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**Erin Anderson**

## **The Great Social Evil: Geographic and Social Segregation in Metropolitan Victorian Prostitution Reform**

What is a prostitute? ...She is a woman with half the woman gone, and that half containing all that elevates her nature, leaving her a mere instrument of impurity; degraded and fallen she extracts from the sin of others the means of living, corrupt and dependent on corruption, and therefore interested directly in the increase of immorality – a social pest, carrying contamination and foulness to every quarter to which she has access....<sup>1</sup>

-William Acton, 1870

The nineteenth century was an era of social dichotomization. The expansion of the middle classes precipitated new distinctions between the rich and the poor, men and women, and the “haves” and the “have nots.” People increasingly defined themselves not only by what they were, but also by what they were not.<sup>2</sup> This disparity fostered a sense of social and moral superiority among the upper and middle classes that quickly became an integral part of so-called “Victorian values.”

These values emphasized, among other traits, religious piety, sexual purity, self-help, frugality, and charity.<sup>3</sup> The latter generated an era of top-down volunteerism in Victorian England in which the upper classes sympathized with the unsanitary living conditions of the underprivileged.<sup>4</sup> The idea was to “rescue” the poor from their filth and sin in order “to re-establish a sense of their own direction and to make a contribution to the common good.”<sup>5</sup> However well-intentioned the reformers may have been, the fact remained that a gulf of misunderstanding divided them from the recipients of their aid.

Such was the case with Victorian England’s prostitution reform efforts. An unnamed contributor to the *British Medical Journal* in 1870 put it this way: “We are exhorted to charity

towards ‘fallen sisters’; and deficiency of Christian love is imputed because we are not willing to recognize and befriend the class referred to.”<sup>6</sup> In this essay I will argue that attempts to reform or eradicate the sex trade in urban Victorian England resulted in the geographic and social segregation of prostitutes from “civilized” (i.e. upper and middle class) society. Anthropologist Mary Douglas described taboos as “the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.”<sup>7</sup> Prostitutes were the ultimate Victorian sexual taboo. The life and practices of a prostitute were incompatible with idealized Victorian values, and thus the “working girl” found herself spatially and morally marginalized to prevent her from “inflict[ing] the greatest scandal and damage upon society.”<sup>8</sup> Reformers accomplished this by restricting the geography of prostitution and by shaping contemporary rhetoric to depict prostitutes as societal outsiders in the public opinion.

Estimates of the number of prostitutes in Victorian England vary widely. Nineteenth century researcher William Acton cited numerous sources claiming that the population of prostitutes in London ranged anywhere from 8,600 to 80,000 in his comprehensive study on the subject.<sup>9</sup> Of course, these estimates included only the demographics of densely populated London, not of any other large towns or cities, let alone the rural countryside, and can hardly be considered more than guesses. Furthermore, as Fraser Harrison noted, “many of the women walking the streets...were irregulars who did not live by prostitution, but who turned to it, whenever necessity dictated, in order to supplement incomes derived from other sources.”<sup>10</sup> Though exact statistics are difficult to ascertain with any real certainty, we may reasonably conclude from historical accounts and modern studies that prostitutes were numerous enough that “everyone who sought a prostitute could be confident of finding one appropriate to his pocket and requirements.”<sup>11</sup>

Prostitutes generally operated through three main institutions: introducing houses, dress houses, and accommodation houses. Introducing houses provided a location run by a third party, usually a procuress, where prostitutes could meet up with their nightly companions.<sup>12</sup> Acton described these rendezvous points saying, “They concern us...little from a sanitary...point of view, but are not without an influence upon the morals of the highest society.”<sup>13</sup> However, introducing houses made up only a small portion of England’s sex trade. Many more prostitutes worked in dress houses. Owners of dress houses provided food, clothing, and lodging for prostitutes. Drawn ever deeper into debt to their hosts, the women plying their trades on the streets were effectively trapped in a state of slavery.<sup>14</sup> Most Victorian prostitutes preferred to work independently on the streets and to take advantage of accommodation houses. These houses gave them a place to take their sexual partners temporarily for a modest fee, usually paid by the client.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to arrive at an accurate number of accommodation houses since, as Acton describes, “these houses are so quietly kept, that police supervision is...impossible.”<sup>16</sup> Often they took the form of a few extra rooms above a tavern or an extra bedroom let secretly by an individual to supplement his or her income.<sup>17</sup>

