men come together in strip clubs to engage in this ceremonial ritual of masculinity. Within the laissez-faire club atmosphere, looking is the prerogative of the clients and an integral part of negotiated interactions. Men stare at women, making assessments based on the visual impression; this ability to scrutinize is premised on a segmented labour force and a social structure of power. They look to obtain pleasure, to assess, to initiate, to invite, to pass judgment and to control; women are for the most part the objects of such activities. Since strippers must expose their bodies, their distant gaze may serve as a self-protective device to take the edge off intimacy. Dancers frequently survey the club and watch the reactions of clients, engaging in their own style of inspection and assessment. On a few occasions, I have observed some of the strippers knowingly looking at the men watching them, an act which causes varying reactions in the clients including surprise, delight and embarrassment. Although looking back is taken as a sign of assertiveness and equality it also reinforces gender asymmetry by serving as a "sexual come-on", in what Candy describes as "sex games" within strip club culture.
Through rituals of smiling and staring in routine social interactions within strip clubs, people learn some of the values and attitudes associated with their sexual identity. For the most part, the world of strip reinforces a bastion of male values, an intrinsically masculine way of generating images about women by men -- an extension of "girl watching" that goes on in the streets, on the subway and at the infamous construction site. Strip clubs have a male-oriented social structure which ascribes to men places of higher status and affirms culturally learned masculine values. They are locations which allow men to explore their sexual fantasies, to express exaggerated masculine roles and to affirm their male identity. The demonstration of masculine rituals are played out with the assistance of the stripper who smiles, encourages the expression of masculine attributes and diminishes the possibility of alternative modes of behaviour. Feminine identity in this context is forged around people who serve others as well as in behaviours which contrast with what is perceived as masculine. Within this social space constructed for male comfort, desire and privilege, women (who make few demands which threaten masculinity or compete with men) ensure that traditional masculine and feminine values remain intact.

The pouty look reads much like the lyrics of an old 1940s song "her lips tell me no-no, but there's yes-yes in her eyes". It creates the appearance of a worldly and powerful woman who decides when (and with whom) she wishes to entertain sexual advances, and the look may also operate to provide some degree of protection. While serving as objects of desire, these pretty women, dressed to kill, seem to reincarnate (rather than reject) feminism by flaunting a self-confident, independent manner and defiant ways. A Toronto stripper of the 1960s, Margaret Dragu, remarked about one of these "new wave strippers" that "Roz never smiled. She danced angry. She had a modern, sexual presence that managers and customers could not understand. Everyone kept
telling her to smile. She would tell them to fuck off. She knew she was good and she wasn't about to try to be the pretty-girl-is-just-like-a-melody kind of stripper (Dragu and Harrison, 1988:24)."

Such messages set in the larger context of a strip club are at times fleeting and unsubstantial, where themes of sexual readiness and servitude predominate (under capitalist modes of exchange) that eroticize consumption and sexualize work. What is problematic when we read the mixed messages on the face and body of a stripper is that beyond the convention of gendered behaviours of acceptance and compliance is the look of resistance in the work of stripping. An attempt to impose a single description on stripping practices leads to the false assumption that the participants are experiencing the event in a similar manner. Although both parties agree to participate in certain activities, this in no way guarantees that the event will have the same significance for each individual. Exposure to stripping practices does not confirm that the client will process or accept the messages implied in the presentation. At one level, stripping involves the equation of sex with money and power, allowing clients to buy access to a woman's body. The stripper's power consists of her ability to set the terms of sexual exchanges, requiring payment for her skills and time. Clients (and employers) do not have unlimited command over the strippers. Given that strippers need to understand their clients' desire, clients often view such events as having sexual attention lavished on them. In order to preserve their emotional integrity and a sense of their personal lives, strippers de-eroticize aspects of their work and report that on the whole these experiences are banal. Such tactics of emotional distancing allow the stripper to establish some degree of autonomy within what appears to be a situation of powerless social interaction.
Similar to flight attendants, concessionaires and fast food workers, the stripper is simultaneously a skilled professional and a casualty of commodification that is characteristic of the culture of global late-stage capitalism. Stripping offers both oppressive conditions and emancipatory consequences for women in the business. The restrictions of delivering a more specialized and standardized kind of service at tableside has meant that the table dancer's job has become more contained and controlled in contrast to burlesque dancers of the past. In view of the greater variety and numbers of clients that a table dancer has intimate contact with, her job (within the more restricted boundaries of presentation) has also become more complex and labour intensive than that of the women who preceded her. It is the introduction of the profit motive of table dancing which requires the emotional exchanges from private life to be managed and transformed by the dancer in a commercial setting. In view of the intensification of work to sexually service a number of strangers in a public venue, the dancer must skillfully assist the client to relax and engage in the performance. Using physical and emotional labour, she transforms impersonal economic associations into personal relations that do not have the appearance of being financially based.

Observing if a client is appreciative of a specific dancer or if he responds to a distinctive image constructed through costume, mannerisms or movements (by way of scrutinizing aspects of his behaviour such as the establishment of eye contact, vigorous clapping and noting the specific style of table dances he requests), the stripper engages in a complicated series of judgment calls. If she is eager to table dance for a particular client she will "hustle" him, and make a number of alterations in her approach, dance techniques and costumes to "bring the
exchange home", as Candy whimsically labels table dancing initiations. The dancer may employ gimmicks such as Annie's "tit twirling" or the Divine Miss D's penchant to sway her hips in a solo dance while nursing a drink at the bar. The goal of the dancer is to "test the waters" and to garner attention; if she is unsuccessful "in making a connection" an experienced dancer will make accommodations in her approach (usually as few as necessary) "to beat out the competition", for a portion of the patron's time and money.

Some customers are cruder and ruder than strippers", T noted. They eat and belch in the audience, some talk and joke so loudly, guys read the paper when you're dancing and trying to put on a show, some get drunk and noisy or fall asleep. Some men are weird, they rattle bags, call out and whistle in the wrong place, talk crazy about their girlfriends, get up and move around a lot and they don't clap in appreciation. They show off in a macho style and jerk off, and some girls take it as a compliment that they are doing their job well. Some men will yawn, act bored, say they have seen better, but they want to see as much as possible. The best audiences are older men who clap. They are gentlemen, polite well-dressed and they like to see a good show. It's the guys that just come to see pure sex, and especially the young guys that are a problem.

In her many years of stripping, T has heard it all, including rude remarks like "put your clothes back on, you look better that way", and "I wouldn't fuck you for free". She avoids table dancing for groups, explaining that "guys in groups are the worst for trouble".

There are many skills which are culled for table dancing (beyond stage stripping), including the ability to act politely and put on a show without effort or conveying real feelings. An integral part of the work of table dancing is to appear friendly and receptive in conversation and to respond to the sexual fantasies of the client. As a professional in possession of a body of knowledge, the stripper provides a rather standardized service for the client which must appear to be both individual
Despite the speed-up involved in servicing many more clients within a short period of time, a genuine and sincere manner is a necessary part of the performance. Table dancers must possess "people skills" and display an interest in and a sensitivity to the clients, and they must demonstrate both physical and emotional stamina to interact with clients continuously throughout their shift. The table dancer is also required to exhibit enjoyment, to flirt with the customer in a manner which suggests that she is responding to his sexual attractiveness, and to do so in a way which conveys that such behaviour is not demeaning to either of them.

Sitting at stage front may mean that the customer is only interested in observing stage performances. Unless a dancer catches a patron's eye by playing rather exclusively to him, he may leave without taking a table dance. Clients vary enormously in their expectations involving intimacy; some engage in the encounter for sex and companionship which on occasion is sustained in relationships both in and outside of the club. Others make it a strict rule not to fraternize with the dancers. While on the Hampshire circuit with Sara, she offered to introduce me to some of the "regulars" of the club. She approached two men nursing their beers while seated at the back of the club. They reluctantly agreed to speak with me. One of the men, who identified himself as French-Canadian, was the more animated and verbal of the two, but remained ill-at-ease throughout the interview. The other, a stoic man with a heavy Eastern European accent (whom I guessed to be Romanian but was informed later that he was Bulgarian) said little, participated minimally in the discussion and appeared to be at a loss in expressing his views about dancers, why he attends strip clubs regularly and what he enjoys about the experience. Both men, in their 50s, were reticent to speak and indeed refused to continue when the subject of a signed consent was raised, questioning the need for such a document when they had previously agreed to be
When Sara reappeared at tableside with their standard order of two Carling O'Keefe beers inquiring how things were going, she was not surprised when I described the difficulty I was having in obtaining a signed consent. Patiently, she sat down to explain that the consent forms were in part, designed to safeguard the rights of persons being interviewed. After ten minutes, one man signed with an "X"; the other with what appeared to be a false signature. Following the interview, I ranted to Sara about the methodological albatross which hung around my academic neck in attempting to do the kind of work I was engaged in, voicing my conviction that it put people on guard, was out of character in strip clubs and lost for me a few potential subjects who would not sign such forms. I was convinced that without Sara's skillful intervention, together with the trust she had built up in the environment of the Copa, I would not have been able to interview Jean and Stephen.

Jean, a pleasant and well-dressed man, mentioned that he had once worked in the Hampshire mines but was currently making a living as a salesman. He tried to sell me life insurance, which I politely declined without having the heart to explain that I did not believe in the concept. Twice-married, Jean proudly spoke about his son (of approximately the same age as many of the young women in the club) who was a grade six school teacher in Timmins. Together with his friend Stephen, the two men have been frequenting strip clubs in Hampshire for ten years. They have developed a Saturday afternoon ritual ("like Mass") informing their wives that they are going downtown for a "little promenade". They stroll to the Copa, stopping for two beers while checking out the roster of new dancers that week, and then proceed to May's Tavern or the Lido for two more beers of the same brand.
Jean likes the strippers to dance fast and that is why he prefers "the French girls, who really give you your money's worth". He is aware of the hostility that exists between the French and English dancers, but he believes that "some of the girls are jealous of the good show that the French girls put on". He indicates that "there is not so much drugs for the girls now". Stephen concurs, adding that six months ago "many girls on stage were zonked out and now only a few are that way". Jean is cognizant of the fact that a number of dancers come from homes where they were abused. When asked if he was aware of women in the club who are mistreated, he replies that he had never thought about it and "wouldn't know anyway" because he and Stephen "only watch the dancers." He does indicate that he knew of a dancer last spring who had a black eye and bruises on her body. The story circulating in the club was that "she was beaten up and ran away from home. Nowadays, kids don't join the circus, they go to a strip club." Just as easily and sincerely as Jean took up this empathic position regarding the dancer; however, his compassionate attitude seemed to vanish when the next dancer appeared on stage and he reverted back to being another patron at the Copa.

"Thursday night is the college kids' night; the end of the month, the welfare types come in and the business men like to come at lunch time." Jean thinks that the majority of men are single. Some he ventures, are married with families like himself and Stephen. Most men spend "ten to fifteen bucks"; a few will spend "a hundred or so on average once or twice a week". Considering that there was no table dancing and only a minimum cover charge at the clubs in Hampshire at that time, I naively ask if one could consume that amount of beer. "Of course, and plenty more besides. Men buy drinks and give tips to the girls when they come to watch. You can buy anything you want if you have the money. Last year, there was guy selling American passports and guns; last week, another guy was selling watches
and jewellery that was hot." Generally this duo does not engage
the dancers or buy them drinks, contending that "it's a losing
proposition money wise. The girl will stay and chat you up and
when your money is gone so is she".

Strippers do not initiate conversations with Jean or Stephen
and they, in turn, do not speak with the women. They consider the
dancers who are less than half their age to be sophisticated and
"quick-tongued", and Jean and Stephen prefer to keep to
themselves avoiding conversations which could "embarrass" them.
Jean acknowledged that the dancers often talk to customers in
"pervert row", the semi-circular set of seats which surrounds the
stage; "that's where the weirdos and the funny guys sit". He
points out "a retarded guy that all the girls like. They all stop
to pay attention to him and to kiss his bald head. The girls are
also kind to the midget playing pool and the lawyer near the bar
because he has a lot of money to spend." The attorney, the most
prominent in his profession in Hampshire, "comes in like many
guys, two or three times a week". It was reported that the
solicitor paid two hundred dollars last year for membership in a
private club upstairs, but when involved in an altercation with
the bouncer (who threatened to call his wife), he backed down and
has not returned to the club. Jean and Stephen chuckled that in
the face of such a threat he was suddenly quiet. They are aware
that other men, such as the owner and the manager, are involved
with some of the dancers at the Copa. Described as "a nice guy
who had a middlelife crisis, the owner fell in love and started
to follow a dancer out of town. He even flew to New York and out
West. When his wife found out, he was living out of a suitcase at
a friend's place, but he didn't care; he was in love." Stephen
speculated that "the affair must be over by now because you don't
hear much about it at the Copa". After approximately an hour, the
men excuse themselves because their time at the club has expired
and they anticipate moving on to the next club.
Candy pays considerable attention to the customers who enter the clubs in which she works, observing an individual man's appearance and apparent socio-economic status, noting if he comes in alone or in a group, where he sits, his interest in types of dancers and his eagerness to strike up liaisons. She describes herself as "part entertainer, sex kitten, saleswoman, mother, social worker, girlfriend and psychiatrist--whatever the client needs" to make herself appealing in selling a table dance. The work of "sizing up" the client prior to table dancing is essential to anticipate his desires and choose an approach which will make him receptive to engaging in an encounter of the kind and for the duration that the stripper contemplates. Against an ideal standard, each client is assessed and silently ranked--as Candy indicates--"on a scale of one to ten", depending on whether they are an "easy dance of ten" possessing all of the desired traits, or lacking most or all of these qualities and scoring much lower as a "hard dance". The characteristics which constitutes Candy's ideal customer are listed below:

- alone
- polite and well-mannered
- good looking and well-dressed
- middle age to young
- pays promptly, adding a generous tip
- sits in the corner of the club
- takes an extended table dancing session
- drinks very little, buys the dancer a drink
- adds a few pleasantries to the conversation
- compliments the dancer
- never transgresses the boundaries with lewd comments and "touchy-grabby" behaviour
- makes no demands of an emotional nature of the dancer
- promises to return in the future

While observing table dancing at Studio 69, I noticed a young woman (perhaps eighteen or nineteen years of age) who was thin, flat-chested and with pubescent hips. Brandy chatted with two customers, apparently rebuffed before striking a deal with a young man seated alone in the corner. The self-confident dancer
left, promptly returning with her table dancing box and she immediately began to dance. She continued her performance for twenty minutes. Upon completion of her act, Brandy joined other dancers sitting around the bar talking as any of the patrons might, seemingly uninterested in her work and unaffected by the needs of the customers. This precocious and very attractive woman sipped a drink, left to get a cigarette and quickly returned to the strippers' enclave—a space which is generally viewed as off limits to the clients. Although at times in deep conversation with another woman, it was apparent from her provocative manner and her garb (consisting of a black leather outfit with pants, bra, a heavily studded jacket, collar, belt and boots, complete with wild-spiked, orange-coloured hair in a postmodernist punk motif) that Brandy was on the job. When she strolled through the club to solicit a table dance and was unsuccessful, she exited to the change room. Re-emerging wearing a lingerie ensemble (that a bride might don on a honeymoon night and sporting a blonde wig in the style of Marilyn Monroe), she anticipated the needs of an older man she had singled out, who picked up on her overtures to dance for him. Even while on break, strippers dress, posture, visually peruse the club and walk back and forth "checking out" potential enthusiasts, attempting to entice them to take a table dance. Virtually all women of strip wear stiletto heels which click into action if they are approached or see an opportunity to sell a table dance.

At times, more effort is required of the dancer to "seal a deal" as Candy quaintly stated. In Major Mystic's one quiet afternoon, I observe a dancer changing costumes three times, walking back and forth in front of a customer's table and using a number of other techniques before she was eventually able "to score" a table dance. As part of her introduction, she stopped to ask the customer to light her cigarette and paused to chat for a few minutes before she is finally successful in getting herself invited to sit at the table. In a "walk by", the more experienced
and confident dancer will brush her arm against the client, whisper something in his ear and leave or attempt to dance for another man (at a nearby table), allowing the client to anticipate the kind of service he will receive when she dances exclusively for him. The latter method might not be selected from the dancer's grab bag of techniques, if she perceives it could be problematic when dealing with a client who appears to be jealous or "emotionally connected" to her. Dancers are also concerned about the possibility of losing control of the table dance if the client harasses her and therefore, seek to initiate and take control to set the tone of the encounter. These and a number of other rehearsed and spontaneous techniques (some of which are "made up on the spot") are referred to by Candy as "attention grabbers to get the ball rolling". Candy reasons that an enjoyable table dancing experience from the client's perspective is most likely to net her the largest tip, accompanied by praise, and will be the most pleasant encounter with the least amount of work and hassle. Operating on the basis of this efficiency model, this experienced stripper approaches table dancing from the point of view of maximizing her returns on an investment of her time and energy while minimizing hassles and her unrewarded efforts.

In table dancing sessions, men converse freely, signalling their approval in body language arousal with a classical open-legged posture in a seated position. Many patrons in normative clubs present a cooled-out, detached demeanour designed to give the appearance of being in control. I have observed clients touching dancers in transgressional clubs, sometimes without permission although often after the dancer has indicated that she is transacting business and will entertain the patron's interests. During these negotiations, table dancing in its various forms is being bargained, as well as lap dancing liaisons within the club and meetings at other locations for the purpose of having sex. Although men cheer, cat call, whistle, clap and, at times, initiate conversation and request table and lap dances,
for the most part they wait to be approached. In the complex course of negotiations, if a client is perceived through a laid-back demeanour not to be too eager to engage the dancer's services, he may gain the upper hand in bargaining price or specific acts. Such actions will encourage the dancer at times to show more of her assets or compromise on the amount of time she will spend in the negotiating phase.

In what Goffman (1974) refers to as "control frames", gender role reversal is one aspect of male-female interactions is symbolically explored in regulated risk-taking encounters of strip performances. The stripper is often seen to take the initiative in interactions, at times assertively walking up to a customer to begin a conversation as the prelude to a table dance. In what could be described as experimenting with a passive role sometimes associated with the feminine, many men sit patiently waiting to be approached by a dancer. During table dancing and by comment and gestures, the dancer will direct the client to observe various parts of the her body. There is nothing "abnormal" in strip about a client, through verbal coaching, tucking a bill in the dancer's G-string when he is invited to do so. In the verbal and visual representation of fantasy and desire, the stripper directs the control frame through her use of costumes, conversation and the exchange of money, thus sparing the client some aspects of decision making in what otherwise might appear to be an ambiguous or prohibited situation. While many strip practices demonstrate an allegiance to conventional gender relations (which solidify power by requiring one gender to acquiesce), the theatrics of strip are also organized around customs which are socially unconventional and will entertain gender paradoxes such as a woman approaching a man for a sexual encounter. A man willing to acquiesce to the social-sexual initiatives of a stripper disavows the idea of a fixed binary identity of male mastery and female passivity. The manipulation and alteration of signs of power in a visible staging of
hierarchy and difference, demonstrate that such conventions are socially produced and accessible to historical change. Such customs call into question the naturalness of male aggression and female passivity in conventional patriarchal and heterosexual relations by contradicting an explanation of social power based on nature.

In Freudian psychoanalysis (premised as it is on child-rearing activities which are predominantly undertaken by women), primary identification of both males and females is with the mother. Identity is forged initially through a culture of femininity. The male's identification with his mother beyond the first few years of life is viewed as pathological, the source of arrested growth and development, and the origin of a perverse fixation which may give rise to homosexuality. A boy is encouraged to shift his identification away from the mother (disavowing the feminine principle in himself and in women in general) to vigorously take on an abstract and obscure identification with men. Rather than being viewed as an adult role model to emulate, the mother is an object which a male must attempt to possess and control. Male identity is forged through a number of masculine rites of negation of the feminine rather than an avowal of the masculine. It is based on discrete gender divisions and leaves unresolved the separation of women into distinct categories as people whom it is desirable to identify with as role models (Freud, 1938:569).

For a male, open identification with the culture of the feminine is subject to social sanctions. Based upon childhood images of female power, experimenting with the feminine aspects of a man's identity carries (in Western culture) a social stigma and guilt. Exploration of gender roles in the safety of strip clubs affords a man the opportunity to examine often without resolution, fantasies concerning the forbidden knowledge and power of women. In this setting, the responsibility for
initiating, taking control of and defining limits can be temporarily relinquished by the client for short periods without dire consequences. Such rituals affirm the value of women's work undertaken in the private domain which centers on leisure, consumption and emotional/physical nurturance, casting doubt on a natural division or segmentation of labour and the boundaries maintained between public/private spheres. The investigation of permeable boundaries in the domain of social/emotional/sexual behaviour validates the significance of the work of women, distinct from the worth of men's work in the marketplace. Despite the overvaluation of commercial transactions and the undervaluation of social/emotional labour to create social wealth in Western culture, it is clear that male customers of strip will transgress social boundaries and pay significantly for a most precious commodity, woman's carnal knowledge.¹⁸

9.6. The Gendered Strategies of Social-Emotional Work Employed in Table Dancing Interactions

Rather than viewing table dancing as constituting "deviant" interactions as earlier work on stripping suggested, the strategies employed by dancers are better seen as a rich sociological study in the social-emotional work of gendered exchange relations.¹⁹ Gender-differentiated work, together with the ways in which gender identity is maintained and altered, can be observed in table-dancing encounters. These practices verify, for the most part, a division of unequal labour in the interactive work of strip. It is apparent that the labour involved in establishing and maintaining table dancing interactions is preponderantly women's work. Through the dancer's efforts (which are largely unnoticed), the interaction is sustained as she responds to the needs of the client. In contrast to the exclusive stage dancing of burlesque (with limited client interaction), table dancing structures dancer-client interactions of a more complex nature in which dialogue augments pleasure.
Symbols take on new and varied meanings, and behavioural cues provide ongoing interpretation and feedback to allow for changes in interpersonal strategies. To be successful in these negotiating processes, the dancer must possess social knowledge and skills, and she must demonstrate resourcefulness in catering to individual client needs. Similar to exchange transactions in other areas of service industry work and gender negotiations in society at large, the presentation of self and the ability to respond to a number of complicated social signs become determining factors in the dancer's artful negotiations of table dancing.

The efficient and successful engagement of table dancing is premised on the interactive work of initiating, sustaining and eventually ending an encounter. To achieve the end goal of minimizing her physical and emotional efforts while maximizing her economic gains, the dancer coordinates her strategies of emotional work with the interests and behaviour of the client. Although the dancer may take the lead, such interactions require that both parties pay attention and respond to each other in a successful encounter and, at times, take turns to keep the conversation going and negotiate the social-sexual and economic parameters of the encounter. Despite having a similar goal to initiate private dancing, the client's interests may not be consistently aligned with that of the dancer if he wishes her to be a companion, obtain a dance free of charge, meet later for a sexual liaison or perform in a way in which she is not comfortable. The stage is, therefore, set for bargaining and negotiating. Table dancing negotiations take on many of the forms of social interaction in general, including cooperation, obligation, companionship and resistance. In the dynamics of buying and selling table dancing, the dancer's goal is to persuade the client that he is "turned on" by her, or that she desires him in order that she might move the encounter along efficiently. To continue the interaction, interlocutors respond
to overtures, elicit responses or introduce new information into the conversation; in short, they perform interactional work.

The majority of table-dancing experiences require the dancer to do most of the physical and social-emotional work—many strippers prefer this arrangement because they can better control the encounter. To be certain that the patron sees what the stripper perceives that he wants to view, she will direct his attention (both verbally and with her movements) to specific body parts, often cupping her breasts, or wetting her finger and touching her nipples or vulva. These gestures are repeated continuously in a well-rehearsed sequence in the table dance. According to Nicole, table dancing has a routine unlike stage dancing; "it is not drawn out, you just go at it. If you strip and dance close to the guy, so he can get a good look and you talk to him nicely, you can usually get a good tip. Most guys in the clubs are not cheap, except those in groups. A lot of guys haven't seen a muff right up close; of course you try not to fart in their face—that won't get you a tip."

As part of the socially-structured power relations between males and females, it is essential for the stripper to provide the appearance of being feminine, and to use her gender in an unproblematic manner in stripping interactions. Often, the conversational work of stripping is disproportionate as the dancer undertakes most of the interactional labour to provide pleasant and stimulating talk for the client. Dancers are actively engaged in establishing interaction and will often choose the topic of conversation in an attempt to sustain the relationship. It is the dancer who works harder than the client, asking questions, doing supportive work and generally engaging in activities to maintain the relationship. Such segmentation of labour is premised on the notion that the routine maintenance work of providing a service falls to the dancer for the benefit of the patron. In the detailed activities of everyday
interactions in strip clubs, other dimensions of work and power come to light. Women's availability (necessary for the interactional work of stripping) maintains conventional gender relations. The classic role of being a good listener, filling in the gaps and silences in conversations, providing the social glue to keep a conversation going and developing topics, falls to women in society. The fact that conversational skills are part of an occupational definition of contemporary stripping and inextricably intertwined with the definition of the feminine has led to the erroneous assumption that such behaviour on the part of women, is "natural". Far from being inborn, the social skills which women evidence in such interactions are a crucial and a learned part of her identity as female (and are also a taken-for-grant requirement of many jobs which females perform).

The old adage concerning initial impressions counting is taken to heart by Amber, as she puts her "best foot forward" in drawing a customer in for a table dance. She is aware of the need to be polite, smile, establish eye contact and listen carefully, indulging and humouring the customer when he speaks. She will augment her splendid tableside manner with specific nonverbal techniques which every stripper uses to signal enticement such as playing with her hair, wetting her lips or calling attention to her figure by adjusting her costume as she chats. By her own appraisal, she is a good conversationalist who specializes in "mental games". She is aware that "good stripping is like sex, it takes time and needs foreplay", and it must incorporate the proper balance of flirtation, sexual entendre and "dirty talk". She openly communicates this view to the client by stating that she would like to spend time getting to know him on a more personal level. Asking the client about himself, his name, what he does for a living and inquiring about what excites him, draws him into the encounter and allows him to demonstrate his expertise. "Teasing out" the client's interests in this manner also provides an indication of the kind of personalized service
he will receive if he understands the implicit arrangement that such service, requiring time, must be paid for by the individual. Throughout the course of the conversation, Amber will often repeat the customer's first name, (having read in a popular woman's magazine about the use of this technique), to assist him in relaxing and feeling unique. She will also pay him compliments with respect to aspects of his appearance, personality traits or worldly success, taking care to point out how he is distinct from the other customers in the club and how appealing he is to her.

Aware that such lines are interpreted as a "standard come on" by clients (who, at times, are defensive about being "conned" while "wanting to hear bullshit"), Amber resourcefully attempts to charm the client and to personalize the service in a manner which is scripted to appear sincere. Rather than concentrating initially on discussing the cost of her time or asking the client for anything, she relates what she thinks the customer might want to hear about her feelings, her body and her dancing. Or she may ask the client to describe aspects of a thrilling sexual encounter he has had or would like to experience. Amber is aware that "good conversation", social skills and individual attentiveness are part of the effort involved in setting the tone for a successful table-dancing encounter. Any interest or preference on the client's part is used as part of the thread to weave the illusional web of individuality and intimacy. In an attempt to create the impression that the encounter is authentic and spontaneous, Amber will share what the client believes is private information, particularly about her sex life. Later, she will encourage the client to do the same, sometimes implying that the couple might carry on after business hours. Rarely is this information accurate on Amber's part, but it is essential that the client feel that he has been able to learn more about her personal life. If he is unwilling to reciprocate Amber will do most of the talking; if a client wants to talk more than watch her dance, her strategies are adjusted to concentrate upon
With promises of money for service, generous tips and lucrative future encounters, a customer will sometimes attempt to keep a dancer at his table, socializing and dancing both prior to the beginning of the table dance and following the performance. Most often, customers are interested in impersonal sexual encounters; they want to feel special and have "a good time", according to Amber. Sometimes the client does not have much money; other times he may be reluctant to part with as much or as quickly as pleases the dancer. Table dancing negotiations are ongoing with each party checking out at various junctures what the other is prepared to give and take in the interaction. Throughout such an encounter, Amber will take stock of the time, money and effort involved for herself and the client. If the encounter is not going the way she anticipates, requiring her to spend more time than she feels she should, or if she surmises that she will not net enough money for her effort, she will cut her losses and move on to the next client. Awareness of the pace, the service and the amount of money spent by the client is part of her assessment; a satisfied customer will spend more money, a disgruntled patron might turn hostile, refuse to pay or complain to the management about Amber's services. Unlike Candy's list of characteristics of the ideal client (which include attributes of a pleasant and youthful appearance), a number of Amber's regular customers are middle-aged or elderly men, often portly and many of them bald, chosen because they are willing to pay generously for the time she spends with them. She explains that "there are no free lunches" in stripping. Her "time is money", requiring that she perform an ongoing cost-benefit analysis.

Sara introduced me to Gary, one of several patrons in the club on an afternoon of observation. A good-looking, burly, White man in his mid-thirties, he has attended strip clubs "all over Ontario, Florida and Texas with my brother and uncle since I was
nineteen". Gary inquired if I "could ever dance like that" and I replied that "I have learned in life never to say that things are impossible, but it is very doubtful that I would strip". When asked if he would ever consider stripping for a living, he replied "hell, no, only gay guys do that". As we spoke, this affable man who was visibly sweating, reached into his pocket for a kleenex acknowledging that "you make me nervous". He volunteered that prior to this interview he had not thought about why he frequents strip clubs or what he hopes to get out of the experience. I remarked that I clearly was not conducting the interview in the best manner, since I was supposed to help him relax, not sweat; he laughed at that moment and seemed more at ease.

In view of the fact that Gary is a "union man", the conversation turned to his work, unions and the economy of Hampshire and Northern Ontario. This man has had "four different starts in construction jobs, making good money and benefits", but he was laid off each time the economy took a downturn. His previous job at Stelco lasted eighteen months; his current job entails building houses in a small town thirty miles outside of Hampshire. He joined the union on his first job just out of grade twelve, in contrast to his brother "who went to McMaster University and now teaches engineering there". Gary surmised that if he had gone to college he would have had a more successful career. He also confided that he "has been through one marriage and left my wife when a private detective I hired caught her cheating on me". He subsequently obtained custody of his son when he alleged that his wife "was caught leaving him alone".

Gary explained that he prefers to look at live "girls" rather than women in videos, although on occasion he indulges in the latter activity. He considers sex to be natural and does not think that it is degrading for a woman to take off her clothes. "Strip clubs are places where women don't have to pretend they
don't get aroused or like sex." He described a number of dancers as "airheads" and "run-away girls, but occasionally you meet a nice one". He comes to the clubs to look at women's bodies, usually gets excited "but not out of hand", he volunteered. In his opinion, dancers generally like their work; "if they don't or get burned out they should leave the business". He declared that stripping and his attendance at clubs is not "sexist"; he does not "beat up or yell at dancers"; in fact he suggested that he is polite and for the most part, "just watching" when he attends clubs. On occasion, he has heard other men shouting insults such as "slut" and he can understand "where it would make the girls mad and why they give it right back". Gary is comfortable in strip clubs, "just like in my home". He claims at times to be bored, commenting that "if you've seen one dancer's act, you have just about seen them all; the acts, the costumes, the bodies, the dancer's lines are all a slight variation of the same theme that I have heard hundreds of times. There is one exception and her name is Shannon."

According to Gary, occasionally a client and a dancer "hit it off" as conveyed by both parties becoming actively involved, contributing ideas by way of conversation and more equitably sharing some of the social-emotional work of the rendezvous. 21 He confirmed that he had seen Shannon dancing several months previously and had come specifically on that day to view her performance. Without hesitation he suggested that she held a "mesmerizing" sensual attraction for him, with her "girl-next-door" pristine Caucasian features, including porcelain-white skin and delicate facial features. Her short gamine hairdo perfectly accentuated a slim body in her decidedly covered-up, modest, black velvet halter top and peddle-pusher pants with the most exquisite tailoring so as to give the haute couture runways in Paris a run for their money. Gary admitted that he attended the club with the express purpose of asking Shannon to dance for him, and he indicated that he would be pleased if he could persuade
her to meet him later for drinks and return to his hotel room for a sexual tryst. "She oozes class" he exclaimed after positioning himself near the steps of the stage, first in line for a table dance. My subsequent move within earshot to the adjoining table went largely unnoticed by Gary and Shannon.

Gary was an active participant in the encounter from the moment Shannon approached him to dance privately at table side. His relaxed, confident and charming ways of smiling, chatting, leaning over to whisper in her ear (as if only the two of them were present in a more intimate interlude) were intently observed by the young dancer. Although attempting to match Shannon's "very cool" and polished mannerisms, he consciously seemed to be signalling his own brand of sophistication and masculinity through the use of a number of postures and gestures (such as perching his right leg on the knee of his other leg at a ninety degree angle) as he sat with his arm casually draped around the chair to his immediate right. The exposure of his well-maintained cowboy boots under his tight-fitting jeans prompted a compliment from Shannon. This led Gary to tell her an interesting story of how he acquired the boots when he was at a rodeo in Texas. Reciprocating, she related an amusing story of how she had almost become a blonde instead of brunette that day by way of a near catastrophe at the hairdressing salon. From the outset, Gary contributed to the discussion of how the table dance ought to proceed, giving Shannon wide latitude to perform in whatever manner she pleased, often commenting about her beauty, her style of dancing and her body in complimentary terms. Deciding to listen to what she had to say seemed to be a superb strategy, serving his purpose of getting to know the dancer. For her part, Shannon was later to suggest that she had a lot of positive feelings about this man stating that "Gary is the greatest guy".

The rapport between the two was quite strong, according to Shannon, who indicated that they "clicked with each other",
shared information and discovered that they had a lot in common concerning lifestyle issues. Synchrony between the two was particularly apparent watching them converse. When one of them started a topic of conversation, the other would join in. Each would add input or elaborate, as if each speaker were incorporating some of the words and ideas of the other. Most striking about this interaction (later described by Shannon as "the easiest hundred dollars in a long time") was the evenness of taking turns in the conversational exchange. Shannon's description of the events suggested that when she would start a sentence, Gary had a shared understanding of what she was relating, such that on a few occasions he completed her thoughts. They spoke about a love of horses, ranching, warm weather, vacations, sexual interests and Shannon's friend who was ill, in that order. Gary employed the old technique so appealing to women; he was described as "really listening" when Shannon spoke as evidenced by his picking up on what she said, asking relevant questions and being supportive when he indicated that he wanted to hear more about her friend who was sick. The prototypical teacher, he did not interrupt when Shannon spoke and offered support and advice for resolving the dilemma concerning her friend who had been hospitalized. Since Gary was particularly knowledgable about horses, he offered to take Shannon trail riding on her day off, an invitation which pleased the talented dancer who had been sailing, motorcycle riding and skydiving but never indulged in her confessed passion, horseback riding.

Gary continued to encourage Shannon to table dance and at times to sit and sip a drink. Shannon increased her eye contact, frequency of smiling, flirtatious mannerisms and close proximity of her dancing (by leaning into him and nodding when he spoke) exclusively focusing on this affable client. It appeared to be Gary's intention to help Shannon to relax so that she did not feel she had to rush through her dance. She, in turn, had a high regard for this client and was eager for his approval by her own
admission. At the end of a seventy-five minute table dance, the duo had made plans to meet the following week to go riding. Toward the end of the encounter he broached the topic of Shannon spending the night in his hotel room for additional financial remuneration of approximately two hundred dollars. While Shannon was not shocked, she declined, but gave the invitation "serious thought", hoping the two might "get to know each other better" the next time they met. Trying to "hide the disappointment" he felt lest Shannon should think that he was "only interested in sex", Gary accepted her decision. He declared that his sexual fantasy of her loomed large, and he had not given up hope that when they meet again Shannon might be encouraged to become erotically involved with him.

Having come to a shared understanding of what the encounter was about, Shannon and Gary each used the voice of the other to negotiate topics and other parameters of their interactions. Even within the complexity of their relationship, Gary's gestures of recognition of Shannon as an autonomous human being with dignity and rights suggested the basis of a relationship that was both professionally and personally appealing to Shannon. The evolution from just another table dancing encounter to the development of a friendship/romance encounter was premised on the ability of both parties to demonstrate empathy, to exhibit genuine fascination in the company of the other, to display solidarity in listening across life experiences, and at times in thinking and speaking in a single voice. Although Gary had intended to convince Shannon to engage in a sexual encounter, when she indicated that she needed more time to get to know him, he encouraged Shannon to construct the table dance in a manner which suited her. He graciously allowed her to set the sexual/social agenda for the couple. Far from being the oppressor, Gary, through conversation and gestures worked with Shannon in an emancipatory way to put aside any privilege he may have had, resulting from gender and class variables within the
An asymmetry of power and the methods by which relations of gender, sexuality and power are initiated and sustained can also be observed through an examination of everyday interactions in table dancing. In these instances, attention is focused on how an unevenness operates in the daily activities of stripping, and how power generally influences client-dancer interactions. Classical sociological theory conceptualizes power as the ability of an individual member or a group to impose their will upon others by forcing individuals to act in accordance with the wishes of more powerful participants (Weber, 1971:152). In what appears to be routine and inconsequential interactions, participants produce their relationship to one another and sustain the reality of the social world. Power and hierarchial relations are not abstract forces operating on people but arise at a microanalytical level from human activities in everyday life. Although relations of power between men and women reflect social and historical forces organized by activities in the home and the marketplace gender, power relations also organize individual interactional activities such as table dancing encounters. With the exception of coercive behaviour by individual patrons (most likely to be encountered by dancers during lap dancing and in aggressive acts encountered in clubs which legitimate violence), power is rarely seen in the form of overt control, imposition and abuse in table dancing. It is more common to view competing and conflicting definitions of power premised on gender, socioeconomic status and factors of race utilized in the social construction of reality.

