Strippers reveal the naked truth: A case study of women employed in the stripping occupation in London clubs (Ontario).

Karen Joan. Orton

University of Windsor

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STRIPPERS REVEAL THE NAKED TRUTH:
A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE STRIPPING OCCUPATION
IN LONDON CLUBS

by

Karen Joan Orton

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research through the Department of Sociology and
Anthropology in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor.

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1997

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ABSTRACT

STRIPPERS REVEAL THE NAKED TRUTH:
A CASE STUDY OF THE WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE STRIPPING
OCCUPATION IN LONDON CLUBS

by Karen Joan Orton

This study examined twenty-four women employed in the occupation of stripping in two London, Ontario, strip clubs. Twenty-two of these women were of table dancer status, while the remaining two were of feature dancer status. The primary goal of this research was to describe the work world of dancers within the occupation of stripping. While research on the subject of stripping and strippers has most commonly been viewed from a deviance viewpoint, this research looked at strippers and stripping as a legitimate and chosen means of work for women. To this end, occupational theory was applied to the work world of stripping. Field research is appropriate when one wants to learn about, understand, or describe a group of interacting people, therefore this qualitative investigation involved detached observation and interviews structured by an in depth semi-structured questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions. The findings suggest that irrespective of their educational attainment, socioeconomic background or race, the most
fundamental issues for these women throughout their experience as strippers centered on money, appearance, and status.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my son "A.J.", Aaron Brochu and my daughter "Sass", Savannah Orton-Foster, who endured endless hours without their Mother so that I could seek out the present occupational experiences and truths of women now employed in the occupation of stripping and in so doing, reflect on my own truth about my own past experience as a stripper.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At a time like this one prays for eloquence. I'm still praying. Dr. Ehrentraut, I have truly learned the meaning of the word mentor, my wise and trusted adviser. I have relished each and every moment of opportunity to sit in counsel with you. From my heart I thank-you for your scholarly advice, enthusiasm, encouragement, and protection, but most of all for your unfaltering acceptance of who I am, and of who I have been. You said, "You did it". I say, "We did it".

My appreciation and heart felt thanks goes to the other members of my committee, Dr. Booth and Professor Mady-Kelly for their time, unceasing support, encouragement and grammatical advice.

I offer a standing ovation to those strippers who volunteered their valuable time to share their occupational experiences with me. Without your participation this thesis could not have been written. Take a bow, this one is for you.

My deepest appreciation is extended to Sue McGilveary for her administrative expertise, ready smile, and thesis assistance that went far beyond the call of secretarial
duty.

Al Foster, you never stopped believing in me, not for one minute. Without your love, and your amazing ability to endure difficult and challenging times I would not have got through the last three years and this graduate program. I thank you for emotionally supporting me through this awesome academic opportunity, but most of all I thank-you for our daughter, Savannah Orton-Foster.
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INTRODUCTION

What motivates women to take their clothes off in front of an audience of men? How long have women been employed in this form of work and in what settings has stripping, and is stripping, taking place? This section looks at the occupation of stripping historically, considering how long it has been practised, where it has taken place, and who the performers were. Following the historical presentation, the stripping universe of London, Ontario, will be described with a focused report on what transpires in the two clubs in which the research was conducted.

"Strip" is defined in the Canadian Intermediate Dictionary as:

[to]
1) make bare or naked; undress a person, thing etc.
2) undress
3) take off the covering of
4) remove, pull off
5) rob
6) take away the titles, rights etc. of a person or thing.
   v. stripped, stripping. - stripper, n.
   (Avis, Gregg, Neufeldt, & Scargill, 1979:1142).

This study defines strippers as individuals who remove their clothing in an entertaining fashion, usually by
dancing, to a state of semi or full nudity for financial remuneration. The act of stripping as an entertainment is favourably accepted by a generous number of the Canadian population, as exemplified by the thriving strip clubs in major cities and towns in Canada today. Those who do not accept stripping look on it with a mixture of fascination, ignorance and intolerance. It is this mixture of fascination, ignorance, and intolerance that Dragu and Harrison (1988:10) see as "evidence of our sexual confusion as a culture".

An eighty-year history of this form of entertainment precedes Dragu and Harrison's statement, as striptease became a standard feature of burlesque in the mid - 1920's. Historically, belly dancers were performing in Egyptian, Persian and Algerian exhibits in amusement midways. These women were dressed in baggy trousers, and midriff length tops, and gyrated to the accompaniment of male musicians. This exhibit created quite an interest, drawing large crowds of people [men]. The audience were in a position to view partially clad women, gyrating, under the guise of declaring an ethnic cultural interest. This belly dancing phenomenon came to be known as "the 'cooch', or 'cootch', or 'hootchy-

While cloaking the performances under the cultural title of "The Streets of Cairo Exhibit", the Grand Central Palace in New York City took an opportunity to monopolize on the crowd-drawing phenomenon and held "cooch" performances. In these performances four dancers performed a show each hour. It was not an unusual sight to see a line of fifty or more, at the ticket counter.

Also common in the 1910's was the disrobing act of the circus and carnival sideshows, in which a woman performed behind back-lighted opaque or translucent screens. The nudity that figured as a logical part of the set up was not blatant but rather suggested. These non-dancing disrobing acts were set up as:

anything that might serve as a pretext for voyeurism: preparing for a bath, donning a swimsuit in a bathhouse, or perhaps the most common device of all, getting ready for bed (Allen, 1991:244).

Up until the 1920's, even disrobing dancers, whose acts were not concealed behind a screen, stripped down only to flesh-coloured tights. It seems that the promise of a revealing show was the only encouragement patrons needed at the time. The burlesque business created entertainment
entrepreneurs as it developed into a competitive business. In an effort to draw spectators to their establishment, the Minsky Brothers, owners of The National Winter Garden, constructed an extended stage which jutted out into the audience seating. The audience could now actually "smell [the dancers] perfume and hear their heavy breathing" (Allen, 1991:232). It was the innovation of this runway around 1917 that drew the spectator and performer into a tighter scopic embrace, an embrace that has evolved to our present day strip club spectator - performer interaction. By 1922:

cooch which was now performed to the rhythms of jazz, had been renamed the 'shimmy'. The chorus girls on the runway, yelling, shimmying directly at and over the men, the music blatant, jangling and dissonant, the audience alternately hooting or derisively encouraging (Allen, 1991:232).

It was the sum of all of these disrobing dance acts that developed into what is known today as striptease. Interestingly, total nudity was not first presented in a burlesque theatre or "strip club" in Canada. Total nudity was first presented in Toronto at the gracious Royal Alexander theatre in the late 1960's to a "highbrow" audience. Total nudity was presented to the public in the
form of a musical entitled "Hair". Up to this point dancers in burlesque theatres had worn G-strings, a clothing article that covered the genitals and pubic hair area but allowed view of the buttocks, and pasties which are ornaments that attach to the nipples to slightly cover them up (Cooke, 1987:93).

Once again, an entrepreneurial owner of a burlesque theatre in Toronto called the Victory took a chance, and billed his dancers as performing total nudity acts, in the hopes of drawing clientele to his establishment. If total nudity was legal as an entertainment form at the Royal Alexander Theatre, why not The Victory Burlesque?

LONDON'S STRIP CLUB HISTORY

Ideas and businesses move quickly from Toronto to London, Ontario, because of the close proximity between the two business oriented cities. On August 23, 1971, London's first burlesque club, named Tracy Starr's Strip Palace, opened to a standing room only crowd of 175. The building previously known as Sophies of London Bride Store now offered a one and a half hour continuous strip show, featuring six strippers. The entrance fee was a mere $2.50 (Florcyk, 1971:B25). Those who were not favourable to a
strip club in London immediately started a petition and the police were preparing a report to be presented to the Crown Attorney (Johnson, 1971:3:25). This was all happening in light of a second strip club to be known as Striperama opening in October of 1971.

The entrance fee to Striperama was $4.00 with a "look-but-don't touch rule" in effect (Gallagher, 1977:D1). Strippers at this time could expect to earn between $200.00 and $500.00 a week for five shows a shift, ten to fifteen minutes per show, and a six day week. In mathematical terms, they worked a total of seven and a half actual working hours a week, which equates to $27.00 to $67.00 an hour. At this time it was estimated that there were more than two thousand Canadian women "who were earning a living by exposing their bodies in public" (Tausig, 1979:D1).

By 1977 strippers were found in numerous London establishments. Several of London's buffet restaurants hired dancers in the hopes of bringing life back to their luncheon and dinner business hours. Some of the strippers even doubled as waitresses. Amateur strip contests were also taking place two nights a week at a youth oriented club called "Arbuckles". The winner received one hundred dollars
and entering contestants fifteen to twenty-five dollars just for entering the "strip-off" (Gallagher, 1977:D26). Strippers and the clubs they worked in at that time were big business and sold everything from beer to roast beef on a bun.

PRESENT DAY LONDON CLUBS

Despite legal harassments and varying degrees of social condemnation directed at the strip business in London, it has survived and one could even say, flourished. Present-day London through a city by-law is limited to seven operating strip clubs (Hodgkinson, 1987:B1, Martin, 1995:B3). At present six clubs are in operation. They are The Famous Flesh Gordons, Blondies, Solid Gold, the Fabulous Forum, The Beef Baron, and the Rendezvous. Three of these clubs employ feature dancers and house/table dancers and the other three clubs employ only house/table dancers. Among the six clubs they employ one hundred and ten dancers a week, not accounting for freelancers. Weekly business hours are noon till two a.m., Monday to Saturday. All of the strip clubs are liquor-licensed and the availability of food ranges from full course meal menus and buffets to candy bar and potato chip vending machines. The two clubs chosen to
conduct the research in will be discussed more fully in the methodology section.

**DANCE ACTS**

In general, there are three areas in a strip club in which a customer can observe a strip performance. Initially, strip acts are performed on the stage, but "private dances" are performed either at the customer's table in the common bar area, or in what are called V.I.P. lounges. The overwhelming majority of the private dances now take place in the V.I.P. lounges. Both feature, showgirl and table dance status dancers perform on stage, but the majority of the V.I.P. dances are performed by the table dancers.

The occupation of stripping is a pyramid-shaped three tier structure in which a limited number of feature act dancers hold the highest status rank within the occupation. Feature dancers are followed by an increased number of showgirl status dancers at the second tier level. The majority of strippers commonly known as table dancers, V.I.P. dancers and freelancers, make up the first tier level, which is the lowest status position within the occupation of stripping.
Therefore, strippers who have attained the status distinction of feature dancer are most often not expected to table dance, however, the club that employs feature dancers has a rule that the weekly feature must perform one free table dance a day. This however is not a hard and fast rule, as indicated by one of the interviewed feature dancers who had successfully declined through her agent and contract. The fact that features do not normally table dance depicts one of the differences that exist between the status levels within the occupation.

The following is a description of what one might expect to see in a feature dancer stage act. This is followed by a description of a table dancer stage act, and concludes with what transpires in a V.I.P. performance. A separate description of a showgirl act is not included as the difference between a table dancer and a showgirl dancer is simply a graduation based on the improvement of costumery and stage presentation, which lends itself to an increase in pay and status. The following act descriptions provide the reader with what is involved in "putting on a show" (Prus & Irini, 1980:94), and the rules that follow the act descriptions outline the bureaucracy in which the putting on
of a show takes place.

**Feature Dance**

A feature act is generally four songs long and lasts a minimum of twenty minutes. The feature act starts with the disc jockey (D.J.) announcing the feature by name, contests previously won, titles held, and breast size or figure measurements. The music intensifies, setting the stage for an entrance of a woman dressed in a costume typically designed to be eye catching, colourful, and possibly provocative. The costumes are more often than not theme oriented and are supported by music that would exemplify this theme. Themes vary and range from Star Wars metallic outfits and Whoopi Goldberg mask with nun habit, to sailor uniforms, cabaret and ninja sets. The first song of four is meant to catch the customer's attention and support the theme of the act.

Dance steps and strutting around the stage floor is generally done quickly with the possibility of some pole work, especially by features who have gymnastic backgrounds. Pole work may involve jumping up to the top most area of the pole and: a) sliding around the pole and down to gracefully spill onto the floor or landing on their feet in an
appealing pose, b) descending from the pole hanging upside
down by allowing their inner thighs to hold them and slowly
lower themselves onto the floor, c) backing up onto the pole
to pose with the pole between the cheeks of their bottom, or
d) holding the pole to steady themselves while posing in
ways to amplify buttock or genital visibility. Pole work may
occur during any part of the stage performance.

The major costume piece is removed during the first
song to generally reveal a flashy costume push-up bra and
g-string underwear. In addition the feature may be still
sporting a feather boa, garter and stockings, gloves or
other accessories. The tempo of the second song is more of
a moderate beat and the feature may spend time teasing and
enticing the customers with her breasts by bending over to
display cleavage, holding them in her own hands and fondling
them, and later, when the bra is removed, by licking her own
nipples.

The slow and seductive third song generally involves a
floor show in which the feature lays on a blanket posing in
sensual positions while removing her g-string. These
positions may be moves and poses that characterize and
simulate female sexual activity. She finishes her set by
dancing or walk strutting to a final fourth song in which
the customers are invited to join her on the stage in a
prone position with a tip held in their mouth. Kneeling by
their head, the feature leans over them with her body, all
the way down their torso, so that at one point they are in a
head to toe position with the feature holding herself up by
her arms. From this position she returns up the torso
stopping at the customers mouth to retrieve the tip by way
of cupping her breasts together and pinching the money from
the customers mouth. The customers leave the stage after
their tip has been received, and when the tipping process is
complete, the performance is over. If the feature has
stimulated a large tipping crowd she may be on stage for as
long as six or more songs, or for as long as it takes for
all the patrons to have had a chance to interact with her in
this way. For a minimal charge of ten dollars, features
also generally offer an opportunity for customers to have a
polaroid picture taken of themselves with the feature. To
create hype and enthusiasm, features also give away posters
or promo shots during their acts. This is more often than
not presented in the form of a minor contest, i.e., the
customer who can yell the loudest, who can get on the stage
the fastest, or who can remove the poster from between the legs or breasts of the feature by mouth without touching the feature's body. Polaroid pictures and the tipping on stage are the means by which the features make their extra money.

The above described act is a typical feature performance, but acts may involve such gimmicks on stage as: fluorescent body painting, fire and candle acts, snake and/or animal acts, duo acts (two features together on stage), bathing, or playing "twister". In short if it holds a male audiences attention and is not considered legally obscene, anything goes.

**Table Dance**

Strippers with the status of table dancer perform to three song sets on stage. Their outfits range from evening gowns, short skirts and tops to simple bra and underwear sets purchased from a local department store. Their abilities on stage range from simple walking to elaborate difficult dance moves that at times may far surpass many features dancing abilities. In general a table dancer stripper follows the same format as a feature, but uses only three songs to complete the format. Most of the same dance steps, moves and presentations are employed by table dancer
status strippers and features. The difference appears to lie in the calibre of costumes and accessories, performance theme, choice of music and choreography, physical attractiveness in terms of hair style and make-up, and willingness to surgically enhance one's breast size.

The following is a table dancer's stage performance observed by the researcher. During the first song this dancer drew full attention to herself through gymnastic and acrobatic movements. Towards the end of the song she removed her bras, exposing her breasts and drew further attention from the crowd by pinching, twisting, and pulling her nipples playfully. Having made acceptable eye contact with a customer in what is commonly known as "perverts row", which make up the seats directly at the stage front, she proceeded to tease and entice interaction between the two of them. She danced and moved about on the stage with his full attention. She knew she had him hooked, he would be compliant and allow her to use him as a prop in her "act". She took a large mouthful of beer from a beer bottle she had placed on the stairs of the stage. As the hard rock music blared she threw herself down onto the stage floor with her head hung over the countertop into the vicinity of the now compliant
customer's lap. With huge dramatic head movements, up and down, she simulated that she was "giving a blow job" (oral sex) to this customer. Withdrawing from the customer, and her prone position, she posed mid-stage, with full attention from the crowd. She now proceeded to slowly release the white, frothy, foamy, beer from her mouth, as the beer had thickened and frothed in her mouth through agitation, which dribbled and flowed down her chin and over her breasts, thus simulating semen. With her mouth emptied of beer, she raised her breasts and nipples to her own mouth sexually licking symbolic semen (beer) from her own body. The music ended and with a flip of her head and a contemptuous look at the patrons she left the stage, her act complete. The implications of this stage performance will be addressed in the discussion section.

Generally table dancers are not tipped on stage, and customers are not invited by the D.J. to do so. The table dancer stage act functions as continuous entertainment and it is the dancers' responsibility to the club and to herself, if she has a desire to keep her job and make more money than her salary, to encourage customers to socially interact with her, purchasing drinks for her and requesting
V.I.P. dances from her. Therefore the onus is on the table
dancer, either on stage or during club social interactive
time, to find creative ways in which she can stimulate the
customers into spending their money on her.

V.I.P. Dance Act

A V.I.P. dance takes place in the V.I.P. lounge, most
often by table dancer status strippers. This is not to say
that feature dancers are not allowed use of this club avenue
if they choose to do so. A V.I.P. dance consists of one
song or more, in which the dancer strips to full nudity, and
stands, leans, bends, and squats in close, if not touching
proximity, to the customer. In other words, as long as the
customer remains seated and does not touch the dancer, she
may brush her breasts against his face while leaning on him,
or place her genital area within an "inch" of his face while
bending over in front of him. The dancers will also use
their own hands to part their thighs to allow an even more
revealing view of their vaginal area. Another form of
V.I.P. dancing, namely, lap dancing is illegal but it is
still occurring in some clubs if the dancer is willing to
take the risk of a fine or being barred from the club. Lap
dancing in the V.I.P. lounge involves the dancer sitting on
the lap of the customer and rubbing, gyrating, or bouncing up and down. Although titled lap dancing, theoretically there is no dancing involved in this form of activity. If the V.I.P lounge is not busy and needed by other dancers, a dancer may remain in the lounge with a customer as long as she can keep him purchasing drinks and private dances.

CLUB RULES

All of the clubs have rules, regulations and conditions of employment that they expect the strippers to uphold. These rules and conditions differ and vary among the clubs and among the status levels of the dancers themselves. The stage dancing and V.I.P. dancing thus all take place in a structured context as illustrated by these club rules. The following are the rules for feature dancers that illustrate what would be found in a club that caters to an upscale clientele. These rules were posted on the wall in the feature's dressing room as of September, 1996.

Figure 1. Mon.-Fri. 12:30, 5:30, 10:15, 1:30  
Sat.  2:30, 5:30, 10:15, 1:30
Minimum  18 sets
Late for show - $20.00 fine
Don't show for show - $50.00 fine
$50.00 Motel charge (weekly)
$30.00 D.J. fee (weekly)
1 free table dance each shift
In the same club, rules pertaining to the table/house dancers are posted in the dressing room and are also available in the form of a hand out to the dancers on request, or as management deems necessary, as in preceding disciplinary action.

**Figure 2. Rules, Regulations, and Conditions of Employment for Table Dancers**

1. Dancers will be ready for each scheduled shift 15 minutes before that shift and will not leave before the shift is over. Fine: $10.00 for each half hour (or part thereof) of absence.
2. Dancers will remove dance boxes from the floor after use. Fine: $5.00.
3. Dancers will not take food or beverages into change room or washroom. Fine: $25.00
4. Dancers will not enter the service area. Fine: $25.00
5. Dancers will perform all sets and specials in a professional manner. Fine: $10.00
6. Dancer will be present for each scheduled shift. Fine: $40.00 and forfeit of all pay for that shift.
7. Dancers will not loiter in the change rooms or around the bar area. Fine: $10.00
8. Dancers will not use any drug inside or outside of the club. Fine: $100.00 and dismissal.
9. Dancers will not appear drunk or high on shift. Fine: $30.00 and suspension for the balance of the shift without pay for that shift.
10. Dancers will ensure the payment and drawing for all tickets sold. Fine: $20.00 and the cancellation of the right to sell tickets for the balance of the week.
11. Dancers will not leave the club for any reason during a scheduled shift.
   Fine: $20.00
12. Dancers will report all problems to management or the doorman and will not argue with staff, customers, or other dancers.
   Fine: $25.00
13. Dancers will not allow husbands or boyfriends in the club while on scheduled shift.
   Fine: $25.00
14. Dancers will not steal from anyone or will be immediately dismissed and forfeit all pay for the week.
15. Dancers will make use of the tanning bed only when not on a scheduled shift.
16. Dancer will ensure that they have at least three (3) different music sets to dance to, each being a minimum of 15 minutes in length (20 minutes for showgirls) during each scheduled shift.
   Fine: $20.00
17. Dancers will have deducted from their pay cheque, a D.J. fee of $5.00 for each scheduled shift.
18. Dancers will dance exclusively for this club and will not dance or freelance at any other club while employed here or forfeit all pay for the week.
19. Dancers will have the privilege of playing pool while on a scheduled shift only when playing with a paying customer.
   Fine: $10.00
20. Dancers will not bring food or beverages into the club from outside.
   Fine: $20.00
21. Dancers will ensure that they are professionally groomed at all times and will change costumes often throughout the shift. Dancers will ensure that all costumes worn by them will be of professional dancer quality and sexy in appearance and will not include runners or any flat heeled footwear, sweaters or sweatshirts, biker paraphernalia, or torn articles of clothing. Dancers understand that all costumes must meet management approval.
Fine: $50.00 and will be subject to suspension without pay for the shift.

22. Dancers will not permit any guests not approved by management in their room at any time or they will be required to pay the whole expense for that room for the week.

23. Dancers will spend all shift time mingling with customers on the floor or at the tables and will not turn down drinks offered to them by any customer. If she does not wish to drink an alcoholic beverage, she will order a pop or other non-alcoholic beverage.
Fine: $10.00

24. Dancers will not ask for any cash advance on or before the second shift of any given week.

25. Dancers will perform all shows and specials required of them by the D.J. or management and will perform them on time.
Fine: $25.00

26. Dancers will complete all scheduled shifts for the week or forfeit all pay for that week.

27. All tattoos are subject to management approval.

28. Dancers will not have any physical contact with any customer at any time.
Fine: $50.00 and possible suspension without pay for the shift.

29. Dancers will give 2 free table dances at the request of management for each scheduled shift.

30. Dancers will book all stags or extra entertaining outside of the club through the management of this club while they are employed here or forfeit all pay for the week.