The inability to detect prostitutes’ lodgings was just one reason police found it so hard to regulate and control prostitution. Another was the transient nature of the sex trade. Prostitutes could practice their trade in any town or city, and “if a prostitute is prosecuted for plying her trade in one parish, she will only move into another.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, not every prostitute was a “professional.” In times of want or need some prostitutes sought additional income. One woman interviewed reported that she only prostituted herself when she wanted to afford “some little luxury in the way of food or clothes” that her salary as a typesetter could not cover.<sup>19</sup> Even when police successfully detained prostitutes, the women often returned to the streets immediately

upon their release from jail. Roughly ten percent of prostitutes arrested near Cambridge University between 1823 and 1894 were arrested at least ten times.<sup>20</sup> The fluidity of the sex worker demographic made it difficult for police to control the English sex trade.

However, this did not stop observers from blaming the continued existence of the sex trade on the failure of the police.<sup>21</sup> They believed that “everything that concerns the relations of the sexes concerns the purity of our homes, the interests of morality...and the honor of our race.”<sup>22</sup> The upper and middle classes wanted an effective solution for the stain that “diffus[ed] itself through the social fabric.”<sup>23</sup> But it would have been a hopeless undertaking to try to eradicate prostitution completely. Acton began chapter two of his book by saying, “Prostitution [is] an inevitable attendant upon civilized, and especially closely-packed, populations. When all is said and done, it is, and I believe ever will be, ineradicable.”<sup>24</sup> For this reason, Victorian legislation placed more emphasis on limiting, controlling, and corralling prostitutes than it did attempting to exterminate the sex trade.

In 1864, Parliament passed the first of three Contagious Diseases Acts. Together these acts worked to control and limit prostitution in coastal towns in an attempt to lower the prevalence of syphilis contracted after sexual liaisons with prostitutes among army and navy personnel. The second and third acts (passed in 1866 and 1869 respectively) extended the geographic reach of the original act. Under this trio of legislation, women merely *suspected* of prostitution or of suffering from a sexually transmitted disease could be forced to undergo an involuntary medical examination. They could be detained for up to nine months in lock hospitals, which specialized in treating venereal diseases.<sup>25</sup> Responses to these acts divided the nation.

Opponents of the acts varied in their reasons for disapproval. A group of 124 women published a “Protest against the Acts” saying that “the Acts put women at the mercy of the

police, that they unjustly punished the sex who were its main cause, and that they cruelly degraded their female victims.”<sup>26</sup> An unknown author of *The British Medical Journal* took a very different approach. He argued that “syphilis and gonorrhoea do stand for many men as efficient scarecrows in the fields of forbidden pleasure” and that by attempting to remove the threat of venereal disease, the government was removing the only deterrent preventing men from using prostitutes even more frequently.<sup>27</sup>

Others, like William Acton, were wholly in favor of this legislation. In a response to the aforementioned anonymous article, Acton declared that he had “long been dissatisfied with the *know-nothing, do-nothing* effete system of the passing century” and regretted that the unnamed author would dare to place “more value on the morals [of the acts] than on the health of the Englishman.”<sup>28</sup> Acton and his fellow supporters of the Contagious Diseases Acts believed the “magistrates should exercise the law – should clear the streets of every one of these infamous women, and make them at least decent, if they cannot make them moral and virtuous.”<sup>29</sup> Acton’s argument clearly displays a common Victorian attitude: that prostitutes – like their fellow lower class compatriots – are inherently morally corrupt, and that no amount of legislation or charity could effectively change that. Thus, his argument follows, laws must be passed to effectively contain this immorality and its physical consequences (i.e. venereal disease). The Association for Promoting the Extension of the Contagious Diseases Act published its argument that “No woman need be a prostitute unless she chooses, but that if she deliberately adopts such a mode of gaining her living, the imminent risk which she incurs of contracting a serious disease renders her so dangerous in the community as to justify state interference to prevent her doing much mischief to others.”<sup>30</sup> Supporters of the act clearly believed that the power of the law was the only hope of controlling a naturally sinful society.

