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The representation of the prostitute in contemporary German and English language film

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Rice University, 1989

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THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PROSTITUTE IN CONTEMPORARY
GERMAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILM

by

WENDY E. STERBA

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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Abstract

The Representation of the Prostitute in Contemporary
German and English Language Film

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Wendy E. Sterba

The fascination with the image of the prostitute in contemporary German and English language film betrays certain ideological underpinnings of our Western, patriarchally structured culture and political system. By analyzing the contemporary filmic representation of the prostitute, it can be demonstrated that woman's place in society has become more visible and vocal. While objectified images of women still dominate in the films of English and German speaking countries, the depth and identificational quality of these characters has greatly improved, suggesting that the inequities of a patriarchal society are slowly being recognized and rectified.
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PART I
Introduction

The fascination with the image of the prostitute in contemporary German and English language film betrays certain ideological underpinnings of our Western, patriarchally structured culture and political system. By analyzing the contemporary filmic image of the prostitute, it can be demonstrated that women's place in society has become more visible and more vocal. This work will attempt to examine the representation of the female prostitute in film, in order to ascertain contemporary attitudes towards woman's identity and role.

I have chosen to look at films from the German and English language countries, not only because of their firm entrenchment in a patriarchal culture and their common linguistic ancestry, but also because of the numerous interactions between their individual film industries. American and British industries have long shared film distribution markets. Commonality of language and cultural origins has permitted a great deal of mutual influence and interaction between English speaking nationalities. It might seem that German film would have little connection to the former. It should be noted, however, that a majority of Americans also have some German ancestry, although the relationship goes much deeper than that. One might say, paraphrasing John Donne, that no film industry is an island. Thus, Hollywood has had as much of a history of influence and inspiration from German directors and filmmakers before the war, as Germans have had from Americans ever since. Many German directors dreamed of fame and fortune in the Hollywood of the Twenties and
Thirties, whereas postwar German audiences devoured American films, music and culture during the American military occupation in the Forties and Fifties.

This international interplay, is just one of the reasons that I have chosen to look at film. Not only does film appreciation necessitate an understanding of a variety of arts, such as music, photography, drama, and literature, but due to film's visual quality, it travels fast and easily and has a long history of international exchange and cooperation. The cinematic arts seem to have become the meeting grounds of a wide variety of arts and cultures.

I will begin with an examination of prostitution in contemporary Western culture. Problems of definition will be discussed in an effort to determine the meaning of the term in contemporary society. This will necessitate consideration of historical perspectives in order to establish the trends in present-day attitudes. I will include a short summary of traditional theories concerning the reasons for prostitution's existence and then turn to more contemporary analyses, placing special emphasis on contemporary feminist theory.

After establishing the social reality of prostitution, this work will then move on to the representation of the profession in the cinematic arts. Prostitution's popularity as a subject will be linked to its professional similarity with the movie industry, as well as its prerequisite of being visually enticing. The primary connection between the two professions, however, will be demonstrated to be an historically consistent equation of the female sex with commodities. This ideology will be shown to be universal to Western patriarchal culture by comparing the representation of women in German and English language films.
An analysis of the films will reveal that representations of females in general tend to be superficial characterizations of women according to their (sexual) relations to the male heroes. Furthermore, these portrayals manifest a blatant male love/hate attitude towards the female sex. Theories of sexual difference will be discussed and employed to explain the dichotomy of female image found to predominate in Western film.

A variety of theories have been useful in this undertaking. The psychological theories of Freud and Lacan have a great deal to say about masculine fear of women, as does the work of semiotics scholars, such as Metz and Silvermann. Of special interest are the newer theories, rejecting a previously unquestioned male perspective. Theories that define sexual identity as socially determined will be contrasted to those which discover it in biological origins. The effect of sexual difference will then be discussed in terms of choice of medium in an effort to ascertain whether certain particular types of representation are determined either by the medium itself or by the intrusion of a dominant underlying ideology. The question of language will also be broached in terms of its phallocentric (or as Derrida so aptly calls it, its phallogocentric) origins and influences. These theories will then be examined in terms of their contribution to film analysis and theory.

Two aspects of these theories which play a significant role in the representation of the woman on screen are the [male] 'gaze' and the [female] 'voice.' These attributes will be discussed in an effort to determine whether the Eighties exemplify a change in their utilization. They have long been associated with gender roles; male empowerment often being represented by the man's right and desire to look, while female powerlessness has frequently been embodied by the impotence of the woman's voice. The use of certain voice and image
techniques in film will be explored not only from a theoretical vantage point, but also from an applicational one. Theories of voice and gaze will be combined with an examination of narrative, style, and editing techniques in an effort to produce a well-rounded and thorough analysis of each film. Thus no image of the prostitute will be taken solely at face value. Directors and writers often embed their attitudes and judgements about their characters in a complex process of suture, (an editing technique), framing, camera angle, extradiegetic sound and timing. All of these aspects will be taken into consideration in the analysis of the figure of the prostitute.

The theories behind all of these techniques will then be used to analyze a variety of serious films that present a prostitute as a central character. Four main categories will be examined, including emphasis on the prostitute as she is influenced and portrayed in an economic/political sphere, in a social sphere, in a psychological sphere and in an aesthetic sphere. Each category will be explored in a discussion of one German and one English language film. The representation of the prostitute will be considered in terms of male gaze, female voice, and the filmic technique of the director in order to determine what attitudes about women are being expressed.

It will be discovered that despite the prevalence of traditional, objectified female models in contemporary film, the representation of prostitutes has indeed changed. Although the prostitute's profession can not be considered a completely self-sufficient one, for its very existence depends on the class structure of the patriarchal system, the portrayal of prostitution in the film world has become less and less an excuse to show women as vicarious sex objects. Not only have the characters become less superficial and less visually glamorized, they have begun to sympathetically exhibit genuinely human
sensibilities that cut across gender stereotypes. This demonstrates hope for progress in a culture that has traditionally treated women primarily as sexual commodities; and although there still remains great room for additional improvement, one can not help but agree with Emma Goldman, that “Salvation lies in an energetic march onward towards a brighter and clearer future.”
Chapter One

An Examination of Real Prostitution

In the supposedly sexually emancipated Western world, it seems strange that prostitution still is mentioned in hushed voices. Although attitudes towards prostitution have changed, inevitably women still bear the guilt and repercussions of a socially supported but concurrently stigmatized profession. Despite legal oppression and major campaigns to abolish prostitution, what has been called the world's oldest profession is still an active enterprise. While being at the same time one of the most easily accessible and financially rewarding occupations for women, it is nonetheless one of the least studied and publicly discussed. Yet in spite of an unwillingness to broach the subject, Western cultures have all manner of apppellations for the woman who sells her body. Moreover, this wealth of nomenclature belies the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of the crime this person perpetrates. As might be expected, this career does not even appear in the world almanac's list of occupations, nor is it listed specifically on government census forms. For this reason statistical information on prevalence and financial success is understandably hard to find and even harder to document. What proves most interesting is that although minimal numbers of women actually pursue this line of work, prostitution is overrepresented as a job-affiliation for female characters in films. An enquiry into such a discrepancy necessitates an examination of both the filmic portrayal and the reality.

In looking at the phenomena of real prostitution, a number of diverse and fascinating issues are raised. Having been for centuries the most lucrative and independent profession for women, prostitution demands enquiry into social
place, female sexuality, and the role of women, as well as the profession's relationship with capitalism. Interestingly, no socialist country until very recently would admit to the post-revolutionary existence of prostitution, for it has always been viewed officially as the epitome of the decadent capitalistic spirit. Yet even in model socialist societies, prostitution is a thriving capitalist venture which refuses to cease and desist. Now, with the advent of Glasnost, Soviet authorities are finally being forced to admit that prostitution is a problem facing the contemporary socialist state along with the rest of the western world.

A common question concerning the phenomenon of prostitution is: "What causes women to turn themselves into sexual objects for financial remuneration?" The answer is relatively simple. Until very recently most women had little hope of being able to earn a reasonable income through so-called "honest" work. Although the figures would now be higher due to inflation and a market somewhat more open to women, Kate Millett's 1971 explanation still applies:

All prostitutes are in it for the money. With most uptown call girls, the choice is not between starvation and life, but is a choice between $5,000 and $25,000 or between $10,000 and $50,000. That's a pretty big choice: a pretty big difference. Similarly, Sydney Biddle Barrows describes the call girl as "simply a woman who hates poverty more than she hates sin." In Barbara Perkins and Garry Bennett's study, 96.7 percent of 121 prostitutes interviewed explained they engaged in prostitution "for the money" or because of "need of money," while 68.6 percent of the sample also admitted they did not like the profession.
This does not mean that prostitution is necessarily lucrative. Clearly educational and training levels influence economic expectation for both prostitutes and women otherwise employed. A variety of factors may diminish a prostitute’s expected income, including such things as the existence of a pimp or drug habit, being arrested, or becoming ill. Many women consider their entry into the profession a temporary measure and plan to quit as soon as they earn a little money. Perhaps for this reason job security does not seem to be an issue considered by women entering the “life,” despite the fact that it is well known that a prostitute’s earnings generally decline with age. A woman’s level in the hierarchy also greatly affects both what she can expect to earn and the protection she receives from the above mentioned threats to her

Courtesans and call-girls can expect to make the greatest profits of those in “the life.” Women working in “houses” or brothels are probably next highest in the hierarchy, but these establishments rarely nurture the elegant qualities and atmosphere that they might have once had and pretend to have in the movies. Murtagh and Harris describe the profits of call-girls as having been between $50,000 and $100,000 a year in 1957. At this time “house” girls’ prices began at $7 for five or ten minutes. Obviously women with undergraduate degrees can now earn much more than the $6,000 mentioned by Millett, but wages for prostitutes have also risen accordingly. Sydney Biddle Barrows’ escorts charged on the average $175 an hour, $500 for dinner (4 hours) or $750 for dinner and dancing (6 hours), of which they received approximately 60 percent of the take.

For the less educated, prostitution offers the possibility of earning far more money with less training, than does studying to become a secretary or
dental assistant. Roberta Perkins and Garry Bennett interviewed a variety of prostitutes, men and women, who had worked in many different countries at many different professional levels, and the lowest current wage they mentioned was $20 for the minimum amount of time, called a "short job" (ten to fifteen minutes), with $1,000 a night listed for specialties (in one case the sexual act with an arm stump).15 Statistics on income are very difficult to gather and assess. Some women (13.2 percent in the Perkins/Bennett study) enter the profession only part time to supplement income, while the energy level and activity of the woman will also directly influence her income. According to the 1983 research of Perkins and Bennett the average weekly income (including part-timers, drug addicts, and all levels of prostitutes) fluctuated between $100 and more than $400 per week.16

Houses tend to earn their owners less money than might be expected. Barrows points out that when she entered the business she could find no one running the business in an efficient and economic fashion.17 Barbara Heyl outlines the monthly budget for a house called "The Shoe Store." Total income was $2,240 per month minus $1,350 in expenses. The resulting $890 a month was then split between the madam and her partner.18 Polly Adler also substantiates the claim that houses are low-profit businesses. She claimed her establishment was always in financial difficulty due to "raids and shakedowns and my high overhead."19 Madams tend to be older prostitutes who are experiencing waning clientele, illustrating that "mobility in prostitution is usually downward." A prostitute's income tends to diminish with age, with older women having to branch out and do more specialty type work or else become madams.20 Ultimately income must be considered variable. It can be
large and glamorous or minimal to nonexistent, but it generally tends to fall somewhere in between. Many factors serve to limit this income, but many women, nonetheless, still tend to be able to make more money at prostitution than they could at other forms of work. They are disparaged and degraded, when under any other circumstances they would be praised for their efficient use of resources and their good business sense.

A second common question centering on prostitution asks, “What allows prostitution to be a viable profession?” Attempts at answering this question invariably tend to deal with prostitution as a social institution. In order to analyze an institution, one must know what it is. This sounds simple enough, but prostitution has no universally accepted definition. Naturally public attitudes toward prostitution have changed since the biblical days, when customers went free but harlots were stoned. Nonetheless, a male bias still tends to exist in the laws, which refuse to acknowledge any responsibility on the part of the male patron. In his book The Psychopathology of Women, Ibsan Al-Issa notes:

Prostitution is traditionally treated as a female offense. It is legally defined as ‘the practice of a female offering her body to an indiscriminate intercourse with men, usually for hire’ (Hoffman-Bustamente, 1973). This definition indicates that men are immune to the charge of prostitution. Moreover, the law does not punish the male who uses the services of the prostitute.22

Prostitution is defined as an offense primarily in terms of female responsibility.

Definitions tend to be problematic for a variety of reasons. The American
**Heritage Dictionary of the English Language** defines prostitute as, "One who solicits and accepts payment for sexual intercourse." Although there is no gender bias in this definition, it is far too restrictive. Some prostitutes such as exclusive call girls and courtesans do not solicit. In addition, many prostitutes provide sexual services which are not covered by the expression sexual intercourse. Roberta Perkins summarizes the difficulty with this kind of definition: "To be pedantic, it ... does not cover anyone who offers fellatio, mutual masturbation or sadomasochism in return for cash or its equivalent." On a linguistic level it is very difficult to find a definition which is concomitantly inclusive enough, but not overly general.

Dorothea Röhr grounds her work in a politico-economic framework, defining prostitution as "... eine sexuelle Dienstleistung außerhalb der Ehe gegen Entgelt." Röhr's definition has two very important aspects. First, it establishes prostitution within a social context. She defines it as only being feasible in a culture embracing the institution of marriage. For Röhr marriage is an indication of a culture where women have a lesser status than men. The origins of western marriage are clearly rooted in the social practice of transferring women as property from father to husband. These women are to be unused (sexually pure) before ownership is assumed, leaving women who are not pure as fair game for those who are unfulfilled and/or unmarried. The symbiosis with marriage is also recognized by Vern and Bonnie Bullough:

Prostitution is ... related to marriage patterns, and if marriage is difficult and highly prized among women, there will probably be a greater incidence of prostitution. Incidentally, despite considerable speculation to the contrary, the existence of a polygamous society
does not in itself cut down the incidence of prostitution since it leaves large numbers of males without legal sexual partners. 28 Thus marriage and availability play a significant role in the prevalence of prostitution.

The economic basis of Röhr's definition is the second interesting aspect. From a materialist standpoint her definition implies another factor commonly associated with the trade. Capitalism demands an open market, meaning goods are sold to anyone who wishes to pay the price. For this reason some definitions have tended to weight the importance of lack of discrimination, or promiscuity. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines prostitute as "A woman, who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse, especially for payment." 29 Even the Oxford English Dictionary stresses this attribute defining prostitute as "A woman who is devoted or usually who offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse esp. for hire." 30 The Bureau of Social Hygiene expressed a similar view in 1910. "A lapse - one or several - does not imply prostitution; nor is the paid mistress a prostitute so long as her relations, emotionally indifferent and mercenary though they be, are free from promiscuity." 31 Perkins and Bennett take issue with such definitions. They do not, they note, include some of the acts most commonly performed by prostitutes. Neither does it necessarily include the actions of a call-girl with a small regular clientele, while it might well include "the woman who agrees to go to bed with men who dine her in a grand enough style." 32

The myth of "indiscriminate" sex or that a prostitute has to "do it" with anyone, is not accurate. Prostitution's professional hierarchy plays a big role in the degree of discrimination a woman may exercise. At the bottom of the
hierarchy are the women doing "car jobs" and walking streets, while courtesans and call girls are located at the top. The higher a prostitute is in the hierarchy the more particular s/he can afford to be. Street walkers and bar hustlers can least afford to decline offers. One street prostitute interviewed by Kate Millett explained her type of indiscrimination:

The worst part about prostitution is that you're obliged not to sell sex only, but your humanity. That's the worst part of it: that what you're selling is human dignity. Not really so much in bed, but in accepting the agreement - in becoming a bought person. When I really felt like a whore was when I had to talk to them ... Because when they talk about 'niggers', you've just got to go 'uh-huh, uh-huh' and agree with them. That's what I really couldn't stand. It was that kind of thing. That's when I really felt I was kissing their ass - more than when I was literally kissing their ass...That's the most humiliating thing - having to agree with them all the time because you're bought.

According to interviews by Perkins and Bennett, women working in brothels or houses have more leeway to decline prospective clients and they actually do so if they receive a request for a service they do not wish to provide. "[W]e don't do S & M (sadomasochism) or B & D (bondage and discipline). There are places that specialise in that and we tell a client who asks for it to go to one of them." Another reason a customer might be turned down is for health reasons:

When that street scene downtown ... was closed down and we were getting a lot of new guys in here we saw genital ringworms, endless
crabs, warts, herpes and some things we weren’t sure what they were. We were seeing things we had never seen before. So we were turning a lot of men away but we also offer a treatment to guys with various complaints, charging $5 extra for a four-minute treatment and tell them what to buy and they were really grateful.36

Street walkers must also be on the look out for violent types, who beat them and refuse to pay. A Seattle prostitute describes her process of screening potential clients. “I don’t get into trashed cars, and I don’t go where they want me to go. I don’t go to their motels. I’ve got my own spots where I take them and that’s it.”37 All of these women are discriminating to one degree or another. On the other hand there is the obviously excessive definition, suggested by Johannes Teutonicus, a lawyer of the Middle Ages. To fit the definition of prostitute in Teutonicus’ eyes, a woman must have served no less than 23,000 men.38 Although this definition is not really helpful in efforts to understand promiscuity, it does clearly demonstrate that attempts to try to narrow down the definition of a prostitute on the basis of her lack of discrimination are fruitless. Since some prostitutes seem to be very discriminating, while others tend to be promiscuous, a different standard of differentiation must be discovered.

Another factor often considered in defining the prostitute is “the emotional involvement and the pleasure gained,” but this too seems to be a distinction which raises more questions than it answers.39 Two stereotypes about prostitutes are commonly found in Western culture. The prostitute is frequently depicted as emotionally and physically uninvolved, or else as the very sensitive gal with the heart of gold.40 There are myths cherished from both
both sides. Prostitutes report frequently having to listen to men that want to rescue them from the "life." On the other hand, there seems to be a fantasy among the prostitutes that they might somehow meet the perfect john, who will take them away from the rat race. Neither of these scenarios happens very often. Reality can be found anywhere between the ice bitch and the "girl with the heart of gold." These characteristics are therefore also rather useless in the attempt to define prostitution.

The definition which seems to best incorporate all of the various aspects of prostitution without being either too narrowly restricted nor overly generalized, was expressed by the German social scientist Iwan Bloch:

Die Prostitution ist eine bestimmte Form des außerehelichen Geschlechtsverkehrs, die dadurch ausgezeichnet ist, daß das sich prostituerende Individuum mehr oder weniger wahllos sich unbestimmt vielen Personen fortgesetzt, öffentlich und notorisch, selten ohne Entgelt, meist in der Form der gewerbsmäßigen Käuflichkeit zum Besclepe oder zu anderen geschlechtlichen Handlungen preisgibt oder ihnen sonstige geschlechtliche Erregung und Befriedigung verschafft und provoziert und infolge dieses Unzuchtgewerbes einen bestimmten konstanten Typus bekommt.

Composed before the First World War, this definition is comprehensive, comprehensible and not biased against either sex.

These definitions, however, do not show the social disrepute accorded the members of the profession, nor do they register the historical changes in such attitudes. According to Vern and Bonnie Bullough, prostitutes vary in degree of
disrepute. They emphasize that courtesans, in certain cultures in particular historical periods, have even been admired.

The primary examples of respected prostitutes are found in ancient India and ancient Greece. In Greece, the hetaira (members of the top class of prostitute) were not only highly praised, but also granted enormous freedom. As the Bulloughs explain:

Prostitutes were probably not any more plentiful in Greek society than in many other societies, but the only women most Greeks had contact with in a social sense were prostitutes... Proper women did not take part in public life but were confined to home and children. Yet Greek prostitutes were not the only ones to be given special treatment. Early Hindu culture before the Aryan invasion also gave prostitutes a very free hand. The Bulloughs explain:

If the classic Vedic texts are to be believed, both male and female were allowed great freedom in their sexual activities; unrestricted sexual activity was tolerated, and various festivals, tournaments and athletic contests permitted intermingling of the sexes and encouraged more intimate contacts. If a woman became pregnant as a result of her sexual activities, she usually entered into agreement with her partner to marry, but if the negotiations fell through, the child was exposed and the parties were free to go their own way.
Women were identified as the more sexual gender in ancient India. There were also laws for the protection of a prostitute's property and rights to payment, as well as traditional functions served by various kinds of prostitute, for example, in certain ceremonies a courtesan had to be present to hold the royal umbrella when the king sat on his throne.  

Although prostitutes were given greater freedom than the other women in these cultures, they were still second class citizens. In India boys children were and generally still are valued over girl children. If the first-born were a girl, she was likely to be dedicated to the temple to become a devadasi (temple prostitute). The parents not only freed themselves of a daughter in this way, but also hoped thereby to please the gods and be granted a son in return. It was also recognized, according to the Bulloughs, that a man's visit to a prostitute could be considered insulting to his wife "and a chaste wife was allowed to correct her wayward husband ... by abusing him or beating him within the limits of the law." The prostitute although given certain liberties was looked down upon in return. The price of freedom was frequently disrepute. In ancient Greece, for example, the primary purpose of women was considered to be child-bearing. "It was woman as mother who was most praised ... otherwise women were not to be seen or heard... For a woman to enter society, even at the level of an unequal, she had to lose her status as a proper woman." Although highly trained, these first professional women were still disrespected. In their examination of a wide historical spectrum of prostitution, the Bulloughs ultimately conclude that in male-oriented cultures a rather negative attitude towards the prostitute prevails.
Thus despite the fact that a life of prostitution would often permit a woman the greatest opportunity for personal freedom, it was usually purchased at the cost of social respect. Unfortunately this did not necessarily mean that women who were not prostitutes lived a qualitatively better life. In Greece the "respectable" women were not allowed out on the street nor even permitted to be present when their husbands invited guests to dine.57 Similarly the narrow choice range of the young Victorian working class woman is quite well documented.58 Prostitution was an oft-chosen career for the working-class or emigrant woman, because although unpleasant, it was nonetheless easier than the sweatshop "while not much more degrading."59

This choice of degrading work interests many theorists, including Feminists, a group that has joined the goals of empowerment of women and their acquisition of status, respect, and rights equal with men, to a variety of modern critical, psychological, linguistic and social theories. In discussing the quality of work, many feminists have proclaimed prostitutes the most respectable of all working women. There are those who convincingly suggest "that a wife prostitutes by having sex with her husband in return for material comforts and financial security."60 In fact, some people feel that it is all just a matter of degree. Polly Adler, in her book A House Is Not a Home, described the brothel owner's perception:

The women who take husbands not out of love but out of greed, to get their bills paid, to get a fine house and clothes and jewels; the women who marry to get out of a tiresome job, or to get away from disagreeable relatives, or to avoid being called an old maid - these
are whores in everything but name. The only difference between them and my girls is that my girls gave a man his money's worth.\textsuperscript{61} Here we have women thinking of themselves solely in terms of their use to men. It is as if one degraded group could elevate its status by maintaining that the other degraded group does not even admit to its degradation. This emphasizes that socially the differences between wives and prostitutes are not really recognized except within the subgroups of women.

This question of where to draw the line in assessing female sub-groups becomes even more complex after the sociologists and psychologists finish their explanations. By way of documentation there is a long tradition of debate between those who believe in biology as destiny and those that hold that sexual behavior is culturally shaped.\textsuperscript{62} Despite the fact that Freud himself felt that masculine and feminine traits were naturally present in both sexes and that sexual roles were learned, he also felt biology was responsible for the unification of sexual instincts needed for development of the ego.\textsuperscript{63} There is, therefore, a divided camp among Freudian psychologists. Many psychologists tend to belong to the school which finds sexual behavior predetermined in the organism.\textsuperscript{64} This school maintains that the male is sexually more active than the female. The post-Freudian argument of this school is that prostitution is a necessary outlet for males, who are repressed by monogamistic mores:

Das ich kann mit der Objektbesetzung auch auf einen vom Objekt ausgehenden Reiz antworten. In Ausnahmefällen mag es zu einer Libidofixierung auf ein Objekt kommen, die ein Leben lang anhält; in der Regel jedoch ruft die Monogamievorschrift Konflikte hervor. Die Triebansprüche, sofern sie nicht verschoben oder sublimiert werden
können, müssen verdrängt werden. Gelangt das nicht, so kann durch den permanenten Konflikt zwischen Es, Ich und Über-Ich eine Neurose entstehen. Ein Ausweg, freilich nur den Männern zugebilligt, liegt in der Prostitution.65

For those who believe that biology is destiny, prostitution therefore becomes a necessary evil and also a necessary outlet for male sexuality.66

There are also schools of social scientists and psychologists who believe these sexual differences to be grounded entirely in the socialization process.67 Dorothea Röhr has an excellent summary of this issue, analyzing the works of Mead, Shelsky, Freud and Gehlen, among others.68 Based on a discussion of Shelsky and Reiss, she states, "Die doppelte Moral heute ist Ausfluß spezieller Interessen und Machtstrukturen, die die Inferiorität bestimmter Gruppen, besonders die der Frau, zum Prinzip erhebt."69 Vern and Bonnie Bullough draw practically the same conclusion:

... the focus of prostitution seems related to the traditional dominance of men over women. The various expressions of that dominance include the conceptualization of women as property, the double standard, and the belief that sexual needs of the male were the only sexual desires that needed to be given serious consideration.70

Western cultures are all still shoulder deep in the patriarchal double standard, which claims on the one hand to protect the "weaker," "fairer" sex, while at the same time stripping it of most rights and privileges.

For Friedrich Engels, too, the existence of prostitution is simply a question of socialization:
[It] is as much a social institution as all others. It continues the old sexual freedom - for the benefit of the men. In reality not only permitted, but also assiduously practiced by the ruling class, it is denounced only nominally. Still in practice this denunciation strikes by no means the men who indulge in it, but only the women. These are ostracized and cast out of society, in order to proclaim once more the fundamental law of unconditional male supremacy over the female sex.\textsuperscript{71}

In a male dominated society it is understandable that the male rulers will do all they can to maintain the status quo and thus the subjugation of women. Röhr discusses the possible influences of biology and innate psychological sexual traits, concluding:

Die Existenz einer weiblichen Prostitution läßt sich weder auf biologische Gegebenheiten noch auf Individualpsychologische Differenzen der Geschlechter zurückführen; sie ist vielmehr untrennbar mit Normen gekoppelt, durch Macht- und Herrschaftsphänomene fundiert.\textsuperscript{72}

The Bulloughs also detect a social origin of the problem: "Since women have a potential for sex enjoyment that is at least equal to that of man, we have to conclude that either male prostitution is physiologically impossible or its absence is tied to other norms, values and power systems in society."\textsuperscript{73} In our patriarchal Western society, it is men, who preside over the norms, values, and systems and men who have the money (and thus the power) to purchase the services of a subservient.
Some feminists have maintained, apparently with good reason, that it would be just a matter of time before liberated, equally paid woman could enjoy the pleasures of a socially sanctioned male prostitution. "The extension of the commercial sex industry to include women as consumers is long overdue. As a setting for learning about sex, the marketplace offers some clear advantages over friends, medical experts or even the more liberated manuals."\textsuperscript{74} Those disagreeing have maintained that the nature of the male would make it physiologically difficult or even impossible to engage in multiple intercourse. However, this is an issue easily countered. As Bullough reminds us, "Although it is a physiological fact that the need for male tumescence creates problems for multiple intercourse, the refractory period is relatively short in young males and has not proved to be an impossible barrier..."\textsuperscript{75} The existence of male homosexual prostitution demonstrates that such serial activity is feasible. Bennett and Perkins not only verify the existence of the former, but include documentation on the various types of heterosexual male prostitution in Australia, even including a discussion of lesbian prostitution to show the full market available to the female consumer.\textsuperscript{76} Germany itself is no stranger to heterosexual male prostitution, being one of the first countries to have a state regulated brothel for female customers: In 1972 the "Yellow House" was set up in Hamburg after having had 1,600 male volunteers answer the advertisement for staff.\textsuperscript{77}

The Bulloughs also remind us that our society never adopts homogeneous attitudes, that "Institutions or social arrangements are seldom if ever functional to all elements of society; they tend to function positively for one group in the society and negatively for another."\textsuperscript{78} This means that even with
the decline of prostitution, it is highly unlikely that this trade will ever completely disappear. The growth of the heterosexual male industry shows that each sex has social groups that will support a certain amount of prostitution, while the general decline in female prostitution is related to "the development of effective contraception and the current sexual revolution, both of which have seriously undermined the double standard." 79

Both the nature and the nurture sides do tend to agree that prostitution can only exist in a culture with a double standard. Societies where men and women have more equal status record less prostitution than those where there is greater inequality and women have fewer options. 80

Feminist critics also see prostitution as being dependent on the patriarchal double standard and a decline in prostitution as the necessary result of the adoption of a single standard:

In einer Gesellschaft, in der die Frauen voll emanzipiert sind, auch hinsichtlich ihrer sexuellen Verhaltensweisen, würde vermutlich die weiblich-heterosexuelle Prostitution zurückgehen, denn eine "Emanzipation der Frau würde politische, ökonomische und rechtliche Institutionen zerstören, die sich der Mann als seine menschlichen Bedingungen geschaffen hat." 81

Feminists and prostitutes have often had difficulty agreeing on the issue. Feminists have seen their duty in abolishing the degradation to women through the implementation of sexual equality. This means destroying the proclivity of men to see women purely as sex objects and implies the disappearance of the need for prostitution. The first feminist conference on prostitution was for this reason a total disaster. Naively, feminists invited prostitutes as working
sisters to participate in a conference, which listed as one of its topics the goal of "The Elimination of Prostitution." The prostitutes quite understandably saw this as an attack on their livelihood and became enraged. The result was a strange dichotomy in the women's movement, which on the one hand wanted to require dignity and equality for all women whether prostitutes, homemakers or physicists, while on the other hand wanting to change a system that permits women to be degraded as sexual objects. The unvocalized assumption, - one which is supported by the fact that money is the primary reason for entering "the life" - is that when society changes, these women will want to do something else professionally. Essentially, what this suggests is that, since prostitution thrives only in cultures with a patriarchal double standard which inherently represses women, the distinction between the prostitute and a "respectable" woman effectively is insignificant, when viewed from a position exterior to the culture being examined. It says, as one prostitute put it, "The difference between being a prostitute and being a wife is the security a wife's got." Millett draws a similar conclusion: "For the prostitute, probably the ultimate oppression is the social onus with which she is cursed for accepting the agreed-upon social definition of her femaleness, her sexual abjectification." Yet this onus remains whether she accepts the social definition or not. In other words, in a double-standard male-run society all women are classified and degraded by their sexuality. Prostitutes become, from a feminist perspective, just another sexual classification in the low status category to which women are relegated.
Notes

1 As might well be expected, money is the big draw, but lack of available alternatives also plays a significant role. Kate Millett compared the wages of prostitutes in 1971 with the wages of other women, remarking, “But you can’t say even of the call girl (the best paid and highest level of prostitute), that she has so many ways to earn an adequate living. Even with an undergraduate degree, chances are that she couldn’t do better than earn $5,000 or $6,000 a year, outside of prostitution ... the choice is between a lower-middle income and and a really good one, lots of money.” Kate Millett, *The Prostitution Papers: A Candid Dialogue* (St Alban: Paladin Books, 1975) 35. Ruth Rosen discloses that this has also been the case historically. She discovers that American women at the turn of the century entered a life of prostitution for a variety of reasons, “that prostitution was not simply ‘caused’ by poverty but represented an integral part of culture determined by poverty.” The earlier financial figures are equally depressing. In 1916, the average woman working in a so-called legitimate job earned a weekly wage of only $6.67, but actually needed about nine dollars per week to get by according to a Senate summary report. “The average brothel inmate or streetwalker received from one to five dollars a ‘trick,’ earning in one evening what other working women made in a week.” Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900–1918* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) 147-148.

2 Words for prostitutes in English are numerous. *The American Thesaurus of Slang* lists seventeen lines of general names for female prostitutes and follows with eighteen additional lines of more specialized terms, which cover only certain particular types of prostitute. For men, only two words come to mind: gigolo and male escort, and these bear nowhere near as negative a connotation as
those listed for the female variety. The American Thesaurus has no listing at all for male prostitutes. Moreover the category for pimp extends only five general lines with an additional five lines of specialized terms. Roget's Thesaurus lists a total of 33 terms for female prostitutes and three for the male, (rent boy, gigolo and gig). In German there are once again far more names for women in the occupation than for men: Hure, Metz, Dirne, Schicksa, Prostituierte, Freudenmädchen, Strichmädchen, etc. for women versus expressions such as Eintänzer and Strickjunge for men. Lester V. Berrey and Melvin Van Den Bark, The American Thesaurus of Slang. Second Edition. A Complete Reference Book of Colloquial Speech (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966); Betty Kirkpatrick, Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (Burnt Hill: Longman, 1987).