Welcome to _____________. We hope to make your employment here a pleasant experience. Our goal is to create an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment for customers and staff alike. We are sure that your full cooperation will be given to achieve this goal in a professional manner. (Print out received from club owner September, 1996).

The preceding rules show that strippers are employed in work settings that are highly structured and regulated by
organizational rules. These bureaucratic rules are ambiguous and create a narrow structure that leaves the dancers with limited ways and means with which to negotiate business. To illustrate the ambiguity and/or contradictions of the regulating structure consider the following: dancers are expected to socialize and encourage the customers to buy drinks for the dancers and themselves. If a dancer declines a drink offered by a customer she can be fined. Obliged to accept the drinks the dancers are ruled to not appear drunk while on shift, risking a fine and suspension from the shift. Even one drink an hour puts these women at risk of intoxication during an eight hour shift. Expected to promote alcohol consumption the dancers are also left with the difficulty of trying to control drunk customers during V.I.P. dances.

In addition, the above rules convey a statement of owner dictatorship over the dancers. The rules and the authority that the rules give the owners, allow the owners to treat the dancers as if they were purchased property, by reason of employment. Ruling by fines and suspensions the club goes so far as to dictate: a) where, when, and what the dancers can eat or drink within the club, b) how they are to
look and dress while on shift, c) the banning of husbands and boyfriends from the club while on shift, and d) the curtailing of other entertainment employment opportunities while employed at the club. One of the ways in which the table dancers may distance themselves from the imposition of the rules is to aspire to feature status. A huge difference is apparent between the governing rules of the feature dancer and the table dancers which will be addressed in a later section.

The following rules from another club illustrate the variability between club rules. These rules were found stapled on a post in the second bar as of October 1996.

**Figure 3. ATTENTION LADIES**

There will now be fines given out for the following. They will either be deducted from your pay or can be paid directly.

- for every 15 minutes you are late - $5.00 fine.
- stage sets must be a minimum 12 minutes
- dressing room is not a drug smoking area - if caught by D.J. or bar staff - $20.00 fine.
- all freelancers will do a stage show or pay a $5.00 freelance fee
- you will follow the NO TOUCHING rules. Extra curricular activities will remain outside the club - $10.00 fine.
- no leaving bar during shift - $10.00 fine.
- miss a show because of leaving during a shift - $25.00 fine.
- double check schedules - a no shift show without phone call 24 hour holiday or - $25.00 fine.
- D.J. booth is not a closet, put your belongings behind the bar. Management.

In addition, dancers seeking employment at this club were asked to read, fill out, and sign the following form of disclosure.

**Figure 4.**

- **MEMBER-**
  
  "ONTARIO ADULT ENTERTAINMENT BAR ASSOCIATION"

  Hair colour: _________(photo:)
  Height: __________
  Weight: __________

**Rules and Regulations for Table Dancing**

All dancers must show two pieces of identification, which will be copied and kept on file with this form. All information is kept confidential and is strictly for office records only.

____________________(Please Print)____________________

Dancer Stage Name: ________________________________
Full Legal Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City: ______________ Prov.: __________ Post Code: __________
Date of Birth: __________ S.I.N. #: __________
Dancer License No: ______________ City: __________

****RULES****

1. The price of a table dance is $10.00 you are not required to do anything extra or special to earn it!!!

2. Dancers will never allow a customer to touch their breasts or their genitals. Any dancer caught allowing a customer to touch, lick or kiss their private parts will be dismissed immediately from the club.

3. It is totally forbidden for a dancer to be engaged
in any sexual activity within the club. Activity such as penetration, hand jobs, or blow jobs. It is totally forbidden for any dancer to touch the genitals of the patrons.

4. Dancers are not permitted to wear any long garments while table dancing.

5. Any dancer who is caught voluntarily participating in any of the forbidden activities listed above will be dismissed immediately and will be barred from this establishment.

6. Dancers caught leaving the club with customers during working hours and then returning in the same shift without a reasonable explanation will be dismissed.

These rules and regulations are designed to protect the livelihood and safety of both the dancer and the club.

I have read the above rules and regulations, and I fully understand them. I agree to abide by them as a condition of my employment in this club.

Entertainer's Signature: _______________________

Date:___________  Witnessed By: _______________

There are obvious differences between the governing rules of the different clubs. Besides the rules not being as elaborate and detailed, they also indicate less severe punishments for misbehaviour. Unlike the first set of club rules presented, the second set of club rules indicate explicitly that there is an awareness that extra curricular activities are taking place between the dancers and the customers. The rules are clear and concise that there is to
be no touching, kissing, licking, or sexual activity of any nature within the club. The rules acknowledge sexual activity and state that extra curricular activities should remain outside the club. These rules draw our attention to the negotiation of sexuality that exists within this occupation. Primarily, dancers employ tactics that promise intimacy in the form of a "turn on" for the customer. The turn on is meant to be a non-interactive strip tease dance, but in some cases the negotiation transcends these parameters and prostitution occurs if both parties are willing. Consequently, a division is created between those dancers who are willing and those who are not willing to negotiate secondary sexual interactions with customers. This division within the occupation will be discussed in a later section.

The above introduction into the work world of strippers indicates that numerous social/work dynamics, of varying states and degrees, are active within the lives of the women employed in this occupation. The significance of these dynamics and how they impact upon these women define the theoretical approach best suited to investigate this social phenomenon. In conclusion one can say that occupational
theory is best suited when the social group of interest is a
group that has come together for the purpose of work. The
analysis now turns to the literature review and the
presentation of the occupational theory that structured this
research.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The experience of women in the workplace continues to be of major interest in occupational studies. Women in professional occupations and some feminized occupations, like nursing, have to date been ascribed higher status over other occupations in which women are employed. Because of this higher status claim, these groups of women have basked in the research limelight. In contrast, an occupation like stripping, which also employs mainly women, has been downgraded and hidden from public view and academic investigative research.

A review of the relevant literature is organized into two sections. The first is a lengthy presentation of occupational theories, in which the following areas are addressed: motivational factors, occupational choice, careers and patterns, status/prestige ranking, and job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The second section defines the term dance and goes on to query and answer the questions: what purpose does dance serve, and why do people dance? In addition, the second section outlines the dance form ballet, with the intention of guiding the reader to consider the ambiguities present between the dance forms
within the occupational world of dance.

OCCUPATIONS

The discipline of sociology has had a long-standing interest in the study of work and occupations. This may stem from the fact that work is rivalled only by sleep during an adult's routine active years. Work, and the occupations into which it is differentiated, is viewed as integral to human activity and existence, as it "serve[s] as a major link between the individual and society" (Hall, 1975: 369).

The word occupation is defined in the Canadian Intermediate Dictionary as "one's business or employment; trade: Teaching is a teacher's occupation" (Avis, Gregg, Neufeldt & Scargill, 1979: 787). This definition speaks directly to a classification label of the word occupation and is devoid of any social implications. It is exactly these social aspects of work and occupations that sociologists are interested in. Prior to defining the term occupation, Arthur Salz in Taylor (1968) suggested three conditions that would differentiate occupational from non-occupational work. These three conditions are namely, technological, economic, and social. The following definition of Salz strongly stresses the economic and social
aspects of occupations. Salz defined occupation as:

that specific activity with a market value which an individual continually pursues for the purpose of obtaining a steady flow of income. This activity also determines the social position of the individual (Taylor, 1968:8).

Another sociologist Everett Hughes (1965) broadly defines an occupation as:

not some particular set of activities; it is the part of an individual in any ongoing set of activities. The system may be large or small, simple or complex. The ties between the persons in different positions may be close or so distant as not to be social; they may be formal or informal, frequent or rare (Hughes, 1965:445).

Hughes is emphasizing the social relationships that interplay in occupations, while withholding comment and inclusion of remuneration within the definition. Hughes had previously noted that he viewed remuneration as an accepted element in occupational work and felt no further commentary necessary in regards to it.

Hall (1975) struggled with a number of considerations in regards to the problem of defining the term occupation. He eventually developed the following definition to his satisfaction:

An occupation is the social role performed by adult members of society that directly and/or indirectly yields social and financial
consequences and that constitutes a major focus in the life of an adult (Hall, 1975:6).

These definitions draw our attention to the numerous focuses and meanings that one term, in this case, the term occupation, can hold within a discipline. What is obvious, from a sociology definitional viewpoint, is that a great deal of interest in the occupations revolves around how occupations can reveal characteristics of individuals and the society of which they are a part.

Occupation, sociologically speaking, involves a degree of consciousness of kind, and a reciprocity between the acting individuals in the occupation and the recognition of these individuals in the occupation on the part of the larger society (Taylor, 1968:9).

The sociology of occupations (work), as with any sociology of a subject, may be viewed from a macro and/or micro viewpoint. The macro view considers occupations within the boundaries of their interrelationships within the larger social structure. The larger social structure refers to the interplay between occupations and the family system, the educational system and the social stratification system. The above mentioned are more commonly referred to as the broad segments, larger society, or institutions within the total social structure (Hall, 1975:237).
Within society the social stratification system is determined largely by the occupational structure. Along with education and income, occupational rank is utilized to determine social status in industrialized societies. On the other hand, the stratification system itself vitally affects occupations. What we see is a two-way interactional process between the stratification system and the occupational system. The family and the education system link these two systems and interplay within the two-way directional interactional process (Hall, 1975:280).

"The education system serves as a distribution and preparation nexus between the family and occupation systems" (Hall, 1975:313). The family's primary importance is to prepare individuals for work and the family is meant to be the immediate beneficiary of their labour (Caplow, 1954:248). The family unit historically has allowed the division of labour, whereby males participated in the occupational system and women were left in charge of the family. This is obviously not the case at present. The division of labour is no longer so decisively divided. Women have entered the labour force in much larger numbers due to the demands for trained individuals, rising education
levels, and the availability of time. Because of these changes we can expect both the family and occupational structure to alter.

The micro occupational view, or, in other words, the interrelationship between an occupation and the individual, is of major importance when sociologists wish to consider and investigate: 1) why people work, (motivations), and 2) what kinds of satisfaction, rewards, dissatisfactions and stresses they experience.

The question, why people work, is one of the main themes for sociologists who study occupations on the micro level. There are five major reasons why people work. A general outline of the five motivational characteristic factors as presented by Vroom (1964) and outlined in Hall (1975), will serve the present needs. First and foremost, wages and all the various sorts of financial remunerations associated with the term fringe benefits, are indisputably the main source of the desire to work (Vroom, 1964; Hall, 1975:30). Secondly, the expenditure of physical and/or mental energy has been found to be satisfying and therefore is a motivational basis for work (Vroom, 1964:36). The third motivational basis for work according to Vroom is "the
production of goods and services and involves the intrinsic satisfaction a person derives from successfully manipulating some part of his environment" (Vroom, as quoted in Hall, 1975:31).

Social interaction is the fourth motivational basis. It has been found that most work roles contain a portion of social interaction in them. Some aspects of this motive include being liked by others, influencing others, and being controlled by others (Vroom, 1964:40). Lastly, Vroom states that social status is the fifth basis for work motivation. For most of the segments of the social structure, social status is acquired simply by working (Vroom, 1964:41). Vroom concludes that the five motivational bases are equal in importance.

Another theoretical view, but one that is highly criticized, is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's motivation theory holds that as one need is fulfilled, a human goes on to fulfilling the next need. These needs in order of importance are:

1) Physiological needs (food, shelter),
2) Safety and security needs,
3) Belongingness and love needs,
4) Esteem needs, and
5) Self-actualization needs (being able to
realize one's own potential) (Maslow, 1954:32-33).

The hierarchy of needs theory is criticized (Hall, 1975:33) on the ground that it is not accurate for most of the population, as it is directed more towards academic individuals.

Another area of interest within occupational sociology is job satisfaction. Hall (1975) points out that what appears most evident is that job satisfaction varies, and the variance seems to rely directly on an individual's position in the occupational hierarchy. Quite often the major factor of satisfaction is "the mix between the worker's expectations (personality) that he brings to the job and the characteristics of the job" (Hall, 1975:45). Although dated, the following general set of findings as reported in Work in America (1973), and presented in Hall (1975) give us an overview of what 1,533 American workers indicated they felt were the most important satisfying factors of an occupation (work). They were chosen from a set of twenty-five possible factors.

1. Interesting work.
2. Enough help and equipment to get the job done.
3. Enough information to get the job done.
4. Enough authority to get the job done.
5. Good pay.
6. Opportunity to develop social skills.
7. Job security.
8. Seeing the results of one's work (Hall, 1975:47).

It is important to consider that these factors might differentiate for different types of workers or specific workers. It appears that it is the meeting of expectations that contributes to satisfaction in this particular research. If on the other hand, people are not satisfied, then it follows that they are dissatisfied, and dissatisfaction can create stresses, tension and alienation. No one occupation or category of workers are free from dissatisfaction. Workers can be dissatisfied with just about any aspect of their work. It seems that dissatisfaction sources are linked to what workers deem important to them. To describe these sources is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is relevant to note some of the different responses that workers may exhibit to dissatisfaction they experience.

Robert Blauner's (1964) investigation of levels of dissatisfaction of industrial workers found alienation to be a primary response. Blauner (1964) depicts alienation in the form of: a) powerlessness - a powerless person "is an object
controlled and manipulated by other persons or by an impersonal system such as technology", b) meaningfulness - a person experiences the lack of an "organic connection with the whole structure of roles, and the result is that the employee may lack understanding of the coordinated activity and a sense of purpose in his work", c) isolation (social alienation) - "the worker feels no sense of belonging in the work situation and is unable to identify or uninterested in identifying with the organization and its goals", d) self estrangement - "refers to the fact that the worker may become alienated from his inner self in the activity of work" (Blauner, 1964:16-26). Blauner summed up the four modes of alienation by stating that they:

reflect different `splits' in the organic relationship between man and his existential experience: the subject-object, the part-whole, the individual-social, and the present-future dichotomies (Blauner, 1964:26).

Realistically it is beyond the scope of this paper to expound all of the information that is available on the subject of occupations. What does need to be drawn out is the dominant thinking about occupations. What appears to dominate our conception of occupations in North America is the notion of a status hierarchy of occupations. For
example, students diligently pursue the occupations of doctor and lawyer because these occupations hold a claim to a high occupational and societal status rank. In addition, they continue to pursue these occupations while remaining ignorant about what actually goes on daily within these occupations (Abbott, 1989:283).

How do occupations, such as medical doctors or lawyers, attain this high status rank? In conjunction with this question, we need to ask why some occupations remain at the lower rank levels, regardless of possible high income levels, or other high status characteristics. Following this line of questioning, one needs to consider how those who find themselves in these low ranked occupations feel about the low status of the occupation, and more importantly, their role in it?

Social research has indicated that occupations attain status rank through a number of occupational characteristics. It is through these characteristics, which are concurrently imbedded in the occupations, and bestowed upon particular occupations, that status is attained. This in turn creates occupational aspirations in individuals and groups. Following Hall's (1975:242-243) schema, the
following are characteristics that contribute to the ranking of occupations: 1) An important status determinant of an occupation is the nature of the work performed and more specifically whether it involves manipulation of physical objects, symbols, or other people. 2) The more stringent the entrance requirements are for an occupation, generally speaking, the higher an occupational status claim. This characteristic area also incorporates the amount (level) of education, training, licensing and experience needed. 3) An occupation where a work task is performed by an individual, rather than by a group, is more highly ranked. The implication is that individuals can accomplish the total project on their own. 4) Supervised occupations are not as highly ranked as the supervisory positions. Therefore the size and the structure of the interpersonal relationships on the job affects the positions' status. In other words the larger the number of people under a supervisor, the higher degree of status attributed to that role as he/she is in a highly responsible performance situation. This status claim is directed from a societal level as well as within the employment scenario. 5) "The work situation, as well as the characteristics of the work performed, plays a role in
determining occupational status" (Hall, 1975:243). The institutional setting is at play within this area as well. This simply means that an office occupation holds higher status than a factory position, and a research laboratory position holds a higher status rank than a machine shop position.

In an effort to augment the aforementioned characteristics, the following are the four dimensions used by Goldthorpe and Hope (1974:151) to evaluate the status/prestige rank of an occupation: the "standard of living of their typical incumbents, power and influence over other people, level of qualifications, and value to society". The possible addition of a fifth characteristic, as proposed by Adler and Kraus, (1985:2) is that of the "initiative and autonomy characteristic of the occupation". It almost goes without saying that there are exceptions to every rule and the above mentioned characteristics do not appropriately address all occupations. Some occupations hold a number of the status characteristics but are not awarded the status level that other occupations with the same characteristics are awarded. For example, in considering chiropractors as an occupational group, we are
aware that: a) the entrance requirements to the occupation are an undergraduate science degree, followed at present by five years of chiropractic college, then followed by an exam for licensing, b) the work is performed by an individual in a position of supervisory control over assistants and office staff. As well the occupation is carried out in an office setting which, as mentioned, holds the higher status position over other institutional settings. c) The chiropractor is involved literally in the manipulation of the physical/mental state of his clients as well. Manipulation is viewed as contributing to the status of an occupation.

It appears obvious that the chiropractic occupation should be considered as holding a very high occupational status position, on the basis of the characteristics of the occupation. This is not necessarily the case though. Its practitioners are viewed as providing an alternative health choice and in the case of a referral, a medical doctor is likely to refer a patient to a physiotherapist, not a chiropractor, for physical manipulation. Individuals pay a user fee for the chiropractic service, as O.H.I.P. currently pays only a portion of the actual cost. People say that
they will not consider a chiropractor for spinal manipulation, but they can offer no valid argument to back their negative opinion of the service and/or chiropractors.

An image perception exists in some occupations and the chiropractic occupation appears to be a problematic one. In light of all the status characteristics of chiropractic, the occupation receives less status than other occupations in its characteristic category. Chiropractors are therefore confronted with the problem of reconciling their own belief in the meaningfulness of their work with the problematic image of their occupation in wider society.

Another occupational area in which a problematic image presents itself is that of male gender nurses. Females employed in the occupation of nursing have always been awarded high status for this vocational choice. Males, on the other hand, who hold the same educational status and nursing skills, and who perform the same job activities while receiving the same wage scale, are often viewed as a male who is "feminine". Such a male is viewed as holding a job in an area that is deemed as "women's work" and the consequences of that leave him viewed as not being able to "make it" in a male employed occupational field. The
societal image is that females become nurses and males become doctors. The gender image issue exists in a number of occupational areas and does effectively impact upon the societal view and subsequent status/prestige level of an occupation.

Quite possibly the issue is not the status rank of the occupations as measured by imperfect scales of measurement, but the level of prestige acknowledged and allotted to the occupation, and therefore to the individuals within them, by the public. This level of prestige allotted to an occupation is a matter of interpretation on the part of the public as, prestige scales rely upon:

the perception of the respondents, and since such perception usually involves some distortion of reality, the prestige scales themselves cannot be taken as totally accurate appraisals of the stratification system (Hall, 1975:252).

In the ever changing world of work, some occupations have lost or changed their level of prestige, while others have maintained position and status in a consistent manner. Amidst this fluctuation, people are active in the process of choosing an occupation. The word choice implies that the process for individuals is a distinct and deliberate exercise in preference. This is not necessarily the case.
There are many factors that affect how and why individuals choose the occupations they do. In addition to these factors there is also an element of limitation, or "no choice", that is dictated by "limitations imposed by the individual's structural content" (Chen & Regan, 1985:46).

Unless otherwise stated, the following is a general overview of the theoretical approaches to occupational choice, as presented by Chen and Regan (1985). The endeavors of occupational choice theorists fall into the following three broad categories; fortuitous approach, rational decision making, and socio-cultural influences. In the fortuitous approach, the selection of an occupation is viewed as a more by chance occurrence than by active choice. In this approach, decisions directed towards occupational choice are viewed as entering an elimination process. This process is spontaneous, is influenced by situational pressures, and may lack the element of rationality. To exemplify this approach, consider the act of a student who pursues a bachelor of education degree to obtain a teacher's license, "just in case", even though he or she has no interest in teaching. This choice appears spontaneous, situational, and lacking a certain level of rational
thought.

In contrast a particular consensus of belief exists amongst the many theorists who examine the processes of occupational choice from the rational decision making approach. This belief is that "the coming together of an individual and an occupation has a large measure of rationality about it" (Chen & Regan, 1985:41). This simply means that an individual has the skills, aptitude, and interest in an occupation and rationally works towards acquiring the occupational position. This approach focuses on the individual's processes of psychological development towards an occupation, and for the most part the rational decision approach is the focus of psychology research. Psychologists view the process of occupational choice as a "series of compromises between a person's interests, capacities, opportunities and values" (Chen & Regan, 1985:42). What they do not acknowledge is the impact of structural limitations, such as educational background or social class position upon an individual's interests, attitudes, perceptions, or socialization experiences.

The third approach emphasizes structural limitations like education and social class, and is mainly the work of
sociologists. Within the socio-cultural influence approach, social characteristics such as socioeconomic status, parental education, sex, ethnicity, and education are all seen as affecting occupational aspirations and expectations. These social characteristics are viewed as "external influences over which the individual has little or no control. In this way they set limits upon and constrain the kinds of occupational choices and decisions that individuals make" (Pavalko, 1971:51).

According to the research literature, the above mentioned social characteristics all influence or impact upon an individual's occupational preference and/or expectations. Socio-economic status, (SES), is considered the most powerful of the influencing social factors. Studies consistently find that the SES of "the family is positively related to the level of occupational aspirations and expectations" (Chen & Regan, 1985:46). A young person is more likely to aspire to and enter an occupation that offers high rewards and prestige if their family background is of a high SES.

Education is part of the opportunity structure and it is a means to high status and high paying jobs. Education
is both a goal and a means that is not equally available to all people, as educational opportunities are not equally distributed within societies.

Gender is viewed as an important social characteristic factor within the socio-cultural influence approach and raises discussion in several interesting areas. Discussions focusing on females seem to cluster around and stimulate interest and research in the following areas:

1) whether women have higher or lower occupational aspirations than men,
2) the range of women's occupational preferences, and
3) the change of sex role and female's occupational choice (Chen & Regan, 1985:50).