Power works through practices and methods of relationships rather than operating solely in a unidimensional and oppressive
manner. In stripping, the body is used as both an object of power and as a means to resist power. It is imperative to view how desire is socially constructed within this subculture in order to observe how desire is fettered by the constraints of capital, patriarchy and racist structures. Desire is not an amorphous entity arising from a biological base which wells up in individuals; rather, it is socially constructed and lived out in specific cultural and historical forms related to ways in which society organizes human passion, labour and power. The social/emotional/sexual work of stripping is both complex and contradictory. There are moments of interest and excitement, structures of oppression and points of resistance—all coalescing at any given moment within the strip club site. Emotions are then the product of socialization that can be created, performed, commodified and interchanged.

As I enter Club XXX in downtown Hamilton, I immediately spot Candy sitting at the bar. Before I can signal my presence to her, she heads for a dark corner at the back of the club where a lone customer is sitting. After a brief exchange with the man, Candy begins to table dance. The patron rarely utters a word or interacts in any way; indeed he appears uninterested, barely watching Candy as she dances. I conclude that this must be the height of blase or a new kind of "head game", as Candy labels such interactions. Every now and then she bends down to whisper something in the man's ear, but he continues in his non-committal manner to look around the club and sip his beer. The client speaks only once in the encounter, and Candy turns her back to him remaining in that position while vigorously dancing. After nearly forty minutes, the table dance comes to an abrupt end; Candy dresses and heads back to the bar from where she spots me and moves towards my table.

She informed me that this encounter was "hard work" requiring her to "do all the talking to try to figure out what
the client wanted. Her attempts to engage him in small talk, to compliment his choice of wardrobe and to make suggestions concerning positions he might want to see were unsuccessful, she volunteered. Although she gently chided the customer toward the end of their encounter "to lighten up", her complaints about this client were for my ears only. Despite several suggestions proposed by Candy, the customer's persistently uncommunicative approach caused her to conclude that he was "bored with the whole thing", motivating her to apologize because he did not appear to enjoy himself. She was later to remark that the customer "didn't get the best of me" (meaning that she deliberately held back in showing the full range of her charms and talents in view of the customer's unappreciative attitude). The table dance did result in a longer session than most, but it was not very satisfactory and did not net her much money for her effort. The interaction within the table-dancing encounter encouraged the separation of mind and body for both Candy and the client in a style dictated by the feminine and masculine roles set out in the culture.

It is Candy who actively engaged in the interaction and performed most of the support work of producing the social/emotional aspects of this encounter. Candy was "nice" to the client and employed seduction to manoeuvre the situation, leading the client to believe that they had the same general interest and to cultivate a social relationship based on candour and trust. In the division of labour which materialized, Candy undertook the social-emotional work of attempting to find out what the client wanted, and the labour of keeping the conversation flowing. By employing a variety of strategies, she initiated the overture to begin the session and she performed the maintenance work of continuing to relate to the customer by being a good listener, filling in the silences and carrying on the conversation for the his benefit. As a woman and a service industry worker, she attempted to achieve harmony and to establish herself as an agent who spoke, rather than as an
In an effort to make the body work of table dancing easier and more profitable for herself, Candy strived to observe the client and engage him through social conversation. Although many of her spirited attempts to draw the patron in were met with discouragement when the client held back becoming involved, she persevered in a manner which is culturally determined by gender without verbal objection. As an interactional pattern emerged, Candy seemed to try harder "to get something going", even though the client exercised his power by refusing to participate. She utilized a pragmatic politic by employing "niceness", deference, tact and status enhancement to bond with the client in order to bargain for wages and the best working conditions possible. Only towards the end of the encounter did she signal that the relationship was not going well by suggesting that the customer relax. When this did not happen she made a decision to pull back in her social-emotional work, and the table dance shortly came to an end. Although she evidenced gender-specific patterns of behaviour by cooperating and adapting to the needs of the client, she did not accommodate passively, nor did she give permanent consent to subordination; indeed she withdrew both emotionally and physically from the encounter when it suited her.

The client employed a unilateral strategy of interaction by refusing to speak and to engage with Candy, attempting to give an order to be complied with and generally doing what he wanted. He was apparently willing to converse, but only on the basis of his terms. When he took control for a single moment and spoke, Candy was expected to be a good listener, to attend to what he said and to respond by changing her dance style to suit the patron's needs. Control in this context was not established from the point of view of who initiated conversation and who spoke the most in the interaction, but was better characterized by the individual who was able to control the situation based on establishing who
would speak, on what basis and whether there would be conversation at all. Control also refers to the way in which the client defined the eroticism of the strip and Candy's display of sexuality. In view of the material differences in this relationship, the client assumed he would make the decisions and the dancer, for the most part, would accept his view of the world concerning the appropriate way in which these people should conduct themselves. Precisely because Candy was both a service worker engaged in stripping and a woman with less authority and fewer resources to alter the parameters of the encounter, the client treated her as a person with lower status. The client anticipated that she would use sexuality and not aggression as a characteristically female form of power in the bargaining, manipulation and disengagement which followed; he in turn used masculine power strategies based on controlling the material resources to assert his needs and control aspects of the encounter.

In exchanges between people of unequal status it is commonly accepted by both parties that the higher status individual will exact more rewards, including the recompense of the hidden emotional work because that individual has more resources to enforce their demands. A person in this position expects to have attention paid to them, to have others take their feelings into account and to be treated in a manner which indicates that they are prominent and influential. Lower status individuals generally receive less respect, are dismissed or discredited, have their privacy invaded, and are treated more like objects than individuals with rights. Similar to Hochschild's descriptions of the work of flight attendants, most service sector jobs (including stripping) are involved in asymmetrical relations which normalize the rights of clients (and at times support disrespect and rudeness from customers). Within the service industry, the lower status individual is often a woman; servitude and social-emotional work are confounded by being viewed as part
of feminine demeanour and as a routine part of male-female interactions. These individuals will usually contribute more to the relationship through deferential behaviour, including extensive smiling, intense listening, appreciative laughter and supportive comments. In a presentation of inequality, it is the absence of such characteristics in masculine behaviour which is deemed desirable in table dancing displays. Displays of irritation or anger which are generally less permissible for women than men are not to be encouraged in strippers who wish to establish successful table dancing encounters.

Candy's emotional, sexual and intellectual resources were harnessed to the service of the client as a learned condition, reinforced by social and material forces operating in table dancing, and in the name of financial gain so revered by society. Operating from a traditional female position of having fewer resources such as money, authority and influence, Candy relied upon the indirect influence of deference, flattery and sexual enticement as part of her interpersonal tactics in order to negotiate gender politics. While she was prepared in a feminine manner to allow the client "to call the shots" in suggesting how she should dance, after thirty five minutes she took on a feminist posture and became reluctant to engage in traditional gender-based behaviour associated with her job. Clearly, she had attempted to negotiate for a more pleasant and easy-going encounter built on joint articulation, a mutual understanding of the terms for exchange of service and appreciation for her efforts. When the client was not forthcoming, she disengaged emotionally and brought the dance to an end. In the table dancing strategies employed in this example, Candy both reproduced and resisted practices of oppression. Despite paying the fee and leaving a tip, the client (by refusing to become involved in the superficial social interaction, flirtation and adulation through conversation) failed in Candy's opinion to make this a successful collaborative effort. Her work was intensified and when left with
the feeling that her efforts were not acknowledged, she consciously decided to provide less service and ultimately to withdraw service from the undeserving customer.

In an analysis of kinesics, proxemic cues and conversational strategies, gendered patterns of emotional behaviour emerged which set the parameters for the way in which Candy and the client interacted. Although she attempted to take the client's feelings into account and engage him in a relationship, the customer operated on the notion of an unequal distribution of power premised on being a male and a customer, speaking only when he chose to do so. By taking on a feminine style in gestures, postures and verbal statements in the ritual of table dancing, Candy initially saved face for the client in a one-way interaction which took into account the needs of only one of the participants. By accommodating his needs with little expectation of reverse consideration being extended, Candy made the client look good. Employing one of the many hidden rules of stripping, she managed her conflicting feelings in a way which allowed the table dance to proceed. The customer in declining to address Candy's social-emotional needs, including a fundamental need to reply when spoken to, initiated and maintained a power imbalance which attempted to assist in making the client look good from the position of male privilege. Candy's role required that she put a lot of energy into the interaction (to ensure that the encounter was successful), and finally to demonstrate deference by apologizing when all did not appear to go as well as anticipated from the client's point of view. What may have been unusual in this encounter provoked by the rather extreme reaction of the client was Candy's conscious decision to pull back in continuing the service in a manner which had ingrained gender expectations.

The varying strategies of interaction employed by Candy and the client reveal the differential work patterns, expectations
and value systems of men and women operating in table dancing experiences. In most such encounters in order to establish a smooth and efficient interaction, both the client and dancer engage in gender-appropriate behaviour. The client asserting his interests and the dancer accommodating to his needs, demonstrates how maintaining gender appropriate behaviour is methodically and continually accomplished in the daily interactions of social life in a strip club. Candy's unwavering motivation and her stoic manner in completing the interaction is not unusual in the context of table dancing encounters, nor is the self-assurance of the client that he could "call the shots" because he was paying for her time. It was anticipated by both that she would be available and willing to do the active work of interactional maintenance precisely because she is a woman and a worker providing service. Indeed, the socially structured power relations between Candy and the client are obscured precisely because they were seen to be part of normal male-female interactions. Candy's demeanour is viewed as constituting who she is as a woman and establishing the kind of work that she is therefore, expected to perform. Such encounters disguise woman's work as aspects of gender identity rather than gendered work, in establishing and maintaining relations of gender power. The verbal-social interactions reveal how the work of table dancing maintains unequal power relations between client and dancer. Such encounters demonstrated how power (which is expressed interactionally in the daily life of women in strip) serves to construct and maintain hierarchial relations of power between women and men.

Despite the fact that Candy does not exist as an independent body/subject within the world of stripping and that her engagement in stripping practices reproduces both gender and class patterns of behaviour, this vignette reveals that Candy is not the passive product of a monolithic masculine discourse of stripping. Adroit at witty conversation, repartee and barbed
humour for the value-added entertainment of a client, the verbal
dexterity of her bel esprit and linguistic sparring is raised to
the level of sophisticated art characteristic of 18th century
decadent discussion in the court of Louis XIV. As a result of his
reaction to Candy, the client left unexplored this delightful
side of Candy. Although conforming with the demands of the client
for a few songs of a table dance, she also engaged in a mode of
subjective resistance by attempting to shape the table dance,
chiding the customer to come in line with her expectations and
ultimately ending the encounter abruptly when the customer did
not comply. It is within conflicting social relations permeated
with agency, self-consciousness and intentionality, forged within
the mode of cultural and economic production that she attempts to
make her case concerning relationships, work, exchange and
desire. This brought texture to an oppressive experience, and to
her subjective and embodied resistance, demonstrating how the
classed and gendered body of the stripper is constituted through
strip club practices articulated to patterns of behaviour outside
of such establishments.
1. This kind of experiential knowledge stands in contrast to scientific ways of "objectively" knowing about reality, in which scholars separate themselves from what they are observing and stand apart intellectually to render "impartial" interpretations. Walkerdine (1984) criticizes this dualistic view of separating the objective knower from reality as an impossible task of observing without influencing. Catherine MacKinnon (1987) draws attention to the power the objective knower has (who actively engages in observation and analysis) as compared to the known reality, which is rendered passive and subject to interpretation. In a feminist critique of the English language as hierarchal and patriarchal, she notes that the male occupies the neutral position of objectivity, while the female is the other, the marked or gendered person. She argues that the elements of objectification in the relationship between the knower and the known establish a hierarchal system of thinking which leads to control and domination. Those who are part of the scientific establishment (whose work takes on a predominant perspective with claims of objectivity and neutrality) are more likely to maintain that subjective knowledge is biased, limited in scope and unreliable. The politics built into the methods used by those who claim objectivity for their perspective obscures the fact that historically men have been the knowers and women have been the objects of knowing, ignored or punished for possessing inappropriate knowledge. Groups outside of established scientific discourse (including women and minorities) are more predisposed to having their viewpoints and insights rejected on the grounds that they lack scientific rigor.

2. The term "significant" or "generalized others" was first used by Mead. It has particular relevance in theories of symbolic interaction, in which the emphasis is placed on communication between the self and others, either real or fictional. In contrast to a passive model of interaction, symbolic interactionists like Mead (1935) and Schutz (1967) have argued that individuals are active participants in the process of socialization, capable of negotiating meaning associated with symbols and redefining the boundaries between the self and others in their social situations.

3. Although feminist political economists argue that domestic labour must incorporate gendered assumptions, concentrating on social/emotional work in the private domain solely to explain women's disadvantage in the public sphere of work is problematic and overly deterministic.

4. When men socialize among themselves in the boardroom, on the golf course or after work in the bar, they recognize the value of social interaction to camaraderie and commerce. The same rules do
not necessarily apply to women in stripping, however, who socialize in order to make a living. These activities are often viewed by clients and managers as nonwork, or preliminary activities to the real work of table dancing.

5. Although perhaps an immoderate example, examining one manager's revelations is insightful, concerning Wal-Mart's ability to "master the whole customer service thing", through the employment of "less than commendable activities going on behind the scenes in order to display a disgustingly chipper ... American ... pollyanna" approach:

The training approach pitted employees against one another in such a way that we immediately became mortal enemies, infused with the ferocity of hungry wolverines. Signs of potential friendships were promptly thwarted. The company believed competition was the greatest motivation and so a survival-of-the-fittest philosophy prevailed.

Meanwhile, they threaten us like imbeciles: We did not think; we memorized. We were told precisely what we could and could not say. Our response to customers' questions had to sound spontaneous, although they had been prudently contrived and practiced for hours. We devoted a full day to rehearsing how to greet a shopper. It had to be done the right way - the company's way - for creativity and candour were not tolerated. In fact, we were forewarned in writing that failure to execute a correct greeting would result in immediate dismissal.

A correct greeting was specific right down to the number of seconds that should elapse from the moment the salesperson opened her mouth. And once that mouth had been dutifully opened, a well-practiced three-step salutation sprang forth. It wasn't worth risking originality because the company regularly dispatched "secret shoppers" to evaluate performance. It took some time to remember the "right" things to say but with infinite hours of repetition, the lines were eventually etched on our brains. In district meetings, we had drills during which we chanted the expected replies at the prompting of our superior.

And although all this deception might sound insensitive to the customer, it really was intended to give him a good shopping experience. He encountered a salesperson who always had the answers and always appeared genuinely concerned. But one particularly busy Saturday, I inadvertently greeted the same customer twice with the same rehearsed opener. I didn't even realize my error until he made a rather unsavoury comment.

That's when it hit me: We had been programmed - just like inanimate, unfeeling computers. And becoming
mechanical had marred my identity and stolen my autonomy. I tendered my resignation the following Monday (LeBlanc, 1995:A15).

6. Goffman (1971) refers to aspects of public performances as "face work" including eye contact, facial expressions, body language and conversation by actors within specific social settings. A service sector worker may be required to wear a uniform, speak in a polite tone of voice, converse within a restricted framework of ideas and respond to specific codes of conduct when executing a performance with a public face. In some social settings, props are used to complement facework or impression management. In contrast, the same worker may smoke, joke with other employees and use coarse language when out of earshot of the customers. Although Goffman's concept of front stage/back stage is useful in distinguishing the various personae which individuals adopt in specific social settings, the mask mostly likely is exchanged rather than dropped, as the actor is integrated within an audience backstage with a different set of rules and roles.

7. Hochschild (1988) describes the training of flight attendants to include "preventive tactics" of deep breathing, talking to oneself, using "anger desensitization" to focus on the worker's response, rather than the cause of problems. Employing company suggestions as to how to perceive, feel and react in situations, flight attendants are encouraged to set out "anger boundaries" when dealing with passengers. They are taught to concentrate on the positive aspects of the situation, to distort reality and to deny or suppress the validity of their feelings through the deployment of "feeling rules". Demanding passengers are to be seen as children with uncontrollable impulses who have to be cared for, flight attendants are made acutely aware that passengers are never to be reacted to in an angry or harsh manner. It is made clear in training that difficult public contact work comes with the territory of the job, and management is more interested in satisfied customers than in comfortable working conditions and the civil rights of flight attendants.

8. The Catholic church has a quaint way of addressing the difference in childhood training of girls and boys with respect to emotional development, stating that in adulthood, men should be the "head" of the household and women the "heart". The specialization of different emotional tasks for women and men (which originates within the family and is reinforced in all major societal institutions) generally calls upon females to manage anger, to arbitrate tensions and disagreements and to placate and service the needs of others. The status of women within the traditional nuclear family and the roles they serve create a general impression of subordination for all women.

9. Yvette Paris (1990:76) developed a similar routine to retain control during her act:
Unlike most dancers, I look the audience square in the face, establishing my supremacy right from the start. My eyes scan the bar for would-be troublemakers. I want to know where they are at all time. The dancing itself is easy for me.... As I dance, I read the sign language of the patrons. Rubbing the side of one's nose means "do you want to buy my cocaine?" or "would you like to share my cocaine?" Opening one's wallet or billfold and exposing large bills to the dancer means "are you free to party?" Pointing to one's watch means "when do you get off?"

10. Goffman (1971) observes that when individuals move into novel social positions, they rarely understand all the dimensions of how to respond initially in their new social roles. It is assumed that individuals have certain generalized patterns of behaviour acquired from everyday life experiences to which they add cues, suggestions and other aspects of stage direction into the new social setting.

11. The notion of symbolic resistance on the shop floor was introduced by Anna Pollert (1981:129-134), who contends that much of the resistance displayed on the shop floor for women engaged in factory work is stylistic and does not result in structural changes.

12. See Henry Giroux and Roger Simon (1988) for an account of how the production and regulation of desire serves an important function in the construction of meaning.

13. Gotfrit (1991:181-5) suggests that the body becomes a critical site for contesting hegemonic and ideological practices as mind/body splits escalate in the culture, and as representations of desire are significantly removed from the experiences of peoples' lives by becoming thoroughly enmeshed with commodification.

14. Greater liberty to initiate and explore sexual pleasure has occurred in contemporary culture as a result of the sexual liberation movement, the last wave of the women's movement and a postmodern emphasis on pleasure and consumption. Complete sexual and gender emancipation is, however, still in its infancy. Traditional stereotypes suggest that the more powerful sex drives of men result in males being socialized to be aggressive, to be concerned with performance and to focus on coitus. As "manly men", males are supposed to be preoccupied with initiating sexual encounters, "scoring" and conquests. Even when a woman initiates a sexual rendez-vous, as in table dancing, social rules are seen to be asymmetrical as the stripper awaits approval from her client to continue.

15. The "naturalness" attributed to male aggression and female passivity is a concept thought to have been introduced into European culture at the time of Enlightenment, to prevent women
from achieving too much independence in an era of new found liberation.

16. Taking on the role of the other as seen in strip practices can be viewed as a superficial attempt at role reversal, rather than as a deeper or more radical undertaking to abandon or invert gender roles. It could be argued that, when strippers take up a assertive posture by approaching men who appear to be passive, each party is partially trying on the behaviours of the other within the context of established gender roles. Such behaviour may serve to reinforce, but does not radically challenge dualism. Binarism, as an expression of the concept of alternatives, is deeply embedded in Western thinking and significantly shapes the images produced in society of women and men.

Cirous and Clement (1975) in attempting to deconstruct the oppositional images of male and female as active/passive, sun/moon, culture/nature, day/night, father/mother, head/heart, intelligible/palpable, logos/pathos, high/low and master/slave found such dichotomies to be hierarchial in nature, such that the characteristics ascribed to males are seen as more valuable. Reuther (1983) has suggested that it is but a short step from the male/female hierarchy to the establishment of the God/man, spirit/matter, Western/non-Western and White/non-White dichotomies of powerful/powerless. The feminist project is about inventing new ways of thinking of males and females that contextualizes meaning and does not feed into such dichotomies and hierarchial relations.

17. The sociological critique of classical psychology concerns the emphasis placed on individual behaviour as an end unto itself in order to explain parental attachments related to growth and development in early childhood. To view feminine and masculine behaviour within this context is to obscure how social, political and cultural processes shape attitudes and behaviour. Such a position fails to account for how issues of gender and power are produced and reinforced within society.

18. The boundaries of "normal" and "dirty" sexuality, work and money are explored in sex trade work. Victorian sexual "perversions" of masturbation, fetish, prostitution and lesbianism (which transgress the libidinal economy of male-defined, monogamous heterosexual sex for reproduction) are emphasized in strip. The work of taking care of the physical needs of the body associated with secretions of "pollution and contamination", contrasts with work processes controlled by males, which emphasize rationality, objectivity and abstraction. The "filthy" money associated with prostitution, drinking and drugs is distinct in mainstream thinking from the money generated in the male-dominated market exchanges (Gallagher and Laqueur:, 1987).

19. In an exploration of the demi-monde of gigolos and their madame bountifuls, Nelson and Robinson (1994:14-21) conclude that in contrast to the illusionary and stylized presentation of this
lifestyle often seen in the media, such relationships are not "aberrant social arrangements" with the presumption that the participants are socially marginalized. The authors suggest that simplistic and reductionists stereotypes depict these relationships as predominated by sexual service/financial exchanges. In the course of studying the real-life experiences of gigolos and madam bountifuls, they caution against cliched descriptions and pathological explanations that would remove the individuals from mainstream social relations.

20. Garfinkel (1967:39-41) discusses the idea that taking turns and other features of reciprocity are essential features for conversational interaction.

21. Postmodern social theorists decry the hegemonic aspects of social theories of modernity. Nonetheless, some of the totalizing facets of theories which prevail in late stage capitalism emphasize a language that devalues individual experience and difference (and fails to address the contradictions which occur in the lived experiences of people based on race, class and gender) located in different positions in society. In the politics of postmodernity, some Left theorists have opted for a radical engagement with text, rather than struggles which many of the oppressed identify as more closely associated with their lives. Left social theorists have not been very successful in looking for the cracks or "blind spots" in hegemonic discourse in which, as Teresa de Lauretis (1986:24) notes, resistance and counter-discourses of power and knowledge can be constructed.

22. Habermas' (1974) exploration of communication patterns led him to conclude that social interactions in which the goal is to reach a mutually accepted understanding without force, has emancipatory potential in producing a mutuality of trust, understanding and reciprocity among individuals.

23. Social exchange theory suggests that, just because two parties are engaged in negotiations based on determining the costs and benefits of the resources that the other wants, that does not imply that the power of both parties in the exchange is equal.

24. Janeway (1981) opines that, although it is in the interest of dominant groups to maintain subordinate groups in powerless positions, power cannot be viewed as a "thing" or a possession. Rather, power is evident in what people do in the context of relationships as they negotiate, bargain and compromise. Even if one party comes to predominate, both parties contribute to the process; subordinates can exercise "power from under" by questioning and rejecting the status quo, especially if they act collectively.

25. Lips (1991) contends that people may be uncomfortable with images of female power because they do not fit with society's
schema of the feminine. Concepts of dominant culture place femininity and power on opposite sides of a "naturally" occurring duality, presented to give credence to the status quo. Through traditional socialization, generalities arise which associate masculinity, in contrast to femininity, with attributes of strength and power. Stereotypes of males who are seen as independent, worldly, aggressive, ambitious, logical and rough are in contrast with stereotypes of females, who are viewed as weak, dependent, passive, naive, illogical and gentle. Since power is a vital component of people's activities, masculine roles which allow men to exercise more power than women become vehicles of self-fulfilling prophecies for males. Females are conversely viewed as exercising power in different and less direct ways than males, and are accorded less status and power than males.

26. See Lips (1991) for a discussion of how gender roles are constructed to incorporate levels of power which are more than separate and complementary spheres for males and females. She argues that the activities of the dominant group, men, are accorded more status and importance while women's activities are marginalized. This happens not only in social and political spheres but also in cultural arenas. It is the establishment of a hierarchy, which underlies traditional patterns of male-female behaviour (or gender roles) which serves as a basis of power.

27. The route to producing new ways of thinking about gender without relying on dichotomies and hierarchal relations, and to construct new forms of language which allow for the authentic feminine voice to speak apart from patriarchal texts is partly based on the rejection of old categories and stereotypes, as well as a demonstration of the many instances where individual human behaviour does not neatly fit into binary patterns.

28. Michel Feher (1987:160) uses the description a "political regime of the body", to designate how the composition of the body ought to be viewed as a complex process involving the creation of subjectivity within specific social and material practices.

29. In game theory the term "game" refers to situations which are structured in such a way that require decisions to be made by participants, using feedback to determine what is happening around them and what may likely happen in the future. Rational decision making and taking the position of the other are strategies used in game playing assessment, determining the payoff and checking out the consequences prior to acting. The gameworthiness, integrity and the course of action of the other player is anticipated in advance, to aid in the orientation of the self to others (Goffman, 1969:37-51).

30. Lakoff's (1975) interpretation that women asking more questions in male-female encounters is a sign of insecurity, fails to take issue with the fact that women are not often encouraged to speak
from a position of power. Asking questions as women are prone to do is a way to secure a minimal response and thus, initiate conversation in interactions.

31. Gender, as a social construct, is formed as a result of the ways in which females and males are differentially socialized and rewarded for demonstrating and maintaining feminine and masculine patterns of behaviour. Gilligan (1982) suggests that, with respect to moral behaviour, females are more consistent in reporting an orientation of responsibility, while males stress an orientation of individual rights. In updating Gilligan's work linking morality with power, Lips (1991) observes that women are more likely than men to influence others through cooperation and accommodation; women seek alliances and use responsibility toward others as a criterion of how to behave. She argues that, when both males and females are taught to emphasize nurturing and responsibility, they develop a sense of morality which emphasizes connectedness rather than separateness, and both genders attach importance to relationships rather than status.

32. Gender and class are confounded in this instance. The lower status person more than a higher status person is likely to demonstrate good will through compliance. Men in attempting to win influence over others often resort to the use of resources or status, while women seek influence through the use of friendships and personal charisma. Research on people who hold power "over" others in relationships demonstrates that these individuals may attempt to keep their distance (Lips, 1991:49).

33. Goffman (1969) discusses how the sense of the message beyond semantics depends on the way the message is presented or "framed" in face-to-face conversation. By attending to expression through the use of paralinguistic cues such as intonation and facial gestures, the observer and the subject know what meaning to take from the face value of the communication. In learning how to read expressions of concealment, accentuated revealment and misrepresentation, both parties are said to engage in impression management.

34. Jacklin and Maccoby (1978) observe that boys use more direct requests and orders than do girls, and they are more likely to ignore addresses made to them by girls. Serbin (1982) confirms that males are less responsive to peer influence, particularly indirect requests, than girls. When they became adults Cann (1979) found that men who are routinely ascribed a higher status view their behaviour as aggressive and powerful and often attempt to influence the behaviour of others. The social consequences are that men's behaviour tends to reinforce their higher status and a world view as more intelligent, capable and informed than women.

35. In what Goffman (1971:208-37) calls "the art of impression management", he suggests that evading ambiguous or inauspicious
signals is crucial to gender performance in everyday life.

36. A neo-Freudian theory of social-emotional development established through object relations does not address the manner in which cultural hegemony confounds the way women perceive, think and talk about the world. Beginning from a materially different standpoint, men and women experience relationships with each other and come to view the world in differing, and indeed, opposing ways. Chodorow (1978) purports that due to female parenting, girls are less differentiated from others, more identified with concrete examples in daily life and more continuous in their experiences of relationships than boys. It is the identification of women as the primary caretaker in the family which results in the construction of gender differentiated and opposing values, she claims. The recent work of Brodkey and Fine (1991) confirms that a single feminist standpoint theory to account for the experiences of all women fails to differentiate experiences based on race, class and sexual orientation in women's lives.

37. See Birdwhistle (1970) and McCroskey and Wheeles (1977) for studies of movement and gestures associated with the visual mode, which involve body motion or non-verbal communication patterns. Similarly, Argyle (1987) examines the significance of distance, orientation and space relations in interpersonal communications. He views proximity as only one of a number of socially significant relations including gesture, posture, facial expressions and general appearance within configurations of non-verbal communication processes. There are many cultural determinants and typologies of relationships that must be considered in the study of the use of personal space. In some cultures people are offended if an individual stands too close or maintains eye contact, the very patterns of behaviour which are encouraged in other cultures. Individuals often seek balance in communication when speaking with the body and reciprocity in addressing the body questions of others. Such actions involve the constant monitoring and adjustment concerning the actions of others to guarantee reciprocity.

38. In explaining face-work in an analysis of the ritual elements of social interaction, Goffman (1967:5) defines "face" as a demeanour or image of approved social attributes and positive social value, seen in the approach taken by an individual during a particular contact. Face, as set out by the particular rules of a group, is established when the image an individual puts forth is judged by others to be internally consistent and compatible with the individual's place in the social world. Saving face, as part of social diplomacy or tact, is the process by which the individual bolsters or has sustained by others, the impression that they have not been discredited or lost face. Face saving devices of presentation and avoidance, preserve the images of all players from contradictions and rationalizations. These techniques restrict matters external to the encounter, regulating interruptions and setting a particular emotional ethos which is conducive to
participants using rituals to act appropriately. Salutations, compliments, apologies and the use of status and deference rituals are part of face saving conduct to establish obligations, concerning how the individual ought to conduct herself/himself, and to institute expectations concerning how others ought to react to the individual.

39. Goffman has been criticized for presenting the rules of human interaction by which players act as if on stage in a simple and mechanistic model. While he speaks of conflict, it is implied that rules are generally agreed upon and unchanged. What is left unexplored is how rules for acting relate to the individual's emotions and an active sense of reconstituting the internally developed self. By exploring the ways in which workers manage their feelings rather than merely selling pieces of their personality, Hochschild (1988) suggests a social theory of emotions which accounts for the ways in which institutions deeply affect the self.
Chapter Ten

ISSUES OF RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY
AND TRADE UNIONISM

10.1. Other Aspects of Working Conditions
in Strip Clubs

Like most dancers, Kalaui Lay does not complain about the
money she makes but gripes about other facets of the job such as
the state of the dressing rooms. Facilities vary from being
spacious, modern and newly decorated, to small, crowded, sometimes
poorly heated and ventilated, with three or four stools
accommodating seven, ten or fourteen women. The owner of Ottawa's
Fantasia recently renovated the dressing room--making it more
modern in appearance--but he simultaneously reduced it in size, so
that, according to Candy, "now we are practically on top of each
other". Prior to renovations, there were eight tables for fifteen
dancers; currently ten tables exist in a smaller space to
accommodate twenty-five dancers. Candy complains that the women are
literally tripping over each other and on bags, trying to get in
and out of their seats. Costumes are piled in a corner because one
dancer, returning from a long road tour, had no place to store
twenty outfits. In the past, features had their own facilities;
currently, stars share accommodations while "the other girls remain
in a little broom closet", Candy dryly remarked. Samantha, a
feature, was visibly upset when informed that she would share a
dressing room with another dancer who had recently entered the
business. Losing the privilege of her own dressing room was a
disappointment since she, like other workers, searches for a sense
of self-esteem and reassurance that her work is important.

Although the public is restricted from the backstage dressing
rooms, Candy offered to sneak me into the private area of Gold's in
Oshawa. The room was a communal area, with a long mirror stretching
from wall to wall, little round theatrical lights above it, and
eight small leatherette-covered stools. In a corner, was an old stuffed couch with padded arms where I sat, while Candy changed her costume. I was introduced to another dancer who did not seem unduly shocked by my presence. To the side, stood a fridge with a flower motif on the door. Beside it was a small wooden table that appeared to have seen better days; it left me with the feeling that it might not be able to support, for much longer the Mr. Coffee Maker that was on it. The ceiling fan was not switched on, nor could I detect a window or a source of ventilation. The air reeked of perfume, powder and makeup. Strewn across the tables, in a helter-skelter manner, were personal effects and cosmetics. I viewed an assortment of glitter tubes, cigarettes, hair clips, a curling iron, makeup and a box of extra-thin condoms on the dressers. Costumes were hung, flung and scattered across the room. Crowded is an understatement in describing this small room, I thought to myself. I felt that the three women who sat there was already one too many, and I could hardly picture the room with eight or more dancers, all attempting to dress for their shows.

During my visit to Halton, Amber invited me to her hotel room above the Copa to view the variety and details of her custom-made outfits which she proudly displayed. Her room was comfortable, though sparsely furnished with an older wooden bed and dresser, a chenille bedspread decorated in robin-egg blue, torn beige drapes and a mismatched 1970s avocado green bathroom. The walls were painted in a dated yellow motif; windows faced a dark alley and there was an outline on the wall where a picture used to hang. In contrast with the other "girls" who share rooms near the band and are exposed to noise from the bar, Amber announced the she had this "quiet room" to herself. "It's a benefit of being a feature", she proudly stated. In this small lodging she feels safe because "the guys downstairs make sure nobody comes up here at night"; however, just to be certain, she places a chair under the older-style, door knob.
Debbie likes the ambience of the Copa because the manager allows her to order drinks from the bar, charged to her tab, anytime she feels like it. The Copa is a refreshing change for her after working in many clubs that were cheap and dirty. She notes that "some clubs are too cold, with air-conditioning blasting in the summer". Debbie complained that in Sarnia she recently tripped on "rickety stairs" in a club, when the heel of her shoe caught on a loose floor board. She also recalls working in Brampton's Twilight Zone club with a low ceiling near the stairs leading to the stage that caused her to bang her head and in a club in Orillia which had holes in the stairs and a newly waxed stage floor. She gripes that "there are never enough phones in these clubs, and the pay phone is almost always tied up", but she likes the long park benches and track lighting which some clubs (like the Cannonball in Downsview and General G's in Hamilton) have installed: "They are far better than those seedy little seats with the individual mirrors that we had before", she added.

10.2 Approaches to Supervision and Conflict Resolution

In a normative club described by Samantha as "laid back and easy going, that just sort of runs itself", the manager was described as a "good guy" who often took the side of dancers in disputes with patrons. This individual was purported not to yell at the dancers, but he did apparently lose his temper if customers became unruly and "smart-assed the girls". Dancers are also not required to hustle drinks, and it is acceptable for a dancer to sit and socialize at a customer's table while nursing a soft drink, rather than ordering hard liquor. When a dancer orders a drink for herself, she is charged the cost to the house with no markup in price. Samantha remarked that this was the only club in which she has not felt pressured to buy the manager a drink (billed to her tab). Nor are strippers required to table dance or allowed to lap dance in the establishment. Samantha characterized the atmosphere
of this Toronto club as a "family environment", which makes the work of stripping "fun", by her rendition. Indeed, when I visited this unusual club on a Friday afternoon, a number of dancers were reading at the back of the club and only left their seats to perform their stage acts. One dancer was completing a crossword puzzle, another was smiling while reading a Garfield comic book and Samantha was perusing a Jungian primer for her course in psychology at a community college.

In contrast, most club owners have established fairly rigid structures of control, which organize strip clubs in ways that minimize the dancers' opportunities for participating in decision-making processes and resistance. Indeed, Louie, as manager and small-business owner of the Club Dorchester (and the epitome of petite bourgeoisie), has successfully altered the perception of the desirability of opposition by mixing his professional and personal relationships with strippers in this establishment. Despite the fact that he is currently living with Brigette, I learned from Candy that he "uses dancers; he goes through women like water through rice, sleeps with a lot of them, gets them to work hard and then drops them". He has a direct interest in translating labour power into labour; his approach to managing his workforce involves intervening in the labour process by "sweet talking" dancers into doing what he wants. He favours loyal workers and interventions designed to induce allegiance to the club by fostering an interest in personal initiative and down-playing class and collective interests.

Successfully marginalizing what might have been the genesis of a feminist struggle, Louie has been able to construct solutions to problems within an individual and competitive context, rather than as part of a movement of political transformation in his small, transgressional Windsor club. He often exercises power in a personal and arbitrary manner, Resorting to a carrot-and-stick approach to supervision, by intervening in "fights, bullying
dancers, threatening people and rewarding others for good behaviour", according to Candy. Louie's own analysis suggests he believes that personal relations will bind people together from different class locations; therefore, he does not favour unionization for club employees and makes an effort to inform the dancers about his views with respect to collective organization. While a number of the dancers in his club complain about long hours, arbitrary managerial practices, disciplinary excesses and working conditions which constitute harassment, Louie, like most club managers, reserves for himself the exclusive right to hire, fire and discipline club personnel and patrons. Among the reasons for Louie's success is his charismatic personality (which enhances the effectiveness of the "carrot" component of his managerial style)--although the fact that dancers and managers bring to the bargaining process unequal amounts of power cannot be ignored.

Currently, Brigette lives with Louie and identifies with his self-determined right to unilaterally control the working conditions for her and other strippers, thereby lending uncritical support to the status quo. It is her perception that she was selected as a dancer for her physical appearance and attractiveness, rather than for her dancing skills. Her identification with a masculine and managerial value system may result from an understanding that her status depends more on the man for whom she is working and living with, rather than on her performance skills. Brigette does not typify the secular version of Max Weber's work ethic, nor does she dwell on the imbalance of power in her relationship with Louie, choosing instead to mention that it is easy to fall in love with her boss and noting that Louie is the third manager with whom she has had an affair.

