# MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF PROSTITUTES IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

**A Thesis Presented for the**

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**Allison Wittmer Johnson**

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## ABSTRACT

In Victorian Britain, cultural expectations of gender, the expansion of the empire, and the fear of degeneration through venereal disease created a unique historical moment that can be analyzed through the media. In the mainland, media was used to direct public opinion and movements surrounding the regulation of prostitution. In the empire, the media was used to control the narrative of colonial holdings and keep public opinion in the mainland in support of regulation in empire. This project will attempt to look at the representation of prostitutes throughout the British empire and explain the media's agency in the developing different public opinions depending on the media's subject. Through the analysis of literature, photography, and art, I will prove that the media influenced conceptions of the prostitute's body and, thus, influenced policies in the mainland and the empire.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

On the afternoon of February 10th, 1840, a twenty-year-old Queen Victoria, the highest symbol of an ideal 'Victorian' woman, married Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace (Figure 1). Unbeknownst to her at the time, the gown, veil, and colors she wore formed one of the most influential fashion choices of modern history. From the top of her head- less than five feet - to her hidden feet, she was covered in white. It was uncommon for



*Figure 1- Victoria and Albert on their Wedding Day*

women to wear white at any time, due to it being almost impossible to wear again, yet the trend would eventually spread across the world and influence women throughout her namesake's era and beyond.[1]

There are several reasons why Victoria may have chosen white. First, it was a symbol of wealth. To be able to afford such bright white fabric, and for only a single day, said volumes about the fortune the Crown possessed. In addition to the dress, her cake was also pearly white; the use of confectioner's sugar created and complemented the large, intricate design, a mark of riches. Yet, it is possible that Victoria wanted to display more about herself than her abundance of wealth. The color white also can symbolize purity, virginity, and innocence.[2] In her hands, a bouquet of orange blossoms was a sign of fertility. These were all things a proper woman should possess, particularly one of high status. While Victoria may have had more trivial reasons for picking the color (perhaps she simply liked the choice), contemporaries, and generations after, certainly took notice. The emphasis on purity and fertility for women trickled down from the highest peaks of status to the middle class, and even further.

Like this image of Victoria, photographs and other forms of art can exemplify aspects of Victorian society's values that cannot be found in solely the discourse. The media depicted women and men from every class. Whether through photography, literature, cartoons, or any other form of art, producers of media maintained the agency and determined how it depicted women. While Victoria may have had sway over her images, women such as prostitutes were less influential in controlling their own images. This project will look at the media's depictions

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[1] Charles E. Nelson. "Victorian Royal Wedding Flowers: Orange, Myrtle, and the Apotheosis of White Heather." Garden History 37, no. 2 (2009): 231-36.

[2] Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Walkowitz discussed the ways that Victorians were obsessed with lightness and white, particularly in interior design.

of prostitutes from across the British empire to analyze the power that media had on politics and public opinion and understand the consequences of this power's connection to race, class and gender.

Queen Victoria and Albert ushered in a new era. They evolved from "being the fruit of the aristocracy to becoming the symbol of the middle class."[3] Victoria exemplified the middle-class woman in many ways. An ideal Victorian lady's focus was on family, "the cornerstone of Victorian society."[4] If she was middle or upper-class, she was raised from a young girl to be submissive to male authority. Her only goal was to marry and reproduce. According to this logic, an unmarried woman was a failure.[5] The true, mythological, perfect woman "combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth."[6] Her worldly education therefore was very limited. Any knowledge of sex or sexual feeling was strictly discouraged until after marriage, and even then, she was not allowed to show any enthusiasm for it.[7] She was expected to raise her children properly and keep them and her husband away from vice. This ideal Victorian woman did not exist, and, in fact, women were increasingly more involved in the public sphere during this period.[8] Women's movement into the public sphere resulted in a shift in political and social reforms. Middle-class women's values were more vocalized than ever, and this shift forced men in the public sphere to interact with new ideas. Among those new ideas was an increasing concern for the containment of vice, particularly through the regulation of prostitution.