Lock hospitals and lock asylums were the main institutions through which the English government attempted to reform prostitutes and eradicate prostitution (or at least reduce the prevalence of venereal disease).<sup>31</sup> In Britain, the most prominent of these institutions were the London Lock Hospital and London Lock Asylum, respectively. Lock hospitals were responsible for treating both men and women suffering from sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>32</sup> Until the Contagious Diseases Acts implemented their policies of involuntary quarantine for infected prostitutes, these institutions were simply a specialized sub-set of medical care facilities.<sup>33</sup> Their emphasis was on curing their patients of *physical* ailments only. Lock asylums on the other hand were reserved for women exclusively, and emphasized a *moral* reform of prostitutes admitted to lock hospitals. Only women were considered suitable for the sexuality alteration programs of a lock asylum because “men had a natural sexual impulse which they could not control because it was innate in them,” therefore making reformation impossible, “but women were held to be responsible for the purity of the nation, therefore they had to be chaste.”<sup>34</sup> Inmates of lock asylums underwent a stringent curriculum emphasizing the “Victorian values,” in short, upper and middle class morality and respectability.

The use of medical detention was one of the key dividing factors in the debates about the Contagious Diseases Acts. The *British Medical Journal* played host to many of these arguments in print. One contributor against the use of lock hospitals made the point that, “...it is said, every woman guilty of syphilitic disease must be held in durance until she is cured. But why not also every man? Do men never spread the disease?”<sup>35</sup> Women, far more often than men, were targeted for incarceration in lock hospitals and were far more likely to receive the moral education of lock asylums.<sup>36</sup> For many opposed to the acts, the singling out of women (and prostitutes specifically) as targets was the greatest issue. However, equally as many supporters

were quick to turn the tables and argue that the *act* of contracting a sexually transmitted disease or infection was the justifiable cause for incarceration, not the woman's gender or profession.

Another writer for *The British Medical Journal* stated rather simply that "a prostitute still continues to be in law a disorderly character, [and is therefore] liable to be treated as such."<sup>37</sup>

Each side of the Contagious Diseases Acts debate based its arguments on both sanitary and moral grounds, though at times the two became one and the same. Such was the case more broadly for prostitution reform throughout Victorian England. The health and legal elements of reforms were tied inextricably to the morals and values of the upper and middle class reformers. They could neither tolerate nor eradicate the blemish of prostitution from society completely, so instead, they separated themselves from it socially and geographically.

Of particular importance when understanding the segregation of prostitutes from Victorian society were mid-nineteenth century expressions of sexuality. Victorian-era morality was based largely on idealized standards of societal perfection. Members of the upper and middle classes created these mores and – with their perceived class superiority – took upon themselves the responsibility to hold the lower classes accountable for the latter's failure to meet these criteria. This further rifted the upper and middle classes from the working class, creating insurmountable moral divisions between the two groups.

Puritanical notions of sexual purity were strictly dichotomized between the "wicked" and the "angelic"; there was no middle-ground, and "the natural place for women was with the angels."<sup>38</sup> Double standards of the Victorian era required that women remain paragons of virtue, while society expected men to have natural, but largely uncontrollable, sexual urges they must somehow relieve.<sup>39</sup> Prostitutes provided a solution to this social dilemma. The exact Victorian understanding of a prostitute was relatively imprecise.<sup>40</sup> Given this age of dichotomization – and



keeping in mind Mary Douglas's definition of taboo subjects as "matter out of place" – it is appropriate to turn to Lynda Nead's description of prostitutes in the Victorian era:

The category of 'prostitute' was not fixed or internally coherent; it was accommodating and flexible and could define any woman who transgressed the bourgeois code of morality. The prostitute was understood in terms of her difference from the norm of respectable femininity: if the feminine ideal stood for normal, acceptable sexuality, then the prostitute represented deviant, dangerous and illicit sex.<sup>41</sup>

Society considered prostitutes especially sexually immoral because of their perceived ability to separate sex from its moral consequences.<sup>42</sup> Victorian culture vilified prostitutes not only for violating "civilized" social constructs of sexual purity, but also for supposedly tempting otherwise virtuous (i.e. upper class) men to give in to their primal sexual urges.

Historian W. H. Lecky wrote, "...the sensual side of [human] nature is the lower side and some degree of shame may appropriately be attached to it."<sup>43</sup> In many cases this "lower side" of human nature was directly equated with the working class lifestyle. One observer described it thus: "To put it bluntly, sexual promiscuity, and even sexual perversion, are almost unavoidable among men and women of average character and intelligence crowded into the one-room tenements of slum areas."<sup>44</sup> The direct relationship between sexual immorality and the lower classes originated with the upper and middle classes' sense of moral superiority that was designed to keep the former in a state of perpetual subjugation.

Fraser Harrison argued in his book *The Dark Angel* that the upper and middle classes *intentionally* created and preserved morally-based social divisions between the higher and lower strata of society. He writes,

In order to perpetuate the all-important distinctions between one class and another, and in order to expiate any pangs of guilt arising from the knowledge that prostitution was a form of exploitation by one class of another, it was essential that the class from whom prostitutes were recruited was credited by the class that kept them in business with a

fundamentally sinful nature. By the same token, it was essential that the exploiting class bestowed upon its own women a fundamental innocence....<sup>45</sup>

In short, by separating itself morally from the lower class, the upper and middle classes of society placed themselves in a superior, and therefore more powerful, social and political position from which to dictate the laws and mores governing the lower class.

Prostitutes in particular were considered especially heinous to society because they were not self-containing within the slums of metropolitan England. Victorian-era rhetoric portrayed prostitutes as both a medical and moral threat to the “civilized” social code designed by the upper class. Prostitutes’ sexual availability purportedly acted like the Sirens’ call to “civilized” men who were tempted into sin by these ‘harlots.’ Physically, prostitutes also appeared to pose an imminent threat to England. Victorian society believed that the “constant recirculation of potentially diseased women into the population” posed an “invisible but omnipresent national threat that [could not] be curtailed without panoptic surveillance and enforced regulation.”<sup>46</sup> The transient and largely untraceable nature of the sex trade in England purportedly necessitated the creation of such strict regulations in order to curtail the endangerment of the broader community.

Prostitution reforms like the Contagious Diseases Acts were nominally designed to reduce or eliminate the *physical* effects of prostitution, namely venereal disease. However, in practice, these regulations and reform efforts were created to remedy prostitution’s *moral* affront to society. William Acton blamed many of England’s problems with prostitution on the prevalence of sex workers themselves. He wrote, “...thousands would remain uncontaminated if temptation did not seek them out.”<sup>47</sup> Even the doctors examining prostitutes (as called for by the Contagious Diseases Acts) were considered by their contemporaries to be performing a great sacrifice in merely associating their name with common street-walkers.<sup>48</sup> More generally, the

upper strata of society aggressively attacked prostitution because it “undermined their family structures, humiliated the women, brutalized the men, and exercised a malign influence over the children.”<sup>49</sup> It is important to note however, that this moral alienation was a purely upper and middle class construct. As Harrison argued, “Working-class women who took to the streets were not excommunicated by their families, friends, and neighbors; they were pitied, abused, exploited, or even admired by their immediate community, but they were not rejected.”<sup>50</sup> The social divisions were constructed from the top down by the upper classes, not by other members of the lower classes. However, in order for these moral distinctions to effectively curb the spread of the “loathsome poison” of prostitutes’ immorality through the upper strata of society, geographical restrictions had to be created as well.<sup>51</sup>

Victorian prostitution regulations were aimed less at ending prostitution or reforming the sex workers themselves than they were designed to remove the sex trade from the purview of “civilized” society. The goal of such regulations was “to remove [these] women as far as possible from the public streets and to enclose them in specified spaces of sexual exchange.”<sup>52</sup> Most often authorities accomplished this by either restricting (either *de jure* or *de facto*) the territory in which prostitutes may ply their trade or by incarcerating sex workers in the aforementioned lock hospitals or lock asylums.