The paternalistic relationship which has developed between Louie and Brigette, combining the employer/employee relationship with that of lovers, encourages pacification and undermines collective action. Like many other dancers, Brigette does not
believe that a union would be beneficial for strippers. Louie, on the other hand, will tolerate technical autonomy, and permit some degree of discretion--especially for feature acts--in the interest of motivating, integrating and pacifying the dancers in his clubs. Dancers are therefore permitted, within reason, to select their own costumes and music; but they do not have control over other conditions of work, such as setting their hours, fees and deciding whether or not to lap dance. There is a complex set of social circumstances which influence the dancers' acknowledgement of the sources of their difficulties and subsequently dictate their adjustment to, or resistance against, such forces. A number of dancers identify with the organizational policies of the clubs in which they work, viewing table and lap dancing as an opportunity to "hustle good money", and they view the problems they encounter with customers, managers and the police as individual difficulties that are "part of the job".

In the smaller establishments, a variety of techniques are used as control mechanisms by management. These range from camaraderie, persuasion, manipulation, economic incentives and the use of club norms and penalties to bring dancers into conformity with the rules as set out by management. The personal authority of the club manager constitutes a primary mechanism for control, characteristic of the industry. The economic nexus between strippers and club managers is overlaid by personal and paternalistic relationships in an attempt to ensure the cooperation and loyalty of dancers, as well as to transform and deflect resistance. According to Laura X, the manager "watches over the entire operation of the club; he supervises the dancers, he jumps in to solve problems, arranges work schedules, sets the pay, hands out bonuses and dishes out the fines". Control over dancers is strengthened by the fact that the geographical location of most clubs renders each an isolated work locale, with shifts of transient workers often turning over twice monthly.
Many owners/managers utilize a personal style of leadership, based on charm and friendship enmeshed in a network of social relations within and outside the clubs with the cadre of personnel. On occasion, Candy has been approached by a manager and "asked to speak to the girls" if a shift change was necessary or, in one case, when a dancer had an offensive body odour. It is not uncommon in a club setting to see a dancer and an owner walking arm-in-arm through the club, or to view the bartender and the manager conversing in a jovial manner, sharing a drink together. Suzette reported that a dancer she knew ended up being a "bar wife", making coffee for the club owner, running his errands, pressing his suits and, of course, "ringing his chimes". She described herself as feeling "sick" when she heard that the woman bought perfume for the man's wife on the dancer's lunch hour, because the owner claimed he was too busy to do his own shopping. The dancer was promised that the owner would arrange a movie test for her, as well as having some photographs taken for fashion magazine modelling. Suzette believes that none of these promises were kept.

Laura X remarked that strippers in past had big bosoms and ample hips (in fact, some were plump), but all were decidedly "exotic". For a time when she was dancing in Montreal, redheads were popular with men who frequented strip clubs; Laura herself became a redhead at that time, in contrast to her natural brunette hair. As we spoke, I observed that she had long, false, red nails and matching lips, large false eyelashes, dated make-up and lots of expensive jewellery, as part of her contemporary look. Today it is the club owner's taste in women which determines the phenotype of the dancers who work in a particular establishment. "If the owner likes dark, tall women, that's what's there; if he likes blonde, young, skinny women with big tits, that's what the customers get." For Laura, the mundane has become the norm in dancing, "because today it is more important for dancers to fit into the routines of the club than it is to be a good exotic dancer". She found that while clubs do not want dancers to be "stoned on stage", they
expect them "to sit and drink with customers and hustle drinks; if you can't fit in, you will fall by the wayside". Laura has witnessed what happens to a number ex-dancers now living on welfare, hooking or, for some, returning home.

Larger normative and transgressional clubs--particularly those with absentee owners--have developed methods of organizing the dancers which are more centralized and formalized than the simple control mechanisms exercised on a personal level by Louie. The majority of these clubs (in urban centres) are controlled by entrepreneurs who often operate a chain of such clubs. In these establishments, informal relationships between managers/owners and dancers are replaced by more impersonal and contractually based working relations, such that rules, rather than relationships, govern how a dancer's work performance is assessed. Control over planning and supervision is established through mechanisms which provide greater centralization of authority. A clear distinction is established between management and staff decision-making authority, with a corresponding transfer of the conception and innovative functions to management and a distinct sense of accountability required by employees.

When owners are removed from the daily operations of the clubs, managers (who often operate in the interest of owners) become the decision makers and coordinators of the daily activities of people within the clubs. Managers are charged with extending the division of labour as well as seeking to maximize profits. Jobs are allocated, employment policies are established and time schedules are organized through managerial structures, leaving only a minute amount of discretion to the individual dancers (in areas such as choice of dancing techniques and freedom of movement within the club). From the point of view of management, a distinct separation of mental and manual labour, of conceptualizing, organizing and supervising the work of others is desirable in a large, urban club, such as Lipstick in Hamilton. Structural forms
of control embedded in the pace of the table and lap dancing--and in codified social relationships between the patrons and the dancers--as well as bureaucratic controls which are instituted by management in the form of formal rules, job descriptions and sanctions, are evident. The management of Lipstick for example, requires all strippers to table and lap dance and socialize with patrons for a portion of the time they are not on stage, emphasizing continuous flow performances and servicing for standard fees.

Some of the larger normative clubs have rules printed on cards placed on the tables, allegedly to restrict customers from touching the dancers. Such rules set a limit of two or three dances for a $5 fee. Transgression clubs make it a policy to codify who may enter the booths at the back of the club, stipulating the length of time and the price for lap dancing. Rarely are these rules enforced by bouncers, even if a dancer complains. Penalties assigned to distinct categories of offenses--including reprimands, fines and dismissal--as formalized rules are meant to protect "the house" in the event that undercover police are present. The Survivor detailed an expanding list of club rules, such as salary deductions for disobedience toward the manager, fines levied for lateness, failure to remove a table dancing box from tableside, or refusing to do "spreads and insertion acts". These sanctions became part of managerial control devices over the new presentation of strip. The inventive group of dancers were rendered more interchangeable and replaceable (with the exception of a few feature acts), which had significant consequences for working conditions, job autonomy, approaches to supervision, as well as opportunities to secure and retain jobs. The rules served to extend and consolidate authority over strippers and stripping practices and were held in place, to a large extent, by the vast number of potential workers outside of the clubs (which contributed to the fractionalization of the workforce inside these establishments).
Laura X remarked that strippers "draw the line" but sometimes customers cross over it, forcing the women to "take matters into their own hands". In the absence of support from owners, managers or bouncers, strippers have found it necessary to develop skills in "managing" the sexual initiatives of customers. The verbal "one-liners" and witty repartee which many dancers engage in with patrons, as well as an explosion of temper (which is often just below the surface and will quickly arise if dancers are "pawed, harassed or insulted") are ways in which strippers attempt to assert some control over their working conditions. Sherry enjoys taking men on in banter and engaging in "put-downs", because she knows that she is skilled at verbal jousting, although she is disappointed that the male patrons are not very skilled verbal jousting. Julie practices her lines on and off-stage, to be used "if a guy gets out of hand". She adopts a street-wise, competitive and assertive attitude that would make most men wary of tangling with her verbally. She constantly teases, on and off stage, trying out her Mae West lines; her body language invites social and sexual sparring. From years spent honing her skills, she is adept at verbal scrapping. She remarks that "strip won't get me, I'll get it", aware of the effects that the business of stripping have on her and other women. "A lot of the girls burn out and there are lots of cons in the game, because it can be a nasty little business." Banter such as "I'm a ten plus and you're not", or "touching me will cost you a lot more than you think", combine humour and charm to protect her from harassment.

Alisha emphasizes her control of the situation with clients; she is not a "wimp", she "can say no", and will not back down in confrontations. The personification of an assertive woman, she claims her "hardness" was forged in childhood as she watched her mother continuously beaten by her father. Determined that no one was going to push her around, she quit school at fifteen and
hitchhiked across Canada. Literally getting up on stage to take her clothes off in order to pay the rent, she began dancing in Calgary and has never worried whether the men in the audience approved. "Once I left home, I was on my own and had to care for myself." By her own description, she is popular with the customers, but labelled as a "bitch", meaning that she gets her own way. "I'd rather be a bitch than a dumb bitch who gets put down by people." She explains further her view of human relations -- "people will use you if you let them and if you let them, they will think you are ignorant".

In the clubs, she is aware that some people perceive her as having "an attitude problem", that club personnel don't like her, and that she does not always fit into the club routines. She responds that she does not intend to hurt people's feelings, or to be aggressive, but explains that "I don't have to explain myself to anybody and I won't take shit. If a man ticks me off by calling me names or by grabbing me, I can be a mean, hard mother." If she is not taken advantage of and treated politely in her working environment, she responds in kind. "The owners are the worst and lots of agents aren't much better . . . hustling for free sex, trying to sell me drugs and making comments about my reputation." Twice previously, she attempted to quit but she found a "straight job" working in an office boring and poorly paid in comparison to stripping. She also missed her friends, the excitement of the clubs and the travelling, "which comes with the territory of show biz".

Two years previously, when living with a man in Kingston Ontario, she was slapped in a drunken fight and she, in turn, "beat him up". She informed him that "I'm out of here," packed her bags, and never returned. Currently, she is helping a dancer who is being "beaten up by her old man; I tell her it's wake up time". She is supporting the young woman until she is strong enough to leave on her own volition, and believes that her "don't-take-nothing-from-nobody" outlook ought to apply to all women. She adds that as a
result of her childhood she had "amnesia", meaning that she naively trusted everyone and had "to learn to wake up. One day, it's like a light bulb going off over top of your head, like in the comic books, you decide that no one is going to bounce you around and tell you what kind of life you want for yourself." As she dashes off to the stage butting her cigarette on the run, she explains that she has a stripper's attitude--"touch me and I'll kill you"--and is confident that her philosophy of life and her strong inner sense of self-preservation will "see me through whatever life in the clubs brings".

As I finish one interview at the Copa, Sara, the marvellous feminist waitress arranged for me to interview Suzette. Grabbing a cocktail napkin I make notes, with the stripper's permission, concerning the difficulties she encountered "in the Soo, with a manager who was a real jerk.

The manager was temporary, filling in for another guy that runs the club. He came in and started bossing everyone around like he owned the place. He tried to change the rules, like you had to be on the floor when you weren't dancing. He wanted the girls to sit with guys and push drinks and you couldn't leave the club between gigs. So a few of us got together and said, 'What are we going to do?'. I said, 'let's just tell him when he comes upstairs that we don't want the rules changed and we're not going to work that way'.

Suzette went on to describe a confrontation between three strippers and the manager which ensued. "He was a loud mouth, always pushing his weight around. He wouldn't listen to the girls, and threatened to 'black list' and fire them all as troublemakers." Suzette informed him that he could not do that because dancers have rights established through their contracts with the club. Reaching behind the bar for a baseball bat, the manager retorted, "this is my right".

The "fight" continued, with the manager calling Suzette "a god
damn whore". At this point, the bartender and the bouncer, joined
the fracas, ready to defend the manager, as Suzette, in anger,
appeared poised to take a swing at him. When the manager motioned
to the bouncer stating "get this slut out of here", Suzette was
escorted to the dressing room, told to calm down and physically
prevented from returning to the show room. As she was leaving, she
heard the manager rage that all the dancers would be fined as
troublemakers and she noted, subsequently, that is what happened.
Three days later when she picked up her pay, she was acutely aware
that she had been "short changed". While Suzette was angry because
she "had worked for nothing" and wanted to seek the advice of a
lawyer, she dismissed the manager's threat that she would have
trouble getting work in future, as the words of "a two-bit punk who
doesn't have any influence" in other clubs.

I asked if Suzette spoke with the other women who were
involved in the incident and she confirmed that she had discussed
the event with the two other dancers in the dressing room. Neither
took on the manager; one woman was planning to leave the club and
the second was afraid that she would be fired if she protested. As
a woman who has long been involved in the trade union movement, I
asked if she thought she could work with other women to prevent
this kind of treatment by organizing other dancers. She shrugged
her shoulders and indicated that

It wouldn't do any good. He's got a lot of people
on his side. The girls are afraid to stand up to
him. Some of the girls, but not the ones involved
in the scuffle, are putting out for him. The guy
don't like Blacks, and everyone says so. He thinks
all dancers are whores and he treats a lot of the
staff like dirt. He pushes his weight around
because he knows he can. If you complain he says,
'You want your job, don't you?'.

She remarked that the bouncer "had tried to quiet me, telling
me not to get so upset, because if you fight with him, it will just
make things worse". Indeed, Suzette's fine and that of
the two other dancers was a penalty levied against them for "talking back". She remained angry as we spoke about this event the next day, stating "we ain't no grade school kids that he can push around". I asked her if she was aware that some workers in Ontario are not fired for merely speaking back to their bosses. She replied that she did not know much about working conditions in other occupations, but that "this [stripping] is probably the only place on earth with such rules. The boss is king, he can pretty well do what he wants. He can hire you and he can fire you, just like that, and you can holler all you want, but it won't do any good." She indicated that there were too many "hassles" involved in taking legal action so she had better learn "to keep my mouth shut". Two weeks later when I spoke with this strong-willed Black woman with a large wide-mouthed grin, she informed me that the manager had fallen onto some "bad times; his tires were slashed and some one called his wife about all the girls he was screwing".

Over the next few weeks as the event was much talked about in the club, this strong and determined dancer refused to back down and stood her ground in a feisty tradition. Suzette's challenge to such arbitrary and oppressive rulings was a spontaneous response to a particularly obnoxious individual manager, not a conscious attempt to organize against institutional tyranny. Although it was significant in the context of the club in question, it lacked the two prerequisites for mass feminist activity--conceptualization of the problem in broad enough terms so that multiple meanings would allow other women to unite around a specific goal, and a link between mass radicalism and the women's movement. Most of the dancers caught up in this event remarked they were frightened that they would be fired if they got involved. Although the event had the potential to constitute working class, feminist resistance, no one came to Suzette's support to extend resistance beyond this single incident.

The fact that the club manager made it known that he did not
"like Blacks" and decided to quash Suzette's resistance in a very open and public manner indicates much more about him than this spirited dancer. From the manager's point of view, treating Suzette as inferior was to render her inferior. The exercise was to signal to other dancers and particularly those of a racial disadvantage that there were boundaries not to be crossed with a White male supervisor. Despite the enormous advantage enjoyed by the manager in the largely White and male dominated industry and his attempts to separate Suzette into a separate and unequal category, the discriminatory treatment encountered by Suzette made her determined to redefine unequal positions of work and to transcend such injustice.

Previously, Suzette "stood up to" a club manager in Sault Ste. Marie when the "pig of a loud-mouth manager" attempted to change all the rules. Strippers' actions embody contradictions, complying with club rules and the expectations of clients, while also actively resisting subordination to the sexual demands of specific managers and patrons. In a similar manner, Sherrill was fired from clubs in Quebec and Ontario because she refused to sleep with the owners, although such acts of defiance and resistance are not often reported in clubs. She also mentioned that, on one occasion, when a customer tried to "finger" her, she "peed in his face". Dancers at times, will resist giving a full show if they are injured or ill, as in the case of Cheyenne when she pulled a leg muscle and "the men got no bum action for a week".

Resistance among the women of strip may also take the form of public protests through television and radio programs, newspaper interviews or, as in Annie Ample's case, the publication of a book. Never travelling without her bodyguards, and prompted to consult a lawyer if she was not paid, Annie has learned to fight back against "unfairness" in club life. At times, women may resort to physical resistance, as in the case of Belinda, who threatened to break a beer bottle on the head of a patron who had been hassling her
friend, Amber, in an Oshawa biker club, before fleeing in Amber's car. Disgust was the emotion she attributed to herself, watching the owner and the bouncer "never lift a finger" as they stood by laughing. The Survivor wrote a penetrating summary of her grievances of stripping, sending the documents to various members of the police force, Revenue Canada officials, provincial politicians and a number of other people--including this researcher--whom she believed would listen and change conditions for strippers. By contrast, Candy's form of protest was also forged in the spirit of "survival", by leaving the business with as much money in her pocket as possible in order to become a successful business woman. "Being successful is my best revenge." Like Annie, who attempted to organize a "wake-up" program to alert young people to the problems in stripping, Candy endeavoured to establish counselling and support services for dancers.

The ways in which strippers deal with the contradictions built into their work processes are multifaceted. In telling their stories, a critical analysis emerges concerning the conditions strippers work under as well as the strategies they employ to gain some control over their working lives. Dancers, as real live actors in the world of strip, with all their lively and human needs, often engage in power struggles with management, with patrons and at times with other employees, in an attempt to humanize and assert control over the conditions of their working lives. They make it very clear that they engaged in the job of stripping for reasons of survival -- to feed their families and to make a more substantial living than they would be able to earn in other sectors of the labour market given their age, education and marketable skills. Scratch the surface of most strippers and you will find women who are well aware of issues of sexual harassment and economic exploitation on the job; they are women who dispel the Freudian myth of women's masochistic nature. They make it apparent that they need their job, and at times that they enjoy aspects of their work, but do not like the "hassles" that come with their line of work.
The individual and collective coping strategies evidenced in this population of workers would provide an impressive basis for a seminar within the women's movement concerning timely topics such as assertiveness training, "street smarts", disengagement and survival. Techniques of coping and fighting back include working to rule, tardiness and absenteeism, quitting the job and, on occasion, insubordination and sabotage. As well, attempts are made by strippers to alleviate the monotony of the work and to humanize the environment through the invocation of jokes, wit and repartee. Activities such as joining in on a spontaneous birthday party, organizing a costume swapping club, opening a club at night as a refugee centre for victims of a fire and attempting to found a drop-in centre for strippers, serve as vehicles for self-expression, community involvement and the establishment of autonomy. No doubt employment instability and job insecurity prevent a number of these women from expressing their dissatisfaction as openly as they did with the researcher. While a substantial number of strippers in this study reported working under problematic and hazardous conditions (which went well beyond what the average Canadian endures each day on the job), the overwhelming impression was not one of victimization and passivity. To repeat, in Candy's own words "I'm going to beat the stripping game; it's not going to beat me".

In reconciling the demands of her private life and those of her work as a waitress in a strip club, Sara has found it necessary to establish her own norms of behaviour, while subtly ignoring and evading the directions given by her manager. She does not wear provocative clothes to work, behaves in a friendly, but never a flirtatious manner towards the patrons, and is "curt" with any male employee or manager who "crosses the line". In so doing, she violates the unwritten rules that are verbally enforced by the management for all the women who work in the club. Despite the fact that she has been warned repeatedly not to read during her shift (particularly "university texts") with the threat of being
dismissed, she has continued to defy the ban during her eight and a half years of employment in the club. While she does not evidence overt signs of resistance in the form of being sullen, argumentative, late or absent, there can be little doubt that her persistence in reading, while on the job, and her modelling of feminist attitudes and behaviours constitutes microstrategies of resistance.

Sara's working life at the Copa is a vivid illustration of a division of labour that is conducive to higher labour productivity and profit maximization. For the length of time she has been employed at the Copa, she has been a permanent part-time employee, excluded from unionization and, therefore, ineligible for benefits such as sick leave, paid vacation time, job security and a wage commensurate with her job skills. She relies on tips, as well as her wage base at the club, supplemented by her salary at a social service agency and the Halton women's center, to sustain herself. Pragmatically, Sara indicated that it was essential to maintain her numerous jobs in order to keep herself solvent and in school. She estimates that she works approximately eighty hours a week, including several days functioning as a social worker with a Halton county social service agency, a number of evenings as director of the women's centre, and typically the noon to 6 p.m., as well as the Saturday shift at the strip club. Together with her work as a part-time university student, Sunday is her only day of rest and is spent reading, doing research and catching up on work related to her own course of study in sociology.

While Sara is imbued with a strong work ethic, efficiently serving many tables in the course of a shift, she refuses to work after hours for private biker parties where some of the dancers take drugs and prostitute themselves with male guests. Even when pressured to accept such assignments she declines, keenly aware that these events can be dangerous and could jeopardize her safety. In an attempt to force her to comply with this and other club
rules, her "boss" has intimated that, at thirty two, she is too old to waitress in a strip club. Sara has ignored these hints. She has carefully thought about her appearance and mannerisms in the context of her work at the Copa, deliberately dressing conservatively and dealing with her male customers in a polite but distant manner, so as to clearly signal her unavailability. She points out, when necessary, that unlike her, strippers are paid to be sexy and to be touched -- although in view of her strong feminist beliefs, she admits that passing the burden of harassment onto her sisters leaves her somewhat uncomfortable.

Aware that managers, patrons, pimps and other men of strip gossip about club women, "deliberately pitting dancers against each other to see a fight", Sara has reflected on the need for a strippers' union in order to struggle for economic and social justice in the workplace. She knows that managers compel dancers to move continuously between clubs to discourage attempts to organize in order to improve their working conditions. Recalling that a small group of dancers (who attempted to join a union a few years previously) were "fired, blackballed and some never got their jobs back", she is optimistic, but cautious, in advising dancers on this topic. During a week spent in Halton with my feminist friend, Sara, we were afforded many opportunities to compare and contrast the working lives of strippers and waitresses. We concurred that both groups of women would benefit from organizing in collective bargaining units; however, we noted that strippers were opposed to unionization and waitresses were restricted from joining such an association. Sara elaborated that dancers show little spirit of sisterhood and solidarity; the structure of the work environment (which promotes rivalry among dancers for the attention of clients, managers and predominately male agents) is conducive to the negotiation of individual contracts, she concluded.

Sara has spoken about the need to act collectively with women at the Copa many of whom, like herself, come from a working class
and union background. Continuing to maintain the belief that unions are the only force standing between workers and managers, she has often spoken with dancers about the possibility of improving benefits, job security and protection for working women through the introduction of unions. For the most part, waitresses would like to have the same benefits as the predominantly male and unionized staff of bartenders and bouncers, including full shifts, regular hours, steady employment in a single establishment and eligibility to join a union. The majority of waitresses in strip clubs, all of whom are women, work on a part-time basis, although most would prefer full-time work. In contrast, the men working in the clubs, including the bartenders and bouncers, are usually full-time employees and therefore eligible to join a union.

Sara remarked that it is difficult for waitresses to get enough hours working in a club to qualify for union eligibility because management deliberately employs waitresses less than twenty hours a week. "Being a member of a union is based on the number of hours worked, and those hours can be obtained only if a woman is prepared to sleep with the manager". I inquired "if that was one sleep or more", and was informed by Sara that she has never bothered to find out, but suspects that the arrangement is ongoing. As a consequence, most waitresses work in two or more strip clubs, wasting valuable time riding buses across town, especially at rush hour, and "depriving their children of time in order to get enough work". Determined to keep unions out because collective organizations actively works against restructuring of the labour process, club owners and managers have been able to hold the line in the areas of waitressing and stripping, work performed by women, but have been less successful with bartenders and bouncers, work which is predominantly executed by men.

10.4. Cooperating and Organizing Within Stripping

One of the striking characteristics of strip culture is the
absence of a sisterly, or even a friendly atmosphere among many dancers. The esprit de corps which exists among workers in other segments of the labour market does not, for the most part, apply to stripping. No such political cohesion appears to exist among strippers. While instances of social interactions and personal support extended by one dancer to another do occur, by and large, strippers are in competition with each other, each attempting to present the best act, aspiring to be a feature, hustling for table and lap dances and seeking to be the most sensuous and successful women in a club. Most strippers seriously doubt that they will benefit from organized representation, choosing instead the free enterprise route in their negotiations regarding salary, working conditions and dispute resolution. While all the women in this study acknowledged experiencing sexual harassment and in some cases (sexual) assault from customers, club owners and male companions, dancers have not been inclined to come together to solve this common problem collectively.

T believes that managers and owners "pit the girls against one another to stir up jealousies, and fan the fires of competition" so that the dancers will vie for the manager's attention to settle fights and to obtain preferential treatment. According to her, such divide and conquer tactics also serve "to keep the girls on their toes, so they won't slack off". She indicates that strippers do not have a "buddy system" in which the more experienced dancers show the younger women "how it's done. A few will help you with makeup or with sex tricks, but mostly you're on your own, so that by the end of the first week stripping is just another job", she added. "The girls always think someone is going to copy their moves, their music or steal their men, so strippers spread a lot of rumours about each other." Despite the fact that the majority of dancers stress their individualism and their competitive spirit, strippers, at times, operate in a concerted manner, displaying a sense of solidarity. "There even exists a stripper code of behaviour", according to T; "you try to be friendly if you can, to get along
and not to steal someone's act or costumes. Strippers will cover shifts for one another, but with the long hours each dancer is required to work, this does not happen on a regular basis. T admits that "if a girl is drunk or strung out, you generally leave her alone. Maybe you'll get her a cup of coffee to help her go on, but you don't snitch to the boss; it's up to him to find out for himself if the girl can't do her act." Sometimes dancers will "prime" each other, by telling the next one up (on stage) how the audience is behaving, and if there are rough customers or a jerk out there." Conversations in dressing rooms tend to revolve around costumes, makeup, working conditions, boyfriends, "good and bad owners", drugs and, most often, other dancers.

Amanda indicated that, on occasion, dancers will team up for support and companionship while on the road. "Strippers will give each other tips, sometimes trade costumes, tell each other about bad gigs and generally look out for each other." She recalled the details of "pairing" with Belinda, a young dancer who was in difficulty when her boyfriend pulled a truck up in the middle of the night and emptied Belinda's apartment. Described as "depressed and hitting the bottle pretty hard", Belinda subsequently stayed with Amanda for a few months. "I thought she was going to kill herself she was in so much pain, and I felt sorry for her". When these women later danced together at Pandora's Box, Belinda returned the favour by threatening "to break a beer bottle over a guy's head", who was hassling Amanda. Whenever possible, the two work as a team and have recently become "an item" after purchasing a condominium apartment.

While investigating the Halton circuit, I witnessed a rare surprise party held for Amber Starr, bringing many strip participants together in pleasant revelry for approximately half an hour. Life was unfolding as it usually does at the Copa that evening with continuous strip acts, when a patron appeared at the door with a large birthday cake in hand, yelling "Happy birthday,
honey bunch". As he invited the owner, dancers and patrons to join him in wishing Amber "a good one", by sampling a piece of the cake and buying a round of drinks at the bar, many of the patrons and all of the dancers crowded around for the event. A number of the women in the club hugged and kissed the young dancer. A few of the men slipped Amber some money. On this occasion, the lines between owner and worker, between patron and dancer and, to some extent, between men and women, seemed blurred, as all joined in the brief festivity. Yet, by Amber's assessment, strippers are likely to jealously guard personal information, particularly concerning their salaries.

If a girl introduces a new risqué number she gets more applause and whistles, management loves it, the word spreads, it's easier for her to get work and her price will probably go up. Girls compete to out sleaze each other so they will be noticed and promoted. Wages are a secret, most girls don't really know what another girl makes but there are lots of rumours in the clubs. Most of the rumours are wrong. Some suggest that a girl is making a lot less, so the boss can hire the next girl cheaper. Sometimes we hear that a girl is making a lot more, in order that girls will think that if they work hard they too can make a lot of money in the future.

When I inquired why strippers do not break the code of silence and disclose their salaries so they can not be pitted against each other, Amanda replied, "girls won't trust each other, one or two might spoil it for the rest, or one might rat to the owner. Dancers are not too good about sticking together."

Annie has on numerous occasions told me that she attempted to be friendly toward other dancers, but they rebuffed her, because they viewed her as a "snob". Baffled by this response, she attributed her interpersonal difficulties to her refusal to engage in drugs and prostitution. On the edge of a paradigm shift in stripping from burlesque to table and lap dancing, she claimed that other dancers did not comprehend her act (which was described as a
parody; it was a blend of comedy and strip that was a throwback to a bygone era. She did not wish to entertain the idea (which had occasionally been suggested to her) that, like many other features, she was viewed as "trotting around like a queen bee", and it was this aspect of her interaction with other dancers that became problematic. Stars demand and are granted privileges--including being given specially-appointed dressing rooms, distinctive lighting and props for their shows, additionally security and larger salaries-- which set them apart from local dancers and cause resentment.

Annie discovered at a young age that her relationships with female peers were more difficult than with males. The former were often jealous of her "ample" physical endowments and critical of her provocative manner of dress, and they would ostracize her as a result. On one occasion, she was beaten up by a group of girls on her way home from a recreation centre. Upon taking up stripping, she attempted to befriend other dancers, but discovered a similar pattern of reactions. She indicated that a number of dancers "shove their crotch[es] in the customer's face, and it makes me sick". While she blames the owners and the agents, "not the girls", for such acts and for the "state of the business", she has steadfastly attempted to "talk to these girls to get them out of the sewer". For the most part, rather than taking her advice, a number of dancers became hostile and, in a few instances, violent toward her. She remarked that "they messed up my costumes and threw drinks at me on stage, hoping that I would fall on my ass". Just prior to leaving stripping, she expressed her conviction that the other dancers hated her, and she voiced the belief that "crack makes dancers have an ego and think that they can do it better. It's a cut-throat business. The group from Montreal are a clique, they're mean and it's difficult to deal with them. Some girls do have their lives together, but the majority are lesbians, hate men, have no emotions and don't take care of their children."
Annie's homophobic remarks were not typical of the comments expressed by most dancers. Despite her difficulties with the other strippers, Annie exhibits many of the characteristics of a strong independent woman who has established a successful career for herself, raised her children and acquired a few husbands along the way. By her own account, she has profited from "women's liberation", revealing that her current marriage is successful, in part, because "women are stronger than men". Her sentiments in this respect echo those expressed by Misty, a stripper of the 1960s, who announced.

Yes, I was pro-Women's Liberation . . . though not formally involved in the movement. I was getting equal pay for equal work, but I knew that most women weren't, and that's just not right. Equal chances at advancement and promotion certainly did not exist much either, and still don't. Most women above the secretarial level in corporations are in low-management jobs, a few in middle-management, but whenever a woman makes it to an executive position, or becomes a company director, it's written up in all the newspapers.

Misty also remarked that her initial foray into strip was wrought with tension between herself and other strippers, because she "did not swear, drink, smoke pot", and she was "older than most with attractive costumes and a different kind of music". In contrast to Annie, by the end of her career, Misty was able to establish "good relationships" with most of the women, who came to understand that "I didn't squeal, didn't criticize or argue, was always on time and ready for my show, did favours when I could, such as rides or switching shows and was handy to have around for answering all kinds of questions".

In the early 1980s, Sandra, a former stripper, attempted to unionize exotic dancers to fight some of the oppressive conditions under which they worked, including the attempt by the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission to zone certain areas of Toronto for
adult entertainment establishments. She was also concerned about
the attempts being made by Metropolitan councillors to register
dancers with the police and to establish a G-string law. We
initially spoke at a Toronto conference in 1985 entitled,
"Challenging Our Images: Politics of Pornography/Politics of
Prostitution" organized by sex trade workers and feminists. She
spoke to the delegates about some of the problems encountered by
strippers, and her impressions of the business of stripping were
subsequently published in Laurie Bell's book entitled Good
Girls/Bad Girls: Sex-Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face.
While expressing her dissatisfaction with the position taken by
some feminists—who view dancers as helpless victims in need of
being saved—she subsequently invited me to meet at her home to
discuss her attempts to unionize strippers.

A working class woman with beautiful eyes and a confident
laugh but rather abrupt manners, Sandra seemed to have forgotten
our appointment. She ushered me into her apartment which had a
distinct odour of cat urine and was decorated with an old-fashioned
peace plaque on the foyer wall, an archaic Smith-Corona typewriter
on a desk in a cluttered living room and a hand vibrator on a
coffee table. The door leading to the bedroom was decorated with
Casbah-type beads, with a red-lit sign above it which informed one
about a place for "private meetings". While Sandra and I conversed,
she attempted to convince a telephone installer that she needed an
extra line with a call forward feature, despite the man's
protestation that the apartment was not wired for such equipment.
She tried drawing me into the argument, explaining that since she
retired from stripping she had earned a lot of money by finding
apartments for people and was therefore in need of a business line.
As she chain-smoked throughout the conversation, her demeanour
painted a picture in my mind of a confident woman in the strip club
environment, strutting through the maze of "mind games", as she
characterized the stripping business, attempting to get her way.
Sandra's presentation to the telephone installer of a stream of sexual double-entendres, only succeeding in embarrassing the man. Lines such as "paying for a phone is one thing, paying for a sweetheart is another", revealed the after effects of a long career in stripping and a calculating side to her personality. When the Bell worker finally left, I was able to spend twenty minutes out of a two-hour encounter interviewing her, while she took four telephone calls from potential clients. I tried to inquire about her years in the strip business, only to be curtly reminded that her personal life was off limits in this discussion. She finally related an amazing story of how, with the help of two other strippers, she had garnered the assistance of a Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) organizer in order to pressure club owners in the Toronto area to retain women who refused to table dance. Her organizing efforts took place during a transitional period between 1980 and 1982, as table dancing was being introduced, often over the protestations of some dancers. She had subsequently attempted to move toward certification of a union for strippers, some of whom had previously been members of the Variety Artists Equity Association, indicating that she had received a "fair response" to organize from dancers in three clubs.

She was invited by the local regional CLC director, along with two other dancers, to attend the annual Congress convention in Winnipeg. Anticipating that she would be given an opportunity to address the delegates on the difficulties within her profession, she was seriously distraught when she realized that the dancers had been invited by the director to provide sexual services for a few of the men. When the women complained to some of the other male union leaders, a few men expressed their outrage at the treatment Sandra and her colleagues had received. Sandra claimed that she was subsequently offered a staff position at the national office of the CLC, as compensation for the treatment she endured at the convention. Although I could understand the forces which had shaped Sandra's survivalist approach, and I left the interview
grateful for the experience, somewhat troubled that she had not demonstrated a more sisterly attitude, but cognizant of the gaps which exist between women who use the self-descriptor "feminist".

Most dancers have little input into the nature and pace of their work, pay schedules, discipline and promotions. Despite this fact and the reality that the next logical extension of stripping involves live sexual acts on stage -- as Annie Ample claims have already occurred in Vancouver, Edmonton and Dallas--the vast majority of dancers are apathetic or antagonistic to the idea of collective action. A number view unions with apathy or disdain, believing that such organizations will only take dues from dancers' paycheques, without serving their interests. Pondering the consequences of a strike for strippers, Suzette remarked that "the public sees strippers as trash; whatever happens to bad girls is their own fault, so we wouldn't get any support. If there was a strike, managers would just go out on the street and hire some new girls". Suzette heard that there was an attempt some years ago to form a union, but the dancers who were involved "were fired and lost their jobs completely" when managers stepped in to "nix" the idea. Kamada Lee recalls attending a labour rally in which she spoke briefly concerning the plight of strippers, only to see many of the men "snickering" and the women present "offering little support". One vocal dancer was concerned that the behaviour of male union leaders was as "chauvinistic" as that of the male managers she has encountered.

Many strippers hold on to a creed of a "fair's day's pay for a fair day's work", despite the fact that they have been required to engage in more, and increasingly sexually explicit work, and even though only a small minority can ever aspire to approximate the working conditions of a feature. While Samantha is clear about what constitutes abuse and how she can minimize dangerous situations, she feels that a union would infringe on her "freedom", and would "stir up trouble for the girls". Nor is she convinced
that a union would address problems of violence in strip clubs. The interviews with strippers in this study did not lead me to conclude that dancers are docile or submissive, using a classical definition of the feminine, a notion which has been used in the past to exclude women from unions. From my perspective of two generations as shop steward on my mother's side, most of these feisty, vocal and, at times irreverent working class women, have the "right stuff" for shop floor politics, pickets and strikes. Unlike their organized sisters in other segments of the workforce, strippers lack the political will to band together under the union rubric because they do not view such an action as beneficial.

In response to my questions, Allen, a bartender, confirmed that, like himself, most in his profession are unionized. "Dancers are not", he added, although he is aware that, a few years earlier, some of the strippers in his club attempted to join the Canadian Association of Burlesque Entertainers (CABE). "I think some of the dancers have also tried to join ACTRA, although they are not actors." In his thirteen years tending Snark's bar in Guelph, and other strip clubs, he has not witnessed any substantive attempts to organize dancers, and he doubts that strippers would join because "they are not the union type, they like to do their own thing. Many of the women in my club have kids, or they like to get out of here as soon as they are finished. If a union came in, dancers wouldn't support it, go to meetings, agree to have dues deducted from their salary or go out on strike."

Most trade unions in Canada remain primarily interested in protecting full-time workers in what remains of blue-collar industries, as well as organizing in the ranks of white-collar work within the public service. Strippers who work in isolated club settings, often on a part-time basis, who move around on a circuit and have a fairly high turnover rate, remain outside of the interests of traditional union organization and are difficult to organize into a collective movement. In addition, the stigma
attached to sex trade work is problematic for some in trade unions, as for a number of people in society at large who have difficulty identifying stripping as work.

While unions have been instrumental in improving the salaries, working conditions and job security of their members over those of nonunionized workers, the job of stripping, typical of service industry work predominated by women, has had little historical association with the labour movement. Such work, with an emphasis on service in small establishments that encourages workers to meet the intimate needs of customers, would not seem to lend itself to the kinds of work-to-rule and strike tactics, which have been successful in large industrial establishments. Some strippers suggest that with limited skills and children to keep, they have few options and fear losing their jobs. Features, on the other hand, who perceive they are stars, often buy into managerial structures, believing that it will benefit them individually. Undermining collective organizing are the policies and procedures of restructuring (which have taken place in many strip clubs) that have resulted in the majority of strippers working on short-term contracts, or functioning as quasi-independent entrepreneurs, fragmenting the stripper's work and dividing dancers from each other.