3 Gathering this type of information has long been a problem for census bureaus and public health inspectors. The Bureau of Social Hygiene acknowledged this problem as early as 1910 in its own volume on prostitution, explaining that most prostitutes maintain they have some other cover profession to mask their primary source of income. Data on the barmaids of the German "Anilmerkneipen" are mentioned along with statistics for Zurich prostitutes of which only 7.9% admitted to their profession. (The Zurich statistics must be taken with a grain of salt, because they were taken from women treated for venereal disease, it being believed at the time that only prostitutes would be likely to catch such a disease.) Abraham Flexner, Prostitution in Europe (New York: The Century Co., 1914) 9-10.

4 In the German Democratic Republic, for example, the dictionary definition records prostitution as "gewerbsmässige Ausübung sexueller Handlungen durch eine weibliche Person: gewerbsmässige Person". It then explains, in keeping with party protocol, "In der DDR ist die Prostitution keine gesellschaftliche

5 In the spirit of glasnost, Gorbachev has requested candidness about Soviet failures, which includes disseminating information about such problems as prostitution and drug abuse. Thus the Russian journal, *Moskovsky Komsomelsk*, published an article about prostitution in the Soviet Union, giving the profession its first official recognition. *Newsweek* remarked that the Soviets “predictably traced the problem to the decadent influence of the West,” but that they did admit their own fault for having looked the other way for so long. “Red-light Ladies,” *Newsweek* 10 Nov. 1986: 46. At the time of the *Newsweek* article, prostitution was not against the law in Soviet countries, but on July 22, 1987, this changed. Prostitution was then made an administrative offense punishable by fines of 200 roubles, not a terribly steep penalty, considering a prostitute’s income potential. *Newsweek* indicates that a Soviet hotel prostitute’s fee is generally around 100 roubles ($150), while the Soviet press reports the yearly income of a “priestess of easy virtue” at the top of the profession, can be as high as 40,000 roubles ($60,000). At the other end of the spectrum, however, Russian journalists describe women, often found frequenting train stations, whose fee might be as little as a bottle of wine. Anthony Gardner, “Glasnost on the Game,” *The New Statesman* (9 Oct. 1987): 14.


10 Vern and Bonnie Bullough find that women do tend to leave "the life" for marriage or other work, for they are very aware of the trend towards downward mobility typical for an aging prostitute. Vern Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Women and Prostitution: A Social History* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1987) 313-314.

11 Winick and Kinsie 31, 74. Furthermore, the life expectancy of a young woman walking the streets might be greatly reduced. Sgt. Pat Ferguson, an officer with the Green River Task Force investigating the killings of prostitutes in the Salem area reports, "My guess is that a young girl going into this sort of prostitution stands a 20 to 25 percent chance of getting killed." Moore, sec. 1, 10.

12 Brothels were at their peak of popularity in 1939 and are no longer the magnificent places still portrayed in films. They are likely to business hours from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. and keep on the premises only between two and four "girls." Winick and Kinsie, 158. The Bulloughs also note that the lives of brothel women are much more strictly controlled than might be generally thought, comparing
their lives to those of girls living in fundamentalist religious dormitories. Bulloughs 310.


14 The "girls" at Barrows’ escort service generally worked only three days (nights) a week, but they could easily earn between $300-$600 per workday. Significantly, Ms. Barrows also clarifies that appearance was not the deciding factor in a client’s choice of prostitute. Her "best" customers' top choices of characteristics for their escorts were that a "girl" be "nice, bright and a good conversationalist." For this reason a variety of girls is usually kept in the "stable." Barrows 57, 145, 158.

15 Perkins 83, 121.

16 Perkins 292-305. Evan Moore, in his Green-River Killer article, details the average night of one nineteen year old prostitute in Seattle. She took home $150 for turning five tricks. He also describes some 15 year olds, who on a good night take in about $300 and a 22 year old "long-legged, wasp-waisted and full-chested" woman who might make " as much as $500 or $600 in a night". Moore, sec 1, 10.

17 Barrows 53-75.


20 Winick and Kinsle 31, 74-75.

21 Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985) 61.


24 This same American Heritage dictionary defines intercourse as "coitus" and then turns around to define coitus as "sexual intercourse" which doesn't provide much information for the uninformed. Luckily Webster's is a bit more explicit, clearly excluding acts such as oral and anal sex. Intercourse is once again similarly defined: "Copulation, coitus, used chiefly by humans" but coitus yields the useful answer: "The act of conveying the male semen to the female reproductive tract, involving insertion of the penis in the vaginal orifice followed by ejaculation - compare orgasm." Philip Babcock Gove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers, 1986).

25 Perkins 3.


27 Marriage ceremonies amount to a transfer of ownership from the father's possession to the groom's, complete with the binding on of ownership bands known as wedding rings. An analysis of these traditional rites and symbols, especially in terms of dress, is found in Diana Leonard Barker. "A Proper Wedding," *The Couple* Ed. Marie Corbin, (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1978) 56-77. Also of interest is the documentation of the ways in which the language of marriage customs and weddings mark women as property. Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975) 32-42.

28 Bulloughs14.
29 It is interesting to note that Webster's gets around the problem of sexual discrimination by adding a second definition of prostitute as "a male who engages in homosexual practices for payment. This definition thereby excludes men who service women, implying that only men are serviced by prostitutes. Webster's 1822. It is curious that Webster's does not simply go the route of the American Heritage Dictionary by broadening their definition and defining prostitute in gender neutral terms. The American Heritage Dictionary 995.


31 Flexner 19.

32 Perkins 3.

33 Perkins distinguishes between eight different types of female heterosexual prostitute. These include Street Prostitutes, Brothel Prostitutes, those who work in massage parlors, those that are bondage and discipline specialists, paid escorts from agencies, hotel and ship prostitutes, call girls and courtesans. Perkins 4-8. Winick and Kinsie also detail the various "ways of plying the trade" analyzing the profession from an historical perspective. They list a compendium of locations for the trade including red-light districts, massage parlors, taxi-dance halls, world's fairs and the "crib," among others. The crib was a horseshoe shaped building with rooms very similar to a corncrib, usually containing only a cot, a chair and a washtub. The last cribs were closed in Reno in 1941, a city that had had as many as 66 active cribs in its heyday. Winick and Kinsie 162-163.

34 Millet, Prostitution Papers 35-36.

35 Perkins 64.

36 Perkins 65.

37 Moore, sec 1, 10.
Bullough xi.

Bullough xii. While some prostitutes claim to be able to just sit back and enjoy the experience, others are able to survive only by becoming sexually detached. Sydney Biddle Barrows describes women in her employ who enjoyed their work and achieved sexual satisfaction from it. Barrows, 110, 167. On the other hand there are those who could only have pleasure with their pimps or boy friends ibid. Some women as a result of their profession, claim to find themselves completely indifferent to men and interested only in women sexually. Ellen Strong describes her experience in this way: "...what I did then was build up a new rationale that allowed me to become a homosexual for several years. I was still able to enjoy sex with women, although I couldn't with men, and, more important, I was still able to fill my needs to be loved and involved." Ellen Strong, "The Hooker," Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings From the Women's Liberation Movement Ed. Robin Morgan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1970) 329. There has been a lengthy debate as to whether prostitutes tend to be lesbian before their experiences with prostitution or whether a change in sexual preference occurs after entry into the profession. See D. Kelly Weisberg, Children of the Night: A Study of Adolescent Prostitution (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1985) 115-116.


Barrows 199-200.
42 Winick and Kinsie suggest that often women may tell a client she has been in the business only a few weeks to suggest she is inexperienced and has not become hardened. Winick and Kinsie 75. Ruth Rosen also makes clear that the other dreams such an escape by securing a fortune and retiring "as a wealthy brothel madam" is primarily a very popular myth. Rosen, Lost 145. See also the chapter on "Dreams: Aspirations, Role Models and Attitudes," of Milwaukee streetwalkers in Eleanor Miller, Street Woman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): 147-170.

43 Rescue through the fantasized bridegroom prince is a rather rare occurrence. Rosen cites a study in which only 20 Dutch ex-prostitutes out of 165 had found themselves able to cancel their registration due to marriage. Rosen Lost 145; See also Winick and Kinsie 75.

44 Iwan Bloch, Die Prostitution, Erster Band (Berlin: Louis Marcus Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912) 38.

45 Bullough xiii.

46 Although Bassermann also contends that the Greek Hetaira were highly respected, he makes it quite clear that their choice of profession was one which lost them status in the Greek social structure. Lujo Bassermann, The Oldest Profession: A History of Prostitution. (New York: Dorset Press, 1988), 15.

47 Bullough 35.

48 Bullough 39.

49 Bullough 81.

50 An Indian prostitute's ornamentation, for example, could not be confiscated because it was considered necessary to her livelihood. Bullough 91-93.

51 Bullough 87.

52 Bullough 93.

Bullough 36; See also Röhr 32.

The Japanese Geisha also demonstrates this type of social rank. Although most students of Japanese culture are careful to distinguish between the common Japanese prostitute and the Geisha, the latter is clearly a prostitute as defined for the purposes of this study. Ruth Benedict notes that payment to a Geisha does not necessarily include the right to sexual satisfaction, that this occurs only on a more complicated contractual basis or because the patron has won the entertainer's favor. She further adds, "An evening with geisha girls, however, is no asexual affair. Their dances, their repartees, their songs, their gestures are traditionally suggestive and carefully calculated to express all that an upperclass wife's may not." Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (New York: New American Library, 1974) 186. While highly trained and praised in their profession, Geishas are nonetheless considered second-class citizens, having neither the purity of wives nor the full freedom of men. Their children, for example, are looked down upon because they are considered illegitimate. See Liza Crihfield Dalby, *Geisha* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Until the Forties the wife was legally responsible for accepting and raising her husband's shoshi, or illegitimate children. Helmut Morsbach, "Aspects of Japanese Marriage," *The Couple* Ed. Marie Corbin, (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1978) 97.

Ruby R. Leavitt, describes several African cultures in which prostitution occurs, noting that "In some tribes the women look upon prostitution as 'merely a new calling like any other and they become prostitutes as reasonably and self-
righteously as they would have become typists or telephone girls." Although this at first seems to imply that there is no stigma against prostitution, upon more careful consideration it becomes clear that the opinions of male peers are not reflected in this statement. Leavitt also points out that modern trade "is virtually a male preserve." This implies that women in general have a lower social status than men and thus are stigmatized regardless of whether they work as telephone girls or prostitutes or remain at home in the villages while the men leave to do all the trading. Ruby R. Leavitt, "Women in Other Cultures," Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, ed.s, (New York: New American Library, 1971) 416-417.

57 Bassermann 3, and also Bullough 36.


60 Perkins 4.


64 Those believing that biological differences are determinative then divide into a variety of schools. There is the anti-feminist school, which maintains that women are biologically inferior or subject to men (M. Morgan and Phyllis Schlafly), there is the separate but equal school (K. Horney, J. Lacan), and then there is the biologically superior to men group (Ashley Montague, and Adrienne
Rich). Janet Sayers discusses the wide variety of positions subscribed to by feminists on this issue in Sexual Contradictions 12–95.

65 Röhr 16.
66 Bullough 292.
67 There actually is some disagreement about where Freud himself stood on this issue, since he modified many of his theories over the course of his life. According to Juliet Mitchell, Freud believed this male sexuality to be a purely social manifestation of cultural conditioning and psychological development. Mitchell finds Helene Deutsch and Karen Horney representative of the biological standpoint in contradistinction to Freud and Karl Abraham. "Based like Horney's opposite theories on notions of biology and morality, Deutsch's account has become redolent with normative morality. Libido has become biological..." Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis 22, 127.

68 Röhr 11–16.
69 Röhr 14.
70 Bullough 292.
72 Röhr 22.
73 Bullough 292.
75 Bullough 292. Millett acknowledges, that contrary to popular fantasy, prostitution does not imply orgasm. "Prostitutes have little need and usually little opportunity to accompany their availability with either orgasm or pleasure." She indicates that they often develop a condition called 'Taylor's syndrome'; "a painful chronic congestion in the pelvic area, the result of
experiencing sexual arousal unaccompanied by that release of vascular congestion and tension which is experienced in orgasm." Men, too, can suffer from unrelieved arousal, although the phenomenon does not seem to be discussed in the literature on male prostitution, nor is it a condition which finds its way into the general medical texts. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980) 164.

76 Perkins 11-14.

77 Bullough 303.

78 Bullough 296.

79 Bullough 297. If the Bulloughs' theory is correct, the current crisis with AIDS should actually serve to increase the prostitute's business. As women become more sexually withdrawn due to fear of infection, the pool of sexually available females will be reduced, thereby causing sex to be at a financial premium. Already we have seen a return to stricter adherence to marriage values and an anti-feminist backlash, which on the one side recognizes the woman's right (currently necessity) to work, while still demanding her to fulfill her domestic duties as biologically fulfilled mother.

80 Bullough 293, 314-316.

81 Röhr 24.

82 Millett 14-17. The Bulloughs cover a large spectrum of societies, in which women are low in status and in which prostitution thrives. Although not in the scope of a study about Western structures, Islamic attitudes toward women might be considered typical. "The whole Islamic denigration of women encouraged the growth of a special class of women whose mission in life was to entertain the male, and in spite of religious hostility, they continued to exist." Bullough 78, 102-103.

83 Millett 31.

85 Robin Lakoff has arrived at the same conclusion through a multi-levelled linguistic analysis. In discussing the definition of women, she asserts, “In every aspect of life, a woman is identified in terms of the men she relates to.” Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975) 31.
Chapter Two
Prostitution in Film

In a culture supporting a double standard, all women are evaluated on a sliding sexual scale. As demonstrated in the preceding chapter this means even in a professional realm women are judged and categorized in terms of their sexuality and are thereby equated with or compared to prostitutes. It hardly surprises therefore that, although less than .05 percent of women ever earn their living through prostitution, on film it is one of the most frequently depicted female professions.¹

A number of different reasons account for this fact. Glamour is certainly one of them. A long literary tradition exists, that associates the prostitute with glamour, one that has been nurtured and exploited even further by movie makers.² A profession placing so much stress on appearance will also naturally be highly effective in a largely visual medium. This fascination with glamour, however, goes a bit deeper, for there are also similarities between the profession of film making and that of prostitution. The sex peddler's situation, after all, is very familiar to the cinema world, a world in which a great deal of money is spent to purchase both physical beauty and bodies to be made into screen objects. Outward appearance becomes crucial in both lines of work; otherwise people will not buy the product. Glamour becomes a priority for marketability.

The similarities between the movie and sex industries go even farther. Both sell, not only merchandise, but also a service that depends on an image. In both lines of work this image is based on the fantasy of the consumer. Both industries rely on repeat customers, but require no fealty nor commitment. There is only one demand made. The customer must pay for her/his entertainment. Barrows
encapsulates the bottom line of both businesses nicely. "It may not sound very
romantic, but the fact is that sex is a commodity, it operates on the law of supply
and demand."³ At issue here is the nature of the commodity.

In a patriarchal culture, where the double standard causes women to be
valued sexually, the commodity, in the sense of object, is not really sex, but the
purveyor of sex. Director Varda Burstyn recognizes the objectified connection
between sex and capitalism:

American sex industries are bringing in billions of dollars in profits,
rivaling profits from all other 'entertainment' industries combined.
These have a lot more to do with selling goods (from cars to vibrators
to more pornography) than with sexual joy.⁴

Sex is bought and sold as an object, and women become the token object that
represents sex.⁵

Unfortunately this condition is common to most if not all Western cultures,
including Germany and the United States. West Germany's film industry exhibits
the same proclivity to sell with sex. Given West Germany's strong cultural
patriarchalism and strength as a capitalistic nation, it hardly seems surprising
that German motion pictures are heavily populated with prostitutes. Additional
similarities between the two countries' film industries might arise from the fact
that American culture has played such an important role in Germany since the
Second World War, essentially being forced on a captive audience during
occupation. American occupation troops moved in bringing their music and film,
which were rapidly ingested into German culture.⁶

When German directors at last began trying to produce their own films, their
fledgling attempts were modelled to a large extent after the Hollywood films that
had been available after the war.⁷ Even today, German audiences consume an
overwhelmingly American product. In 1986, for example, 138 of the 287 films released for public viewing by FSK were American compared to only 60 West German productions. This means that American culture still dominates television and movie screens all over West Germany. Whether it is due to cultural sympathies, common interests or the imprinting of American sensibilities on German ones, both cultures have the same tendency of reducing women to objectifications. This is fully in keeping with the analysis of the Western double standard.

Yet the filmic image of women in German and English language films is striking not only for its shared cultural history and thus similarities, but also for its differences. A comparison of the image of the prostitute across these two Western cultures shows some interesting differences due to cultural changes. Although the image of the prostitute has a shared history in German and American motion pictures, it is understandable that separate cultures will gradually develop in different directions. As war-guilt and national shame has receded and economic strength has increased, West Germany has more and more been prone to assert its independence and nurture a sense of cultural pride. The German film industry has begun to disassociate itself from their American role models, and filmic style and image has changed accordingly.

In both countries the image of women has altered, but not necessarily improved. Contemporary films from Germany and the English speaking lands now exhibit different attitudes than their predecessors, and the effects of both the burgeoning women's movement and a conservative backlash can readily be seen in the cinematic products of both cultures. Although a variety of approaches to the portrayal of prostitutes in contemporary film will be examined, both cultures recently have shared a tendency towards an increasingly prevalent portrayal of
woman as financially acquirable object, as prostitute. Even films which can be regarded as exceptional due to their artistic and/or philosophical merit display this tendency and it is to these films that attention will be turned. What is it about prostitution that speaks so strongly to the populace of contemporary culture? Why are there so many films about prostitutes?

In United States film consumption, prostitutes are greatly over-represented. At least one fifth of the top twenty films between the years 1982 and 1985 contain one or more scenes with a prostitute. Elthne Johnson has documented the increase in prevalence of comedy films concerning prostitution which occurred in 1982/83. Several of the films she discusses were not only very popular, but also financially successful. Trading Places, for example, in its first week of release netted 11.1 million dollars pulling the third greatest number of film rentals for 1983, while Risky Business netted 7.2 Million dollars for its first week and rated twelfth in rentals. This trend continued with films like Doctor Detroit, Angel, Bachelor Party, The Red-Light Sting, Jack's Back. All of these films depend on prostitution as a major plot device. Even more films of the Eighties contain prostitutes as background figures in police stations, or "color" in urban street scenes.

Similarly, of the top money makers in Germany over the last five years, significant percentages include a female character, who sells out physically for money. In the third quarter of 1987, 4 of the 10 top sellers were English language films with an ancillary prostitute figure. Only 4 of the thirty films were even German, as many as twenty were American and four British. But of the homegrown stock in 1987 German films accounted for only about 12 percent of the film industry's total take (and even this statistic is nonrepresentative because most of that 12 percent was culled from only two films, Otto and Zärtliche
Admittedly this type of information is difficult to quantify. Nonetheless one need only attempt to make a list of eight films in the last five years which center on a woman salesclerk, computer programmer, or a barmaid, to realize that prostitutes are a favored female profession on the screen.

When one considers that a comparable examination of the occurrence of men's professions in film yields no single category arising with any such frequency (although six of the thirty 1987 films also contain policemen, it must be remembered that there are many more male than female characters in almost any given film, so that policemen comprise a lower overall percentage of male professionals than prostitutes do of female professionals.) In comparing the two categories it is quite in keeping with traditional stereotypes that men should play defenders of law and order while women are cast in a sexual role as disrupters of the law, prostitution being for the most part illegal. The fact that there are so many fewer women than men (with a few notable exceptions), means that of all women represented, a greatly exaggerated percentage are depicted as prostitutes. The implication is that this fascination with the whore has a deeper social significance than simple outward similarities with the movie industry.

In examining the roles of women portrayed in recent film, it becomes evident that women are not really classified according to their profession. They are generally comprehended and categorized in terms of their relation to the hero of the movie, but rarely in terms of their occupation. Robin Lakoff sees this as a cultural attribute demonstrated in our linguistic structures. Hearing someone remark, "He's a professional" immediately invokes the image of a doctor or an attorney. But as Lakoff is quick to point out, "She's a professional" produces a completely different set of associations: "The first assumption most speakers of
English seem to make is that "she" is a prostitute, literally or figuratively speaking."23 Lakoff concludes that, "a man is defined in the serious world by what he does, a woman by her sexuality, that is, in terms of one particular aspect of her relationship to men."24 This perhaps explains why the film industry will tend to utilize primarily the sexually active female prototypes, those of the whore or the mother/wife (including both the prospective wife/mother and the already assimilated one.)25

The movie industry perception of women as merchandise has a long history indeed. Maria La Place documents ways that the movie industry of the Teens and Twenties adopted an advertising strategy to feed the needs of consumption phase capitalism:

This strategy consisted of the attempt to position women as the carriers of the new ideology of consumerism, indoctrinating them with the notion that the consumption of goods is the major activity, primary goal and ultimate gratification of life.26

Women then became identified with the very goods they were being encouraged to consume. Diane Waldman documents how Hollywood ad campaigns began to blur this distinction between indirect and direct object. The image of the star was molded into the product. Campaigns were specifically designed "to sell the woman," an idea which expresses two possible meanings.27 Charles Eckert confirms this fact, identifying Hollywood's efforts to present women as glamorous objects to be imitated and consumed and pointing out the links between the American film industry and the manufacturers of commodities aimed at the female consumer. Special ad campaigns were devised to promote imitation of the stars using particular products, thus hosiery companies were to sponsor beauty contests to find the local girl "boasting the prettiest pair of legs," while beauty parlors
were to host events like the "Bette Davis Bob" contest. Women were being encouraged to make themselves into physical objects of desire and consumption.

More and more the ad industry's encouragement to view women as consumer product and to be judged on the basis of her sexuality combined to determine the image of woman on film. The resulting images follow the already historically established female classifications of polar sexual extremes. But, this dichotomy is not the product of simple polarisation. It is a bit more complicated. In patriarchal societies, woman has frequently been conceived of, not only as being diametrically opposed to the male, but also as having a split nature of her own. She is frequently portrayed as both the bearer and destroyer of life, variously as Kali, Goddess of creation and destruction, as Gala, who, brings forth and devours her children, as Eve, who causes the generation of the human race, but who also brings upon them sin and the misery of death. Certainly, there is a terrifying quality to all these images, which lends credence to European patriarchal society's Freudian interpretation of woman as castrated and castrating being, as essence of the Dionysian pole, as nurturer and destroyer, as symbol of love and death, of the womb and the tomb.

In Western culture this dichotomy manifests itself in oppositional poles. Descended from Eve, the Virgin Mary is countered by the image of the harlot, who is also appropriately called Mary (Magdalene). With the invention of the virgin birth, sex was suddenly dissassociated from motherhood, the good girl became pure and maternal, the bad one sexual and independent.

The mother and the whore, the good and the bad versions of women who do (have sex), have been the standard female roles, not only in Western civilization, but also in the film industry. This type of division on the basis of sexuality becomes of necessity an objectification of the woman into a specific role, which
allows little character depth or possibility for growth. This absence of development in main stream female characters has been chronicled by numerous critics. This is what Molly Haskell labelled "the rigorous splitting off of women into madonnas and whores for the safeguarding of the male ego." Films which did try to deal with women on a less than superficial basis became condescendingly labelled women's pictures and more frequently than not contained the message that women who tried to be more than just a stereotyped madonna must learn the error of their ways, a lesson usually accompanied by undue suffering.

Unfortunately, if anything, the portrayal of women has worsened over the years. Molly Haskell has documented the transition in female image starting with the twenties. She finds "the camaraderie, the much vaunted mutual support among women," of earlier decades to be missing in modern times. Others, such as Marjorie Rosen and Mary Ann Doane, see the image of the past less rosily. Rosen found Hollywood of the Forties "temporarily indulgent," Idealizing female bravery and participation in the war effort, but never really banishing "the fluffy little lady [who] had just lain dormant, carefully camouflaged on the screen by tuneful period musicals and suspense shockers." Doane concurs, "the woman's film does not provide us with an access to a pure and authentic female subjectivity, much as we might like it to do so. It provides us instead with an image repertoire of poses." Nonetheless these poses often permitted a certain inherently individualistic quality, which has been lost with the advent of the seventies and the "sexual revolution." Joan Mellen notes: "Thus, the end of the image of woman as prim, sexless domestic in American films has led to the assimilation of all women to the norms and hazards of the 'loose' woman." This regressive tendency is also described by Haskell, who suggests that the newly gained independence of women during the war was linked to a gained independence in the filmic image. The
apogee of female independence in the motion pictures of the Forties, she finds was followed shortly thereafter by a filmic return to the image of the objectified woman after the return of the men from the war and women to the home. 43

Since Germany experienced a similar cultural shock during the war, one might expect German films of the Forties to show an analogous liberation. This, however, turns out not to be the case. German tradition has long maintained that a woman's place is in the home (or in the kitchen with her children) and failing that in church. While Rosie the Riveter was being paid for her defense industry labor, German women who worked for the war effort were frequently required to donate their time without receiving financial reimbursement. Angelika Bammer notes, "From 1938 on a mandatory "Work Service" ("Arbeitsdienst") was implemented, requiring that all unmarried girls and women between 14 and 25 give a year (augmented to a year and a half by 1941) of unpaid labor in service to the fatherland." 44 The state controlled film industry preferred to offer traditional romances to entertain the women left at home and despite a post-war disgust with the patriarchalism of the National Socialists, the old cultural system remained in place changing to a large extent in name only. 45 Germany continued to produce the same kind of film it always had, until 1962, when 26 young directors embarked on a new road with the publication of the Oberhausen Manifesto. Influenced by Nouvelle Vague, British Free Cinema and above all the American B Film, they initiated what subsequently has been called "New German Cinema." 46

One might have expected the newly socialist German Democratic Republic to be more open-minded in its portrayal of women, especially since all workers were to be of equal value and receive according to their needs. Alas, the socialist left had too much else to worry about. The German Democratic Republic responded to
women only in terms of their needs as workers, while still embracing the cult of motherhood and leaving the social fabric of the patriarchal family the same.47

Even in West Germany, the left faltered in the postwar liberation effort, by becoming preoccupied with such feminist issues as abortion and day care solely in terms of the freeing up of the worker for her contribution to the state.48 The metamorphosis of the image of women in Germany did not arrive until 1964, when, reacting ostensibly to the Oberhausen Manifesto, an independent film board was organized by the state.49 Suddenly women themselves could become actively involved in the making of films. Women's films did not exactly blossom into abundance, but money was more easily available and a number of women at last found it feasible to make films.50 The German film products of this period can be compared with American film of the 40's as analyzed by Molly Haskell.51 Both types of film permitted a more independent, female-oriented approach to women as subject, although German film tended to be much more critically and politically grounded. In Germany many women found themselves looking back at the war years and criticizing a patriarchal system that could permit the idiocy and destruction of the Second World War.52 The female characters in these films were never sexually objectified and although they had little opportunity for escape from their severely male-chauvinistic world, they tended to present a female perspective unparalleled in any previous German film.53

Gradually, in both cultures, the newly born feminine perspective began to disappear. In Germany the state supervised television industry made funding dependent on more clearly defined or scripted projects and also began utilizing profitability statistics, which effectively denied independent and experimental film makers (and thus women) any hope of financial aid.54 Furthermore the government agency controlling this funding became increasingly conservative, and
controversial directors found it more and more difficult to obtain monetary support. The few accepted women directors were gradually dropped from the canon. The traditionalists took over by default and the image of women once again returned to that of constrained sexual object or biological babymachine.

In the United States the scenario was no less severe. The conservative backlash gave rise to a renewed interest in fascinating womanhood, and hopes for intelligent and independent women on celluloid were dashed. Joan Mellen describes the situation in this fashion:

One searches in vain in the contemporary cinema for a new perception of women which assumes their capacities and value. An international and rapidly developing women's movement has induced the cinema to be only slightly more self-conscious about its patronizing and hostile portrayal of women as flawed creatures.

Three books came out about the same time to discuss this worsening image: Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape*, Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* and Andrea S. Walsh's book on *Women's Film and Female Experience*. The conclusions were all similarly discouraging.

It should be noted that all of the above books were written by feminists. In general, the image of women in film has been approached and explored only by feminist film critics. This means that the method of analysis has had a somewhat limited basis. Unfortunately it also means that the criticism has had ample occasion to become entrenched in a narrow political perspective. Occasionally this has led to a rather short-sighted "the male world is against us" analysis that forgets the original object of discussion. Parts of Mellen's book exemplify this particular problem. Certainly political and feminist approaches to art are valid means of textual investigation. Nonetheless it is vital to be able to
look at a film as a complex and multilevelled art form. It is my opinion that no artwork can be satisfactorily examined if it is considered purely as a political vehicle. Art after all must have a relationship to the aesthetic, even if it is simply a denial of the feasibility of the aesthetic or an affirmation of the ugly. Viewing art in other than political terms does not, however, invalidate the espousal of meaning or message. It recognizes, rather, that art's primary function is not to be useful but to be aesthetic.

Some feminists who proclaim that the personal is political seem to forget that a single issue can not realistically be made the sole basis for an interpretation of film. Naturally film always contains an (often invisible) underlying ideology, but the message need not always be read as an acceptance of a prefabricated fairy-tale morality in which a character gets what s/he deserves. Mellen, for example, applies a rather limited version of feminism to Robert Altman's film McCabe and Mrs. Miller. She maintains it is a sexist film because it portrays the brutalization of the independent woman on the western frontier, and because this frontier does not offer its female protagonist any viable independent alternative life-style. This judgement seems to be somewhat excessive. Why should Altman attempt to depict alternatives where none actually existed, and why can this film not also speak to the horror of women living in such a sexist society? Films must be examined within their historical and cultural contexts as well as within the parameters of what they define as realistic. Mrs. Miller's escape from such a brutal masculine world of objectification through opium addiction is a logical and consistent alternative within the culture of the film's historical period and within the construction of the universe as structured by the film. She can not be expected to ride off into the sunset on her own to a vacant and nonhostile world free of men and danger. The message of this film need not be
that women are safe only as mothers in the home as suggested by Mellen. The message might be that such a world should not exist in which an independent and interesting woman like Mrs. Miller is forced to become an abused sexual object and opium addict in order to bear continuing her existence.63

Thus, while some critics might view Mrs. Miller as an uppity woman being put in her proper place, feminist criticism may choose to reinterpret the film and draw a different moral. This is what Adrienne Rich calls for when she speaks of the need for re-vision. She defines it as "the act of looking back seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is - for women, more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival.64 This method of analysis which counters the dominant socially supported and accepted interpretation has been called cutting across the grain. Jean Baudrillard, who has borrowed much of his thought from Umberto Eco, discusses this technique as a method of dealing with dominant ideology. For him the key to disrupting the ideologically structured message is in creative reading.

Changing the contents of the message serves no purpose; it is necessary to modify the reading codes, to impose other interpretive code... The receiver (who in fact isn't really one) ... opposes his own code to that of the transmitter, he invents a true response by escaping the trap of controlled communication.65

To utilize this method, popular interpretation must be countered by a feminist reading of the film. Cutting across the grain has been particularly useful in re-evaluating the films of the Thirties and Forties, but it can be employed to question any unexamined popular opinion. It has been used successfully, for example, to reevaluate opinion of Mae West. West, who to a large extent controlled and produced her own films and image, was at one point in time considered a
vulgarization of the epitome of woman, "the greatest female impersonator of all
time."\textsuperscript{66} In the Forties one critic described her as creating "a howling, diverting
mythology of glamour."\textsuperscript{67} Molly Haskell sees West more as a typical example of a
fetishized Hollywood star, phallicly dressed with a deep androgynous voice:
"woman as sex object turned subject."\textsuperscript{68} Claire Johnston concurs:

The female element that is introduced, the mother image, expresses
male Oedipal fantasy... at the unconscious level, the persona of Mae West
is entirely consistent with sexist ideology; it in no way subverts
existing myths, but reinforces them.\textsuperscript{69}

Yet the recognition of her film characters' financial and sexual independence has
also brought her high praise from feminists.\textsuperscript{70} Whereas before feminist criticism
West was generally depicted quite negatively, current opinions of her range from
liberated foremother to glamorous fetish. By reexamining West's actions and
films and avoiding the pitfalls of a chauvinistically male-centered attitude, a
fairer and more open set of choices have been made available to the viewer.

Interpretations that cut across the grain must however be undertaken in a
careful fashion, by considering more than the outward story-line of a film. As
Stephen Heath has clearly demonstrated, directors' intentions and values may be
communicated in a variety of ways and the entire system and narrative of the film
must be taken into account when attempting an interpretation.\textsuperscript{71} Not only do
editing techniques and the intercutting of images affect the narrational
framework of a film, but, as will be shown more explicitly in the film chapters,
choice of colors, lighting, and framing all affect the viewer's judgements of
characters, motives and actions. Feminist theorists who have tried to attack the
bastion of the male dominated film world in this way must be careful and honest
in their assessment.\textsuperscript{72} Any work of art is the expression of its creator's values
and opinions and although the depth of the work may outclass by far the niveau of her/his values or philosophy, the artist has the right to be given credit for intentions as well as genius in presentation.