Nineteenth century researcher William Acton understood that because the sex trade was naturally fluid, attempting to eradicate prostitution in any one region would simply lead to its expansion elsewhere. He therefore recommended that since prostitution was “a thing to be kept within certain bounds, and subjected to certain restraints and surveillance,” that it “must so far as possible be kept a thing apart and by itself.”<sup>53</sup> Spatial segregation seemed to be the only way to effectively decrease the influence of working girls on men. Some urban areas established “sex

districts” or “vice zones.” These tolerance zones promoted connectivity between the prostitutes and criminals but also facilitated more accurate and consistent registration and tracking of working girls.<sup>54</sup> For example, Cambridge University’s population of young, single men supported the flourishing *de facto* sex zone of Barnwell, a working-class town east of the university itself. As Philip Howell describes, “If Barnwell was never a licensed prostitudinal space, the proctorial system ensured that it functioned for authority in more or less the same manner.”<sup>55</sup> In this way, prostitution was tolerated in Victorian society, but only in specific geographic regions where its moral influence on upper and middle class society was negated, or at least lessened, by physical distance. In locations where the creation of a new space for containing prostitution was an impractical solution (especially in urban centers), authorities focused on moving prostitution off public streets to indoors. Laws were “designed more at protecting the neighbors than curbing anything that might be going on inside.”<sup>56</sup>

Broad geographic legislation begs a return to the discussion of Victorian-era sexuality as well as historical discussions of public versus private spheres. James Walvin perhaps described it most concisely when he wrote, “The Victorian hesitation to speak or write about sexual matters was part of a long tradition of delicacy about behavior which was, and is, highly personal.”<sup>57</sup> Sexuality was a *private* affair and wasn’t meant to be flaunted by whores on street corners where the respectable public must be subjected to their indecency. The purpose of geographical legislation was to diminish the effects of prostitution on the senses of upper and middle class society by removing prostitution from the public sphere (or at least the *respectable* public sphere) to the private, isolated neighborhoods of the working class.

However, when policing the haunts of prostitutes failed to have the desired effects, authorities changed their tactics and began restricting the movements of the street walkers

themselves. Under the Contagious Diseases Acts, women who contracted venereal diseases could be involuntarily quarantined in lock hospitals for up to nine months.<sup>58</sup> By legally detaining women, and prostitutes in particular, Victorian society took the ultimate step in the segregation of the working class girls: incarceration. Previous regulations had dealt with prostitution on an institutional level; with the implementation of lock hospitals in tandem with the Contagious Diseases Acts, English society controlled and regulated the movements of prostitutes on an individualized level.

Of course, although prostitution reform had no qualms about taking serious and domineering steps to alleviate the moral and physical impact of the English sex trade on “civilized” society, the legislation always maintained a rhetoric of protection and improvement consistent with Victorian-era volunteerism. “In lock asylums women were taught appropriate behavior through religious instruction, and a decent working class profession, so that a process of inclusion in respectable society would be fulfilled after a process of exclusion had taken place in an institution that was run according to middle class values.”<sup>59</sup> Lock asylums placed an emphasis on the moral reformation of their inmates with the ultimate goal of returning former prostitutes to society in the role of domestic servants well versed in the values of upper and middle class society.<sup>60</sup> Even the goal of lock asylums – preparing women to work in upper and middle class households – reinforced the social segregation already established between the two groups; high society remained the master and commander of the lower classes.