Sexism in stripping is perpetuated by individual and institutional structures. Club practices and rules endorsed by managers, clients (and dancers themselves in some instances), exploit dancers. Stripping practices teach women that they will be valued and rewarded when they form attachments with men; such practices reinforce forms of competitive and defensive behaviours among strippers. The majority of dancers do not have economic independence apart from men and many voluntarily choose to associate with males for companionship. While it can be argued that all men benefit economically, sexually and socially from patriarchal practices, not all men on a continual basis relate to
dancers in exploitative and problematic ways, and so individual women do seek and obtain, solace and support from a number of men in the world of stripping. The daily experiences of strippers are often mystifying to them, and do not readily lead to an analysis of their experiences, along the lines of gender, race and class divisions. As well, the experiences of oppression and strippers' interpretation of these events are complex, and vary considerably between individual dancers so that even when a dancer is victimized, she is likely to view the experience in an isolated, rather than in a feminist, context and to emphasize her assertive, independent and survivalist skills, in order to retain her conviction that she is able to exercise some degree of control over her life. Few dancers portray themselves as victims and bond with other women of strip on this basis, for to do so would be daunting and could undermine confidence in their personal power. Bonding between strippers, when it occurs, is usually on the basis of bilateral support and service; rarely is a sisterhood forged on the premise of mutual exploitation.
1. See McGregor (1960) for a detailed analysis of the Theory X approach to human relations, which stresses the idea that workers dislike their jobs, do not want to be self-directed and must be coerced to work.

2. In their discussion of the concept of workplace democracy, Guarasci and Peck (1987) contend that humanistic concerns have rarely been given precedence over profits--nor have the privileges of capital frequently been relinquished--to heighten workers' participation and redistribute power within work settings. "Reforms" in this area provide the illusion of input of constrained choices by workers, rather than a genuine attempt to install workplace control when featured against the backdrop of industrial relations in the larger capitalist society.

3. Much of the literature within the field of business administration (dealing with the establishment of an appropriate managerial approach to employees) emphasizes the idea that women's lack of progress in the workplace and their slower career paths are due to personal factors. These factors include a lack of confidence, an inability to compete with men, restrictions due to socialization, a failure to adopt male attitudes towards work, ineffective leadership styles and a lack of initiative, hard work, and intelligence.

Cuneo (1985:466-68) suggests that these explanations fail to account for the fact that women are underrepresented at the middle and upper levels of management where decisions concerning promotions are made, and they are overrepresented in low-paid and low-skilled jobs outside the home and as unpaid workers in the family. He emphasizes the continued structural inequalities which exist between men and women that curtails promotional opportunities for women, citing the fact that 68% of all women are classified as working class, compared to 43% of men. The latter are 3.4 times more likely to be managers than the former.

4. Krahn and Lowe (1988:29-31) contend that managers and capitalist owners share a similar ideology of work and workers; thus, "the concept of management cannot be divorced from the concept of ownership".

5. Discussing another segment of the service sector, Reiter (1986: 309-25) details the transformation of the labour process in the fast food industry, suggesting that the teenagers who predominate in the industry are hired as ideal commodities - cheap, energetic workers who are in abundant supply. In such settings, every movement of these workers is controlled, with rules such as "if you have time to lean, you have time to clean". Policies regulate the display of a proper attitude, including continuous smiling and comments such as, "have a nice day" to
each customer, in what have been dubbed "McJobs" in the recent sociology of work literature. Reiter cites the comments of Theodore Levitt in a Harvard Business Review (1972:56) article, suggesting that the frequent changes required of workers contributes to a disruption in the labour process. The new model supplants "the humanistic concept of service with the kind of technocratic thinking in other fields, [which] has replaced the high cost and erratic elegance of the artisan with the low-cost munificence of the manufacturer."

6. This incident, filled with complexity and contradiction, is at the intersection of the debate concerning sex work, feminism and trade unionism.

7. According to Blackwell (1998:A4), slightly more than four million Canadians, some 34 percent of the workforce, belong to unions. As membership has slipped due to the decline in manufacturing, resource industries and public sectors, unions have recently turned their attention to what Carla Lipsig-Mumme, Director of York University's Centre for Research on Work and Society, refers to as the "next working" class of the service sector Bell (1976), White (1980) and Blackwell (1998:A4) have established that, while women in unions enjoy better working conditions and remuneration than women who are not unionized, they receive fewer benefits than both unionized and nonunioned men.

8. Women have had a low rate of participation within trade unions, in part, because they have been under-represented, particularly at the executive level of unions. In some sectors of the labour market, unions have not assertively moved out to defend--nor have they been successful in raising--the wages of females. These factors contribute to the 10-20 percent wage differential between unionized and non-unionized jobs, indeed some Canadian union-negotiated contracts in the past allowed for lower wages for women and racial minority groups. Other reasons why women have not been as quick or as easy to organize as men include patriarchal notions of female inferiority originating in the family (alleged to cause women to be less militant and more compliant than men), dispersion of women in jobs which made organization difficult, time-consuming and expensive campaigns and the relatively short period many women, in the past, remained in the paid labour force before retiring to take up domestic duties (Phillips and Phillips, 1983:74-8).
CONCLUSION

11.1. Studying Stripping

This study involved an investigation of stripping in late twentieth-century Canadian society. The examination was based on an exploration of the political and economic context of stripping practices that provided an understanding of how hegemonic political economy shapes social status and identity in stripping. Practices of stripping were taken to be social constructed and articulated with economic, political and social structures of the material world. As a form of sexual experience grounded in body work, stripping was viewed as historically and culturally constituted rather than as a natural phenomenon. The investigation attempted to deal with the complexities of desire, sexuality, gender, labour, race relations, commercialization and criminalization as part of racist, patriarchal and capitalist structures of social organization of stripping. The political economy of stripping (in which socially marginalized, working class women evidenced racial patterns of desire) was seen to arise out of the dictates of the marketplace and the division of labour which capitalism subscribes for some women in relations of production/reproduction.

The study examined the social organization of strip work and how it was transformed during the 1980s and 1990s in Ontario, providing new images and practices that better served advanced capitalist needs. Stripping was viewed as work that is part of the new global economy with segmented markets, diversification, work intensification and declining rates of remuneration. The purpose was to explore stripping as skilled and knowledgeable work, located within the service industry and subject to a gendered division of labour. Stripping practices were understood
to be similar to other forms of unequal exchange relations which have evolved within the service industry. The defining features of stripping emphasized a decentralized and flexible labour process in which working class women service the needs of predominantly White men of resources. Feminist standpoint explicated specific aspects of the everyday working lives of strippers (with gender and race employed as organizing categories) to be investigated as culturally constructed and material forces which were central to a differential labour process. The experiences of strippers were viewed as socially constructed (formed by historical, material and discursive practices) as part of capitalist, patriarchal and specific forms of race relations. Shifts in skills, the nature of power and resistance based on class, gender and race statuses were revealed in the labour process of stripping.

Drawing on theories of deviant behaviour, traditional sociological investigations have searched for etiological explanations as to why women engage in stripping and how they adjust to the "counterfeiting and manipulative performance" characteristic of the job (Sijuwade, 1995:373). The perspective of radical feminism emphasizes that the oppression of women does not stem from an economic base but from a sexual class system of male privilege and sex distinctions. This dominant paradigm critiques prostitution as a master-slave relationship in which women's subordination is based on men's appropriation of female sexuality (in exchange for economic security), resulting in the victimization of all women. Sexual liberationists, on the other hand, emphasize erotic agency, sexual desire and control as critical issues for investigation. Radical feminists highlight the direct relationship between depiction of violence in pornography and violence against real women, in contrast with sex radicals who view desire as socially constructed and stress choice, diversity and tolerance especially for sexual minorities.
Both the sex trade debates and cultural theories fail to take up sex work as an occupation. In contrast, this study is part of a more recently emerging theme which examines the work setting and labour activities of stripping in the context of the sex trade industry. Few women in stripping have adequate training and skills to acquire a high-paying job, especially one which is associated with the glamour and excitement that stripping is perceived to offer for some participants. Prostitute discourse in particular, argues that sex trade work is an empowering and a pragmatic choice that allows women to take control of the sexual and economic terms of engagement. Although few in number, investigations which proceed from this perspective provide descriptions of strip work and accounts of dancer-customer interactions. This investigation addresses the underlying causes associated with economic resources and political power that explains why women seek this line of work. The social/sexual practices of stripping are examined in the context of working processes which many women in the service sector perform. Stripping is seen as a form of sexual entertainment that involves processes of work characteristic of jobs that women are engaged in through other venues of paid employment and in the domestic sphere.

A feminist materialist framework is based on continuity of a Marxist legacy that examines material relations, class conflict and inequality (by making connections between historical and economic changes), together with feminist challenges that refute the gender blindness and biases of Marxist orthodoxy. Feminists have established that studying material reality is at the expense of women and marginalized groups, maintaining that sexuality cannot be reduced to economic determinism or restricted notions of class. Feminist materialist theory underscores the way the dual systems of capitalism and patriarchy operate to produce a sexual division of labour and the formation of gendered subjectivities. The approach verifies connections between gender
structures and class, examining the changing material conditions in the lives of women under late-stage capitalism. This method makes it possible to examine the interweaving impact of gender and class in the lives of women who strip. In theorizing divergence based on race, an inclusionary position is employed based on factors of race and ethnicity to challenge the inequality which exists for women of colour. Materialist theoretical perspectives have recently been challenged by processes which call for the incorporation of representation and symbolism in an analysis of the social world. A shift has occurred from concentration on deterministic models of capitalism and gender-segmented labour markets to an examination of the connections between political economy and issues concerned with sexuality, culture and political agency. Questions of vision, power and knowledge have been raised as female subjectivity intertwined with cultural and material production has become important to feminism. Recognizing that historical shifts in production are deeply embedded in patriarchal structure, cultural knowledge (circulating through discourses and institutional practices) has become a feminist issue, with concepts of desire, sexuality and femininity utilized to explain the commodification of women's bodies and attempts to appropriate their labour.

The approach used in this study originates from a feminist critique of forms of knowing. By locating women and men within different social structure, gender is taken to be a critical component of social organization. Using the work of Dorothy Smith (1987), the investigation begins with everyday experiences in the lives of strippers. Feminist standpoint methodology seeks to test a theoretical understanding against women's accounts of their experiences. Smith suggests that it is women's experiences (as well as their relations to productive forces and to one another in exchange relations) that provide the products of consciousness in the material activities of everyday life. Apart from providing an understanding of daily activities in women's lives, everyday
experiences are taken to be part of the ruling relations of society. Descriptions and analyses of the everyday world are articulated to larger socioeconomic organizations in which they are embedded, to reveal how the social relations of capitalism, patriarchy and racism are put together. Ways of knowing produced through women's interests, however, do not generally enter into the production of culture and become part of socially accepted modes of thinking. Focusing an analysis from the standpoint of women in Western culture theorizes subjectivity within a historical context that allows for the dismantling of gender dichotomies.

In this ethnography, culture is taken to be a multiplicity of negotiated realities within historical contextualized and contested discourses. Ethnographic provisions of accounts of culture, albeit partial and incomplete, that digs below the surface to uncover the ways in which political and economic apparatuses pattern practice. Accounts of stripping were based on in-depth interviews with forty seven strippers in eighteen clubs concerning their experiences. It drew upon strippers' illustrations with respect to how they entered the business, descriptions of their work and social activities and explanations concerning what they hoped to do in the future. Specific questions were asked with regard to the length of time the women had stripped, rules pertaining to social/sexual activities and issues related to working conditions and remuneration. The interview data was used to complement observations in various typologies of strip clubs across Ontario. Several other participants of strip were also interviewed--clients, managers, bartenders, waitresses and spokespersons for sex trade workers--to provide an in-depth understanding of the strip world. Two strippers and a waitress served as consultants on this project to assist with the interpretation of the way in which the business operates from the inside, the benefits and difficulties of the job and how events occurring outside impinged on life in strip
clubs.

Although a wide range of overlapping characteristics exist, the subcultures of strip clubs can be classified into three distinct categories according to the appearance of the establishment, working conditions, kinds of clients who frequent the clubs and permissible forms of sexual contact permitted. Normative clubs (most often found in the inner core of large cities and in small towns in Ontario) were the predominant kind of establishment in the 1980s prior to the introduction of table and lap dancing. The relaxed friendly atmosphere conceals the fact that many such clubs are syndicate based businesses whose owners operated a chain of such establishments. In these clubs, beautiful professional strippers such as features, present a wide range of stage and table dancing exhibitions (with imagination and creativity in costumes and dance styles), complemented by props, lighting and choreography. Deejays with witty repartee and a full complement of service personnel including bartenders, waitresses and cooks round out the roster of service providers. Clients (with wide-ranging demographic characteristics) are explicitly informed by dancers about club rules regarding the degree and kind of sexual contact; such boundaries demarcate the limits of acceptable behaviour and reinforce social cohesion. The second classification of clubs labelled transgression are disreputable establishments, characterized by explicit sex acts on stage as well as "dirty" lap dancing. Clients are permitted to touch and verbally harass the dancers as well as to engage in fondling, masturbation and coitus in private booths. The distinguishing attribute of the third category of clubs (of which there are very few in Ontario) is that violence and sexual assault may be part of the stripper's interactions with patrons. These private "biker" clubs located in suburban industrial areas of cities emphasize performances with elements of shock appeal, provided for viewing to a rowdy although appreciative audience of men and women.
11.2. Changes in Canadian Political Economy: Reflections in the Sex Work of Stripping

Practices of stripping are the product of historical and social development, revealing both continuity and discontinuity with past practices and discourses. Men's desires function as a necessary precondition for sustaining stripping practices; at times the sexual demands and the economic resources of the predominantly male clientele appear to be more important than the physical and emotional needs of the stripper. Sex work is problematic because it is about sex and concerns practices which eroticize inequality. Sexual presentation assumes exaggerated proportions among women who seek to establish their livelihood in this manner. Although strippers are objectified and stripping practices are sexist and do not lead to the elimination of hierarchies and binary systems, strippers speak about choice and concepts of sex as work. This study found little support for Laura Mulvey's (1975) notion of the monolithic male gaze as a means of domination and exploiter/victim relationships. Strippers are unlikely to view their situation as arising from oppression, often colluding with capitalist and patriarchal interests to profit from both systems. As active agents, they manipulate customers in accordance with their needs and values and they, at times, reject the social order.

Although strippers do not speak with a single voice, prominent themes emerged concerning sex as emancipatory work. While viewing their occupation as a job undertaken for economic reasons, strippers speak about agency and the fact that they do not necessarily experience stripping as their clients may imagine by seeming to submit as a subordinate. Women report stripping for reasons beyond acquiring money; they enjoy a "fast track" life of glamour, travel, meeting people and fostering the admiration and attention of many men. Several also identify low-paying work and unsatisfactory traditional jobs for women as some of the reasons
that stripping represents a pragmatic choice of employment. In a number of ways, stripping challenges the assumption about women's dependency on men. The majority of these women describe a sense of power in controlling interactions with clients in a manner in which they can command money for their time and skills. Young women (many of whom come from poor backgrounds with limited job skills) immigrant and minority women, may gain recognition and status that would not be forthcoming in other areas of society.

Strippers enter their occupation for a variety of reasons, arising in the context of political and economic factors, specific circumstances of family environments and in response to social conventions which objectify women through the presentation of advertising and pornographic images in the culture. The career of a stripper is characterized by three phases including the period of initiation, a second stage of skills acquisition and acculturation followed by a third level of acquiescence and acceptance. Often encouraged by a male friend, agent or through contact with biker gangs, a stripper is hired on the basis of her appearance, interpersonal skills, ability to conform to club rules and, at times, by her willingness to engage in sex with a club manager. The predominant reason given by strippers for taking up their profession is to achieve a level of earnings which they could not obtain performing minimum wage jobs, since the majority do not have equal access to the training, education and job opportunities of many men and some other women in Canada. Strippers are also attracted to the flexible hours of work (especially if they have children) and the perception that they will be able to gain some control over the conditions of their work. The "ego boost", opportunities to complete their schooling and the ability to express their sexuality are mentioned as other facets of the work which are appealing to women.

Political economy is used to explain how stripping is rooted in complex political, economic and social/cultural relations,
demonstrating how such practices are constrained by social institutions and forces outside the immediate control of strippers. During the 1980s, transformations in the labour market resulting from a recession, technological change and transformations of state social services, increased unemployment among young women. Patterns of unequal opportunities, distributions of resources and control within the work setting labelled patriarchy, historically disadvantaged women in the marketplace, reinforcing the societal notion of women's primary responsible for domestic work and child care. The gendered notion of work, together with the expectation that women were pliant and adaptable workers willing to accept short-term contracts, confined women to traditional female occupations. As the number of women living with a spouse declined and the traditional nuclear family model was replaced by the dual-income family, the result was a substantial increase in those women who became economic independent and single parent heads of households. Opportunities resulting from changes in clerical work, a decline in public and private sector employment and the state's resistance to women's claims for equality, meant that fewer women had options with respect to paid labour in the newly restructured Canadian economy. A proliferating service industry characterized by part-time, low-wage contingent jobs with diminished security complied women's subordination in the secondary labour market. Changing sexual mores added significantly to the number of women willing to take up the occupation of stripping.

The sexual revolution, youth radicalism and the counter cultural revolution of the 1960s produced cultural forms of resistance and alternatives ways of viewing the dominant culture. As burlesque was fading, clubs owners wanted to entice customers away from the proliferating market of commercialized sex in pornographic videos and magazines, escort services, telephone sex and the advent of sex tourism. With the 1981 ruling of the Supreme Court of Ontario that determined the state did not have
superintendence over entertainment, nude dancing began to evolve across the province. This event was followed by the introduction of table dancing as the new genre of stripping in the early 1980s, superseded in the mid-1980s by the initiation of lap dancing that diminished the demarcation between stripping and prostitution. The new strip techniques provided the patron with a more sexually explicit and personalized performance at table side and in private booths, based on a more entrepreneurial spirit of individual and diversified competitiveness. During various transitional periods, strippers were ostracized or dismissed initially for refusing to table dance and then for protesting about undertaking lap dancing.

Transformation of the labour process of stripping (from performance art to live sexual acts), allowed the club owners to generate increased revenue, eliminate the costs of elaborate stage shows and extract table and lap dancing fees and more work from strippers. By turning their attention to the work routines, owners and managers extended supervision into the labour process of stripping. Control over some strip practices passed from strippers to employers and clients, as many women were subject to speed-ups and work intensification. The majority of strippers who no longer received a salary from the clubs became free agents and took on more responsibility for their work. Managers took advantage of the segmented labour force of full-time, highly statused, skilled and well-paid feature, and the large number of part-time, unskilled and poorly paid dancers who were amenable to increased managerial supervision, intensified work schedules and an increased pace of work. While a number of strippers viewed these managerial practices as patently unfair, quit or were fired, some strippers welcomed the changes which allowed them to increase their earnings through contacts with customers. In contrast to the strippers of burlesque who performed a few stage shows, enjoyed long breaks and many secure years of employment in the same club, the new strip practices altered and intensified
the work, requiring the contemporary stripper to perform several stage shows a day, to engage in continuous and explicit table and/or lap dancing and to move about on a club circuit. Skills associated in the past with the craft of stage stripping were diluted, however, interpersonal, marketing and financial negotiating skills augmented the new presentation of strip.

The majority of workers in Canada are employed in the service industry, many on a part time contractual basis. The fastest growing segment of the labour market has conventionally served as a job ghetto for workers who are young, female and part of a visible minority population. With the contraction of many forms of private and community life, services associated with domestic work and the nurturing of others have become a commodity added to the new division of labour in exchange relations. The provision of sexual services is a growing and salient aspect of a consumer society preoccupied with commercial interactions, sensuality, competition, acquisition, choice and instant gratification. Within the service industry of stripping, pay and privilege inequities are created among woman who work full time and obtain substantial benefits (most often features), and those women who work part time with limited benefits, employment insecurity and high rates of job turnover.

Political economy examines social problems based on multiple axes of social injustice to explicate the nature and dynamics of oppression, and to view the consequent differential access of individuals and groups to power. Operating under multiple categories of difference, the social and economic factors that determine and differentiate women's work lives are revealed in the labour process of stripping. By assigning women to different strip tasks, a ethnic/racial division of labour maintains and creates differences between women of colour and White women. Racial and gender stereotypes prevalent in stripping are pronounced in work processes, as young women of colour provide
intimate services for predominantly White and almost exclusively male patrons of some means. These women are set apart from White women by quotas in terms of hiring and supervisory practices. Women of colour are more likely to experience increased pressure to perform in a more explicit manner and they are also more likely to encounter harassment by club owners, clients and the police.

All strippers speak about the large amount of money they earn or have a potential to earn as a motivating factor for entering and staying in the business. The great variation in strippers' salaries range from features making $2,500 a week, to dancers who freelance and receive most of their money (in lieu of a minimum base-rate wage) through fees and tips provided by clients. To cope with the increased number of client contacts needed to generate their income, contemporary strippers perform a more standardized and simplistic form of table and lap dancing. Fines are levied in an arbitrary manner against strippers who are uncooperative as well as for such things as being late, improperly dressed, insubordinate to a manager and failing to provide intimacy in client interactions.

Due to legislation and social stigmatization that defines stripping as deviant, strippers are not recipients of equitable treatment and social justice. Unlike many workers in Ontario who come under legislated employment standards covering working conditions, minimum wage rates, hours of employment, overtime pay, vacation periods, maternity leaves, pensions, health and safety factors and conditions pertaining to the termination of employment, many strippers have not been able to secure the most basic of working benefits. Nor have they necessarily been able to garner coverage for dental care, extended health benefits and life insurance. Although strippers pay taxes in the regulated business of stripping, protection in hiring practices, recall after layoffs, dismissal without just cause and the right of
appeal to a labour tribunal regarding disputes, elude the majority who work in this occupation.

This investigation also attempted to understand how the expectations and ideals of femininity were socially constituted through the body work of stripping. The culture presents women as the body beautiful in television, films, advertising, popular songs and fairy tales. The particular version of femininity with heterosexual appeal found in stripping is put together by social, political and economic forces within strip clubs in response to popular cultural practices and discourses. Stripping is a practice in which gender and sexuality structure the way in which strippers interact with clients. These practices take sexuality to be ahistorical and natural, associated with public heterosexual encounters that legitimizes the maintenance and production of patriarchal and capitalist forms of social organization. Similar to many women in Western culture, strippers believe that perfecting their bodies will assist in achieving personal and marketplace rewards. Concepts of beauty and personal attractiveness (seen in advertising images of women and contemporary messages of fashion and pornography) are incorporated into the stripper's production of desire to highlight the importance of the client's interests in her body. Specific stripping practices, nonetheless, challenge the notion that inequalities are rooted in biology, that men are more powerful than women and that women's rightful place is in the home. Women of strip actively participate in defining and redefining themselves through the work of body decoration and embellishment. Their working routines are enmeshed in processes of beautification related to perceived job requirements and cultural concepts of femininity. These processes include costuming, dieting, exercising, tanning, together with the use of makeup, manicure and hair styling procedures. Although time consuming, expensive and at times painful, the glamorous appearance of strippers disguises the work needed to achieve such
beauty, particularly for those who submit to cosmetic surgery involving breast implants and liposuction.

The largely unrecognized and undervalued social/emotional and interpersonal work of stripping was also part of the exploration of this study. The importance of social emotional work processes performed by women and the obscurity of their gender-based origins were disclosed. The way consciousness enters into skill and consent, highlighting the importance of subjectivity is made visible in this feminist material labour process of stripping. As stripping evolved during the 1980s and 1990s, some aspects of the work became more simplified and routinized while other facets called for more imaginative and inventive skills to be added to the new strip routines. Through production of the simulacrum of private emotions, strippers attempt to exert control over their work processes in specific client interactions. Strip work can best be understood by redefining notions of skills to take into account gendered patterns of social/emotional and interactional work (as part of service industry labour) in an advanced capitalist economy.

Strippers who lack power and authority as well as material resources characteristically use sexuality and social/emotional skills as a female form of power. The emotional labour and the relational work of these interactions (which supports the social construction and maintenance of male-female relations of power) is viewed as women's work and a component of the skills and attitudes brought from the workplace of the home. Similar to the way in which relational work has been incorporated into commercial transactions within other service industry jobs, strippers learn to socialize and manage customers with conversational skills, gestures, smiles and eye contact. These socially engineered interactional techniques are an integral part of contemporary strip practices, designed to entice the customer to engage with the stripper. Successful strippers use social
knowledge and skills to enter into complex negotiations of economic and gender exchange relations. Stripper-client interactions have a critical air of authenticity; however, they do not necessarily represent genuine and egalitarian exchanges. Although demonstrating gender-specific patterns of behaviour by cooperating and adapting to the needs of the client, the stripper does not necessarily accommodate passively, nor does she give permanent consent to subordination. Within differential patterns of work and social expectations, strippers endeavour to establish encounters based on mutual understanding, reward and reciprocity.

In some cases, strippers turn their attention to other aspects of working conditions such as the appearance of dressing rooms and the temperature in clubs. Under conditions that do not meet with their approval, strippers transgress and transform norms within strip clubs. No less than other workers they also negotiate, subvert and negate the idea that they are passive objects. Defending their right to this job, most women in stripping attempt to shape the balance of power with managers and to exercise control in client interactions. While they are expected to cater to men's sexual desires, they undermine outcomes if encounters do not have the desired financial and emotional consequences. Many strippers focus on approaches to supervision which can range from managers who intervene on behalf of dancers with unruly patrons (and who do not pressure women to table or lap dance), to managers who attempt to put into place rigid and formal structures of control. In smaller clubs, managers often intervene in the labour process through personal contacts with club personnel including strippers; such an approach fosters cooperation and loyalty and discourages class and collective interests. Solutions to problems are addressed within an individual and competitive framework (often based on arbitrary managerial practices) that resort to divide and conquer tactics in an attempt to motivate, pacify and discipline strippers.
Larger normative and transgressional clubs have more formalized mechanisms of control based on planning, supervision and a greater centralization of authority. In seeking to maximize profits, managers use employment policies concerning hiring practices, time schedules and job descriptions to extend the division of labour. Strippers are generally neither compliant individuals nor victims of such practices. They contest the terrain of their problematic working conditions (including harassment by managers and customers) largely through their own initiatives of verbal confrontation and retaliation. While they withdraw, work to rule, commit acts of sabotage and quit their jobs, resistance in strip clubs is not usually linked to campaigns of collective action. Although the stripper's code of ethics extends to covering shifts and informing one another concerning difficult customers and employers, their actions do not advocate solutions to oppression within a feminist framework. Nor do strippers perceive that trade unions will address the immediate problems many encounter on the job in their attempts to establish the kind of respect which many of these women seek. Most strippers endorse individual negotiations with managers concerning salary, working conditions and work place difficulties, and they comprehend that they will be valued and rewarded through their attachments to men (even as most seek to establish their independence and economic autonomy).

11.3. The Future of Stripping

Far from being replaced by other genres within the sex trade industry, stripping has held its own (by evolving from table to lap dancing) with a number of accompanying changes in the strip labour process. Given that stripping practices are permeated with cultural values and expectations (that produce and reproduce norms which are linked to wider social processes arising out of society), the everyday experiences of strippers can serve as a window to provide an understanding of the contemporary social
world. Stripping is part of a discourse regarding the way specific cultural images are produced and it reflects the way in which gender roles, class-based behaviour and racial identities are socially constituted. An exploration of stripping raises questions about some of the salient issues of our time with respect to work, sexuality, desire, economic status and relationships of power.

As the economy continues to create more part-time, service sector jobs in contrast with full-time career employment, young women are likely to increasingly enter stripping. The occupations taken up by women and the conditions under which they work should be a concern to feminists, labour sociologists, government policy analysts, economists and people interested in a Canadian society based on fairness and equity. Not unlike prostitution and the sex tourism industries of developing nations, rich nations have also turned to marketing the sexual skills of specific populations of women in the interest of capitalism. It is no accident that many of these individuals on the front lines of economic global transformations are working class women and some are women of colour. The majority of strippers choose their work out of economic necessity, despite the fact that strippers are subject to oppressive working conditions, to legal regulation and to sexual harassment. What is of concern to many strippers is their struggle to control the immediate working environment, garner social support for the kind of work they perform and educate the public concerning the legal and social rights they wish to establish.

In the interest of inclusion and emancipation, the goals of destigmatizing and decriminalizing sex trade work ought to be of prime importance to the women's movement. Women's magazines, journals and events such as International Women's Day have recognized that the needs of minority women ought to be given preference over the interests of women who have some degree of
privilege and power in the society. They frequently experience working conditions similar to other workers in this informal sector including long hours, a lack of job security and unsafe working conditions. Enfranchisement ought to involve sexual minorities such as sex trade workers. Poor women, young women and women of colour who strip for a living share many of the goals of the women's movement with regard to establishing agency, economic autonomy and control over conditions of their work. Sex trade workers provide a service within labour processes which resemble many of the conditions of work for women in the service industry. These problems need to be addressed on many fronts simultaneously through the utilization and reform of labour legislation and societal attitudes with respect to issues of wages, working conditions as well as health and safety factors. When sex work is not viewed as labour, it becomes difficult for these workers to achieve minimum standards of employment and personal safety in their working lives.

To date, there have been few Canadian studies devoted to the social organization of stripping which assess the factors surrounding supply and demand, the structural forces that contribute to the conditions of this kind of work and a cost benefit analysis concerning those working in this industry. In contrast to working processes dominated by standardization and mass production, stripping practices have been transformed (within the genre of entertainment) to respond to individual and customized consumer demands. Making their own contribution to the gross domestic product, strippers operate in the marketplace as part of a globalized world economy. They offer niche marketing of sexual services at a competitive price. Yet there remains resistance to viewing stripping as a form of work which deserves the protection extended in other areas of the workforce. Without recognition that these women are part of the paid labour force, they are vulnerable to exploitation as well as human rights abuses.
Stripping offers a limited challenge to the notion of male dominance that underlies the patriarchal meaning of sexual difference. Some stripping practices shape attitudes, expectations, patterns of desire and overt behaviours in ways that demean women and eroticize their subordination. It might be argued that the sexist content and the patriarchal context of stripping (which precludes real economic power and choice for women) means that stripping cannot be reformed from its essentially alienating infrastructure. Stripping practices cannot, however, be held exclusively accountable for the fact that women continue to experience gender inequality and some are the targets of male sexual violence. While specific stripping practices are racist, objectify women and lead strippers to complain about harassment, other practices confront erotic ignorance, address sexual prohibitions and allow for greater sexually expressiveness.

Acting subversively within the social order, stripping also conveys messages about sexual adventure, advocating sex outside of marriage, anonymous sex, voyeuristic sex, public sex, commercial sex and, at times, nonheterosexual sexual encounters. The place of agency allows the stripper to actively participate in advancing sexual autonomy and engaging sexual culture. Stripping offers an initial challenge to the notion of male dominance, since neither the client nor the employer acquire unlimited command over the woman. Practices of stripping flout conventional sexual mores, ridicule sexual hypocrisy and underscore the importance of sexual needs. Stripping serves a useful social function, since as experts in human sexuality and emotional nurturing strippers engage in sex therapy and sex education. Even as stripping reinforces male power, it also destabilizes it by presenting a potential threat to patriarchal control over women's sexuality. In setting their own rules and demanding payment for sexual encounters, strippers limit access
to their sexuality and negotiate the boundaries of their sexual autonomy. Operating outside of the confines of traditional morality, participants of strip are emancipated from some of the constraints of conventionality and free to engage in sexual exploration. With changes in attitudes concerning sexuality and commercial sexual exchanges, stripping may in future become less sexist and may make a positive contribution to an understanding of bodily and emotional experiences.

Feminism is distinguished by its political nature and commitment to material and social change in taking up the cause of eliminating injustice, oppression and exploitation. Although it has been a privileged site of sexuality, feminism has not addressed many of the issues of sexual dissidents such as strippers. The fact remains that many of these women are governed by ideologies that classify them as deviant, inferior, dangerous and subject to legal persecution. Feminists ought to acquire an affinity for working with these women on the margin, assessing both the oppressive structures and the liberatory tendencies of strip practices. Operating from a position of interpretive privilege fails to account for a plurality of understanding in the lives of different women. The challenge remains to provide the same protection to strippers as afforded to other women, workers and citizens in society with respect to working conditions, salary, retirement benefits and workers' rights. Given that the struggle for women's equality includes freedom of expression and sexual choice, it is difficult to understand how some feminists allege to support the interests of sex workers (by claiming to know what is best for them) while aligning themselves with repressive forces of the state which call for censorship. This position is in contradiction to the commitment to personal liberty advocated by the vast majority of strippers including the right to make choices that may be inexplicable or offensive to others.
Despite the stigmatization and marginalization of sex trade workers, the fact that strippers have yet to achieve employment benefits, paid maternity leave, unionization and working conditions free of racism, that they often experience harassment on the job by clients, managers and the police and that they encounter violence for which there is little legal recourse, the stripper's plight has not been taken up within the women's movement. Stripping and other practices of commercial sex continue to serve as a fault line in internally dividing the feminist community. Some feminists argue that women providing paid sexual services for men causes them to submit to degradation and subordination, and such practices, therefore, offer little to feminist notions of liberation. While many feminists reject an anti-sex worker position, the minority favour greater legitimacy to sex trade work. This study suggests that a position of compromise might be forged between the radical feminist and sexual liberationist camps to provide a feminist politics which speaks to sexuality as a site of oppression and emancipation, upholds a position of choice, does not advocate censorship and is supportive of sex trade workers concerning improvement of the daily conditions of their working lives.

Without eliminating commercial sex, it may be possible to eradicate gender inequality, making sexual services available in a context of wealth, power and jobs shared more equitably. Feminists, nonetheless, ought to move beyond a preoccupation concerning commercial sexuality to focus on other areas of gender inequality including the media, politics, religion, childrearing practices, psychiatry, job discrimination, unequal pay, the state and the family that play a more pivotal role in the oppression of women. Struggles against the sexism of sex work are best accomplished through education, expressive exploration and protest. State intervention in the form of regulation concerning consensual, adult sexual activity turns commercial sexual practices into stigmatized forms of sex. Criminalizing stripping
practices renders sex workers vulnerable to exploitation and unable to organize for better working conditions. The regulation of lap dancing is symbolic of a broader descent into disorder in the social body concerning the age-old fear of pollution and female sexuality. Providing knowledge concerning safer sex practices would be preferable to regulating consensual, adult sexual behaviour. Regulation fails to address issues of economic disparities between men and women, class locations or to address issues of racial discrimination that lead some women to enter stripping. Once sex work is criminalized and deemed unprotected, legislation often enacted against sexually explicit literature and gay and lesbian erotica. Strippers who are victims of sexual harassment and assault complain that they receive less than vigorous support in pressing the state to uphold social justice through legal recourse with respect to their grievances. Once sex work is criminalized and deemed unprotected, legislation often enacted against sexually explicit literature and gay and lesbian erotica.

Finally, this study did not specifically explore topics such as drug usage or the way the working lives of strippers are affected by organized crime (especially through association with individuals in motorcycle clubs) or issues concerning violence in the work place and in the home. Nor did this investigation attempt to make distinct connections between the public and personal lives of strippers. A more thorough examination of the social lives of strippers may reveal that not only do they fraternize with people in the sex and entertainment industry, but that stripping work processes deeply impinge on their personal lives to shape their identities, subjectivities and life choices. A fruitful task for future investigation might be to examine the myriad of interpersonal and social/emotional skills that strippers bring to the marketplace (which employers have come to rely upon), although such flexible, diversified and skilled work processes have not been incorporated into the concept of skill
that has resulted in such work being largely unrecognized and unrewarded. In the interest of advancing arguments about pay and employment equity, stripping would be a prime area to undertake a skills assessment analysis with has implications for other women in the service sector. In answer to the question where does a woman go when she leaves stripping, it might be worthwhile in future inquiries to take up the issue of what happens to individuals who spend their youth in the sexual service of others and are forced to retire long before other workers. Many strippers appear to leave the business with few resources, limited transportable skills and problems of adjustment, with the exception of some who take with them the memories of a few good times.
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Appendix A
THE WOMEN OF STRIP

12.1. Introduction

This appendix provides background information on some of the subjects of the study. Included are two strippers and a waitress who served as consultants on this project along with a few of the other women, to provide some variety by way of background, age, experience and perceptions concerning the women who work in strip. A detailed chronology of the early working life of one of these women is presented to accentuate some of the critical points of her growth and development as a stripper. Over the course of time that this investigation was ongoing, I made dozens of observations in strip clubs and spoke with approximately sixty people concerning stripping practices. Some of these observations are presented, together with highlights of a biographical nature, to provide a context within which a description and analysis of the working and social life of the stripper can be understood.

— Amanda —

Upon leaving the stage at the Copa after completing her number to "You Sexy Thing", Amanda confidently strolled toward my table to chat. Having attitude and presence is essential, she remarked, for a feature. She has known for some time that her beauty was part of her cultural capital, which translates into power because it brings with it male admiration and affiliation. While she was speaking, I caught glimpses of other lives she could have led and may lead in the future with her slim and very tall physique and her striking Caucasian beauty. For a moment when I looked at Amanda, I saw a Vogue model, a young matronly woman married to a rich man, a poised media woman positioned in front of a television camera. I was aware that for all my
liberation, I had cast this young woman in rather traditional feminine roles (not unlike those in stripping) which capitalize upon her appearance rather than viewing her as a potential orthopaedic surgeon or an engineer.