In examining the different approaches to the image of woman on film, several schools come under discussion. Analysis of the female image at a critical level has been undertaken from several perspectives, including the psychological, the semiotic/linguistic, and in terms of narrative or voice. Although feminist work often concentrates on attempts to find positive, non-objectified, role models, it has been equally important to publicize the way that traditional, ideologically determined images of women fail to produce positive models. Teresa de Lauretis in analyzing feminist cinematic efforts, noted feminist theory's "dichotomy of concerns." She divides these concerns into two forces, "... one called for immediate documentation for purposes of political activism, consciousness raising, self-expression, or the search for "positive images" of woman; the other insisted on rigorous, formal work on the medium - or better the cinematic apparatus, understood as a social technology - in order to analyze and disengage the ideological codes embedded in representation." Kuhn, who also deals with this topic, divides actual feminist film efforts into two primary schools, into an avant garde approach and and a deconstructionist school. Thus ways of attacking the problem come down to the tools of theory and practice. Theoretical analysis of woman's image breaks down farther into a plethora of methods. In order to fully understand the nature of the representation of the prostitute in the films of the Eighties, it is necessary to understand the wide variety of theoretical approaches being implemented. Each approach, of course, has its problems as well as values, which will now be discussed, before they are applied to the analysis of the prostitute's image.
One of the most prevalent forms of film analysis uses the psychoanalytic approach. Obviously, in our society psychoanalysis has hit a strong chord. For regardless of an individual's opinions of the oedipal complex and castration theory, this science of the mind unquestionably seems to have spoken to certain deep-set cultural or biological urges and fears. Social and physical scientists are still disputing the origins of these feelings, so it is not surprising that psychologists have also lined up on either side of the nature/nurture debate. I will now briefly describe some of the various psychological schools which are useful in the analysis of film and particularly suitable to investigating the image of woman.

All psychological theory begins with Freud, the first to try and examine behavior on the basis of sexual difference. Although Freud's theories were constantly changing and being revised, his theories of human sexual development have been extremely influential in both literary theory and art of the twentieth century. His theories have been actively and consciously used in the making of movies, and they therefore play a significant role in both dominant cinema and feminist critical theory of film.

Some of Freud's theories are particularly relevant to film analysis because of their concentration on image, the gaze, and objectification. The two most frequently utilized bodies of theory concern the oedipal complex and penis envy. Freud derived these theories by being the first to look at human development in terms of sexuality. Sexuality, he believed, was extant in very young infants; however, it did not manifest itself as primarily masculine or feminine for some time. Awareness of sexual difference, as understood by Freud, then, was not innate, but was something acquired through socialization and psychological development. According to this theory, people have a combination of masculine
and feminine traits, which are neither good nor bad, but are only problematic when their manifestation leads them into conflict with the socially acceptable.\textsuperscript{79}

It is recognition of sexual difference that starts the psychological separation of the child from her/his mother and thereby initiates the awareness of social difference. Freud felt that boys first notice sexual difference at the age of three, when they realize that their mother has no penis. This recognition, which occurs through looking, gives rise to a fear of castration.\textsuperscript{80} The boy is afraid he will lose his penis as he fears must have happened to his mother. The mother, with whom the boy has identified up to this point, now becomes a frightening reminder of this possibility of castration, so he begins to divorce himself from the previous unity with his mother and realign his identity with his father who still has his penis. In wanting to be like the father, the boy then takes his mother as object of his love, which in turn sets him up as a rival to his father. In transferring identification from mother to father the subject/object break is complete, however, there is still a fear of castration invoked by the sight of the desired object (mother).\textsuperscript{81} A boy can relieve his castration fear in several ways, for example by denial or by fetishism. Denial offers no hope for adult growth, because it refuses recognition of reality. Fetishizing, on the other hand, allows the boy to deal with an uncomfortable "fact." Using his gaze in a voyeuristic act of male empowerment referred to as scopophilia, a boy can objectify the mother/woman, essentially setting up a substitute phallus for the woman's missing penis.\textsuperscript{82}

Young girls, according to Freud, also undergo a similar, but slightly different process. They begin to notice that they are missing something and this produces an envy of the penis.\textsuperscript{83} The girl retains identification with the mother, but experiences a desire for the missing organ. As summed up by Freud in "Die
Traumdeutung: "The unsatisfied wish for a penis, should be converted into a wish for a child and for a man, who possesses a penis."84 The girl child, coveting the penis of her father, then enters into a rivalry with her mother.

The natural result of this system is therefore children at odds with their same-sexed parent, for according to theory they will grow up wanting to take the place of this parent. For men, Freud felt the situation is even more complicated, because fetishizing women is not a perfect solution to the problem of castration fear. As Janet Mitchell explains it, in the setting up of a fetish, men "both recognize that women are castrated and deny it, so the fetish is treated with affection and hostility, it represents the absence of the phallus and in itself, by its very existence, asserts the presence of it.85 This is a distillation of the oedipal complex in simplified version.86

Freudian theory has been used extensively in the analysis of film. Roland Barthes has gone as far as to suggest that "all traditional narratives re-enact the male Oedipal crisis.87 While it will be argued here that this is not the case, that Freudian theory is useful only in interpreting material which begins with and adheres to a patriarchal ideology, this theory is unquestionably useful in investigating certain types of film, especially the Hollywood variety that is strongly entrenched in the patriarchal tradition. Due to its prevalence, this type of film has come to be known as dominant cinema. Freudian theory underlies a great deal of these films either through conscious planning or through unconscious acceptance of the ideology.88 Freudian interpretation lends itself to the interpretation of many kinds of film. For instance, the popularity of the female vamp(ire) can be explained in terms of castration fear. Representing the fearsome vagina dentata or sexually active woman, she drains men of their self-control in a simulation of the sexual encounter.89 The female lead in film noir, for example, is
simply a less explicit variant on the vamp. These women who are simultaneously attractive and dangerous are prime examples of the fetishized woman.\textsuperscript{90} The problem with such this type of approach, however, is, that it takes a uniquely male perspective as the point of departure.

Although Freud's theories have been viewed as sexually nonpartisan, sexual bias certainly creeps in to a certain degree. Some of Freud's conclusions need not necessarily follow from his observations.\textsuperscript{91} As Sayers demonstrates, there is nothing inherent in Freud's theories to cause a woman's desire for an education or a job to be labelled neurotic, yet this is exactly his perception of such women.\textsuperscript{92} Modern theorists have thus made major efforts to divest Freud of his sexist origins, to revise and review his work in Rich's sense of re-vision.

Foreseeably attempts have been made to take Freud's basic theories and utilize them in a sexually neutral fashion, showing that woman's "lack of penis" is not of necessity an inferior position. Psychoanalytic theories since Freud have split into two main lines. One group views sexual difference as socially determined, while the other sees it as having a biological origin, with the sexes being equally weighted.

The problem with the psychologically determined sexual difference for the feminist theoretician, is that it does not satisfactorily explain the development of the current situation. Chris Weedon, quite correctly suggests: "If we assume that subjectivity is discursively produced in social institutions and processes, there is no pre-given reason why we should privilege sexual relations above other forms of social relations as constitutive of identity."\textsuperscript{93} Weedon concludes that:

Feminist poststructuralism suggests that it is not good enough to assume that psychoanalysis accurately describes the structures of femininity and masculinity under patriarchy, since discourse
constitutes rather than reflects meaning. To take psychoanalysis as
descriptive is to assume basic patriarchal structures which exist prior
to their discursive realization.94

Thus using a psychological method to interpret film may serve to further reinforce
the meanings being developed within the patriarchal system. It is therefore not
surprising that psychological interpretation is so prevalent an analysis of the
dominant cinema. As a research tool it does not only explain, but it reshapes the
culture it attempts to elucidate.

The theory of biologically determined sexual identity has a variety of
supporters. Karen Horney was one of the first Freudian psychologists to support a
kind of "separate, but equal stance" in which different was not considered inferior.
Horney believed sexual difference was influential at a much earlier age than three
years as initially posited by Freud. Horney's research was based on a theory of
innate psychological sexual difference. She felt that a natural distrust arises
between the sexes because of this innate sexual difference, a phenomenon
manifested by the coexistence of the cult of the virgin and the burning of witches
in male-dominated, Western society.95 By emphasizing the polar nature of man's
gynophobia, Horney maintained that "Males will always be in favor of
motherliness,... i.e. the nurturing, selfless, self-sacrificing mother; for she is the
ideal embodiment of the woman who could fulfill all his expectations and
longings."96 Yet as she points out in her chapter entitled "the Dread of Woman,"
man is at the same time full of the anxiety of being too small to satisfy her, which
yields a fear of inadequacy and rejection.97 Horney theorized that this bifurcated
image is the natural result of biological and psychological difference.

Other critics have tried to turn Freud on his head. Adrienne Rich, for one,
suggests a type of psychological womb-envy, in which it is men who are envious of
women's abilities to produce new life. This feeling of inferiority supposedly gives rise to the need to create artistically as a vicarious act of procreation. Such an approach, however, undercuts its own validity by implying that there are fewer women artists because they do not need nor wish to pursue such an ersatz form of creation. Rich feels that certain innate characteristics of being female cause women to perceive the world in a different fashion. An entire school of feminist theory develops out of this perspective. This group feels that the way women see and speak is different from the way men do, which when applied to film theory means that women's films must be inherently different in nature.

Luce Irigaray takes this approach in affirming a biological femininity, which is different but not lesser than masculinity. Irigaray believes that men have a logical one-way approach to the world which correlates to the singleness of the male organ and male orgasm. Women's perceptions are more like the female genitalia, which are numerous or multiple:

Whence the mystery that woman represents in a culture claiming to count everything, to number everything by units, to inventory everything by individualities. She is neither one nor twa. She resists all adequate definition. Further she has no proper name. And her sexual organ, which is not one organ, is counted as none.

Irigaray thus suggests that women have an accepting, all-embracing approach which allows for multiple coexisting possibilities, and corresponds to their biology. Such an argument is in stark contrast to the Freudian interpretation that defines women in terms of lack, or as Irigaray describes it, as "the horror of nothing to see." For Freud - and then later Lacan - a woman defines herself through her realization of the lack of a penis. Her role thereby becomes defined by absence. She is made the negation of man.
Irigaray begins by criticizing previous psychological theories, ending with the influential and controversial ideas of Jacques Lacan. Lacan has been a springboard for many of the new French feminists primarily because of his theories of penile lack and male gaze. Related to Freud’s theory of scopophilia, Lacan sees the gaze as one element of a triangular system which actively defines the subject. His is a very complex theoretical network based on the belief that the unconscious is formed like a language. For Lacan, language and the unconscious, in conjunction with the gaze, structure one’s perceptions in the first stages of development. The gaze becomes crucial during what he calls the mirror phase, at which time it becomes directed at oneself. Suddenly, the infant is able to recognize her/himself in her/his own reflection or in the reflection of his/her mother. As noted by Deutelbaum and Poague, this recognition of image has some very intriguing applications. “Involved here is an essential illusion or misapprehension... The mirror phase is thus ‘imaginary’ in two respects, in that it depends on ‘images,’ and in its aspect of falsity, of being ‘imagined’ or ‘projected.’” These elements are also vital to the illusion of reality called upon in film.

Lacan’s theory identifies self/subject as the location of what he called the phallus (or symbolic penis). In semiotic terms, it is subjective, becoming the signifier “intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified, in that the signifier conditions them by its presence as signifier.” Lacanians maintain that possession of the phallus is not an inherently male position and that sexual difference is actually a consequence of the social separation of the sexes into two mutually exclusive divisions of gender. Nonetheless it is the woman, being without phallus, who is “inscribed in an order of exchange of which she is object.” She becomes the imaginary signified and object of the signifier’s
desire, as well as the origin of the fear of castration. Chris Weedon summarizes some problems with this theory very aptly:

Despite Lacan's own protestations to the contrary, Lacanian theory employs an anatomically grounded elision between the phallus and the penis which implies the necessary patriarchal organization of desire and sexuality ... Men by virtue of their penis, can aspire to a position of power and control within the symbolic order. Women on the other hand have no position in the symbolic order, except in relation to men...¹¹² Lacan's claim is that "These facts reveal a relation of the subject to the phallus that is established without regard to the anatomical difference of the sexes." Yet as Jacqueline Rose notes his account of sexuality is based entirely on sexual division, in which "woman is constructed as an absolute category (excluded and elevated at one and the same time), a category which serves to guarantee that unity on the side of the man."¹¹³ Woman is exteriorized as the exalted and feared object.

The analysis of the oedipal phase also raises questions as to the place of woman.¹¹⁴ According to Lacan's theory, the subject experiences desire through his recognition of himself as a unity different from the 'other.' The object of the desire becomes the signified, a meaning 'erected' by the subject phallus. This suggests two immediate problems. One is that woman is defined solely within the realm of the Imaginary. Rose summarizes it in this fashion:

The woman, therefore, is not because she is defined purely against the male ... As negative to man, woman becomes a total object of fantasy (or an object of total fantasy), elevated into the place of the Other and made to stand for its truth.¹¹⁵

She becomes a negative. Woman is absent, replaced by the fantasy of woman.
The gaze thus becomes a power structure through which the objectified woman is made object to male desire. Behavioral psychologists have even come to recognize the power of the male gaze. In experiments designed to evaluate the effect of gaze on the perception of honesty, researchers found that photos of men that looked directly into the camera were sorted into the honest pile, “while women in this pose were more likely to be thought dishonest.”116 The implication is that women who look are being dishonest because they are asserting themselves as something they are not. They should not be behaving like men.

When applied to the field of dominant cinema, such a theory seems to explain the limited nature of images of women. Woman is absent as a realistic entity from mainstream cinema, being depicted in fantasy terms (because she is imaginary) either as sexual fantasy or nurturing mother. This absence is a common topic of feminist analysis. Teresa de Lauretis registers woman’s absence in the patriarchy in an analysis of a section of Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities. The story tells of the foundation of a city based on a dream of a running naked woman that was pursued, but no one could ever find.

The city is a text which tells the story of male desire by performing the absence of woman and producing woman as text, as pure representation. Calvino’s text is thus an accurate representation of the paradoxical status of women in Western discourse: while culture originates from woman and is founded on the dream of her captivity, women are all but absent from history and cultural process.117

Claudia Lennsen deplores the fact “that women’s lives have been very different from their images within male literature and film,” while Helen Fehervary notices the discrepancy between viewer and subject: “In traditional films there is a virtual absence of female images conceived by women themselves; yet women have
comprised a vast number of the viewing public for these films." Men have coopted all rights to the gaze.

The influence of Lacan's writings on recent feminist cinema theory can not be overstated. Not only are they the basis for the objections of Luce Irigaray and Julie Kristeva who have tried to counter Lacan's definition of woman as 'absence of sex," but they also raise the question of the importance of language in sexual/social development. Lakoff's work on the repression of women by male language has already been mentioned, but the extent of the linguistic influence must be stressed. As Silvia Bovenschen exclaims, "We are in a terrible bind. How do we speak? In what categories do we think? Is even logic a bit of virile trickery?" She points out that women do not even know if the way they express themselves is purely a result of the patriarchal structure or whether women's words might not have an innately female quality.

Fascination with male gaze has given rise to a counter movement concentrating on female voice. Influenced by Derrida, French feminism, which in turn influenced both American and German feminism, has come to ask whether the objectification of woman through image can not be countered through the subjectification of women's writing. According to Weedon, "Writing becomes a way of giving voice to repressed female sexuality." Kristeva raises the question of feminine and masculine modes of language. For her there are modes of language not encompassed by the rational thetic structure of the symbolic order found in masculine language. Feminine and masculine modes of language, however need not be sex specific. Men may use a feminine mode, just as women may use a masculine one. Quoting Weedon again:

Kristeva's use of the signifier 'woman' is deconstructive in the sense that she argues that there is no essential womanhood, not even a
repressed one and that feminist practice cannot be directed at achieving or recovering some sort of essential state. It can only be defined in terms of what rejects and what it is not. Politically the notion of being a woman is at best a useful, temporary political strategy for organizing campaigns on behalf of women’s interests as they are currently defined within patriarchy.¹²³

Such is also the approach of Hélène Cixous, the champion of "écriture féminine." Sandra Gilbert clarifies Cixous’ work as “a fundamentally political strategy, designed to redress the wrongs of a culture through a revalidation of the rights of nature.”¹²⁴ Cixous maintains:

One can no more speak of ‘woman’ than of ‘man’ without being trapped within an ideological theater where the proliferations of representations, images, reflections, myths, identifications, transform, deform, constantly change everyone’s imaginary and invalidate in advance any conceptualization.”¹²⁵

Yet Cixous sees the key to feminine writing at “the level of jouissance, inasmuch as a woman’s instinctual economy can not be identified by a man or referred to the masculine economy.”¹²⁶ At present she finds women’s language to be different than men’s. As explained by Lacanian theory men control desire, but women experience the jouissance or pleasure and women are concerned with how the latter inscribes itself.¹²⁷

The question of language divides further into a debate on spoken and written language. As Walter Ong suggests, most cultures speak about a mother tongue, which is differentiated from the language of the literati.¹²⁸ Mothers are indeed the passers on of spoken words, and, countering Bovenschen’s suggestion of a male controlled language, is the implication of a spoken tongue governed and handed
down by mothers. Gilbert and Gubar thus trace the woman's search for a written language which is suitable for her expression. Differentiating between male and female linguistic fantasy, they note that, "the very existence of a long-neglected tradition of female writing interrogates the widely accepted contemporary assumption that 'the feminine' is what cannot be inscribed in common language."129 Gilbert and Gubar go on to examine literature they feel is written in a characteristically feminine voice.130

Carol Gilligan also makes a good case for a uniquely female voice.131 For Gilligan the issue is not so much what has caused the discrepancy in sexuality, but how it is relayed into terms of judgements of superiority and inferiority. Gilligan notes that almost all theories of sexual difference descend from a male perspective by which the male is considered the "normal" standard of evaluation, a bias, that has led to the equation of normal child development with male child development.132 This naturally results in theories based on female lack and inferiority. Gilligan's argument is that for whatever reasons women have a different moral composition which is evinced in female voice. In her studies, based on theories of Kohlberg and Kramer, Piaget and Freud, she discovers a legal/logical form of analysis common to male problem solvers and a relational one common to female subjects.133 In noting the frequent occurrence of aggression in conjunction with connection/commitment, she posits a male fear of attachment as opposed to a female fear of separation. None of this is really new. Not only related to Nancy Chodorow's theories of childbearing and female nurturing, it is a theory which fits into the old Apollonian and Dionysian dialectic that divides the masculine/logical from the feminine/emotional.134 What is new is the presentation of the female voice as being not only different, but equally valid with the male one. Gilligan takes issue with the frequent psychological
tendency of seeing women's maturation as arrested when compared to a male standard of adulthood and separation. It is the problem of psychologists creating a "discrepancy between Womanhood and Adulthood." Gilligan sees female voice as a different, but equally valid means of expressing sexual difference.

The analysis of sexually differentiated voice examined in conjunction with Lacan's analysis of language as a shaping force begs the question of language as system in general. This broaches the final field commonly used in film theory known as semiotics. Semiotics takes the techniques of film construction and analyzes them in terms of linguistic structure, an area pioneered by Christian Metz. Metz claimed to have discovered differences between media which altered the reception by the viewer. Metz started with the theories of early theorist Rudolf Arnheim, whose assesment of photography, and theater was that they were partial illusions.

For Arnheim film combined the temporal and spatial qualities of the drama with the realistic images of the photograph. Metz undertook to discover why film seemed more "realistic" than the other arts. Metz decided "the secret of film is that it is able to to leave a high degree of reality in its images, which are, nevertheless, still perceived as images." This is based on his belief that photography with its motionless paper medium was not real enough, while cinema offered only poor images. The combination of the reality of movement and image thus were what Metz considered the keys to films. Cinema also had the peculiarity of always seeming to occur in the present and due to its projection in a darkened room would emulate a dream state making it appear more real. The link between film and the dream state allowed Metz to integrate his ideas with theories that the mind was structured like a language. If film taps into subliminal
mental processes, then it too must be structured like a language. The big question became how was the viewer inducted into the illusion of the film.

Metz solved this problem by introducing the concept of suture. According to this theory, the viewer was stitched into the narrative through a combination of shot, reverse shot editing in a process which he labelled suture. Through a surgical incision the viewer is inserted into the action of the film, which naturally involves a certain amount of lack of control due to the fact that the viewer has no active role in the events. He can only watch. He can not act. This impotence is correlated with castration fear by Kaja Silverman. The viewer's inability to act must therefore be compensated by his identification with the main character, who then acts in her/his stead. It has been suggested that suture is the primary way that film prevents alienation of the observer by ensuring identification. Work by Dayan and Oudart suggest that an initial shot, because it is framed, jars the viewer into recognizing he is watching a film. "The spectator's pleasure, dependent on his identification with the visual field, is interrupted when he perceives the frame. From this perception he infers the presence of the absent-one [presumably the director] and that other field from which the absent-one is looking." The director then includes a shot of the character "presented as owner of the glance," which makes the audience forget that it was a director who framed the initial shot and thereby returns him back into the structure of the narrative. For Daniel Dayan suture is thus a wily means of obscuring the underlying ideology which determines the production of Classical cinema establishes itself as the ventriloquist of ideology.
Owners of the glance are invariably male in dominant cinema. Thus if Dayan and Oudart are to be believed, women are once again relegated as object and suture becomes just another means of assuring domination by a patriarchal ideology.

Silverman notes that semiotic analysis can thus be useful in laying bare this structuring ideology:

Not only does psychoanalytic semiotics establish that authoritative vision and speech have traditionally been male prerogatives, whereas women have more frequently figured as the object of that vision and speech, but it provides a vivid dramatization of this role division at the level of its own articulation.148

In demonstrating woman’s classic role Silverman hopes that women can counter the status of “always-already,” an effort being made by feminists who try to reverse the typical relationships or read dominant films across the grain.

Silverman’s approach also suggests that suture need not necessarily espouse the dominant ideology. William Rothman demonstrates that a point-of-view shot is analogous to a sentence and not a statement, that the viewer appropriates the view of one of the characters, so-to-speak without the character’s permission and that the viewer is then free to interpret that shot in any way he chooses.149 A similar point is made by Nick Browne in his discussion of Stagecoach. By intercutting shots of a proper woman and her reactions with the embarrassment of a prostitute figure, the director strongly indicates “the ladies” disdain for the fallen woman. Sympathy is not, however, with the “lady,” for the framing clearly indicates hers to be an attitude of inhumane snobbery.150 In film, as in any narrative art, the author/uteur has the choice of using the voice and eyes of an unreliable narrator while undermining that perspective through technique.
Two themes recur constantly; the instrumentation of perception and of expression: the importance of the voice and the gaze. The theorists examined thus far clearly suggest that the voyeuristic and scopophilic urge is a male prerogative. Laura Mulvey in her now classic article on the male gaze relates movie viewing to Freud's scopophilia and Lacan's theory of the mirror phase. Satisfying a "Primordial view for pleasurable looking" Mulvey sees a trend in dominant cinema:

The scopophilic instinct (pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object), and, in contradistinction, ego libido (forming identification processes) act as formations, mechanisms, which this cinema has played on. The image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further in the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by the patriarchal order as it is worked out in its favorite cinematic form - illusionistic narrative film.\textsuperscript{151}

Silverman suggests that Mulvey's article "demonstrates the impossibility of thinking about any part of the classic cinematic organization - including editing - apart from sexual difference."\textsuperscript{152} Her point is well taken, for she notes that in combination with the suture theories of Oudart and Dayan, "i.e. the shot/reverse shot formation. Not only can a metaphoric connection be established between the two halves of that formation on the one hand, and the alignment of female spectacle with male vision on the other, but the former provides the ideal vehicle for the latter."\textsuperscript{153} Once again an ideology seems to be embracing a praxis, which in turn reinforces and reformulates the ideology.

Yet ideology is not necessity, as demonstrated by Annette Kuhn in her book on feminism in cinema. Kuhn develops strategies for creating new forms unsullied
by patriarchal significations and supports the use of theory to deconstruct dominant film models. In examining the representation of the prostitute in contemporary film, it is important to use all critical strategies that are available. After a careful look at film theory and feminist criticism, it has become clear that two aspects of film analysis are important to a serious interpretation. A film must be analyzed with full awareness of its ideological framework, and it must also be examined with an eye on all aspects of its narration, form and style. The greater the variety of approaches that can be used, the more likely it is that particular issues will not be blown out of proportion or taken out of context. Thus theories of gaze and voice will be used along with examination of structuration, narration, editing, and imagery. Sound and lighting will be taken into consideration, along with frame, scene length, written text and directorial style. The issue of whether there is a discernible difference between female perception and male perception (and also therefore between female art and male art) goes hand and hand with the debate about whether there is an inherent or purely socialized sexual difference.

While filmmakers like Claudia Lennsen and Jutta Brückner maintain that there is a sexually inherent difference and a distinct female sensibility clearly evident in a final film product, many feminists take an opposing viewpoint. Certainly the theory of innate aesthetic difference is tenable in terms of communication theories which perceive the medium to be productive of the message. If the male dominates by gaze, then it would seem acceptable that women's voice is specially suited to an oral or written medium. In cinema where both written text and visual image are integral parts of the whole, there would be room for integrative as well as oppositional play with these theories.
Most theorists tend to agree that a women's cinema can only be distinguished because there are still few enough women directors to be able to easily pigeonhole them. It should be pointed out that there is greater difference between any two same-sexed individuals than similarities between them. There are a great many other, non-sexual differences which play as important a role in life. Gilbert and Gubar, although they speak for a uniquely female voice, also recognize the magnitude of non-sexual human difference. They cite the linguistic study of McConnell-Ginet in reminding the reader, "the assumption that sexual difference outweighs all other factors, ignores and devalues the differences among women and perpetuates the male-centered view of women as homogenous."156 For a recent group of feminists this does not seem to be the case. Sandra Frieden points out that sexual distinction is one of the few pieces of information without which people are unable to cope. She explains that not knowing the sex of a person completely disrupts behavior modes as far as trying to deal with a person.157 Fassbinder's *In A Year of Thirteen Moons* shows a character of unidentified gender and the viewer is unable to settle down to the business of the film until s/he has relieved her/his discomfort about the character's sexual identity.158 Sex difference can neither be denied nor be viewed as the sole basis of interpretation.

Ultimately a critic who uses a single issue to judge a film's worthiness misses the point. Certainly, one can object to the means and reasons for a certain type of portrayal, yet like it or not, there are women who view themselves as and behave like objects in this world, and simply because one does not like this, it does not give just cause for rejecting a film which may utilize such a character to make a point. Certain feminists might not approve of visual scenes showing prostitute China Blue being objectified in Russell's * Crimes of Passion*, yet the director has an intriguing and resounding point to make about the connection
between the enjoyment and production of art as compared to voyeurism and sexuality in a sterile capitalistic setting.

It is my intent here to examine a variety of the most modern films in order to analyze their portrayal of women as prostitutes, to define the differences and categories of prostitute which occur and to determine what the purpose of this representation actually is. It must be stressed that the director/writer's decision to place a prostitute in a major role does not imply any particular value judgement or morality. The filmic technique, reception and ideological structuration must all be examined before a judgement can be passed. One of the films to be discussed is a pseudo-documentary produced by women called "Working Girls." A German film, Die Flambierte Frau, which was co-written and co-produced by a woman defines an entirely different vision of prostitution. It is vital to remember that simply because a woman made the film it does not mean the film contains a feminist content, nor that it displays feminine characteristics. Some feminists were quick to criticize the films of Lina Wertmueller and Elaine May, but Molly Haskell wisely repudiated generalizations about feminine sensibility, noting:

Elaine May - witty, cerebral, puritanical, even (in the accepted comic tradition) misogynistic - actually has more in common with such male compatriots as Mike Nichols or Woody Allen or Brian De Palma than with her European 'sisters,' both of whom are more sensual, in their sensual response to the world as well as their gravitation towards sex as a theme.159

The clear conclusion is that there can be feminist films by men, and male-chauvinist films by women, as well as any other combinatorial possibility. The newest feminist theory has finally begun to become less exclusionary with very hopeful results. As Roszika Parker summarizes it, "It can be argued that the
'feminist' valency of a work does not inhere in the gender of the author or result purely from the author's intentions. It is the effect of the dynamic context of the work's consumption and reading.\textsuperscript{160}

The ultimate goal in cinema, therefore, is to have so many individuals of both sexes producing film that sexual difference will no longer be a useful tool for classification. Likewise a wide variety of critical theories will hopefully undermine the dominance of the patriarchal ideology and render criticism based on sexual perspective insignificant. Presently feminism remains a valid means of examining a filmic text. More and more traditional sexual boundaries are breaking down and becoming interchangeable. Films like \textit{Cruising} and \textit{Red Heat} have made the dubious progress of objectifying the male body sexually. Other films like \textit{Working Girls} and \textit{Sticky Fingers} impose a female figure of identification and suture them in as subjects. Some female characters such as Molly in \textit{Working Girls} and Claudia Draper in \textit{Nuts} co-opt the male gaze and remain unpunished for it. In the film \textit{Männer}, the male characters take a decidedly non-patriarchal voice. A small number of relatively recent exceptions to the cinematic norm do exist. They are, however, still the exception to the rule. Feminist criticism is therefore still relevant and necessary. For this reason it has been described along with the already familiar and accepted theories of film analysis. My hopes are to provide the broadest possible basis for the examination of the representation of the prostitute in contemporary film.
Notes

1 Perkins compares statistical studies done on prostitutes in the U.S., Great Britain, France and Australia and finds that prostitution in all of these places falls below a .03% frequency. Perkins 16.

2 This literary tradition is discussed by the Bulloughs, who follow the prostitute heroine in a variety of literatures, including American, British, French and Russian. Bulloughs 309-313. Folklore and movie traditions also tend to stress the glamorous quality of the work, according to Winick and Kinsie 31-35, 75-77.

3 Barrows 171.

5 Burstyn further comments on the tendency of sexuality to become fragmented and "disturbing tendencies for people to treat one another as commodities - objects to be manipulated, flaunted or consumed - rather than as humans to be loved, appreciated and pleased." Burstyn 21.


7 Pflaum has written a great deal on the influence of the American film on German motion pictures, especially on the postwar work of the new German Cinema. See Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, eds., Film in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der neue deutsche Film: Herkunft/Gegenwärtige Situation: Ein Handbuch (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979); or Hans Günther Pflaum, Deutschland im Film: Themenschwerpunkte des Spielefilms in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Materialien zur Landeskunde (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1985) 6-8.

8 Other years yield similar statistics. In 1985, of 319 films released, only 71 were West German and 145 were American. In 1984 the ratio was 87 to 135 out of 334. "Film Statistics 1986: Figures and Numbers," Kino 3 (1987): 3.


10 Timothy Corrigan describes Germany's love/hate relationship with Hollywood. On the one hand German directors have been perpetually awestruck by Hollywood technical superiority and production craft, while on the other they feel disgusted by what they have perceived as a distasteful underlying bourgeois materialist ideology. Timothy Corrigan, New German Film: The Displaced Image (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1983) 3-6.
For a history of the women's movement that documents these changes in attitude, see Barbara Sinclair Deckard, *The Women's Movement: Political, Socioeconomic, and Psychological Issues* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1983) 371-372. These changes can also be seen in a more recent survey, which indicates that despite the fact that women's wages have not altered much since the 1960's, women earn on the average between 60-70 cents for every dollar earned on the average by men, 65% of all teenage girls feel that the women's movement is passé and has no meaning for them. Although women now have much greater access to professions other than nursing, secretarial work, etc., 42% feel the women's movement has not helped them and the general attitude among young women today seems to be that they've achieved equality, and that present women's movement people are just perennially unhappy. *The Houston Chronicle* (Saturday 4 June 1988), In Germany there is a similar situation. The women's movement has had experienced vacillating popularity, due to its early connections with the Marxist left, who frequently wavered in its support of specific women's issues such as abortion and day-care. For a more detailed description see Marc Silberman, "Film and Feminism in Germany Today. Introduction: From the Outside Moving In," *Jump Cut* 27 (1982): 41-42. Edith Hoshino Altbach summarizes the similarities and differences between the German and American women's movements, ending on a hopeful note for the future of emancipation. Her book was published in 1984, when the political tide had already begun to turn and German conservatism was once again on the rise. Edith Hoshino Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature* Ed. Hoshino Altbach, Jeanette Clausen, Dagmar Schultz and Naomi Stephan, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) 3-26.
Edward Dimendberg, for example, discusses the prevalence of prostitutes and the seamy side of life in current cinema from Berlin. Edward Dimendberg, "The Berlin Film Underground" Kino, German Film 16 (Autumn 1984): 14-17.

This dissertation will concentrate on films in which prostitutes are primary characters, rather than on the hundreds of minor characters used simply as colorful background characters.

In figuring these statistics I have included all women who exchange sexual favors to improve their power or financial standing. Statistics on first week box office profits are from the yearly "Annual Grosses Gloss," Film Comment 13-22.2 (March/April 1977-1985).


Lee Beaufre, "Distributor' Derby: Hare Beats Tortoise," Film Comment 18.2 (March/April 1982): 62.

Titles of a few recent films with purely decorative prostitutes are Stake Out, Red Heat, Colors, Shake Down, and The Big Easy.

Statistics were provided by Johannes Klingsporn of the Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft E. V., Statistische Abteilung, letter to the author, 7 June 1988.

ibid.