In many ways, the consortium of lock hospitals and lock asylums was the epitome of geographic and social segregation in Victorian England’s prostitution reform efforts. Prostitutes were specifically targeted for incarceration in these institutions because they failed to conform to traditional Victorian values of propriety and private sexuality. The legislation that legalized

prostitutes' involuntary detention—most notably the Contagious Diseases Acts—was created by members of the upper and middle classes who, being in a self-proclaimed superior social and moral position, believed it was their duty to “civilize” the working classes. Rather than truly working to re-introduce prostitutes to society, existing legislation focused on removing the immoral “blemish” of the sex trade from the purview of high society thus restricting its existence to very specific geographic locations, namely tolerance zones and lock hospitals and asylums. The upper and middle classes designed English prostitution reform laws to physically segregate prostitutes from society with the justification of removing the group's corrupting influence to prevent further damage on civilized and moral society.

Participants in the Victorian sex trade simply could not live up to the values established by the upper echelons of English society. The working class had not created these mores, but they were bound by them all the same. Working from their “civilized” position, the privileged classes of Victorian England took it upon themselves to raise up their “fallen” working class “sisters” in prostitution. While nominally a noble gesture, in reality the new legislation and reforms passed during the second half of the nineteenth century benefitted the upper and middle classes far more than it actually helped reduce the population of prostitutes in urban England, ameliorate the plight of venereal disease, or reintegrate street walkers into “civilized” society.

What these new reforms did accomplish was to widen the social gap between the privileged classes of society and the working class. The combination of Victorian era morals and the rhetoric of reform efforts painted the image of the English prostitute as an immoral disease that if left unchecked would corrupt society from the bottom up. Additionally, the new legislation created during this time geographically removed prostitutes and their profession to specific isolated locations where they could not inflict harm on the upper and middle class

society. Toleration zones created a sanctioned space where prostitution could continue unmolested by the authorities as long as it did not offend the delicate sensibilities of the upper and middle classes. Likewise, lock hospitals and lock asylums ostensibly acted as a refuge for prostitutes to heal their physical and moral diseases but in reality served as penitentiaries under the Contagious Diseases Acts. The social and geographic segregation of working class prostitutes created by Victorian reforms was not designed to help prostitutes at all; rather, segregation was used to remove the taint of prostitution from the purview of upper and middle class society.

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<sup>1</sup> William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns with Proposals for the Control and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils* (London: Frank Cass 1972, originally published 1870), 166.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Kocka, "The Middle Classes in Europe," in *The European Way: European Societies during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Harmut Kaelble (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Asa Briggs, "Victorian Values," in *In Search of Victorian Values*, ed. Eric M. Sigsworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Bill Forsythe and Bill Jordan, "The Victorian Ethical Foundations of Social Work in England: Continuity and Contradiction," *British Journal of Social Work* 32 (2002): 849.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> "The Control of Prostitution," *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 494 (1870): 631.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1996), 36.

<sup>8</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Fraser Harrison, *The Dark Angel: Aspects of Victorian Sexuality* (New York: Universe Books, 1978), 218.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Michael Pearson, *The Age of Consent: Victorian Prostitution and Its Enemies* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles, 1972), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 27.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Harrison, *The Dark Angel*, 235.

<sup>20</sup> Philip Howell, "A Private Contagious Diseases Act: Prostitution and Public Space in Victorian Cambridge," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26, no. 3 (2000): 390.

<sup>21</sup> "Pseudo-Cures for the Social Evil," *The British Medical Journal* 2, 146 (1863): 425.

<sup>22</sup> "The Control of Prostitution," 630.

<sup>23</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 48.