Amanda plans to remain in stripping, pleased with the life the she has established. She has travelled across Canada as a result of her job, met numerous interesting people, acquired a fabulous wardrobe and has a bank account larger than most women in Canada. Coming from a home in which her every move was monitored and supervised, almost as important to Amanda as fame is a sense of independence which she had achieved through stripping. She enjoys "coming and going as I please, deciding who my friends are, taking a drink or two and making up my own mind about what is good for me". Her strict upbringing in a small Canadian-Croatian family has not "turned me off family". She is able to understand that many of the restrictions imposed upon her "were for my own good"; however, when Amanda has a family of her own she plans to "cut her children a lot more slack" than she was afforded as a child.

- Amber Starr -

Amber, a tall, elegant young woman typical of features, was described by the disc jockey of the club in which she worked as a "classy lady". Employed for almost a year at the Cannonball club in Brampton, she recently changed clubs because the customers were "growing tired of me"; she also wanted a change and her money had begun to diminish as a result of working in the same establishment. She takes a very pragmatic approach to dancing, trying to provide the maximum amount of pleasure for the customers in the shortest possible time so she might exit the clubs with the "most amount of money in my pocket". Operating as a one-woman business tycoon, decisions including her exercise regime, costume purchases and sun tanning sessions (to achieve a
"California look") are carefully orchestrated to advance her career. She spoke about how she had mastered a number of body techniques, costume tricks and makeup procedures through hours of observation and adaptation of the work of other strippers to her own act. Every detail seems thought out, leaving little to chance in the presentation of a very sleek, professional but self-made persona.

Amber stated that she "doesn't do drugs" because she was dependent on cocaine for two years; nor could I buy her a drink as she had also "given up that habit". For awhile "everything I earned went up my nose". She is determined "not to be used since the club owners deliberately get dancers hooked on drugs so they will be dependent and have to dance for their drugs". Her carefully worked out savings plans will be used to buy her a condominium, enabling her "to have something to show for dancing" when she eventually leaves the business. By her calculations, she has been able to save approximately fifteen thousand dollars a year. While she has also purchased a car, expensive clothing, jewellery and taken several trips, she considers that as long as she is not buying drugs she remains "on target", toward being a home owner in the near future.

Describing her family life as poor but well-adjusted, she was the youngest of four children who grew up in Oakville. While she admires her parents for the dedication and hard work they undertook to raise their children on her father's meagre salary as a truck driver, she was clear that she did not want to emulate her mother and become a "stay-at-home housewife". As a youngster she recalls seeking out fun and excitement, the very elements she claimed were missing in her earlier staid lifestyle. Her first and only job prior to stripping was as a carnie for Ringling Brothers circus, a job she described as much more difficult and less glamorous than her current career. In stripping she has found her forte, combining excitement, admiration, travel and a
very lucrative paying career.

- Annie Ample - (Consultant)

Annie Ample, a centerfold in *Oui, Penthouse* and *Cherry*, once lived at Hugh Hefner's mansion. She socialized with *Screw* magazine editor Al Goldstein, had her 44DD bust insured by Lloyd's of London for a million dollars, was a feature dancer making $4,500 a week at the height of her career, was the only stripper to have her own show in Las Vegas and was billed (by her own account) as the number one stripper in the world. An articulate energetic woman in her early forties, who claimed to have had many appearances in her repertoire from numerous magazine layouts over the years, she was most distinguished by her curvaceous figure and her interest in off-beat clothing that enhanced her Italian and Native-American features. Equally attractive as a naturally dark brunette or bleach blonde with a range of hairdos (from a long page-boy style to a short crew cut of approximately an inch all over her head) Annie had a bright red pony tail propped on top of her head at the time we met.

My first interview with Annie and Marshall (her husband who was both a musician and a bodyguard) occurred when she was being threatened "for going public" as she was leaving the stripping business for the first time. Intimidated by "biker guys for telling all on a W5 television show" in Toronto, she agreed to meet only after going through a complicated process of verifying my identity in order to protect herself. "Some of these gangs use female decoys to smoke out people they want to find", she explained. Although she donned a classical heroine disguise of dark glasses and a hat to subdue her carrot-red hair, I was certain it was Annie who swept into Bemmelman's restaurant with a flair, clad in an eye-popping green velvet jumpsuit and a cape which went to the floor. She revealed that she would shortly be off to Europe to make a movie entitled *Pandora* and to scout out
possibilities for her nightclub act. With my limited understanding of stripping and perhaps evidencing a patronizing attitude, I stereotypically envisioned the movie as Pandora does pornography. Annie and her husband (whom I later learned played several musical instruments, worked as a back-up musician for leading rock musicians such as Ronnie Hawkins and produced "high-tech" music in his home studio) began to discuss how many people forget that, according to Greek legend, when the layers of Pandora's box were removed it was "hope" that was discovered at the bottom. I knew I was going to be the fortunate recipient of an interesting educational experience. Several hours later, after dinner and a few bottles of wine, intertwined with conversation concerning Eastern and Western mythology, education, drugs, violence, films, music, love, sex, children, peace, witchcraft, the 1960s and stripping (or "adult entertainment" as Annie referred to it) I had made an inside contact in the business which was to prove immensely important.

Jayne Mansfield was Annie's childhood idol, not only because she was a "woman who became a star by exploiting her body but also because she remained vulnerable". Toward the end of her career, Annie signed a contract with the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas to star in a production of her idol's life. Like Jayne, she described herself as a "product of hype who loved the media and made a living talking and taking off my clothes." By taking her extremely lucrative career into her own hands in 1977, she resisted the label "dumb blonde"; by her own admission she found "an ingenious way to have fun and exploit the sex business, rather than being exploited by it". Despite temptation, she insisted that she had "resisted the problems of the porn industry, didn't succumb to the advances of wealthy men who could have made me very comfortable, and didn't get involved with drugs even though I was surrounded by them twenty-four hours a day".

She created the character Annie Ample to support her two
children, Holly and Jason, whom she described as "the pride of my life and more important than being on Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous". She indicated that prior to retiring she had never taken time to examine her life because it would have been a process that was too painful. Typical of "people who are abused in childhood", she was "in a daze, learned to be numb and not to let things hurt you". And you do these things to survive, one day at a time being careful not to make long-range plans or emotional commitments to anything or anyone". Becoming a "movie star" to escape the poverty and harsh conditions of her youth, she described herself as "an observer at the events of my own life".

Annie grew up during the 1950s in Old Town, a poor section of San Diego. Despite being poor, one of her fondest memories of childhood was being taken by her grandfather in a little wagon to the market and to the circus. Her relations on her mother's side were Italians who emigrated to the United States from a little village near Bologna. Her father, an American native and ex-marine, was "the kind of man women adored no matter what kind of work he did". Described as having a perfect job as a television repairman, the work of her "playboy" father revolved around making "house calls" for lonely women. Although Annie was often taken on these assignments as a "cover", she learned to keep quiet to avoid his "unreasonable meanness" when she discovered that "he was servicing more than television sets". It became clear that her father's alcoholism was the source of many disagreements between her parents and the cause, as well, of the family's poverty.

Certain that her father was angry with her "because she wasn't a boy", she was scolded by him when she experimented with various appearances by becoming a "tomboy". Yet when she brought a boy home from school for lunch, her father, in a drunken rage beat her "telling me that I shouldn't go out with boys". Nothing pleased him and her fear and mistrust gradually turned to hatred.
"I didn't want anything to do with my father," she said; "he made my skin crawl." Once, when she was baking a cake, he emptied his pockets into it and filled it with tobacco and screws. "I guess it was typical of the way we felt for each other", she explained, "I loathed him and he thought I was garbage". When she started school speaking only Italian, she found reading and writing in English very difficult. All her classmates were promoted to grade two; however, when she opened her report card it was blank. Protesting to her mother "you got a mentally retarded daughter", her father was often to shout at her "mental retard" or to say "What stinks in here? Is it the M.R.?" Although psychological tests later in life confirmed that she was above average in intelligence, her learning disability was not well understood at that time. Struggling with dyslexia she only learned to read as an adult and still can only "handwrite" with difficulty.

The neighbourhood children cruelly labelled her "wopaho, halfbreed or M.R." and refused to play with her. For many years her imaginary friend Suzy and a beautiful blonde doll were her only companions to stave off her overwhelming feelings of confusion and loneliness. Her cherished possessions consisted of McCall's doll clothing and a poodle skirt with matching purse. Withdrawing into a fantasy world, Annie watched old movies on television and perfected her skills of singing, dancing and reciting little rhymes. Due to her father's occupation, her family was one of the first on her block to have a coloured television, and "since the kids wouldn't walk with me to school, I charged them a penny to see T.V. programs". The situation worsened when her "exotic-looking mother with the well-built body" suffered a massive stroke causing their close relationship to dissipate. Annie became withdrawn emotionally, had continuous fights with her father which were "just one more drain on me", and began to be "shuffled all over the place".

"My home life was a nightmare." Her father's verbal abuse
grew worse when he brought home strangers from the bars. One night she awoke "with a man who ran his nasty little hands over my body and stopped between my legs". She is convinced that her sister stayed away from the house because her father made sexual advances toward her sibling. At that time in her life Annie began to have nightmares "although the nightmare was the waking; reality was the nightmare. I would fall asleep at school because of everything that went on at my home in the night. I was in the special ed class and I wasn't popular with the kids. I was ten years old and already a reject." At Christmas the children picked names and exchanged dollar-valued presents. Her present was a pair of barrettes with one missing causing the other children to laugh: "I didn't even deserve a whole present." As a result of moving so many times she was unable to recall her teachers or her schools; as well, her few possessions were lost or stolen. The little money she acquired at that time was spent on makeup and clothing.

Although many girls beginning adolescence pause to gaze privately into a mirror to check the curve of their calf muscle, the shape of their thigh and to wonder if they are going to have a bustline, these changing dimensions of femininity had particular meaning for Annie. With the aid of her panache and some finery purchased at second-hand clothing stores, she began to dress in outfits such as a "purple Indian shirt and a skirt with a silver belt like that worn by glamorous people on television". Far from immune to the images she witnessed on television of movie stars sporting the season's bodily look, calendar pinup models at the gas station and glamorous models in high-fashion photographs (she viewed occasionally in women's magazines) she began to remake herself in these images. On her first date during the summer of 1963 she met Angie who wore a tight skirt, high heels and mesh nylons. Since "she obviously knew the score", the remainder of Annie's summer was spent trying to achieve a correspondingly noticeable and sophisticated look.
By fashioning a bikini bottom out of a seventy-five cent Goodwill bathing suit, "this skinny kid with the giant chest was a sight. No wonder I had such a great summer." While her father was taking her around to bars in her "little flapper costume" in order to obtain drinks and money, Annie began to enter and win talent contests.

By the fall of that year however, everything had again changed: "If I necked with a boy, I was a whore; if other girls did it they were just being teenagers." At a neighbour's party, she tried to get away as she was pulled by a boy, into a broom closet. When discovered by the mother of the boy she was labelled a "bad girl", sent home and the children of the family were no longer allowed to associate with her. Hanging out at a recreation centre to escape the "emotional roller coaster of my home" reinforced that "bad reputation". Describing herself as "very innocent about sex", she did not understand that "her chest was a sexual turn-on" for many of the males in the neighbourhood. At the same center, she was attacked by two seventeen-year-old boys who forced her behind a tree in order to pull off her top and stare at her breasts. Annie remarked that "I felt unclean, and boys and men began to terrify me. I was learning not to trust them." Subsequently, one of the girls in her class made the cutting remark, "teacher, I have to move away from Karen because she smells. I felt a stab of pain go through me. I had two baths a day; the girl was just being mean. It was mostly girls that disliked me, but I couldn't imagine why. It was the boys who held me down while the girls kicked me in the stomach after school." Her time spent volunteering in a senior citizen's centre was described as "some of my happiest days back then. I could make them laugh, sing to them and tell jokes ... and I'd feel good about myself".

Annie was married for the first time at fifteen in a
Goodwill wedding dress with an eighteen-dollar ring. When Mark paid attention to her and bought her clothes and Christmas presents, she opted for marriage to escape the "piss ants" at school. Her hope chest consisted of a shoe box full of makeup, souvenirs and second-hand clothing: "I was living the American teenage fantasy and was incredibly happy." At the birth of her daughter, Annie described herself as so naive that she took a comic book with her into the labour room anticipating that she would have little to do. Her fantasy was not to last, as Mark soon became jealous and verbally abusive. In a rage, he put his fist through a door and physically abused Annie. While Annie was decorating the house, Mark "spent money on booze, guns, cars and was making out with another woman". Realizing her need to work to support herself and her children, she secured a job as a receptionist at a massage parlour where her naivety prevented her from recognizing that "some form of prostitution was going on in that place". Upon finding Mark with a shotgun in his hand and calling for a SWAT team to remove him from her home, it was clear that she would need to retain the job in the massage parlour.

Her subsequent encounter with Michael led to the two of them reading Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet, becoming vegetarian, taking up herbal medicines, panhandling flowers on the street, giving up smoking, and for Annie wearing long flowing dresses when they moved to the woods a hundred miles north of Sacramento. Recovering from a miscarriage and an abortion, she became a "showgirl", earning $200 a night at a Lake Tahoe club in Reno, Nevada, in the same period of time. She was, however, neither "crazy about stripping or supporting a man". When diagnosed with cancer of the uterus at twenty-one years of age and without getting a second opinion, she had her ovaries removed because "she was used to doctors being authority figures so I went along with it". Awaking from a dream in which "I heard dripping and upon discovering it had come from the rupture of a major artery,
she was rushed to the hospital to receive multiple transfusions. It was Michael who said I shouldn't have made such a fuss and that's when I knew the relationship was over."

Moving on to a go-go bar called Cheater's, she met Jake, the owner of the establishment. Spending a whole paycheque getting her hair and nails done for their first date proved worthwhile to get him to notice her. When she indicated that she wanted to study herbs and Indian folklore and he, in turn, suggested that he would help her, "I was gone. Once again I allowed myself to be seduced, a pattern I fell into for the next ten years. Jake was broke all the time, didn't have funds to fix the club and couldn't pay me to dance". She worked in other clubs, put on shows at a local naval base and began to do some modelling to obtain money for groceries and babysitting. Many days she drove from her paid employment to Jake's club across town to dance free of charge. Since Jake was described as "dazzled" by big breasts, Annie travelled to Tijuana when "bugged" by Jake to have her breasts enlarged. "It shocks me when I look back on it now" she admitted, "that I could have seriously thought of changing my body to make a man love me." Claiming she built up the club by selling membership cards, launching a "King for the Day" promotional campaign, repairing the washrooms, installing search lights in the parking lot and plastering the walls with photographs of celebrities, she "never dreamed it would be taken away from me. You give people what they want. It's an illusion -- like me and my naked dancing when I'm not really naked at all."

As Jake's "temper tantrums and his drinking" increased, Annie attempted to change her occupation "to keep the family afloat financially". She worked for a time on a hospital geriatric ward but left fearing that, as a result of her learning disability, she might dispense the wrong medication to patients. Similarly, she lasted two nights as a cocktail waitress limited by the fact that she could not remember nor write down the
customers' orders. She cleaned houses and opened an antique store, the latter which was bankrupted by Jake and his father within two months. Obtaining the first vending license in San Francisco, she sold shrimp from a cart until she became ill. Returning to stripping she "went from living on food stamps to buying a mansion and a pony for my children". She also accepted Jake's proposal of marriage. "I wish I had belonged to a women's group in those days", she said. "I needed someone to say -- this isn't right, this isn't good for your children or for you. I didn't have a choice; I had never been without a man and I couldn't imagine life if there wasn't one around. I ended up repeating the same destructive cycle over and over again."

Self-labelled as the most photographed figure model in the world in 1980, she became featured each month in magazines such as Hustler, Velvet and High Society. "Sex kitten" and "sex goddess" were popular terms during that era describing Annie's mixture of the innocence and playful sexuality as a new sex symbol for glossy and pulp magazines. Posing nude for men's magazines was "money in the bank for me". This progressed to stripping across North America, based on the notoriety which followed her as a "figure model". It was the legendary Candy Samples, a friend and perhaps the most famous stripper of her day who persuaded Annie to take up stripping in Canada. Not all clubs were glamorous; in a club in Utica New York, Annie improvised with a car stereo sound system and Christmas tree lights to illuminate the stage with an obliging deejay who switched the lights on and off for "special effects". As her reputation grew so did the glamorous atmosphere in which she worked. This included the club owned by the Mitchell brothers in San Francisco, who financed the movie "Behind the Green Door". In the Starlight Room, nude women could be found dancing quickly on stage and lap dancing for an extra five dollars. The Braille room was preserved for women in glass cages performing lesbian acts which permitted the customers to "stick their hands in and grop
if they put money into a little dish."

Early in her career Annie made it a point to converse with customers, believing that she "represented a little bit of Hollywood and glamour for these men". Describing herself as an "illusion" with the ability to create the appearance of great beauty and sexuality, she claimed never to have thought of herself as either "good looking or sexy". Her heart ached for the men who told her they had saved their money all week to see her show and for those who remarked that they had amassed a large collection of her pictures. For years her fans paid $9.95 each month for a poster, letter and a news bulletin concerned with Annie's activities. They also sent her presents including stuffed animals, jewellery, costumes and hundreds of dollars by mail. Being very cognizant of publicity, she took every opportunity to promote herself including an incident when she went for a "bikini walk" (at Universal City in Hollywood) near a parade for Vice-President George Bush and had to be rescued by a SWAT team. Newspaper headlines the next day which detailed how Mr. Bush's aids were asking Annie for her autograph read "Bush and Bush - Almost a Riot". As her fan club and fame spread, so did the "freebies" attached to being a celebrity, such as moving up automatically to first class when she flew on American Airlines.

At that time, she entered "any kind of contest I could to get publicity", including the "Gong Show" and the "Dating Game" on television. "I kept winning contests", because I could put my legs over my shoulders and move fast with a big chest. What a sight that was!" While she continued to shop in second-hand stores for clothing, she added touches of "high-class sleaze" to her costumes, purchased at Frederick's of Hollywood. For a brief time she was one of Muhammad Ali's Angels and was paid "hundreds of dollars a day, travelled all over the place, stayed in first-class hotels and was picked up in a limo". In 1978 she appeared with Alice Cooper in his "Welcome to my Nightmare" concert before
45,000 fans in San Diego. She also stayed at Hugh Hefner's mansion, hoping to make a movie with Dorothy Stratton until Ms. Stratton was found murdered. Moving on to New York, Annie was "living at the Waldorf Astoria, eating at Sardi's and Twenty One and wearing classy outfits". She danced with Valentino and met Andy Warhol, Omar Sharif, Bianca Jagger, Ryan O'Neal and Margaret Trudeau at the infamous Studio 54. "I felt I possessed power", she recalled. I could get in anywhere. All of a sudden doors were open and people wanted me. I was one of the weird people who was fast becoming one of the beautiful people. I kept playing up the ingenuous blonde innocent who was wide-eyed at the world -- partly because that really was how I felt, and partly because it was part of Annie's personae."

Deciding to make a sensational appearance during her first visit to Cannes, Annie wore a custom made, black jump suit cut to the waist and a red leather halter top with hot pants. She caught the attention of Prince Faisal who invited her to a dinner party. In Nice, she delighted at being followed by the paparazzi and was captivated by having dinner "with the monied people". She reports in her autobiography that, when approached by Robin Leach to "give a little and you'll get a little back ... if you don't there's no place in show business for somebody like you", she declined (Ample, 1988:87). "There was practically a riot when I strutted my stuff" in San Tropez as the photographers hounded her while she walked down the street. After lunch in Monte Carlo with Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, she was presented with the Miss Screen World ribbon and paraded before the world press. Screen columnist Peter Noble wrote in Screen International about the party Annie attended on a private yacht in honour of Ann Margaret and her husband. Posing for the press doing her "Marilyn Monroe number with pouty lips, leaning over and looking over my shoulder, I thought I was destined for movie stardom. I wasn't the first person who had taken off her clothes to get started in the business. When I look back on it, 1981 was my best year in
show business."

By 1983, the Cannes "pro", was written up in many of the gossip columns, highlighting what she was wearing and how she styled her hair. "It's hard to explain clearly what Annie Ample was in Europe", she mused, "at home I was the mother of two children, in America I was a centerfold, in Canada I was a stripper, and in Europe I was a starlet." A clipping from Las Vegas Magazine provided by Annie stated:

Annie goes to France each May not to work on movie deals, not to negotiate with agents but simply so she can be noticed. And she is noticed the most when wearing the least. At Cannes, Annie will casually stroll down the beach in the morning, take off her robe and wearing the skimpiest bikini, will spread herself over a chaise lounge. This attracts herds of photographers from every major news daily and wire service in Europe, all of them having waited half a morning for just such an event. The following day in the newspaper and tabloids across the continent and eventually in many American men's magazines will appear photographs of the Las Vegas starlet, Annie Ample - and below that an inconsequential story about the film festival. It is hype in its purest form; the reading public gets what it wants and Annie gets what she wants -- tens of thousands of dollars of free publicity, just for lying on the beach playing hide and seek with her erogenous zones (Ample, 1988:135).

Returning from Cannes she posed in Playboy and had a "few walk-on bit parts where my breasts fell out of costumes in movies. The movies I've been in never amounted to much", she acknowledged, "I can't remember most of them and I don't think many people remember them either." Claiming that in 1987 she was mistaken for Candy Samples, "a porn star" she incredulously lamented that she could no longer go topless at the film festival for fear of attracting crowds which were too large. "It was turning sour, like everything else I was observing about show business."

Moving on to "the action and glamour in Las Vegas in order
to see my name up in lights", Annie commanded $4,500 a week together with accommodations and airfare for her stage strip act. Her home, a "ranch-style mansion with a wrought iron fence, two acres of land, a sunken bathtub and a horse in the backyard" was almost as appealing as the opportunity to own the Royal Casino in which she offered an "exotic cabaret show with two strippers, an illusionist, a singer" and, of course, Annie herself. That year she attended the Beaux Arts Ball where guests came dressed as Annie Ample. She was picked from the magazine Faces to help Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention with their musical comeback in Los Angeles, she posed for Hustler magazine again and she was invited to join Larry Flynt's presidential campaign. Beyond ordinary ambition and the need for economic survival was a driving need to be accepted and adored, which caused Annie to endure plastic surgery consisting of breast and cheek implants, continual dieting and psychological stress as a necessary part of success. Just as a man with driving ambition might strive to make himself a millionaire or a political force, so a woman with a similar need may think of using her body to alleviate her feelings of loneliness by becoming strikingly beautiful. While her strategy may appear less successful than a man's (based on the short-lived commodity of beauty) it was difficult to channel her talents into alternative roles. By 1985, customers were being offered "sexcursion" tours, a "free whorehouse colouring book" and a limousine ride to the Cherry Patch Ranch by Madam Annie Ample.

In the late 1980s, Annie left stripping with the same flourish and in the same manner in which she orchestrated most events in her life, giving interviews this time to The Toronto Star, the Sun and Now magazine. She detailed for the world the difficulties she encountered in the stripping business. Citing numerous problems, she lamented that things had changed substantially since she first entered the "adult entertainment business". She complained that she "felt like an animal fighting
over a small piece of territory in the jungle. The clubs were more degrading month by month. It was dirty money, and I began to hate it." The "sleazy clubs with drugs everywhere" and the "coke whores" were particularly mentioned as problems within the club environment. "The clubs vibrate with a sense of danger when people are high on drugs. If you didn't do drugs you were under suspicion immediately." Suggesting that "customers didn't just want a picture, they wanted a feel", she felt compelled to hire bodyguards for protection.

The crowds in general were getting weird and I was scared to death on stage. In many clubs the managers were all business. Today I can count on one hand the real fans who have been loyal all these years. Now any kid can get a title, be a feature because ... stripping is about showing more and more and the shows are getting raunchier and raunchier. There is no art involved, the only development is duos, lesbian acts or inserting anything up the crotch. The girls today have to press the flesh and act like pigs for $900 to $1,200 a week. It left me with a feeling of profound disgust.

At one of her last jobs in Canada she was fired for the first time in her career. While her agent had represented her as a Las Vegas act, a club owner did not think her act reflected that genre. When released on a Wednesday, she observed that her picture continued to be used as a drawing card for the club until the week's end, so she hired a lawyer but to no avail. "I was worn out with the struggle." During her last show "a man yelled my name, and as I turned my chest was blistered with acid." Lodging a complaint with the police with the request "that they send someone undercover to check out the club" resulted in the manager chastising Annie for bringing the "morality squad" to his establishment. "The last few days working" she went o, "I was working in this absolute hell and the police just made a bad situation worse. The girls were humping and bumping behind the scenes as well as doing drugs. It was a cesspool." When the
police again were contacted because a customer threw a syringe at her on stage and they did not respond, Annie remarked, "that's when I realized that being a stripper meant I had no rights. I was trash."

Retiring to a 160-acre farm near Sudbury with horses, chickens, cows and dogs, Annie brought forth plans to write movie scripts and start a "Church of Wicca for herbalists and healers who concentrate on spiritual ideals". Claiming to be happy having met some local Natives Annie was increasingly plagued by telephone calls from a man threatening to kill her for going public about the stripping business. Due to "boredom and fear", several months later she negotiated another Las Vegas contract and, when that ended, Ann emerged as a manager in a Richmond Hill strip club. Proud of the fact that couples and off-duty police officers came to her club, she envisioned it as evolving into an environment "like the old pubs in England where people laugh, talk, eat, drink and jam musically on Sundays". Bustling around the club, chatting up customers, giving instructions to the bartender and advising a young stripper ("why give it away when you can sell it") Annie seemed in her element with Marshall at her side. In view of her strong protests and the way in which she sensationallly took her leave from stripping, she felt compelled to explain to me why she had returned. Past the little pink business cards and promises of exotic boat and limousine rides, I viewed the warm and charming side of Annie, who took every opportunity to advance herself in the all American capitalist manner. Within two weeks she discovered that "when big money is involved from liquor sales the mob becomes involved, and that scares a lot of girls when those people come around". Appearing as a forty something woman with a dated comedy act and an additional thirty pounds, who stated that she "could not afford not to work", Annie took one more brief twirl across the stage of the Zanzibar club in Toronto before sending me a card postmarked from her retirement ranch in Las Vegas.
When I asked Annie to introduce me to a very young dancer, perhaps one underage, I met Becky. Currently dancing at age eighteen in a club which Annie owns in Richmond Hill, Becky revealed that she began stripping at age fifteen. In some ways the stereotype of the stripper who was sexually abused by her stepfather, ran away from home and was placed in a series of foster homes rings true in Becky's case. She made a decision at age sixteen to leave her equally unappealing foster home and headed out on her own for the streets of Toronto. What is not stereotypical about this seemingly calm and composed woman is the fact that she meet up with a number of street people who were mostly Black men and formed a rather unusual "family". While the group was technically homeless and without funds, they fended for each other and "hung together in a tight clique". Living communally in old buildings and under city bridges, Becky claims there were days in which she stole food and ate out of garbage cans to survive. At no time was she abused, nor did she prostitute herself. In fact, her companions insisted that she attend school on her sojourn and Becky is currently the proud recipient of a high school diploma.

- Sherry -

When I first approached Sherry in a club she was wrapped in a blanket because the temperature of many clubs is set to accommodate clothed customers and not undressed dancers. Initially, I felt some trepidation in confronting a strange figure who appeared to be combative or high on drugs. Sherry, in fact, is an extremely intelligent woman who hesitated to reveal the limited extent of her education which she obtained in Trinidad where she was raised. This articulate, socially aware woman in her late twenties spoke quickly in a very composed
manner. Her extensive vocabulary, her current interest in the work of Pierre Salinger and Margaret Laurence and her ready engagement in analysis about stripping and life in general speaks to an intellectual approach to life.

Sherry elaborated on the hypocrisy she observed in society concerning the status of a stripper. Upon her arrival in Canada, she worked as a cashier in a bank earning approximately $280 a week which was not enough money, she claimed, to support her three children ages eleven, eight and eighteen months. She began to supplement her earnings (which rose to $1200 a week) by stripping and her career decision became irrevocable. Her male co-workers at the bank who came to the club, however, reported her activities to the manager and she was fired. She laid out her case in logical terms stating that she "didn't force the men to come to the club (in which she worked on her own time in a location that was situated on the other side of town)". Shortly after her services were terminated at the bank, it was reported by a female co-worker that the bank manager had organized a stag night for a retiring male employee, hiring a stripper from a club in which Sherry was once employed.

Her options were few as she sees it, being one of eleven children her mother raised on her own; she herself is a single parent who "wants it that way". Her first cheque as a dancer went towards hiring a housekeeper to take care of her children. When asked if she used drugs she replied, "well, Coricidin is a drug isn't it"? Luxuries such as drugs, alcohol and designer clothing -- things that she claims a number of dancers spend a considerable amount of money on are not her indulgences. She works for her children and her desire to return some day to Trinidad with enough money to open her own restaurant. When queried about the worst thing about her job, she replied that stripping is "degrading and robs women of their self-esteem". When asked what the benefits were she replied, "not much".
Contending that stripping is hard work mentally but not physically, she volunteered that a dancer "has to keep her head together or the business will get to you". She elaborated on a related topic -- the battle of the sexes. "The majority of men who attend strip clubs think of themselves as sexually experienced and socially adept at handling women", in contrast to her view of the many men she has encountered who were described as unaware of "female anatomy, female sexual functioning and unresponsive to the feelings of women". She displayed a rather sporting (or challenging) attitude when she spoke about the men she engages in verbal banter "who think they are so cocksure. If men are so together sexually, can easily get women and have happy marriages, why, I ask, are they in strip clubs?" Volunteering her philosophy of stripping in terms of gender and power relations, she added that a number of men she encountered were "into control in the same manner as her ex-husband. Need I say more about why I am no longer married to him?", she added. In contrast to Brigette, another dancer in the same club, Sherry's dream is to stay single and to remain independent.

This very sensuous Black woman acknowledged that she was interested in sex early in life and deliberately went to the beach as a teenager to observe the bodies of men and to experiment sexually. These days she describes herself as long past being sexually excited when she strips: "in fact, I am past caring". She has developed a profile of customers "based on the same kinds of dumb questions which I am repeatedly asked -- where are you from, how long have you been dancing and do you get turned on by it?" -- which I could not help but wonder must have sounded similar to questions asked of her by this researcher. When I inquired what strippers in general want she retorted, "the same as all women -- dignity, respect, pleasure and security. And, if I ever find that in a man again, I'll marry him". Spontaneously, she broke into the line as the interview ended:
"strippers just want to have fun", and she added, "get paid for it".

My second opportunity to speak with Sherry occurred several months later when I spotted her (by the large birth mark on her leg) at Filson's Tavern. She had gained weight, perhaps fifteen pounds. She described herself as "tired these days, running a house and looking after three kids". Inquiring about her children (whom she described as "the love of my life"), she stated that they were "healthy, happy, normal children". Her oldest child, a son, is extensively involved in music and practices guitar every day. Her daughter and second child is a model who is escorted to acting and modelling lessons twice a week by Sherry's sister. Jokingly, this mother suggested that she may be able to retire early if her daughter's income grows as a result of the few commercials she has made in her brief career. Her younger son "is mechanical and very good with his hands", and Sherry believes that he may follow in his father's occupational footsteps.

Since her sister has children of her own and works on a part-time basis, she is no longer able to accommodate Sherry's changing work schedule, her need to travel for her job and the demands of taking care of three young children. The housekeeper whom Sherry brought into the country from Trinidad was described as not being able to do even the simplest of tasks (such as heating a baby bottle in a microwave oven) so Sherry let her go after a trial of two weeks. For some time she took her children "to a nice Italian lady down the street", but she was not convinced that they received the stimulation and emotional attention needed with the numbers of other children present in the home. She then experimented by placing her oldest child in an after-hours school program while she sought out alternative daycare arrangements for the other children, supplemented by her sister's willingness to care for the children on a part-time basis. The flexible working hours, maternity leave and the
opportunity initially to secure child-care near her place of employment were critical factors in persuading Sherry to take up stripping; currently, she is wondering if she will be able to continue with her career given the conflicts which exist between her career and her childcare arrangements.

Inquiring if I have read any good books lately, Sherry volunteered that she had just finished the latest Tom Wolfe novel. When she also queried if I had seen the new Spike Lee movie ("She's Got to Have It") and I nodded, we were off into a lengthy discussion concerning Lee's views on race relations and racism, women and whether or not his work was the great Black hope for the 1990s in terms of class politics. Sherry had gone back to school six months previously, attending Atkinson College at York University to study political science. "There's more than one way to beat the stripping game"; she said, and added, that "I intend to be out of here some day". On her way to retiring in her Trinidadian restaurant, she has plans to open a hair dressing salon with a relative and she was excited about the possibility that she might be granted a patent which she sought for one of her "numerous little inventions".

--- Brigette ---

Although she had been dancing for a few years, my first impression of Brigette was of a very soft-spoken, naive woman in her twenties. Despite her easy-going and open approach to life, her thin, White, dowdy image sans makeup and her long stringy hair gave her the appearance of a novice. As one of seven children, Brigette was adjusting to life without her family. She was also struggling with English with which she had little familiarity while growing up in a small town in rural Quebec. Coming from a tightly knit family whose members "shared everything, good and bad", this shy and affable woman seemed out-of-place in a strip club and adrift in a large urban center. By
her own admission she was lonely and missed her parents, siblings and her boyfriend with whom she shared an apartment in Quebec City. Similar to a number of other very young dancers, Brigette volunteered that she did not have a home or a social life, tending to vacillate between her apartment in Quebec City and the hotels she lives in while travelling on the Ontario strip circuit. Her only friend in Toronto (apart from another dancer from Quebec) was an elderly impotent "gentleman" and a customer who take her to dinner once a week.

Having left school at the end of grade eight because she disliked it, Brigette took up stripping "for the money" which she claims she never had previously in her life. Interestingly, she does not view stripping as work but reports getting into the business because she was "too lazy to get a real job". Introduced to dancing in Trois Rivieres by her older sister who danced for fifteen years before her, she was warned that stripping had become more associated with drugs and violence than in the past. The older woman had worked in a biker club in Montreal and was beaten and raped. Her sister was described by Brigette as having a "severe drug habit and three children by different dads that didn't stick around". Moving on to Quebec City and then to Hull constituted the next three years of Brigette's working life and her first job has became her only occupation to date.

Approximately a year and a half later, Brigette and I encountered one another again in a strip bar. Faced with the appearance of a very polished and elegant looking young woman in a sleek red dress with liberally applied makeup and an upswept hairdo, I was unable to make the connection with the waif I had met previously. As she settled into Toronto life, she had been able to move past many of the difficulties which French dancers encounter as they travel the Quebec-Ontario circuit. Brigette seemed to have profited from the experience of dancing in clubs in Montreal and Toronto as well as in Halifax, Vancouver and in
upper New York state. Her ability to converse in English, her walk and bright smile all conveyed that she had conquered the problems of being a newcomer to an English-speaking culture and the routines of stripping in a large urban club in Ontario.

Forthcoming about her transformation, she volunteered that she has had relationships twice previously with club managers and recently had become the paramour of Louie, a club owner. She also regularly accepts "dates" with some of the patrons, reasoning that the extra money she earns and the gifts she receives constitute a way out of poverty for her. Despite the fact that her boyfriend is pressuring her to quit stripping (with the threat that the relationship would end if she continues) she is resigned to working in the business until her barely-voiced dream is achieved. Smiling, she becomes quite animated when speaking about her younger sister (who was described as "happily married with children"), living with a husband who takes care of her" in a large home in suburban Montreal. Her dream of a life of wealth, comfort and domestic bliss is similar to the fantasy presented to every female through movies, magazines and television, waiting patiently for a man to come and take her away in a romantic marriage. Using the cult of femininity as her frame of reference, Brigette interprets her job to be as beautiful and seductive as possible as a way to attract and keep a man who will allow her to retire and become a wife and mother. I surmised that stripping was Brigette's way to hone her feminine skills as a way to move from the lifestyle of one sister to that of another in order to realize her dream.

Just as Brigette has perhaps not thought through some of the contradictions inherent in meeting the kind of husband she desires in a strip club, she also rationalizes her inclinations towards part-time prostitution. She chastises the feature dancer of the club in which she works as a "sleaze" because she uses a chair with a phallus-like object on it and has been seen to
"French kiss and hang all over a guy to get a big tip". When asked if she ever engages in prostitution, she winks at me and replies "no, but ...", informing me that she does dance privately for a few nice men on occasion. Once or twice a week Brigette will go to dinner (and bed) with a few men who have become her steady "fans". In contrast to the rather harsh life of dancing at Peccadillos's in a double shift and sleeping in some "dump" of a hotel with two other dancers (which requires her to lock her suitcase so her underwear is not stolen) an occasional "bed and breakfast with a nice man" seems to be a respite for her.

She described her three-year battle with cocaine coupled with her six month prison term for importing the drug, as a very difficult time that is behind her. Yet, when she is feeling "down" or lacks the energy to go on stage, she takes "uppers". Brigette reasons that she predominantly does "coke" recreationally on the weekends, confining the drugs she does during the week to "smoking marihuana most nights after work with her girlfriend from the club". When asked if she used drugs prior to dancing and took up stripping to pay for them, she was quite insistent that her "habit" like those of many other dancers is a result of stripping. Not only was her first introduction to "hard drugs" through stripping, she confided, but she often feels the need to "loosen up" by using drugs in order to "gain the courage to dance".