It seems that because of the different patterns of socialization that females receive, their opportunity structure is different from that of males. Girls appear to choose fewer occupations than boys do in our society because of the strong stereotyping of occupations. Seen in terms of there being men's jobs and women's jobs, females narrow their range of occupational preferences to fit the appropriate female stereotypical occupations in our society.

In summation, the socio-cultural approach recognizes structural factors and social characteristics that affect occupational choice. There are arguments for and against
each of the three approaches previously outlined. In an attempt to provide a model which incorporates both individual and structural factors, Chen and Regan presented a condensed version of Tony Watson's (1980) theory. Watson's theory suggests that:

the individual approach to work is influenced by both objective and subjective factors. Objectively, the individual has certain resources such as cash, skills, knowledge or physique. Subjectively, the individual has certain motives, interests and expectations such as to make a living, achieve power or gain job satisfaction (Watson, 1980:26).

All of the above mentioned factors are in turn influenced by structural and work related factors. The individual's family, class, gender and educational background, are located within the non-work structure. The occupational structure and the prevailing job market are included in the work related factors. Watson's approach to a balanced view of the interplay between individual and structural factors provides us with a theory that views choice and structural constraint as two sides of the same coin.

Alongside choice, sociologists also study the concept of careers within the occupational field. Career as a
sociological concept is depicted as:

both a path of movement within some form of social organization comprising progression through a series of interconnected statuses and a patterned series of adjustments made by the individual to the network of institutions, formal organizations, and informal relationships in which the work of an occupation is performed (Chen and Regan, 1985:85).

Career is viewed as two dimensional, consisting of an objective and subjective dimension. The objective dimension of career addresses the series of moves, vertical or horizontal, that occur within an organization or occupational hierarchy. These moves create a status passage which is determined by the direction and timing within a career. Direction refers to and includes simotions, which are changes in work that do not alter the status claim of the position, and demotions, and promotions, forms of vertical and horizontal movement. The (timing) is in reference to schedule, regularity, speed, pace and the prescribed steps of career.

Individuals may move from one occupation to another, or from one job to another within an occupation, developing career shape and passage. In the case of horizontal movement workers do not generally experience any change of status. As stated, careers typically consist of both vertical and
horizontal movement, and it is the sum of these movements and the individual careers that add up to an organized system.

The subjective dimension of career "highlights how one perceives, interprets and modifies the shape of one's career as a lived experience" (Chen and Regan, 1985:88). It is this lived experience and participation in one's career that is viewed as a major basis for the formation of one's identity. Our identity is partly developed and shaped by our response to the appraisals that are directed at our work activity by others. As people experience career movement in the shape of simotion, demotion and promotion, there is a corresponding change in one's personal identity (Chen and Regan, 1985:89). Increased purpose and heightened self-esteem is experienced through promotion, whereas demotion is experienced by a sense of failure and lowered self-esteem. The subjective dimension of career helps shed light on the worker "as an active participant in the workplace and clarifies the important linkages between work statuses and personal identity" (Chen and Regan, 1985:91).

In addition, occupations are comprised of typical career patterns and members experience these patterns in
distinct ways. An occupational career pattern is seen as the wealth of individual career shapes that occur within an occupation. As with careers, vertical and horizontal movement characterizes occupational patterns. Vertical movement is located in occupations that are structured by a fairly tall hierarchy, which indicates the division of labour is highly stratified. Because formal organizations bring a number of occupations together, they are typically tall hierarchies that offer promotion upward through the status hierarchy.

Lawyers are a good example of occupational workers who experience vertical mobility due to a fairly tall hierarchy in which "the division of labour is stratified in terms of the types of work settings: solo practice, group practice, law firm, and government" (Chen and Regan, 1985:93). Other occupations, such as college professors and physicians, experience virtually no mobility due to a very flat hierarchy.

"Desirable location" and the "in and out syndrome" are the two distinct patterns that characterize horizontal movement. The "desirable location" pattern is characterized by movement "from one workplace to another in search of the
'right' kind of environment" (Chen and Regan, 1985:95). For social workers this means seeking out particular types of clientele. Nurses select a hospital or doctor's office where they can perform the nursing duties they value. The second pattern called the "in and out syndrome", is characterized by semi-professional women who take the time out from their careers for marriage or childbirth, returning later when the children are school age.

Although occupational career patterns and shapes are structured, advancement is not equally available or equally paced for all individuals within the same occupation. The pace and direction of an individual's career is functionally influenced by personal attributes, such as ambition, ability and education and by "formal criteria for promotion and informal influences in the promotional network" (Chen and Regan, 1985:97). There is a visible interplay between an individual and the informal and formal features of the workplace. Within this interplay, it is apparent that personal attributes and interpersonal dynamics also serve as critical contingencies that may alter or redirect an individual's career. Sponsorship exemplifies the importance of interpersonal dynamics. Promotion, partnerships, and
peer acceptance in the professional occupations, rely heavily on the acquisition of a sponsor who actively intervenes and shapes a new member's career. The other personal attributes of ethnicity, gender and age all impact for or against successful career shaping and mobility.

A theoretical structure exists that further assists our understanding of the interrelationship between the worker, work and the social structure, namely, "the lifework pattern". The lifework pattern, which bridges the beginning to the end of a full life of work, consists of five definite periods. Miller and Form (1951) called them: (1) preparatory, (2) initial, (3) trial, (4) stable, and (5) retirement (Miller & Form, 1951:535). In addition to the actual work pattern of each period, each of the five periods contain social adjustment patterns. These adjustments and their patterns are believed to be imposed upon the individuals by the culture.

In the preparatory period the prospective worker develops a personality and becomes a social being. This is a process referred to as socialization. Socialization occurs within the family and school, where skills are developed, which can later be transferred to the work world. The active
work life is comprised of the following three work periods. The initial period is characterized by "job impermanence beginning when the worker seeks his first job during his span of school enrolment and continuing until he has terminated his education" (Miller & Form, 1951:535). During this period the worker feels his work is secondary to his school life and his work attitude is exemplified by statements like: "I'm making some spending money" and "I'm preparing myself".

The trial period is characterized by school days being over and this is a time when youth go to work. It may be defined as a:

period of job transition beginning when the worker seeks his first full-time work position and continuing until he has secured a work position in which he remains more or less permanently, three years or more (Miller & Form, 1951:536).

The common folk expressions that exemplify this period are, 'getting started', 'trying to find what he likes', and 'its a living for awhile'. Characterized by full time employment, the stable period may be defined as, "a period of job persistence beginning when the worker finds a work position in which [she]he remains more or less permanently (three years or more), and continuing until retirement,
death, or until [she] he enters another trial period" (Miller & Form, 1951:536). The common folk expressions of the attitudes of workers in this work period are: "a fixture", "old timer", "he likes his job", and "he's stuck in that rut" (Miller & Form, 1951:536-537). When workers exit the active work life and enter the retirement period they experience emotions of either acceptance or non-acceptance towards their new status. Three factors appear to be especially important for successful retirement. They are: "strong or varied interests and activities, economic security or independence, and freedom from physical handicap" (Miller & Form, 1951:781). In conclusion, the lifework pattern is a theoretical approach and a research tool, that can be used to study individuals and occupational groups within the work world.

A number of occupational theoretical approaches have been presented which depict the numerous approaches and theories used to study occupations and all that the term encapsulates. Beyond theory there are obvious differences between occupations and within occupations. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a person's occupation is a major link to the total society. To better understand occupations but
more importantly the types or models of the men and women who are experiencing the occupations, it is essential to investigate:

the characteristic stresses, tensions, and satisfactions that they derive from their occupations, be aware of the differing processes of socialization that they undergo and be able to capture the relationship between the occupations and the employing organizations and the total social structure (Hall, 1975:68).

What we can ever truly have, is a "snap shot picture" of an occupation so to speak. This means that what is viewed, measured, and then analyzed is only for the moment, and may be interpreted much differently at another point in time by another respondent or researcher. But at any given time, what is truly significant is how those who are working and experiencing their involvement in an occupation view themselves within the work.

The act of dancing, integral to stripping, is viewed as an occupation in numerous societies. Within the occupation of dance, a stratification structure exists in which some forms of dance are viewed as having attained a higher status level within the hierarchical occupational structure. This stratified view of the occupation of dance appears to rely on limited but specific characteristics within the
occupation. Before considering these characteristics and how they affect how one might view dance, and therefore dancers, it is my intention to address what dance is considered to be and how it is defined.

DANCE

In simple terms, dance is understood as the human body making patterns in time and space (Royce, 1977:3). However, differences of opinion exist in and between the membership of a discipline and between the disciplines. Like numerous subjects, dance has fallen into the discipline melting pot, and is poured out in numerous definitions in an effort to suit a particular discipline's definitional requirements. The present paper's intention is to provide a general overview of dance, answering questions that would be relevant to the discipline of sociology. How is the concept of dance to be defined? What purpose does dance serve? Why do people dance?

Before one can explore the complexities of a behaviour such as dance, the term needs to be defined. As noted, many definitions can exist to define the same concept. After considering a number of dance definitions, Judith Hanna's definition as presented in To Dance Is Human, was chosen.
Hanna wrote:

Dance can be most usefully defined as human behaviour composed from the dancer's perspective, of

1) purposeful
2) intentionally rhythmical, and
3) culturally patterned sequences of
4a) nonverbal body movements
4b) other than ordinary motor activities,
4c) the motion having inherent and aesthetic value. (aesthetic refers to notions of appropriateness and competency held by the dancer's reference groups which act as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation to guide the dancer's actions) (Hanna, 1979:19).

In this dance definition, Hanna (1979) points out that all of the four criteria are necessary in order for human behaviour to be viewed as dance. This conceptualization is meant to be of a consensus nature, incorporating and employing established and accepted dance definitions while attempting to eliminate any existing difficulties based on the general defined notions of dance.

The next question is, what purpose does dance serve? As all dance has purpose or intent I will begin by presenting the differentiation between what is considered the primary purpose of dance and its larger social purpose. The social purpose refers to understanding the purpose of
dance in terms of the larger social structure. A dance's purpose may be primarily movement, in which case, dance is viewed as a semiautonomous system, separable conceptually and practically from its socio-cultural context. "In the embodied meaning of dance, one aspect of dance points to another rather than to what exists beyond the dance performance" (Hanna, 1979:24). Therefore in the primary purpose view, our attention is directed towards the formal qualities and sensuous surface of dance rather than to the standardized social forms through which conceptualization and action occur.

Dance placed in the context of the larger social structure takes on a different purpose. This is because it is through the larger social structure that conceptualization and action occur. In other words, dance and dances can create and transform social construction and transmit cultural knowledge. This is accomplished through dance "reflecting what is and suggesting what might be [in the culture]" (Hanna, 1989:42).

Culture then is seen as a "system of ideas about the nature of the world and the expected behaviour of people in it. Ideas are encoded in public symbols, literary texts,
art, drama, religious practice, and dance" (Hanna, 1989:28).
Because of these culturally encoded ideas, "the social structure may dictate the criteria for participation and the dancers relation to and means of coping with, the broader social structure" (Hanna, 1979:25). Dance has both a cognitive and affective dimension, whether it be viewed within its primary status (physical movement) or within its larger context where dance functions as a multidimensional phenomenon, codifying experience, and capturing the sensory modalities. In essence "dance is a whole complex of communication symbols, a vehicle for conceptualization" (Hanna, 1979:26). Dance through its communication symbols, may support or refute through repetition, augmentation, or illustration, linguistic, paralinguistic, or other nonverbal communication; it may anticipate, coincide with, or substitute for other communication modes (Hanna, 1979:26).

Returning to the question, what purpose does dance serve, according to Royce (1977) discussing Gertrude Kurath's dance purpose ideas, Royce listed the following:

fourteen purposes or occasions in which dance may serve a particular function: puberty, initiation, courtship, friendship, weddings, occupations, vegetation, astronomical dances, hunting, animal mime, battle mime, and moriscas, cure, death, ecstatic dance, and clown dances (Royce, 1977:79).
On a critical note, it seems there is a problem with Kurath's purposes or occasions of dance when one tries to compare dance cross-culturally as her purposes and occasions are very specific.

Considered to be of a more general approach, Anthony Shay, as cited in Royce (1979), presented six categories he felt depicted dance purpose.

1) dance as a reflection and validation of social organization,
2) dance as a vehicle of secular and religious ritual expression,
3) dance as a social diversion or recreational activity,
4) dance as a psychological outlet and release,
5) dance as a reflection of aesthetic values or as an aesthetic activity in itself, and
6) dance as a reflection of economic subsistence patterns, or an economic activity in itself (Royce, 1979:79).

Asking the question why do people dance assists in further understanding of the purpose of dance. The phrasing of the question as such, implies that all people everywhere dance for the same reasons. Theories have been presented explaining dance respectively in terms of "expression", "relaxation", "instinctive needs", "sex", "catharsis", and "social function" (Williams, 1991:22). While all these theories hold a measure of being correct, there is no reason
to accept even one as containing a universally valid interpretive reason for why people dance.

Judith Hanna discusses the various reasons why individuals enter the dance occupation in her book, *Dance. Sex and Gender*. Hanna states that:

- Economic opportunities are important. However, some people simply seek the pure joy of movement. Narcissism, desire to control audience reactions (seduce the audience) and exhibitionism are other motivating factors. Exhibitionism may be an attempt to confirm one's adequacy and self worth through attracting positive audience acclaim. Dance may be partly an effort to enhance self-esteem related to a faulty body image, a need for other's approval, or proof of independence from one's family. Dance may also be a continuing reenactment of an approach-avoidance relationship with a parental figure. Although audience appreciation may temporarily enhance self-esteem, it may be counteracted if the individual has grown up or lives in an environment in which a stigma is attached to dancing (Hanna, 1988:121).

Hanna's reasons for why individuals enter the dance occupation are clear and direct and yet an element of conflict resides in her discussion. There are dancers and non-dancers who would fully agree with Hanna. But I believe there are some people who would disagree with her. Surely there would be, and could be, more reasons than economic opportunities, joy of movement, narcissism and exhibitionism to motivate an individual to enter the dance occupation.
While considering who these people would be and their reasons for dancing, it would be important to specify the form of dance, be it ballet, jazz, dance chorus, stripping, within which an individual is employed, to properly assess the answers one may obtain in response to the question of why dance.

William suggests that because of the confusion and conflict that permeate the numerous approaches, and theories of the study of dance, dancing and therefore dancers, the question should possibly be rephrased to "what are people doing when they dance", instead of why do people dance? Asking the question in this way allows us to go beyond the answers and claims made as to why people dance. William (1991) says certain safeguards are imposed when the question is asked in this way.

1) asking the people concerned what their intentions are,
2) keeping the investigation within the boundaries of a specific ethnicity, both in terms of language and of the value system involved and
3) proceeding from a general answer that might go something like this: when people dance, they are organizing, attaining, experiencing, communicating, or representing knowledge and belief (William, 1991:36).

This style of question and answer, permits us to
proceed on an assumption that dances can be learned, as anything else in the culture is learned, and that "human dances do not consist of random "behaviours", and above all that they mean something" (William, 1991:36).

Historically dance has been frequently banned. Fundamentalists in the 1900's engaged in discourse against dancing. They viewed dancing, and quite specifically the "flapper" as a corruption of conventional morality. The fundamentalists feared that the flapper destroyed distinctions between the genders, as depicted by the "relatively androgynous fashions of the flapper: her short hair, course language and men's clothes" (DeBerg, 1990:111). They believed that these depictions caused a loss of demarcation between the sexes, working totally against the social fabric as defined by the Victorian gender ideology of the early 1900's.

A number of religious groups in Canada still consider dancing to be corruptive and ban it on the premise that it is a "peril to purity and to Christian character because it inflames passion" (DeBerg, 1990:104). What may be acceptable to these groups is the idea of dancing for God, in a symbolic ritual of prayer and thanksgiving within the
congregational meeting place.

At present, dance continues to be challenged in different dance arenas. Dance because of its nature is an extremely potent medium of expression. The underlying factor of its potency is the fact that the human body is the instrument of dance. In consideration of these facts and factors, dance and the forms it takes in industrial societies is of high sociological interest. Research in this area would increase knowledge about who chooses to dance and why do these people allow their bodies to be the vehicles of expression in this area.

As previously noted, a stratification structure exists within the occupation of dance, in which some forms of dance are viewed as superior to other forms of dance. In other words these dance forms are viewed as having attained a claim to a higher status level in the occupational dance structure. In consideration of this fact, it is apparent that:

the label 'dancer' tends to categorize a person in a particular social status and to carry the weight of yet another evaluation on a scale of disreputable to reputable (Hanna, 1988:247).

The categorization and evaluation of a "dancer" is therefore
dependant on the form of dance in which a dancer is employed, and how this form is socially viewed.

As is the case of the male nurses and chiropractors previously addressed, when the same occupational characteristics are applied in order to rank and evaluate dancing as an occupation, ambiguity is present. What appears to work for one dance form appears at times to work against another dance form. The categories and defining terms of what constitutes a socially acceptable dance form, and hence the dancers who dance the form, appears to contain social bias. This bias is derived from interpretations weighted in "elite" high art standards, gender issues, the level of sexual presentation as well as exposure, and results in evaluations based on acceptable and non-acceptable atmosphere/environment scenarios.

The following is a view of public dance performers that Hanna (1988) presented in her book titled Dance, Sex and Gender, where she wrote that:

public dance performance has brought opprobrium throughout the course of history. Associated with illicit sexuality, low social class or dispossession of social standing, and female self assertion, in addition to means of economic independence, dance nonetheless, provided some performers with a vehicle to gain glory and the
envy of respectable society for their artistry and association with powerful men (Hanna, 1988:247).

To assist in drawing out some examples of the ambiguity that resides in the ranking of the dance occupation and therefore dancers, I have chosen to present ballet as an example of a dance form. It is said of ballet that "generally within the professional world, as well as popularly, ballet holds a position of cultural and institutional dominance" (Novack, 1993:39). This dominance stems from the fact that as a performance form, ballet is viewed as a respected artistic tradition which is simultaneously associated with both a bourgeoisie white audience, and through television and film, with a more general audience.

In addition, "because ballet is considered the premier art dance form by governments of Europe, North America, Australia and former Soviet Union, ballet's ideas and practices gain cultural power" (Novack, 1993:39). This cultural power coupled with ballet's respected dominance is further recreated and simultaneously augmented by governments who bestow upon ballet companies the highest amount of grant money awarded to any of the dance forms. In
the language of the government granting powers, ballet companies are considered "primary cultural institutions" (Novack, 1993:38). In consideration of these claims allotted to ballet, a couple of questions arise. Why is ballet viewed as an art form? Do ballerinas have a claim to a higher status position than other dancers in other dance forms? Perhaps an overview of the art of ballet may shed light on these questions.

Firstly, because of the level of discipline, technique, and skills needed within the art, ballet training demands early exposure. Other dance forms do not require as early an entrance for training and exposure. However what also reveals itself in relation to exposure is a marked difference between the sexes within ballet. It seems that the training age entrance differs between females and males in ballet. Sutherland (1989:98) points out that comparatively the greater number of females began lessons between the ages of 6-10 years and the greater number of males began between the ages of 17-20 years.

Differentiation between the sexes occurs again when the age of commitment to ballet is considered. Apparently a conscious decision must be reached to "seriously"
concentrate and intensively study ballet in the teens, which is very unlike other occupations and professions. Again females decided at a younger age, 11-16 years, that they wished to become professional dancers, as compared to males, who decided between the ages of 17-20 years of age (Sutherland, 1989:98).

Upon commitment, expertise of training accomplished, and the occupation entered, "ballet allows for great achievement in a physical art by female performers for which they receive public acclaim" (Novack, 1993:39). It may be this achievement and public acclaim which offsets the negative fact that ballet dancers are not guaranteed a full year of employment. Females work a median of 36.9 weeks and males work an average of 42.7 weeks per year (Sutherland, 1989:105). This low level of weeks worked may contribute to the low salary levels, which definitely demonstrate that dancers encounter downward mobility as indexed by salary levels (Sutherland, 1989:106).

Table 1 points out that the larger number of ballet dancers were receiving a yearly salary of $3,001 - $5,000, with the second highest group receiving a yearly amount between $5,001 - $7,000.
Table 1: **SALARY OF DANCERS**
(by company)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Under 3,001</th>
<th>3001-5,000</th>
<th>5,001-7,000</th>
<th>Above 7,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prestigious</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less prestigious</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Sutherland, 1989:106)

As males receive a higher number of working hours it is quite possible that they are found in the higher salary range in ballet circles. Regardless of salary, what is said of male dancers is that:

In Western tradition, male dancers, since the demise of the Renaissance court fetes, have felt opprobrium for their career choice. Professional male dancing became associated with homosexuality and low income. Gender streams of reputability/disreputability differ for male and female: social class tends to be associated with female dancers, whereas sexual orientation is linked to male dancers (Hanna, 1988:248).

Males, possibly attempting to avoid gender scrutiny and quite possibly low income levels as well, mobilized themselves backstage where, according to Hanna,

males tend to be managers of companies and theatres, artistic directors and choreographers who determine the rules, hierarchal chains of command, a dancer's rank - principal, soloist or corps member - roles, partners and general working conditions. Work patterns have shaped notions of masculinity and femininity. Gender participation in the various aspects of the dance occupation
illustrates the process by which individuals have been encouraged to do certain jobs and prevented from doing others (Hanna, 1988:246).

So although a limited number of males have claimed fame in the ballet area, the form continues to be dominated by the female gender. As an occupation, this form is characterized by: a) commitment and discipline at an early age, working towards proficiency, and b) long dedicated practice hours, rewarded by limited work weeks, low salary, and only the possibility of public acclaim. Put in these terms, one might ask exactly what attracts young girls and some boys to the ballet dance form and then into the occupation? One might conclude that there are other rewards, possibly artistic.