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[3] Julia Baird, *Victoria The Queen*. (New York: Random House, 2016), 150.
[4] Martha Vicinus, "Introduction: The Perfect Victorian Lady," *Suffer and Be Still*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1972), x.
[5] Ronald Pearsall, *Public Purity, Private Shame,* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 8.
[6] Vicinus, "Introduction: The Perfect Victorian Lady," ix.
[7] Ibid, ix.
[8] Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Tauris Academic Press, 2007).

The British middle class defined prostitution as many different things: 'the great social evil,' a 'guardian of the nation's virtue, a 'necessary evil' or a symptom of economic, social, or moral distress. Class factored into how the middle class understood prostitutes. It was perceived that these were working-class women who, by puberty, had an extensive understanding of the body. According to scholars E. M. Sigsworth and T.J. Wyke, women of this class came from an overcrowded home and "acquired from an early age intimate knowledge of facts of life."[9]

This was a complete inverse of the experience of a middle-class woman, who was restricted into a bubble of ignorance about anything sexual. Martha Vicinus states that a young, middle-class girl "was brought up to be perfectly innocent and sexually ignorant" with "family affection and the desire for motherhood" emphasized.[10] Both classes of women were limited with the knowledge that their experience in society allowed them.

Middle-class women and Christian activists created anti-vice social reform movements. Reformers often focused on 'fallen women.' Prostitutes, adulterers, or those who participated in premarital sex (without a marriage following) were all 'fallen.' The reformers believed that working-class women, once 'fallen,' were trapped in the profession of sex work. Focused on morality, the reformers' goal was to restore the 'fallen' back to society. William Logan, a Scottish missionary, addressed prostitution in 1871 saying "though their wickedness is abhorred, there are those who commiserate their wretchedness, and are ready to lend a helping hand."[11] Magdalene houses (the name itself based on the narrative of a famous supposed biblical prostitute) were homes created by middle-class feminists and Christians to rehabilitate women

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[9] E. M. Sigsworth and T.J. Wyke, "A Study of Victorian Prostitution and Venereal Disease," *Suffer and Be Still* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1972), 81.
[10] Vicinus, "Introduction: The Perfect Victorian Lady," ix.
[11] William Logan, *The Great Social Evil: Its causes, extent, results, and remedies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), 16.

back into society.[12] Their return to a non-sex work life, which was quite common even with women who did not go through the homes, became a major concern for medical officials concerned with the spread of venereal disease.

The reformers' focus on morality made venereal disease a perfect analogy. While they wanted to redeem prostitutes, they also believed that the disease, that seemed to be growing and rampant, was a result of the decline in society's morality. Syphilis became a perfect metaphor for the consequences of sin. Middle-class wives and, especially children, were victims of their husbands or father's moral failures. Historian Alain Corbin argues that the last decades of the nineteenth century were the "golden age for venereal peril;" rates were declining but fears were increasing.[13]

Middle-class men believed prostitution was essential to preserve the function of society. The 'cult of purity' for upper and middle-class women combined with men's sexual prowess could not exist without an outlet for men's desires. While men were encouraged to abstain from sex before marriage, they certainly did not face the same social consequences for extramarital sex as women. Wives of upper-class men disapproved of their husbands partaking in vice, particularly sexual ones, yet they had little power over their spouse's actions. As the gap between puberty and marriage grew longer, middle-class men were more likely to give in to their temptations. Even married men were not expected to be faithful, only put up appearances. As Sigsworth and Tyke claimed, "The cardinal sin was to be found out; this was true of all sexual diversions. Hypocrisy was not only overlooked- it was approved.[14] This double standard was

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[12] Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz, "Fallen Woman and the London Lock Hospital" *Journal of English Studies* 8:141, May 2010.
[13] Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), 262.
[14] SE. M. Sigsworth and T.J. Wyke, "A Study of Victorian Prostitution and Venereal Disease," 81.