Naturally the policeman category could and probably should be extended to include detectives and spy "detectives," in which case the numbers are six films with official police officers (Crocodile Dundee, Beverly Hills Cop, Police Academy IV, Angelheart, Die Fliege [the Fly], Stand By Me and I'll also include here The Untouchables since the FBI is a federally organized police force, one film with a
(detective) spy (James Bond) and numerous nonuniformed police detectives where main characters are solving a mystery (the already mentioned *Angelheart*, *Crocodile* and *Stand By Me* along with *Basil der große Mausdetektive*, *The Name of the Rose*, and *Jumping Jack Flash* which offers the first main character female counterpart. Certainly films like *Police Story IV* offer female police officers, but the portrayal is much more concerned with these women's sexuality than with their profession. If categories of prostitute are equally widened to include women who use their bodies for money or power the prostitute category can be increased to nine compared to 10 films with detective/policemen. Klingsporn, ibid.

21 Prostitution is not illegal in Germany. Indeed, it is highly legislated, a fact which may express the patriarchal need to instill a male order on a female profession. Nonetheless it is considered a blight on the social order, even though it is built into and often considered a necessary stopcock/release for a monogamous society. Röhr 14-16.

22 Most films have a predominantly male cast. There are only a few films in which women predominate. *The Women*, *Working Girls*, and *Neun Leben hat die Katze* (as well as most other films by Ula Stöckl) are a few examples of films with predominantly female roles.

23 Lakoff 30.

24 ibid.

25 Women are rarely seen in films without a (heterosexual) love relationship, even though male buddy films have been frequent in film history. (*Bridge over the River Kwai*, *Sorcerer*, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, ) Many films miss an opportunity, because the producers feel they need to discuss a woman’s social life and add romance. In one such instance, the film *Black Widow*, main character Alex
Barnes is portrayed as an incomplete woman because she has no social life. This character "defect" is, of course, "corrected" by the end of the film.


29 Barbara Walker breaks the classification of women down into the the virgin, the mother and the crone. Actually these can be better divided into double sets of oppositions, of good and bad, sexual and nonsexual. This produces categories of those (women) who don't, the good variation being the virgin and the bad being the crone and those who do, the good version being the mother and the bad being, of course, the whore. Nuns and lesbians also fit into the first category of women who reject and thus threaten men. They round out the six female types commonly found in Hollywood films. Barbara G. Walker, The Skeptical Feminist: Discovering the Virgin, Mother and Crone (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987); An excellent documentation of the occurrence of the sexually active woman on film, which discusses thoroughly both the good bad-girl and the bitch phenomena is found in Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, Movies: A Psychological Study (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950) 81-84.

This polarity is not restricted solely to the female. Sayers describes bifurcation of the male image as a parallel phenomenon. She cites Zeus, who both rapes his mother and is king of the gods, (something which might easily be interpreted as unilaterally patriarchal and contradictory perhaps only from a feminine perspective). Other examples given by Sayers are Jack, of Jack and the Beanstalk and the ogre, and God as opposed to the Devil. This bifurcated male image, although it does exist, is certainly not commonplace as suggested by Sayers. Nor is there reason to believe it is as manifestly prevalent as the bifurcated image of woman. Sayers 60.


33 The path from Eve to Mary is explored in Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology. The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978) 83-87, 231.

34 For a discussion of Christianity's influence on the good girl/bad girl syndrome see Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology; Also see Matilda Joslyn Gage, Woman, Church and State: A Historical Account of the Status of Women through the Christian Ages: With Reminiscences of the Matriarchate (1893) (Watertown: Persephone Press, 1980).


37 Haskell, "Madonnas" 85.


42 Mellen 15.

43 Haskell, *Reverence* 189-276; M. Joyce Baker disagrees with Haskell and Rosen about the portrayal of women in the Forties. By analyzing the most popular films during the war years, Baker discovers that freedom for women in the Forties meant "not working." Baker does recognize that female screen characters were not helpless or passive as is frequently the case with more recent women's roles, but that the ideal of that time was not Rosie the Riveter, but Mrs. Miniver, a woman who defended her traditional domains and culture. M Joyce Baker, *Images of Women in Film. The War Years. 1941-1945* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International Research Press, 1980) 130-133.


46 Pflaus, Film 6-22. Rentschler also documents the influence of American critical reception on the German Auteur cinema, even noting a select group of auteurs who can produce their films with a foreign market/audience in mind. Rentschler 26-32.

47 Socialist countries have tended to offer little overt support to the women's movements, except in the recognition of the equality of all workers. Mellen finds both men and women in socialist films "become cardboard, emotions stifled and irrelevant, and the struggle for liberation debased into its opposite." Mellen 19. Renny Harrigan notes that even though the Marxist left in Germany paid lip service to the liberation of women and took up the issue of a woman's right to child care and abortions, that this was primarily in the interest of having a reliable workforce, rather than out of any special belief in women's equality. As Harrigan explains it, the party recognized in the 20's "abortion was necessary to
ease the burden of working class women but in a socialist and communist society which provided the material bases for existence such a measure would be unnecessary." Later the split became obvious and the Marxist Left was no longer willing to promote issues that centered on women's rights to choice, rather than worker's freedom to work. Renny Harrigan, "The German Women's Movement and Ours," *Jump Cut* 27 (1982): 43. Based on analysis of recent images of women in East German film, Gisela Bahr reports that although the legal status of women in the GDR has been changed, the authorities have perceived that this "may not be sufficient to assure equal rights for all." Gisela Bahr, "Film and Consciousness: The Depiction of Women in East German Movies," *Gender: Perspectives in German Cinema* Eds. Sandra Frieden, R. McCormick, V. Petersen, and M. Vogelsang. Fothcoming publication.

48 This increase in opportunity for women is documented by Claudia Lennsen, as is the prior exclusion of women from the medium. She notes that even though more films are being produced and more women are being permitted into the German Academy for Film and Television, the battle has not been won. "Projects by women that do not conform to the established public opinion of what are "women's subjects" face difficulties." Claudia Lennsen, "German Film Women: Women's Cinema in Germany," *Jump Cut* 29 (1984): 50. In addition the political scene in Germany has grown more and more conservative and films are increasingly being chosen to promote the fine old traditions. This once again leaves women primarily in the role of homemaker, wife and mother. Ramona Curry continues the evaluation of *Frauen und Film* also concentrating on women's problems with funding. Ramona Curry, "Frauen und Film - Then and Now," *Gender: Perspectives in German Cinema* Eds. Sandra Frieden, R. McCormick, V. Petersen, and M. Vogelsang. Fothcoming publication.
49 See S. Johnston for an analysis of the situation at the time of the Oberhausen Manifesto.

50 Ibid.

51 Haskell 189–230; Curry 2–5.

52 These films include such classics as Ula Stöckl’s Neun Leben hat die Katze, Helma Sanders-Brahms’ Deutschland Bleiche Mutter, Margarethe von Trotta’s Schwester oder die Balance des Glücks and Jutta Brückner’s Hungerjahre

53 Fehervary 175–178.

54 The effect of these profitability statistics is discussed by Curry. Frauen 11.

55 Ula Stöckl tells of her efforts to get approval of her script Killertango, "which was rejected in blatant censorship by funding sources everywhere." Marc Silberman, "Interview with Ula Stöckl: Do Away With Taboos," Jump Cut 29 (1984).

55 Curry fully documents women’s problems in acquiring funding under a "subsidy system [which] privileged male filmmakers." Curry, "Frauen" 11.

56 European governments, including West Germany have become very concerned about the drop in birthrate. Various programs have been introduced by the Kohl government in order to try and encourage women to stay home and have babies. These include long maternity leaves and financial support for unmarried women who have babies. Richard Kern, "Z-P-G in the E-C is O-U-T," Sales and Marketing Management 138 (May 1987): 21; Ben J. Wattenberg, “The Birth Dearth: Dangers Ahead,” U.S. News and World Report 102 (22 June, 1987): 56–64.

57 Marabel Morgan The Total Woman was published in 1975. Phyllis Schlafly was also at the height of her popularity with The Power of the Positive Woman, which came out in 1977. Typical of this backlash is Janet Scott Barlow's
assessment that, "American feminism is a twenty year con." Janet Scott Barlow, "Still Crazy After All these Years," _Chronicles_ 12.7 (July 1988): 8.

58 Mellen 15.

59 This in itself lends credence to the feminist claim that women are, for all intents and purposes, an invisible other in a male-dominated field. Marsha McCreadie in her book _Women in Film_ gives feminist attention to such things short shrift, calling it "the grafting of the 'new sensibility onto film." She concludes, "Platforms, outlets, organs and voices seem few and far between in the early-1980s, which is in dramatic contrast to the near-militant rage about film's use and abuse of women that characterized the early-to-mid 1970s. Feminist film criticism may now seem to be an institution, but it has few practitioners." Contrary to McCreadie's viewpoint, I find that feminist criticism has certainly mellowed, but is not lacking in abundance. One very good point made by McCreadie is that one should not continually confuse the actress' personal life with her roles. This is a big problem in discussing the roles of Barbra Streisand, for example, as will be shown in the section on _Nuts_. Marsha McCreadie, _Women on Film: The Critical Eye_ (New York: Praeger, 1983) 48-49, 65.

60 The feminist point here is valid in that one can no more separate one's personal life as a woman from the politics of the way one is therefore treated. This means that no film or art work can truly be separated from the political. My point is that there is a great difference between a political tract and a short story, or between a documentary and a feature film. All may (and indeed generally do) contain a political message, but a work of art involves additional aesthetic considerations. Its' primary purpose is not functional. It was Simone de Beauvoir who first raised the cry that the personal is political. Simone de Beauvoir, _The Second Sex_ (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1965).

On the other hand a film like *House of Games* would be good material for Mellen's criticism. Here we have a film ostensibly about a single, independent, professional woman, who midway through the film accedes to the male lead when he says "You want to be possessed, don't you? This film rather than portraying a single case seems to stand in for the type of independent women who really enjoy playing mind games. The conclusion is that the woman loses on the intellectual level, being unable to con the con man without him logically detecting her con. When discovered rather than take the film to another level of con she becomes emotional and repeatedly shoots the con man. Her character is then portrayed as
permanently damaged in the parting shots of her stealing another woman's lighter despite having come back from a vacation relaxed and mentally refreshed. Despite the fact that many alternatives are available, this film insists on seeing the independent woman as needy and incomplete, whose own fault it is that she plays mind games with the con man and loses.


65 Baudrillard, "Requiem" 140.

66 M. Rosen cites this quote from George Davis in Popcorn Venus 152.


68 Haskell Reverence 115.


70 Marjorie Rosen sees both positive and negative in West, but can not refrain from glowing tones. "Never before, and never since, has a woman in films been so thoroughly in control of her destiny. First of all she was usually self-employed and self-supporting. Mae's character adored herself with a passion that didn't leave room for men." Rosen 153. McCready takes issue with Rosen's assessment of West as a counterrevolutionary, reminding the reader that atypical role choice caused her censorship difficulties, "that effectively ended West's career." Marsha
McCreadle, *Women on Film: The Critical Eye* (New York: Praeger, 1983) 55. Mellen describes her quite positively in a feminist sense, as someone who, "looks over the field, reduces and discards, takes lovers at will, but never surrenders freedom or control" or as someone who had the heroic courage to "present Hollywood with a reversal of roles and a manifest contempt for the culture which had for so long demeaned the capacities of women." Mellen 215, 224.


72 This type of criticism parallels Lukacs' analysis of Tolstoy. Lukacs saw in the disillusioning power of Tolstoy's novels a radical cultural criticism which would probably have appalled the conservative author. When, however, one recognizes the intentions of Tolstoy as being different than Lukacs' interpretation, it is fairer to the author and does not diminish the validity of either thinker in the least. Tolstoy's powers of social observation are upheld and the political interpretation ultimately must be left up to the individual reader. Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans: Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der großen Epik* (Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand VerlagGmbH, 1965) 148-156.


74 ibid.

75 Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures, Feminism and Cinema* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986). Success with this method has been fairly limited as has been its popular appeal. One male film director, Peter Gidal, has for the most part refused to put women into his films because almost all ways of filming them fall into a preinterpreted range of male-dominant fetishizing. Certainly this


79 Freud thus did not view homosexuality as a moral issue, but rather in terms of the patient's ability to cope with her/his life. In advice to a distraught mother he writes her in English that he can not simply abolish homosexuality and make heterosexuality take its place: "What analysis can do for your son runs in a different line. If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency, whether he remains homosexual or gets changed." Sigmund Freud, "To Mrs. N. N.," 9 April, 1935, Briefe 1873-1939 (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1960) 416.

80 Freud, "Drei Abhandlungen" 95-96.

81 Freud, "Drei Abhandlungen" 130-131.


85 Mitchell, Psycho-analysis 85. This fear/desire dichotomy is also present in the sex act itself as pointed out by Sarah Kofman. She notes that the castration fear can extend to the sexual act. "What man always fears is 'being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity and then showing himself incapable.' The
prototype of this disquiet being 'the relaxing of coitus,' the influence which the
to woman gains over him through sexual intercourse." This will later tie in with
Lacan's theory which sets desire in the male sphere, while denying him jouissance
or sexual pleasure. Sarah Kofman, "Ex: The Woman's Enigma," Trans. Cynthia

86 Freud's Oedipal theory underwent a great deal of change. For a short
description of this, see Mitchell, *Feminine* 9-10; also Mitchell *Psycho-analysis*
61-73.


88 Daniel Dervin shows the utility of Freud's primal scene theory in his book
*Through a Freudian Lense Deeply*. His interpretation of the Wizard of Oz as a
variation on the Cassandra complex (Freud's version of the female oedipal complex)
bears mentioning. Dorothy, a young pubescent girl must conquer her fear of sexual
awakening, slay the phallic mother (wicked witch of the west) and return the
phallus to the "proper" owner by bringing the broomstick to the Wizard. This
process, however, "not only in effect disarms the wicked phallic-mother, but also
sets in motion a process which will demythologize the all-powerful Wizard, for he
now stands for a merely human organ after all, and her earlier fears over the
phallus, which had been displaced onto the cyclone, were not only overdetermined,
but finally unnecessary." While I do not believe Freudian analysis is the skeleton
key to all narrative, it can certainly be informative when dealing with directors
who do not question the patriarchal system of their origins. Dervin's analyses of
such directors as Antonioni and Bergman have a great deal to offer. Dervin, 56-65.

89 A good Freudian analysis of the vampire film can be found in James Ursini
Senf documents the dawn of the female vampire's reign in 1958 (when Hammer
films released the explicitly brutal color feature *The Horror of Dracula*). She explains, "Such violence against women reveals some rather unpleasant things about our popular culture, including a fear of aggression in women and a desire to retaliate." This is typical of many films in the horror genre where women are the prime targets. The phallic nature of the knife in so-called slasher films is still another such example. Carol Senf, "Brides of Dracula: From Novel to Film," *Studies in Popular Culture* 7 (1984): 68.

90 See Tania Modleski, "'Never to be Thirty-six Years Old, 'Rebecca' As Female Oedipal Drama," *Wide Angle* 5.1 (1982): 34.

91 Mitchell, *Feminine 6*.

92 Ultimately as suggested by Ernest Jones in his attack of phallocentrism, Freud can not be viewed as sexually neutral. Horney, for example, agrees with Freud that it is natural for a girl to want to be able to urinate like a man. See Horney, 38; Yet my personal experience with young girls is that they exhibit a totally different reaction upon their first sighting of the male organ. The penis is perceived as funny looking or "yucky" and not as something to be envied or desired. A penis might just as easily be regarded as a freakish growth, rather than something which one should miss having.

93 Weedon 50.

94 Weedon 50–51.

95 Horney 112–114.

96 Horney, 114.

97 Horney 141–142; and Sayers 36–37.

Ashley Montagu expounds a similar theory in *The Natural Superiority of Women*. "The explanation of the disparity in 'achievement' of men and women is that women are simply not as interested in the kind of achievement upon which men place so high a premium ... all that I am saying is that women, because they are women, are more interested in human relationships, in which they can creatively love and be loved." Unfortunately this smacks a bit of excusing the little woman from the work of real men because of her exalted and pedestalled position as furtherer of the race. Ashley Montagu, *The Natural Superiority of Women* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1953) 139-140.


This position is covered in many of her essays. In discussing Freud and the Oedipal complex Irigaray connects the penis, the law and the "subject" as a male appropriation. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* Trans. Gillian C. Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 37-38, 133-135. Similar themes are found in *This Sex which is not One* Trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 24-25.

Irigaray, *Sex* 26


Irigaray responds to this with "Woman takes more pleasure from touching than from looking and her entry into a scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity..." *Sex* 26.

106 ibid. 149


110 Mitchell, *Feminine 6*.

111 Lacan, "The Ego in Freud's Theory," *Séminaire II* 304-305; See also Rose, *Sex* 69. See also Elizabeth Cowie, "Woman as Sign," *m/f* 31 (1978): 49-63. Cowie examines the means by which woman has been equated with sign using the theories of Levi-Strauss on woman as unit of exchange.


113 Rose 71.


115 Rose 74.

116 This research was described by George and Naomi Rotter at a meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association. "Honesty: Look them in the Eye and Smile," *Psychology Today* 21.9 (September 1987):23.


118 Fehervary, "From Hitler" 183; This topic is also discussed by German feminist Gertrud Koch, in her article, "Why Women Go to Men's Films," 108-119.


120 Brigitte Wartmann, as just one example, supports a "female and aesthetic productivity ... as a form of practice that changes the social form" According to Wartmann, this can occur when "sensuality ... is combined with rational productivity" in order to subvert female marginalization. Brigitte Wartmann, "Writing as an Attack Against Patriarchy," *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature* Ed. Hoshino Altbach, Jeanette Clausen, Dagmar Schultz and Naomi Stephan, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) 60.

121 Weedon 69.

123 Weedon 69.
125 Cixous 83.
126 Cixous 82.
127 Cixous 82.
130 A very similar argument is made by Paul Tiessen in his article about silent film maker Dorothy Richardson. Comparing her to Virginia Woolf, Tiessen believes, "Film provided a model for orderings and restating feminine consciousness in narrative form." Paul Tiessen, "Feminine Modes of Perception and Expression: Dorothy Richardson and the Cinema," *Proceedings: Purdue University Seventh Annual Conference on Film* (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 1983) 161.
132 Gilligan 10.
133 Thus Kohlberg assembles a six-tiered hierarchy of moral adulthood, which essentially weights a hyperlogical approach as the highest level of morality (a six) compared to a relational morality (a three). According to Gilligan it is this relational morality that is praised as being ideal for women and yet at the same
time condemns women to a position of moral adolescence in this man-ordered hierarchy. Gilligan, 18.


135 Gilligan 17.

136 Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst* (Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1932) 39.

137 Arnheim 40.


139 Metz, *Film* 13.

140 Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* Trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 101-128. It is questionable whether one can make claim that the perceived reality of film is "more real" than that of a drama or say of a novel. Perceptions of reality may well function in different ways due to the use of different media, but scores of novel readers would surely attest to the fact that the reality of words, or the reality of dramatic verbal texts also create a thoroughly convincing form of "reality." Metz' insistence of film always feeling like the present is contrasted to the photographic image which is recognized as a record of some moment in the past. This point is discussed by Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* Trans. Richard Howard, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981) 76-77.

141 This is, of course, an extreme oversimplification of Metz' theories which he supports with careful linguistic analyses. See, for example, Christian Metz, *Language and Cinema* Trans. Donna Jean Umiker-Sebeok, (The Hague: Mouton, 1974).

142 Metz, *Imaginary* 45-57.


145 Dayan 448.

146 Dayan 449.

147 Dayan 451.

148 Silverman, *Acoustic 4*.


153 Ibid.


155 Ong deals with the ways that the oral medium affects the information conveyed. Ong, 154-195. Both Ong and Werner Kelber provide support for McLuhan's theory that the medium is the message. Kelber describes the change in message that occurred when Biblical texts shifted from epistolary style to

156 Gilbert and Gubar 519.


158 Ibid.


PART II
Introduction

In the Eighties the image of the prostitute has indeed shown a new sensibility to the issues of sexual difference. Past images of prostitutes and women in general have tended to be superficial and fetishistic in the sense discussed in the previous chapter. In the American film this was typified by the whore with the heart of gold, while in the German film it was more often characterized by the heartless vamp.\(^1\) On the former side fall such classic characters as Gilda, Bree Daniels in *Klute*, Belle Watling in *Gone With the Wind*. The wicked women of German film run the gamut from the evil robot in *Metropolis* to Lola in *Der Blaue Engel* and Lia Leid in *Die Freudlose Gasse*.

As the sensibilities of film audiences became less prudish and more sophisticated, the image metamorphosed into a less stylized and more open sexually explicit portrayal of women. This amounted to an openly fetishized depiction that capitalized on the sexual. In American films these portrayals were often no more realistic, but simply a way to heighten the salacious for a sale. Prostitutes in contemporary times have become convenient background figures to be included in almost any film dealing with a policeman or a major metropolitan area. Likewise a new German Cinema which reacted against the propaganda for the Wirtschaftswunder began to fixate on the seamy side of life, an image that conflicted with and undermined the self-proclaimed economic recovery. The new Berlin Cinema of the seventies concentrated on the violent underside of life, frequently using images of prostitutes and criminals. At the same time more mainstream German cinematographers chose to emphasize the analogy of prostitution with a political/economic situation in which people were willing to sell their bodies or souls for economic prosperity. Whereas German film makers
viewed this comparison with horror. U. S. directors chose to perceive it humorously. American cinematographers began producing films that glorified the capitalistic aspect of the prostitute's profession, depicting it as simply another way to get ahead, as something to be put up with temporarily as a means to an end. Such films of the seventies as *Night Shift*, *Doctor Detroit*, *Trading Places* and *Risky Business* implied that women were just beautiful objects to be manipulated in a male world, but so what? Prostitution was really just good clean fun, the American way and a worthwhile investment for a man with business acumen.²

Interestingly, the films of the eighties seem to have in common an increasing sympathy for the female role. Although scores of Hollywood films still use streetwalkers to spice up the image, the tendency has been to portray them more and more as heroic women fighting against their lowly standing in a male-dominated world. Whereas Walsh, Haskell and Mellen were unable to see any progress in the portrayal of women through the seventies, both German and American film show that in the eighties this image has begun to change in a positive way.

At the outset certain culturally determined tendencies must be made clear. Germany, with its history of economic destruction and reconstruction and with its massive political guilt complex, has been prone to politicizing its films. On the other hand, the Hollywood/British proclivity for romantic resolution should be noted. Nonetheless the depiction of women seems to fall evenly into particular patterns regardless of a film's national origin. A few key films from each category will now be examined and used to document the notable improvement in the prostitute's image. It should be stressed here that not all films show this improvement in image and that what is being examined is the marked increase in
the portrayal of the prostitute as a positive, multi-faceted figure. Certainly the character of consumer product is necessarily present as part and parcel of the prostitute's film image and this quality marks the prostitute as someone who plays in the men's world for men's stakes, but who does so only by the good graces of the male power structure which both creates and controls her industry. Perhaps this is what has made the prostitute figure nontthreatening to such an extent that new incomparable possibilities have opened up with regard to character depth, independence and sexual emancipation. Indeed current films seem to permit the prostitute to call into question the true degree of this male control. The prostitute characters of the eighties no longer represent female sex objects pure and simple. Many of the women in these films are shown to be intriguing individuals above and beyond their stereotypical classification as prostitute. In fact the classifications of prostitute figures in more recent serious films become diverse and complex.

Four main tendencies can be discerned which represent a more serious treatment of female prostitute characters. The first is the prostitute as political/economic symptom. A very German concern, the only true American corollary is to be found in the work of the new feminist left and documentary makers. In this section Fassbinder's *Lola* will be discussed along with Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls*. Closely related to this theme is the depiction of prostitution in its social aspect. These films attempt to deal with the circumstances, and rights implicit in a woman's choice of entry into prostitution. In this category is included Wender's *Paris, Texas* and Streisand's production of *Nuts*. Closely associated with the social level is the personal psychological level, which deals with the impact of the job choice on its participants. This category include such films as Van Ackeren's *Die Flambierte Frau* and Bob
Swalm’s *Half Moon Street*. The final category concerns the discussion of art as embodied by the role of prostitute. This group parallels a long literary tradition based on male fetishization of the female body. Yet modern film has taken up the theme and improved on it, turning the male dominant perspective on itself. In this section Schlöndorff’s *Un Amour de Swann* and Neil Jordan’s *Mona Lisa* will be analyzed in terms of contemporary theory. All of these films are significant in their approach to the visual and textual image of woman, for all recognize either implicitly or subconsciously the inequities of previous portrayals of women. These films show that despite a strong tradition of abuse and fetishization, women can be portrayed as protagonists and figures of identification, as human beings with voices and minds as well as bodies.
Notes

1 Obviously as a stereotype this statement does not hold true 100% of the time. American films also had their cruel vamps and in fact invented the vamp with Theda Bara. German films likewise had their almost innocent hookers, such as Lulu in Büchse der Pandora and Greta in Die Freudlose Gasse. For an examination of the image of women in the latter, see Tracy Meyers, "History and Realism: Representations of Women in G. W. Papst's The Joyless Street," Gender Perspectives in German Cinema Eds. Sandra Frieden, Richard McCormick, Vibeke Petersen and Laurie Melissa Vogelsang, Unpublished manuscript.

2 Eithne Johnson demonstrates that male sexual titillation is the common denominator of all of these films. "The kind of prostitution depicted in these films is a middle-class male fantasy of unlimited sexual encounters, in which the man provides protection for a number of grateful, glamorous women, who repay him with sex and lots of money. The prostitute, like any commodity, is expendable, as well as easily acquired. The real goal and hence, the heroic action in these four films, is to make money so that one has the power to consume." Eithne Johnson, "Business" 155.
Chapter One

The Prostitute and the Political/Economical

Fassbinder's *Lola* and Borden's *Working Girls*

Fassbinder's attitude towards women is an oft discussed theme.\(^1\) Siegfried Schober describes woman as Fassbinder's "Lieblingsgegenstand." Opinions vary. Some feel he mercilessly objectified women. Fassbinder denied it, claiming smugly that his works were not chauvinistic, just honest.\(^2\) Others felt that he was sensitive in his portrayal of women because of an innate femininity that allowed for identification.\(^3\) Certainly there were a great deal of prostitutes in his films, but this does not indicate any kind of value judgement on his part. Fassbinder's father was a doctor, who used to treat the prostitutes of Sendlingerstrasse in the family home.\(^4\) The great confusion about Fassbinder's filmic portrayals of women, seems to be primarily the consequence of a misunderstanding of the director's motivations. Fassbinder, as what Hanna Schygulla has called "Meister der Irritation," learned quickly to walk the line between sentimental involvement and Brechtian alienation and the result was an image of women that mystified and confused.\(^5\) Thomas Elsaesser also sees this delicate equilibrium in:

...the German director who wants to make Hollywood pictures and whose audience-effects keep a balance between recognition and identification through genre-formulae and the use of stars while at the same time distancing the spectator, placing him/her elsewhere through syllization and artifice.\(^6\)
By constantly irritating the viewer through his own disappointed expectations, Fassbinder was able to leave his audiences room to think without completely alienating them. This fits with his own assessment of goals:

The best thing I can think of would be to create a union between something as beautiful and powerful and wonderful as Hollywood films and a criticism of the status quo. That's my dream, to make such a German film - beautiful and extravagant and fantastic, and nevertheless to be able to go against the existing order, like some Hollywood mass films which are in no way apologies for the establishment, as is always superficially maintained.\(^7\)

\textit{Lola} was made by a Fassbinder who seems to have finally mastered this happy medium. The director himself described it as the first film "in a long term development in which I have been able to join, sort of mix together, a political and entertaining film."\(^8\)

So \textit{Lola} demonstrates both Fassbinder's fondness for the Hollywood melodramas of Douglas Sirk as well as a kind of Brechtian approach to film making.\(^9\) His characters are neither good nor bad nor intended to curry viewer identification. Instead Fassbinder takes characters indicative of a particular mindset and places them in a tightly controlled situation.\(^10\) They stand in for the audience and yet are not to be identified with emotionally. An early message in \textit{Lola} is that sentimentality only sets us up for disappointment. This is in perfect keeping with Fassbinder's claim that "Love is the best, most insidious, most effective instrument of social repression."\(^11\)

\textit{Lola} the third part of Fassbinders BRD trilogy, is constantly reminding us not to get emotionally involved in the lives of its characters, for it is the sentimentalists who are most likely to find themselves hurt or destroyed.\(^12\) In
this part of the trilogy Fassbinder makes clear that the point of the film is to portray postwar German life as life in a whorehouse. The use of unnatural lighting, garish colors and sentimental music stresses the fact that, even when outside of the bordello, there is no change in the quality of life. In the first part of the trilogy Maria Braun learns the costs of material well-being or the Great German Dream pursued at all costs, and in Lola we see the continuation of the saga with the humorous description of the only possible way to win under such circumstances. In Veronika Voss, the final part of the trilogy when viewed chronologically, (even though it was labelled part two by Fassbinder), we see the natural and tragic results of the sentimental pursuit of glamor and economic well-being, for those who are not able or willing to fit in. A system that is willing to do anything for empty facade or material appearance is never satiated, and finds itself dependent on the emptiness of its own goals, hopelessly pursuing its illusions until it finally destroys itself. Lola represents the lightest side of the trilogy. At the same time comic and tragic, it almost seems to end with the director sitting back to silently exclaim, “Well, what did you expect, given the exigencies of the system?”

In a corrupt world only corrupt people succeed and Lola succeeds, because she is a true whore. For someone not paying attention to Fassbinder’s method, there might be a tendency to make claims of severe male chauvinism or even romantic sentimentality. Yet Fassbinder’s goal is a fine line between the two, which simultaneously calls both into question. The director obviously likes his characters, despite their rather nasty characteristics, but he wants to play with his viewers, to manipulate them emotionally and narratively in order to bring them around to a certain (his) perspective.
A brief case in point is Fassbinder's handling of the character Esslin. In the opening scene Esslin is portrayed in a very favorable light. He is shown in close-ups bathed in the warm light of the whorehouse and is reading sad philosophic poetry. We observe him at another time demonstrating against rearmament (well, who could be for war except for the corrupt meanies of Coburg's elite power structure?) and we are moved by his chivalric response to Schuckert's demands of Lola's favors. Yet Fassbinder is teasing the viewer, for later Esslin will demonstrate his corruptability for the right price. The viewer will also recognize Esslin's gesture to outbid Schuckert as idle show. Lola indulges them and then throws the both of them out. When Schuckert demands whether Esslin has ever slept with Lola, his indecisive reaction shows that whatever the answer, it is not due to principle. Fassbinder manipulates audience attitude carefully in order to remind viewers to steer clear of their sentimental prejudices, such as that all poets are noble.

Lola is about the bourgeois twin dependencies of sentimentality and capitalism and especially about that particularly German form of capitalism found after the economic miracle. What better motif than a whore house for a world that went from total chaos to superficial opulence within five years? The cinematography bears this out. The first shots of the salon done completely in red and blue lights set the color for the rest of the film. Every aspect of life touched by the power elite in the film is bathed in this red and blue light of the whorehouse. But the film is about something else too. It is an indictment of bourgeois sensibility.

The first clue that Fassbinder is setting his aim for bourgeois sensibilities is the sentimental song which introduces the film. The audience regards an image of Adenauer leaning over a symbol of the latest technical progress, a tape
recorder fresh from the Wirtschaftswunder. Meanwhile a male singer lifts a sentimental pop song. The lyrics speak of a common German dissatisfaction; the desire for the exotic "In der Ferne" and sailing with white sails to Hong Kong. The final verse however reminds the listener that if this singer were in the Orient, then he would probably be pining for home. The song is one of discontent, which underscores the desire for things one can not have. Thus already at the onset Fassbinder has clearly demarcated his themes, such as the evils of the conspicuous consumption mentality as evidenced by the bourgeois during the Wirtschaftswunder and the dangers of characteristic bourgeois attributes such as crass materialism and sentimentality. These same motifs appear in the other films of the trilogy and Fassbinder does not care who notices. The photo of Adenauer before the stove-shaped recorder is a double link to the first film Die Ehe der Maria Braun. This latest technical invention is not only a product of the Wirtschaftswunder, but also a reminder of Maria's fate. She also wanted too much and paid dearly to have it before her immolation in a gas explosion. The implication for the second film is that Lola can probably avoid such a fate.

In turning to Lola the first thing to affect the viewer is the film's title. The name Lola immediately brings to mind Marlene Dietrich's naughty Lola in Der Blaue Engel. This film was based on Heinrich Mann's short novel Professor Unrat, the tale of a dignified teacher's abjectification resulting from his involvement with a woman of questionable morals. The story is an ideal framework for an inquiry into middle-class Germany's preoccupation with dignity and respect. Fassbinder will play on these obsessions throughout the film, but even at the beginning he sets up bourgeois ideals for later potshots.

The opening scene introduces a very typical bourgeois preoccupation, the conflict between soul and understanding. Esslin and Lola are seen in close-up,
swathed in the warm light of the bordello. Esslin has just finished reading one of his sad poems, and is explaining that "Die Seele weiß mehr als der Verstand." This marks him as a philosophical poet and someone who will not strive to succeed in the real "capitalist" world. For Lola "Der Verstand weiß mehr." This, not only suggests a more sensual perception that is often paired with the feminine, but additionally implies that she is aligned with the entrepreneurial spirit.