The occupation of dance may be conceptualized within the same occupational framework applied previously to the occupation of nursing. A problematic gender issue presented itself in the occupation of nursing, whereby when a male entered the occupation he was not assigned the same status as a female was in the occupation. What we see is that "work is gendered; that some tasks are seen as 'women's work', to do which is demeaning for men" (Diane Elson, 1991:1).
While males were not awarded the same status and were not accepted on the same level as female nurses, they were, however accepted into the medical profession as surgeons, doctors, x-ray technicians, and administrative staff. Matthaei (1988) points out that similarly, males were accepted into the dance occupation as managers, choreographers, directors, and the like but were discouraged or prevented from dancing itself. It appears that in both of these cases the occupation is gendered and is only socially accepted and awarded status if the occupation is practised by females. However, males are favourably viewed by society and awarded status within the occupation of dance if the male dancer has abilities that are outstanding, and show male prowess, strength and athletic ability, as was the case with Rudolph Nureyev. In addition, ballet has a demanding need for male dancers, and the supply is not readily available, therefore men who do enter the occupation may gain status simply based on the supply and demand principle.

As previously suggested, other elements beside the issue of gender are at play within the status ranking of the occupation of dance. However, with the issue of gender removed, what becomes obvious is that the occupation of
dance is female specific in most cases. Therefore when the occupation is assessed and ranked, what is clearly being viewed and ranked is the status of females in dance. As already mentioned, the art of ballet is viewed as a respected artistic tradition. It is supported by the social elite, the governments of numerous countries, television, and a general audience (Novack, 1993:39).

In contrast, stripping is not viewed as a respected artistic tradition; it is not necessarily supported by the general elite; the governments do not support the dance form through grants; and only recently has stripping been viewed as on an entertainment screen, as in a current Hollywood style movie depicting strippers. The popular and recent movie called "Independence Day" presents a scene between the Presidents' wife and a black female that epitomizes the categorization of the term dancer and the evaluation of a dance style. After rescuing the President's wife the black female is asked by the First Lady what she works at. She replies, "I'm a dancer". The First Lady says, "Ahh the ballet". The black female says, "No exotic". Whereby the First Lady responds with, "Oh, I'm sorry". The stripper says, "Don't be".
In other words, if a female is a ballet dancer it is accepted and respected, especially by a character who in this case, the First Lady, is a high status society member. Given that the dancer is a stripper, not a ballerina, the First Lady evaluates the dancer's position in society, and immediately feels sorry for the dancer. The dancer's reply indicates the dancer herself does not relate to the status imparted to her occupation and her work.

Stripping, which includes burlesque, peeling, table dancing, and exotic forms, is generally considered to hold the lowest status position in the hierarchical dance structure. Besides the commonality of both stripping and ballet being dance forms and an occupation, they are both generally female oriented occupations.

What appears to be acceptable in one dance form within the occupation of dance is not always acceptable or granted status within another form. This leads us back to the basic questions of occupations and occupational careers which form the two major theories of the research. Very little research has been conducted in the area of strip dancers since the early to mid seventies, when strip palaces and clubs were first popularized. Consequently the research and
data are quite ahistorical. This research will augment and supplement the existing data, casting a fresh and new light upon the subject and the women who are presently employed in the occupation. The research conducted in the seventies most commonly viewed stripping from a deviance viewpoint, looking at such topics as morality (Salutin, 1970), lesbianism (McCaghy & Skipper, 1970) and the entrance into occupational deviance (Carey, Peterson and Sharpe, 1974), while in an attempt to demystify deviant activity, Ronai & Ellis (1989) studied the interactional strategies of the table dancer.

Skipper and McCaghy (1970), approached their research in a similar fashion to the approach utilized for this research, collecting data through observational research and interviewing techniques, however, their research was focused on seeking out the deviant characteristics of the sample. Their research findings highlighted the following characteristics of strippers: a) that nearly all of the members in their sample were first born and received little attention or affection from their parents, especially from the father, b) that most of the sample had developed sexually at an early age and had coital experiences by age 16, and c) that strippers have a tendency to exhibitionist
behaviour for gain (Skipper & McCaghy, 1970:401-402).

Boles and Garbin (1974), also utilized observational and interview techniques in their occupational study of night club strippers. Their sample consisted of 51 strippers, 26 features and 25 housegirls. Well documented and theoretically sound, their research was very thorough, but is outdated, considering the changes that have taken place over twenty-three years and now exist in the contemporary stripping occupation.

In Hookers Rounders & Desk Clerks, Prus and Irini (1980) conducted research into the groups of people who come together and constitute the "hotel community". Strippers are one of the group of people active in what they considered to be a deviant subcultural community. While focusing on the social psychology of interpersonal relationships within the hotel community, Prus and Irini's attention was often drawn to the career contingencies of particular groups, one namely strippers. However, this was not their prime focus and once again this research was considered to be studying deviant nature.

Following Boles and Garbin (1974), Skipper and McCaghy (1970), and other research focusing on strippers, this
research takes a look at strippers more than twenty years later, and by utilizing and applying occupational theory, casts a light on stripping as a non-deviant, legitimate, and acceptable chosen means of work for women in the 90's.

While it may be easy to suggest that a low socio-economic background would be over represented among the stripper population in this sample, this view does not get us very far in the study of this occupation. In other words, even if these women came from low socio-economic backgrounds, it still does not answer the question of why they became exotic dancers. In addition, it does not present us with the actors' point of view of themselves within the occupation, which in this sense is similar to the image problem experienced by members of some other occupations, such as the chiropractors mentioned earlier.

In light of these unanswered questions, stripping is conceptualized as an occupation and by utilizing occupational theory, this study of strippers attempts to answer the significant question of why women choose to work as strippers and what they are doing when they strip. Additionally, this study attempts to cast light on other important aspects of this form of work. The investigation
of the stripping occupation will be structured by the occupational stages of a career.

Unlike quantitative researchers who assume social life can be measured in terms of numbers, qualitative research does not draw analysis from mathematical and statistical manipulations, but relies on "words" which are viewed as superior to mathematics in the social structure. Following the parameters of inductive reasoning, qualitative research looks for a pattern or relationship which may present itself during the research stages and the collection of data. The idea is to seek opportunities through the research data to "create new concepts and theory by blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts" (Neuman, 1991:405). The intention of this research is to provide an illustration or vividness in evidence of the social world of women working in the occupation of stripping, derived and interpreted from their words, "showing that a theory, generalization or interpretation [of the occupation] is plausible" (Neuman, 1991:405).

Findings from a study of this nature may help to build a better understanding of what is deemed legitimate women's work in the 90's, including what women themselves may view
as legitimate work. With the study of this occupation and its further legitimization as non-deviant, legislation may be created to protect the workers themselves from poor working conditions, non-existent employee benefits, and exploitive work situations.

In addition, research in this area would support comparative studies between what is considered non-conforming women's occupations (strippers), and women's mainstream cultural occupations (nursing). Interestingly, it would also support comparative studies of acceptable dance forms such as ballet, and a not so acceptable dance form such as stripping.
METHODOLOGY

DESIGNING THE STUDY

The primary goal of this research was to describe the work world of dancers within the stripping occupation. This description was to be from the viewpoint of the strippers themselves, as well as from my own observations of their experience in their natural work setting. Field research, also known under the term of qualitative research, has been substantively used to focus on "community or ethnic groups, deviance and powerlessness, occupation and professions, and more" (Singleton, Straits, Straits, and McAllister, 1988:296). It was judged to be the most appropriate method of data collection for this type of study. Field research is appropriate when one wants to learn about, understand, or describe a group of interacting people and is best used when the research question is structured by questions like "How do people do Y in the social world? or What is the social world of X like?" (Neuman, 1991:331).

These are questions which lend themselves to a response in qualitative word form, not a quantitative mathematical analysis as, "words are a mode of expression with greater open-endedness, and more capacity for reaching intellectual
audiences" (Collins, 1991:405).

Within the framework of field research, two data collection methods were utilized. The first method was that of detached observational research and the second method was an in depth semi-structured interview structured by a questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions. The semi-structured interview format was chosen because it "provides some data that are comparable for all respondents, (i.e. age, marital status, and level of affluence) and other data derived from questions tailored to the unique experiences and perspectives of each individual" (Williamson, Karp, Dalphin, Gray, 1982:173). Two goals existed: 1) "to give greater visibility to the subjective experience of women [employed in the occupation of stripping], and 2) to increase the involvement of the respondent in the research process" (Neuman, 1991:252). By utilizing features of feminist interviewing the researcher drew on female skills of being open, receptive, and understanding, creating a social connection and building trusting social relationships with the women. Integral to the respondents account and central to this connection is "the interviewers presence and form of involvement - how she
or he listens, attends, encourages, interrupts, digresses, initiates topics and terminates responses" (Elliot, 1986:82).

In this way the respondents were encouraged to express themselves in ways that they were most comfortable for them, in hopes of creating "a sense of empowerment and an esprit de corps among women" (Neuman, 1991:252). The study looked at strippers employed at two strip clubs in the London area.

**SELECTION OF STRIPPER AND CLUB SAMPLE**

Strip as a nominal measurement is defined as to make bare or naked. Strippers then are defined as individuals who remove their clothing in an entertaining fashion, to a state of semi or full nudity for financial remuneration. The cases for this study consisted of twenty-four women who were employed in the occupation of stripping: their ages ranged between nineteen and forty-five, with one age refusal. Twenty-two of these women were of table dancer status, while the remaining two were of feature dancer status. An equal number of twelve respondents were interviewed from each one of the two strip clubs described in the next section.

The sampling design for this study was purposive sampling within the non-probability sampling method. This
method was chosen because the population is not readily identifiable at all times, and sampling consists of "studying any and all identifiable and co-operative units" (Singleton, et al., 1988:153). In addition, informants were obtained through a snowball effect which occurred when the interviewees offered the names of other strippers whom they thought might be interested in the study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select certain groups or individuals because of their employment status within the occupation of stripping. It was necessary to single out dancers of feature status, as they represent relevant dimensions of the population.

On the basis of the sampling procedure and the researcher's own familiarity with the stripping occupation, the researcher feels confident that this sample of strippers is highly representative of the larger population of strippers in Canada. This confidence stems from the fact that the majority of strippers must travel from club to club, commonly known as the strip club circuit, to ensure continual employment. Therefore a dancer working in a club in London, Ontario, this week may be located in another city in Ontario next week. In actuality they may as easily be
working in another province or The United States at any
given time as well, as this group of women can be very
transient if they choose to be, or as employment necessity
dictates. In addition, as the interviews will indicate, the
dancers interviewed felt they were highly representative of
strippers in general.

The two bars chosen to conduct this research in are
both fully representative of the common elements that
characterize strip clubs. One bar of a "higher" calibre and
serving a middle class clientele will be referred to as the
M.C. club. The second club of a "lower" calibre and serving
the working class is referred to as the W.C. club. Despite
the similar characteristic elements, differences reside
between the two clubs in states or degrees of what is
considered to be quality. Hence the reference to and use of
the terms higher and lower calibre. The higher quality
differences presented themselves in the M.C. club and not in
the W.C. club in the following ways: a) the M.C. club bills
a new feature act weekly and is therefore viewed as a high
status strip club, b) the patrons on average were white
collar middle class, c) the dancers were more attractive and
wore professional quality costumes, d) the M.C. club was
larger, cleaner, and equipped with high quality bar furnishings, carpeting, lighting and sound system, and e) the waitresses and bartendresses wore tuxedo style uniforms, giving the service employees a professional appearance. By choosing two clubs at the opposite ends of the stripping universe in London, a stage is set to be able to recognize the similarities and dissimilarities between the clubs and clientele and how this impacts upon the strippers in the occupation.

Like all entertainment clubs, the tables and chairs are positioned in a manner in which the stage is the centre of attention and viewable from all areas of the bar. Enclosing the raised stage is a bar-like shelf table with chairs, most commonly known as "pervert row" or "gynaecology row". These are the seats closest to the stage and, consequently, to the dancers. The stage ceiling is outfitted with varying intensities of spotlights, blacklights, and running lights, all operated by the D.J. who is housed in a booth within very close proximity to the stage. In addition, the stage and other areas of the bar utilize mirrors, framed with lights, to enhance the dancers performance. As well, each stage is outfitted with a metal pole running from ceiling to
stage floor, and/or a horizontal pole railing, for the
dancers to incorporate pole work into their performances.

Each club has a V.I.P. lounge which is an area set
aside from the common bar area, by either walls or smoked
glass. These lounges house table and chair sets or couch
and table set-ups. This is where the table dancing, more
commonly referred to these days as V.I.P. dancing, takes
place. Ten dollars purchases a customer a private, one song
to full nudity strip performance in the V.I.P lounge.

The clubs offer small, ill kept, and poorly lit
dressing rooms for the dancers to apply their make-up and
change into their costumes. The feature dancer at the M.C.
club received a separate dressing room for her use. The
door was embellished with a gold star and the room was
almost the same size as the dressing room available for the
ten to fifteen table dancers on shift at the same time. The
dressing room situation depicts the distinction between the
status of the feature dancer and the status of the table
dancers. This status distinction will be more fully
discussed in a later section.

The researcher had relative accessibility to the middle
class club because of previous waitress employment in this
establishment and therefore was acquainted with the club's owners. Entry into the working class club was gained by the researcher simply introducing herself to the club owner and asking his permission to be allowed to conduct observational research and interviews with the dancers in his establishment. In both cases the owners were agreeable and helpful in providing club rules, and the names of strippers who might be interested in the study.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND INTERVIEW METHOD

Strippers are considered a unique population as they are actively involved in the hotel community in which a number of quasi-legal and illegal pursuits take place. It is a community in which a number of the occupations, one being stripping, are considered deviant. These occupations and the sub-culture they form develop an argot of their own which is often used to distance outsiders who are not active in the sub-culture. It was necessary to assess my knowledge of the current argot of strippers to ensure its proper usage in the questionnaire and the subsequent interview. Because of the sub-cultural characteristics of this occupational group it was extremely important to get some sense of how the membership might react to the proposed questionnaire and
most importantly, to myself as interviewer.

Before entering the research field, the questionnaire was pretested with four retired strippers. These interviews took place in their own residences and were taped. On the basis of this experience I refined the construction of the questionnaire, the argot used within, and subsequently the sequential order in which some of the questions and probes were asked. Additionally, I was able to develop confidence in my interviewing abilities and was encouraged by the ex-dancers that my questionnaire followed a logical order, asked reasonable and interesting questions, and did not inquire about information that would be embarrassing or distressing. Pretesting the questions with the ex-strippers enabled the researcher to achieve a model of external consistency, whereby, the responses from the currently employed dancers could be cross checked with the responses from the ex-strippers for reliability.

The researcher also had confidence in the reliability of the responses because of her own experience as a stripper which enabled her to recognize inconsistencies, evasions, and fronts. In most cases the respondents were extremely interested in the research subject and were eager to share
their experiences and feelings on the topic of stripping. Consequently, the data in this study are considered by the researcher to be sufficiently valid and reliable.

During the subsequent interviews within the clubs it was found that when respondents were asked, "Is there anything else I should have asked you and didn't?", the common response that surfaced was, "You didn't ask me if I liked my work?" Based on this response, the question was incorporated into the final stage of the interview process.

PROCEDURE

The actual research was initiated by detached observation conducted for one week in each club, thereby allowing the researcher to "break the ice" of the hotel community sub-culture. During this time valuable contacts were made with other hotel community members, namely, the club doormen, bartendresses, waitresses, and most importantly, as it would turn out, the club D.J.'s.

In some of the cases contact was made with the dancers through an introduction made by the D.J. Other subjects were approached by the researcher randomly within the clubs while the feature dancers were purposely selected and their participation requested. Still other dancers, through a
snowball effect within the clubs, approached the researcher herself, interested in contributing to the study.

Once contact was established the researcher explained the purpose of the study in general terms, and openly admitted her own past employment experience as a stripper, thereby explaining her current interest. In most cases this openness established an immediate rapport of trust and honesty between the women and the researcher. Participants who were willing to cooperate in the study, were then encouraged to select a mutually convenient time and place where a meeting could take place. Not all of the dancers approached or referred were willing to participate in the study: five of the twenty-seven table dancers approached refused participation. Their reasons for refusal differed but in most cases the subjects simply avoided me, after not showing up for the mutually agreed upon interview time.

Three of the five feature dancers available in the time frame in which this study took place, declined participation in the study. One feature felt she had not been in the business long enough, and although efforts were made to change her mind, she held to her beliefs. Two other features approached would not commit to an interview time as they
were having a "bad day" which eventually developed into a "bad week".

The interviews were conducted in a number of locations. Respondents were often willing to participate in the interview process if it could take place "here and now", meaning, the majority of interviews took place in the strip clubs, seated either at a table, the bar, or a dressing room when available. The remaining interviews took place in motel rooms, the dancers' own apartments, and in one case, a Karaoke bar. In all cases the interviewer sat, face to face, maintaining eye contact with the participants.

The interviews were conducted over a forty day period spanning September and October of 1996. The interview times ranged from forty minutes to three hours, with the average interview lasting one and a half hours. The interviews were recorded on audio tape with the permission of each subject, if the noise factor within the environment allowed. In a number of cases it was impossible to tape record because of the volume of the music in the two clubs.

Prior to starting the interview process each interviewee was asked to read and sign a consent form which, a) described the purpose of the study, b) asked permission
to tape the interview, and c) guaranteed the informant that all information collected would be treated confidentially and all published material would protect their anonymity (Appendix 1). Each informant received a copy of the consent form, while the researcher retained a copy for her records. In addition to the interview, the researcher made observations which were recorded as field notes.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Our culture and legal traditions demand respect and protection from harm for research participants. There are four problem areas of ethical concern in research regarding human subjects. The four areas are: potential harm, lack of informed consent, deception, and privacy invasion (Singleton et al., 1988:446-455). Researchers are obliged to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of their informants. This was of particular concern in this study as the participants in this study are located in an environment in which quasi-legal and illegal practices are taking place, of which they are aware and in which they are sometimes involved. For this reason and also because not all members of this occupation want members of the larger community to know of their stripping involvement, a number of safety
measures were needed to protect this population of women.

The following safeguards were utilized to protect the informants' rights: (1) the proposal for this study was reviewed and approved by the Department of Anthropology and Sociology Ethics Committee, (2) the research objectives were expressed verbally and in writing on the consent form, so that they were clearly understood by each respondent, (3) written permission to proceed and to tape the interview when possible was obtained on a consent form prior to their interview, (4) informants were provided with the highest level of privacy available during the interview process, (5) informants were assured of anonymity, guaranteed that neither their personal name or stage name would appear in print within the study, (6) informants were informed they had the right to withdraw from participation at any time and/or could refuse to respond to specific questions, and (7) respondents were offered the opportunity to read the results of the study if they wished to contact me in the spring of 1997 for that purpose.

In addition to the above mentioned safeguards, as researcher/interviewer I revealed my own historical experience in the stripping occupation, revealing my present
interest and past identity within the occupation thereby establishing a rapport for honesty and trust. When I found myself in a position where I was aware of, or unintentionally involved in, any illegal activity, I unobtrusively excused myself, so as not to jeopardize the membership or myself with guilty knowledge. In addition to promising anonymity, the clubs, acts, and recognizable characteristics of the women employed in the clubs during the time of this study are never described in any explicit manner which could enable someone to draw conclusions of said clubs, or those employed in them. In this way these women have their occupational membership, privacy, and public reputation safeguarded.
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STRIPPER SAMPLE

The analysis of the dancers will begin with a demographic profile of the strippers employed in the two stripping clubs researched. Socio-economic status (SES) background is accepted as "the most powerful overall factor which influences a person's aspirations and expectations" (Chen and Regan, 1985:46). Based on the SES factor, one might expect that strippers come from low socio-economic backgrounds, and because of low self esteem and the lack of education, skills and/or training they find themselves in the stripping occupation. However, according to the data I collected, the majority of the strippers are from middle to upper middle class families, as measured by the occupations of their parents. The parental occupations ranged from single parent mothers, to an engineer, an optometrist, numerous managers, and a Doctor of Theology.

In addition, the ethnic background of these women was not a deciding factor for their occupational inclusion either. A variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds were apparent in the occupation and ranged from Black (American, Canadian, and Jamaican), North American Indian, Oriental, Canadian, and American, to Italian, Czechoslovakian,
Romanian, and Mexican backgrounds. Because "Canada is an ethnically heterogenous society" (Chen and Regan, 1995:53), one might expect to find all races present in any given occupation and in all status positions within a given occupation. But "given the cultural and socio-economic differences that exist in the various ethnic groups in Canada, it is conceivable that they also differ in terms of occupational aspirations and expectations" (Chen and Regan, 1995:53).

However, a connection appears to exist between ethnicity and the opportunity to aspire to feature status within the hierarchical structure of stripping. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Research indicates that education is dependant on SES, but if the SES background of strippers is not what was expected, it follows that a low educational level should not be assumed as well. Indeed, the education of strippers in this sample ranged from grade eight to a four year university degree in child psychology, with 59% of the sample having a high school diploma or even higher level of education. One might conclude that the majority of females after finishing high school, found they were not trained in
any work area beyond low paying menial work positions. Previously held jobs as indicated by the strippers, were doughnut shop attendants, waitressing, clothing store clerk and some reception work. With 100% of the sample indicating financial rewards as the motivation behind entrance into the stripping occupation, it is apparent that the financial opportunity far outweighed contemporary minimum wage female work situations. Since their entrance some of the strippers have returned to school, some want out of stripping but do not have a plan of action to date, and some are currently saving to retire from the business. This is not to deny that education is a predictor of financial success, as illustrated by the university graduate feature stripper, whose estimated annual salary is $70,000. Additionally, the other feature stripper had completed a college degree and was also receiving a high salary. A connection appears to exist between education levels and attainment of feature status in this sample.

As indicated, the majority of strippers were seeking out employment at high school completion. The data indicates the entrance age was consistent with the typical high school completion age. The most common age of entrance
into the stripping occupation was 19 years of age, but entrance did range between 14 and 45 years of age. Their current ages ranged between the ages of 19 and 46 years. In terms of percentages, 25% of the sample entered the occupation at age 19, with 66% of the sample entering between the ages of 19 and 24 years.

Retirement age from stripping was estimated to be as "close as tomorrow", and otherwise ranged from four months to five years. Most of the respondents raised the connection between age and appearance, stating that as one ages, one should not be stripping. Therefore the concept of appearance is attached to a stripper's ideas of what constitutes retirement age. In the case of this occupational group, younger persons do not show deference to their elders, as indicated by their negative attitude towards aging senior level strippers. Therefore aging strippers are pushed into retirement based on their physical appearance and in competition with the younger strippers coming into the occupation. Retirement concerns and the "push - pull" phenomenon (Chen & Regan, 1995:102) will be discussed fully in the retirement section.