certainly recognized by many contemporaries. Prostitution provided an outlet for middle-class men to partake in sexual activity while preserving their classes' purity, making them the primary consumers of prostitution. Working-class men did not experience the same economic push to marry late and therefore did not face the frustration of abstinence.[15] While demand for prostitution was found within the working class as well, middle-class commentators assumed that these men "had less need to purchase what was freely available."[16]

The focus on working-class behavior did not exclusively belong to anti-vice social reformers. Medical professionals worried that loose morality and prostitution was leading to a spread of venereal disease. There were many Victorian authors who wrote about venereal disease, typically including a section on prostitution's role in its spread. Some critics blamed socioeconomic status, claiming that either women or the lower classes themselves were innately immoral. One such commentator, Dr. A. R. R. Preston, claimed that "idleness and the love of finery" were the causes of prostitution, stating that "some girls won't work if they can help it; they will take the easiest way of obtaining money…"[17] Medical professionals, a field dominated by middle-class men, were hesitant to place the blame on their own social class and gender. Still, many recognized that demand fueled the profession, or that men's sexual insatiability was at fault.[18] Yet, it was feminists who recognized the role that social and economic forces had in poor, working-class women's lives. Feminists looked to social reforms that could help women.

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[15] Pearsall, *Public Purity, Private Shame*.
[16] Ibid, 87.
[17] *Western Daily Mercury,* 18 May 1870.
[18] Anne Hanley, *Medicine, Knowledge and Venereal Diseases in England, 1886–1916* (London: Palgrave, 2017).

As the first Medical Officer of health in London said of this period: "[h]ealth necessarily began to take rank as an object of practical politics." [19] It was medical officials, not reformers, who were the first to get legislation passed to regulate prostitution. Medical officials concerned themselves with the spread of disease exclusively, ignoring the morality or safety of prostitutes, and the law reflected this. The Contagious Diseases Act of 1864 exemplified the way reformers disagreed on how to solve the issue of prostitution. The Acts' intent was to prevent the spread of venereal diseases in the military, focusing on port cities and garrison towns.[20] The regulation method required prostitutes to be registered and pass regular, invasive medical exams. If they were found positive for a sexually transmitted disease, they could be incarcerated in the Lock Hospital or Asylum, a hospital prison[21]

The military was the focus of discussion for authorities due to their high rate of infection. The military restricted soldiers from marrying while they were serving, and it was clear that unmarried men were the most likely customers of prostitutes. Paul McHugh reports that only about six percent of enlisted men were able to get married officially.[22] With medical professionals labeling prostitutes as the source of venereal disease, concerns grew for the outbreak of syphilis among a majority unmarried soldiers. In addition to this, unofficial marriages happened often in the military. Without any extra income to support another person, the 'unofficial' wives lived as "camp followers," ironically often making their income as prostitutes.[23] This combination of unmarried men seeking company and camp followers needing

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[19] Accessed through Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Tauris Academic Press, 2007), 180.
[20] Paul McHugh, "Prostitution and Victorian Reform" (*Routledge Library Editions: Women's History,* Vol. 26, 1980), 16.
[21] Ibid. The specific periods of time women were held in the hospital, specified in the Acts, was according to the medical authority of the era.
[22] Ibid, 18.
[23] Ibid, 18.

an income made garrison towns and port cities high activity spots for sex work and, thus, the focus of regulationist policy.

Men were not subjected to incarceration, a fact that exemplifies the double-standard placed the woman at the 'center' of the spread of disease. The hypocrisy evident here was also clear to contemporaries of the time, such as Josephine Butler, who fought to repeal the Acts, a campaign which succeeded in 1886.[24] Yet, this disagreement was between public good and individual freedoms. Medical professionals who endorsed the Acts argued that when women decided to become prostitutes, they gave up their individual rights.[25] Feminists created social reform groups that argued that prostitutes were victims of economic and social despair who needed philanthropic assistance, not clinically invasive government testing.[26] They pushed back against the idea that women were the sole reason for the spread of disease, and thus required government surveillance.[27]