- <sup>24</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 3.
- <sup>25</sup> Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 56.
- <sup>27</sup> "The Control of Prostitution," 631.
- <sup>28</sup> William Acton, "Shall We Find that by the Control of Prostitution We have Irretrievably Lost in Morality and Gained Not at All in Health?," *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 498 (1870): 76, 77.
- <sup>29</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 221.
- <sup>30</sup> Association for Promoting the Extension of the Contagious Diseases Act, *3<sup>rd</sup> Report*, 29 quoted in Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 55-56.
- <sup>31</sup> The word 'lock' implied a social evil which respectable society perceived as a peril. Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz, "Fallen Women and the London Lock Hospital Laws and By-Laws of 1840 (Revised 1848)," *Journal of English Studies* 8 (2010), 147.
- <sup>32</sup> Both men and women received treatment for venereal diseases in lock hospitals, however only women were legally obligated to remain there under the Contagious Diseases Acts. "Pseudo-Cures for the Social Evil," *The British Medical Journal* 2, 146 (1863): 426; Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz, "Fallen Women and the London Lock Hospital Laws and By-Laws of 1840 (Revised 1848)," *Journal of English Studies* 8 (2010), 143.
- <sup>33</sup> Ruiz, "Fallen Women," 143, 146.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.
- <sup>35</sup> "Pseudo-Cures for the Social Evil," *The British Medical Journal* 2, 146 (1863): 426; Ruiz, "Fallen Women," 143.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.
- <sup>37</sup> P.H.H., "The Contagious Diseases Act," *The British Medical Journal* 2, 500 (1870): 130.
- <sup>38</sup> Michael Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 17.
- <sup>39</sup> This is not to suggest that Victorian women (of any class) lacked sexual desires. I argue only that the accepted outlets of feminine sexuality were severely restricted relative to those of men. James Walvin describes it like this: "Female sexuality was assumed to take place within the confines of the family; but this had also been true for centuries. It was equally applicable to menfolk, though they, unlike their wives, had opportunities of sexual encounters outside marriage; the degree to which they took up these opportunities is unclear, and presumably varied enormously. But it would be bizarre to imagine that, in general, men were forced into the arms of mistresses and prostitutes because of the frigidity of the bourgeois married woman. Some doubtless were; many were not." James Walvin, *Victorian Values* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 125.
- <sup>40</sup> The basic *definition* of a prostitute is obvious, but here I am referring to the *understanding* of a prostitute, meaning the perception of prostitutes juxtaposed against broader upper and middle class definitions of civilized society.
- <sup>41</sup> Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (London: Blackwell, 1988), 94-95 quoted in Ruiz, "Fallen Women," 143.
- <sup>42</sup> Shalyn Claggett, "Victorian Pros and Poetry: Science as literature in William Acton's *Prostitution*," *Prose Studies* 33, no. 1 (2011), 28.
- <sup>43</sup> Quoted in Asa Briggs, "Victorian Values," in *In Search of Victorian Values*, ed. Eric M. Sigsworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 23.
- <sup>44</sup> Walvin, *Victorian Values*, 129.
- <sup>45</sup> Harrison, *The Dark Angel*, 229.
- <sup>46</sup> Claggett, "Victorian Pros and Poetry," 30.
- <sup>47</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 166.
- <sup>48</sup> "Pseudo-Cures for the Social Evil," *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 146 (1863): 426-427.
- <sup>49</sup> Harrison, *The Dark Angel*, 234.
- <sup>50</sup> Harrison, *The Dark Angel*, 234.
- <sup>51</sup> Acton, *Prostitution*, 74.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.
- <sup>53</sup> William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns with Proposals for the Control and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils* (London: Frank Cass 1972, originally published 1870), 206, 230 quoted in Shalyn Claggett, "Victorian Pros and Poetry: Science as literature in William Acton's *Prostitution*," *Prose Studies* 33, no. 1 (2011), 31.
- <sup>54</sup> Howell, "A private Contagious Diseases Act," 380.



<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 381.

<sup>56</sup> Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 25.

<sup>57</sup> Walvin, *Victorian Values*, 122.

<sup>58</sup> Under the original act, women could only be detained for three months, but the second act extended it six months and the third act further extended it to its ultimate length of nine months.

Howell, *Geographies of Regulation*, 28.

<sup>59</sup> Ruiz, "Fallen Women," 143.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 145-146.