Personal appearance is the mainstay attribute of this
occupation. Without a reasonable physical appearance by typical "Cosmopolitan" magazine standards, strippers have a difficult time procuring weekly bookings. Some bars do exist, as exemplified by the working class bar (WC) in London, that do not lean as heavily on appearance standards for employment but a number of these strippers complained of being turned away from other bars based on their appearance. The majority of the women in the middle class bar (MC) and about half of the women in the WC bar were considered attractive by magazine standards. These women exhibited a variety of body shapes which included ranges of extremely large to almost non-existent small breast sizes, including surgery induced and natural breasts, and curvaceous hips and legs. There were short and tall women, sporting hair arrangements of varying lengths, styles and colour, with varying degrees of makeup and fingernails. The most common appearance trait amongst this group is that they had all shaved their pubic hair to show off their genitals. The hair was shaved off to one degree, shape or another, and in some cases had been removed completely, thus, "baring it all", and leaving nothing to the imagination.

In conclusion this group of women are as diverse and
individually unique as any given group of individuals who come together for a common work practice. The common work practice of these women is a form of entertainment that involves presentation of the female body in altering states of undress. Based on that one common thread, their work practice, can one assume that these women are all the same colour, texture of character, and design of mind?

Based on these considerations it becomes unreasonable to assume that these women would have the same basic orientations and satisfactions towards their careers or career stages. The analysis now turns to the career motivations of these women.
THE OCCUPATION OF STRIPPING

MOTIVATION

As discussed in the literature review, theorists studying the motivation behind why people work conclude that wages and all the various sorts of financial remunerations associated with the term fringe benefits, are indisputably the main source of the desire to work. In the case of the stripping occupation, the interview data revealed an overwhelming consensus in this area. Every respondent was initially motivated to enter the occupation because of its financial rewards. The ex-wife of a strip club owner, who went on to become a feature stripper and now reaches an annual income of seventy thousand dollars described the financial rewards for stripping in this way:

I made the pay cheques up, I knew how much they were making. I knew the money was deadly! I use to say, I can't believe you are paying these girls this much money to exercise nude.

In a similar vein a table dancer described her motivation this way,

The money you know. The money is good, I was working in a doughnut shop and I didn't want to do it no more. It wasn't paying much and I was working so hard. So I said, I could become a dancer and I could get this [money] like a week. I
don't have to wait two weeks. I can make like a hundred dollars a day.

Yet another respondent supported the financial theme stating,

I was just working my butt off and I wouldn't take any money from my parents or anything. I was always just getting by. I had to scrape pennies to make my car payment and insurance. I really just always wanted to make money.

A respondent who had come to Canada from Rumania where she had worked as a salesperson stated she had: "worked day and night in Rumania, very bad money, money very low". She now hoped to "take money back to Rumania for house".

Vroom (1964) concluded that the five motivational bases are equal in importance. Therefore it is necessary to note that although the other four motivational characteristic factors are not highlighted here as occupational entrance motivators, they did surface within the interviews as job satisfaction elements and contributed to current occupational motivation. These four motivational bases and the satisfaction levels, thereof will be discussed in the section on occupational satisfaction.

To conclude the area of motivation, this sample of strippers within this occupation support Vroom's (1964)
theory that wages are indisputably the mainstay source for the desire to work. As indicated in the demographic profile the majority of these women had tried other forms of work. Dissatisfied with working long hours for minimal wages, a change to an occupation which would at least allow them reasonable financial rewards appeared promising. In most cases financial satisfaction attained through working in the stripping occupation outweighed any further consideration of any other form of employment which would not provide the same remuneration.

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

The interview data revealed that not one of the respondents had childhood aspirations to become a stripper. Only one dancer had daydreamed about a dancing activity that might be considered remotely close to stripping. In the words of this respondent,

when I was really little I said, I wanted to be a belly dancer, but then I changed to wanting to be a nurse.

The majority of the dancers identified the helping hand professions, as exemplified by nursing, law officers, day care attendants and veterinarian work as their childhood and adolescent dreams.
Theory suggests that among the family's primary functions is the preparation of individuals for work (Caplow, 1954:248). In the case of the stripping occupation, there is a visible plausible connection between family preparation, however unintentional, and the entrance of these women into this occupation. Although these women did not consciously aspire to become strippers in early childhood, the interview questions stimulated a reflective process in which a number of the respondents could clearly see their early childhood preparation for the stage. This preparation for the stage came in the form of dance lessons, gymnastics, acting, modelling, public speaking and figure skating. These skills and abilities developed in childhood and adolescence would later serve them to enter into an entertainment occupation, namely stripping.

A feature dancer respondent explained her preparation this way:

I started acting school at 13, or 14 and before that I was always class clown, the front person in a group, the leader. Then I went to modelling school for three years and then from that to public speaking. So I've always been up there. I've always been under the lights.

In a similar vein a table dancer with nine years of ballet,
and a gymnastic and martial art background noted that:

I was always on stage. It was not a daydream, as I was always active on stage. My grandfather directed stage performances.

Still another table dancer commented that,

I am also a singer, that's why getting on stage in front of an audience does not bother me.

Although a majority number of respondents did envision some form of preparation for entrance into an entertainment occupation, a minor number of the respondents did not, as exemplified by this dancer's response:

No, I would never have thought in a million years that I would do this. I was very shy, I was shy about everything.

Another dancer who, prior to stripping, had worked in a factory for ten years, before it closed down, stated: "You couldn't even get me to dance on a dance floor before this".

While none of the women in this sample actively aspired to enter the occupation of stripping during childhood, the interview process revealed that for the majority, preparation for the stage in terms of dance, acting and modelling aided their entrance into this occupation.

Given that only a minor number of females can "make it
big" in ballet, acting, or modelling, it is plausible that a few females might desire an employment opportunity, such as stripping, that would allow them to maximize their looks, abilities, and the desire to be on stage. This is not to say that all attractive females with a stage presentable skill and a financial need will enter this occupation.

**OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE**

As previously discussed in the review of the literature, theorists studying occupational choice have developed three broad theoretical models: the fortuitous approach, the rational decision making approach, and the social cultural approach (Chen and Regan, 1985:40-61). The overwhelming majority of this sample entered the occupation initially by a fortuitous approach, meaning an entry more by chance than by choice. This is not to say that these women entered the occupation giving it no rational thought at all, or that certain socio-cultural influences did not set limits which affected their occupational aspirations or expectations. In this case the application of the fortuitous approach implies that the majority of these women, driven by financial needs, made an occupational choice through an elimination process. This process was in
most cases spontaneous and highly influenced by situational pressures as the following recounts of entry into the occupation depict.

**INITIAL ENTRY**

The respondents' recounts of initiation into the occupation were colorful, humorous, and dramatic. These women remembered why they chose to enter this occupation and their initial experience with a clarity, as if it had just happened yesterday. One respondent, anxious about bills after a six week work lay off, met up with an old high school friend who was stripping. Her friend described what she did, the money she made, where she was working and told the respondent to come down to the club anytime. She is now a high status feature, the following is her recount of her initial occupational experience.

Sure enough I did it. I packed up I guess, little sexy things that made me look good. I went in and she [friend] took me into the change room and said 'Okay take your clothes off.' Standing in a changing room full of girls, I just went, What! So I took my clothes off, she said 'you look good. Okay can I see your cookie?' You are going to look at my private parts? No! And she did. She said 'you look good, now come out and watch me.' Went out and five minutes later she said 'okay you're on your own. Go out there and this is what you do. You just go up to them, would you like a dance?' and that was it. I did it one night. It
was just boom, boom, boom, and I went home and I had some money, and I thought okay I can do this.

Another respondent of showgirl status discussed how she had entered the occupation after working as a waitress in a strip club for a year.

I decided to come to London to strip with a friend. I was really scared and I thought I would have to be really drunk to do this and from being a waitress I thought the girls sat around till ten o'clock and drank for four hours and then went to work. That's not how it worked. You started right at six o'clock. The last girl there is the first girl on. We were at the ____ _____ in London and staying at the __________. We got to London at 5:30, we got changed and went over there at six. I was second up, so I had not drank anything. Which I'm glad for, because I know you don't have to drink to do it.

The following two respondents entered the occupation with a little less apprehension and fear. This may be attributed to dance performance experience from childhood and teen years as they note. The first respondent of table dancer status noted:

I use to go to reggae parties and they use to say, if you want to win five hundred dollars you got to take off your clothes. So I would strip off my bras and bikini things. A stripper hanging out in the club, said "hey man, you know, come try". My friend took me to the club, I got a license and freelanced for one week. They see I was doing good, and I wasn't scared no more, so the manager said would you like to be on schedule? So I said sure.
In the words of the second table dancer,

When I was about seventeen, almost eighteen I moved into an apartment and the woman below was a dancer in Toronto. So her and me started talking about it and she dressed me up a couple of times, just in front of a mirror, and I was like, Wow! I'd been in dancing classes since I could walk. My parents were really avid on making sure I was always kept busy. I figured by that time I had the ability to do it. Now, would I be able to do it out of private. Slowly but surely I got into it. I practised in the apartment and finally got the nerve. I went out there. For the first time I just had more of a great time than anything, bouncing around and having fun.

The following account illustrates the rational deliberation some women enter into in their decision to enter this occupation: A feature dancer after examining her choice between continuing to work in the stripping occupation or moving on to work in the area of child psychology after completing a four year university program, stated:

Because of the child psychology I look deeper into everything. I thought I would be working in child psychology, I thought for sure. I never wanted to dance professionally. But I found out I can't help kids the way I want to, so I chose to continue dancing.

In addition to the preceding accounts, other dancers had entered the occupation initially on an "I dare you to strip", or "if they can do it so can I", and one feature
initially started stripping to goad her husband, the club owner. All of the dancers entered the occupation at table dancer status. The majority remained at this status for their career while others aspired to promote themselves to showgirl or feature status, as will be discussed in a later section.

INITIAL SOCIAL STATUS

"An occupation is the social role performed by adult members of society that directly and/or indirectly yields social and financial consequences" (Hall, 1975:6).

Contending with situational pressures these women chose a social role in which they felt they could make the best use of their physical appearance, skills and abilities. In addition to reaping the financial consequences of the occupation, they inadvertently reaped the social consequences as well. They entered the stripping occupation aware of the social conflict that surrounds the occupation, and its social status position in the lower echelon of occupations. At point of entry the majority of this sample were not supported by family, simply because most families were not aware of their occupational involvement. All of the respondents were aware that the stripping occupation is
viewed by society as one of the lowest status ranked occupations for females, regardless of high income levels or other high status characteristics as outlined in the literature review.

The following are the responses evoked by probing into the dancers concerns about what others thought of their decision to enter this low status feminized occupation. The most common response and simply stated by one table dancer, was "I didn't care. I needed to pay the bills." In a similar vein another respondent stated: "My younger friends thought it was cool" and as far as others were concerned, she didn't care.

I thought of it as another step in my life. I do what I have to do. You take what you've got and you build on it.

One dancer's remark reflects the general attitude that members of society have towards certain occupations. "I couldn't care less. I was already disowned by the family for even bartending in a strip club".

In addition to non-accepting family, dancers also experienced a lack of acceptance from friends as expressed by this table dancer, who said, "I disassociated from my school friends and dancers became my friends." In contrast,
the following quotes from a minority of dancers within the sample express concern and a degree of nervousness over their occupational choice and how others subsequently would view them.

I was quite nervous, I didn't know how react to them. I could talk about it, but was concerned if they would show up. After the first year my parents were supportive, I lost a few flaky friends.

At the trial stage of their career these women were willing to try to overlook the occupation's status and consequently their social status in exchange for the financial remuneration it allowed them. Their feelings and reactions to the social status implications of working as a stripper will be further addressed in the discussion of the plateau phase of their careers.

In conclusion of the interview data presented for the entry and initial trial phase of this occupation, it can be said that, all that is truly required of a female wanting to work in the stripping occupation is a reasonable appearance and the willingness to "move" naked for a male audience. As noted, family preparation and the subsequent skills and abilities developed in these women in childhood did actively assist in their initial entrance into the occupation. In
addition, these pre-occupational skills and abilities linked with the key characteristic of the women within this occupation, namely appearance, supported and encouraged mobility within the occupation as will be discussed later. In summation the majority of this sample entered stripping in prime health and physical form between the ages of 19 and 24, with skills and abilities capable of sustaining them in this entertainment occupation. They needed only to get past the initial experiential discomfort of undressing in public, and they were then considered "in the business".

CAREER STAGES OF STRIPPERS

There are four distinct categories of strippers that form the hierarchical structure within the strip club setting. These four categories, namely, freelancer, house dancer/table dancer, showgirl and feature dancer, also happen to be the career stages which shape the career pattern of this occupation. Primarily a vertical career pattern, the status hierarchy within the stripping occupation is organized in terms of appearance, acquired skills and/or abilities, which include dance, gymnastic and novelty performances and social presentation.

The criteria for advancement are highly identifiable
and well articulated within the stripping occupation. Because the criteria for promotion and the channels one needs to move through to be promoted are clear and explicit, the vast majority of strippers interviewed all shared a stable set of expectations, and understood the rules of conduct necessary at given status levels. It was also well understood that at each of the subsequent career stages there was a coinciding increase in status, wages, and autonomy, i.e., being able to "call your own shots" within the occupation.

As previously noted, initial entrance into the occupation came about in a number of ways for this group of women. Despite the differences in initial entry into the occupation, all of the women in this sample started their career freelancing and/or had entered at table dancer status. Those who had entered at freelance status were quickly promoted to house dancer/table dancer status. On schedule and receiving a weekly pay cheque for stage dancing, these women were expected to conduct themselves as outlined in the MC and WC club rules. Promotion from freelancer to house/table dancer is awarded on the basis of reasonable appearance, an ability to "move" on stage, and an
acceptable level of being able to socialize with the customers while working on the club floor. Promotion to table dancer status is awarded by club owners in most cases but is also available through an agent's promotional tactics. Generally only showgirls and features take advantage of agents and their abilities to keep bookings available in showgirl and feature status clubs.

ESTABLISHMENT/PLATEAU PHASE

At the time of the interviews all of the strippers in this sample had established themselves as either a table dancer, showgirl or feature dancer within the occupation. As the following quotes express, strippers of table dancer status aspiring to showgirl status, and strippers of showgirl status aspiring to feature status, are clearly aware of what the criteria are for advancement, and what the rules of the game are. A showgirl working at the WC club stated,

Women advance through it [career] if they are interested in advancing. As far as physically, to go from table dancer, to show girl, to feature, you have to get into the liposuction and the silicone, the peroxide, and all that. That's generally what you have to do. There are lots of blondes. They have a brunette at ______ this week. She is siliconed to the max. She's this little skinny frame with triple D bags on her
chest. Oh yea, some music gets better response than other stuff and lots of sequins and feathers help.

In a similar vein, a showgirl at the MC club said it this way:

You have to be motivated, put some money into it, and win contests. Your show price will be less unless you have your breasts done. They want to know your measurements. The owner at _____ _____ fired a feature in the summer because she could not dance at all and had not had her boobs done. The owner said you don't have boobs you can't work here.

Two table dancers who sat through an interview process concurrently, answered simply and simultaneously, "boobs", when asked what they thought was required to advance in the business. Still another table dancer, who is aspiring to reach showgirl status next year, stated, "you need to invest in costumes, photo shoots, and you need an agent."

The two strippers who had attained feature status also support this well articulated criterion for advancement. Commenting on her own substantial bust size one feature stated:

To me I wish I was smaller. The guys are Al Bundies. I've seen table dancers get a bust job and all of a sudden they're features. That's wrong. Your boobs will get you in the club, your boobs will not get you booked a second time. It is important unfortunately to the guys. That's
what they want to see. I don't think after the first song they look at your face.

Commenting on breast enlargement for career advancement, the second feature simply said, "absolutely, I've had them done twice. It is essential. When my bust size doubled, my pay cheque doubled."

In support of their concerted efforts and subsequent attainment of feature status the two features defended their status stating:

The girls in this business who are getting all the money are the girls who have their heads on straight. They're like Madonnas, they're thinking of the dollar and every way to make it and they're making it. I take this shit seriously. It's a big show four times a day. My name is out there. I've turned it into a profession, not just a pay cheque sort of thing.

The other feature, who receives up to $2,500.00 a week for stripping, modestly stated:

I know I'm not the best by far. I look at table dancers that can blow my ass right off the stage. It's how I treat the bar owner and their customers that's important. You don't have to be a ten, but if you look like you tried and put some effort into the costumes and music, it's the most important thing [trying].

To stay in maximum shape one feature worked out in a fitness club daily and took numerous health and dietary supplements. The second feature was also very conscious of
her appearance and shape and commented, "I only eat once a
day. I'm on a very serious health program which I pay a
nutritionist to keep me on." As an after-thought she added,
"You need to stay focused, strong, and stay sober."

In some professional occupations, "the acquisition of a
sponsor has shown to be a crucial contingency on an
individuals career" (Chen and Regan, 1985:98). Theory
describes sponsorship as a process in which an established
member of an occupation actively intervenes and helps to
shape the career of a junior. Sponsorship did occur in the
case of a feature dancer who described her advance through
the ranks in this way:

I was working in the club and saw a woman working.
She was so beautiful, so I had to go up to her and
we started talking. I told her she was beautiful
and she said I was good looking too, you should
meet my agent. So I did and he said do you have
any costumes? I said no, but I can get some. He
said, how would you like to be a showgirl? I
started with three costumes. From there I had my
breasts done, got more costumes together and that
was it, I became a feature act.

It is only a small minority of strippers that make it
to the top. Very few dancers have the good fortune to
benefit from sponsorship, as the mobility of the occupation
hinders developing close ties with other experienced dancers
who might be in a position to teach the ropes of the trade to them. Dancers generally learn the trade and develop acts through copying other dancers and incorporating contemporary dance forms into their performance.

Occupational theory depicts career as a path of movement and within this path of movement, simotion as well as promotion occurs. Simotion is expressed as "changes that do not differ in status terms" (Chen and Regan, 1985:86). This movement within the stripping occupation occurs when strippers of showgirl status willingly work in table dancer status clubs when clubs that claim showgirl status billing are fully booked and/or the dancer is not willing to travel.

Likewise dancers of table dancer or showgirl status may seek freelancer positions in town for the same reasons as noted above. In these situations, dropping down in career status position is not considered a demotion and the strippers maintain their respective positions in the hierarchy. However, they do not receive the pay level for their high status position within the occupation, but willingly accept the pay for the status position in which they are currently working.

Characteristic of horizontal movement within a career,
the "desirable location" pattern is visible within the stripping occupation. Described as moving from one work place to another in search of the "right" kind of environment, a majority of the table dancers at the WC club expressed no interest in career promotion and were happy that they had found a desirable location in which to work. The majority had experienced the hustle bustle, club owners, and dancer conflict/competition within MC clubs and preferred the slower, down home community feeling of the WC club.

Theory suggests that advancement is not equally available for all individuals within the same occupation. As discussed in the literature review, an individual's career is functionally influenced by personal attributes, such as ability, ambition, and education. In the case of the stripping occupation, advancement is influenced by all of the above mentioned, but more importantly it is influenced by a particular type of physical appearance, as the interview quotes have demonstrated.

In summation, the majority of this sample accept the criteria for advancement within this occupation, and are either willing and motivated to address the necessary steps
to acquire promotion, or are not.

The most prominent criterion for promotion is to be naturally large breasted or be willing to enhance your breast size artificially. In addition, all of the features observed during the field research were white, all but one had breast implants or fat injections, and all were fair haired. The significance of these observations on equal advancement within the occupation will be further addressed in the discussion section.

SATISFACTION

Theory suggests that job satisfaction varies, and that the variance seems to rely directly on an individual's position in the occupational hierarchy (Hall, 1975). Often the major factor of satisfaction is the mix between the worker's expectations and the characteristics of the job. In consideration of the fact that this group of women entered this occupation for financial reasons, it follows that, with their expectations of financial remuneration fulfilled, there would be a positive degree of satisfaction with their work. Furthermore, if job satisfaction is also a function of one's position in the occupational hierarchy, it follows that feature dancers should be more satisfied than table
dancers within this occupation.

During the interview process the respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction derived from ten areas characteristic of stripping work and the environment in which it is located. These questions are found in Appendix 2. The following three items were commonly chosen by the majority as very important and important sources of satisfaction: 1) "financial rewards", 2) "working when I feel like it", and 3) "the glamour of entertaining". Table dancers, showgirls and features alike all agreed upon the importance of these areas of satisfaction. Contrary to theoretical expectations, there was no apparent difference between the satisfaction level of the feature dancers and table dancers.

Financial rewards were universally indicated as either very important or important as a source of satisfaction. The most common response to the question was simply "very important", and in one case the respondent augmented her comment by stating, "very, very, important, you don't even need to ask."

One table dancer stated, "I'm very satisfied, because I know what I'll get from the job I'm doing." With MC club
wages for out of town table dancers as minimal as $160.00 a week after VIP lounge, DJ fees, and motel room deductions, knowing what one will make financially is strongly contingent on one's hustling skills. In other words, the attainment of finances and financial satisfaction appears to depend on goal setting and the willingness of the table dancers to hustle the sale of V.I.P. dances.

Financial satisfaction and the goals set to achieve it were expressed by the table dancers in the following ways,

I think if you don't make at least $1,000.00 a week not including your pay, it's a waste. I'm working to stop dancing, I'm saving my money, I've saved a lot of money.

On the average this table dancer needed to "hustle" fifteen table dances, at ten dollars a dance, daily for six days, to meet her goal.

Another table dancer was not as ambitious and stated,

$100.00 a day for me is okay. I'm happy. I don't have anything to pay. If you work in a doughnut store you are not going to get a hundred dollars a day.

The wages of the feature dancers ranged between $1,500.00 and $2,700.00 a week, with an opportunity to augment these earnings through stage tipping, polaroid shots, and table dancing if it appealed to them. The two
features interviewed stated that financial rewards were the most important satisfier in their work. In addition, they both agreed that they did not feel compelled to push the table dancing aspect of the occupation to further increase their earnings. The following quotes express their attitude towards features table dancing.