This entrepreneurial spirit will be demonstrated in a variety of scenes, including the one that follows. Fassbinder immediately cuts to the men's restroom in the bordello, juxtaposing the two scenes not only to win sympathy for Lola, but also to insinuate what will be Lola's main tribulation. The tender intimacy of the first scene contrasts greatly with the crass nature of the second, which displays an intimacy of a more vulgar kind. Getting ready to urinate, the Bauunternehmer Schuckert pontificates, "Hier sind wir alle gleich." In reference to what he is holding "we" are not all alike and in this particular capacity Lola is lacking. In terms of Lacanian logic she is never the possessor of the phallus. As a prostitute she may manipulate it, but she will never own it. Fassbinder carefully sets up a series of scenes which are very sympathetic to the title figure, causing the audience to ignore the warning that for Lola "Verstand" is more important than "Seele."

The next scene seems to move away from the character of Lola, but it actually prepares for Lola's further exasperation. The arrival of a great man is announced. Intrigued by the stories of the stranger, Lola must hear repeatedly that such a man would never be interested in the likes of her. She first hears this from Schuckert in a drunken scene, where von Bohm's reputed reserve is played off against the swinish behavior of Lola and her entrepreneurial lover. Her
mother implies it again, in her description of her new position as Haushalterin for
the new building commissioner. That this good middle class woman is ideally
suited for the very proper von Bohm is indicated by movements and camera angle,
so that after establishing Lola's disreputable profession as "a singer" and the
mother's as a housekeeper, the elder woman distances herself from her daughter
by walking forward and through an arch. The Mother portrays von Bohm as the
perfect gentleman. When Esslin finally tells Lola that von Bohm is "Kein Mann
für dich," her agitated state makes it clear that she wants to do something about
this class differentiation. The emotional stake has been raised and Lola goes
from intrigued curiosity to a painful realization of her lower social standing.
Earlier Lola bets Schuckert a case of champagne that she can get von Bohm to kiss
her hand before witnesses. Relying on the automatic nature of good breeding, she
dresses up in pristine finery and confronts him at a public function, hand
extended. Performing according to propriety, von Bohm is amazed when this
refined lady then turns and leaves as mysteriously as she came. The scene is well
executed showing the motion of her car arriving from the right. A tracking shot
follows the progressing figure of Lola and stresses the diagonal in conjunction
with her. The camera stops moving at the point of the kiss, yielding a static shot
that emphasizes von Bohm's surprised reaction as well as his solid (squared)
location in his environs. These scenes are interspersed with shots of the voyeur
Esslin watching. He is the viewer identification-figure and knowing witness to
the scene.

Esslin is set apart as the moralist in the film. Von Bohm, knowing of
Esslin's fondness for Bakunin, has categorized him as a revolutionary, but Esslin
insists he is a humanist. Confronting Lola in one scene with the question, "Do you
want to live in such a corrupt world?" the viewer identifies her reply as the crux
of her problem. "I wish the world were totally corrupt. They make the rules and no one will let me play." This is the key to Lola's problem in a world that is constantly compared to a game.

In the car, when she tells von Bohm that she is corrupt, her face is lit in the red of the corrupt whorehouse. Von Bohm's face is bathed in a contrasting blue. Although both shades are colors of the whorehouse, these colors are constantly played off against each other, the red standing no doubt for the passion of the sex act and the blue for the romantic desire for die Ferne and things one, as a proper member of the bourgeoisie, cannot have. Blue is considered a cool color and is incessantly identified with von Bohm and his cool bourgeois mentality.25 A most striking scene shows him playing the violin in a blue light. After he has seen Lola in the whorehouse and has become unsettled he plays again, but finds the music metamorphosing into Lola's song of the Fishers of Capri.26 The shot that immediately follows is von Bohm in the whorehouse. Carrying a bottle to indicate loss of rationality through inebriation he is drenched in red.27 When in total fervor he discovers that he cannot fight his emotional attachment and goes to buy Schuckert's whore, he is bathed predominantly in the red light of passion.28

People that are not corrupt are for the most part harmless and insignificant for the materialist players of the game. If one has scruples one is liable to be hurt by them; thus the most successful players are those who have no moral compunction. People like Lola's mother and Fräulein Hetlich are set up to be disappointed by their middle-class expectations. People who don't play the game lose automatically. Von Bohm believes for a time that he can change the rules. Unfortunately he will soon discover that no one has any interest in the bourgeois values of integrity and honesty any more. Thus when he goes to the local newspaper to show them evidence of Schuckert's monopoly, the newspaperman
stares in disbelief. It is natural for entrepreneurs to strive and make money. "Das sind die Spielregeln." There is nothing illegal in that.29

Even Esslin is not exempt from the magnetism of bourgeois desire. Although this poetic man initially refuses Schuckert's bribe of the cigar and fights in a romantic fashion to save Lola from being forced to stay with Schuckert, Fassbinder makes sure to undercut these noble motivations. Eventually Esslin will sell out and take both the cigar and the job offered him by none other than Schuckert. In a scene shot from behind Esslin's back, his acquisition of power is demonstrated by the view of his overlarge foregrounded hand playing with a yo-yo while the power elite of Coburg squirm over their anticipation of von Bohm's efforts to destroy them.

The main action of the film then involves an upwardly mobile movement for Lola, which coincides or results from the downward slide of von Bohm.30 As the epitome of the good Bürger, von Bohm is susceptible to his prudish dreams of the perfect woman and the desire to have nice things. He is described as being modern and old-fashioned at the same time. While adhering to old middle-class values, he therefore believes he can combine these with the desire for material things. He is identified with a metallic geometric mobile which is the replacement for Fräulein Hettich's more organic plants and his predecessor's smutty photographs. His apartment has geometric contemporary furniture and he is quick to purchase a television, a perfect image for useless conspicuous consumption, since the program does not begin till 8:00 and by 10:00 he has fallen fast asleep only to be awakened by an angry Esslin. Consuming even a small piece of the apple constitutes a sin. As soon as von Bohm has dared to construct an imaginary object of desire in Lola, he has begun listening to the viper. Nonetheless, at that point von Bohm still has a chance to be redeemed. He even
attempts to fight the act of sin by going to the nightclub and perceiving Lola not as he desires her but as the whore that she is. He must go to the bordello and recognize her baseness, thereby rejecting his false image of love. The perverse irony is, if he can be titillated by the whore in her he will be saved, but if he remains pure because of his dignity, he is lost. In either case he must face the fact that his values are in conflict and he will lose either his faith in the construct of love or in the construct of integrity/purity.

Lola's rise is even more intriguing than von Bohm's descent. Placed in a society that does not recognize her right to power she manages none the less to empower herself. The way to power is a familiar Fassbinder theme. Robert Reimer notes that in *Veronika Voss*, "The movie Industry metaphor makes clear that the master gains control by pandering to desires." By selling herself as the image of von Bohm's desire she is able to take possession of the phallus. She does this ironically through the use of her voice, by singing canons with von Bohm in the chapel and by enchanting him with her magic spells. It is not accidental that prostitute Lola claims her profession to be that of singer and that her ultimate expression of frustration comes in her performance of a song. Once again the female voice is juxtaposed with the male gaze. Although Lola does entertain with her singing, her main attraction to the men is her specularity and it is for this latter work that she is most genrously paid. She is singing the Fisher of Capri when von Bohm wanders in on her, and her voice proves to be ineffective in trying to alter what von Bohm sees. This visual aspect is also clearly underscored, for it is through his gaze that von Bohm becomes attracted to her. She says nothing after ascertaining that the man before her is indeed von Bohm at the scene of the Handkuß. Later it is his gaze which destroys her charade and renders her powerless. Her reaction is an unbridled visually active dance to a
song which not so coincidentally stresses the beauty of a woman named Marie (Her non-working name is Marie-Luise).32

This silence or absence of verbal response comes again in the scene where von Bohm buys Schuckert’s whore. Here she again says nothing, while von Bohm indulges his masculine right to gaze at her in her clothing of trade. The only purely fetishized image in the film comes at this point. It contrasts with the very painful shots of von Bohm making demands and Lola reluctantly performing her job. It is not a glamorous image. When von Bohm requests she wear her Hurenwäsche she is willing to comply, but as required by business she tells him tersely that it costs extra. Tension is conveyed by shot length and composition. Von Bohm is viewed frontally sitting stiffly with his back to the bed on which are lined up all her other dolls. Only after a series of unglamorous shots does Fassbinder include a fetishized image of Lola portrayed in close-up lounging in a sexually inviting position. It is a point of view shot that emphasizes the extremeness of von Bohm’s moral fall. The audience sees von Bohm seeing Lola as the image of a whore. If he can recognize her true nature, which means releasing his bourgeois ideal of love, he can solve his dilemma. Yet he neither sees her as the pristine Maria-Luise that she never was, nor as the troubled woman she really is. Instead to his horror he creates the prudish gentleman’s conception of a whore, thereby cueing the audience that he can not or does not want to face reality. Von Bohm turns away, essentially relinquishing the gaze and dropping the hand with the phallicly held bottle. Only when Lola realizes, by looking at von Bohm that he does indeed love her, does she speak and officialize her acquisition of power. Not only has she retained posession of voice, but she also now possesses the power of the look. In Lacanian terms, von Bohm has traded his phallus for sexual jouissance. Although Lola never intended to hurt this person
she is too much of a materialist to look such a winning gift-horse in the mouth. Since von Bohm is the one person in the community that can scare everyone else, she now has the one commodity that he can not live without. Economics of scarcity will allow her to enter the power elite.33

It is important to stress the uniqueness of the fetishized shot in the film Lola. There is, of course, ample opportunity for fetishization of the female form in the setting of a whorehouse. Other scenes, which could easily have been turned into eroticized images, are carefully avoided. The scantily clad women are never beautified or glorified and a marked difference in attitude is depicted between the stage performance, where Lola erotically kisses another woman on stage and Lola's private actions in the club. Often she is drunk and ungainly. Her insistence that she can make a fine man like von Bohm kiss her hand is undercut by her falling face down across Schuckert's lap. The shot is from the side and slightly forward. It stresses no part of the anatomy, but dwells rather on the clumsiness of the action, which is contrasted to the implicit grace needed to charm a fine gentleman.

Lola is not the fetishized super vamp so prevalent in Hollywood films. Fassbinder cuts across the Hollywood grain depicting a woman, who succeeds in empowering herself, through utilization of the weaknesses of patriarchal society. But the film does not stop there. In order to ensure that the audience doesn't identify with and celebrate Lola's success, Fassbinder adds scenes to remind them that she really is just a whore. Immediately following her wedding she is portrayed running off to celebrate not with her husband, but with her swinish lover Schuckert. The necessary apparent order is thereby reintroduced in the corrupt system. For her part in keeping von Bohm under control, the new Frau von Bohm receives a gift certificate for the "salon" and easy acceptance into the
upper social echelon. The viewer is reminded that the whole world is full of whores. There is no one in the world that has not sold out. Von Bohm has lost his integrity to retain his image of love and Esslin has betrayed his soul. Even Maria-Luise’s daughter is insinuated in the corrupt world order. When she turns twenty-one the whorehouse will be turned over to her. As if to underscore this relation, the penultimate scene is of young Marie lying in the top of a barn in the same position as Lola when she gave herself to von Bohm.\textsuperscript{34} The final irony is that when asked, von Bohm signals his willing blindness, by agreeing that he is very happy.

Ultimately then the happy couple at the end of the film are Lola and Schuckert. She has earned her equality and now receives recognition thereof. “Bin ich nicht eine teure Maitresse?” she demands making it quite clear that her relationship with Schuckert will continue. Upon hearing the affirmative she replies, “So soll es auch sein.” For those with absolutely no scruples the world is a bed of roses, and a bed is an entrepreneurial possibility. There is no sentimentality wasted even between themselves. When Schuckert tells Lola he wants to have her naked but wearing the veil, she replies with financial acumen, “Okay, aber mit Schleier kostet’s extra.”

In turning to Lizzie Borden’s \textit{Working Girls}, it may seem an odd companion piece for \textit{Lola}. Nonetheless the two films share quite a few similarities. Both films have the same motivation, wanting to call into question the male dominated class structured status quo. Both have likable main characters. As Mimi Cramer explains it, “What runs through all these portraits of the ‘genteel hooker’ is an idea that society has somehow betrayed the middle-class woman by failing to provide her with a lucrative outlet for her talents.”\textsuperscript{35} Both Fassbinder’s and
Borden's films also attempt to discomfit the viewer and cause him to question the necessity for this current social order.

Whereas Fassbinder sets up the locus of the viewer as exterior to the action, in what Todorov in his analysis of narrative calls the view from outside, Borden aligns the audience with the primary character Molly, giving instead the 'view with' the character. The point of the film becomes not so much a narrative of events as the opportunity of seeing and understanding middle class prostitution from the inside, as well as explaining its existence. The activities of the house are seen through Molly's eyes and since she has only been a "working girl" for two months she needs practically the same explanations as the audience for certain aspects of the trade. The combination of the visually obvious and the explanations to the new girls allow the viewer to satisfy her/his curiosity about the day-to-day reality of the bordello.

Overtly the film is a narrative about a day in the life of Molly. It starts with the heroine awakening at her home and follows her through the course of her darkroom work, quick shopping trip and bicycle ride to work. Borden underlines the ordinary. But the more important story of the film is not Molly's day, but an examination of relationships. In the small stage of the whore house, which feels small because of the way scenes are shot, Borden scrutinizes not only the relations between the sexes, but also the relationship between employers and workers and the ways that women relate to each other. The whorehouse introduces a microcosm which stands in for the world outside. Borden notes,

It is ironic that prostitution on this middle class level parallels other parts of our culture such as singles bars and how we as middle class women have been educated to make men feel comfortable... In a way the film is much less about prostitution than about heterosexual codes and
rituals in our culture. In this context I wanted to bring up, by implication, all the times women have slept with men for other than romantic reasons.\textsuperscript{38}

She explores this in a wide variety of ways, which often ignore the narrative demands of male dominant cinema.

The relation between the sexes is discussed from a variety of levels. At the beginning of the film, Borden sets the tone by showing an androgynous faced person cuddling up with a woman in bed. At first glance, a viewer produced by a male dominant heterosexual society might assume that this is a young man and his girlfriend. It is actually the main character Molly and her lesbian lover. By taking an identificatory figure who is neutral in her sexual interest to men, Borden asks the viewer to take a step away from viewing the sex act with any degree of involvement.\textsuperscript{39} The director explains, "Most people think that prostitutes must feel something sexual or 'get off' in their work. but that's not true."\textsuperscript{40} In \textit{Working Girls} the world of prostitution is framed as work, distinct and different from a real love or sexual experience as typified in the home.\textsuperscript{41}

Thus although the film has a consistent linear narrative, it prefers to concentrate on networks of ideas which link together and produce another filmic dimension. Borden tells Anne Friedburg that one thing which concerns her in film is, "questioning the nature of narrative."\textsuperscript{42} She attempts this by laying less stress on the language of the film and putting more emphasis on sound. "There is a level at which the beat is some kind of empowerment," she says.\textsuperscript{43} This is carried through in \textit{Working Girls} by a particular type of percussive music which frequently makes more incisive comments on an image than any dialogue ever could. Female vocalizations and percussion are used in the home scenes to depict an individualism and domestic calm. Sex scenes are accompanied by unattractive
burbling noises which underscore the work nature of the scene and which at the same time undercut any possibility of viewing the scene as erotic. Large portions of the film contain no dialogue whatsoever. Images of Molly taking a break to watch children on a playground are set to other female vocals and one very satisfying night scene of Molly depicts her after she has left her job. A soaring free quality in the female vocals, which is not easily describable in words, forms a comfortable symbiosis with the image.

This undermining of traditional narrative is also carried into the actual written text of the film. Dialogues include contradiction and do not necessarily point out a clear message to the film. As in a documentary conversations are included to describe a situation or a relationship rather than to further the plot. Borden asserts that, "The language is meant to be contradictory; any political position contains so many contradictions that it has to undercut itself within its own exposition." Borden uses dialogue as an exploratory device to investigate the relations between the women and men. Conversations explain how each of the women deal with their love interests outside of work. Molly does not tell her lover about her job, since she does not want her "imagining what I do here." Gina, on the other hand tells her boyfriend in the belief that if he really loves her he can deal with it. Then she quickly dumps him with the reasoning, "If he really loved me he couldn't." Dawn adamantly proclaims her own fidelity. "In over five years I've never been unfaithful," she proclaims, but she also tells her boyfriend that she works for a catering service, which causes her great grief when he wants to drop her off at work one morning. Participating in the intimate discussions of the group through Molly, humanizes these women's major problems for an audience that has never had to consider the tangible effects that such a profession has on daily life. Borden creates an essay around the question, "What do I tell people I
do?” highlighting the dissatisfactory nature of all possible answers. The audience has already seen the inside view and realizes there is no love nor sexuality which occurs in a whorehouse, something which makes Dawn’s claims of fidelity quite genuine. Nonetheless, it is also quite clear that even though prostitution is just a job, a male dominated society has a hard time regarding it as such. Borden does not moralize. For her there are no wrong or right answers as to what should be done. Prostitution is neither good nor bad. It simply is.

Borden spent a fair amount of time with prostitute women when she was filming Born in Flames. This and personal friendships formed the impetus for her Working Girls.47 For this reason it is quite interesting that one German reviewer, Hans Messias, finds the film unrealistic in its depiction of prostitution. The very day-to-day quality of the film seems to upset him the most.

Lizzie Borden hat die feministische These von der “Gewöhnlichkeit der Prostitution als “Bordellutopie” gestaltet, die bestenfalls durch filmische Geschlossenheit überzeugt. Allzu viele Halbwahrheiten erschweren den Blick auf das Ganze, aber auch die Diskussion ihres Films.48

The normalcy and work-a-day quality were exactly what Borden wanted to catch in her portrait of middle class prostitution. She found that American women tend to glamorize the image of a prostitute. “Even many women have a prostitution fantasy because the prostitute represents sexual freedom. I wanted to show women what prostitution is really like, to deromanticize it.”49 Yet on the other side Borden is criticized by Messias for overidealizing it instead of showing the unquestionable reality, “den Sumpf von Kriminalität, Zuhälterei und Drogensucht, der eng mit diesem Metier verknüpft ist.”50 Messias typifies the very audience which Borden is trying to reach, one which is unable to rise above its own
predetermined image of the prostitute. As she explains in her interview with Lynne Jackson:

There is also much more middle class prostitution than people think, and the kinds of women in it run the gamut from students to working mothers. Middle class prostitutes never get counted because they don't identify themselves as such. They never get in the police records as prostitutes, and they never come out and talk about it.51

Messias is unable to acknowledge the existence of middle class prostitution. He therefore insists that prostitution can only be "Ein Kreislauf, dem niemand so leicht entfliehen kann wie Molly es am Ende des Films tut."52 Once again Borden has foreseen this point of contention. A major goal for her is to combat such common stereotypes of degradation and inescapability. "Many women have done it for short periods of their lives and many other women have traded sex for a lot of things. Women who have worked as prostitutes don't emerge as walking basket cases."53 Lucy echoes the same sentiment in the body of the film, exclaiming, "Most people are under the false impression that working girls wear themselves out physically. Well, it simply isn't true," and although Lucy is frequently guilty of disingenuous behavior to improve her business, Dawn's response that she is exhausted underscores the fact that she is still healthy and feisty. Although many of the film's characters have their problems, these are no greater than the problems of the average viewer. Thus Mary has a child she can not afford to take care of, and Dawn is struggling with night classes so she can go to law school, while Gina would like to have enough money to open a boutique. None of these women has problems any different or more overwhelming than the average woman.

The characters of the film do not stand out as unusual in any way and this is one aspect that makes Working Girls a feminist film which refuses to follow
dictates of male dominant cinema. Much in the same way as *Lola* *Working Girls* is a film without fetishistic images and without a male hero. It is a film which steadfastly refuses to embrace a psychological model. Instead it portrays the woman's view of a male dominant reality, irritating the viewer into questioning the necessity for such social disparity.

Borden works very hard to avoid any vicarious salaciousness from entering the film, not an easy task in a movie about a whorehouse. She achieves her goal in a number of ways. In addition to the unusual use of sound, she is extremely careful about the way she films the female body. Women are not glamorized nor prettified and nude scenes are filmed from the woman's perspective. Composition is stressed over sexuality. Even in the shots of the sex act, the play of angles and facial expressions emphasize the fact that this is work. Diagonals are used strongly to suggest the active nature of the activity, while sex scenes are broken up into shorter shots to break with the potentially lubricious. Shots of Molly looking at her watch or preparatory actions are intercut with the actual sex scenes to reinforce identification with the sexually unabsorbed woman. In addition certain scenes jar the viewer into a nonromantic view of the work. Gina is shown washing the blood out of her diaphragm, "because as a working girl she is not allowed to have a period." Molly is seen lying on the floor with her legs apart, attempting to insert her diaphragm. While the image of a woman with her legs spread may sound fetishistic, the scene plays very humorously as the diaphragm goes springing across the room each time she tries to insert it. Even a shot of the simple act of dropping a used condom in the garbage goes a long way in undercutting the romance generally associated with this profession.

Another not so romantic aspect of the job that *Working Girls* explores, is the relationship between the employer and worker. Here the network of ideas
seem much simpler. Borden maintains her middle road approach allowing some of the girls to support Lucy's contention that there are houses where the work is much rougher. Nonetheless Lucy's attitude of superiority is unmistakably criticized. On the one hand Dawn complains about having wasted an entire evening for a profit of only twenty-five dollars, while in another scene Lucy asks them to guess how much her expensive new acquisitions cost. The implication later voiced by Molly is that while they are working Lucy is out spending their hard-earned money. Lucy spends an excessive amount of money on designer bags and shoes, while complaining about Dawn carelessly putting her feet on her walls' $100 paint job. (This seems extremely petty, as she has just finished telling them she spent $300 on a Gucci bag.) Images of Lucy are very critical. She hurriedly dons rubber gloves and stands like the model yuppie housewife in a spray and wash ad, while stylishly cleaning Dawn's alleged footprints off her walls. In another scene, she glowers while reproving the "girls" for smoking downstairs, while doing so openly herself. Lucy is more of a whore than the girls who work for her, because she demonstrates no redeeming qualities. Concerned solely with her income and her reputation, she refuses to acknowledge the true nature of her business, while at the same time milking her own boyfriend for every material object she can cajole from him. Never does she once show any empathy for him or any of her "$150 dates." She mercilessly berates a new woman for allowing her child to call her at work and worries only about the needs of the business when she cons Molly into staying for a double shift. Her own excuse for her behavior rings shallow. "I can't help it if I had a very materialistic upbringing," she maintains in self-defense. A major purpose of the film is to show, "the conditions of employment and the manipulation that goes on between employer and employee." Fassbinder stands outside the whore house looking in to
demonstrate that the world is a brothel, while Borden takes the viewer inside and asks him/her to look out and see the same thing.

Although the networks of ideas play a vital role in *Working Girls* the narrative structure is also a well-utilized component. Despite what Borden says about narrative and amoral stance with regard to prostitution, the film does contain a plot with a message. Borden admits indirectly that narrative is an important part of the film, because she carefully sets up Molly as a figure of identification. Importantly she is set aside as a female figure to be identified with and one with whom men also successfully identify. She therefore disproves the theory that a sex can only identify with the a same sex character.

Both sexes are able to identify with Molly's feelings and attitudes toward her job and the changes that her opinion undergoes. In her interview with Jackson, Borden enjoins that "Molly would have been fine if she had left at 6 O'clock when she was supposed to have left." Yet this does not really agree with the motion she has provided the film. Molly is an educated woman, with an ambivalent attitude towards her work. Like the viewer she is curious about why the others have taken up this line of work and what they tell their significant others. Yet this betrays her own discomfort with her own answers to these questions. When Dawn, the least demure of the working girls, calls her a whore, she is taken aback. Later a peaceful scene of children playing in a city park is contrasted to the work of the brothel. Molly betrays no emotion. She simply sits and watches. The free world of play and innocence jars against the work world of the whore house, as does the different form of watching. Men that visit Lucy's house often indulge in voyeurism in the form of a "show" in which two women appear to engage in the sex act for the male's gratification. Other shots show Molly and a client posing as he watches them in a mirror. This voyeurism
constitutes the objectification of another for sexual gratification, while Molly's watching at the playground implies a subjectification in the activities around her. Borden also alludes to a contrast of what we were and what we become, leaving the scene with a shot of an empty tricycle.

Molly feels a sense of freedom in her job as long as she is in control. Borden claims that the prostitute possesses the power in a brothel situation. "The control in prostitution comes from the woman having power over the financial transaction. The men enter the woman's space and the women control the timing of the sessions and all the activities. In brothels, in fact, the men are quite vulnerable." She even has Molly announce, "Men used to scare me, but I've completely lost my fear of men. It's amazing how you can handle any man when you know what his trip is." Yet this smacks of the middleclass fantasy of sexual freedom against which Borden has earlier warned us. Molly must finally recognize that in a patriarchal society this is only an illusion of power, for ultimately she is unable to maintain the distance necessary to retain control. The varying men in the film are shown asking her to see them outside of work, and eventually they wear her down. Ultimately she lets her feelings through and is brutalized by a man who claims to be interested in her. Borden says, "Since she lost her distance, she lost her control. That's why she knows she has to leave the brothel." Yet the implication is that it is only a matter of time and if one holds onto this distance then eventually the only concern becomes the money. In other words, one ends up like Lucy. Those who do not maintain their distance must eventually get out. Most hope to earn their money and leave without having to examine the implications of their actions, but for Molly the personal cost becomes higher than the monetary rewards. The ultimate message seems to be that prostitution should not be regarded with such disgust in a world that echoes
the structure of a brothel. Nonetheless it is just a matter of time before the
liberated, intelligent and sensitive woman finds that she can not continue to
justify the means by the ends.

Molly betrays her attitude when she suggests that if April would sell her
jewelry to department stores, she would not have to rent her body. April feels
demeaned by that statement, which belies Molly’s desire and ability to get out of
the business at any chosen time. Molly’s talk with her is another stimulus to tell
herself she needs to get out before she loses her ability to do so. April has been
beaten and robbed and although she is a skilled maker of jewellery, she resorts to
selling drugs to get by. She is caught in the downward spiral which Messias
defines as the only realistic portrayal of prostitution. Finally with Lucy’s
outburst at a girl who has been there only a few hours Molly sees the bottom line.
Men like Fagbag Jerry regard her with contempt, insisting on authoritatively
misquoting literature to this English major from Yale. She becomes aware of the
dangers of growing divorced from her feelings and recognizes also the brutal
truth that Lucy views her solely as a meal-ticket.

Both Fassbinder and Borden see life as a whorehouse in which the social
factors played a major role in determining our possibilities. While neither offer
much hope for their characters, due to the overwhelming nature of the social
structure, both films suggest that the recognition of this condition must precede
any hopes of action.
Notes


3 Sandra Frieden, "Fassbinder's Frauen." According to Daniel Schmid Fassbinder did identify with a certain female sensibility: "Rainer Werner Fassbinder wanted to be Marilyn Monroe." He claimed, "No one else. He wanted to walk down a staircase wearing feathers and a gown. He died the same age as she did, the same way as she." Robert Katz, Love is Colder than Death. The Life and Times of Rainer Werner Fassbinder (New York: Random House, 1987): xix.


5 Schober, Fassbinder 37.


8 Sally Schoen Bergman, "Fassbinder and His Friends: A Personal Recollection," Sex and Love in Motion Pictures. Proceedings of the Second Annual Film Conference of Kent State University, April 11, 1984 Ed. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, (Kent State: Kent State University Press, 1984) 117-121. Although few have chosen to highlight Lola as one of Fassbinder's best films at least some critics seem to agree with the director's appraisal. Vincent Canby, for example,
exclaimed, "Here is the work not of someone who was on the point of burning
himself out, as many of us interpreted his untimely death, but of a major film
maker in mid career, at the peak of his form, refining his methods and chancing
new ones in the ebullient manner of someone who has decades of work ahead of
(4 August, 1982).

9 Fassbinder in fact wrote a laudatory article on Sirk describing six of
Sirk's films as "among ... the most beautiful in the world." Rainer Werner
Fassbinder, "Six Films by Douglas Sirk," The Marriage of Maria Braun: Rainer
Werner Fassbinder, director Ed. Joyce Rheuban, (New Brunswick: Rutgers
University Press,1986) 207. Frieden Points out Fassbinder's debt to Sirk's
written on the Wind in which a frustrated Dorothy Malone performs a wild
unbridled dance. Lola's dance in the Villa Fink is only a pale imitation according
to Frieden. Frieden, Frauen. Fassbinder's indebtedness to Sirk may also shed a
little light on the question of his attitude towards women. His praise of Sirk
includes this thought: "Bei Douglas Sirk, da denken die Frauen. Das ist mir bei
keinem Regisseur aufgefallen. Bei Keinem. Sonst reagieren Frauen immer, tun
was, was Frauen eben tun, und hier, da denken sie. Das muß man sehen. Es ist
schön, eine Frau denken zu sehen." Wolfgang Limmer, Rainer Werner Fassbinder:

10 Ingrid Cavan recognized that Fassbinder was more concerned with
situation and outward form. "Ich hatte nie das Gefühl, daß Rainer, wenn er eine
 Rolle besetzte, daran interessiert war, wie es in der betreffende Person aussah.
Was ihn interessierte, war, etwas zu gestalten, irgendeine Struktur, etwas, das in
seinem Kopf war, in seiner Phantasie..." Ronald Hayman, "Ich habe mehr Energie

12 Chronologically Lola comes second in the series. Fassbinder, in what he called his "Entire History of the German Federal Republic" however labelled Lola BRD III and Veronika Voss (made last) BRD II. There is some discussion about the meaning of this, but his ordering makes sense if Fassbinder considered it such a step forward to be able to combine the political with the enjoyable. He would have been ordering the film according to his own progress and not Germany's. Mention of this ordering occurs in Hayman, Fassbinder 114. Also Joyce Rheuban, "The Marriage of Maria Braun: History, Melodrama, Ideology," The Marriage of Maria Braun: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, director Ed. Joyce Rheuban, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986) 4. Eric Rentschler reminds quite rightly that Fassbinder's indebtedness to Sirk really amounts to technique rather than content. Eric Rentschler, "German Friends and the New German Cinema: A Study in Reception," New German Critique 24-25 (Fall/Winter 1981-2): 28.

13 One of the characteristics of Sirk's films which Fassbinder greatly admired was his use of unnatural lighting. Fassbinder, "Six Films" 201.

14 Hayman notes that, "The survivors in his films are the characters who make compromises." In Lola they are the characters who are willing to make any compromise. This is characterized in the film by the quality of being corrupt. In her conversation with von Böhm, Lola confesses that she is corrupt, she knows how to "adjust" (sich anpassen). Hayman, Fassbinder 145. The word "adjust" is from Heidi Faletti, "The Doomed Moralist in The Blue Angel and Lola," National Traditions in Motion Pictures Ed. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, (Kent state: Kent State University Press, 1985) 83.
15 This is in keeping with earlier Fassbinder productions. The motto he affixed to his dramatic adaptation of Sophocle's Ajax was, "The most important thing, it seems to me, is to create discontent regarding the achievements of the bourgeoisie." Anna K. Kuhn, "Rainer Werner Fassbinder: The Alienated Vision," *New German Filmmakers from Oberhausen Through the 1970's* Ed. Klaus Phillips, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1984) 78.


17 It is suggested by Duren that Adenauer is linked to the whorehouse motif by the colors of the credits which flash across his picture at the beginning of the film. Duren, "Vamps" 108-109. Canby notes that Adenauer is leaning over to listen to a tape recorder, remarking, "One thing is certain; he is not hearing the truth of what is going on in West Germany, where ... the free enterprise system is running amok." Canby, "Screen."

18 For an excellent discussion of the implications of the stove see Rheuban, "Marla Braun."

19 For a comparison of *Lola* and *The Blue Angel* see Faletti, "The Doomed Moralist."

20 Esslin's poem is also ironic in that it proclaims that the person, who has not yet built his house will not get one now. The allusion is to the by then complete return of the same old power elite after the occupation. The world has settled back into normalcy and the poor are once again the ones to suffer. Ironically both *Lola* and *Esslin* will prove this wrong by raising their economic standing, but of course this is accomplished only with the appropriate lowering of
scruples and integrity, which marks them as prime candidates for belonging to the class of exploiters.

21 As Duren quite correctly explains, "Schuckert is identified with the anal, the phallic, with urine and with that most impure animal the pig." This is not however necessarily a negative value judgement on the part of Fassbinder. It must be remembered that one of Fassbinder's previous roles was Brecht's böser Baal, an amoral character also identified with the above mentioned images. Fassbinder's personal beliefs suggest a certain identification with types such as Schuckert. Daniel Schmid reports, "The basis for his new friendships was always the same: 'You are a pig and I am a pig. Let's start our relationship there, both of us convinced the other will betray.'" Roger Ebert, "Fassbinder: The Final Days," Gentlemen's Quarterly 53 (1983): 57. Lola also continues the ambiguous metaphor telling Schuckert he should sell von Bohm a piece of his ass to make Rump roast, when she is angry and in a more complacent mood, labelling him tenderly her "süße Sau."