Inquiring what happened to her since last we met, Brigette informed me that in addition to working in a number of clubs "with college students and single moms", she had entered therapy for a few months "to get my head straight and get off drugs". Unlike the "ninety-eight percent" of strippers she claims do drugs, she feels "really good about myself" having been free of heroin for seven months. She confided that she left home because she felt that she had not been accepted by her parents and that through therapy she has been able to discover that "you can run
away from home but not from yourself". A number of problems still persist with her parents who disapprove of what she is doing for a living ("My mother is a strict Catholic"). Expressing the sentiment that it is more acceptable for the males in the family to be on their own and working, her parents have expressed their desire that she "come home, settle down and get married". In due course as she had initially claimed, her goal and that of her parents will coincide.

When I asked what she had learned during the past few years of dancing, she opined that with all the difficulties she had been through she has discovered how to set boundaries by saying no and to protect herself. A year previously she was a "birthday present for a guy for four hours at the cost of $237". She reported "hitting bottom" when she was raped in that encounter. Describing this period as one in which she had "no control over [her] life", she quickly mentioned that she has never had someone feed her, nor has she ever slept in a park. Currently, she is more selective about the men she dates from the club scene. Interested in going to college in the future and leaving the club life behind, she remains in stripping because "the club is the price tag to college".

- Candy Kane (Consultant) -

This young woman, initially shy when we met at Cheater's is not a feature but was the most popular act of the afternoon (judging by the whistles and claps she receives while on stage). By all cultural standards Candy is an extremely beautiful woman -- the quintessential stripper who is tall, statuesque, with perfect bodily proportions, classical features and a cascade of long blond hair which enhances her model-like beauty. What I discovered in the inner recesses of this flashy dancer was a modest woman who expressed shock the first time she viewed table dancing and never dreamed that she would one day be stripping for
a living. I sat through three shows (in which she wore red, blue and gold gowns each with matching shoes, bra and G-string) observing a very polished and professional performer. I observed her on several other occasions, one in which she wore tight, black leather pants which accentuated the length and slenderness of her legs together with a black leather bra and high-heeled boots. On another occasion, she was carrying a humorous-looking whip which did not appear that she could do much damage with given its soft silk-like fibres. On the day I approached to speak with her, Candy was clad in a halter top, a short frilly skirt with ballet-like slippers, all in matching pink. She employed a lot of movement in her energetic and acrobatic act which I identify from my own long years of training in ballet as dance moves in modern and jazz ballet. Confirmation of her five years of dance training followed when we subsequently met in a park where our children played together in the snow.

With two years of college, majoring in but not completing a social service program, she had an OSAP loan that ran out and she found herself pregnant by a man who subsequently left her. She made her decision to drop out of school. Candy has not given up hope in the future of returning to college to obtain her diploma. Like many strippers, she claimed to have entered the business strictly out of financial need. On her way to attaining her academic goal she hoped to use her current savings to open a boutique. Candy is a caring single parent of a five-year-old daughter, Christine, who lives in an extended family that includes a loving relationship with her boyfriend, Carl and her mother. She spoke openly and with pride about her relations as part of a large, working class Portuguese family. It is important to her to preserve a family life apart from her work as a stripper. Although she has a woman-centered and feminine point of view, she does not use the self-descriptor of feminist. This "home body" likes to cook, sew, knit and read incessantly -- mysteries, biographies, history and poetry.
Early in our relationship, I was invited to Candy's home for dinner and to meet her family. I was struck by the immense contrast between Candy's life as a sophisticated stripper in a red sequined dress and the domestic woman (who served me pot roast, wine and baked Alaska) in an atmosphere of children's books, lace doilies on the arms of chairs, pictures on the wall of Candy, her family and Toulousse the cat. Candy and her family still pray at meal time. Determined to maintain the barriers between her private and public life, she mentioned almost with pride that no one in her apartment building knows what she does for a living with the exception of one close female friend. She lives with some degree of anxiety that her father will discover her secret, and she similarly fears that she may not be able to achieve the savings goals that will allow her to leave the business before her daughter discovers her occupation. Not unlike a number of other strippers, she has gone through a complicated process of adjustment to a life of stripping (anticipating being isolated and ostracized) while nourishing a separate private identity, lifestyle and acquaintances apart from her public occupation as a stripper.

Throughout her career, Candy found local babysitters to be unreliable and expensive; when her parents separated she invited her mother to live with her. "Just as you would be getting ready to go out the door to work", she explained, "you would get a call that the babysitter couldn't come or there was an emergency in the family. So I would call the club and tell them I was sick and couldn't come in." Initially, her mother did not know what stripping entailed; Candy gradually "let it leak out bit by bit so it wasn't such a shock to her". Her mother was supportive sewing some of Candy's costumes to allow her to save money and providing loving care to her child. Described as a lot more understanding than her father about her situation of living "without the benefit of marriage" with her new boyfriend, Candy's mother conspires with the duo to keep the secret from the male
members of the family. For her part, Candy abides by rules which sharply demarcate her home and dancing life. When she finishes at the club, she leaves immediately for home preferring her clean apartment, eating her mother's pasta, watching a movie with her family and spending time with her child to hanging around drinking after hours in a club.

Her parents came from Portugal with three children. Following Candy's birth, they had two more children. For her "true blue Catholic parents" who separated five years previously, divorce is out of the question. So is the flaunting of a stripper's lifestyle. While Candy's mother (who was described as "liberal") knew that her daughter stripped, she did not approve of such activities. Her father who has been living in an apartment on the other side of the city with Candy's brother, was a "different case". Both Candy and her mother were convinced this was a temporary job and as long as she did not engage in prostitution and saved her money, they agreed that this part of her life would "some day be history". Her mother often told her that she should proudly wear white on her wedding day and, when she married and settled down no one would know about her past.

She said of her younger years that they were "just ordinary". For a time she attended Orde Street public school and, to this day, many of her best friends are people she met while at school. She did what all girls of that era did--she played "hopscotch, two balls, tag and alleys". She was an ordinary student, sometimes achieving a C, sometimes a B average on her report card. By her adolescence, this ordinary-looking child had "long gangly legs, big feet, buck teeth, no breasts" and most definitely thought of herself as ugly. Worrying about acne, clothes and makeup and all the "regular things" that girls are involved in served as her preoccupation during her teen years. When discussions occurred about sex, boys and dates at slumber parties, Candy never dreamed that she would later become a stripper.
Within her large noisy, friendly family, the conversation around the dinner table covered topics such as food, politics and a comparison of the "ways things were done in Canada and back home". Raised as a strict Catholic, Candy had her first communion at age thirteen, attended mass every Sunday and confession often. While she balked at the strict discipline of the nuns, she credited her devotion to reading to her high school education at St. Hilda's girls' school. On the subject of sex, the nuns would often tell the girls not to wear patent leather shoes because their shiny surface would permit the boys to look up the girls' dresses. An air of excitement and taboo permeated both her school and home as she, and many of her peers, were forbidden to date and mix with boys except in family gatherings. By her senior year of high school, many of the girls (including Candy) were telling their parents that they were going to the home of a girlfriend, as they experimented with meeting boys at house parties or dances. These encounters, she remarked, were innocent events in which the boys and girls may have kissed at most.

Graduating from high school, her first job was as a waitress in a donut shop. Enticed by friends, she went out on Friday and Saturday nights to dances and clubs. Gradually, she drifted into hanging out with a different crowd from the Portuguese community who were "attached to a life of crime" and involved in selling marihuana, cashing stolen cheques and living in abandoned buildings near Palmerston Avenue. In some respects, Candy's life is Brigette's dream gone wrong. When she fell in love with Carlos from this group, they began immediately to have sex in his apartment, although Candy had always equated falling in love with getting married and having children. While she attempted to be careful about birth control by buying "foam" at the drug store, six months later she found herself pregnant. When she informed Carlos, he stated that he was not ready to commit to marriage, and suggested that she get an abortion. The broken-hearted Candy who still describes herself as a good Catholic was unable to
contemplate abortion.

These were difficult times for Candy as she faced a family whose members were angry with her and ashamed that she was about to have an "illegitimate child". She continued to work throughout her pregnancy, leaving the donut shop for a dry cleaning store and a surgical supply plant. Although she made peace with and was physically and emotionally supported by her mother, the relationship with her father remains distant to this day. The long and difficult birth of her daughter brought no regrets, as she remarked that "the little one is the shining star of my life". Shortly after the birth of Christine, Candy wandered back into the same circle of friends. When she had difficulty meeting her bills one of these friends suggested that she take up "exotic dancing". "Take off my clothes" she said, "you must be kidding". The first time she saw a strip show she described how she felt shocked, embarrassed and must have turned "beet red". Although acknowledged by the manager of the club as beautiful, it was suggested that she was too "uptight and prudish" to dance. Plied with a lot of wine which she rarely drank, she danced a set naked was offered $800 a week and became a stripper. To this day, she concentrates on her jazz and aerobic moves in stripping and still professes to feeling "shy and inhibited" when she dances.

Approximately a year after I met Candy, she approached me with the idea that she wanted to start a self-help, drop-in center for dancers. We conferred on many occasions about this project--would the center be staffed or run on a volunteer basis, would it be organized strictly by strippers and ex-strippers or expand to include other women, would the service offered provide counselling or expand to provide other services including an area for strippers to meet and talk with each other? When I inquired what Candy thought dancers needed most she replied "everything", rattling off services which would provide information concerning birth control, abortion and venereal diseases as well as general
health information and childcare. She remarked that dancers often do not eat well and she wondered if it would be worthwhile to try to bring in a nutritionist to provide advice about diets. "Strippers don't think about getting an annual health check-up either." She also queried if a local doctor could be persuaded to drop by the center without asking a lot of questions about the sex life of the dancer or reporting her to the health authorities.

"Dancers also need assistance with housing", Candy said. A lot of them live around and don't have a permanent place to stay because they are on the road all the time. I am concerned that, if someone finds out what they do for a living, they may be evicted from their place, especially if they have children." The latter situation was cited by Candy as having happened to two dancers in the club in which she works; "they end up having to be supervised by Children's Aid and needing to find a new place to stay in order to keep their kids". In Candy's opinion, dancers do not use their money wisely--"they make good money, but they spend and don't save or invest it, so they end up broke". She chuckled at the prospect that she could assist dancers in seeing what happens to their money invested over seven years with compounded interest. In the end, she opted for a model of service provision in which "dancers help dancers" because she suggested that "they would never take advice from social workers".

With my assistance Candy applied for and obtained a grant of $8,000 from Health and Welfare Canada to open the center. Under the auspices of conducting an AIDS educational program, she was able to establish a store front operation to meet the needs of strippers which went well beyond the approved mandate. Unfortunately, that was just the beginning of her "easy life", as she described it. Struggling for months to keep a modest center open, providing a twenty-four telephone line, reception and counselling services proved to be a small matter compared to the
The larger task of convincing women in the business to attend and staff the center. From time to time a single woman or two would drop by, but this did not justify the enormous amount of time devoted by Candy to making telephone calls to strippers, placing advertisements in newspapers and plastering notice boards in strip clubs with flyers to advise about the services. In the end, the center closed six months after it opened; however, Candy had no regrets in "giving it my best shot".

On my last visit with Candy we met in her newly opened gift and flower shop on St. Clair Avenue in Toronto. Standing before me in an expensive navy blue suit with a crisp white shirt topped off with a peter pan collar, Candy was the essence of an elegant and composed business woman. Her upswept hairdo and flat shoes gave no hint of the stripper in a red sequined dress whom I had encountered a few years previously. Her expertise hinged on identifying various flowers and their care and issues such as refrigeration, aesthetic display, inventory control and merchandising, in contrast to her knowledge concerning stage and table dancing. Having achieved her savings goal, she took advantage of a business opportunity offered to her by a childhood friend to start her own business. The two women pick up shipments of fresh flowers every two days from the airport and attend various flower shows in Toronto, Chicago and New York three times a year. The store is the height of good taste, complete with a waft of perfume cast by a bevy of beautiful flowers from around the world, new age music, aroma therapy candles, Italian pewter pots with dried flowers and silk plants in abundance. By contemporary standards, her business can be considered a success -- in the first year her sales were over $125,000 and she reported making a living for herself after paying for the expenses of inventory, travel and the wages of two part-time clerks. Her personal life also is turning out the way she had planned -- two months ago she walked down the aisle of a church in a white dress to marry her boyfriend. Her mother, father,
daughter and other family and friends were present to wish her well in this new stage of her life.

- Laura X -

In contrast to Candy, the maturity of Laura X was demonstrated physically by her very wrinkled skin and in her air of confidence which seemed to be as a result of age and experience. She chain smoked her way through the interview, a habit she acquired at age fifteen. An intelligent woman, philosophical in her own way, Laura would not be described as overly endowed with a warm and charming personality. This seasoned dancer in her early forties displayed a bawdy attitude and earthy style of verbal expression, as she sprinkled lots of "fuck", "shit" and "Jesus Christ" into the conversation. There was an aura about her that made me feel like I had come to apprentice at the great hall of stripping to learn the secrets of the business from one of the grand mistresses.

This Polish and English dancer began her career in strip clubs on St. Catherine Street in Montreal. Bemoaning the changes she has witnessed in the business, she remarked "that I have seen some terrible strippers in my day, but the worst is the new breed. Strippers used to have big bosoms, they had some hips, some were plump and fat but they were always exotic." As we spoke, I noted Laura's long, false red nails and colour-matched mouth, her false eyelashes, dated makeup and lots of expensive jewellery. In the days when she began to dance the waitresses would take turns dancing topless -- "we had no options". In her training she was taught to be "modest, flirtatious, titillating but never coarse or vulgar. Stripping is an attitude thing", she continued. "Leave them excited and smiling. In the past it was innocent and fun, a good clean business. It was separate from prostitution and you could do yourself proud by your wardrobe and makeup." The latter sometimes took her an hour to apply prior to
a show. "We used to laugh with the audience -- the old thing about the bald-headed guy in the front row and the stripper stealing the guy's glasses and pretending to clean them between her legs -- everyone knew it was a joke."

According to Laura, today's strippers are skinny kids who cannot dance who are unsure of themselves and uncertain as to whether they want to be in stripping. She critiqued a number of acts she had recently witnessed including acts she claims in which the "girls can't dance and have no sense of rhythm". "Stripping today has no tease, no flirtation, no sense of humour. It is important for the audience to feel entertained and to have a good time. Many girls can't dance and they won't take the time to learn. Now the men just sit there, stoned-face and the girls fake a little smile. The girls show everything--today stripping is not sexy, its vulgar. There is no grace or poise", she complained. The burlesque Queen of the past explained that she used to use the whole stage when she danced. Props, layers and layers of costumes, art and drama were part of her routines. In contrast to today's "losers, loners and druggies", her act was depicted as "mesmerizing. We learned every trick in the book. Fun was had by all and of course the stripper would give you the shirt off her back." We both laughed.

Laura met the love of her life when she was a feature dancer. A big French-Canadian man in the construction business saw her picture one day on the marquée, strolled into the club, and they fell in love at first sight. After taking to the streets to buy eight dozen red roses he came backstage "hat in hand", knocking politely on her door to say that he would be honoured to escort Miss Laura to dinner. Despite the fact that the man had a wife and two children in Dorval, Laura lived with him in Montreal, on and off, for fifteen years. Described as being very good to her, over the years Laura received numerous gifts including a fur coat and new car. When she later married another
man, her husband approved of her "helping out with the family finances" when he was unemployed. "Once he got his old job back he wanted me to quit", she confided "so I had to sneak out to the clubs." At the time she had one child whom she took to school, informing her husband that she was heading out to her downtown office job. On her allegedly meagre clerical salary, she was able to buy a house, a car and take her family on a number of vacations. She believes that her husband knew that she was stripping but did not want to confront her because he enjoyed access to the large sums of money she brought home.

Laura complained that in one club, recently, a few customers threw cocktail swizzle sticks at her because they did not like her act; another time it was paper airplanes. "They yell at me not to bother with the fancy steps -- take it off honey and let's see what you got. The clubs are bringing in younger and younger girls, and they will table dance for $5 to $10", she griped. A few years ago some of her contracts were cancelled, she was not always paid on time and she was cheated out of money by an owner/manager. Asked if she ever thought about leaving the business, she remarked that she had tried a number of business ventures in past but had been unsuccessful. The bartender at Cheaters confirmed how she has been complaining about stripping and leaving for some "hair-brained business idea" over the past five years. At one time she became a partner in a restaurant (which subsequently folded), she then tried to manage a launderette and "got robbed blind. She kind of lives in la-la land but she is a wonderful person".

- Jesse -

Jess can truly be said to have escaped from a very dysfunctional background. She is using her job as a stripper to make some money in order to continue to take control her life. Leading a very sheltered life in Missouri, she was convinced at
age sixteen by her fundamentalist Christian family to marry a neighbour who was thirty-three years old. The loveless marriage quickly turned to abuse from which she was forced to flee after six months. Upon her arrival in a large city, she was literally picked up off the street by a man who was a cult leader. Convinced that her life would improve with the promise of "truth, beauty and peace with God", she lived a cloistered life with the man, her twin boys and seven other wives and children. As it became clear that her life and that of her children was being controlled emotionally, financially and, at times, with corporal punishment (by her husband as well as some senior members of the harem) Jess attempted to leave, only to be brought back under threat of violence. Following several additional attempts to escape, she managed to "break out" in the middle of the night by bundling her babies in a buggy and walking through six miles of fields to a town. When her tale was believed by a sympathetic desk sergeant at the police station, she was escorted to a women's shelter. There she felt safe for the first time in many years; she received counselling and some funds which allowed her to relocate to Buffalo, New York. Crossing the United States/Canada border without a passport in order to put as much distance as possible between herself and her husband, she took up stripping to feed herself and her children. Fearing that her husband may make good on his threat to find her "wherever I go" and force her back into the cult, she realized that it is imperative that she seek legal counsel.

_I met Linda when I took my son to a fair at our local shopping center. While waiting for my child to run through his fist of ride tickets, I began to chat with a jovial woman operating one of the kiddie rides. I was struck by her emotional generosity, her offer to let my child and a few others ride free and her caring attitude concerning the children's safety as they_
boarded and dismounted from the rides. Although her haggard and tired appearance and her coarse and sun dried skin gave no hint of her previous occupation, during the course of the conversation I learned that she had been a stripper thirty years ago.

Linda began stripping "during the good old days of vaudeville and burlesque" when strippers wore pasties and G strings. She had heard that when stripping began in the 1920s and 1930s: "Things were pretty wild, such as the time when Gypsy Rose Lee took up her famous fan dance: you never knew if she was really naked although people thought she stripped down to the buff." For unknown reasons, Linda mentioned that just prior to her entry into stripping in the 1940s, "things were all covered up again". Describing herself as "a looker" in her younger years, she used to have a lot of fancy clothes, get dressed up to make the rounds of the clubs and drink champagne "with a man on each arm" after work. For a time she "ran around with gangsters; you could say I was a gun moll". Her fifteen years of stripping were very enjoyable and a time she described as "learning a lot about life and meeting a lot of different kinds of people".

She described her second marriage (of almost twenty-two years) as a "very rocky affair". Both she and her husband -- from whom she has been divorced for two years -- were described as alcoholics. Although Linda no longer drinks, her ex-husband's perseverance with alcohol has continued to reverberate in her life and the lives of their children. Linda recently incurred a black eye in an argument with the man, something that she frequently experienced throughout her marriage. Her recent years of living alone have given her an opportunity to reflect and, when she recalls her former life she admits with regret that she was not "a good enough mother". She fought with her husband on many occasions in front of her children, was often ill and left home frequently. All of these factors, she surmised, contributed to the numerous problems of her children including the "mental
problems" of her eldest daughter (who is studying to become a nurse's aide), the difficulties her son has had with the police (for breaking and entering, auto theft and robbing a milk store), and the problems of physical abuse of her younger daughter who, at twenty three, is now a dancer like her mother before her.

As Linda spoke, tears rolled down her cheeks. She is attempting to be a good grandmother "to makeup to my children for the childhood they never had". To this end, while her son is currently serving time in Kingston penitentiary, Linda takes care of her grandchildren. She is trying to help her elder daughter financially so she will be able "to get some help, get back on her feet and get her nursing diploma". Unfortunately, the hours she works at the carnival are long, "the life is rough and the pay is not very good", she explained, in contrast to her "high living in the lap of luxury through stripping" in the dimly remembered past. This mother volunteered that I might want to speak with her younger daughter "to find out more about what stripping is like today", and her introduction led to an opportunity to meet Heather.

- Heather -

Heather sounded pleasant on the telephone when I called to get directions to her home in the Broadview Avenue and Gerrard Street area of Toronto. I found her to be a generous and caring woman, a quality very much like that of her mother. Her small, poorly kept house was shared by a woman with two children on the first floor, while Heather and her boyfriend rented the top floor of the building. The distinct odour of fire was noticeable as I climbed the narrow stairs and entered a room in almost total disarray with clothing strewn about the couch and floor ashtrays overflowing, old newspapers piled up around the door and a musical instrument precariously perched on a window sill. The old but, in contrast, clean and tidy kitchen was the room where
Heather and I sat to chat over tea.

Describing herself as a woman with a lot of experience for her twenty-three years, this reed-thin Caucasian woman confirmed she knew all about stripping from her mother, although she added that "things have changed a lot since she was in the business". While Heather did not think she is a good dancer, she has declined to have her mother show her some of the "old bump and grind stuff because nobody does that kind of stripping any more". Maintaining that she did not know that her mother had been a dancer while she was growing up, she found that "surprising", since she claimed to know "everything else about my mom". If she had a daughter who took up stripping, Heather suggested that she would provide her with advice about the business. Volunteering that she had numerous disputes with her stepfather while growing up but did not "have any big problems with her mother" nonetheless she offered that her mother could not handle her. Family life consisted of lots of difficulties in her home. Her parents were kind and caring, but both were also alcoholics. By continually running away from home, stealing and getting drunk, Heather was brought before the courts and eventually sent to "training school".

She reported that she had tried other jobs, such as a cook and factory worker; however, she missed the "good money and excitement but not the hassles of stripping". During her brief career she admitted to making a lot of money -- but also to spending a great deal on drugs and liquor, with the net result that she is currently broke. "You really come to expect the money and that's what gets you hooked." She explained that it was difficult to return to a job which paid $6 to $7 per hour when she had made $1,500 in a week. Describing herself as "so naive", initially, Heather thought that stripping was "fun, nice costumes and free coke". She changed her mind during the five years she has been in the business. Two women she knew as dancers have
recently been murdered. "One went home with a customer and had her throat slit and the other was strangled by her boyfriend outside the Zanbizzi Club. It took the bouncers and two guys to get her boyfriend off her and even though the bouncers took the guy into the back room and beat him up, Jackie died".

Describing her current relations with her boyfriend as a situation in which "he gets more shit than he deserves for my past problems with men", she mentioned the many fights she had in the past with her ex-husband. It was her husband who brought her advertisements for strippers from newspapers and offered to go with her to the clubs for an audition. He was also responsible for ripping and burning up to $3,000 worth of costumes, almost her entire dance wardrobe when their relationship ended. "He also stole $1,500 of my money that was in the apartment when he left."

At the time, Heather was trying to become as a feature dancer but she had neglected to lock her dressing room door when she ran out after having a fight with an owner of a club. Upon her return, all but two of her costumes had disappeared. To add to her grief, when she returned to her apartment the last of her costumes were "trashed" on the front lawn. The confrontation which ensued with her ex-husband resulted in Heather sustaining a black eye and a broken arm.

Heather's ex-husband was a member of the Satan's Choice motorcycle gang. They married in Kitchener when they were both young, four years after they met. Often her husband would come home and beat her, similar to the beatings she had incurred by her step father. "The whole family thought that I would just take it", she said. Recently, she was beaten up again by her sister's boyfriend which resulted in her applying for worker's compensation to recover from her injuries. She sustained a concussion, a punctured lung from a knife wound, two broken ribs and many bruises in the mishap. After her release from a three-week stay in the hospital she applied for welfare when informed
that she would not be able to return to dancing for three months. Although her brother-in-law attacked her with a knife in her apartment, charges were not laid because Heather refused to cooperate by informing the police as to the identity of the perpetrator. "He was family", meaning a member of the motorcycle gang; "here you don't go to the police or you are dead". While in the hospital, she decided to have her "tubes tied" so she would not have to worry about becoming pregnant again. When she gets some money in the future her plans are to have her decayed and missing teeth repaired. I tried unsuccessfully to call Heather after our initial meeting but her telephone was disconnected; I also went to a club on Danforth Avenue in which she claimed to have worked, but no one acknowledged that they knew her.

- Nicole -

For Nicole, stripping is a step up from the work of street prostitution in which she used to be engaged. Described as a tough life that caused her to lose confidence in herself after a violent incident with her pimp, Nicole believes that she has made it into a job and a lifestyle that will provide her with glamour and job security. Literally coming in from the cold during the winter, she planned to dance by day and continue to see a few dates in the evening (whom she says she carefully screens) for gifts and money. She felt fortunate to have left a very difficult aspect of her life behind her and believes that she will be better able to take charge of her life now that she is free of a man "who was running my life and running me into the ground". A rebellious young woman she does not blame her mother for "kicking her out of the house". Recently, she has reestablished contact with her mother and is hoping to move back home in the near future.
- Samantha -

Samantha's appearance and mannerisms are contrived to present an excessively wholesome image to "assist in my act". In her late twenties she has been stripping for a number of years and is aware that she may soon reach the upper age limit for a dancer. She works hard to maintain her skin, makeup and tone of her body in peak condition to detract from the slight limp she has when she walks. As a result of a very serious car accident that she was involved in at age ten, her parents were informed that she would never walk again. Through many years of recuperation and therapy and with the aid of a steel plate placed in her leg, she described herself as the "fastest moving gimp on steel pins". The balance and poise she has been able to achieve may also result from the many other skills that she has acquired. In addition to dancing, she has worked as a secretary, draftsperson and store manager. She has carpentry skills and had just purchased a home computer for the purpose of selling her creative writing. Samantha's husband, who has a university degree, "believes in me" and encourages her to view herself as a person with a lot of ability -- some of which she is exercising by taking courses in English literature at the University of Toronto. Her academic ambitions for the future include studying for a degree in psychology in order to become a psychotherapist.

- Sara (Consultant) -

I had known Sara through academic contacts and had previously made arrangements to stay with her for my venture into strip culture in Northern Ontario. Upon arriving in a residential area of town, I spotted the pink door and porch of a house that I instantly knew (from my twenty-five years of grass roots work in the women's movement) to be the entrance to the Hampshire's Women's Centre. After passing a bulletin board with announcements about forthcoming meetings concerning day care and pay equity, I
was greeted by Sara. As director of the organization Women Across Culture, characteristically her office consisted of a desk in the corner of one large communal room in the Centre. The room was dominated by a map of Africa, a large floating and well-endowed, nude paper-mâché, female figure and posters of Native women. Her beautifully-permed and glossy hair looked darker than I recalled; her warm, stable and helpful manner left me feeling reassured that I would be in good hands as we toured the strip clubs, returning to the Centre for a dance celebrating International Women's Day and attending a private party with her co-vivant.

In her attempts to help me understand elements of strip culture, Sara and I spent several hours over the course of five days discussing the many events I had encountered in strip clubs. In view of our long friendship, we also spoke about issues with respect to our backgrounds, conditions of work, relationships, finances, religion, the plight of Natives and concerns about war and peace in the world. As long-time activists in the New Democratic Party, we asserted our right to critique certain positions put forth with respect to the party's position regarding free trade during the federal election. The implications for women concerning the recent leadership convention that I attended as a delegate (in which a woman was elected for the first time as a leader of a major political party in North America) was also a subject of discussion. Throughout my stay in Hampshire, I was able to share my concerns about some of the "head games" I witnessed in clubs, the conditions of work and issues of abuse reported by dancers. I also queried how a feminist came to work in a strip club. Sara responded that it was her regard for strippers that caused her stay in the business of waitressing when she had intended to depart some years earlier. From an "insider's viewpoint", she was able to speak "in a more straightforward manner to women who would listen rather than as just another feminist from the Women's Centre trying to convince strippers to quit". There was also a considerable amount of
overlap among some of the women working in the clubs and those who attended dances at the Women's Centre. Her final convincing argument concerning why she held onto her job of waitressing for eight and half years related to her working class background; she was convinced at an early age that she would have to work to support herself. Her current combination of working three jobs provides her with the financial means needed to continue her studies in Sociology.

Sara's conservative German background provided her with a strong work ethic, a sense of independence, a respect for learning and an understanding that it was important to give something back to the community in which one lives. She has shared a comfortable egalitarian lifestyle for many years with Ben (her co-vivant) and Jonathan, Ben's son. She collaborated with Ben on research and together they were able to discuss matters which pertain to strip clubs as well as many events which are removed from that world. Each had their own office filled with books, a computer and a comfortable chair in the large house they were renovating. Sara reserves time for gardening considering that one of her most treasured hobbies. As one of many projects for the future, she dreamed about buying, renovating and running a rooming house for women, both as an entrepreneurial venture and as community project to assist the number of homeless, single and troubled women who could benefit from communal living.

-Sherrill-

Despite the fact that Sherrill makes "good money" dancing and has a "sugar daddy" who buys her things like jewellery and a stereo in exchange for "private dancing", after five years of club she is well aware of the limitations of the job. In our first encounter she complained that dancers do not get benefits similar to other workers including paid holidays, time off due to
injuries and a pension plan. While she has not trained in singing, acting or dancing, she held out hope that she may one day go into "the legitimate entertainment business" apart from stripping. In contrast with Brigette's understanding of stripping as easy work, Sherrill believed that she "works hard for her money". As a Black woman aware of the tacit quotas which operate against dancers "that only permit one or two non-White women to work at a time", she reported being tired of "race hassles", and she stated that she wanted to quit stripping.

By luck, at a Caribana party in the summer of 1989, I spotted Sherrill and again made contact with her. When we initially met, I did not mention that I was the mother of a Black child but in our subsequent conversation she revealed that she had learned some things about me through a few mutual friends in her community. Depicting the owner of the club in which she was working as having "some kind of problems with the police" concerning drugs, she left stripping to work as a clerk in a store when the club was raided for the third time. Remarking that police have a special interest in "busting prostitutes because they are an easy target; a bust on the street brought in a number of hookers to the clubs" and made it more difficult for dancers who would not prostitute to obtain work. Without explanation, Sherrill revealed that she now has a criminal record as a result of dancing.

She had resigned herself "some time ago to getting out of the business" reasoning that she could do better for herself. Toward the end of her stay in stripping her agent was telling her how she could earn a lot of money making full-length movies in private homes and hotels. Sherrill's investigations found that the agent had contracts with many of the approximately two to five hundred women (and an equivalent number of men who were actors) in the "sex-film industry". She discovered that the movies were thirty to ninety minutes in length, were made for
$4,000 to $10,000 and earned a profit of $70,000 by selling for a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars each. In doing her homework, she discovered that she would have been required to engage in oral, anal and group sex with male ejaculation and urination scenes. She declined arguing "that if I didn't want to do such things in stripping, why would I do it in porn movies"? She added that she was "really scared" by the rumours circling in clubs at that time that some of actresses in "slice and dice" video films were actually raped or killed. There were also some "chicken porn" or "kiddie porn" films being produced, and Sherrill added that she would never have anything to do with sexual activities which involved children.

Describing herself as very happy, Sherrill is married to a man who is a house painter. Having long since left her dancing behind her she claimed not to think much about it these days. Her husband was described as "supportive of me" and aware that she once danced in clubs. They both came from the same small village in Jamaica, although they met for the first time in Toronto. No one in her Jamaican family nor among her friends is aware that she was once a dancer. She reasoned that she has kept quiet about her past occupation because there are those in her community who would reject her if they knew she had been a stripper. Sherrill was pregnant and looking forward to the birth of her daughter, a knowledge she possesses due to the ultrasound tests she recently underwent. Currently, she is looking forward to being a mother with the help of her sister who is emigrating to Canada in two months to help take care of the baby. Planning to return home for a visit or perhaps to live simply in Jamaica with a few goats and a vegetable garden overlooking the ocean, seemed a long way from strip clubs in Toronto.
Dressed in four inch stiletto heels, the dancer's standard footwear for stage, T's feet were "killing" her when we met. She prides herself in having an extensive collection of these shoes, having grown up in circumstances in which she was not always able to attend school because she did not have shoes to wear. As we left Hay's Tavern in Timmins where she was employed, she pointed out a few of the specialty shoe stores such as the Sugar and Spice shop that cater to strippers, places where she indulges herself well beyond what is required to keep up her wardrobe of dancer's lingerie. To complete her ensemble, Samantha is clad in a very short, frilly skirt with a bandeau top exposing her midriff and topped off with a studded, black leather jacket of the highest quality. Her hands shake a little as we speak, her nails are bitten, and the index fingers of both hands are tobacco stained. Her long, wild and tousled hair is not unlike the fashionable, unkempt style that many young women sport today. Leather and metal bracelets, neon pink lipstick, three iron earrings in a single earlobe and a fabric ankle bracelet set off her appearance as a tougher version of the fashion statement of the day.

T complained about the double standard afforded her and her brothers when she was growing up. She could never understand why they were permitted to stay out later, to be excluded from household chores and to be able to drive the family car when she was not allowed such privileges at the same age. Stating that she had a good home life but disliked school, she longed for a life apart from domestic tasks and school work. As her academic interests waned, both parents encouraged her to concentrate on her appearance and her feminine wiles. When her parents clamped down on the "tomboy tendencies" she developed by playing sports during her adolescence (because it was suggested that she would no longer be attractive to boys), the stage was set for
rebellion. T's resentment sprang out of such ordinary but significant events which mark gender roles in family life together with her sense of adventure to explore the world. Although she did not want to be trapped by domestic work ironically, her career goal was to become a dietician. Pleased with her current career, she feels very comfortable that she has achieved a niche for herself in this society and does not long for domesticity in any of its manifestations. Proudly holding out her long finger nails, she remarked, "I don't cook and I don't do windows".

- THE DIVINE MISS M -

Described by a bouncer in a club as a "mean mother" if she is grabbed or harassed, Miss D remarked of herself that she would prefer to be thought of as "the bitch who gets her way rather than the dumb broad who gets put down". This determined young woman believes that "I control my own destiny and call the shots, not someone else". She was married for four years to her high school sweetheart, left to live with a woman for a time and currently lives on her own. Stripping suits her "to a t" at present, although she is planning to try to become an actress through her involvement with local theatre groups and through the private singing and acting lessons she is currently taking. In viewing stripping as a stepping stone to her eventual career goal, Miss D is able to cope with some of the "flakiness" of the strip business. She harbours no illusions, however, that acting will not carry with it some of the same difficulties as stripping, and she considered the time she has spent stripping well worth her while on her way "to cutting my teeth in the world of entertainment".
Appendix B

THE POLITICS OF LAP DANCING

13.1 The Prohibition of Lap Dancing in Metropolitan Toronto

Lap dancing rationalized and specialized the labour process of stripping, resulting in a substantial transformation of the nature and organization of the presentation of strip. The result was an intensification of the pace and explicitness of the work, and a fragmentation of craft knowledge which produced a narrowing down of the skills formerly associated with the art of dancing, teasing and stripping. While dancers may not have attributed the changes in their work processes to the application of the principles of scientific management established a century earlier, they experienced a restructuring of the labour process as the planning and pacing of lap dancing became regimented by time clocks and producing shortened, standardized and sexually erotic sequences of body work. Similar to other workers, some strippers displayed their discontent in a multiplicity of ways such as refusing to engage in lap dancing, demonstrating open hostility toward dancers who took up this method of dance, failing to show up for work or leaving the business. For the strippers who remained and those who entered the business during this period, most did so with the recognition that lap dancing had become an integral part of stripping. Even while accepting lap dancing this group, for the most part, attempted to put personal strictures into place and to react against undesirable practices, while supporting specific procedures within the new organization of stripping that would humanize and establish control over the labour process of lap dancing.

A number of strippers in the Metropolitan Toronto area who felt compelled to take up lap dancing voiced their criticism that the new style of strip turned their workplace into "brothels". They
complained that their livelihood was being undercut by less inhibited competition through the influx of local street prostitutes. A veteran dancer, Debbie, voiced her concern that "Asian immigrants" ignore the going rate of twenty dollars"; they lap dance for as little as five dollars and "screw" for ten dollars. By the mid-1990s, these complaints were successful in garnering the attention of a number of municipal politicians who increasingly wanted to place restrictions on lap dancing (that involved extensive and intimate touching as well as fondling) in private strip club cubicles.

During the summer of 1995, as the issue of lap dancing took centre stage (resulting in vehement debates in the courts, the media and in the council chambers of Metropolitan Toronto), divisions between strippers became apparent. At the Human Services Committee meeting of Metropolitan Toronto that I attended in July of 1995, it was clear that the councillors were unwilling to wait for a judicial rendering before taking action to ban lap dancing. A number of the councillors were anxious to define terms such as "burlesque", "touching" and "lap dancing", and were concerned to enact a bylaw that required a space to exist between patrons and strippers during performances. A disgruntled constituency of strippers were present to argue expressly that a decision enacting a by-law to prohibit touching between dancers and customers and outlawing the existence of private enclosures in strip clubs would infringe upon their right to work and their ability to earn a living. In arguing against banning lap dancing, Deidra McAllison informed the councillors that she was comfortable in providing a service of touching and being touched by customers. "It's part of my right to self-expression", she stated, "and I earn considerably more money than in stage and table dancing."