Never have [table danced]. I'm against features table dancing. If you're a feature, you're a feature. To me, why are the guys going to scream and clap if they saw you bending over two minutes ago. I almost didn't do this booking because I was suppose to do a free table dance a day. If I go to table dancing, I'm out.

The second feature said,

It looks bad for the feature to be sitting around. So, if I sit out there for five minutes and no one approaches me I'm not going to stand around looking available, it doesn't look good.

Although financial rewards were ranked as the highest source of satisfaction within the occupation, additional comments during the interview process highlighted the financial changes that have taken place in the occupation. These changes appear to be creating a level of dissatisfaction. One stripper commented about the change in financial rewards in this way:

It's [money] not as good as it used to be. It was good till they took out lap dancing. People [men]
do not want to pay the same price and not have the same freedoms. It's also due to the new government, Harris and his cuts, people do not want to spend.

In a similar vein a showgirl said:

I'm not as satisfied now, but it helps when I need it. There use to be a lot more money, it's not there now.

Yet another respondent echoed these views:

I'm reasonably satisfied with the money rewards. If I wanted to be a slut it could be a lot more. I choose not to.

These comments draw our attention to the big business that the stripping occupation has been. Now, during harder economical times, it is no different than other business areas where everyone wants as much for their money as is feasibly possible. Satisfied with reasonably priced cheap sex as provided by lap dancing some customers are now harder to please with the non-touching act of a table dance and are less willing to pay the same price. With the customers being less willing to spend their money, table dancers need to really "hustle" to reach their goals and remain satisfied with the financial rewards of this occupation.

The secondary source of satisfaction, as indicated by 83% of the sample, was the opportunity to work when they
felt like it. A table dancer at the MC club of showgirl status said,

I like to work when I feel like it because I've never been one to be told what to do. I'll do what I want to when I'm ready to do it. I don't like a deadline to be somewhere.

Another stripper who was also employed in another form of work stated,

Last year I only danced weekends while I went to school. I just dance now when I don't have work in _____.

Attempting to juggle family responsibilities and the need to be mobile weekly to maintain employment, the following stripper said,

It is very difficult to try and raise four children and be a stripper, so I don't work every week in a month.

The financial rewards are consistently available if one is willing to apply themself. Additionally, this occupation offers another incentive, being able to work when you feel like it. This characteristic is not often available to women in work situations in which the financial rewards are so impressive. This characteristic allows dancers to juggle personal, family, and financial responsibilities simultaneously.
As previously mentioned in the motivation section, four other motivational factors surfaced within the interviews as job satisfaction elements. As satisfiers they contribute to current occupational motivation and appropriately express the satisfaction derived from the glamour of entertaining.

A feature dancer who ranked the glamour of entertaining as very important was extremely satisfied by this characteristic and stated,

I like to look like a princess. I love my costumes. I designed them all and that's the way I want to be seen. I like the flashy stuff, I like looking like a girl and that to me is the number one part of the business.

In a similar vein the second feature who ranked glamour as important said,

I'm paid to look good, paid to go on stage. I'm paid to perform. I'm paid to be creative. That's everything I've ever wanted, everything I've ever been a part of. Disrobing was not probably my ideal dream, but.

A stripper of table dancer status expressed her satisfaction derived from the expenditure of physical energy in this simple phrase: "I love to dance". Through the production of designed costumes, considered the goods, and professional stage appearance and acts, considered the service, strippers successfully manipulate their work

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environment and the goods and service recipients, the patrons of their clubs. In this way the dancers derive intrinsic satisfaction from the successful manipulation of their environment, which creates an ongoing motivation to work in the occupation. Extremely satisfied with the sense of power they hold over the club patrons, the strippers in this study expressed this satisfaction in the following ways.

One table dancer stated,

I get a real boost, a real rush from the attention, the whole response. It's a game. I love the game. I like the hustle. To see how easy it is to get them going, to get them in the lounge. I like to see how long it takes me to wrap them up. I reel out the line and reel them in.

In a similar vein a feature dancer said it this way,

I love to flirt. Flirting is a healthy thing and getting attention from men knowing that I'm going home alone is a lot of fun. I'm the boss, they are on my turf and I can play with them.

The second feature dancer uses her appearance and professional performance to establish "power over them [customers] and if I can make them come up and tip me I won."

Table dancers employed at the WC club also derived
satisfaction from "being in control of men which makes me feel better" and "if I know I'm teasing a few in pervert row, I get off on it." Contrary to a popular social belief that these women are employed in this occupation because of the availability of men, alcohol and drugs, the majority of this sample indicated that they were not important as sources of satisfaction. In terms of percentages, 75% of the sample indicated alcohol was a little or not important, and 83% of the sample indicated drugs were a little or not important. Ranked amongst ten work satisfactions drugs contributed the least to any satisfaction experienced by strippers in this sample. Queried about alcohol and drug satisfaction within the occupation a number of strippers, of both table dancer and feature status answered, "I don't drink, I don't do drugs."

With alcohol visibly and drugs invisibly available in this work environment, the situation suggests that liquor and drug use by the strippers would be high. As mentioned, these substances were indicated as not contributing to job satisfaction. This is not to say that alcohol and drugs were not used, as will be discussed in the chapter on stress, but that they were not abused or used extensively in the
majority of cases in this sample.

Commenting on the availability of men, one showgirl stated "the availability of men, that's funny, not in there." A feature dancer considered the men in the club for a moment and then responded, "I wish they weren't." Not interested in men for any social reasons, one table dancer remarked "men are the customers, so they are very important in that way." Viewing men as a necessity of their work, the strippers tend to patronize the men during work hours, but do not view these men as serious prospects for love or romance after work hours.

In summation the majority of this sample are satisfied with the financial rewards of this form of work despite the financial changes that have occurred within the occupation for a number of reasons. Initially motivated to enter the occupation for financial reasons, this sample of strippers still consider finances to be the number one motivator and satisfier. A stripper's position within the occupation's hierarchy did not appear to effect the level of satisfaction derived from the satisfaction factors of this occupation.

Using glamour and movement to sexually stimulate male patrons, these women are highly motivated by the sense of
power they experience from manipulating their environment in this way. This sense of power stemming from feeling in control is experienced as a profound state of satisfaction and was stated so by the majority of the sample, table dancer and feature dancer alike.

Dissatisfaction

Dissatisfaction contrasts with satisfaction and can at times overlap areas of satisfaction as was presented in the previous section. Dissatisfactory aspects of an occupation can be found embedded in the task itself, the work environment, or may be stimulated by other players within the work place. Structured the same as the satisfaction question (see question 11, Appendix 2), the nine predetermined areas were rated by respondents as sources of their dissatisfaction with this occupation.

The three dissatisfactory areas in order of importance, rated as "very important" or "important" by the majority of the respondents, were dressing rooms, club owners, and male patrons. Both of the features and the majority of the table dancers, totalling 75% of the sample, indicated that dressing rooms were the key dissatisfactory area in the occupation. The dressing rooms were described by the
dancers, and observed by the researcher, to be too small for the number of dancers expected to use them during a shift, being ill-kept and dirty, poorly lit, and generally demeaning in appearance. The table dancers did not receive adequate, if any, hanging space for costumes, or a lock up for personal belongings. A table dancer at the WC club exclaimed "Oh God what dressing rooms? They're shitty, no class at all." A table dancer at the MC club, where the dressing room was slightly more appropriate than the WC club, said "It's too fucking small. It's only as wide as my bed, yea exactly." The following statement of one table dancer summarizes the majority of responses given. "The dressing rooms could be nicer, I'm very dissatisfied with dressing rooms." The features at the MC club received a separate dressing room of their own, which almost equalled the size of the dressing room available for eight to fifteen table dancers on shift. There was ample counter space and hanging space for their needs, with bright lighting, and a door which locked with a padlock. Although the MC dressing room was deemed adequate, one of the feature dancers expressed, "Dressing rooms are important. If they're bad they can make the week bad. Believe it or not, they really
can."

The dancers were quick to identify employee-employer conflicts as a source of dissatisfaction. The club owners were described as using the rules and contracts like swords, cutting the wages back and enforcing fines for any inconsequential misdemeanour, intentional or not on the part of the dancer. Using their position of authority, club owners and managers were also known to seek out "favors" of all types and descriptions from features and table dancers alike. These favors included such things as dating customers or friends of the owners to promote business, performing oral sex for a cash advance on a dancer's salary, and dancing at stags or private parties that had been arranged through the club.

Seventy-three percent of the table dancers indicated club owners were a source of dissatisfaction, rated as very important to somewhat important on the scale. In contrast feature dancers rated club owners as only somewhat important but then went on to verbally express the dissatisfaction that club owners had created for them.

The following comments highlight the reasons strippers have for ascribing dissatisfaction to the relationships
between an employee and an employer. In addition, their comments indicate what the day to day work situation can be like in this occupation. Thus one table dancer at the MC club stated,

I get a feeling when I walk into a bar. If I don't like it I get a feeling inside and I know I can't work there. Some of the club owners are jerks, and if you don't sell all your tickets they fine you $50.00. Every little thing you do they start taking money off you. If they don't work with me, then I'm not going to work the bar.

In a similar vein a WC club dancer said,

I do not put myself in a position of dissatisfaction with owners. I won't work if I feel they are against me.

Another dancer commented that "owners should treat dancers with a little more respect and as individuals." So dissatisfied with her treatment by club owners, one dancer exclaimed "I've been very dissatisfied, that's why I've been barred from a number of clubs." Table dancers not wanting to elaborate on club owner experience generally answered, "I've experienced lots of dissatisfaction, that's number one", and left it at that.

Because of the number of clubs available for work, table dancers seem to always have the option of leaving a club and looking elsewhere for employment if an
employee/employer relationship is dissatisfactory. Table dancers have the option of walking into virtually any strip club and requesting to be put on schedule if a vacancy is available, or freelancing for the week by paying the club a minimal freelance fee.

In contrast, the conditions of employment for feature dancers differ from those for table dancers. Features are generally booked into club engagements weeks in advance and given that they find themselves in a club with an "owner from hell" there is not usually a subsequent work situation available. A feature would not be welcomed back at a later date if she walks out on a club engagement and would forfeit her pay for the work week as well. Feature dancers can find themselves quite unexpectedly in uncomfortable situations with club owners as each week is generally a new club booking. After being on the circuit for awhile, a feature may have learned what clubs and club owners to avoid. But until one is knowledgeable about this area of the business it appears one is at the mercy of the club owners. Deeply affected by the club owner at her previous weekly engagement, one of the features emotionally described her experience in these terms,
Last week was the worst owner I've ever met in my life. It was utter hell, I cried daily. It was, oh my God! I can't even describe the hell I went through. It was truly the worst week of my life. It was utter hell, he was just a total asshole with no respect. He was a drug addict schizophrenic. I was told he hits girls, that's what I was dealing with. It was very scary. But here they're good.

Not surprisingly, this same feature also expressed dissatisfaction about travelling, complaining of loneliness and a state of alienation described best as a sense of isolation. She said,

To be honest my days are numbered if I continue to be alone. I've got to get somebody out here with me or I'm going to lose it real soon. If I had a companion it would be a lot easier.

The second feature had been active in the occupation for eight years and had learned through experience which clubs and, subsequently, which club owners to avoid at all costs. She recalled,

____ and ____ are the worst two club owners on the face of the earth. They beat up their girls. I use to work for them table dancing, I saw the owner of ____ throw a girl down the stairs and break her leg. I've seen them bring in 15 year-olds to prostitute in their clubs. Before lap dancing even came in I saw a blow job when I was up on stage and it was right on perverts row. I walked off the stage got a pot of coffee and poured it over her head and said to the owner if you don't do something about live sex I'm walking.
Quote, unquote from _____, 'If you don't want to fuck my customers you can walk'.

Attractive and personable, this feature went on to discuss how she handled the attention bestowed upon her by the club owners interested in getting to know her outside of work.

I've had club owners chasing me, but it's a joke. Meanwhile I know they're fucking another feature. They are going to try. My favorite thing is to say, I read my contract. The owner here asked me if I had read the fine print? I said yea it says I can walk out and still get paid if you keep coming on to me. They are going to try it.

Like the other feature, she too was dissatisfied with travelling and commented,

I'm a homebody. I love my home. I hate being away from my home. I don't do two weeks straight on the road. I'm suppose to be in Quebec City for two weeks. I said there is no way because I wouldn't be able to go home on Sunday. I'm in Chatham next week and I will drive back to _____ Saturday night, spend my whole Sunday home then leave early Monday morning. I love my home. When I took a whole month off, I don't even think I went to the corner store.

Protecting herself from alienation in the activity of work, this feature ensures that she reconnects with her inner self on a weekly basis, by controlling the fact that she can return to "the home place" weekly. Given that the majority of the strip club owners are male and there was a
deep seated dissatisfaction towards them by the dancers, it is understandable that the third distinct dissatisfaction is with another male group, namely, the customers. Seventy-five percent of the sample rated male patrons as "very important" to "somewhat important" as a source of dissatisfaction working as a stripper.

Employed to entertain male patrons and to encourage them to purchase alcohol, these women are expected to put on a show whether it is on stage, at the customer's table during a social drink, or while performing a VIP dance for a patron. Learning to "handle the customers", considering all the variables at play within this environment, can be difficult to accomplish and be extremely trying at times for the dancers. Male patrons often become objects of contempt as shown by the following quotes:

Customers come in wanting to whine about their lives and I tell them I don't want to hear about it. It creates a lot of dissatisfaction for me.

Male patrons are very important. They're a one [creating dissatisfaction]. They have almost destroyed my whole thinking about men. I've basically gone home to my boyfriend and said don't even talk to me, I've listened to men so much tonight.

Male patrons are very important, I'm telling you. They can make it or break it for you. It all
depends on them. If patrons are assholes, I will not take their money.

I'm very sarcastic. What they don't realize is what they say I can beat. I even shock myself with what I say. Last week for instance there was a guy with a loonie in his mouth and his friends were yelling, 'sit on his face'. I said maybe your mother sits on somebody's face for a buck but I don't. If you're somebody who thinks you're cool I'll knock you right down.

Epitomizing male patrons as "all Al Bundies", she described the customers as "hating eye contact", gawking only at her body from the shoulders down, creating what she declared was "a cold environment".

When probed as to whether there were any other important sources of dissatisfaction in their line of work, respondents identified a couple of other highly relevant areas. Although originally presented as the primary satisfaction for working in this occupation, financial rewards surfaced again but this time as a dissatisfaction. It is apparent that the dissatisfaction stems from the inability to meet one's expectations within the occupation, namely that of finances. This showgirl stated,

I used to be very satisfied with it [financial rewards] but now I'm not as satisfied. But I don't know what else to do to get that kind of money.

Elaborating on this topic she went on to say,
They say you never make the money like you do when you first start, and that is true. You don't have the drive to go out and get it anymore. I don't want to spend anymore time with a customer than I have to.

An injury of any nature can greatly affect the ability of a stripper to be able to continue working. One table dancer who broke her back on a trapeze bar at work likened herself to "a lame horse" having no more use. She experienced time off work with no compensation or medical coverage, and made a point of mentioning there was no pension plan for dancers either. Able to return to the stage after a period of healing time, she is very aware that,

There are a lot of medical problems that stem from it [stripping]. Your hearing is affected by the loud music, you get upper respiratory infections from air conditioners and being half naked most of the time, and heels give you back problems.

The idea of injury and another angle in which the occupation can be seen as unsatisfactory surfaced in this stripper's remark who said, "to the bank it [stripping] is not looked upon as a real job. I guess they figure if you break your leg who is going to pay them."

A number of the dancers expressed a high level of dissatisfaction and stress within relationships and marital partnerships which they felt was a result of their working
as a stripper. The common remarks of a number of the dancers are reflected in the words of this table dancer who said,

It creates problems with relationships. My common-law husband is occasionally jealous because of the hours I work in the bar. He also thinks I'm dressing up for other men and not him.

Commenting on the difficulties within her relationship with her boyfriend because she is gone so much of the time as well as the fact that he too is involved in the stripping industry, this feature stated,

Like I said I don't trust, and I don't get to spend enough time, there is so much of a gap. Times when he should be the one there to comfort me for whatever. That's where eight hours away from each other and a phone just doesn't do it.

A number of the dancers were still concealing their work in this occupation from parents and family members. One dancer who had disclosed her work activities to her parents commented,

My mom understands, but dad is very old fashioned. I have to make a living and this is what I do best. My father is very controlling and doesn't understand, he cuts me down.

Because of the jealousy problem with boyfriends/husbands and the dissatisfaction stemming from other family relationships, a number of the dancers indicated it was
enough reason to retire from the occupation, as will be
discussed in the disengagement phase.

Social status was initially ranked by 83% of the sample
as not important or only somewhat important when the
respondents were asked to rank it. When queried later in the
interview process, with a question specifically addressing
social status, the overwhelming response was of anger and
disappointment. This response was directed at societal
members for not accepting them or appreciating them because
of their chosen occupation. In view of its importance, this
will be addressed further in the section on social status.

A number of mixed responses of varying degrees were
offered by the strippers when they were asked, "Do you or
don't you like your work?" The following responses
illustrate the strippers who declared they really did like
their work.

I like my work. I get a feeling of community.
Part of the reason I'm here is because of the
girls you meet that give you a family feeling,
where I have not had that in other parts of my
life. There is an aura between the girls, the good
ones. You come to work and you know you've been
missed.

In a similar vein this table dancer said,

Yes I like my work, I'm very satisfied. You can
tell the difference between those who enjoy their work and those who don't.

Satisfied with some aspects of the work and yet dissatisfied with other aspects the following two quotes express the mix between the two. One dancer said,

Some days you do and some days you don't, but overall yea, yea I do. Some days I'll curse on it, when you've had enough and that happens and you just need to go home. So like the day you're going home, you say, I hate it [the job].

Another table dancer stated,

Yes and no. Yes I love the stage, the music takes me away from the bar. No because some of the guys can give you a bad time.

For as many of the respondents who did like their line of work there was an almost equal number of women who did not like the stripping occupation, as the following quotes illustrate.

No not in general. I would like to be something else. I don't have the motivation to do anything else because of my sleep pattern and the convenience of the money coming in.

A second table dancer said it this way,

Other than the fact that it keeps me in shape and the little bit of money, no, I do not like my work.

Summarizing this section, one may conclude that there are a number of dissatisfactory areas within this form of
women's employment. It is apparent that there is not an area of their lives that is unaffected by their choice of work. Unsatisfactory working conditions, club owners and male patrons all contribute to low self esteem, frightening experiences and alienation, poor health, and stressful spousal/family relationships.

In addition, the financial rewards that initially drew them to the occupation were now seen to be "not what they used to be" and a number of the respondents had become dissatisfied with the financial rewards. It is apparent from the data in this section and the satisfaction section that this sample of strippers were satisfied and dissatisfied with their occupation simultaneously.

The study now turns to look at how these women deal with the stress that is created by the dissatisfaction within this occupation.

STRESS

The areas found dissatisfactory in the work setting and within their private life as a result of their work, create stress for these women. The dissatisfactions they note are their responses to the "stressors", the harmful or unpleasant situations which lead to stressful reactions.
This group of women easily identified the areas of stress that result from their work and how this stress impacts on their lives.

Two of the most common stressors in our society are jobs and relationships. The majority of the women in this sample indicated that their jobs were the first and foremost stressor in their life. This stressor impacted on their relationships which in turn were also reported as primary stressors in their lives. The most obvious response to a stressful job is to quit. This response did not qualify as an option for the majority of this group. They simply were not prepared to enter another occupation in which they would reap the same financial rewards, as well as the opportunity to work when they felt like it. Finding themselves "stuck", they opted to persevere through work hours and to initiate ways in which they could release stress, either in the workplace or at home.

One of these was reliance on substances. Eighty-two percent of the sample reported smoking cigarettes most of the time on shift and they also consumed alcoholic drinks during a shift period. Thus, fifty-four percent of the sample indicated a minimal use of one to three alcoholic drinks
always to sometimes. Thirty-eight percent admitted they drank three to six alcoholic drinks sometimes to always during a shift. Sixty-seven percent reported they seldom or never drank more than six alcoholic drinks in a shift.

Only one dancer disclosed that she regularly drank more than six drinks a day at work. In reference to her alcohol use this table dancer said, "The more beer I have, the better I feel. Then I feel in the bar mode and then I make more money". Three dancers, including one of the feature dancers, indicated they "frequently" drank more than six alcoholic drinks a day. Commenting on her struggle with alcohol and drug use, the feature said,

Well, since I started I've assumed both an alcohol and a drug problem. So it's important because I need it. It's around me and my needs are taken care of, but I don't want the needs. Being around alcohol and drugs were okay when they were recreational, but once they become a need, now its a problem. Now I don't like it. I wish I could go back. I want to be able to just say no. There are women who do refrain and don't drink and don't do drugs and I really commend them for that. I got into a situation where I needed it to perform. Now I'm not drinking and doing drugs for the shows, now I need it just to socialize. If I'm sober I will never sit with a customer. If I'm a little out of my mind then I will, absolutely. Liquid courage, I need it to be social. So I'm stepping down and I'm doing a lot better now.

As previously stated half of the sample reported they
always drank one to three alcoholic drinks daily. However, alcoholism as indicated by drunkenness was not observed by the researcher during the time the research was conducted. As described previously, the rules of the MC club indicate that excessive consumption of alcohol results in club fines and possible suspension from the shift. The dancers are aware of this structure and concerned with the possible loss of wages and suspension: as one remarked, "You can't go anywhere if you are drinking all the time, or doing drugs, your money is blown".

In terms of prescription drug use, eighty percent of the sample expressed they seldom if ever used prescribed drugs. A minority of twenty-five percent admitted they used pot or hash at least frequently, if not always, during work hours to cope with stress within the environment. The majority of sixty-six percent, however, indicated they seldom or never used soft drugs. Commenting on her smoking, one table dancer said, "I like to smoke dope it helps me deal with a lot of stresses". In a similar vein another table dancer stated,

I smoke pot and take time off if needed. Smoking drugs around the clubs is pretty easy. There are
some clubs that indicate or you know not in the club, in which case you go outside.

A small minority of three cases admitted "sometimes" use of other drugs, i.e., cocaine. However the majority of the sample indicated that they never or very seldom used other drugs.