22 There are those such as Ingrid Caven, who claim that Fassbinder laid primary value on form and structure and little worth on the verbal text. Fassbinder maintained, "Ich arbeite nicht vom Dialog her." Irrespective of what Fassbinder said, his dialogues show that they were closely constructed. In Lola he played a great deal with the concept and connotations of "ownership" in post-war Germany. In a conversation with Frau Schuckert, after Lola has won her entry into the Machtetlite, she announces, "Jetzt gehöre ich zu Ihnen," a polite way of pointing out that she has bought them with the power of controlling von Bohm. Hayman, "Schillernde" 38.

23 Fassbinder injects his typical irony here. The mother then talks about von Bohm's qualities and standing, and she is seen bathed in the red light of the
whorehouse. Had her husband not died she would be an officer's wife and not a housekeeper. Fassbinder seems to suggest that even the moral bourgeois sell out.

24 Fassbinder pokes fun at this gentle middle-class woman. After the appropriate expressions of allegiance to Lola's father, who was an Unteroffizier and would have been an Offizier if he hadn't died first, she then describes her impressions of his good upbringing. He is of "Gute Familie, Das kann man riechen," she contends, envisioning von Bohm on a horse, and stressing the Von in his name which signifies nobility. Naturally the man who is destined to marry the daughter is a far better match for the mother. This is just one of many examples which show that those who are not totally corrupt lose out in the world of the economic wonder.

25 In the German literary tradition blue is classically identified with romantic yearnings for the infinite, as in Heinrich von Öfterdingen's blaue Blume. It has further connotations of cool rationality due to the color symbolism of Thomas Mann. In *Tonio Kröger* the paternal Leitmotiv of a Feldblume im Knopfloch also speaks to Novalis' motif of die blaue Blume. This image captures both the latent sentimentality and the dignified reserve of the German Bürger.

26 For Duren, von Bohm plays the second time "with a violence and excitation that clearly suggests masturbation." The color red thus marks an unwanted change which can be compared to von Bohm's disgust with the pornographic material found in his desk the first day at the office and his obvious disgust with the presence of Coburg's power elite in the Villa Fink. Duren, "Vamps" 108.

27 Although much has been written on the use of color in *Lola* this metamorphosis in color seems to have been previously overlooked. Canby notices that "von Bohm is always seen in an electric-blue light and Lola is drenched in a
pinky-lavender, even when they share the same film frame." But his conclusion is that "this should not be overanalyzed." Canby, "Screen". Faletti notices these same dual colors in the automobile scene, but she interprets this as an indication of von Bohm's "potential and eventual involvement in a totally self-enclosed universe of conformity." Faletti, "Doomed" 83. For Duren the same scene "underscores at once the difference of the characters, and their similarity — namely, that they are both prostitutes." Duren, "Vamps" 108. This assessment of von Bohm is not quite accurate. Although he has indulged his vanity in dressing up in the more youthful walking suit, he has not yet sold out.

28 The use of color is even a bit more refined than already indicated. In the scene in Lola's bedroom lights depict von Bohm's struggle for control. In his steely determination to see Lola as she is and retain power, von Bohm is shown in blue light. He is shown in blue when he stalwartly cries "Ich will Ihre Hure kaufen." Gradually in the bedroom this blue gives way to red as his efforts fail.

29 The barroom scene where von Bohm meets the journalist also uses the red-blue lighting dichotomy. The newspaperman is marked as corrupt by being bathed in red light. Von Bohm's longing for a better world is also intimated by the playing of the white ship to Hong Kong song used with the opening credits.

30 Duren sees the action more in terms of Lola being pulled into the upper echelon by von Bohm as opposed to Professor Rat's being pulled down by Lola Lola in der blau Engel.

32 The all-encompassing nature of the whore is made explicit by the inclusion of this triple generation of Marias. Fassbinder more than insinuates that even the proper mother has a bit of the whore in her. She may not be willing to sell-out for money, but she expresses great interest in rank, having married a man who almost became an Offizier. The director may be indicating that a wife in the capitalistic system is simply a badly paid whore. The child Maria will also be implicated, something foreshadowed in her demand to know what a whore is. Lola responds "it is something you buy like that vase." Her future desire for acquisition is prefigured by her exultant cries of "Ming! Ming!"

33 It is very clear that Lola is still a sympathetic character. She is not a conniving vamp who seeks to torture men, or even an evil woman plotting to arrive at power. An opportunity falls literally into her lap and her lack of sentimentality allows her simply to "adjust."

34 Young Maria's association with prostitution is also suggested in the wedding scene. Upon seeing Esslin she asks if they will philosophize again. Esslin in proper capitalistic spirit agrees if he can receive a kiss. Mariechen's entrepreneurial spirit is shown when she in return barters for a Limonade.


37 Scenes in the "living room" of the house are shot close in often from low angles which tend to cut out the edges of peoples bodies. Borden also emphasizes the bars of the stairs and diagonals which hover threateningly above heads.

39 The point of this relationship is not as Richard Schickel implies to shock. According to him, “The twist in Lizzie Borden’s new film is that its callgirl protagonist Molly (Louise Smith) uses her evenings to support her half of a lesbian relationship.” This is a rather unfair diagnosis, since there is no real discussion of the household arrangements. Schickel is also inaccurate when he claims Molly works evenings, she is shown working the day shift, her regular schedule. Richard Schickel, “Working Girls,” Time 129 (27 April 1987): 79.

40 Jackson S.

41 Cramer agrees, calling Working Girls “a movie, whose great shock value is lodged not in any of the graphically depicted procedures of the profession but in the way the words ‘working’ and ‘to work’ are used.” Cramer 272.

42 Anne Friedberg, “An Interview with Filmmaker Lizzie Borden,” Women and Performance 1.2 (1984): 43. Borden continues, “I just couldn’t create a seamless narrative.” The implications of narrative as implemented by dominant cinema is a major point of discussion among avantgarde filmmakers. Sandra Frieden using E. Walter’s theories on subculture notes the importance of the avant garde’s refusal to employ the seamless formulations of the dominant culture. She sees counterculture efforts as seeking out and making obvious the unsuccessful stitching over of these seams and contradictions, a technique which Borden uses quite successfully in her disruption of favorite myths about prostitution. E. Victor Walter, “From Counterculture to Subculture: An Episode in the History of Poverty,” Counterculture and Social Transformation. Ed. Seymour Levantman, (Springfield: Thomas, 1982) 75-86. Sandra Frieden, “Um Gottes Willen, bloß das nicht!” Autobiographie gegen Öffentlichkeit und der kritische Frauenfilm,” Erkundigungen: Beiträge zu einem erweiterten Literaturbegriff Eds. J. M. Fischer,

43 Friedberg 43.

44 Friedberg 43.

45 Weigel has pointed out the tendency of narrative closure to repress contradictions as well as affirm false alternatives in the service of ideology. S. Weigel, “Over coming Absence: Contemporary German Women’s Literature.” New German Critique 32 (Spring/Summer 1984): 3-32.

46 Once again Schickel has judged rather harshly, claiming, “The transaction between a hooker and her john is not complex. To imply that this is a paradigm of the male-female relationship is closer to feminist propaganda than to home truth. The fact is that Borden gives a wide selection of personal relationships and that these are more often than not contrasted to the situation with the johns not equated with them. Dawn, for example talks about how glad she is to go home to her boyfriend and have satisfying sex. Schickel 79.

47 Jackson 5-6.


49 Jackson 7-8

50 Messias 990.

51 Jackson 6

52 Messias 990.

53 Jackson 6. This is the gist of much of the first chapter on prostitution as particularly evidenced by Sidney Biddle Barrows book, among others.
54 The act of the woman looking at her watch to characterize her activities as work, is used in numerous movies about prostitutes. Borden admitted her indebtedness to *Klute*, which she "loved as a movie" in her interview with Mimi Cramer (219).

55 Jackson 9.

56 The only praise coming from Richard Schickel concerns Lucy, whom he calls "the Miss Manners of Madams." His judgement - "McElduff achieves a level of wry social commentary that the rest of the film only aspires to." Schickel 79.

57 Jackson 9.

58 Jackson 7.

59 Jackson 8.

60 Jackson 8.
Chapter Two

The Prostitute and the Psychological
Van Ackeren's *Die Flambierte Frau* and Swalm's *Half Moon Street*

The next category to be treated deals with the social and psychological effects on the prostitute. It is very interesting that in several current motion pictures the prostitute is combined with the scholar or student. While the "Angel" series (the ads say, she's a high school student by day and a hooker at night) embroiders on the age-old hooker with the heart of gold story, more serious films in both Germany and England deal with the effects this profession has on the psyche of the intelligent woman. In this section Robert Van Ackeren's *Die Flambierte Frau* and Bob Swalm's *Half Moon Street* will be examined in terms of psychological aspects of prostitution.

At first glance Van Ackeren's *Flambierte Frau* might seem to be just an extension of the prostitute as objectified victim of capitalistic ideology. We have already discussed the German penchant towards politicization and viewed this in conjunction with the psychological distancing and alienation technique common in the works of Fassbinder. Van Ackeren's is a completely different method. Filmed in an extremely slick and stylistically glossy fashion, *Flambierte Frau* was cowritten by a woman, Catharina Zwerenz. It exaggerates the excesses of the male dominant cinema in order to express a great dissatisfaction with a society that embraces the facile objectification of women. The film also, despite its egregious style, questions the validity of style over message, of superficial polish over depth.

Van Ackeren centers his film on a female character. He shoots not from Fassbinder's position of exteriority, but from a point of view grounded in the feelings and perceptions of his main character. Van Ackeren's characters are
psychologically motivated and elucidated as people, as opposed to such characters as Maria Braun and Lola, and, although both sets of characters demonstrate the results of a particular cultural condition on a human subject, Van Ackeren deals with his people on a personal level, a perspective that is not reflected in the films of Fassbinder. Van Ackeren tells the story of a representative female character, who recognizes her predicament as woman in a particular (male dominant) culture, with particular emotional desires and needs. Rather than being motivated entirely by the economics of her capitalistic society, Eva shows concern for personal relationships and a search for meaning in contemporary society.

Van Ackeren begins the film by using numerous techniques to help the viewer sympathize with Eva. The opening shot is a long shot of Eva in the home she shares with her live-in. It is a formal and austere setting, stylish but with large expanses of white wall, which suggests emptiness. Eva is dwarfed by her surroundings. Her male companion in the foreground is shaving and admonishing her for having used his razor again to shave her legs. As the man moves back and approaches Eva, who is setting the table, the camera dollies forward, at which point we learn that Eva has not gotten the wine for the evening’s party. She is cool. The viewer notes there are problems, but as yet is unable to identify the source. S/he sees merely an extremely attractive woman helping to prepare for a party. When asked, Eva gives a summary of her day’s activities, at which point her male companion tells her she has miss-set the table. Eva now points out that she is the wrong kind of woman for him. She can not set the table, nor drive, and she wonders why he even wants to be with her. During the following scene of the party, Eva packs and leaves a note telling the man she does not love him any more. She signs it, “Kisses, Eva.” The hollowness of this lifestyle is evoked, not only by the house furnishings and the overly intellectualized jazz music, but by the
female characters' complete inability to perform a satisfying action. In this respect she is as empty and sterile an ornament as the furnishings of the apartment.

Van Ackeren quickly identifies the major realms permitted the woman in traditional Western culture. Eva leaves her man to return to the student life, ostensibly to finish her dissertation. Intelligent, but not terribly motivated by academia, she finds herself in need of money and she decides after several months of holding onto the telephone number, to call a woman who can get her work in the "modelling" business. Her idea is to turn a few tricks to tide her over. This is, of course, the third area, after home and school, where women are permitted space in Western culture. Yvonne explains the female dilemma succinctly. Since women are required in society to look a particular way, they can either afford to dress the part and not go out, or go out but not finance their appearances. Prostitution is practically a must for the independent woman who wishes to fulfill the role for which she has been raised by a male dominated society.

Eva takes the appropriate steps to move from her previous position of completely helpless woman, dependent on the man for everything, to one of total personal and financial independence. Suddenly she finds herself empowered by the fact that men seem to need/want sex, which she is able to provide without personal attachment or risk. When Yvonne explains the rules Eva learns them quickly: Never get involved with the clients, never give them anal sex and never let them kiss her on the lips. Like Molly in Working Girls she recognizes that power comes from being able to maintain a distance from one's clients. As is the case in Working Girls, the screenplay writers have done their homework. The details are entirely based on reality. As Ellen Strong, a feminist ex-hooker describes it, "Without the games, she will trade what is regarded as a commodity
anyway, for what she wants." In this case, it is no longer just a question of
money, what she wants is her sovereignty.

After Eva has embarked on her new profession for awhile she runs into her
ex-lover in a bookstore. He tells her he has found a replacement for her, albeit
someone not as pretty. This underscores her previous role as someone who did not
need to know how to do anything except be a pretty object. He is self-righteous
from his patriarchal pedestal, exclaiming in disgust, "So I spent five years living
with a whore!" At this point Eva demonstrates what she has learned about
patriarchal structures. A woman who marries a man for financial support works
herself to death. She is called a wife. Women who live with men and do it for
free are tramps. And women who charge for their services are called whores. Her
logical extension of this, "I'll be the best paid whore around, because I give them
the least for their money." There is no escaping the conclusion that women who
act in a male dominated world must all engage in some form of prostitution.
Although her friend Yvonne leaves the profession to marry a rich Brazilian, she is
still selling out for a comfortable nest and long term well-being. She simply
sells out for the best possible price.

One might therefore suspect Van Ackeren of a typical male chauvinist
misogyny that relegates all women to sluts and all men to pitiful victims.
However, this perspective is carefully avoided. Eva's process of development is
chronicled through numerous point-of-view shots which stress her own
perception of the world and the arrogance of the men who think that they are in
control. One such example is the shots of a business man, who is petrified that
some one might see a hooker come into his room. Next he is shown haughtily
examining the merchandise like a prize cow. After being commanded to turn
around, wash up and undress, Eva finally walks out on him. Upon counseling with
Yvonne she returns only to be told by him that "A prostitute by definition has to
take everybody.” Her response is to tell him she is not selling him anything, not even a smile. Yvonne and her friend have also supported this view of the prostitute as lacking the right to discrimination. One only rejects clients if they are too dirty. Eva, however is determined to do nothing she does not want to. This makes her more of a master of her fate than any one else in the film.

The viewer follows her psychological progress in her reactions and in the voice-overs used as she writes her diary. As she moves from the circle of the oppressed to the oppressor, she undergoes changes in her attitudes. These changes are reflected also in her relationship with Chris, a gigolo, with whom she has fallen in love. Van Ackeren/Zwerenz use the contrast of the two lovers to show the effects of a chauvinistic world on the dreams and needs of the opposite sexes. Early in the film Eva asks Chris what he does for those women, not realizing that she had seen the whole routine on her first evening with him. What she found charming then is exactly what most women seem to want, not sexual perversion, “They get too much of that already from their husbands at home,” he explains. What they want is a little tenderness, some affection and to hear that they are attractive. What the men want from Eva is quite different. They want the power of controlling through purchase the uncontrollable women of their fears. They want to receive nothing from Eva and the less she gives them the happier they are. In Freudian terms they wish to ease their fears of the woman as castrated by experiencing her as the phallic woman. She tells one man, “You’ll get nothing from me, nothing. You’ll never possess a woman like me and when you leave here you won’t even have touched me.” In a Lacanian perspective she has taken the phallus and become the creator of meaning. Reversing the normal order, this time it is men who are lacking and become the locus of jouissance. She has coopted the look and watches uninvolved as the men squirm under her controlling gaze. As the possesor of the phallus, however she also becomes
incapable of jouissance. Her desire is chronicled in her diary notes which express longing for a total experience and in her fear of not being able to stop when she is engaging in sadistic behavior. A simple reversal of the sex roles does not therefore improve the system.

Chris functions as a different type of prostitute figure. As a foil to the character of Eva he is perceived by the viewer from an exterior position. He comes from a lower middle class home of which he is ashamed and does not possess the coldblooded will to material comfort seen in Eva. His is the more traditionally feminine perspective. He feels sorry for his clients and works to make them feel like individuals (a role society is constantly denying women.) He is appalled at Eva's treatment of her customers and is unable to understand what she does that makes them pay her so well. He wins the sympathy of the viewer when he catigrates her, "You take their money for despising them. I don't want you to treat them badly." Yet Eva is only soothing the bad conscience of a society that has always treated women this way. She is giving the customer exactly what he wants. For this reason Eva is especially well-liked, and well-paid for her uncaring behavior, a fact which her lover Chris is unable to understand. From the beginning the difference in their practice of the profession is very obvious. Each delivers something greatly valued by the opposite sex. Chris' female clients hunger for affection and attention, and the sex act tends to be secondary. They come to Chris to be deobjectified and to feel human. The men, on the other hand, come to Eva to be released from these emotional ties, to be able to have sex with an image and not have to deal with a partner on a personal level. Eva gets satisfaction by being above her clients, who are slaves to their desires. This plays not only on female fantasies which equate prostitution with freedom and control but also on the reality of the trade. Ellen Strong describes this feeling.
There is something unquestionably real in that aspect of the man that the hustler sees. It's usually stripped of its public image, its defenses, its need to perform or to look good, and whatever layers of phoniness are part of his public face. It's quite an experience to turn a trick with a particular objectionable individual, then open the newspaper the next morning and read about what a pillar of the community and upstanding family man said creep is.²

This experience is echoed in Eva's life by her encounter with her ex-lover in the bookstore. This man, who should have been the tender friend, wants to sleep with her again, as if he needs to compare her performance as girl-friend with her performance as whore. No doubt from the tack of the movie that he would find the latter more satisfying, because she has learned by this point to give nothing of herself. This scene serves to remind the viewer that Eva's clients are no different than what society considers its successful family men. Ellen Strong once again expresses the sentiments of the scene: "I knew, well before I began hustling, that the pillars of our society were pretty much rotten at the core... There's nothing like screwing... one of the Establishment's leading lights, and hearing the hate and filth pour out of his mouth, to give one an insight into the basis of our revered society."³ Van Ackeren is careful to show this all through the woman's eyes. This is done in a variety of ways also used in Working Girls. For instance both films take time to show the experiences of novices on their first "dates." In Flambierte Frau the audience sees the ill-at-ease Eva having to learn how to react to the degrading nature of the men's demands. Both films also include dialogues between the hookers, showing their amusement with the fatuities of their clients. At one point Yvonne takes Eva through a main room of the hotel giving a running commentary on the arrogance and foibles of each of the well-dressed business men. In another scene the women read the personal column
out loud. The self-centered and sexual nature of all the ads serves once again to highlight how absurd the whole social structure really is. The entire power structure revolves around money and sex and those who can maintain a distance find themselves in control.

Prostitutes are then the ideal business people of our time. Yet often they get involved not with people but with the earning of money. A comparison of prostitute to non-prostitute is made when Chris, upon spotting the newly turned out Eva, asks Yvonne whether her new friend is a professional or a lady. Yvonne's suggestion is that he go up and insult her. If she's a professional she will get angry and return the insult, if she's a lady, she will laugh. The implication here is that a prostitute is hooked into the business world and therefore serious about her work and her image, a "lady" sells out cheaply and need not worry about respect at all. Eva shows herself to be above both. She is a "lady" who has stopped selling out. Essentially she only does what she wants to do and thus others' opinions of her mean nothing at all. A case might be made for her being the only one in the film who is not a prostitute. She lives for the moment, only does things she feels like doing, and refuses to be swayed by the bourgeois materialist dream. She enjoys the spoils of the materialist world, but she neither cares about empire building nor the future. Eva has been able to adapt to the total parasitism of the capitalist world. She becomes angry with Chris when he spends her money on a restaurant, but only because he is trying to force her to buy into the bourgeois dream of security and a small business. Idealistcally he believes that the legitimate business world will give him the financial freedom necessary for a personal sense of freedom, a freedom that is actually chained to the falseness of the middle-class dream of home, family and security. In reality his dream makes him dependent on either Kurt, a long-time client and friend, or Eva. Thus Chris will always be a whore for his dreams. In other words he will
always have to sell out to someone in order to support the bourgeois dream of an art gallery restaurant.

That Eva's personal integrity is maintained can be seen in the portrayal of her relationships with Chris and Yvonne. Although her opinion of men becomes ever worse, she is able to preserve her emotional needs for a while and enjoy her relationship with Chris. Eva is threatened not by Chris's sex life, but by his friendship with Kurt, whom he occasionally services for free. Such an act of generosity and feeling goes against what Eva sees as the nature of their work and thus offers a threat to their relationship. For Eva work should be work and personal life personal. When Kurt and Chris walk into the kitchen after a session she snidely remarks, "Oh I didn't know you were still working."

Chris, however, after seeing what women want from a man, is terribly threatened by Eva's working life. He can not understand how she can perform increasingly extreme sexual acts with her clients without the least signs of passion, let alone compassion. He fears that this coldness also transfers to him. His fears turn out to be somewhat justified. Ellen Strong explains the difficulty she had relating to men after a while. "For myself, after hustling four or five years, even with the help of drugs, I found it impossible to look at any man other than as a trick." In the long run an entry in Eva's journal demonstrates the validity of the problem. She describes how she wishes she could be consumed by her feelings, how she knows how strongly Chris feels and how she wishes to reciprocate these feelings, but can't. She has seen through to the sterility of the bourgeois materialist dream and is unable to be empassioned by false fantasies. For Chris, who deals in these fantasies, his inability to ignite Eva emotionally is devastating. The reason he sets Eva aflame is to feel a small modicum of success. He sets her aflame physically because he is unable to do so emotionally. The irony, of course, is that he has driven her away emotionally, through his useless
jealousy and overpossessiveness. Neither half of the couple is very accepting of the friends of the other, each expressing fear and hurt, when the friends of the other are present or want some of their time.

Eva and Kurt enter into an adversarial relationship. Kurt mistakenly believes he can win in a battle over Chris, claiming that Chris needs him more than he needs her. He does not understand Chris' involvement in the bourgeois dream of a home and a family. He believes income is a prime draw for Chris, seeing his purpose in living with Eva as a lucrative business management. When Kurt pays Eva to come talk to him, he learns that money is not really an issue. There is a nice contrast with an earlier scene here. A business man in a hurry objects to Eva's request to talk to her a little. He isn't there to entertain her, he says. The business man views the whole thing as a business transaction. In the scene where Kurt wants to talk to Eva, he shows his materialism by rudely trying to buy her off instead of talking with her. For the money he has given her, she explains, it is usual to undress. She makes it clear that she sells her body and not her self.

Chris is uncomfortable when Eva goes to spend time out with the girls. As good friends they are rivals for his attentions. It is in fact only to the women that she gives any part of herself. When she smiles her normal smile at his parties Chris is enraged that she is acting seductively. The cleft in their relationship is seen also in his desire for her to quit the business, which echoes his own desire to leave it. Unable to agree on the topic of the restaurant or their future he tells her they are taking a day off. The pacifier for relationship problems in the capitalist world is, of course, a shopping trip and he buys a blue fur coat for Eva, which speaks both to Eva's hopeless embroilment in a capitalistic world that can not give love a chance, but also to Chris' unspoken fears about Eva. The entire film is done in shades of blues and reds, another
reminder of the world as whorehouse. Blue is a cool color, but even more, the image of the coat also suggests a cold woman, a woman who does not feel. Ironically it is Chris that is dressing her in something which will insulate her from the outside world and also from himself. Ultimately she is unable to be herself around him or give anything more of herself to him. The result is the pathetic scene where he wants her to return his affections and pleasingly offers to pay her for a kiss. He has hit the very bottom, for from the earlier scene with Yvonne the viewer already knows that a whore never lets a trick kiss her. Pathetically he is asking to remain with her even if it is at a level below that of the most despicable john. It is of course also appropriate that his act of setting Eva on fire is totally without result. She is not affected in the least, because he can have no power over her. In the end only the relationship with Yvonne remains strong. When visiting the Knemo bar, bouncers let Eva know her presence is not wanted. This is Chris's territory. When she reenters with Yvonne they are both put out on the street, but it doesn't affect them in the least. They sit on their stools and laugh and keep on talking. In this instance the female voice is impervious to the efforts of the male gaze and Chris must admit his defeat in not being able to bear to see Eva.

Thus Die Flammierte Frau, although seemingly a fetishizing film about woman as sex object, actually takes these images and by exaggerating them shows their absurdity. The film shows the natural results of a capitalism gone to excess and demonstrates that women can use the weakness and fear of a corrupt patriarchal system to empower themselves. While offering little hope for anyone within the system it also points to the fact that those who meekly go along with the system help to continue its existence, whereas those who refuse to be judged by it and give up their autonomy can fight back. Yvonne and Eva's relationship was originally based on a financial transaction, and yet both permitted personal
considerations to become more important. By sticking to their own independent
dreams and not making expectations of the other they were able to remain on very
good terms. This type of relationship could have allowed Chris to stay with Eva.
Instead he hungered for a patriarchal role in which she become a part of his
empire and the entire thing collapsed. Both characters end up with what they
value most and in doing so they have sacrificed any hope for their relationship.

Not all films insist that life in the patriarchal mill need be such an
either/or situation, although some films send their message more blatantly than
others. Bob Swaim’s *Half Moon Street* is a very interesting film, because it
appears to have been made in full keeping with the traditions of the patriarchal
Hollywood tradition. For critics who look only at the text of the film there might
be a temptation to interpret as a typical story of the just fall of a liberated
woman. An emancipated doctor of Middle Eastern Studies finds she can not make
it on her own and resolves to use men as a financial stepping stone for her
personal ambitions. She does not reckon with the power of the love of a good
man, getting herself involved helplessly and unwittingly in a plot to kill her
diplomat lover, she is ultimately saved by his masculine henchman. Ron
Rosenbaum, in fact draws just this conclusion:

> In essence the film’s version of a modern liberated woman’s mentality
> is this: She may be a Ph.D. and have brains and participate in
> formulating foreign policy, but when it comes down to it, she’s just a
> hooker at heart - all she really wants is anonymous, uncomplicated
> sex.\(^5\)

Rosenbaum’s summary is that this motion picture’s “pretensions mask an
astonishingly retrograde male fantasy of hostility to women - the sort usually
found in cheap porno films.”\(^6\) It would seem from a rough overview of the plot,
then, that this is just that same tired old Oedipal story that realigns the male
dominant structure of man as possessor of the phallus and woman as subordinate helpmate. A closer analysis of the film, however, shows that this is not necessarily the case.

The film starts off both textually and visually with great sympathy for the main character. After an initial shot of a stack of videotapes and the halfmoon on a domed building the opening shot settles on a close up image of veiled female visages. The camera moves back and captures a limousine carrying veiled Arab women and behind it a jogger, an unadorned woman in sweat pants. The camera now follows the jogger through London city streets showing the double takes of surprised upper class banker types in bowlers. A shot of a videotape being placed in a machine is inserted. There is a cut to the jogger. The camera tracks her as she is almost run over by a taxidriver and as she passes closely by a car, which soon after blows up. She is visibly shaken, exclaiming "Jesus Christ!" under her breath. The credits are over and the first official lines of the film seem like commentary on the beginning: "Welcome to London, Dr. Slaughter." This opening sequence links all the main themes of the film. The videotapes are a clue to the viewer that s/he is not yet able to decipher, but the image of veiled women already foreshadows the inequality which is a major factor in this environment. This contrasts starkly with the image of freedom shown by a woman running unaccompanied wherever she wishes. The viewer will learn shortly that this is Dr. Lauren Slaughter's first day at the Middle Eastern Institute, but already she has encountered all the things which will threaten her in her life there: the powerful bankers/diplomats, political terrorism and most of all the powerlessness of women in a patriarchal society.

Sympathy is created for Dr. Slaughter by a series of scenes showing the unfair treatment she repeatedly receives as a woman in a male world. She is repeatedly stabbed in the back by her colleagues. First she is passed over for
grant money, which she is led to believe may be available to her, and then an article is stolen and published by her boss, a man she thought she could trust. A phone call to her ex-husband intimates past disappointments. An unseen voice, he reminds her that at one time she didn’t care where she lived as long as he was around. She assures him she must have been in love, “but don’t worry it won’t happen again.” To make the picture complete, at a dinner party she runs into a very wealthy and influential business man named Van Arkady who implies that there are only five thousand men in the world who really count. Intrigued by this global good old boy network, she presses to find out what the breakdown by nationality and number is, but just as she asks about the number of women in this organization, she is called away with the women folk for “the loo and baby talk.” Lauren Slaughter is thus inscribed as an outsider on two fronts. First, she is a foreigner in a very tightly knit culture, and, secondly, she is a woman and therefore not eligible for a significant role in the power structure. As a woman men have used her repeatedly and continue to do so. The director shows his sympathy for her situation in suture shots which make her the character of identification. Dr. Slaughter is portrayed throughout the film as someone in charge of her own gaze, who looks unabashedly and who then considers the relevance of her view. Her own ideas, disappointments and perceptions are registered in point of view shots, which clearly show the unfairness of the male dominated system.

After her meeting with Van Arkady she receives a mysterious videotape about high priced call-girls at the Jasmine Agency. Although she needs money desperately, she clear-headedly rejects the notion of selling her body. She has already rejected one incidental suggestion by her landlord that she could “sell her ass,” but further frustrations and financial neediness, make the temptation more and more appealing. Like Molly and Eva, Lauren decides to sell sex, but only if she
can play by her own rules. She refuses suggestions of the agency that she need
take on a working persona rather than be herself and after putting on make up for
her first "date," she irritatedly removes it, opting to go as Dr. Lauren Slaughter.
Putting on her glasses captures the finality of her resolution. She determines to
use her real name because she is not ashamed of anything she does. The conflict
of the film thus revolves around the central character's sense of who she is and
how she deals psychologically with the challenges thrown in her way.

She is constantly depicted in contemplation. Her dates go quite well. Her
superior intelligence and training put her in control of the situation and she
freely chooses with whom she will sleep and whom she will deny. The image of
prostitution here is exceedingly sanitary. Her world is clean and upper class, but,
like American television, the sterility of the image does not connote the absence
of the problem. Dr. Slaughter's second profession distresses her mentally.
Effects of her job are seen in disturbing memory flashbacks. For example, when
she is lecturing at the Middle Eastern Institute she suddenly envisions images of
her demeaning objectification on an exercise bicycle or in poses with some of her
clients. Clearly the powerlessness of her academic female voice are contrasted
to the power of male gaze.

Dr. Slaughter is then introduced to a perfect foil, an older diplomat, with
high ideals and intellect who can appreciate in her all the qualities which have
endeared her to the viewer. Sam Weller, a pseudonym for the influential Lord
Bolbeck, hires his dates because he does not have time for the vicissitudes of
building relationships. Lauren informs him that she is in her line of work because
she needs the money and likes uncomplicated sex. Both attempt to allow
expediency to govern their personal lives and both must learn that such shortcuts
lead to trouble and are unacceptable. Both take an action counter to their
principles. Lord Bolbeck is a life-affirming person who tries to negotiate peace
settlements to stop the killing of wars and yet he smokes and eats unhealthy food, actions that are destructive to life. Dr. Slaughter engages in prostitution in order to get the competitive edge on her male-dominated society. She attempts to expedite her climb to recognition and financial success and in doing so harms herself psychologically. Sam is quick to note that he feels she is doing something damaging to herself. Each has something they can learn from the other, not only a lesson in trust, but also in integrity to one's beliefs.

Sam turns out to reaffirm certain prejudices about men. He frequently makes promises to do something and then reneges on them. The lack of trust between them is lucidly demonstrated by footage showing both sides jumping to conclusions, but viewer identification remains with Lauren. Her disappointment is registered as justified when Sam stands her up. The camera dwells on her waiting and on her face, suggesting her angry thoughts and lack of comprehension. Her doubts are shown through the visual and his through the verbal, thus his jealousy is registered as unwarranted when he pries into her working life, after he has neglected to call her. In both cases identification rests with the figure of Lauren.

As it turns out Lauren and Sam are not the only people involved in this little drama. The viewer is made aware of a third lurking presence, beyond the scope of either main character. Pan shots of Lauren's apartment before she enters it suggest outside surveillance. The audience discovers that there is more to her situation than meets the eye. A series of verbal double entendres alerts the viewer to a fact that Lauren expresses early in the film, when she reminds Sam that appearances can be deceptive. Her Palestinian "friend," Akim, gives her his apartment in return for nothing and somehow knows that she is planning a trip to a resort. Her instincts when she asks him why he is doing all this for her are correct and yet logically she is outgunned. Only the viewer, who knows the full
story about Bolbeck’s security problems and peace dealings, is aware that Lauren
is in the female submissive position of being used by men for their own purposes.
By not sticking to her impulses of avoiding prostitution she has put herself in the
position of being used.

This sets the stage for a cheap suspense manipulation of helpless woman at
the mercy of a psychotic killer. Yet the director refuses to allow the hitman
Sonny to be victorious. After putting up a good but insufficient physical
resistance, Dr. Slaughter outwits him, only to be tricked herself by yet another
man she believed could be trusted. After the upsetting physical experience,
Lauren is now injured psychologically. She learns that she has allowed herself to
be used once again. Karim perceives her simply as an interchangeable object for
his plan to assassinate Lord Bolbeck. Had she not taken the video-tape bait or if
she had not taken Sam’s fancy, they would have found some one else. They would
have found a replacement object. Thus this film raises serious questions about
the purpose and validity of scopophilia.