Richard Wylen, the attorney representing the (normative) Dorchester Club, supported Deidra's position and further stated that clubs' owners were opposed to establishments outside of Metro
"carrying on with business as usual. We're in favor of a provincial ban. But we can't deal with a competitive disadvantage that would arise from banning it here and not banning it across the street (Brazzo, 1996c:A6)." Wylen's client and the owner of Caddy's (in Scarborough), Michael Stephanopoulous, appealed to Council for a "level playing field" that would not allow customers to go to York Region, Markham, Vaughan or Oakville in pursuit of lap dancing. In subsequent newspaper articles, Stephanopoulous stated that "it is the politicians who are destroying us", noting that the employment of three hundred people and his contribution of $1.5 million a year in taxes to the city of Toronto was threatened (Brazzo, 1996c:A6).

As Stephanopoulous sought to establish his respectability during a subsequent interview, he was observed in a newspaper photograph with a wall full of tributes and plaques. Many were presented to him by the Metropolitan Police including a signed letter by the police chief, William McCormack and signed photographs with Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien (Dexter and Brazzo, 1995:A6). At the same Metropolitan Council meeting, the owner of the Golden Slipper Tavern rattled off his business credentials, including the possession of Adult Entertainment and Ontario Liquor Board licenses together with his extensive associations with personnel from the fire, food services, building inspection and police departments. He reminded Council that, as an "upstanding business man" who employed 125 full and part-time dancers, he contributed $9,000 a week by way of taxes to the coffers of the City of Toronto. His yearly taxes include GST payments of $178,000, realty taxes of $45,000, Metro Licensing Commission taxes of $3,600, city of Toronto taxes of $5,000, liquor board taxes of $35,000 and $5,000 in contributions to the Workers' Compensation fund. He bluntly suggested that a ban on lap dancing would cause his business "to fold", which meant that the city would lose a great deal of revenue.

Despite insisting that lap dancing was not a health hazard,
Mary-Ann Claudet, a nurse representing the Toronto Board of Health, provided support for the Council's intent to use licensing to control sex acts in private booths. While declaring activities of "touching" to be "low-risk", she stated that officials of the Board of Health supported the notion that dancers ought to use latex towels to separate themselves from customers in order to reduce potential health risks during lap dancing sessions. She explained that, where digital penetration or masturbation occurs, any sexual activity that brings blood, semen or vaginal fluids in contact with skin or mucous tissue that is inflamed or damaged creates a greater risk for the transmission of diseases. "There is a concern about the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases", she added. METRAC's director, Judith Vanderzaden, reinforced Ms. Claudet's position by stating that lap dancing was physically risky, referring to the cases of two strippers, Jessica Williams and Betty Marchand whose complaints were before the court as a result of their having been sexually assaulted while working in clubs. By referring to the research of Dr. Deanna Forsythe of the University of Toronto and the work of the Toronto Rape Crisis Center/Multicultural Women Against Rape, she attempted to reinforce her position that lap dancing constitutes a danger to strippers.

While stressing that the Police Services Board authorizes the Chief of Police to investigate complaints of sexual assault, it was clear from Detective Sergeant Terry Wark's remarks that the Metropolitan Toronto police have taken the position that enforcement of the Hatchborn decision was impractical. Since charges laid by the police did not result in convictions, most officers no longer monitor strip clubs. The exceptions concerned the charges laid in 1998 against the Diamond Saloon in Peel and the Erotica Club in York for keeping a common bawdy house (due to the existence of "regular prostitution on the premises, not just on one occasion"). Council was informed that the plain-clothes detachment of the Vice and Morality Divisions (Project P) operated by way of instituting "spot checks" in a complaint-driven manner; without
complaints, the police do not lay charges or investigate concerns about sexual assault. "If the province under the Criminal Code were to enact a bylaw separating sex from dancing and place a total ban province-wide on sexually explicit touching, then we could take the clubs back to where they use to be, asking all the provincial licensing commissions to make the Hatchborn decision binding." With the current ambiguity concerning what constitutes "indecency" emanating from the Minister of the Attorney General's office, enforcement was not practical, Wark insisted. He was later to state in a newspaper article that the "Hatchborn decision effectively handcuffed morality squads in their attempts to police strip clubs and anything goes at some of these clubs including . . . masturbation, fondling, fingering and sex--it's become legalized prostitution (Brazzo, 1995a:A16)."

Katie Silverstein, a thirty-one-year-old Black dancer and a married mother of three, is the founder of the Association for Burlesque Entertainers. She wept as she told the members of the committee a detailed and moving account about a number of club incidents involving explicit touching against her will, and of being injured when she attempted to resist. Named the "Queen of the Erotica Club" for her artistic stripping, she was "barred" from that establishment in the spring of 1995, and later fired and "blacklisted", for refusing to grind in patrons' laps and for protesting about being fondled (Conroy, 1998:A4). These requirements to lap dance and submit to fondling "comes with the territory of the job", she was informed by the club manager. In exchange, the manager "allowed" her to make $10 a lap dance to supplement her salary of $250 weekly. She vehemently contended that the entrenchment of lap dancing practices did not permit her and many other strippers to ply their trade without being touched, harassed and stalked. Lamenting the fact that she wished to strip rather than prostitute, she insisted that her struggle around "no contact"--including touching, grinding, oral and genital sex as well as working in booths--was an issue about working conditions
rather than morality. Katie has been fined in clubs for refusing to lap dance while other dancers have been sanctioned for joining her protest, she noted. Her brief foray into lap dancing subsequently caused her to mount a campaign "to make women feel equal and free". With a twenty-five page petition containing "over 2,000 names of the majority of Toronto's dancers", she passionately and convincingly argued that Council should "ban lap dancing to restore stripping" to practices of stage and table dancing as well as to regulate the business in the future.

Classified as a sub-contractor when employed in some of the "wildest workplaces in Ontario", Katie bemoaned the fact that "there aren't many work rules in most clubs. They have dimly-lit floors and dark corners in which customers can prod, grope and grab". Claiming she was sexually assaulted each day she went to work, she explained that stripping has crossed the line of fantasy as lap dancing has become a euphemism for prostitution. She explained to the Council how her experience of lap dancing, with constant touching and fondling, gave new meaning to the terms sexual harassment and assault. "Some dancers can make up to $750 cash per shift, depending upon the sexual services provided to many occupants in private booths that are littered with used condoms at the end of the night." According to Katie, dancers were being coerced into prostitution, and prostitutes were moving in on the profession of stripping. "Although some club owners don't directly force the dancers to lap dance, those who don't end up broke." She concluded her remarks by insisting that the two-income family is a necessity for economic survival, and that women are in the paid labour force for the same reasons as men--to support their families.

Despite posted rules stipulating that customers may not have contact with dancers, Katie claimed that dancers were pressured because clubs not only do not protect dancers, but they will fire a woman who refuses to lap dance. Clients who engage in touching
are not usually evicted from the clubs, she volunteered. Arguing that monetary, client, management and peer pressures converge to encourage compliance from strippers in terms of meeting customers' desires, she indicated that strippers have little choice but to engage in sexual activities. "Where customers used to be kept in check by the club owners and bouncers, dancers are now exposed to threats and violence in private booths; that's where the behaviour of customer and dancer is not monitored. The only alternative is to quit." In a subsequent newspaper article, Katie spoke about her "close call" with a customer who wanted "sex for a song; I was dancing for this guy and I was naked. I had my back turned. I went to sit down on his lap, not looking, and he had his penis out. I nearly sat on it (Brazzo, 1996c:A3)." While she protested to the manager and had the patron evicted, she noted that dancers like herself, who complained were labelled as agitators.

When Katie called for a one-day strike by strippers to protest lap dancing, she found that some dancers who tried to restrict touching--and in the process sustained bumps, bruises and scrapes while wrestling with customers--were wary about jeopardizing their employment by complaining. According to Katie:

The practice of lap dancing has turned the workplace inside out, causing strippers to put up with things that other workers would never imagine putting up with. Dancers find themselves in a "double bind" as they attempt to become more provocative in order to collect fees because they don't want to risk losing business to the competition at the next table. Without guidelines defining lap dancing practices, owners will make up the rules as they see fit, so that some dancers will sit on a customer's leg and upper thighs, others will dry grind as the men masturbate in their pants and some will give hand jobs. Men disregard the rules and they wear the dancers down; when an inspector comes, the owners tell the girls to slow it down. The owners can't possibly not know what is going on, or they don't want to know. The police do nothing about anal and vaginal sex. There's no way to draw the line on lap dancing. Girls go further and further,
putting pressure on others to do the same or they
don't make any money (Brazzo, 1995c:A3)."

Since "dancers do not want to be touched or compete with each other", such practices, Katie stated, pose a risk both to the health and safety of club strippers. She went on to describe how she entered stripping after she left school at an early age. With "no education", she found it difficult to secure a "good job". While she needed the money "to pay my bills, sitting on the laps of customers and allowing them to grope me caused me not to like myself very much". As these events "went further and further", she described the tension such situations created in her marriage. "I felt dirty. My mind and my body still feel dirty, even though I'm not dancing today", she said (Moloney, 1995:A4). Calling for the establishment and enforcement of guidelines, she suggested that exotic dancers and the clubs in which they work ought to be licensed. The conditions of retaining a license would delineate specific behaviours which are permitted from those which are restricted within strip clubs. She suggested that customers should not to be able to place their hands or mouths on the dancer's body; nor should dancers be permitted "to grind" in the laps of customers or meet them for private dances in booths. Such events pose health risks and raise concerns about assault, as in her own case when she was bitten on her nipple by an overly-excited customer. She subsequently cited city ordinances in New York State that have made lap dancing "illegal". Calling upon the licensing commission to eliminate the "whorehouses that Judge Hatchborn has allowed", she asked Council to evict all patrons and dancers who engage in physical contact.

Insisting that the bonus system of table and lap dancing enables club owners to exercise control over the working lives of strippers, she stated that lap dancing prevents women from working who wish to strip but do not want to prostitute themselves. "Lap dancing is not only degrading and demeaning to women but, in an age
of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases it is a deadly health hazard for both customers and strippers. We can't compete with the prostitutes who have moved into the clubs", said Katie. She pleaded that the Council should enact "strong licensing controls" to restrict contact between customers and dancers which can be "vigorously enforced by the police" issuing citations in the case of infractions. Having received numerous letters from strippers complaining that lap dancing was problematic--including "touching of dancers' skin, breasts, genitals, digital penetration of dancers, oral sex with customers, ejaculation by customers" together with "the full-range of sexual activity ... within private enclosures including oral sex (performed both on dancers and customers) and vaginal intercourse"--many of the Metro councillors did not need much convincing to enact a new by-law (McKeown, 1995).

Another stripper, Karen Kells, testified that she expected men to be sexually aggressive in lap dancing encounters. Similar to Katie, she correspondingly blamed customers for putting enormous pressures on the dancers to comply, when "they [customers] try to go too far". However, Patti Buck-Wheeler, who had been friends with Katie since they worked in Toronto's Strip Premier, stated that "it was pathetic and embarrassing to us that her voice is heard at the law-making level. [Silverstein] makes us look like we're too weak to look after our own affairs. Nobody was asking us to take risks we weren't comfortable with. She victimized all of us and set the women's movement back twenty years." Katie's contention that dancers were placed in situations of physical danger was rejected; she also dismissed Mary-Ann Claudet's notion that diseases were transmitted in the clubs and she refuted as "phoney morality", the view that all lap dancers are prostitutes. "Even before lap dancing we were sitting on boxes cuddling up to guys, leaning into them, nuzzling our breasts against them. We weren't there selling donuts." She cautioned that lap dancing was "not just an issue of morality", but that Council had to look at "the social benefits and the serious consequences for jobs in Metro". Patti's co-worker,
Joelle Brown, added that she believed that the "no-touching by-law was a done deal. We heard from Public Health that there was no real health risk." Both were concerned that their petition (with over 200 names of dancers and customers in favour of lap dancing) which was presented to the committee would be given little attention.

Katie continued to insist that dancers were not aware that their working conditions had been substantially altered as lap dancing became accepted in a short period of time. She argued that if lap dancing was legally allowed, dancers would not have the choice of stripping in a conventional manner and would be forced out of the business. In her written statement submitted to the Human Services Committee she stated, "don't be de-railed by those who say banning lap dancing will put dancers out of work. If it did that would still be a price worth paying, given the public health danger of what's going on. But, to ban lap dancing won't put dancers out of work. It will mean dancers will be able to dance again." Submitting that lap dancers were "pimping, procuring and prostituting ... they support their clubs, and if they don't support their clubs they will not be working (Funston, 1995)." She maintained that dancers have been subject to "rough treatment" since the Hatchborn decision which "forces them to choose between prostitution and poverty". While stating she realized "that you can't turn the clock back", Katie insisted that stripping ought to be defined in terms of practices of "no touching", "safe hygiene" and "the dancer ought to keep her G-string on, except for table dancing". The establishment of a new municipal by-law to enforce such practices and "give encouragement to all the girls who came forward. This would show the girls that someone is on their side."

The comments of the councillors were framed by the 1986 C-49 amendments to the Criminal Code, introduced by the federal government concerning the governance of prostitution. While prostitution is no longer illegal, many aspects associated with it remain illicit including communication in public for the purpose of
prostitution, living off the avails of prostitution, procuring a person into the trade who is not a prostitute and operating, being an inmate, on the premises, or a found-in (customer) in a bawdy house. The regulations intended to move prostitution off the streets (thereby reducing the "nuisance" of street solicitation) as well as making the application of the law less complicated for law enforcement agents and the courts. Conducting "john sweeps" to displace prostitution from city streets to indoor locations such as hotel bars, escort services and strip clubs, catered to the growing public pressure to restrict street encounters. Sex-for-money taking place between two consenting adults in private is nonetheless, the kind of activity that the 1985 federal Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (the Fraser Commission) advocated should be decriminalized. The task force report acknowledged that few police investigations take place in bars and strip clubs because they are very time consuming and the fines imposed through the courts are meagre. It was further noted that convictions are difficult to obtain, in view of the fact that owners and operators of such establishments claim that they are operating a business in which they explicitly discourage sexual encounters through the posting of rules and regulations (Pornography and Prostitution Issues, 1985:539-49).

In their deliberations, a number of Metro councillors cited the fact that the licensing of adult entertainment parlours fell under By-Law 20-85, allowing for regulatory control to govern, classify and inspect workplace standards and to license exotic dancers in the entertainment industry. Councillor Gordon Chong found himself in a minority position when he suggested to Council that a by-law prohibiting touching between consenting adults would not withstand a character challenge. He made particular reference to the legal advice provided by Sam McMahon, Council's solicitor, who advocated that amendments to the by-laws should not be enacted until a legal opinion could be obtained. Despite Councillor Jack Layton's suggestion "to use our licensing powers to address the
situation"; Mr. McMahon stated that "the power of Metro remains fairly narrow and confined to matters of the health and welfare of the participants". Councillors were given legal advice that metropolitan stripping establishments have a code of conduct "which is self-regulating because the Criminal Code prohibits indecency, but not touching; if dancers go too far in enclosers, not all are breaking the law." The solicitor suggested that while it would be possible "to work on wording regarding dancers and owners, as was enacted in St. Catharines and Markham", Council had to provide clear evidence of health and safety issues and could not disallow lap dancing simply because the majority wanted to do so on moral grounds. "Clearly a no-touching by-law goes beyond that", insisted Mr. McMahon.

Mr. McMahon further cautioned that regulations could not be enforced at the local level but would need to be enacted province-wide in conjunction with the regulations which govern the Association of Adult Entertainment. The retort from Councillor Layton that it was "ridiculous to issue gloves at the strip club door", the discussion by Councillor Olivia Chow concerning issues of sexual harassment and assault, and the call by Mayor Barbara Hall to "take the lap out of lap dancing", led Council (in a vote of 13-2) to enact a new by-law prohibiting lap dancing as a community health risk. The ruling, which affected 2,515 exotic dancers licensed to work in 41 strip bars in Metropolitan Toronto, imposed penalties of $25,000 on any dancer who engaged in physical contact with patrons and a $50,000 fine on a club owner or operator who knowingly allowed an attendant to touch or be touched by a patron. In addition to the fine set by Council, the by-law anticipated the possibility of closing an establishment for two years if lap dancing was permitted on the premises.

As a result of her testimony, Virginia Singer, a seven-year veteran of stripping, was subsequently interviewed by all the major
dailies and appeared in several clips on the evening television news. This rake-thin, Caucasian woman regards matrimony with contempt and has long-ceased worrying about having sex outside of marriage. She had been lap dancing for the approximate length of time such practices have been in place--some seventeen months between 1994 to 1995. Showing me a picture of herself wearing attire of sheer lace, black panties and a see-through blouse (which scarcely contained her thirty-eight inch bust) she confidently took control as if she has been interviewed on many previous occasions. Her approach to work was forged in an economic context of high unemployment, an abundance of "bad" jobs, and a downward pressure on wages. Without using the term feminist to describe herself, this young woman made a compelling case that she is neither a victim nor a prostitute. Similar to other post-capitalist employees, she called herself an "independent business woman" and believes that economic autonomy is essential to women's freedom.

"Customers don't want completely no touching; in fact there was touching before Hatchborn", according to Virginia. She earns a $1,000 a night from customers who pay "from $10 up, to stroke, fondle and grope", and she is worried that "any changes in the rules will keep dancers off customers' laps. Copping a feel could cost a dancer $25,000 in fines, and a year in jail. There's no way we're going back to the no-touching days because nobody wants to make $5 a dance." She is not employed in any single bar in the Toronto area and no one controls her; in fact she chooses to lap dance and work for herself. She works in specific (transgressional) clubs designated by geographic location, type of clientele and described as "clean and safe". Virginia's family in British Columbia is supportive, so she feels she "has less to lose than most" in coming forth to support the practice of lap dancing. She argued that women "go along" with lap dancing "not because they are harassed but because they want to". They remain silent when such events are discussed by the press or at Metro Council, she maintained, simply because they do not want their families and
clients to see them on television.

Adamant that she has complete control over her working conditions, she stated that "the dancer controls the dance not the customer; I don't need or want the government to protect me". The limited salary and tips from stage dancing compel her "to use the skills I have to make a living". By her conservative estimate, she suggested that lap dancing quadrupled the number of women who were able to find employment in strip clubs during the past few years. "When the green light was given to touching, it improved my life. Table dancing boxes and big boobs were out and light shows and lap dancing were in. It's more convenient for me, I work shorter hours, and I make more money. Besides, you don't have to be as beautiful to lap dance since it is not as visual as table dancing."

Describing her clients as well-behaved individuals looking for a little diversion, Virginia claimed that they are willing to abide by whatever rules their favourite dancers set. "I'm tired of hearing about men as the enemy who harass and assault women. We talk to them and tell them how far they can go." She prides herself on being able to quickly arouse men sexually and to be able "to con them out of their last dime". While she no longer works in booths, she maintained that dancers are not harassed: "If guys cross the line, the dance can stop at any time and the bouncer will reprimand the customer and back up the girl. Owners want it [lap dancing] controlled; they don't want any trouble, so sex in clubs is safe like people watching others making out on a park bench." If she is fined or fired for "going too far"--which she described as touching involving "breasts and genital contact without kissing or orgasm"--she moves to another bar. "The majority of lap dancers do a clean dance, so the ban on booths and the small percentage of dirty dancing (defined as oral, vaginal or anal penetration) will increase prostitution". Since table dancing and lap dancing are the only source of income for thousands of women in Toronto, "banning will force most of these women into low-paying, dead-end jobs".
Changes in metropolitan Toronto's lap dancing regulations were undertaken by certain individuals within particular institutions, utilizing specific practices and distinctive ideologies concerning economic and moral life. Sexuality can be viewed as categories of behaviour, invented at different times and sustained by legal, economic and political practices in order to serve the purpose of social control and regulation. Knowledge concerning sexuality politically functions to undermine traditional beliefs; mechanisms of external control regulating sexual desire are therefore intended to adapt forms of sexuality to specific social and political ideologies. Although regulations pertaining to some forms of sexual behaviour have diminished in the past century, the regulation of lap dancing demonstrates that the state continues actively to define a code of morality and to adopt various methods for the purpose of containing sexual desire.

In their presentations to Council, there was support for lap dancing among some strippers, together with the clients' concerns about freedom of expression and the owners' interests in profit margins. Nonetheless, it was not difficult for the councillors to institute control mechanisms against such practices in order to avoid moral panic. Strippers who were vulnerable to such processes of the law and public ostracism were, to a large extent, absent from the proceedings. The social attitude of the token few who were present seemed at odds with the perceptions of the majority of councillors. Little attention was paid by the Council to the notion that new constraints on table dancing would reduce opportunities for employment and substantial remuneration for the many women currently stripping. No thought, moreover, was given to the fact that the systemic discrimination that confronts strippers based on attributes of gender, class and race is also present when these women leave stripping to take up other forms of employment.

The words of one of the dancers who spoke to Council were ignored when she suggested that she did not need or want protection
from the state. The lone indignant voice of Katie Silverstein added to the urgency of the matter. Undoubtedly, her legitimate grievances concerning sexual harassment and assault ought to have been dealt with through the application of existing laws. Working under conditions that are both physically and emotionally unsafe oppresses sex workers in particular. Expanding labour laws to deal with the provision of safe working conditions for sex workers, and applying existing criminal code sanctions including laws dealing with assault, sexual assault and intimidation, in particular, would have been the appropriate approach regarding state intervention. Instead, Katie's presentation was used to strengthen the Council's intent in extending jurisdiction over boundaries of sexual freedom. In the interest of protecting one group of strippers who were being harassed by clients, another group of strippers who wanted to engage in lap dancing, had their livelihood curtailed. Stigmatizing the work of stripping resulted in such work potentially becoming more dangerous, since strippers will be reluctant to call upon club owners, bouncers and the police to intervene. Subjecting stripping practices to state penalties and fines would make women working in the industry more, not less, vulnerable to powerful legal and economic interests.

The Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP) resists the label "victim" as disempowering to prostitutes, preferring to view sex workers as autonomous individuals rather than victims hopelessly subjugated by oppressive patriarchal practices. Sex workers' advocates have consistently promoted strategies that remove criminal penalties for sexual commerce. They suggest that the implementation of regulations are generally in the interest of clients as opposed to protecting the rights of sex workers. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), an organization supported by two and half million Canadian women, recommended a similar course of action at their 1986 convention by lending approval to the validity of prostitution as women's work. Although practices of male-defined privilege,
operating both at the individual and institutional level may suggest to some men that they can assault a stripper because of her chosen occupation, prostitute discourse advises that sex workers are actively involved in negotiating their status, have skillfully learned both how to manipulate men and to take steps toward providing a safe working environment for themselves.

The discussion before Council was reinforced by academics, who assisted the lobby of a feminist organization in framing their arguments. The feminists who took an active part in the debate espoused criticisms about sexual exploitation and violence against women as the dominant sexual politic. Since feminists have long recognized the economic reasons why women enter prostitution, Judith Vanderzaden's presentation suggested that an improvement in the working conditions of strippers was required, rather than a need to remove women from strip clubs. Representing women's subordination as a result of degradation and violence in patriarchal society, her position presented strippers as objectified, dehumanized and functioning within the industry as sex objects. Men, frequently, were viewed as perpetuating violence against women; women were seen as reverting back to helpless victims prevalent in late nineteenth and early twentieth century sexual discourses. METRAC's director did not, however, discuss the way in which economic forces organize social relations and the fact that women choose to strip rather than live in poverty. Nor were feminist interests in the politics of sexual liberation mentioned, calling for women to be released from inhibitions and social controls. Similar to other historical eras in which the state was able to neutralize or divert feminists from addressing the root cause of female subordination in society, Vanderzaden endorsed regulation as a strategy to eliminate violence against women. A feminist position which is aligned with institutions of legal regulation in calling for legal reform is at odds with the call from other feminists for the decriminalization of prostitution, and is in danger of being coopted by the state to support an anti-
feminist agenda against sexual freedom.\footnote{16}

Given the legal loophole established by the Hatchborn decision (which increased sexual contact and provided greater public accessibility to what was formerly illicit behaviour), law enforcement representatives made it evident that the existing regulations were unworkable. The police complained that blurred lines and the shifting boundaries (which exist between behaviour that is indecent and that which is not viewed as such) resulted in difficulties obtaining convictions under existing obscenity laws.\footnote{17} Representing pro-criminalizing forces, law enforcement agents implied that Council could regain control over strip clubs through the enactment of by-laws which would reinstate police sweeps. The moral panic, heightened by the presentation by the police, suggested that more intensified policing practices and more power provided to the police to raid strip clubs, were the only solutions to the social problem of lap dancing.

Eager to report on cutting-edge events, the daily newspapers in Toronto carried numerous stories concerning the political debates and the subsequent legal decisions that were rendered. By highlighting a practice which had been ongoing without much concern for eighteen months, the media contributed to the moral panic sweeping through the Metro Council chambers and further encouraged the mobilization of public support for state action. Extensive media coverage in some instances reinforced negative stereotypes of strippers, by concentrating on the centrality of strippers rather than clients in lap dancing practices and by ignoring the basic economic and social problems faced by strippers. Left unstated were some of the wider oppressions women confront as a result of downsizing, privatizing and restructuring which were occurring at the time in Ontario under a Tory government.\footnote{18}

Lap dancing supplanted table and stage dancing in an obvious and open manner in many strip clubs, violating the legal and social
boundary between public and private sexuality. It was clearly at odds with some of the founding Christian moral values of "Toronto the Good" requiring, on the part of the Council legislative action to bring such practices back in line with standards of dominant culture morality." It is not necessarily contradictory that lap dancing existed and flourished within a regime of official condemnation and legal repression. By presenting stripping for pleasure and profit, conducted anonymously in public, lap dancing challenged the notion that sexuality is a monogamous activity for reproductory purposes to be conducted in the private domain. It seemed that lap dancing of a discrete nature was to be tolerated in order to get women off the street, to enable the police to regulate some aspects of the sex industry by having individuals congregated in specific establishments. When lap dancing became flagrant and wide-spread, it constituted a threat to morality and social order requiring state regulation to deal with this "deviant" practice.

The criminalization of lap dancing ensured that such practices were kept distinct from other forms of work and apart from the legitimate world of business and commerce. The purpose in enacting a new lap dancing by-law was to encourage specific forms of stripping, while restricting participation in lap dancing by linking such practices to disease and placing it within dominant discourses of sexual crimes. Such regulations, however, made it difficult for strippers to achieve financial independence, control conditions of their work and organize against economic and legal marginalization. Instead of offering protection against abusive customers and owners, criminalization tended to reinforce the dependence of strippers on owners and male friends to provide bail in the event of an arrest. Given the selective enforcement of the law that places the greatest burden of criminalization on women of colour, restricting lap dancing practices created a legal tactic of racism. The social stigma against strippers made it difficult to find work outside of the sex trade and made it necessary for many to move among clubs and cities to find gainful employment. Legally
recognizing lap dancing as a form of work would ensure that other benefits such as employment insurance and rights including protection against the intrusion of the state's child welfare services might be extended to strippers.

While regulation of morality framed the Metro councillors' debate, the decision to eliminate lap dancing was structured around issues concerning public health. Advocates of regulatory strategies presupposed that venereal diseases could be curbed by controlling the stripper's body and punishing strippers who engaged in lap dancing. The effect was to link strippers with other "high risk" deviant groups, including intravenous drug users, bisexuals and prostitutes. The outcome was to set the stage of moral panic within a medical frame of reference and to penalize sex workers for the alleged offense of spreading sexually related diseases. With the discovery in the 1980s of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases, the moral climate of the 1990s stood in contrast to an earlier liberated atmosphere promoting sexual exploration and pleasure. Due to the association of AIDS in particular with disease and death, sexuality became laden with moral meaning. As with late nineteenth and early twentieth century policies to curtail syphilis, and the fears of the 1940s surrounding syphilis and gonorrhoea, the current response to the AIDS epidemic focused on the role of the sex worker as the agent of infection (Chapkis, 1997:165). Prejudice and intolerance concerning "deviant" sexuality loomed large. Fears concerning contagious diseases spreading in strip clubs were used to justify prohibition, even though it is not clear that the physical contact in lap dancing practices are sufficient for the transmission of the HIV virus. Indeed, it has been established in North America that prostitutes practising safe sex are not predominantly responsible for the transmission of venereal diseases and AIDS in particular. Stigmatization more than disease is the major problem faced by strippers. The ineffectiveness of restricting strippers rather
their clients was not taken into account, nor was the tendency of health officials to engage in such interventions instead of offering programmes of sex education and condom distribution.

Council's decision was certainly at odds with the 1995 City of Toronto Health Committee report, endorsed by most of the councillors at that time, supporting the decriminalization of prostitution and an investigation of alternative strategies to deal with sex trade work. The moral conservatism displayed by the Metropolitan Council mirrored the political conservatism that has swept all Western industrial countries for the past twenty years, beginning with the policies of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain, Ronald Reagan in the United States and Brian Mulroney in Canada. In the crisis of capitalism created by the new global economy, inflation increased, real income declined, government deficits grew, unemployment soared, social services were cut back and concerns about crime mounted. In such a climate, the Council was to constitute lap dancing practices as a problem and provide an interpretive schema using the framework of health concerns that would require a regulatory response. With the appearance of rationality and neutrality, input presented by various individuals and organizations was entered into a political/legal discourse with a intended outcome. The work of the Council was to establish the harm resulting from lap dancing practices and to take steps to eradicate the dangers associated with such practices.

Not unlike the recent crackdown on solicitation among street prostitutes in Toronto, eliminating lap dancing infringed on human rights, imposed an anti-sex prohibition and stigmatized as deviant people engaged in stripping. The Metro Council's restrictions on lap dancing demonstrated its commitment to cautious safe sex and fidelity within the private domain. Invoking fear concerning health problems, the councillors associated a message about sex with infection and death. Discussions concerning safer sex practices, encouraging sexual variety, erotic playfulness and imaginative
diversity were absent. The message was to engage in the safest sex practice, abstinence, by returning to sexual encounters where clients were permitted to view but not to touch strippers. Reflecting values of moral conservatism, the effect was to compel people to engage in a specific form of visual erotic performance, rather than the more explicit kind of strip which had emerged and was associated with prostitution in advanced capitalism. The political implications demonstrated that Metro Council contained the moral panic and, through the restoration of public confidence maintained the credibility of municipal institutions.  

13.2. Lap Dancing Restrictions

Expand Throughout Ontario

Katie Silverstein's dedication to reforming her "business" became her cause célèbre when she wrote to every municipality in the province and personally attended many of the Council meetings in which the issue of curtailing lap dancing was discussed. Her agenda and that of many of the municipal councillors of both left and right political persuasions coalesced to bring about changes enacted within the province affecting approximately 3,800 dancers. Within a few months, two dozen municipalities within Ontario passed regulatory legislation similar to that of Metropolitan Toronto's by-law prohibiting touching between dancers and their customers. The amendment to the Town of Richmond Hill's by-laws, for example, stated that no owner or operator would allow an entertainer to touch or be touched by any other person, and all services provided by an entertainer must be performed within view of the main stage. When Justice Gloria Klowak, of the Ontario Court general division declared that "mud-wrestling and stripping carried on in the centre of town may have been acceptable at one time, but more aggressive and overt sexual activity would be treated differently in town", the scene was set for her to grant a permanent injunction barring a club in Richmond Hill from providing adult entertainment (Levy, 1998:F4).
Fearing that it would become "the lap dancing capital east of Toronto", Oshawa's Council unanimously enacted their by-law on the insistence of Katie's claim that "the girls have experienced sexual assault ... the word 'No' doesn't work (Boyle, 1995:A14)." Peter Psihogis, president of the 100-member Ontario Adult Entertainment Bar Owners Association, argued that "the GTA conspiracy" inspired the implementation of a plethora of by-laws which infringed on the Criminal Code's federal jurisdiction (Boyle, 1995:A14). After the police received anonymous complaints from dancers with respect to concerns about health issues and pressure exerted by management to lap dance or be fired, the York Region police laid 57 charges in April, 1996--mostly against dancers for being inmates in a common bawdy house. Additionally, some customers were charged with being found-ins as part of a investigation of the Exotica club in Richmond Hill which advertised "201 luscious lap dancers" (Boyle, 1995:A14). Raids conducted by more than 200 police officers in 19 premises resulted from a five-month undercover surveillance investigation of "lap dancing establishments" in Richmond Hill and Markham (Conroy, 1998:A4).

On September 18, 1995, the Metropolitan Toronto Council ruling and those of several other municipalities were appealed in the provincial court of Ontario. The sentiments of one of the strippers, Deidra McAllison, who appeared before the Council were echoed in court by Jack Laxmi, an attorney representing some of metropolitan Toronto's forty strip club owners. Claiming a right to speak for the employer of some 5000 people, the owners' attorney, Alex Stafford, argued against the constitutionality of the by-law. He maintained that municipal by-laws prohibiting lap dancing and privacy in booths violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the grounds that they restrict freedom of expression and association. The lawyer for the Ontario Adult Entertainment Bar Association, Maurey Mandel, informed Justice Brian Trafford that Council had infringed upon the Criminal Code by exceeding its legal jurisdiction in the decision to exclude lap dancing. "The by-law
technically precludes any contact with a patron, whether it be in the exchange of bills or helping a patron with a glass. It doesn't make much sense (Van Alphen, 1995:D3)."

Laxmi suggested that a "licensing by-law which incorporates a condition of no touching, would kill 2,500 jobs for dancers and hundreds of jobs for doormen and cooks who work in adult entertainment parlours in Toronto." No doubt, it will be challenged in the courts as unconstitutional (Van Alphen, 1995:D3)." One of Deidra's colleagues, Sharon Staton, was concerned enough to ask for intervener status in the divisional court hearing since the restrictions on table dancing resulted in a loss of approximately eighty percent of her income. "When customers experience lap dancing they are reluctant to settle for table dances; the clubs are very quiet these days", she stated (Brazzo, 1995b:A2). Joe Kalzalas, the brother of the owner of the Eros club added, that "once you've had a filet mignon, it's hard to go back to hot dogs and fries", decrying a 60 per cent decrease in business which necessitated a drop in the price of a beer from $4.95 to $3.75 in his club. The possibility also exists that the club may have to close in the future", he added (Brazzo, 1995b:A3).

With mounting political pressure exhibited across the province, many strippers, clients and managers suggested that it was a foregone conclusion that the Ontario Court of Appeal would control contact between strippers and clients (Pron, 1997b:A7). The City of Mississauga forwarded a copy of their resolution to the Attorney General of Ontario, requesting that the court "take whatever action is needed, be it to enforce the existing laws or to create new regulatory apparatuses, to terminate the indecent, offensive and unacceptable activities that are currently prevailing and rife through out the adult entertainment establishments in the Greater Toronto area. The report specifically pointed out that Judge Hatchborn had previously been incorrect in not finding that lap dancing exceeded community standards of tolerance and morality
Indeed, Chief Justice Charles Dubin seemed to be on the same wave length as the municipal councillors of Mississauga when he ruled that the public interest issue should take precedence in the decision concerning the legality of lap dancing (Vincent, 1995:A3). Dubin ruled that the Supreme Court of Canada's decision to permit the viewing of pornographic video materials in the privacy of one's home was distinct from a situation which involved physical contact between strangers on public premises where food and alcohol were served. He rejected arguments of the defence that the use of basketball hoops, nerf balls, lollipops and cream, used by dancers "in a variety of objectionable ways was protected as a means of freedom of expression by the Charter of Rights. The trial judge erred in holding that the test to determine whether the performance was immoral was the same as if the test was to determine obscenity, and thus failed to take into consideration the surrounding circumstances and the context in which the performance was being carried on", Justice Dubin stated (Brazzo, 1996:A3). The court therefore upheld that the Metropolitan Toronto by-law (concerning the prohibition on lap dancing) did not violate the right to freedom of expression, as set out in the Charter of Rights. It was stated that first convictions would carry a maximum fine of $750 and the closure of the premises in question for a day; in the event of a second or third conviction the fine would be $1,000 and a four-day closure of the establishment.

For Katie Silverstein the court decision that "declared lap dancing as indecent was a great victory for women. The nightmare is over. The courts really did their job this time. I think this is a day when all women are going to feel safe, going to feel strong again. They have saved a lot of girls a lot of pain and suffering (Brazzo, 1996:A3)." Silverstein did offer that some strippers had lost their jobs because they were lap dancing, and that "in-fighting" had broken out between strippers who would and those who
would not perform such services. For David Marwick, owner, and Robert Presser, manager of Toronto's Eros Tavern (who had recently been found guilty of allowing an indecent theatrical performance), the determination of the five-judge panel meant that they faced possible fines or imprisonment. The remarks of Justice Dubin that lap dancing degrades and dehumanizes women, portraying them as sexual objects without dignity meant that dancers and club patrons could also be charged by the police for engaging in lap dancing, according to Crown Attorney David Butt (Brazzo, 1996:A7).