In summation, the majority of this sample of strippers did smoke cigarettes to help deal with stress in the work setting. However, as noted by the respondents, and observed by the researcher, and contrary to popular belief, all strippers are not alcoholics and drug users. The majority of this sample reported an acceptable minimal to moderate daily use of alcohol. Additionally only a small minority indicated daily use of soft recreational drugs. Employed in an environment that promotes the purchase of alcohol by customers, it might be suggested that strippers would inevitably become heavy drinkers. Those women who did indulge in alcohol or drugs indicated it as a way of making an uncomfortable time a little easier to bear.

A number of alternative methods to alcohol and drugs were used to deal with the stress that was created by working as a stripper. These included such activities as
hot baths, listening to classical or soothing music, doing crafts, and computer games and hacking. "I deal with stress by holding a glass Buddha and burning a candle", one table dancer stated. A feature dancer said, "If I'm really pissed off, I'll be at the gym for like three hours."

Seldom able to obtain club bookings in a city for more than a week at a time, feature dancers find themselves constantly on the road away from home. One feature dancer expressed herself in these terms,

I take time off. Whenever I need it, I take it. I won't even work, even if I need the money. If I need to go home, I go home. I need to see my boyfriend and I need to sleep in my own bed.

When asked how work creates stress for them in their home life, the majority of the sample stated that involvement in this occupation had affected how they viewed males and consequently their relationships with male partners. One table dancer simply remarked, "I can get irritable, the men get to bother me. All men." One feature dancer said,

It does affect relationships, it really does. My current boyfriend, now when we first started dating, it's like wild sex was expected. Let's have a threeway, how about I bring my friend over, or how about this, and I said, hey like wait a second, would you say this to a normal girl? Do
you expect fireworks to shoot out of my ass because I'm a stripper? It's funny because every man I meet just assumes I'm a wonderful lay just because I'm a stripper. Things like that can be annoying when you're trying to date. There is always that preconceived notion that you are wonder woman in all different aspects.

After considering what she thought of men and the subsequent stress, the second feature dancer stated,

It's hard to like men. It's hard to have faith in men. Like they don't realize that they take off their wedding band and under black lights their wedding ring mark is glowing. Like it's punching you right in the face. It's hard to believe when you see that so much. Even the guys who technically wouldn't take you home or to a motel room, feel they have to come on to you. I don't trust any man on the face of the earth. I think men are more animal than women. I think its in them to cheat.

Another area which creates a high level of stress and tends to go with the territory of this occupation is the dancers' knowledge and feelings about how others in society view them. I now turn to the topic of social status, how the strippers perceive themselves and their perception of how others view them in society.

SOCIAL STATUS

As previously discussed, at time of entrance the sample of strippers were willing to overlook the stigma attached to this occupation. However, their comments about the social
status of stripping and the stigma attached to it in the plateau phase of their career contrasts with their earlier feelings and opinions.

According to Hanna (1988:247), "the label dancer tends to categorize a person in a particular social status and to carry the weight of yet another evaluation on a scale of disreputable to reputable". Condemned by the majority and exalted by a minority, these women continue to work in an occupation where as one table dancer put it, "I'm dirt as far as everyone is concerned. No matter how nice of a person you are."

In the case of these dancers, known as strippers, not only are they challenged by societal members based on occupational status, they are challenged simply because they are dancers. Within the stripping occupation, the question of dancing as disreputable or reputable exists particularly in the form of whether a dancer is willing to lap dance, now deemed illegal, and/or prostitute herself. All of the strippers in this sample were extremely aware and sensitive to these two issues in conjunction with the low social status of the occupation. One of the respondents was very clear about her concerns with the stigma attached to the
occupation and shared, "I live in a conservative suburb, so I'm very conscious of what others think about my occupation."

The following statement from a table dancer expresses her awareness of, and her disappointment with, the stigma attached to stripping,

It's disgusting, everyone figures we are all bad people, we're not. It's [stripping] legitimate. There are lots of strippers who are not hookers.

In a similar vein another table dancer stated,

You can't tell people what you do. When you tell them what you do they change their opinion of you. It's really weird. They only see what they want to see and not the whole picture, I'm referred to as "one of those girls".

However, a number of the dancers also commented on the legitimacy of the stigma attached to the occupation. Acknowledging that prostitution is alive within the stripping occupation and that lap dancing encouraged certain types of interactions, one table dancer said,

I liked it when they brought in no lap dancing. Only because of social disease and it makes it bad for girls who don't and if they want that kind of activity they should do it in motels or non public places. This is dancing.

Doubling as a WC club bartendress, this dancer is in a position to keep law and order when it comes to illegal club
behaviors. She stated,

The girls know I keep an eye on them. No matter what side I'm on. The fine is ten dollars the first time, twenty-five the second time and the third time they are dressed and out the door.

Employed in the occupation for eight years, one of the feature dancers commented on the legitimacy of the stigma attached to the occupation.

A few years back I would have said it was uncalled for. Now it's pretty accurate. In a club, when the lap dancing came in, prostitutes swarmed the club. That's where they are going. [direction] It bugs me that prostitutes are now calling themselves dancers. I have nothing against prostitutes or prostitution, if that's what it takes and you have that to give, it's your business. I don't have to live with you, I don't have to look at you in the mirror. But I don't like to have to work and see it. I've seen anal sex in the clubs, that's bad.....I don't know what girls "go" in the VIP lounge. If the girls start out at this level [extras in the lounge] where is it going? Eventually the clubs will get into prostitution. The dancing won't be important. There is so much of it. There isn't one club clean that I can say. Every club has at least one girl.

In a similar vein, the second feature dancer supported the attitudes towards strippers from women outside the stripping occupation, stating,

And you know what, I don't blame normal women for being angry and looking down on dancers when that was going on [lap dancing]. Because if I had never seen the inside of this industry and I was just a girlfriend and my man was gone out and I found out
what was going on in there, I probably wouldn't like strippers either. It's not right a man can come in and get approximately whatever he wants, I mean during lap dancing days and that's not right. That's not the way this industry is supposed to be. It's a fantasy, it's entertainment, it's exotic, it's fashion. Now they're greedy, spoiled [the customers]. It just screwed up the whole thing [lap dancing did].

One of the table dancers commented on how some of the strippers look when out in public, pointing out that how one looks and acts in public also serves to legitimate the stigma attached to strippers. She stated,

When you are out in public you don't have to look like a stripper. Sometimes the girls deserve and or have earned their treatment because of their own actions.

"The look" has a dual nature and the following quote is from a feature dancer who changed her look to be able to advance in the business; she now must maintain this look to keep her status position within the occupation. She reported,

I don't consider myself to look like a normal girl. I've got huge hair, I've got thick makeup, everything is big! Now when I go out with my friends they don't know where to look. I don't fit in with them anymore. The girls don't know how to talk to me. I'm socially handicapped because no matter what I do now I've got these [large breasts], so it's hard to tone it down and go back into the real world.

Presented in the context of the strip club environment,
her appearance is greatly appreciated by the male patrons as measured by whistling, clapping, smiling faces, and tipping on stage. However, looks from men outside the club environment and general public opinion can create high levels of dissatisfaction and stress for this group of women. The following table dancer thinks that other people's attitudes towards strippers are "pathetic" and she does not "like the fact that people think strippers are low-lifes and have no education". Public leering and interactions draw out and present what is considered acceptable and not acceptable in the "normal social structure", as the following account of a feature dancer illustrates,

It doesn't really bother me. Sometimes it does, like today. I walked through the mall and it's just like enough is enough. I'm browsing in a little trinket store with like cute little dainty things. People are looking at me like, you're probably a stripper, you can't appreciate that sort of thing....An older man has come in and the wife has been doing the elbowing him scenario, and I said to her, I have to come out and see the daylight too. I spend my life in the dark, let me come out and buy something here and I'll go right back to my hole where you don't have to see me anymore. I get the feeling sometimes like it's not accepted and I look like a stripper. It's everywhere, I get pissed off.

This is the same feature who said, "I hold my head high. I'm not embarrassed to tell anyone what I do. I don't do
anything wrong." Acknowledging that she had thought the
same as the general public before her entrance into the
occupation, one of the table dancers said,

Before I knew about stripping, I probably thought
the same as everyone else. But then I found out no
one could touch you. Others don't know what goes
on and draw a judgment based on that. There are
not as many weirdos as people think. I think the
whole thing is misunderstood by others.

In a similar vein another table dancer stated,

You can't tell people what you do. When you tell
them what you do they change their opinion of you.
It's really weird. They only see what they want
to see and not the whole picture, I'm referred to
as "one of those girls".

The opinions of the general public and the social
status awarded to these women because of their occupational
involvement, impact upon them in terms of their experienced
state of self esteem. Two of the strippers interviewed made
comments on the issue of self esteem and the part it plays
in the occupation. One of the table dancers commented that,

A lot of the women come into the business and it's
an ego boost, but it's a false sense of self
esteem. The owners and other dancers do not
support or encourage you.

In a similar vein the second table dancer stated,

It doesn't build anyone's self esteem. So people
who think they are coming into this to get a
higher self esteem are wrong. It's masking it and
it only takes a while. Everyone who comes into this business thinks they are a Barbie doll and better than everyone else. Slowly but surely you realize you're nothing and you're right back down.

Having chosen an occupation based on financial consequences, these women now find themselves stressed and in conflict with other societal members who do not accept stripping as legitimate work. Along with education and income, occupational rank determines an individuals social status. In light of the demographic material the majority of these women have attained a general level of education and are now earning very reasonable incomes. In addition, these women are attractive in appearance, have numerous artistic skills and abilities, and generally come from middle to upper middle class families. Despite these characteristics and other status qualities within the stripping occupation that should contribute to a higher ranking of the occupation as outlined in the literature review, stripping and the strippers themselves are considered to be at the very bottom of the occupational hierarchy for women, along with prostitution.

The majority of these women entered the stripping occupation with little, if any, thought to the amount of
time they intended to work as a stripper. Having remained in the occupation for a number of years, the majority of these women were still unresolved as to when they would retire from the occupation. Turning to the topic of retirement, the reasons for retirement, and the difficulties of retirement from this occupation are addressed.

**RETIREMENT**

"Retirement is the last passage in one's work career" (Chen and Regan, 1985:104), despite whether one is retiring fully from work practices or retiring from a given occupation to move on to another. Unlike other occupations that females work in, women do not reach the typical retirement age of sixty-five in the stripping occupation. Because of this fact, and other circumstances, a number of the dancers were in the process of upgrading their education by taking evening and correspondence courses. A minority of the sample had set other career goals and were working towards them.

In general, a number of reasons were given by the respondents, when they were asked why they thought women retired from the stripping occupation. The main theme for retirement revolved around the idea of age as it presents
itself as a characteristic of appearance, as can be seen in the following remark when respondents were asked why strippers retire, simply stated, "too old and body shape". The stripping occupation is extremely appearance oriented and the loss of looks, or the aging of looks, creates difficulties in remaining employed in the occupation. As previously indicated in the demographic profile, this sample of women indicated retirement to be as "close as tomorrow" and otherwise they expected to retire within four months to five years. In other words they did not view this work as a long term or lifetime career.

Besides the push factor of aging appearances, there were also other reasons for retiring. One of the feature dancers summarized the reasons strippers retire from the business in this way,

Can't get a booking [this might be based a number of reasons, appearance is number one], 10% return to education, getting married, and 1% got what they wanted [finances].

A majority of the sample echoed the dream of being one of the one percent who get the finances they want and retire from the occupation, as the following quote illustrates, "I dream of having enough resources to retire from this
business."

Marriage or the entrance into a common-law relationship were also indicated as reasons for retiring from the occupation as the following account illustrates,

I met a man, it was casual at first and it [my stripping] didn't really bother him. Then the more serious we got, and we moved in together and so forth and it became a really big problem. That's when I left and started bartending.

This dancer's retirement did not last, however, as participation in the stripping occupation had been a major basis of the formation of her identity, and she missed the "attention, the lights and the sense of performing" that she needed. Unable to admit this to him, she simply told him "it was because of the money" and returned to the occupation. Some of these women suffer from "burnout" and are pushed to retire from the business as this respondent shared,

Just too much, just too much everything. Too much darkness, too much alcohol, too much music, craziness, and too much stress on the body.

Employed in the business for eight years, and considering herself to be one of the 1% who got what they wanted out of the industry, one of the feature dancers shared her reason and the unique way in which she planned to retire from the business. She said,
I'll be having a baby. I have a plan because the money is addictive. When I want to get out I told my boyfriend, when you hear me say three times in a week, I want out, get me pregnant. Take my pills, don't even talk to me about it. Get me pregnant then I have no choice about it, because I don't believe you can be a good mom and dance.

Often pushed into retirement because of aging appearances, these women who have not been able to reeducate, change career, or marry out of the occupation may experience a mid-age crisis. Accustomed to fairly fast and easy money, and accommodating work hours, they find it too difficult to make the transition to an everyday work life. Ex-dancers often stay on in the club business, seeking out work as waitresses, bartendresses, manageresses and agents.

As one dancer said,

Strippers quite often go on to waitress. It's a sad thing to say but it's very true. I don't know very many women at all who have retired and moved on to normal quote unquote careers. Once in the industry, always in the industry. I know ex-dancers who now bartend, or now manage, or now DJ, or now agent. Always in the night life. If I was to leave here I'm not qualified to do anything. What would I do? I would bartend. Once you're in it's hard to get out.

In the case of one of the table dancers in the sample who had a new career, she had returned to stripping part time as she was still unable to establish a full time position in
her new career.

Retirement from this occupation is not as simple as one might expect it to be. As previously discussed, there is the issue of finances, not being qualified in other work areas, and the consideration of orientating oneself to "normal" work. Difficulties do arise when these women try to change careers. Strippers do not feel much differently than a person trying to conceal a criminal record, as they attempt to fill out applications and create resumes that conceal their involvement in an occupation that is generally misunderstood and condemned by the majority of society.

As one dancer put it,

It's not that easy explaining what you have been doing for the last three years. A friend of mine got a bartending job, when they found out she had been stripping they fired her.

When a stripper does attempt to retire from the occupation, there appears to be a high incidence of return, or "coming out of retirement". A return to the stripping occupation can be stimulated by the ending of the relationship that promoted retirement in the first place, losing the new job, or the simple fact that bills are mounting up, the prime reason for entrance into the
occupation in the first place.
DISCUSSION

During the course of the interviews it became apparent that for all strippers, irrespective of their educational attainment, socioeconomic background or race, the most fundamental issues throughout their experience in the stripping occupation centered on money, appearance, and status. Negative and positive polarities exist within all fundamental issues and dancers find themselves located in the conflicting movement between the two poles. These three issues come into play at every stage of the stripping career, interacting and acting upon each other, creating a triadic dynamic in which these strippers are located.

MONEY

Money and the part it plays in the lives of the strippers and the occupation itself will be discussed first. The first and foremost reason to enter the occupation of stripping as indicated universally by this sample was a perceived financial crisis. In other words, these women were in need of money. This finding supports previous research conducted by McCaghy and Skipper (1970), Carey and Peterson (1974), Boles and Garbin (1974), Ronai and Ellis (1989) and Prus and Irini (1980). Initial entrance into the occupation
for the overwhelming majority of this sample came about through fortuitous circumstances. McCaghy and Skipper (1970:400) also found entrance into the occupation to be of a fortuitous nature, saying women "had become strippers more by chance than by design, more by drift than inspiration". Not one of these strippers had childhood aspirations to become a stripper and had not considered stripping prior to finding themselves in it. Past research by Prus and Irini (1988) also supports that few women actually aspire to become strippers.

Previously held employment was reported by the sample to have been menial low paying jobs like waitressing, store clerks, and doughnut shop attendants. Motivated by money, these women were initially very satisfied with the financial rewards of stripping, especially when they compared their current earning abilities as a stripper to the earnings from past work experiences. This is similar to the findings of Boles and Garbin (1974:321), one of whose respondents stated, "I could make much more money stripping". This state of satisfaction would remain with the majority of the strippers throughout the initial and trial stages of their stripping career.
At the stable career period, the point in their career where they have attained table dancer status, and have learned the trade/business, the issue of money once again presents itself. The dancers experience a decrease in financial returns as they find themselves less motivated to "hustle" VIP performances. In addition, comments from the dancers who were stripping during the height of lap dancing, indicated a severe drop in the money from what they were making at that time, especially for those who were willing to lap dance. Even those not willing to lap dance, or table dance for that matter, such as feature dancers, were affected temporarily when lap dancing was deemed illegal. Clubs that could afford feature dancers when they were booming with lap dance customers, could no longer afford high paid features to come into the club. Faced with diminishing wages and the need to negotiate business with customers who would be satisfied with "just" a table dance, as well as an increase in the number of women willing to work as strippers, many of the dancers began to question their status. They began to question whether they should aspire to feature dancer or at least showgirl status in an attempt to increase their financial returns from the
occupation.

However, contemplating what is needed to move up within the stripping hierarchy creates internal questioning about their personal appearance, their willingness to travel, investment in costumes, publicity, and winning titles, and exactly how far they are willing to go to increase their chances to advance. Given that the average dancer is not naturally endowed with large breasts, she must be willing to currently invest about $4,000.00 dollars for a breast enlargement. This surgery can be very painful, requires a number of recovery weeks, and there is no guarantee that problems will not ensue from the implants. Aware of the criteria necessary to advance in the occupation, each dancer must realistically go through the check list and gauge where she is in terms of the needed criteria for advancement, and her willingness to invest some money into her career in the hopes of a financial return.

The decrease in finances and increase in dissatisfaction also pushes some dancers into considering retirement from the occupation. As the dancers feel themselves pushed or pulled into retirement, especially because of financial issues, other concerns surface in
context to money. Is it possible to retire from the business based on their savings, did they invest in education and can now move on to another career, and what do they have to show for years in the stripping industry?

When all is said and done, money motivated these women to enter the occupation in the first place. Money continues to hold them in the occupation as their feelings about the occupation and the money fluctuate between the two opposing polarities. On one side, stripping and its financial rewards are satisfying and provide the motivation to continue working in the occupation. On the other side, the money issue creates a negative experience. They are now addicted to fast easy cash, as Boles in Futterman (1992:131) also reported. This money is also tax free, as it is income not generally reported or easily tracked. Knowing no other way of making the same amount of money as easily, the money issue holds them in the occupation, creating satisfaction and dissatisfaction simultaneously. The issue of appearances and the part it plays in the lives of these women will now be addressed.

**APPEARANCES**

Well documented in the interview data, appearance is
the mainstay attribute of the women in this occupation. Their appearance combined with their willingness to dance in states of undress are the components necessary to obtain the money they desire in this occupation. The ages of the women within this sample ranged between 19 and 45, however the majority had entered the occupation in prime physical shape between the ages of 19 and 24. Although the rules of the clubs do not indicate an age requirement for employment, there are many references made within the rules as to what appearance is expected of the strippers. As indicated in the MC rules, the women are to make use of the tanning beds in their own time, thus promoting a tanned, healthy appearance. In addition they are to appear professionally groomed at all times, change their costumes often during the shift, be of professional dancer quality, and be sexy in appearance. Without blatantly expressing an age requirement or ceiling range of age, the rules give club owners and managers reasons and excuses to not hire or to let a stripper go who may not be of the age or appearance standards of the club.

These women were very aware of their sexual attractiveness and the power they have over the men within this environment. In exchange for their willingness to
perform, "dancers receive validation, attention and money for displaying their attractiveness and seductiveness" (Ronai and Ellis, 1989:296). The appearance of these women can best be described as attractive by magazine standards. As was the case in Boles and Garbin's (1974:319) research, specific information on body measurements was not gathered in this research either. The researcher found this group of strippers to exhibit a variety of body shapes and sizes, which included natural breasts and silicone enhanced breasts. This observation is supported by the data and observations of Prus and Irini (1980). In addition to an attractive appearance, more than half of this sample had skills and abilities in dance, gymnastics, modelling and acting, which had been studied during childhood and adolescent years. Although these skills and abilities were not a prerequisite for occupational entrance, they did enhance the overall stage performance, thereby increasing their overall appearance as perceived by the club clientele. Contrary to the findings of Carey and Peterson (1974), Boles and Garbin (1974) and Skipper and McCaghy (1970), who reported an under-representation of Blacks in the occupation, this research did observe Black women employed
in the occupation. Prus and Irini's (1980:95) research suggests that there is a lower number of Black strippers in the clubs because "coloured girls are not wanted by most places". This does not hold in the present case: four of the twenty-four strippers in this sample were Black women. Indeed women of all races and ethnic groups were observed by the researcher to be employed in the occupation at the time of conducting this research.

However, as also observed it appears that advancement may not be equally open to women of all races, attractive by magazine standards or not. Black women and women of racial backgrounds other than Caucasian had not advanced to showgirl or feature status in this sample. This finding compliments Boles and Garbin's (1974:318) data which documented that the fifty-one strippers interviewed, of which twenty-six were feature dancers, were all Caucasians. As previously addressed in the interview format, the specific criteria for advancement in this occupation are fully understood by the women of this sample. As stated by numerous strippers, the feature dancer "look" tends to be white skinned, slender, short, blonde, cutesy, and silicone breasted to the max, (breast size in disproportion to the
rest of her body). This look is commonly referred to as the California girl look. Therefore advancement in this occupation is first and foremost dependant on a specific appearance, supplemented by costumes and performance, and then the ability to "pull it off", in other words be seductive or cutesy while on stage.

In addition to the above mentioned appearance standards, the two features interviewed in this research had also reached much higher levels of education than the rest of the respondents in this sample. The researcher does not consider this characteristic to be needed to advance to feature status, however it apparently played a part in their rational deliberation when it came to aspiring to feature status.

Irrespective of a stripper's status within the occupational hierarchy, one common appearance factor did present itself amongst this diversely shaped group of women. Universally these women had shaved off their pubic hair to one degree, shape or another, to offer a clearer view of their labia and vaginal area. Nothing is left to the imagination in present day strip acts. The blatant presentation of the strippers' private parts subscribes to
what the club patrons want to see, or so it appears.