The true test of Dr. Slaughter’s mettle, however, comes in her reactions
after she finds out she was being used. Lauren, it turns out, is a true feminist.
Rather than benignly acceding to the plans of her captors, she fights back. Having
waylaid her first captor in the shower, she then learns the full truth from Karim.
Bloody and battered, she refuses to allow what she believes to be Sam to be
gunned down through her actions. She demonstrates a belief in personal integrity
by being shot herself instead.

The crux of the film revolves around how Dr. Slaughter has been rescued. In
the final segments the viewer is informed that both she and Sam have been under
government surveillance. Thus although she believed herself to be saving Lord
Bolbeck’s life, in reality her actions are inconsequential. Furthermore she and
Sam are saved only because of the scopophilic activities of “the good guys.” Yet
what appears to be an inconsistency in the subtext of the film seems to be an effort to realign a sexual imbalance. One can not disarm the male gaze by outlawing it altogether. This can only occur through a concerted effort to deconstruct it. First one can refuse to recognize the sexual gaze as having genuine power. Lauren does this in her attitudes toward her own nudity. There is no question of sexuality in the bathtub scenes involving Lindsay. Female nudity is thus shown filmicly without being associated with male sexual drives. Additionally it can be suggested that there are superior alternatives to scopophilia. When Sam finally visits Lauren in the Half-moon street apartment she asks him if he wants her on the bicycle. The bicycle is symbolic of her profession as sexual object. It is a pedestal for sexually titillating observation. Sam prefers the bed "like lovers." Obviously woman as lover is being valued above woman as sexual object.

Ultimately the discussion must come down to whether Dr. Slaughter is saved because she herself has become the scopophilic object of undercover surveillance. This would suggest that woman's natural role is still object and whether she likes it or not it will remain her primary social function. Yet this film seems to imply something different. The gaze obviously can not be eradicated, and it will always necessarily be tied to the possession of power. Nonetheless it can be used discreetly and properly or misused by people with less than honorable intentions. Without undercover surveillance it is evident that both lead characters would be dead. Surveillance provides information and knowledge is power in the modern world. Yet knowledge is not entirely visual. Dr. Slaughter and Lord Bolbeck are both representative of professions in which voice and communication represent power. Furthermore the government's surveillance is clearly shown to be not only visual (in the form of hidden cameras) but also auditory (in the form of tape recordings) and as the viewer learns both male and
female protagonists are the objects of this activity. Swaim has thus used the visual medium of film to undercut the very scopophilic power which is being questioned by the screenplay. Certainly the film does not deny that some men may view Sigourney Weaver's body for scopophilic thrills, but it certainly poses the question as to whether there are not preferable alternatives, while at the same time avoiding the pitfall of censoring all nudity because it could be misused scopophilically. All female nudity will be produced as sexual pornography if directors decline to use it for fear it might be interpreted as pornography.

The worst complaint that can be lodged against this film is thus its facile way of dealing with the existence of a paternalistic big brother state which comes to the rescue at the end. By using heavy-handed tactics equally on males and females and by not informing the significant people involved (like Lord Bolbeck) everyone is taken off the hook and the film's message can be continued. The final scenes underscore that this is not a film which tries to keep women in their visual place. The very fine closing of this film is not drowned in melodrama or sentimentality. Dr. Slaughter is bloodied and in a daze. Uncomprehending she passes by Sam to hear that he knew nothing about the set up. A blanket has been wrapped around her shoulders and she is told to sit down and quit moving around. The film maker in an earlier scene has already confessed that he believes women can make it despite the society they are up against. Midway through the film it is announced by the head of the Middle Eastern Institute that an article by Dr. Slaughter is about to be published in the Spectator. This time it will be published under her own name. This means that despite her previous experience with the institute and her boss, after sufficient work and persistence, she is finally being given the respect she is due. This same motif is reiterated in the last scene. The final shot shows Lauren removing a cigarette from Sam's mouth as he stands looking down at her. His line is "What are you trying to do, save my life a second
time today?" The connotation here is recognition on his part of her act of integrity. As he says this he sits down beside her, levelling the discrepancy of height and bringing them to an equal "standing." This final image is of the battering that a woman takes in a male-oriented society, but it is also one of a woman whose head is bloodied, but not bowed. Both Lauren and Sam must learn that integrity permits no shortcuts, but that with time and great effort the odds can be defeated.
Notes

1 Strong 325.

2 Strong 326. Prostitution seems to be a common fantasy for women in a patriarchal culture. It allows women who feel otherwise powerless to imagine a world where they are not judged by narrow sexual standards as well as the vision of total freedom and control. This is also mentioned by Borden in her interview with Jackson. Jackson 6.

3 Strong 327

4 Strong 327


6 Ibid. Another aspect of the film which makes Rosenbaum feel that it is based on a dishonest premise, is the numerous times one sees Sigourney Weaver bare-breasted. At the screening, one female critic was provoked enough to exclaim, "Oh God, I am so tired of her tits!" Rosenbaum makes a reasonable point, although the scenes certainly can be justified from the action of the film and are not overly glamorized or glorified. The semi-nude scene on the exercise bicycle could have been shot from behind, although the bath tub scenes need some view of her problems with the shower mechanism. Swalm did not shoot from the front which would have delivered the most highly fetishized view, nor did he shoot Weaver standing up. Her attitude is that of a liberated woman, who does not care about such silliness. It is consistent with the dignity and lack of physical shyness of the character, or at least that was the way I perceived it. Naturally others may have gotten their vicarious voyeuristic thrills from these scenes, but as demonstrated in the final section of this discussion Swalm uses these nude shots to underscore the feeling "Hon y soit qui mal y pense."
Chapter Three
The Prostitute and the Social
Wenders' *Paris, Texas* and Ritt's *Nuts*

The films dealing with the social context of prostitution show the greatest variance in method and attitude. In part this is due to the choice of Wim Wenders as the German representative. Film-maker Wenders' choice of style and personal themes place him in a unique class of his own. A man who has rarely been interested in portraying women realistically in his films, Wenders shoots squarely from a non-feminist male perspective. It is interesting to contrast his *Paris, Texas* with Streisand/Ritt's *Nuts*, a social criticism produced from a feminine point of view.

Wenders' ill ease with women has been thoroughly documented.¹ For this reason it is only to be expected that in *Paris, Texas*, the main female character of Jane is really only a secondary figure. Although the main character, Travis, sets his goal of finding Jane and making up for his past behavior, the film actually concentrates on the male character doing penance for his own failures and taking what he sees as corrective measures for his failings. *Paris, Texas* is really only another "Road" movie in which a male character attempts to come to terms with himself while remaining oblivious to the needs of the women around him.²

The opening scene shows Travis collapsing alone in the desert. The shot of him in the vast expanse of Texas desert underscores the fact that this character is not only in a state of mental collapse, but also that it is truly his story alone. After being retrieved and taken to his brother's house, the protagonist comes in contact with his long lost son. Travis has reached a point of crisis and realizes somehow that he must come to terms with his past. He begins the process by reacquainting himself with his son, whom he hardly knows. As if the past is all a
blank, as it is indeed for the son, the audience and Travis start to put together the pieces from a set of the brother's home movies. It is the bond of this male gaze and preoccupation with image which brings father and son together again, a subtle foreshadowing of Travis' original problem with his wife. Later he will clarify the origins of their troubles to his son Hunter by explaining that the father had had an image of the wife that wasn't true. The trouble occurred when Travis kept on insisting on the validity of this image until it was finally accepted by both partners as the truth. Travis kept on insisting, for example, that his wife was from Paris, a city known for being a whore.\textsuperscript{3} Travis' false image of his wife as a whore is what ultimately drove them apart. The image is demonstrated to be a creation of his imagination by a comparison with his brother Walt's wife, who really is from France, and about whom there is nothing at all slutty. The initial scenes of the film have therefore left Travis at the point, where he is ready after all those years to attempt to correct the wrong resulting from his false image, by initiating a quest for young Hunter's lost mother.

Kathe Geist notes that Wenders' films often imply an absent mother figure.\textsuperscript{4} She also quite rightly points out that this is Travis' search, for the juvenile character Hunter is really more adult and independent than his father.\textsuperscript{5} The son immediately knows what kinds of provisions and supplies they will need for their trip to far off Texas, while Travis seems to feel comfortable with simply getting into their car and going. It is Hunter who spots the mother at the bank and who insures they keep up with her on the highway. Despite their respective ages, young Hunter is in actuality the wisened guide to father Travis' wounded child.

The confrontation with Jane also involves this type of dependency relationship. In her job at the peep show she has in fact become the whore that Travis always accused her of being, because she now really does sell her body in return for money. She is at the same time chaste, never touching nor being touched
by her clients. Like the female Hollywood star, she offers only her image for masculine use, which permits her character to fall into the ever-popular category of the hooker with the heart of gold. In a boxed room, which is built to resemble typical domestic situations, she stands before a mirror submitting to male requests made over a telephone. Since she stands before a one-way mirror, her only access to the customer is vocal, showing the powerlessness of female voice. In the truly female submissive position she is displayed before the glass, victim of the male gaze, while being forbidden to look herself. The discrepancy in their vistas is quite telling. The man's view is one of perfect domesticity, a boxed woman. Her view discloses the reality of her business, the mirror which reflects her is set into an unfinished wall, openly disgorging its insulation. She is literally insulated from the men, but the female gaze reveals powerlessness and the imaginary quality of the situation. The male perspective perceives the domestic harmony of a world under control. Wenders cynically places this scene inside a decrepit building with a gigantic reproduction of the Statue of Liberty painted on the exterior. While men may go to demonstrate their freedom in such a place, the women are displayed in cages. A mockery is made of Jane's fantasy of the sexual freedom of a life without Travis and Hunter. She has fled Travis' image of her only to be locked into the same image by society. His image of her sexually unbridled nature proves to be completely imaginary, perceived only by Travis and the men who visit the Peepshow. Her role is to listen, or to talk to the men, underscoring the powerlessness of female voice in comparison to male gaze.

German critics portray Paris, Texas as a fairy tale, a story with a happily-ever-after ending. Reinhard Baumgart, for example, perceives it as "Im Grunde ein Märchen aus der Männer- und Frauenweltgeschichte erzählt, das wir auch als das Märchen von Schneewittchen und Wim Wenders verstehen könnten." Hans Dieter-Seidel describes it as a dream, "der nichts will als die Gefühle zu einer
einzigen Empfindung zu verdichten...⁸ Peter Buchka waxes poetic about a film in which beauty makes possible "als utopisches Versprechen einer möglichen Überwindung von Schuld."⁹ Der Spiegel's review expresses similar admiration, submitting this synopsis:

Ein Mann kommt aus dem Nichts, erledigt eine Aufgabe, die er sich stellt, und verschwindet in die unbekannten Welten der Zukunft - ein heroischer Verlierer, der endgültig von der Vorstellung vergangenen Glücks Abschied genommen hat.¹⁰

No doubt this is also how Wenders would view it. His own description of Travis' task is, "daß es seine Pflicht war, jeden für den anderen freizumachen - das Kind für die Mutter und die Mutter für das Kind."¹¹ Paris, Texas becomes a story based on ideals. Wenders' original conception of the film supports this utopian vision: "... we had the beginning of a story: a man who's lost, a little like Ulysses among the dead, who returns with one single idea, that of a woman..."¹² For Wenders, woman is really only a male produced idea.

A certain dissatisfaction comes from critics who read a contradiction in the reality grounded depiction of the film's structure with the utopian morality story envisioned in Wender's description. The background reality in Shepard's script undercuts the aesthetic vision.¹³ Thus the embrace at the film's close is supposed to connote a happy ending for the mother and child who have been reunited as well as a destiny of sad and unrelieved suffering for the father who has atoned, but who has also "missed his chance."¹⁴

A feminist interpretation might cut across the grain and perceive things in completely different terms. Travis, in order to alleviate his overwhelming sense of guilt at deserting his wife and child, feels he must atone by reinstituting the natural order he has destroyed. This interpretation of natural order is only comprehensible in terms of a male imposed perspective. In his rambling
description of what happened when they were together, Travis reveals to the audience that the decision to have a child was his and not hers, that he felt it would tie her more closely to him and their home. She felt trapped by the existence with child and jealous man. The viewer also learns that Jane has known all along where Hunter was living and has been sending small amounts of money for his support. She had, in fact, requested that Walt and Anne stop sending her pictures of her son because she could not bear it. She had resolved to live her life on her own.

What actually happens in this film, is that the man violates the woman's decision about her own life, determining it to be an invalid choice. Travis rearranges the lives of everyone else in order to soothe his own sense of failure and make Jane's world conform with his image of the way it should be. Contrary to Travis, Jane has retained a sense of responsibility while maintaining her independence. Her ex-husband, on the other hand, has accepted absolutely no responsibility. He leaves free as a bird without recognizing the true burden of responsibility required in sticking out a difficult situation. Geist maintains, "A steady paycheck would probably mean more to Hunter and Jane than Travis' noble self-denial."15 Travis ultimately gives nothing of himself personally or emotionally, as if his sins are excuapated after his confession. The ending is certainly in keeping with Gilligan's conclusions that women tend to think more in terms of relationships and the community and men more in terms of moral rectitude, for the woman ends up being the nurturer of future generations after the man has corrected the social injustice which he himself caused. Travis' truth is unitary and self-oriented in comparison to one which takes into account the way that one's actions affect the lives of others.
Travis confesses his sins in order to promote a higher order. Peter Buchka points out this very interesting analogy between the Peepshow booth and the confessional:

Der Katholik Wenders inszeniert diesen Akt der Reinigung wie eine Beichte. Der Einwegspiegel der schauerlichen Voyeurskabine funktioniert nun wie das Gitter eines Beichtstuhles. Die beiden können oder wollen sich nicht sehen, wenden sich von einander ab, bis sie sich durch die Beichte – in einem fast biblischen Sinne ‘erkannt’ haben. Da verschmelzen dann ihre Gesichter für einen flüchtigen Augenblick auf der Glasscheibe: der vergängliche Schein eines verehrten Traums.¹⁶

The problem with this whole context is the patriarchal structure it assumes and in fact, requires. Original sin is, after all, considered the fault of woman, and a confession from both sides implies that Jane has done something sinful in her completely defensible acts of self protection. She has very literally set his bed on fire, an image which echoes original sin as the female prompting of sexuality in man. It should also be pointed out that the confession scene is portrayed completely from a male point of view. Travis permits her to “see” a little by suggesting she turn off the light. The end result of their conversation however is not a union of the two people, as suggested by Buchka, but an image of union perceived by the camera or male perspective. Indeed what is actually seen is the super-imposition of the man’s face) over the body of the woman. A feminist director could not more clearly have attempted to depict the tyranny of male logic over the female body.

Travis’ quest seems to boil down to simply a male fantasy of saving the fair young maiden, of liberating her from his own vision of her as harlot. He attempts to rescue her by replacing her back in her “proper role” as mother.¹⁷ In the real world of the film, neither mother nor child need each other. It could in fact be
argued that Travis returns only to recommit his earlier sin, for in trying to reunite the original family unit, he disrupts a perfectly happy family comprised of his brother's wife, his brother and Hunter. Additionally, both Hunter and Jane are entirely self-sufficient entities who came to terms with the dissolution of the family long ago. They do not seem to really need this reconciliation. It is Travis who is without purpose and bearings and who ultimately does not progress. The motion picture ends in a reversal of the way it begins, with Travis driving off into nowhere. He never addresses the problem which started the trouble in the first place. He never deals with his propensity to construct false images. Instead he indulges himself further, by replacing his old image of Jane as whore with a reverse image of her as madonna. Ultimately his personal crisis has only seemingly been solved by inventing a more comfortable male construction of false consciousness.

A very strong network of male false consciousness also exists in *Nuts*. Unfortunately it seems to be built on the very core supports of patriarchal society, the belief that certain individuals need to be taken care of by our social, medical, and judicial systems. Neither German nor American critics were able to agree in their evaluation of a film that attacks these hallowed cornerstones of patriarchy. They agreed only that they did not like the film, even though they could not seem to concur on what the film was about. Nebulous mutterings about "the hypocrisy of the medical-judicial establishment" and "such up to the minute issues as child abuse" or the not so big shock, "that someone from a respectable upper-middle class background would work in the Oldest Profession" issued from American newspaper reviewers. 18 Richard Corliss called *Nuts* a "no-risk psychodrama," while Stanley Kauffmann labelled it scraggily and formulaic. 19 An equally sceptical German reviewer summarized the story in this fashion: "Barbra alias Claudia Draper darf eine Luxusnutte mit 500 Dollar-Honorar sein, nur sehen sollte
man davon möglichst wenig. Sie darf sich auch wie eine Verrückte benehmen, nur sein darf sie es natürlich nicht."20 Most reviews then continue by complaining about Streisand’s role in the production. She is criticized for trying to do too much, for attempting to create a star vehicle for herself, for being too glamorous for her role, for being too ugly for her role and for trying to play a serious role instead of just being funny. One wonders what has raised such animosity on the part of critics for an effort that is supposed to be basically just an average little movie. All of these criticisms amount in the long run to male critics telling Streisand that she is trying to be something she shouldn’t. She shouldn’t try to compose, she shouldn’t try to act, she should just stick to singing. Exactly like the main character in the film, Barbra Streisand is being told to behave as a patriarchal system wants her to behave.

The judgements are for the most part ungrounded and unfair. David Ansen complains that Streisand is too slick: "In the psycho ward her make up is impeccable."21 Conversely Leydon finds her not glamorous enough. "She is not conventionally attractive enough to be convincing as an elegant high-priced callgirl. (Any woman in that profession, making that much money, would get a nose job, at the very least.)"22 No critic seems to have perceived the criticism of the medical/psychological and judicial establishments as anything more than disorganized potshots. Gene Siskel remarks, "Of course the goal of the story is to prove that our legal and mental systems – and not Streisand – are nuts."23 Yet this film does a bit more than berate societal institutions. It demonstrates the way that male constructed and governed institutions like psychiatry and the judiciary system work together to “protect” women. This obviously is a euphemism meaning to systematically deny women the right to voice and female behavior.
The restrictions to female behavior are expressed everywhere in the views of bars and caging which predominate Nuts. The film opens without an initial image. The first sensory presentation is sound. It is the sound of the women being brought before the law. First images move from the graffitied ceiling of lock-up down across the bodies of all manner of women. Names are called, indicating every conceivable ethnic origin, and as the selected few walk out to be arraigned a voice quips that it is showtime. The scene clearly marks the spectacle of women before the law. Women are viewed as being walled in. Scenes are repeatedly shot from outside the bars showing the women inside. The source of this problem is also inscribed in the initial images of the film. As the women to be arraigned march through the barred passages, they are led past the cells of men who hoot and howl at them. These shots are interspersed with lateral shots of Streisand walking past a row of men in business suits at a cocktail bar. The equality of the two sets is underscored by the come ons of the business men as she walks by. While one group lingers leeringly from their elegant stools, the other screeches and grabs from behind steel bars. The noises of each groups' come ons blend indistinguishably, indicating there is no genuine difference between the two groups. In the opening sequence the film has already been defined as a film about the ways men look at and wall in women.

All manner of men circumscribe women in this fashion. Judges, too, are inscribed as representatives of this patriarchal system, a fact demonstrated by showing how the judicial system tries to operate independently of the accused. The initial courtroom scene shows two attorneys bartering over the sentence of a defendant. The conversation is typical of any business deal. "What are you going to give me on him? ...Seventy-five is the best that I can do." When Claudia Draper comes up to be "heard," she is ignored altogether. She tries to speak, but neither her attorney nor the judge will listen. The lack of women's voice in this society is
then reaffirmed in the succeeding scene. Draper’s parents are observed entering the courthouse. The father speaks with their daughter’s attorney, while the mother says nothing. Instead of having a verbal outlet she is shown swallowing a pill at the water fountain. In this shot of the mother, Ritt gives the viewer an image of loneliness and repressed tension, of holding things in, which will be recurrent in the course of the film.

Similarly, Draper is allowed no voice in her own trial. She can not even hear what is being said. Her attorney, a highpaid gun, will not even tell her what is going on. It has been decided by paternalistic authorities, led by her father, that prison is no place for her and for her own good she should be sent to a mental institution. When her attorney finally turns to talk to her at the insistence of the judge, he speaks to her as if she were a child. He does not listen to the objections she raises, because he knows better than she. Ultimately the only way she can get his attention is through a traditionally male action. She slugs him. Her attorney resigns, because he can not deal with a woman who insists on behaving improperly. Time and time again this character is told to sit still and do what the court (in loco parentis for the pater familias) says.

Claudia’s legal aid attorney stands somewhat outside of the circle of the fathers/businessmen. Since he is poorly paid, not by the client, but by legal aid, he is not identifiable with the builders of the system. He is initially involved with a disagreement with the judge, which places him as an outsider, and which is probably the reason he is given the case. He is not completely immune to paternalistic attitude, as is indicated by the scene where he goes to Claudia’s apartment. It might perhaps be argued that he is indeed helping his case, as well as the viewer, by looking at the accumulated possessions of his client in order to understand her. He may even find it necessary to find her suitable clothing for trial, although it is a subject he could have broached with her at a earlier meeting.
Nonetheless, he really has no excuse for going through her underclothing, something which she probably already has at the institution or at the very least something whose absence is unlikely to be noticed in court. Her anger that he has not asked her permission is only one in a series of instances where she is justifiably angry because her right to her privacy is violated by a masculine sense of privilege.

This male privilege is not recognized by the critics as being worthy of culpability. David Ansen, for example, is highly critical of a script he feels is "so uncontrovertial, so undaring. Because everything about this slick, intermittently rousing courtroom drama is a foregone conclusion. Because instead of wrestling with the issues, the script... simply stacks the deck." Ansen feels the "supposed revelation... is telegraphed from miles away." The real revelation is not about Claudia's father, but about all fathers, and of course it is telegraphed. Ansen can only feel this film ignores the issues if he has not recognized the true nature of these issues. *Nuts* is not a suspense story. It is a statement about the treatment of women in contemporary society. The truth is that women in our culture are treated like birds, children or nutcases. They are either locked away in cages, where they are expected to sing, or they are talked down to and told to let the grown-ups take care of things, or they are institutionalized for their own good so as not to be an embarrassment to the male order.

Ritt handles the issue of father quite well. Claudia is given justification for her murder of Al Green, in light of her father's previous behavior. Al and Mr. Kirk both offer instances of woman being deprived of her privacy and her right to say no. Claudia is violated by the male gaze, by a father who paid to watch her. The bathroom becomes the locus of struggle for independence. In the courtroom one of the first flashbacks is to a young Claudia before a mirror cutting her hair, with her father's voice exclaiming, "What have you done!" Claudia before the mirror
expresses her desire to be separate, taking action to become something other than
the image controlled by her father. This locus of struggle for independence, then,
also becomes the original place of violation. The bathroom is closely associated
with the mysteries of feminine sexuality and self discovery through the presence
of the mirror. It is pertinent that in killing Allen Green, Claudia executes the
action with a large shard from the mirror he has broken. Her resistance to his
desire of his fantasy image causes the bathroom mirror to be shattered. It is
through the destruction and disassociation of this image that she is able to fight
back. Green's actions echo those of Claudia's father. They mirror the actions of
all men in a patriarchal culture, but by breaking the imaginary object of the gaze
she is able to dispel the threat. In breaking with this image of the proper girl she
however also represents a threat to a society founded on this imagery and
inconsistency.

Claudia has learned long ago to use male gaze to manipulate those around her.
Realizing man's innate fear of woman's sexuality, she utilizes an openness to
disconcert and defy men. She turns the male gaze against them by being
unabashedly sexual and by controlling the male vision. She thus "flashes" her
attorney and her doctor using their own sexual insecurity to undermine their
authority. Additionally she is unafraid to look herself. She uses metaphors which
also convey this empowerment, such as having seen the doctor with his pants
down, because she knows he is in charge of the prison mental ward only because he
can not compete successfully in a fancy private practice.

Male gaze is also contrasted to female voice and lack of voice. Claudia looks,
capturing images by sketching people in the court room. Yet, as her attorney
demonstrates, none of Claudia's caricatures have a mouth. For example, an image
of woman bound and gagged is a universal statement as, equally applicable to
women in general as to Mrs. Kirk. Mrs. Kirk has no eyes for what has happened to
Claudia, nor any voice in revealing the secret. Nonetheless the mother is portrayed as a woman who really did not know the whole story. Her questioning on the witness stand reveals an angry woman who has no idea why her daughter has turned away from her. She is someone full of love and yet she feels the guilt necessarily heaped on the mother when things go wrong.\textsuperscript{27} For his part, Mr. Kirk makes it clear that he was an impeccable father who can in no way be held responsible for Claudia's problems. The mother on the contrary expresses uncertainty. Perhaps she could have done x, and things would have been different. The mother-daughter reconciliation underlines the fact that women must face these problems together.

Claudia's final speech before the judge lays bare the essence of the problem. "Don't whip me with your rules," she pleads. The implication is Luce Irigaray's that man's logic does not allow the woman her more universal nature. "I'm not just a picture in your heads," she continues. The scene culminates in her avowal of her self-determination, ending with "I won't be nuts for you." The final actions of the judge are very important. She has just repudiated the male system of monoperceptual judgement when the judge asks her if she will allow herself to be examined by an independent psychiatrist. Psychiatry is the very emblem of male oppression, a science which defines women as lacking and immature. The film supports the conclusions drawn by Phyllis Chesler in her book *Women and Madness*: "Since clinicians and researchers, as well as their patients and subjects adhere to a masculine standard of mental health, women, by definition, are viewed as psychiatrically impaired - whether they accept or reject the female role - simply because they are women."\textsuperscript{28} Thus for Claudia to submit to a psychiatric reappraisal is to reaccept the very system she has been so adamantly rejecting. When Claudia Draper walks out of that courtroom to be free it is not in terms of a male definition of her being, but on her own terms. She is not dressed in furs and
gowns, etc. Rather, she is unadorned and unimprisoned by bars, blinds or glass for the first time in the entire film.
Notes


2 A road movie, implies process as opposed to achievement of goals, since end points are very rarely mentioned if they are even known. Reinhard Baumgart makes reference to Paris, Texas, as a road movie. See Reinhard Baumgart, "Der lange Film zum kurzen Abschied," Die Zeit 3 (11 January 1985): 34.

3 Molly in Working Girls corrects Fag Bag Jerry's misquote, noting that the expression stems from Henry Miller.

4 Geist 1-19.

5 Geist 11.

6 Even more interesting is that fact that American critics overwhelmingly panned the film. For a thorough overview of American reviews see Jordan Mejias, "Unverständnis und Animositat gegen Europa: Amerika reagiert auf 'Paris, Texas,'" Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (28 December 1984).

7 Baumgart 34.


10 "Richtige Bewegungen." Der Spiegel (January 1985).

11 Seidel "Traum."

12 Geist 6.
Shepard did not indeed finish the script with Wenders. Wenders and L.M. Kit Carson allowed inspiration to guide them with the ending. It would have been interesting to know Shepard's ending and see to what extent it differed with the final product. Siedel "Traum."

Katherine Dieckman. "Wim Wenders, an Interview" *Film Quarterly* 38.2 (Winter 1984-85): 4 (Geist)

Geist 8.

Buchka, Traum*.

This echoes Mary Daly's description of the transformation of Eve into Mary. *Daily Gyn/Ecology* 86-87.

Gene Siskel "From Funny Girl to 'serious woman'" *The Houston Post* (22 November 1987): 9F. Joe Leydon, "Streisand's 'Nuts' not all it's cracked up to be," *The Houston Post* (20 November 1987): 12E.


David Ansen, "Down and Out in the Psycho Ward: Barbra Streisand carefully trashes her star image;" *Newsweek* 60.21 (23 November, 1987): 83.

It is funny that that same thing might be said about actresses too! Leydon reveals he has no knowledge of what the life of a high-class call-girl is really like. Scenes with Allen Green, show Streisand as not only attractive, but very engaging, which is far more important in that kind of work than classic beauty. Leydon 9F.

Siskel 12E

It is interesting that the main character's repression can be summed up in a three way word play. Claudia Draper is being brought before the bar, the American
legal system, a patriarchal institution trying to deny her her right to speak for herself. She finds her clients in a bar, the hang out for lonely men who dream of sexual conquest and she is therefore placed behind bars, in a prison or mental ward.

25 Ansen, 83.

26 These images of women are repeated throughout the course of the film. When Levinsky comes to visit his new client, there are once again an abundance of bars. Streisand/Ritt underscore the image of a woman in a gilded cage by having one of the inmates singing about a yellow bird. The judge, psychiatrist and previous attorney all address Draper in condescending tones frequently used for children and woman as nut is of course the situation from which the film takes its title.

27 The phenomenon so prevalent in present-day psychology of laying all blame on the mother is admirably exhibited in Ferdinand Lundberg's book on modern woman. As Lundberg explains it, "Men, standing before the bar of historical judgement, might often well begin their defense with the words: 'I had a mother....'" While Lundberg may no longer be current, his ideas still are as seen in popular self-help books which view problems in relationships as the sole domain and responsibility of the woman. If a relationship fails it is because a smart woman has made a foolish choice, or because she loves too much, never because there was anything wrong with the man. Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, M.D., Modern Woman: The Lost Sex (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947) 3. Anthony Wilden also describes this phenomenon in his "Critique of Phallocentrism." He notes that the father's complicity is rarely taken into account in "the logical typing of the parents' responsibilities," Anthony Wilden, System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange, Second Edition, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1980) 280.
Chapter Four
The Prostitute and the Aesthetic
Schlöndorff's *Un Amour de Swann* and Jordan's *Mona Lisa*

The history of woman fetishized as muse is as old as the history of male art. For this reason the fantasized image of woman as inspiration and idealization injects special problems into a feminist analysis. This problem is intensified when the idealized image is also portrayed as prostitute. As previously noted, an entire literary tradition has concentrated on the representation of ideal woman as ideal object of consumption. One may well ask: in what ways do films which choose prostitutes as their subject/object, deal with woman in contemporary society?

The first film to be discussed, Volker Schlöndorff's *Un Amour de Swann*, poses some problems. Firstly it is a mixed cultural bag, based on a French text and produced by an international crew that included an assortment of European technicians and performers.¹ Filming occurred in a variety of languages, following a screenplay passed down from Joseph Losey to Peter Brooks to Schlöndorff, with final credit being given to Marie Helene Estienne and Jean-Claude Carrière along with Brooks.²

Filmic adaptations of literature often suffer from their transfer to the medium.³ General conclusions are that a change of medium always modifies the message to some extent.⁴ There will always be those literati who are displeased with a film because it has not adhered closely enough to the original and this, of course, was to be expected in the filming of such a French national treasure as Proust.⁵ In an attempt to nip this problem in the bud, Schlöndorff even published an explanation of his adaptation in the *Bulletin de la Société des amis de Marcel Proust*. In it he defends his divergence from Proust's text, by maintaining it is
more important to rediscover "l’élai de l’auteur, cette force qui l’a poussé à écrire." And although critics were nonetheless quick to point out these strayings from the original, Marie Migué concurs with Schlöndorff, "Il me semble que le cinéaste a retrouvé cet élan." 

Swann is the story of a man obsessed by a woman below his station. Its action necessarily takes place in a rigidly structured social system, and it addresses the role of art and obsession as antagonist to social order. Set in a completely male dominant environment, Swann asks the question of what is important in life and at what price it can be achieved.

In his article about his adaptation Schlöndorff is not afraid to admit that "Odette reste à mes yeux un personnage plus imaginaire que réel." The director defines the motor of the film as being the confrontation of Odette de Crecy and Charles Swann. "Elle ne demande mieux que de vivre un grand amour avec lui... Swann voudrait la posséder tout entière, corps, cœur et âme, sans se donner lui même en échange." But she does demand more. As Schlöndorff later remarks, "Il faut y ajouter qu’Odette recherche une ascension sociale que le mariage avec Swann accomplit, tout en détruisant celui-ci. Autant dire que tous deux y trouvent leur compte."

The film introduces the idea of Odette as fetishized image early on. Her face is not seen until twenty minutes into the film despite the fact that her name occurs within the first three minutes and her bosom is shown shortly thereafter. She is the topic of discussion at the Duke de Guermante’s party and is invoked by “la petite phrase” of the Vinteul sonata. When she is finally seen, it is not amidst romantic images of candles and string music. Instead Schlöndorff makes her appearance a surprise. Suddenly she is there, dressed in red, flooded in bright daylight, the discrepancy between the romantic image and the reality starkly highlighted.
Schlöndorff stresses the fact that the action takes place within a twenty-four hour period. It is the story of the crystallization of Swann’s obsession, "une journée et une nuit qui durent jusqu'au petit déjeuner et qui résument une vie." The lighting has been planned around this subject. Odette is seen in the full sun of the afternoon. As the sun sets, the light gets warmer, then falls off into blue. This also echoes the emotional swings of Swann, who is initially encouraged by Odette before she becomes angry and distanced by his jealousy. A full moon casts a cool light on the evening as both Swann and the baron de Charlus experience the frustrations of their desires. The day is set off by dual scenes of Swann’s valet opening the windows in the morning.

Odette is seen in only about half of the scenes, which allows for Swann’s images and jealousies to be played off against the reality. In her first scene Odette makes her priorities clear. She is escorted by Forcheville, a man in a red riding jacket. When they encounter Swann she demands that Forcheville leave, because Mr. Swann can not stand it when others accompany them. Swann is charming and attentive to her wishes until they get into the cafe, where they join Charlus.