Despite a failure to identify any "high-risk sexual activities" in a year-long investigation into lap dancing conducting by the York Region municipality, the practice continued to be criticized by the regional medical officer, Dr. Marjorie Pallin, and the municipality's solicitor Patricia Kincaid. Their comments indicated that dancers were touched and their bodies including skin, breasts and genitals were being fondled. Investigators who produced the report for the municipality did not, however, observe sexual intercourse, oral sex or ejaculation (Brazzo, 1996:A3). By the fall of 1996, five exotic dancers in the metropolitan Toronto area were charged with allowing themselves to be touched and faced maximum fines of $25,000. Such clubs which were quick to open their doors to the controversial form of entertainment (including one bar naming a room after Justice William Hatchborn) were now jumping on the bandwagon to eliminate such forms of stripping. In the spirit of the double standard prostitutes speak about so frequently, clients, however, were not charged (Brazzo, 1996:A3). The result, according to lawyer George Radojcic who acted in court on behalf of The Solid Gold Bar in Burlington was that the earnings of dancers and other staff were seriously affected (Brazzo, 1996:A3).

A counter move was mounted by the Professional Lap Dancers Association which, according to the president and manager of the Markham bar Bubbles, Frank Vatalaro supported the status quo of lap
dancing. Remembering a similar controversy in the mid-1980s when she first arrived in Canada, Annie Ample was confronted by a petition signed, by 300 people, presented to city hall to eliminate table dancing. Allen Teale, the Lipstick bartender, also recalled a battle at Toronto's city council several years previously concerning the issue of licensing strippers. At the time, a doctor's certificate was needed to establish that a dancer did not suffer from any communicable diseases in order to obtain or renew a stripper's license. Allan mentioned that there was a great deal of controversy surrounding the event with some politicians demanding that the real names and addresses of licensed dancers be posted in each club. This proposal never became incorporated into the city's by-laws, in part because dancers protested loudly that such a requirement constituted a serious threat to their privacy and safety. Most dancers in that era protected themselves by using a stage name on their stripper's license; Allen met at least one dancer with six aliases, two passports and three driver's licenses all in different names.

Within a short period of time, a number of Ontario municipal councils came to the same understanding that lap dancing posed a social problem for which legislative regulation became the solution. As definitions of sexuality were being challenged, strip clubs became sites of socially constructed power relations. The state functioned to maintain hegemony by restating boundaries to restrict the forces of sexual liberation. In addressing the social crisis, the legal procedures of the state were coordinated with the media, policing practices and dominant political and economic interests. Viewed as the legitimate legislation of the state, the social problem of lap dancing was regulated and reorganized into a new set of social relations constructing an innovative social identity for strippers.
From the standpoint of women driven out of the business and for those who remained, lap dancing was seen as a job rather than a social problem. The impact on strippers of new by-laws regulating lap dancing was to present them as responsible for spreading disease and moral decay. In the view of municipal councillors, open and licentious lap dancing practices had progressed too far. They demanded that strip clubs be reorganized in order to bring stripping in line with a conservative sexual ethic. The approach required that issues of health be addressed through regulation carefully crafted within the confines of municipal jurisdictional law that would thus violate the human rights of consenting adults to congregate and fraternize. It was imperative that the ideological shift in the state's view of sexuality would not result in a constitutional challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The enactment of municipal by-laws in Ontario to prohibit lap dancing demonstrated an ideological commitment to traditional family values, despite the fact that there was little evidence of a return to monogamous marriages and traditional nuclear family lifestyles in the community at large. A lack of action on the part of municipalities, however, would have been interpreted as permitting the legalization of specific forms of prostitution. By-laws designating lap dancing as problematic singled out strippers for a different kind of treatment than other people in society. The effect was to increase the stress and the rate of arrest for women employed as strippers.

The moral parameters of lap dancing confronted ethical pluralism and earlier challenges to the construction of female sexuality. In the context of increased social, legal and human rights during the past few decades, a sex ethic of pleasure without censorship became widely endorsed. There was an increased emphasis on the individual's right to sexual choice and freedom, and a corresponding reduction regarding the state's regulation of sexual behaviour in the interest of maintaining social order. Sexual ethics based on love, within the institution of marriage, were
replaced by ethics of sexual pleasure and self-fulfilment. Compulsive and frequent sex, a variety of sexual partners and positions and sex as performance, free from commitment and guilt became popular. Feminist sexual politics established the theory and practice of encouraging women's sexual autonomy to subvert structures which enabled men to claim ownership of women's bodies. Male violence, in particular, was associated with a wider system of male dominance and control to keep women in their place. As women were demanding personal and political rights in the family, workplace and society at large, they also asserted their sexual autonomy. Demands for equal pay, better day care facilities and paid maternity leave, addressed women's rights to equal treatment. An increase in sexual options for women, a decline in the sexual double standard and a desire to legalize contraception and make abortion a private matter between a woman and her physician, also spoke to the right of women to control their bodies.

In effect, in banning lap dancing, municipalities undertook to bring larger areas of social and public life under the control of legal regulations. The work, identity and social relations of strippers became reorganized and constituted in social terms through a discourse of legal rights and responsibilities. Although strip clubs are privately owned establishments, they are similar to massage parlours and gay bath houses as places that the public can access sex and in which sexual activity takes place. In legal terms they constitute part of the public domain. Many contradictions surfaced around the lap dancing debates, including the issue of choice and autonomy regarding consenting adults engaged in sexual activity within private strip club booths. Britain's Wolfenden Report (1957), the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1967) and the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (1985), all of which called for toleration of prostitution in private, were ignored in the enactment of new municipal by-laws concerning lap dancing.
While activities related to prostitution such as solicitation are illegal, prostitution itself is not illegal in Canada. Being a lap dancer does not contravene municipal by-laws; however, engaging in lap dancing especially in private booths within strip clubs, the most logical place for such activities, currently violates city and town ordinances. Nor was there any thought to providing space for prostitution, as has been undertaken in other jurisdictions including Nevada, Holland and Germany. By-laws were constructed in such a manner that, sitting on a lap in public and "nonsexual" touching between consenting adults, was constituted as an offence in need of regulation. Given that complaints do not originate from the consenting parties, prostitution has been called a "victimless crime". Prostitutes have long favoured an approach of decriminalization and the elimination of state intervention in the private lives of individuals. Regulating lap dancing holds individual women responsible for the multi-million dollar business of stripping and fails to take into account the social and economic reasons why women feel compelled to take up such work. Silencing and marginalizing prostitutes through the formation of restrictive public policy meant that their input was used to add legitimacy to the decision making process, without adding accountability to the constituents most affected by state regulation. The criminal justice system is, therefore, supportive of a sexist division between men and women and a class division between "good" and "bad" women. This obscures the fact that prostitution as a practice that involves both genders: however, one gender is punished for such activities and the other gender is not held accountable. In the process, the work processes of strippers become stigmatized, despite the fact that prostitute discourses present their activities as work and seek to establish more control over the conditions of their jobs. As the state regulated morality by constituting lap dancing a social problem, it was only the stripper who had her livelihood threatened.

While arguments advanced by the police suggested that table
dancing required its own distinct regulatory strategy, such solutions will increase the numbers of law enforcement officers required for such work as well as the amount of power they derive from the state. The market principles of free enterprise endorsed by the political Right are also called into question in the enactment of lap dancing by-laws. At odds with the repudiation of state intervention in favour of the market and the message of choice and self-sufficiency touted by the Harris government, the meaning seemed to be that for women, some may have to return to the home or other lower-paying jobs. Municipal councillors did not question structural factors of gender inequality, unemployment, violence in the family, racism, the double burden of marketplace and housework, or the cutbacks in social services occurring in the society. Concern was with the production of new categories of sexual behaviour oriented to organizing categories of the state, police, health care professionals and the media. Nor was concern extended to strippers charged with lap dancing offences who would be stigmatized and have their future employment options and social status curtailed.

The state clearly had not relinquished its ability to censure, restrain and control behaviour in order to enforce a dominant cultural version of morality. Obscured in the production of these by-laws was an examination of the economic base for women engaging in stripping, serving to further marginalize strippers by declaring them a health risk. The crisis legitimated state intervention; at the center of the new sexual moralism was the reconstruction of the woman as a sexual deviant. Councillors did not consider educational rather than legal methods of dealing with health issues which impacted on lap dancing. Such an approach, based on providing knowledge concerning sexuality, would be premised on the individual's right to know and the need to explore and to understand the sexual self. Pleasure and self autonomy gave way to punitive constraints placed on sex, deemed necessary to protect society from unfettered desire and chaos.
As has happened on several other occasions, the defence of prostitutes' rights by feminists was very circumscribed. Situated in a discourse of censorship and anti-pornography, feminist efforts became more associated with the efforts of the state and the police to regulate rather than to protect, strippers. Working within mainstream legal, state and policing structures has proved to be problematic for all women; the situation is even more crucial when it pertains to sex workers who are on the margins of society. While addressing some of the oppressive conditions within stripping, the autonomy of many assertive and independent strippers must also be factored into a feminist analysis. An inclusive feminist approach to deal with the complicated terrain of sex work that would uphold and endorse a woman's right of choice and autonomy was required, while extending protection against violation of her human, civil and legal rights. The lesson which sex trade workers have attempted to impart that it is critical that feminists do not speak for strippers or engage in regulatory practices designed to curtail the activities of sex workers, was lost.

Feminists, in particular, have pressured the state to be included in discussions regarding the establishment of sexual boundaries and have long pursued the goal of sexual autonomy for women. Despite the divisions in the feminist community regarding issues of prostitution and pornography, many feminists support decriminalization of prostitution. Although this faction may grapple with prostitution as a practice which endorses the rights of men to sexual access to women and treats women as commodities (in contrast with the view of prostitution as work with characteristics that are not dissimilar to other kinds of jobs working class women perform), there has been wide recognition among feminists of the injustice of stigmatizing women regarding sexual activities.

The re-emergence of social and political concerns about
prostitution were at the heart of the legal interventions into lap
dancing, rendering strippers more vulnerable to wider state powers.
Women who remained in stripping after the legal abolition of lap
dancing were particular concerned that protection money would need
to be paid to the police to allow them to continue working. Others
suggested that they may need to hire a pimp to negotiate with
clients. Women of colour, who volunteered that they are more
frequently monitored by the police than White women, believed that
monitoring practices by the police would be intensified. A woman,
arrested for soliciting or being a found-in within a bawdy house,
could pay the ultimate price by acquiring a police record which may
preclude her from finding alternative employment, housing and
retaining custody of her children.

Despite a radical alteration in the sexual ethics of the past,
attitudes toward sex trade workers, including masseuses,
prostitutes and strippers have hardly changed. Canadian laws
regarding sexuality have been based since 1969 or the concept that
individuals may do as they wish, as long as the activities involve
two consenting adults in private.39 For the most part, private
indulgence in sexual activities stands in contrast with displays
and consumption of sexual services in public.40 Consenting
individuals engaged in public sexual acts with numerous partners
and partners of the same sex in an exchange of sex for money,
however, have been highly regulated. Indeed, in some jurisdictions
the police have recently been granted additional powers of control.
While sex in the public domain thrives in movies, rock videos and
popular magazines, the workers in this industry remain a
stigmatized group, operating at the border of legality, and more
harassed than protected by the law (Highcrest, 1997:105-15). Sex
work remains at the moral boundary, forming a dividing line between
respectable and illicit sexual encounters. The economic dimensions
of sex work add to constituting it as a social problem. Prostitutes
and not the clients continue to be scapegoated for social concerns
regarding the commercial exploitation of sex, and the double
standard means that prostitutes are predominantly fined, imprisoned and criminalized for soliciting offenses.

13.3. The Lap Dancing Beat Goes On

Although the courts have declared that lap dancing is "indecent" because it offends community standards and by-laws in many of the towns and municipalities of Ontario prohibit the practice, lap dancing reappeared in the late spring of 1996 in some urban clubs. As the issue again appeared on the front page of newspapers, club owners were openly advertising for the never-ending stream of customers, some of whom spent hundreds of dollars in the clubs. In total, sixty four charges have been laid against dancers since the Toronto by-law was enacted, according to Carol Ruddell-Foster, Chair of the Metro Human Services Committee (Welsh, 1996:Al). Katie Silverstein suggested that customers in the Greater Toronto area who were seeking the "forbidden dance" could quite readily obtain it. The enforcement of the laws is a joke. It's at the point where it's almost full-blown again. That gives the club owner more control because the dancers feel like they have no say or safety at all. The highest fine a dancer has received so far is $200--a small fine to someone who can earn that in an hour. And owners themselves face little more than a slap on the wrist. They need to be convicted twice on the charge of allowing physical contact before a court will issue a penalty", she remarked (Welsh, 1996:A1). Her point is well taken--the sign over the door of Garby's East reads "Toronto Sexiest Couch Dancers", followed by "Room for Rent - Low Rates".

Once again the dancer who carried out a high profile campaign against "rape rooms", returned to the Metropolitan Toronto Council to bring to their attention the fact that clubs were continuing to provide privacy between patrons and dancers. Having been primed with pictures which showed private booths equipped with single beds, pillows and bedspreads, the Metropolitan Council's Human
Services Committee joined with approximately fifty other Canadian municipalities by amending the lap dancing by-law to include a prohibition against "VIP booths" (Welsh, 1996:A1). Recently, stripping has taken on a high-tech appearance with advertisements found on the Internet directing eager customers to select bars where they can rub their faces in the dancers' breasts and grab their buttocks without interference by staff. One Web site boasts "the ultimate strip club list--a reader's guide for customers on prices with a list of which twelve of Metro's numerous clubs offer lap dancing" (Duncanson and Welsh, 1996:A15).

Some club owners, bitter about the fact that their competitors operate in an illegal manner, complained to Toronto's mayor, Barbara Hall, asking her to intervene (Funston, 1996:A7). Suggesting that customers are savvy and will "go where the dirtiest action is", the entertainment manager of Toronto's Fantasy Club remarked that his business was down by 50 percent because he adhered to the rules. Detective Sergeant Charles Hanson of the morality division of the Metropolitan Toronto Police specifically singled out Club 86 in Toronto as an establishment which had a number of charges laid against it, stemming from acts of touching and the reintroduction of lap dancing in private lounges. He indicated, however, that he had not investigated that particular club in months. "Police officers are kept busy", he reported, "inquiring into complaints concerning bawdy houses, escort services and prostitution in the city, and we don't have time to investigate the activities of strip clubs" (Welsh, 1996:A1). Peel Region police officers witnessed "dancers masturbating customers, having oral sex with customers ... and having intercourse with a condom between dancers and customers" (Funston, 1996b:A7). In response, the Mississauga city council voted unanimously to revoke the adult entertainment, restaurant and tobacco licenses of the Diamond Saloon.

As of 1998, in strip clubs in Toronto, Brampton, Richmond
Hill, Hamilton and Niagara Falls, it is still possible to encounter lap dancing, and to sit in a booth with a dancer in a close-encounters-of-the-private-kind despite the by-laws which prohibit physical contact between dancers and customers. The doorman at Studio 27 in Toronto when questioned about what takes place in the back rooms indicated that "you go in there with a girl and give her $20 and she'll rub her naked body all over you" (Hanlon, 1998:B1). According to Christine, a stripper in Niagara Falls, who uses the clubs to establish contacts for prostitution, "crackdowns have scared a lot of customers away and that means that I have to hustle a lot more to make a buck". She also reported that "more women have been driven out on the streets because they can't earn a living in the clubs". Another dancer from Fort Erie reported:

When lap dancing was outlawed in 1995, ... many of us saw our incomes drop by more than 50 per cent. Some turned to mother's allowance or welfare. Owners demanded a daily 'bar fee' - long ago we received wages, though minimal - and those who protested were fined and blacklisted from entire cities. Lap dancing evolved again for several reasons. European women flocked here after the Iron Curtain's fall. South American, Mexican, and Asian women also followed this route. Club owners want as many women as possible working in their bars. At an average of $25 per shift/per dancer 'bar fees' and say 50 dancers per night - well you do the math! More women, less money to go around, more competition and incessant whining from customers made lap dancing's return almost inevitable (Sneider, 1998:A28).

It is apparent that legislative attempts to restrict lap dancing practices were effective; however, looking to legal strategies to resolve complicated social issues did not address the issue of prostitution in strip clubs. Such an approach, however, is instrumental in initiating new concerns by providing the legal mechanisms that increase the rate of arrest of strippers, club owners and some clients by the police. According to statistics provided by the Toronto Licensing Commission which monitors such activities, approximately two charges concerning lap dancing have
come before the courts each week and a number of clubs have been accused of operating a bawdy house (Hanlon, 1998:B1). Despite the fact that, during the past year, twenty six convictions have been won against owners/operators for permitting physical contact, fifteen convictions against owners/operators for allowing services to be performed out of sight, and a hundred and twenty convictions against attendants for physical contact (most of them while providing services out of view of the main stage), lap dancing continues in a number of the forty-two licensed adult entertainment parlours in metropolitan Toronto (Hanlon, 1998:B1). Such an impressive rate of arrest and conviction strengthens the notion that the police are able to contain criminal elements. Rather than preventing offenses, zealous police officers engaged in lap dancing entrapment have created infractions, thus gaining support for the maintenance and expansion of police surveillance.

Solutions to social issues surrounding stripping will not be achieved by viewing strippers as patriarchal pawns who require regulatory intervention for their protection. While strippers seek control over their conditions of work, most do not report that working with the police has provided them with either security or authority. Rather than protecting women from violence, regulatory strategies serve to increase their vulnerability. Restrictions on lap dancing have forced strippers to become more clandestine in their activities and to ply their trade in other settings; such actions have not decreased prostitution. A regulatory approach does not address the unequal relations of power which cause women to seek work in stripping as a means of economic support. Yet being held responsible for the spread of infectious diseases and acquiring a record of arrests profoundly affect the lives of women in stripping. Such actions serve to reinforce a deviant identity and to stigmatize further the occupation of strippers.

It is imperative to show how the practices of strip regulate the lives of women so as to reproduce the structures which preserve
regulation. Legal constraint and regulation play a decisive role in the production of lap dancing presentations. These new practices of stripping govern the lives of women so as to reproduce the structures which preserve regulation. Focusing on the ways in which legal regulation and enforcement create and sustain legal responses to the disadvantagement of strippers demonstrates how lap dancing is currently suppressed as a practice of work and promoted as a potentially dangerous sex act. Making lap dancing practices illegal is part of the mechanism which publicly tolerates, suppresses and promotes specific stripping practices. Constraint, marginalization and the oppression of strippers is the result of the institution of specific work practices and regimes of regulation.

By presenting stripping for explicit sexual pleasure and profit, conducted anonymously and in public, lap dancing challenges the notion that sexuality is a monogamous activity for reproductive purposes to be conducted in the private domain. When lap dancing became wide-spread, it constituted a threat to morality and social order, requiring state regulation to deal with this "deviant" practice. The regulation of lap dancing ensures that such practices are kept distinct from other forms of work and apart from the legitimate world of business and commerce. It further curtails the stripper's right to control conditions of her work, gain access to state services and seek protection from abusive practices. Regulatory strategies presuppose that venereal diseases can be curbed by controlling the stripper's body and punishing strippers who engaged in lap dancing practices. The response of the state is to focus on the role of the sex worker as the agent of infection. Fears concerning contagious diseases spreading in strip clubs is used to justify prohibition, even though it is not clear that the physical contact in lap dancing practices is sufficient for the transmission of the sexually transmitted diseases. Although stripping is defined relationally, restricting strippers rather than their clients is the preferred approach of the state. Nor is the practice of health officials to engage in such interventions by
offering programmes of sex education and condom distribution contemplated. The effect is to link strippers with other "high risk" deviant groups and to penalize sex workers for the alleged offense of spreading sexually-related diseases. Stigmatization and criminalization more than the control of disease and morality is the major outcome with the burden of such regulations directed predominantly at strippers.
ENDNOTES

1. Taylor's meticulous approach to time-motion studies must be set in the context of his idiosyncratic personal life. He was reported to be an insomniac who could only sleep in a harness constructed to keep his body in a vertical position. He suffered most of his life from thoughts of illness and death, irritated his friends with his rigid adherence to the rules in croquet and fastidiously studied his own walking patterns to determine the amount of energy expended (all in the same compulsive manner in which he studied workers in factories) (Andrew, 1981:60-1).

2. A recent change to Canada's immigration laws currently requires that some 500 strippers who apply to enter Canada each year, must prove that they will have a bona fide career dancing. With the exception of dancers from the United States, these foreign strippers must now produce photographs and a portfolio of work, prior to receiving a six-month work visa (Appleby and Green, 1998:A12).

3. In a letter by Sally Willats (a representative of the Toronto Rape Crisis/Multicultural Women Against Rape Centre) to Katie Silverstein, she states her support for "the fight to stop sexual assault and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases". Willats explains that women in strip clubs are unable to maintain control over their bodies and their working conditions.

Women are not choosing to lap dance and break the laws concerning prostitution -- they are being coerced and forced into it because they have no job security. The second issue is that sexual assault is happening to these women each and every night. And no government branch or institution is willing to do anything to prevent it. The woman's options for reporting are limited because they don't know who the men are, getting cooperative witnesses is difficult, the booths mean that witnesses aren't often available, most owners won't back them up in their complaint, and if they do report, the judgements about their line of work, their style etc. make it difficult to get a conviction.

It will also be very difficult for dancers to get a job in the Metro area if they report assaults. Rapists and molesters choose women whom they perceive to be vulnerable and take advantage of those opportunities where they are least likely to be caught. The clubs have become an ideal venue for these men. Dancers have no interest in closing down the clubs -- they are here fighting for their jobs. The Commission can set standards for how these clubs operate and what activities are
acceptable. One thing I've heard over and over from dancers, is to get rid of the secluded booths in the clubs. These are nothing other than rape rooms (Willats, 1995:4).

4. In a letter by Katie Silverstein's husband directed to Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga, he argues that "the dirty clubs have several prostitutes working them, alongside [sic] the strippers. If the dancers do not allow the patrons to get away with sexual molestation, they don't make any money." He agonizingly described how with only forty-three cents in their bank account, his shy wife, in desperation, took up stripping:

That's how she ended up at the [Diamond Club] on the Queensway. This was her introduction to the soft-core prostitution that somehow quietly established itself in one of the world's most conservative cities. With clients paying $10 and $20 per dance, my wife began to make a lot of money. She gradually changed with the money. Competition became fierce as the hookers moved into the clubs. Our marriage began to painfully fall apart. My ability to function as a man and a wage earner eroded, until my wife's dancing became almost the sole support of our family (Goldberg, 1995:1).

5. Alexandra Highcrest (1996:12), a prostitute working for twenty years in Toronto, writes in Eye magazine that the (self-styled stripping industry spokeswoman) Katie Silverstein disrupted the industry by presenting herself and her co-workers as "stupid helpless victims" when she spoke before the Metro Council. Silverstein's intentions to save exotic dancers from "unwanted gropes and fondles, violence and rape" were motivated by greed and jealousy, she contends (Highcrest, 1996:12). Leo, Silverstein's stage name when she danced for seven years at [Club XXX] in Toronto, retired in May 1995 "unable to adjust to changes in the business. [Silverstein] was losing clients because she was unwilling to compete with women who were prepared to lap dance (Highcrest, 1996:12)." Facing economic ruin, Highcrest alleges that [Silverstein] began a campaign by regaling politicians and the media with tales of violence, prostitution and risky sex, presenting herself and other dancers as victims of unscrupulous club owners and clients. Rather than "uprooting the money tree and bringing everyone down with her, [Silverstein] should simply have retired from the business to get another job", as Highcrest did when she left prostitution (Highcrest, 1996:12).

6. Marx suggests that "alienation" resulted from the introduction of capitalism when workers laboured under conditions that did not allow them to own their tools or to control the means of
production. Under modern-day capitalism, it can be said that, for the vast majority of jobs, the tools of their trade and knowledge of workers are rather distinctly separated from decision making processes (Ware and Nielsen, 1989:333-37). Apart from the traditional factors of production including labour, natural resources and capital, knowledge has become a significant personal and economic resource which in the "information society" can be applied to the production of products and services. Workers with human and intellectual resources vital to modern production, generally have more control over the means of production. Knowledge workers who, to some extent, are not directed with respect to the immediate job or extensively supervised by a line-boss peering over their shoulders are able to redefine some of the constricting practices of capitalism.

The majority of service industry jobs, while demanding a fairly low level of skill and relatively little education, are increasingly seen to have specialized knowledge that requires specific, albeit unrecognized and unrewarded skills for the job. An argument can be made that the rhetoric of continuous improvement, self-monitoring of production, and other aspects of "empowerment", only add greater labour market flexibility and skills enhancement to many jobs while encouraging less secure, non-standard forms of employment.

7. On July 31, 1995, the Metropolitan Council of Toronto voted overwhelmingly to institute a by-law against touching in adult entertainment parlours in view of the alleged community health and safety risks posed by such practices. The same day, the Ontario Court, General Division, ordered a temporary delay in implementing the by-law to permit attorney generals, both federally and provincially, to prepare submissions on the question of whether the by-law infringes on the Criminal Code.

8. Subsections 159(1) and 159(2) of the Criminal Code of Canada which deal with the production, distribution and sale of obscene material are often cited in violations given out to strip club owners. Similarly, subsection 163(1) is invoked for "creating the offence of presenting or allowing to be presented an immoral, indecent, or obscene performance, entertainment or presentation".

9. Under Section 195.1 of the Criminal Code, soliciting for the purposes of prostitution has been made a gender-neutral offence; however, the reality remains that women are particularly targeted for arrest by the police and prosecuted by the courts in far greater numbers than male clients. With respect to the laws which preceded these changes to the Criminal Code, clients were neither legally held accountable nor morally stigmatized in the same manner as prostitutes.

10. According to the Ancaster Zoning By-law 87-57 for example, Adult Entertainment Parlours are defined as "any premises or part thereof in which is provided, in pursuance of a trade, calling or
business or occupation, goods or services appealing to or designed to appeal to erotic or sexual appetites or inclinations" (Hennessy, 1997).

11. Metropolitan Toronto solicitor McCouch advised his colleagues in a July, 1995 Human Services Committee meeting that, to prohibit touching could be viewed as imposing a stricter standard than the standards set out by a superior court (permissible under the Criminal Code) which prohibits indecency but not touching. In stipulating a distance requirement between the dancer and the customer, he pointed out that specific forms of "table dancing" require dancers to perform close to the customer. The effect of a distance requirement on these forms of performance should be open to a legal challenge and declared invalid on the basis that it is overly broad and goes beyond the particular purpose of the regulation, he suggested. He noted that private enclosures range from separate rooms to booths of a type commonly found in bars and restaurants, and a detailed description would be needed so as to address only the types of enclosures giving rise to the problems under consideration.

12. Mayor Hazel McCallion, in discussing the Metropolitan Council ban on lap dancing, suggested that Toronto's new by-law assisted Mississauga in becoming "the lap dancing capital of Canada". Her council's by-law carries a maximum penalty of a $10,000 fine, up to a year in prison for an individual and a fine of $25,000 for a corporation (Funston, 1995).

13. Two women who work at the Diamond Tavern in Toronto were charged in September 1995, according to the owner of the only club to defy openly the new lap dancing by-law, Abe Connors. He proudly proclaims that lap dancers in his establishment will continue to sit on the customers' laps but will not allow themselves to be touched in the pubic area, a technique he labels "European lap dancing" in a newspaper advertisements entitled "Laps Are Us" (Brazzo, 1995a:A1).

14. As a result of the work of Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis at the turn of the century, sex was dissociated from sin and punishment. Medical advances in the treatment of venereal diseases led to diseases being treated as a public health concern, rather than a social problem of morality. With the advent of birth control technology in the 1960s, sex was separated from procreation and women were liberated from involuntary childbearing. With the acknowledgement of sexual choice and female desire in the 1970s, sexuality began to take on a new meaning. Public debates and changes in sex education altered social attitudes. With rising expectations of sexual freedom, choice, happiness and responsibility, controls on sexual behaviour became less rigid. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex increased, monogamy became less important to the institution of marriage, rates of co-habitation and divorce soared, and children
conceived out of wedlock as well as single-parent families became more acceptable (Baker, 1996).

15. Prostitutes at the first "Whores Convention" in 1985, sponsored by the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights, established the prerogative to speak for themselves in defending sex work as a legitimate occupation for women. They insisted that they have the same human and legal rights as other people in society including the right to choose their occupation and control the conditions of their work, freedom of association and access to social benefits (Della Costa and James, 1973).

16. This position dismisses the views of the majority of sex trade workers and echoes a period in history when feminists in their interest to protect women, supported the Comstock laws in England, which resulted in regulations being enacted against prostitutes, lesbians and women who advocated for birth control (Russell, 1993:76).

17. Considering that defining indecency is a matter taken up within the jurisdiction of the federal government, and that there has never been a definition put forth which adds clarity under criminal statutes, it could be argued that existing legislative and judicial frameworks are adequate to deal with the issue.

18. As part of the Common Sense Revolution, Premier Mike Harris cut health care spending resulting in long hospital waiting lists and made 50 per cent expenditure cuts to school boards. Dramatically, in 1995, he ended the New Democratic Party's efforts to nationalize child care operations. By transferring responsibility to municipalities, he divested the province of the old system of provincially funded public housing for low income people and he eliminated welfare "fraud" (with a 20 per cent drop in welfare rolls due to changes in eligibility and a 15 per cent reduction in payments). Harris' revolution promised to cut 15 per cent of the civil service and, with a reduction of 20 per cent by June 1997, he more than fulfilled that pledge.

Only some government departments, however, have had their budgets slashed, including a 40 per cent reduction in Labour (responsible for "safe, fair and harmonious workplace practices"), a 39 per cent reduction in Consumer and Commercial Relations (promotes a "fair, safe and informed marketplace and set standards of conduct for business") and Environment and Energy ("protects the environment and administers natural resources") (Rumy, 1998:B1,4).

19. The phrase, "Toronto the good" was around for some time prior to being used by C. S. Clark (1898:15) in his book entitled Of Toronto the Good: The Queen City of Canada As It Is. According to Clark, the city was championed in this manner at the 1896 Social Purity Congress in Baltimore, and the 1887 World's Convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union held in Toronto. Edward
Mann (1970) much later took up this description of the city in The Underside of Toronto, when he remarked about the difficulties encountered for some who lived in Toronto.

20. Christianity views sexuality as a private matter, to be undertaken by people within the framework of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Until recently, many Christian denominations viewed the function of sex as associated with procreation for the purpose of reproducing, endorsing only vaginal sex between heterosexuals in the "missionary position".

21. When the HIV virus, thought to be responsible for AIDS, was first discovered during the early 1980s in the United States, the disease was initially viewed as a "gay disease".

22. In the past, sexual deviance or "unnatural" and licentious sexual behaviour was associated with sin, guilt and retribution.

23. It has recently been determined that the transmission of the AIDS virus occurs much more readily from men to women than the reverse situation. In a private conversation with Alexandra Highcrest, she stated that the type of sexual activity, rather than the numbers of contacts, contributes to the spread of venereal disease. The findings of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (1985) upheld this position by indicating that prostitutes do not significantly contribute to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

24. In my private conversation with Alexandra Highcrest, she reported that laws dealing with prostitution attempt to restrict activity to specific geographic zones. The results do not curtail sexual activities, since prostitutes move to other areas of the city. An increase in policing power and activities and a more punitive approach do, however, result in a greater number of arrests and criminal records for prostitutes.

25. Most of the safe sex literature warns about infection associated with unprotected sex, casual sexual practices and a large number of partners.

26. In the division of powers among federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, only the federal government has the authority to pass and enforce laws under the Criminal Code.

27. The Charter section guaranteeing rights and freedoms, which is most frequently invoked is Section 195.1 (1) (c), and is premised on an individual's right to communicate or attempt to communicate with another person.

28. While Metropolitan Toronto Council has control over the stripping industry through the setting of workplace standards and
the licensing of exotic dancers, councillors were advised by their solicitor that Metro does not have legal jurisdiction to prevent sexual touching in strip clubs. Despite this legal technicality, the majority of councillors voted to enact a by-law which prohibits touching and the use of booths in Toronto strip clubs. Many club owners have complied with the new by-law while others, such as the proprietor of the Xanadu Tavern in Toronto (which boldly advertises "Live Sex Shows on Stage" on the club's marquee), immediately sought an injunction until a court decision was rendered with respect to the legal status of the by-law.

29. The 1978 Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a customer could be convicted of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution. As part of the shift towards gender neutrality in the law suggested by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, Bill C-127, introduced in 1983, further upheld that both males and females could be classified as prostitutes.

30. Murdock notes that only 20 per cent of the 554 societies he surveyed are strictly monogamous. Birth rates in all industrial countries have been dropping; in 1921, the average woman in Canada had 3.5 children compared to 1.7 children in 1991. More Canadians are currently living together without being married than at any other time in history. In 1990, 12 per cent of couples were living in common law relationships, compared to 6 percent in 1981. Increasingly, more marriages involve at least one partner who has previously been married. In 1967, 12.3 per cent of Canadian marriages involved one spouse who had been previously married, but by 1991 this had risen to 32.3 per cent. Since the late 1960s, separation and divorce have also increased in many industrial countries. The Canadian divorce rate rose from 6.4 divorces per 100,000 population in 1921, to 280 per 100,000 population in 1991 per annum. In addition to more single-parent families that were created by divorce and separation, 24 per cent of live births in 1990 were to Canadian women who were not married, compared to 4 per cent in 1960 (Baker, 1996:16-30).

31. Legal reforms, including the custody of children being the responsibility of both parents, have reduced some of men's rights over women.

32. Alex Comfort's *The Joy of Sex* and the advice of other sexologists advocate that a fulfilling sex life is critical to an individual's physical and emotional well-being.

33. While providing an opportunity to have more sex or a spontaneous kind of sex without commitment, the sexual liberation movement did not emancipate women from a subordinate role in the sex act or address larger issues of women's economic dependency and political subordination (Hite, 1977). Nor did it necessarily encourage women to explore their sexuality without guilt.
34. During the 1970s, women in substantial numbers became lesbians, engaged in adultery, "open marriages" "swinging" relations, living with a partner prior to marriage and having children outside the framework of marriage.

35. Section 193 of the Criminal Code, interpreted in 1972 by the Supreme Court of Canada, confirmed that the "frequent and habitual use of an establishment for the purposes of prostitution constitutes keeping a common bawdy house" (Pornography and Prostitution: Issues, 1985:43-5).

36. An examination of the Criminal Code by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1967) suggested that prostitution was a social and not a legal problem. Under section 164 (1) (c), any person who was vagrant in a public place and could not provide an adequate account of their activities was labelled a prostitute. In effect, the law discriminated against the free access of women to public places and criminalized women's sexual behaviour. The Commission recommended the repeal of the "Vag C" law as it was called, the use of by-laws to deal with disturbances of street prostitution and the provision of government training programs to encourage alternative employment to prostitution. In 1972, the statute was repealed and replaced by legislation specifically dealing with street solicitation. Under section 195.1 of the Criminal Code, soliciting in a public place for the purposes of prostitution was an offence punishable by a summary conviction. When the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1978, that solicitation must be "pressing and persistent" and occur in public places, the power of the police to entrap prostitutes by posing as customers cruising streets in unmarked cars was curtailed. When a further amendment to Section 195.1, in 1985, recommended that public soliciting for the purpose of prostitution need not be "pressing and persistent", it was clear that an arrest could occur for any type of public behaviour in which sex was being exchanged for money.

The Commission followed the lead of Britain's Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offenses and Prostitution (the Wolfenden Report) in 1957, which advocated that matters of a private consensual nature ought not to be the concern of the state. It distinguished between crime, sin, morality and legality, and in liberal tradition, made a clearer separation between the public and private realms. Although the Wolfenden committee relaxed sanctions against tenants and owners of bawdy houses, it also called for more stringent action against public prostitution to preserve moral order, suggesting that acts of solicitation need not be proven. (Brock, 1998:27-8).

37. It is not only prostitutes but all women who are affected by a split between "good" and "bad" woman. Socially assigning some women to be wives and others to be whores, exerts control over all women. Wives are aware that women are available who engage in commercial sexuality and are, therefore, pressured not to be...
tempted to transgress their traditionally feminine role. The prostitute is conversely also conscious of the fact that her sexualized role ought not to be abandoned for fear of rejection.

38. Under the Harris government, taxation policies which discriminated against families with dependent children, cut welfare benefits, dismantled the family support plan, reduced funding to shelters dealing with domestic violence and homelessness and made marriage and motherhood economically hazardous occupations. When women left the home to work, changes in pay equity deprived 100,000 of the poorest paid women of the millions of dollars owing them. Added to the changes in labour laws, eliminating non-profit housing, abolishing rent controls and restructuring hospitals and schools to eliminate some of the jobs performed by nurses and teachers resulted in a very different kind of Ontario for women than for many of the White middle-class and middle-aged men who voted for Harris.

39. Section 195.1 (2) of Bill C-49 states that a "public place includes any place to which the public has access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view".

40. One exception is the case of Terri-Jean Bedford, a dominatrix, who calls herself Madame De Sade. She was recently convicted and fined $3,000 for keeping a common bawdy house after the police raided her Thornhill bungalow, removing the tools of her trade including whips, restraints and a coffin (Levy, 1998b:A3).

41. Lap dancing temporarily returned to the Exotic Club at the Seargant Arms Hotel in Richmond Hill, when Madam Justice Janet Boland granted an injunction on September 25, 1995 against the York region by-law (passed on September 14 of the same year) which prohibited touching between dancers and customers. On the same day as Madame Boland's ruling, the Brampton Council voted 17-0 to eliminate lap dancing (Dexter and Brazzo, 1995:A6).