Again as was the case with the money issue, the element of appearance saturates this occupation at every career stage. In other words, a woman's attractive appearance supports initial entrance into the occupation, a particular look that meets a specific criterion promotes advancement, and as appearances age, an older strippers appearance predicts retirement from the occupation. The data thus supports Salutin (1971:20), who suggested, "what the aging problem does to them, that is perhaps their worst problem". Competing with nineteen-year old women entering the occupation, a stripper of thirty is realistically considered to be over the hill. By normal standards, such women are still considered very sexually attractive, however, within an occupation that is based solely on a sexual, youthful, attractive, physical appearance, it becomes questionable to employ thirty-year old women when one can employ nineteen to twenty-four year old women, who unquestionably meet the appearance requirement.

Still viewing themselves as attractive in their thirties, "strippers are often reluctant to signal their decline by quitting work" (Stebbins, 1988:85). This
observation also holds in the present case. Finding it increasingly more difficult to locate clubs that will hire them as they age, "older" strippers are faced with the dilemma of retiring from the occupation. Those women in this sample that were over thirty were observed by the researcher to be working in the club which served the working class clientelle, namely the WC club. Two retired strippers over the age of thirty, now worked in the WC club as bartendresses. As previously discussed in the methodology section, the WC club was of a lower calibre status than the MC club. Strippers who did not meet the criteria for employment in the MC club, and/or who chose to work at the WC club because of the "at home" atmosphere they experienced there, found themselves located in the club of the lowest calibre in London strip clubs. Finding low calibre clubs that will hire unattractive and/or aged strippers becomes a challenge for those strippers who choose to remain in the occupation, regardless of whether it is due to financial necessity or a reluctance to retire.

That which initially and primarily promoted their occupational entrance, namely appearance, appears to also serve as the primary reason for their exclusion from the
occupation in the decline stage of their career. Despite the stigma attached to stripping by the larger society, and the dissatisfactions that pervade the occupation, a large number of women are still attracted to working as a stripper. In addition, they remain in the occupation much longer than they initially plan to. The discussion now turns to the issue of status and power as it is experienced by the strippers.

**STATUS/POWER**

Supporting Skipper and McCaghy's research, in which all of the strippers in their sample felt "the impact of negative public sentiment" (1970:392), all of the respondents in this sample were also aware of the social stigma attached to the stripping occupation at the time of their entrance. In an effort to support their theory that a definite negative public image of strippers exists, Skipper and McCaghy (1970:392) surveyed seventy-five college students, and confirmed that a negative public image of strippers did exist, at least in the college population. Strippers were described by the college students as "oversexed", "immoral", and "prostitutes".

Desperate for employment that offered the finances they
required at the time, the majority of these women were willing to overlook the low status of the occupation and the responses of family and friends. Not necessarily intending to make stripping a lifetime career initially, the strippers were less concerned with society's opinion of what they were doing for a living, than their concern with trying to make a living.

However, as they continued to work in the occupation experiencing condemnation from numerous members of society within different areas of their lives, their ability to overlook the way in which they were treated became a difficult task for the majority. This is a task that promotes high levels of dissatisfaction and stress which create a feeling of being powerless. Employed in clubs that are highly structured and regulated by organizational rules, bureaucracy, and the constant "counterfeiting of intimacy" (Boles and Garbin, 1973:140), this group of women find themselves pressed further into a deeper state of powerlessness. Regimented and routinized, they search for ways in which they can assert some form of control over their work circumstances.

Unable to alter the negative way in which the larger
society views them, they turn their attention to ways in which they can rearrange the power positions within the occupational environment, namely, the clubs. One of the ways in which they assert their power surfaced during the interviews as a satisfaction element within the occupation. A majority of the dancers expressed the satisfaction they felt through the sense of power they experienced from the successful manipulation of those within their working environment, male patrons in most cases. Perhaps existing only as a semblance of control, none-the-less the strippers experience it as power. As a 1980's former stripper stated, "We wanted control. The thrill I got from stripping was power. I was seen as powerful, more important I felt powerful" (Allen, 1991:286). This applies to this sample of strippers too.

To some degree strippers experience a degree of power and control through their appearance and the attention they receive because of their attractiveness. Experienced by the performer as a temporary ego boost, the audience may temporarily enhance a strippers self esteem, but, as Hanna (1988:121) has observed, "Although audience appreciation may temporarily enhance self-esteem, it may be counteracted if
the individual has grown up or lives in an environment in which a stigma is attached to dancing [or a style of dance]". The interview data and the researcher's observations support Hanna's observation that initially strippers do experience a boost in self-esteem, but it is quickly counteracted, as the work environment and this style of dancing has a social stigma attached to it.

"The common denominator of the dancer-audience relation is power and the power to influence attitudes, opinions and feelings is critical to the stage performer aspiring to success" (Hanna, 1982:8). Their ability to encourage customers to purchase dances from them, which in effect provides strippers with the opportunity to tease, toy with, turn on, and sexually wind up customers, enables them to exert control and continually re-empower themselves. This means of continual re-empowerment provides ongoing motivation to remain in the occupation for a large number of these women.

Advancement in the stripping occupation is another way in which strippers can further empower themselves and simultaneously increase their position of control and status within the occupation. As seen in the previous section,
strippers of feature status had more control over the club
owners, patrons, and the strip business in general. As a
result, feature dancers subjectively experienced increased
states of power as compared to table dancer status
strippers. In addition to gains in power and control through
advancement there was a corresponding increase in financial
rewards, which continued to support their primary reason for
occupational entrance and continuance within the occupation.
This further augments their state of, and sense of, power
within the business.

An increase in financial rewards, coupled with power
and control, allows feature dancers to legitimately claim a
higher level of status within the occupation. No longer are
they "just" a table dancer or "common stripper", they are a
feature performer, "top dog" on this occupation's
heirarchical ladder. As Hanna (1979:26) stated, "in essence
dance is a whole complex of communication symbols, a vehicle
for conceptualization", and this applies to stripping as
well.

As was previously described in the introduction
section, where the researcher presented an observational
account of a table dancer's stage performance, the stripper
controlled the audience and empowered herself by creating mental images and conceptualizations specific to male thinking, using symbolic dance and gestures. Moving through the appropriate gestures and simulating that she was performing oral sex on a customer, this stripper expressed her disdain for the customer's sexual needs and ridiculed their fantasies by creating a spectacle around their fantastic ideas. She utilized an aggressive physical manner, and delivered the performance with an air of contempt for their fantasies. The aggressive manner further negated the pleasurable element of the conceptualization for the male patrons. During and after this performance the dancer displayed a haughty and smug look, satisfied within herself, and knowing that she had controlled the images within the patrons thoughts. She was in effect, empowered by her performance and by the message she had communicated to the male patrons. In effect this table dancers strip presentation illustrates the importance of William (1991) distinction between the questions of "why people dance" and "what are people doing when they dance?" (William, 1991:36). Consequently, we also see "the resourcefulness of [a member of] an oppressed group in manipulating the system
of their oppression" (Allen, 1991:285). Completely aware of the status position of their occupation and the stigma attached to them through the work act itself, all three status levels of dancers within the stripping heirarchy have developed ways in which they can psychologically reempower themselves and/or claim status within their work environment.

In terms of the satisfactions and dissatisfactions within the occupation, all of the areas expressed in either area, can be identified with one polarity or the other. In other words, an element was either empowering or it was disempowering: it either increased power and control on the part of the dancer or it limited power and control, which in effect resulted in a lowered self concept of status. Consider the number one dissatisfaction, dressing rooms. One might assume that because of their inadequate size, lighting, and furnishings that this was understandably dissatisfying. Viewing the situation from the perspective of strippers and their feelings in regards to their status, and consequently their treatment in society, it is clear that a clean, reasonably decorated, and appropriately sized dressing room would have confirmed some sense of worth and
appreciation to these women. Like the "old boys club", it is here in the dressing room that these women are allowed to be themselves, let off steam to each other, share costume or performance ideas, and feel supported by each other as entertainer/performers.

A dressing room, like any other lounge, lunch room, or rest area, in any given work environment, is meant to be a place where an employee, in this case a strip performer, feels secure and comfortable, creating an environment in which a sense of community is experienced, and conveying a feeling of acceptance of their work which is performed. Is it any wonder they were dissatisfied, looking at their situation from this angle?

All of the areas that were expressed as satisfying, are in effect, all areas of stripping that are empowering. Finances, working when one feels like it, and looking glamorous are empowering and raise the self esteem of most strippers.

To summarize: money is absolutely the key element of the occupation. Money needs drew these women to the occupation, and money reasons function constantly to hold them in the occupation. The second key element is their
appearance, which buys a woman membership into this occupation and also sells her out of the occupation. The third and final element is status. Viewed as a form of "low other" (Allen, 1991:287), strippers seek out ways in which they can neutralize and/or contrast the low status position assigned to them by society. Using their appearance to take control within their work environment, they attempt to take back their power through customer interactive situations in which they experience an increased state of power which lends itself to an unrealistic sense/state of status. When all three key elements were dynamically correlated a stripper of feature dancer status had invested money earned through stripping into her appearance and performance, and this investment paid off in a higher state of control and power within the occupation and over the members of the hotel community in which this occupation is located. Unable to claim much status in the larger culture, this is the way in which a stripper can attain status within the subculture.

Despite the nature of this occupation and the stigma attached to it by the larger society, a view of stripping structured by occupational theory shows stripping to be structurally similar to other low status occupations in
which some elements of work are stigmatized or devalued. Although it is a job that many women would not want, in effect it is a low status social activity that can be and is meaningful work for a growing female population of strippers. As previously discussed, the movie Independence Day supports the common thinking that pervades our society in regards to the status imparted to the dance forms. However, the black exotic dancer who saves the First Lady in the movie defends her stripping involvement by telling the First Lady not to feel sorry for her because she is a stripper. The script dialogue is possibly a reflection of how the current 90's strippers now view themselves in this occupation. It appears to be a view of, "Don't feel bad for me I'm working at what I want to be working at". It might be reasonable to assume that this is a fictional Hollywood movie depiction of a stripper, and that it does not pertain to everyday life, but the interview data and the researcher's observations support the conclusion that strippers do not feel sorry for themselves and that the majority of the strippers in this sample liked their work even though there were areas that caused dissatisfaction.

As was discussed in the literature review, some
occupations share a number of the status characteristics but are not awarded the status level that other occupations with the same characteristics are awarded. In comparison to dancers employed as ballerinas or broadway dance performers, strippers obviously are not awarded the same status. The difference between the dance presentation, and therefore the occupational forms, appears to reside in the environment in which it takes place, the level of nudity involved, and the sexual implications of the performer/performance. Skimpy costumes are worn by dance performers in ballet, broadway, and strip presentations. The costumery and/or lack of it is acceptable when presented in a ballet or broadway production but it is not acceptable when it is presented in a stripping presentation.

In comparison to ballet dancers or broadway dancers, strippers are in an occupation where there is a greater opportunity to make much higher salaries, if a dancer applies herself to the business. Other advantages include being able to act as her own boss, choosing when and where she will and will not work. In addition she is at liberty to choose her own costumes, music and dance acts. Although ballet and broadway dancers may not experience these
advantages, they enjoy other advantages that strippers do not. Their salaries are usually regulated by union contracts and so are their working conditions and their treatment by directors and choreographers. In contrast, it will be recalled that both dressing rooms and the treatment by club owners were the two most dissatisfying and disadvantaged occupational areas reported by the strippers in this research.

In addition to being a low status occupation, stripping is a gendered occupation which typically employs females. Work in our society is gendered and some occupations, for example nursing, are simply viewed as "women's work". This is not to say that there are not male strippers, but simply that the majority of strippers are female. In contrast to female strippers, the smaller population of male strippers may perhaps have a more positive public image. According to one study, women employed in the occupation of stripping are viewed as immoral and sleazy, whereas men employed in the same occupation are "respected for their high earnings and their success with women. Their image is positive, upbeat and charged with good will" (Dragu and Harrison 1988:79). As
the authors put it, "Whatever is unsavoury about women's sexuality and its display simply does not apply to men [male strippers]" (1988:80). Consequently, what is good for the male population of strippers is not necessarily good for the female population within the occupation of stripping.
CONCLUSION

This research has described the strip club work world of strippers. Its findings have been analyzed in terms of the occupational theories discussed in the literature review of this paper. Utilizing a questionnaire designed on this theoretical basis to interview the strippers, was an invaluable tool. It gave the interviews a structure which allowed the strippers to reconstruct past events and remember why they were initially motivated to strip and what their intentions were as they enacted their performance. As well it enabled them to identify areas of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and the ways in which they cope with their dissatisfactions. In addition, it presented them with the opportunity to speculate what they might do when they retired from the occupation. This was a question that some were extremely ill prepared to answer and yet others were exact about their future after strip retirement.

In the course of answering questions about their occupation, these women presented a type of work life that can be exciting, interesting, and financially rewarding in a positive manner. On the negative side, it directly and indirectly yields social condemnation. This stigmatized
feminine occupation is entrenched with women who are highly charged with emotion around the issue of who they are in society and how societal members view them for their choice of work.

The generalizations arising from this research are based on observations made in two strip clubs of one city and on data acquired through interviewing twenty-four strippers employed in these two clubs. Therefore there is some question as to the generalizability of the data to other strip clubs in other cities. This question can only be answered precisely by additional research in the area of strip clubs and strippers. However, as was discussed in the methodology section, the itinerant nature of the occupation gives the researcher confidence that this sample of strippers is fairly representative of the larger population of strippers in Canada.

Numerous areas of interest presented themselves during the course of this research. However, time and financial constraints did not allow for their investigation. Previous research has not been conducted in the area of lap dancing, and the changes that have occurred in the occupation of stripping since its inception. Although lap dancing has been
deemed illegal, the data hints that it and prostitution within the clubs is reportedly still happening. This is only one area of the occupation that creates a division among the strippers between those who are willing to "go a little further" and those who are not. Another area that creates a division between the women involves cultural and ethnic differences. The researcher observed that there was a marked division between the North American strippers and the women who had come to Canada to strip, by contract, from Rumania and Czechoslovakia. One might argue that it was simply a communication barrier, but a difference found objectionable by native strippers was the willingness of the imported dancers to lap dance and do extras for the customers.

Another marked division was highly visible between the feature dancers and the table dancers. The data suggest that advancement is not equally available to all strippers and that specific criteria are required for advancement within this occupation. Research directed solely towards feature performers and the occupational characteristics of this elite group of strippers would be extremely useful in furthering our knowledge of the hierarchical structure of this occupation and the women employed in it. Similarly, it
will be recalled, that in the literature review parallels were drawn between stripping as a form of dance and ballet as a dance form. In this connection it could be useful to investigate in detail the content of the dance repertoires in the two occupations, and particularly the gendered nature of the two occupations.

As diverse a group of women as they were, the data hint that these women share the commonality of unsatisfactory, unstable relationships. This is another area that might prove to be useful to investigate within this occupation.

A final point concerns an observation made by Hanna (1988:41), who stated,

In the past dance performances lasted mostly in memory, critic's reports, and language metaphor, now dance has a more permanent and accurate visible past in film and videotape, another form of replay and translation.

As a culture we have recently witnessed the emergence of stripping as a theme for Hollywood productions, as well as background scenes within popular film productions. It appears to be a vogue at present to have in a movie at least a snap shot scene in a strip club. A well-known and admired actress, Demi Moore, recently acted the part of a stripper in "Striptease". All of the club scenes and stripping
scenarios were authentic and presented in a realistic form and manner, including Demi's own personal set of silicone breasts. Another Hollywood movie recently viewed by at least a million North Americans, "Independence Day", also presented a strip club scene to movie patrons. As it turned out the heroine was a Black American stripper.

Movies and hence film and videotapes on the subject matter of stripping and strippers are a recent and new addition to the film library. It is interesting as a sociologist to speculate how these film records of the stripping occupation, as a permanent visible past, will be viewed in the future by societal members. Because when all is said and done, the viewers perception of the images is the final curtain.
APPENDIX 1.

CONSENT FORM

My name is Karen Orton, and I am a graduate student at the University of Windsor. I am presently conducting research for my M.A. thesis on the occupation of stripping in the city of London. The purposes of this study are to look at the motivations of women who enter the occupation of stripping, and to explore the occupational experiences of these women.

I ask for your participation in an interview and permission to tape the interview. Your participation is voluntary. At any time during the interview, you have the right to withdraw your participation and/or refuse to respond to specific questions. You will not be asked to identify yourself by your birth name or your place of residence. No names will be used in any reports and efforts will be made to present the information in ways which prevent identification.

In the interview I will ask questions about your experiences and understanding of your occupation as a whole. These questions will be both close-ended and open-ended. I will be asking questions about the length of time you have
been employed in the occupation, how employment was
initiated in this occupation, and what you find satisfying
and dissatisfying about your work. The interview may take up
to an hour to complete.
This research has been approved by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology Ethics Committee, University of Windsor. You may direct any questions regarding my conduct or the content of this research to the chair of the Ethics Committee, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B3P4, (253-4232 ext.2190). Interested participants may contact me for a short summary of the key findings, date available to be posted in the club.

Having read and understood the above terms, I, the undersigned, consent to participate in this study.

____________________.             Dated: _______________

Thank you.
Appendix 2.

Questionnaire Interview Format

for Females Employed in The Occupation of Stripping

Start Time:

1) What is your current career status?

Probe: 1) Feature: Describe to me your performance acts and what has gone into the design or creation of them?

House dancer: Describe what kind of dancing you do at this time?

PREPARATORY STAGE OF CAREER

2) Did you daydream about performing and working as a dancer when you were a child, and if not what type of work did you think you would be working at as an adult?

Probe: 2) Did you know anyone involved in dancing when you were a child?

Probe: 3) Did you receive formal dance lessons as a child, adolescent or adult.

Probe: 4) What type of dance lessons were they?

Probe: 5) Did you request the dance lessons, or was it someone else's idea?
Probe: 6) Did you do anything else that may have led you into a dancing occupation?

INITIAL STAGE OF CAREER and TRIAL PERIOD OF CAREER

3) How did you get into stripping?

4) What motivated you to become a stripper?

Probe: 7) What was your age at the time?

Probe: 8) Did you start stripping while in school?

Probe: 9) How did you land your first job?

Probe: 10) Was there an agent involved?

Probe: 11) What was your marital status at the time?

Probe: 12) How much support did your parents, family, boyfriend/husband, friends offer you in this decision?

Probe: 13) How much did you care about what others thought of your decision at the time?

STABLE CAREER PERIOD

5) How long have you been working as a stripper?

Probe: 14) Have you worked continually as a stripper, or have you had time off during your career?

Probe: 15) What was this time off for?

6) What do you consider your status to be as a stripper in the occupation?
7) How important are the following to you as sources of satisfaction in working as a stripper?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) opportunity to dance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) glamour of entertaining</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) financial rewards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) travel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) socializing in club</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) working when I feel like it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>g) the availability of men of women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) the availability of alcohol of drugs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Probe: 16) Please describe more closely why you are satisfied in the areas you described as very important or important.

8) What is your overall income from stage performances?

Probe: 17) Your income from table dancing?

Probe: 18) Is it possible to put your income in monthly or annual terms?

Probe: 19) Do you receive income from any other sources, or employment?

Probe: 20) In general how satisfied are you with the income you make from stripping?

9) How do you advance in the stripping business?
Probe: 21) How important are physical attributes, costumes, choice of music, the ability to dance, choreographed acts, who you know in the business?

10) What are your goals within the stripping occupation?

11) How important are the following, as sources of your dissatisfaction working as a stripper?

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<tr>
<td>a) club owners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) male patrons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>c) female patrons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) other strippers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) travelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) clubs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>g) dressing rooms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) child care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) social status</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Probe: 22) Please describe more closely why you are dissatisfied in the areas you described as very important or important.

Probe: 23) Are there any other important or very important source of dissatisfaction for you in your line of work?
Probe: 24) How do you deal with the stresses created by the unsatisfactory aspects of your work?

Probe: 25) How does your work create stresses for you in your home life?

Probe: 26) How does your work create stresses in consideration of your boyfriend/husband, children or parents?

12) What is your opinion about the negative stigma (attitude) that is attached to stripping, and strippers?

13) Over the years have family members or others changed their attitude towards your choice to strip since your initial entrance into the occupation?

14) When you are working, how often do you use the following to deal with your stress?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
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<th>Sometimes</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>b) 1-3 alcoholic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Alcoholic drinks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) more than 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) prescription drugs (tylenol 2, valium)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) pot or hash</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) use other drugs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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RETIREMENT CAREER LEVEL

15) How long are you planning to work as a stripper?

16) What do you think your main reason might be for retiring?

17) At what age do you expect to retire from stripping?

Probe: 27) What are some of the reasons women retire from stripping?

Probe: 28) What do women go on to do after retirement from stripping?

Probe: 29) What are your plans when you retire from stripping?

Probe: 30) Are you currently engaged in an education process? Describe it for me.

Probe: 31) If engaged in an education process, what type of work do you hope to do when you finish?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

18) What is your age?

19) What is your marital status:

Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed  Common-law  Other

20) How many children do you have and what is (are) their age(s)?
21) What is the highest level of education you have attained?

22) What is your family social economic background? ie. occupation of parents.

23) What other kinds of work have you been employed in?

24) Is there anything else I should have asked you and didn't?

TIME END

Could you refer me to anyone else at this time who I could interview for this study?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and patience during the interview process.
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Vroom, V.

Watson T.

Williams, D.

Williamson J., Karp, D., Dalphin, J., and Gray, P.
VITA AUCTORIS

Karen Joan Orton was born in 1953 in London, Ontario, Canada. She graduated from high school in 1972 as a Registered Nursing Assistant. She left the nursing profession much to her parents dismay in 1974 to work as a stripper. Answering the "calling" to dance that had been in her bones since childhood, she survived in the occupation for a couple of years while travelling the Ontario strip circuit of that time. It was an exciting time, a time of innocence, a time of keeping your G-string on. Returning to nursing full time in 1982, Karen only lasted a few years before health reasons abruptly removed her from the nursing profession. Counselled to return to school and re-career herself, she amazed her parents by graduating from The University Of Western Ontario with an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1993. Accepted into the Graduate program at The University of Windsor in the fall of 1993, forty years old and pregnant to boot, the task at hand was to declare a thesis topic. Years had passed and so had keeping your G-string on, therefore it seemed like an appropriate research subject for an ex-stripper, now sociology graduate student, to explore. Karen Joan Orton received her Master of Arts Degree in Sociology from The University Of Windsor in 1997.