Charlus is a wealthy homosexual nobleman, who has just picked up a young Jewish boy because of his looks. A comparison is made between Charlus’ preoccupation with the boy’s appearance and Charles’ obsession with Odette. Both speak of works of art which remind them of their love objects. Swann has maintained up to this time that he has not been seeing Odette and several previous hints suggest that this is the time of decision for Charles. His friends, the Guermantes, let him know unconditionally that if he marries a woman below his station, especially a woman of such ill-repute as Odette, that she will not be allowed into their or any other respectable company. Charlus, who has introduced him to Odette, re-issues the warning. He tells the boy that he looks like a
Moorish prince who fell in love with his wife and had to stab her. He had to stab her in order to regain control of his life. The Freudian imagery is very clearly one of possession of the phallus being affirmed in the face of castration anxiety caused by love/woman. Charles’ “inoperable disease” renders him out of control. His jealousy, also a form of castration fear, prevents the sex act from ever being completed. Every time he is ready to “adjust Odette’s orchids,” a patent symbol of the female genitals, he thinks of some thought which disturbs him, or imagines he hears something. In keeping with Lacan the woman becomes the locus of male desire.

This raises the question as to Odette’s culpability. According to Miguet the novel hedges on this question, whereas the film, by fact of its realistic portrayal cannot blend the dimensions of Swann’s imagination so easily with reality. Schlöndorff does use certain techniques to represent Charles’ mental perceptions which can then be mixed with straight reality without giving away their source. For example, Schlöndorff uses flashbacks to show Swann’s mental state. The scenes with the cattleya orchids indicate his obsession, while a scene of him receiving a chrysanthemum pronounces the difference between Odette’s earlier feelings for him and the those at the present. By intercutting rapidly from one scene to another Schlöndorff is able to indicate Charles’ dismay with the change. In a red dress she tells him to come by anytime, that she is always free for him. In the blue dress she is giving him the brush so she can go to the opera with Forcheville. Even so the viewer never knows anymore than Swann whether Odette is carrying on behind his back or not.

As she points out to Swann, she has a bad reputation. This makes the appearance of a procurress for a wealthy noblewoman suggestive but not definitive. She tells Odette her client saw her in a bordello and will pay any price. Odette shoes Swann into another room and tells the procurress she should not have come.
Odette insists she won't do it, yet she never denies nor affirms that this is something she may have done in the past. She side-steps the issue by refusing to belong to that network of definitions.

Odette does lie on several occasions. Swann can hear every word she has said, and when she embellishes the description of her own behavior to the procuress, Swann knows that she is lying. What ensues is a long game, where Swann in his jealousy attempts to find out the truth. The worst insult to his masculinity would be that Odette not only has a lover, but a female lover, a fear that has already been hinted at by a painting at Guermantes' estate. The Duke de Guermantes immediately covers a picture of two nude women embracing as his wife and Swann walk by. Odette and Swann engage in a game, indicated by a circular tracking shot, which follows Odette as she walks around the room stalked by Swann. The viewer understands the circularity of this behavior both in terms of absence of progress, as well as in terms of a ritual and perhaps even a mating-dance. Odette denies having engaged in the feared behavior. Swann wants to know the truth. Odette makes a statement, then claims to have lied about it, in order to give him what he wants to hear. He claims to know more than she thinks and despairs of her lying. She confesses to a more grievous crime, at which he shows disappointment, he had hoped it was a more minor infraction. Finally she tires of the game, wanting to know why they have to be degraded by such silliness, at which point he apologizes profusely. "It's over," he announces, meaning not the relationship, but the interrogation. But it is not, for he continues, if she will just tell him one name he'll forget it in no time. The routine has come full circle.

The viewer has no way of knowing where the genuine emotion is and where the play. Since Odette is a prostitute, there always remains the possibility that this is an agreed-upon game from the start, that the conversation with the woman in the hall was a provocation either to demean Swann or to initiate a sexual
scenario. On the other hand it is just as likely that she does lie to Swann to get it over with and tell him what he needs/wants to hear, whether it is true or not. The circular tracking shot suggests that this is a common occurrence, possibly even a query about why men and women seem to require such behavior from each other. At one point as Swann embraces her, Schlöndorff shows a close up of Odette's face and the pain that this whole game is causing her. At a quieter moment she asks, "Est-ce que je dois jouer la phrase ou faire des petites caresses?" Playing is set up in opposition to tenderness. Schlöndorff describes Odette as someone who refuses to be possessed by Charles because he refuses to play by the rules.

The motivations of the characters in this film are very complicated because most of them really do not seem to know what they want. The characters can not even be trusted to tell the truth about themselves. Charles lies shamelessly to Charlus when he tells him he has gotten over Odette. Charlus, of course, sees right through him by engaging in another game. He tells Charles that he has been out with Odette the night before, eliciting the crestfallen look from Charles which betrays his ever strong obsession. Charles also lies to himself, trying to convince himself that Odette has demeaned him for the last time on the night of the dinner party. Odette has done nothing to him in comparison to the disgraces he heaps upon himself by his lovesick calling at the window of complete strangers in the middle of the night. Swann's progress in the twenty-four hour period is nil. Up until the end he is proclaiming he is through with Odette, despite all the primary characters' full knowledge to the contrary. Charlus sums it up with the last words before the epilogue, "When are you going to marry her?"

Odette, on the other hand, does show progress in the film. As a character not accepted on her own merits, she learns to draw lines and deny Swann at important moments in the film. Although her motivations are never clearly explained, she displays very tender moments toward Swann which support Schlöndorff's claim
that she seeks only a great love with Swann. She also knows how to get what she
wants. In convincing Swann to marry her, she succeeds in making an honest albeit
un-receivable woman of herself. Only at the end of the film is there any
confirmation of her seedy past. As she walks triumphantly past the Parisian arch,
a passerby notes that many years ago it cost him 50,000 Francs to sleep with
Odette de Crecy and for that he didn’t even get a smile. This additionally
underscores that Odette really does care for Swann, although she was a prostitute.
She has smiled freely for Charles throughout the movie.\textsuperscript{17} The film ends with her
triumphant walk, while a dying Charles is left to look back at a life of
questionable value. At the end, Charlus and Swann reminisce and discover their
lives are just collections of memories. The very obsession that has filled Swann’s
life is that which has prevented him from doing his work. He has been a memory
collector, whose collection will die with him. Perhaps the moral here is that
people who create images of other people had best do so in a work of art, or else
the images are lost with them.

Madame Swann, however, was never a passive observer and collector like
Swann. As an active participant in life, she will go on living as she sees fit
regardless of Charles’ or society’s image of her. Discovering what she wants and
how far she will go to get it, she knows when to withdraw from the game and when
to play it. At the end of the film she has wealth, standing and Swann. At the
bagatelle, Odette complains about the way the footman looks at her, to which
Swann replies, “Then we must purify his thoughts or make him look the other way.”
Odette’s solution is neither of these. The social structure can neither purify its
thoughts nor look the other way, instead Odette has learned to deconstruct the
social setting by flaunting her difference. Knowing what people think about her
she refuses to let people look comfortably the other way. Instead she strolls down
the main thoroughfare of Paris. The victory in the film is clearly hers. The film is clearly hers.

The character of Simone in *Mona Lisa* also knows what she wants and how to achieve it. In addition to being a strong vibrant woman she has all the glitzy characteristics missed by critics in the characters of Molly, Claudia and Lauren. She is gorgeous, she dresses skimpily and she comes from the seedy side of town where there are drugs and thugs and pimps that like to beat their 'girls.' That should be an immediate tip off. Simone has broken away from the King's Cross street business and instead of a pimp or ponce she now hires a driver to look like her date at hotels and generally protect her from the bad guys.

Her unlikely chauffeur is George, a working class Cockney man, who has fallen on bad times, which include the destruction of his marriage and seven years on "the inside." After his release he is in need of work and more or less willing to take on any job offer. Simone and George's best friend, Thomas, an avid reader of detective novels and middle man for all kinds of cheap plastic objets d'art, comprise the main characters of Neil Jordan's film.

On the surface this is a suspense thriller about the underworld's attempts to control the underground sex market. It comes complete with guns, drugs and underworld kingpins. But there are some elements here which just don't fit. George has a daughter and a best friend, who keep showing up throughout the film and who have nothing to do with the prostitution plot. Then there is the title. Does it imply that the point of the movie is to find out what makes this painted "lady", in the sense of either the da Vinci masterpiece or the prostitute Simone, smile? Is it the pure irony that our simple, but good hero is to be thrown over for another woman? Once again an opening scene is worth a thousand words.

George is shown at sunrise crossing a bridge. The music is Nat King Cole's rendition of *Mona Lisa*. The camera follows a package-carrying George through a
park to a London street corner and to a set of row houses. As he rings a door bell, the viewer sees that he now has not only his package, but also a bunch of flowers. A girl opens the door, looks at him and asks, "Do you want Mom?" George can say nothing. When Mom gets to the door she pulls her daughter away and a screaming fight ensues. She is yelling, "You been away too fuckin' long." He is telling her, "I only come to say hello." When the door is slammed in his face, he screams, "Hello." In a fit of pique he knocks over garbage cans and starts a fight with the neighborhood guys. A friend of his comes and extricates him with "Let 'm be. The man's upset." Taking George to his car, a beautiful white Jaguar, he lets him know that he's been keeping it for George since he has been on "the inside." This rapid series of events tells the viewer just about all s/he will learn about the factual life of the hero, George. They are also crucial to the later events of the film. They introduce George's disillusionment with women, his unresolved anger, and his relationship with his best friend. They show George's prized possession, the white Jaguar, and let the viewer know that George has been locked away. They tell her/him no more and no less.

In the following scene Thomas asks if George got the books that he sent him. George complains about their endings and Thomas replies, "You didn't write them, George." George responds, "No, but if I hadda..." They get into the white Jaguar. From the radio/cassette deck come the strains of Mona Lisa. Instantly George asks Thomas, "Why does she hate me?" To which he answers, "You can never tell with women. They're different... When they die they get wings like angels." George knows better, letting Thomas know with a scowl, that angels are men.

This scene includes a lot of information. Not only does it imply the way men tend to idealize women who are no longer around, but it also describes George's role. He is an angel, in that he sees himself as an innocent party. More properly, he is naïve and inexperienced. A very important theme is the fact that things are
different. This is a word that George will hear every time someone is trying to dissuade him from something. More importantly, women are different. George asks Simone at one point about her love life. Her answer is that she is different. "I'm the woman men hurry home from." George can not understand. He wants to know why she is different. Why isn't she the way he imagines she should be. Richard Corliss' interprets the film as opening with, as well as centralizing, this very problem. "It begins with a powerful perception: when a man looks at a woman, he sees the fiction he has created of her, and out of this visionary myopia, this need to fashion a Galatea or a Bride of Frankenstein, come love, lust, violence and art." While Jordan may not be generalizing for all of man-kind, he certainly asks the viewer to pay close attention to George's perceptions of the world and what it means to be different.

The first scenes contain other important recurring themes. Detective novels are repeatedly discussed by George and Thomas through the course of the movie. Thomas keeps giving George gifts of detective stories, or telling him about the newest twist in the latest one he has read. They all include exotic and outlandish plots involving opera singers, horses murdered with ice picks and dwarves running into psychiatrists' offices. The very first mention of a murder mystery is a thinly-veiled reference to George. He informs Thomas, "It shouldn't have been the driver." Here he is once again pronouncing his own innocence. George has found someone else to pin the guilt on.

The second recurring theme is the song Mona Lisa. Peter Travers believes Cole's song is the key to George's character, while Pauline Kael credits it with giving the film "the potency of cheap music that's represented by the title song." In the first scenes the song is played in connection with the question, "Why does she hate me so much?" but Jordan forces it on the viewer at many other points in the film. It is not only used motivically as extradiegetic background music, but it
is played on the car radio/cassette recorder twice and hummed by Hoskins at another point. A poster of the Da Vinci painting is even taped to the side of Thomas’ refrigerator. The Nat King Cole version of the song is played at the opening of the film and once again at the close. It should be noted that a director very rarely uses precisely the same sound track for both the beginning of a film and the end. If the opening music is sung, usually a second instrumental version is recorded for the final credits. Jordan obviously wants the viewer to pay close attention to the lyrics.

This is a song about disillusioned love. The singer compares someone he loves to the Mona Lisa, wondering what the secret is behind the smile. The song is made up of a battery of questions. “Do you smile to tempt a lover, Mona Lisa? Or is this the way you hide a broken heart? Many dreams have been brought to your doorstep. They just lie there and they die there. Are you warm? Are you real, Mona Lisa? Or just a cold and lonely, lovely work of art?” The song begs the question of fantasy versus reality.

It is played when George and Simone fight over his choice of clothes. He has just confessed to being cheap. “Being cheap is one thing,” she says, “Looking cheap is another.” He turns on the music and she demands he turn it off. At stake here is the difference between images and reality, between what people want to see and what is really there. George hums the song again when Simone comes back from an appointment in the stereotyped hooker’s hose and garters, asking her about how it went. He is essentially asking her to validate his imagination of what went on “up there.” The whole film revolves around George’s attempt to distinguish between his fantasies and reality.

Jordan sets up a machinery that clearly links Simone with the Mona Lisa of the song. She looks a little like the Mona Lisa and, besides being mysterious, she has a very secretive smile. She is frequently depicted as a smile in George’s rear-
view mirror, a fact which underlines her quality as image, rather than person. As it turns out, she is indeed a woman with a secret. In the interior of the narrative, her secret is that she has a female lover, but her real secret, which only gradually becomes clear to the audience, is that she doesn't really exist. She is simply the figment of heartbroken George's imagination, "a cold and lonely, lovely work of art."

Jordan assaults the reader with this fact most clearly at the end of the film, when George in overalls is seen working on the Jaguar with Thomas in his garage. George concludes, "... and that's the story." The narrative continues with him talking about the chauffeur, George, in the third person. "But he couldn't see, he liked her so much..." This connects to a previous scene in the film where George tells Thomas, "I could write a book about it... He likes her, but she fuckin' hates him..." Jordan has pulled a fast one. The cut to the next scene does all it can to portray reality. It is broad daylight and Simone is saying, "You look better in the daytime." She is taking him to get him some decent clothes. This, however, is only a segment in George's narrative.

Jordan gives some hints at different points in the narrative. George, when visiting Thomas, has been shown some tacky wire spaghetti sculptures that Thomas is selling. Later he is shown before a spaghetti dinner asking, "Is this real?" There are also constant references to "story." George asks Simone on the pier, "What is the whole story?" Thomas asks George, "What's the story" suggesting, whatever it is, it can't be more complicated than one of his detective novels. People are always telling or asking for stories. Simone tells George the story of Cathy and why she is looking for her and the story of the man with the gold ring (who turns out to be George's employer Denny). George's daughter wants to know the story of what he did to make his wife so angry with him. Thomas brings up the fact that George used to tell jokes, which are obviously a form of
story. As if an aside he comments, "But no one ever laughed." Thomas explains, "It's the way you tell 'em."

The way George tells his story also ensures it will be taken seriously and not questioned by the viewer. In the first place Jordan includes things to confuse the reader. He includes a scene where Simone and Thomas talk to each other. Although this seems to contradict the fact that Thomas is real and Simone is a made-up character, all it really does is suggest that George uses his friends as players in his story. (Writers after all, often adapt real life to their own uses.) Jordan then allows the drama to become more and more theatrical, and as it does, the big joke is that elements of Thomas' mystery novels start to pop up in George's narrative. When he goes to Denny's house to fetch the girl, there is opera music in the background. It sets up a link with the dead opera singer in one of Thomas' mysteries. After nabbing the girl, George stops at a nursery story playground, upon looking around the camera settles on a white horse. Finally in the scene of the shoot out, after George behaves in an unexpectedly heroic fashion, knocking his hard head against a killer's to knock him out (very typical adventure story stuff) and pummeling another thug, the camera catches two dwarves engaged in a mock battle. All of these jarring elements relate to pieces of stories that Thomas has told George.

An intriguing idea is not worth much without a motivation, but Jordan also presents the viewer with some clues to the meaning of George's story. This hinges around his relationship with his wife. It is probably not by accident that George's wife is dark. Thus George, who seems not to understand what happened to his marriage, tells the story of being rejected by a woman he loves. As she slams the door in his face, George calls his wife a cow, an epithet he repeats in the pier scene when he finds out that Simone is in love with Karen. The elements of the story suggest a struggling with an emotional problem. George ends up taking care
of a woman who does not love him and feeling like an inadequate man. This castration fear is once again expressed in the Freudian dread that he is being replaced by another woman. Yet the healing process occurs as he works through the imaginary story. The telling strains of "Mona Lisa" strike up again as Simone pleads with George, "Didn't you ever need someone?" The answer which shows him for the first time that these pains are felt on both sides, is "All the time." After admitting this weakness in himself, he is still able to behave like a man and protect her from the oncoming foes. George has discovered the egotism in being unable to believe that someone he loved could be indifferent to him. It is the discovery that no partner has overriding rights in a relationship. In talking to his friend he thus concludes with the statement that she was in love, but not with him." This recognition signals acceptance of his position and the ability to move on. In ending with, "That's the story, almost." He reveals that it really is his story that he has modified just a little.

It should also be mentioned that the viewer never really knows where George has been locked up for seven years. It is implied that he may have been a driver of some kind of getaway car for Denny and that he has agreed to take the fall. Yet one wonders what kind of crime can be pulled in a one of a kind white jaguar. In addition there are other strange behaviors, that suggest that maybe George was in another kind of institution. The first thing he does after he gets out is buy a large white bunny for Denny. Thomas exclaims, "You're not going to start all that business again, are you?" Bunnies carry with them a wide variety of associations. They are sweet and cuddly, have active sex lives, but are also known for being dumb. Whatever a white bunny with long ears signifies to George, his is not the action of someone who is completely stable.30

George's mental state is constantly called into question. Depicted as someone who does not know what's going on, George is constantly making mistakes
due to his ignorance. Often these turn out to be quite amusing. When told to go out and buy suitable clothes, he decks himself out in a Hawaiian shirt and leather jacket which is perfect for a bluecollar pub, but not too suitable for a top-class hotel. When he orders tea, his waiter intones, "Earl Grey or Lapsang Souchong." His reply is, "No, just tea." Denny suggests he should find out what his employer does for her money, which of course George immediately sets out to do without even asking himself why Denny should be so interested. In the ice cream scene with the real Cathy, she matter of factly states, "You don't know anything, do you?" To which he responds, "No, I don't know anything." His state of ignorance is underscored by the scene on the pier where he will declare his love for Simone/his wife, because that's what men and women do.31 If his first marriage was based on that kind of logic, then no wonder it fell apart.

Nonetheless George's weaknesses are echoed in the visual imagery of the film. On the Brighton Beach pier, he puts a pair of red heart shaped sunglasses on his love interest, while placing star shaped ones on himself. Not only do shades represent clouded vision, but they also visually describe him as someone with stars in his eyes. Here is a man who is unable to look at the truth squarely. He can only approach it through the protective screen of telling it as a story. When Simone bolts she knocks down a series of large plastic hearts on the pier, thus emphasizing the futility of George's vision. George sees only his fetishized image of Simone.

Thus the image of the prostitute in this film really is a fetish, yet she is a fetish which the male character learns he must release in order to live a balanced life. Mona Lisa is a film about letting go of dreams, in order to live more happily in reality. The very last scene of the movie reveals George, his daughter, and Thomas strolling off. George has managed through the process to build a healthy relationship with his daughter and he, of course, retains the one he has with
Thomas. As they walk off into the distance they skip in the same fashion as Dorothy and her friends following the yellow brick road. This can only be a reminder of the growth process undertaken by Dorothy, who realizes that fantasies can be fine, but there's no place like home. The film ends with a sunset, suggesting the succession of time and process.
Notes

1 The cameraman was Swedish, the lead actor English, the female lead Italian. All these people however come from countries firmly ensconced in the European patriarchal tradition.


3 This is actually a very hot area in German theory at present because of the large number of classics adapted to film, because of the ease with which directors get funding for the classics. See Brigitte Jeremias, "Wie weit kann sich Film von der Literatur entfernen?" Film und Literatur: Literarische Texte und der neue deutsche Film. Ed. Sigrid Bauschinger, Susan L. Cocalis und Henry A. Lea, (München: Francke Verlag, 1984) 9-17.

4 For a brief discussion of this topic please refer to footnote 118 in Chapter 2.

5 The French did in fact take the request to film Swann very seriously. For a discussion of the long history in trying to get permission to film, see Wiegand "National."


Wilfried Wiegand reports that Schlöndorff insisted on the music being composed before the screenplay was even finished, because it was in itself "Element der Handlung." Wiegand, "National." The fictional sonata was compared by Proust to Saint Saens, Franck, Schubert and Wagner. Schlöndorff commissioned a work that would combine the qualities mentioned by Proust, "mais avec l'oreille et la sensibilité musicale d'aujourd'hui, sans jamais du faux xixe siècle." Schlöndorff 190.

In the original Proust, Charlus is not identified as the person that introduces them until the later book Sodome et Gomorrhe. Miguet 359.

This is just another in a long series of images which indicate that Swann is the only one who does not know that his course has already been decided.

Miguet points out in the novel that Swann immediately conceives of the piano playing as a way to cover up the noise of a departing lover, another variation
of play. Schlöndorff makes the same implication by showing Odette interpose herself between Swann at the door to her sitting room. She closes the door and makes no explanation for her actions spiriting Charles off in a different direction. Miguet 360.

18 Schlöndorff 187.

19 Schlöndorff suggests that it is Swann who insists on a relationship with a financial basis. "Le dandy est avant tout un professionnel achevé de la consommation, comme dit Walter Benjamin, et Swann se comporte en capitaliste." Schlöndorff 187.


21 Kael/Kauffmann, for example complain about the very fact that Thomas is only a construct, put there simply to warn George of the evilness of Denny Mortwell. Kael 118; Kauffmann 27.


23 Ironically perhaps, George wants to pin the guilt on a more exotic party, "a chinese fella', who fed the gold fish."


25 John Simon divines a Thomas Aquinas in George's best friend. The spaghetti he interprets as a symbol of the Italian (along with the poster on the refrigerator) and Thomas' desire for "the whole story," he equates with the

26 In fact this style of telling a joke that makes no one laugh annoyed many critics. Kael, for instance, notes, "Mona Lisa reeks of noirishness. Worse it reeks of intellectualized noirishness." Kael 118. Kauffmann calls it "sententious underworld hokum." Kauffman 28. John Simon intones, "Beware of the film that features a symbolic white horse... Something pretentious is afoot, or ahoof." He sums it all up with, "The mode of Mona Lisa is gutter Dostoevsky, with the former, alas, outpulling the latter." Simon 59.

27 The opera is, in fact, Puccini's Madame Butterfly, a central theme of which is amore o grillo, (love or fancy). The opera hinges on the degree to which the main character is deceiving Butterfly into thinking he is in love with her, despite his plans to take an American wife in the future. Jordan uses the music very blatantly to foreshadow events or indicate states of mind. Sentimental songs of Nat King Cole dominate the sound track when George is on camera. The words express such feelings as, "When I fall in love it will be forever." or "You know I love you, but I just can't take this." (A song from the rock group Genesis.)

28 The white horse is also a powerful symbol. Freud and Jung, of course, equated the horse with the male organ, perhaps playing on George's castration fear. The horse is tied up. Nonetheless the horse also connotes the knight, who saves the maiden in trouble. This of course is the fantasy which George is enacting at that time. A fantasy also foreshadowed the girl's calling him Father George in the church. George is the defender of distressed damsels and the famous slayer of the dragon.

29 Dwarves are of course little men, which also has a Freudian implication.

30 The most obvious connection is with Hugh Hefner's organization, suggesting that George is displeased with Denny's choice of empire. However,
these changes have supposedly taken place while George was away, which indicates that there may be some other connection. George seems too disgusted with the peepshow world to willingly have gone along with that type of business, let alone to have taken the fall for Denny in it. Perhaps the implication is that Denny had an affair with George's wife, or that George was unrealistically jealous of Denny. A bunny with long ears might also indicate that George knows more than he is saying, that he is innocent or that he is dumb and never knows what is really going on. It may also signify being screwed or being innocent or even refer to the sixties rock song by Jefferson Airplane, which deals with a hallucinatory experience. Perhaps the white bunny is really only a red herring.

This is an additional "knowing" motif in the film. A common female question is, "Do you like me?" To which the invariable male response is "I don't know you. Do I?" Both George and Thomas respond in this fashion.
Conclusion

In comparing the prostitute in film to the real life practitioner, it becomes clear that the American, British and German film industries have another interest other than simply portraying the truth about the profession. Something about the prostitute has made her particularly attractive to the consumers of popular art in Western culture. The increase in portrayal of prostitution in the motion picture industry suggests some rather interesting conclusions concerning our present-day culture.

It has been noted that the visual quality of prostitution probably has a great deal to do with the frequency of prostitutes occurring as subordinate characters in film. Similarities between the film industry and prostitution, both of which capitalize on an image based on fantasy, also probably play an important role. In addition the location of the film industries in highly patriarchal cultures leads to the classification of women in one of four superficial categories based on their morality and their relations to men. Women, as examined and explained by male scientists, have been viewed historically as both nurturers, creators of life, and evil destroyers thereof. The frightening aspects of women are often explained as being related to fears of castration or loss of masculine control. Woman's sexuality has for this reason always seemed frightening when not under male domination. These feelings gave rise to the classification of women in terms of whether they engage in sexual relations with men or not. Consequently, women that do not have sex are divided into the threatening and the non-threatening categories.

Innocent young girls, known as virgins, are not considered threatening, because they are perceived as naive and influential. They are comprehended as incomplete beings in need of male protection. Older women who chose not to have
relations with men become threatening, because by assuming their own independence, they can not be controlled by men sexually. These women have been generally categorized as witches and crones or else they become nuns, having been rendered harmless by that most patriarchal of institutions, the church. Women who have sex, but remain obedient to the patriarchal order, become mothers, whereas those who participate, but refuse to limit themselves to the monogamous strictures set for women, become known as sluts or whores.

Yet this dichotomy reduces into still another set of poles. For even whores have a split characterization in patriarchal culture. There are whores with hearts of gold, who never question the male-constructed order and who secretly long to be mothers but for one reason or another (often simply that they were abused by men earlier in life) ended up in the category of naughty women. Nice whores are not nearly as threatening as the nasty ones. The not so nice side of the unmarried sexual woman is thus the evil vamp, who refuses to be dominated. She retains icy control, luring men wantonly with her charms and thereby reminding them of their own inability to control themselves. She may give the illusion of being subjected to men sexually, but her lack of involvement causes her to preserve a certain autonomy.

The rise in popularity of the whore in contemporary film can be readily understood in terms of recent social developments. The feminist movement, which was so strong during the late Sixties and early Seventies, suffered a great backlash in the mid and late Seventies. Not until the Eighties has the possibility of a moderate acceptance of some of the liberation tenets been possible. Gradually the inequities in patriarchal culture have been recognized and castigated by popular culture media, including television, detective novels and the film industry. Nonetheless the sudden popularity of the whore represents a kind of double edged sword.
The popularity of the unsubdued whore may be based, for example, on a double fantasy, whereby men who utilize her services can feel that they are subjugating such an evil type, while the perspective of women feeling repressed by societal strictures may allow a fantasy about finally being able to take advantage of men in the way they have been taking advantage of women. The prostitute is envisioned as having control of the situation in terms of finances, time limits and sexual orgasm, and as rendering the man the manipulated object. Likewise the whore with the heart of gold can be viewed variously as symptomatic of the abuse of women in patriarchal society as well as chauvinistically as a woman put in her proper place. In a society confused about the place of women, these ambivalent interpretations can play to both audiences.

Nonetheless, the timbre of these films seems to be changing with the Eighties. While earlier films located whores distinctly in the realm of the dominated women, prostitutes of the eighties seem to be getting their comeuppance. More and more clearly directors are recognizing the extreme phallocentrism in past portrayals of prostitutes and women in general. They have begun to question whether there are not other techniques and attitudes to use in the depiction of women. While inventing story lines that apparently fit into musty patriarchal traditions, they are sneaking films into dominant cinema that undercut the traditional messages. By using lighting, sound, text and framing to call the old male perspectives into question, they are injecting a new sympathy for and identification with their female characters. This occurrence, of course, represents a reversal since Meilen's discoveries about the films of the Seventies. Whereas previously films had been couched in an apparent or pseudo-feminist perspective that was undermined through the development of the story, now it seems that films tend to be located in patriarchal environments which are called into question or altered by the course of the action.
While there are still numerous examples of films which glorify the chauvinist perspective, and films like *Fatal Attraction* can have such phenomenal success, it is nonetheless a hopeful sign that such an abundant number of films conveying the opposite viewpoint are suddenly being produced and viewed. No doubt some of the popularity is due to the lack of comprehension on the part of the public. As reviews have shown, a majority of critics as well as viewers have not comprehended the purpose of these recent films. The fact, however, that they have induced such a sense of malaise and such a variety of interpretations, speaks to the impact of their efforts.

A great influence in this has no doubt been the rise in feminist critical theory, which has enlarged the possibilities of interpretation. By clarifying and rejecting the limits expressed in male dominant cinema, feminists have given artists new understanding of rules to break and perspectives to undermine. Thus by making people aware of the fact that most films were shot from a completely male perspective, the gates were opened to filming from a female perspective, which may one day eventually lead to filming from a human perspective. The myth that viewers had to identify with a male hero was also dispelled. Critics who claimed only women had the ability to relate with a different sexed protagonist, had to learn that men were just as able to identify with a female lead. Accordingly, Borden was thrilled to find that so many men identified with the character of Molly in her film *Working Girls*. Films which cross these sexually prescribed boundaries have shown that men are capable of being objectified and women are capable of being the determiners of meaning. While the theories of Metz, Lacan, and Freud were completely applicable to a culture in which males exerted dominant control, they can be seen to provide only a partial story. With the break-down of acceptance of verbal narrative as the proper filmic medium, the course was laid for a wider diversity in film making and viewing. Theory has
Increasingly begun to recognize the importance of the other areas of the film in interpretation and aesthetic value.

The importance of all of these factors have been demonstrated in the analysis of the image of the prostitute in current film. What has also been discovered is that film style and approach will alter the depiction of any character type. This means that to some extent the message really is the medium. Political/economic discourses have tended to give the prostitute a particular tint and character different than films which take an emotional or psychological tack. While no approach promises a more realistic depiction, films which take a political vantage point are more interested in system than in plot or narrative.

Naturally, none of the classifications are pure. Most of the motion pictures discussed would tend to fit into at least two of the four categories. Regardless, films which concentrate on social structures seem much more likely to analyze the hardened, controlling woman and how she got there, while those which concentrate on psychological structures, tend to deal much more with individualistic characters, often concentrating on the pain endured. These latter women are more likely to be the modern versions of the hooker with the heart of gold. The final category, prostitute as aesthetic symbol is most prone to fetishizing and objectification of woman. This is understandable, because in using any one or thing as a symbol, the individual character becomes less significant. Perhaps feminists need to be a little less sensitive on this issue as long as these symbols are not made stand-ins for the entire female sex. Without the freedom to use this method, great novels and films such as *Laura*, *Death in Venice* and *Rebecca* would not have been possible. Male sexual objectification is also used extensively these days and though it may be viewed either as a step backward, or as progress, it is reasonable to expect a visual medium to include a certain amount of objectification. Films like *Cruising* and *American Gigolo* address the nature of
address the nature of sexual appeal and differentiation by using objectification outside of its usual female-centered context.

In conclusion, the prostitutes examined in this dissertation represent a wide spectrum in terms of character-depth, morality and personality. This can only be construed as an improvement over their previous depiction. Fallen women in the movies are no longer just paper-doll cut outs of either the wanton and evil mistress or the sweet young thing gone wrong. They are fully developed individuals who live in a patriarchal culture and for this reason are faced with difficult choices. Some of their choices are criticized and some are venerated, but they are no longer simply castigated for their choice of profession. In fact, given the social structure in which they live, sometimes these women are even validated in their occupational choice. This represents a major change since the years of Lola Lola and Lulu, Gilda and Jezebel, or even Bree Daniels and Phyllis Dietrichson, the manipulating blonde in *Double Indemnity*.

Although the majority of films are still about men, and most of the popular ones involve mindless action plots, it is a marked improvement to have an increasing number of films which deal with women as a multi-dimensional subject. While the prostitute may represent a fantasy of sexual and personal freedom to women still under the pressures of a patriarchal society or she may represent a hopeless pawn in the game of male capitalist economy, she also may represent a culture which recognizes some of the hypocrisy inherent in its system. Obviously the image of the prostitute in film is indicative of a society still reliant on a patriarchal structuring. A profession dependent on the inequality of the sexes for its very existence will never provide its practitioners with more than the appearance of equality in the male system. It is also evident from these films, that women are still seen primarily in the context of their sexual relationships to men, and there are still plenty of demeaning filmic images being produced daily.
Nonetheless, within the restrictions of a patriarchal structure the humanity and sympathy for the position of female characters has improved immensely and will hopefully continue to do so. Only with a clear recognition of the limitations for women in a male structured society will there be a possibility of a restructuring in the direction of total equality.
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