Sir Alfred Cooper, an English surgeon, wrote in 1895 that the prostitute's individual liberties could be sacrificed for the greater good.[28] Cooper used this argument to support the invasive medical exams in the Contagious Diseases Act, the most important part of the legislation to prevent the spread of venereal disease. French regulationist and an advocate for regulation elsewhere, Alexandre Parent-Duchatelet, reinforces this mentality saying,

> Are prostitutes entitled to do whatever they want? In other words, can we, must we deprive prostitutes of (their) individual freedom… They make themselves unworthy of that freedom by abandoning themselves to their unbridled passions and all the excesses of dissolute life. Freedom in this case amounts to licentiousness and destroys society.[29]

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[24] McHugh, "Prostitution and Victorian Reform," 16.
[25] Jean Alfred Fournier (1880) *Syphilis and Marriage* (London: Andesite Press, 2015).
[26] Josephine Butler (1879) *Social Purity* (London: Dodo Press, 2008).
[27] Levine, Phillipa. *Prostitution, Race, and Politics* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2003), 3.
[28] Sir Alfred Cooper, *Syphilis* (Philadelphia: P. Blackston & Son, 1895), 432.
[29] Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet, trans. "An American Physician" *Prostitution in Paris: Considered Morally, Politically, and Medically: Prepared for Philanthropists and Legislators from Statistical Documents*, (Boston: Charles Brainard, 1845), 206.

The spread of venereal disease dominated the discourse about prostitution. Without a good cure, spread of the disease caused fear and anxiety. Mercury remained the primary cure of the disease until 1905, and it would be half a century before Alexander Fleming invented antibiotics, relieving much of this fear. For many, syphilis carried the most fear, due to its degenerative effects and the false belief that it was hereditary.[30] In a period where ideologies such as social Darwinism were growing in popularity among the middle-class and fueling concerns about depopulation throughout Europe, Britain feared degeneration and racial decline.[31] The idea that a venereal disease could affect mental function was terrifying.

As the British 'scrambled' for Africa, their fear expanded from degeneration to racial impurity. As many historians have argued, concerns about prostitution, disease and race have gone together since the mid-sixteenth century, and the British have faulted other races with the spread of venereal diseases equally as long. In her analysis of French Morocco, Hannah-Louise Clark binds race and syphilis together with colonial desires.[32] Europeans believed that syphilis was more common and more dangerous among Africans.[33] The anxiety around prostitution, both domestic and in the colonies, originated in a fear of the spread of venereal disease. Many medical journals and physicians from the Victorian period theorize about the origins of venereal disease, often 'tracing' it back to Columbus' first interaction with Native Americans or early contact with Southeast Asian or African countries.[34] Medical officials often urged that "tropical

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[30] Jill Harsin, "Syphilis, Wives, and Physicians: Medical Ethics and the Family in Late Nineteenth-Century France." *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (April 1, 1989): 72–95.
[31] Margaret Cook Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlements in the Third Republic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).
[32] Hannah-Louise Clark, "Civilization and Syphilization: A Doctor and His Disease in Colonial Morocco." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87, no. 1 (April 1, 2013)
[33] Liat Kozma, "Between Colonial, National, and International Medicine: The Case of Bejel." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 91 no. 4, 2017, p. 744-771
[34] Cooper, *Syphilis*, 8.

forms" of venereal disease were much worse.[35] In early twentieth-century Australia, signs were posted warning soldiers that the "Anglo-Saxon race" could be compromised by venereal disease.[36] The British 'othering' of syphilis portrays the deep connection race and sex had and how this initial connection also influenced the way they created policies for prostitution in the colonies.

British understandings of gender and race influenced their interactions with subjects in their territories. Colonists' understanding of female colonial subjects' role in their society was misconstrued in many colonies, and this misunderstanding contributed to the narrative that colonial subjects were 'uncivilized.' Historian Antoinette Burton argues that British feminists depicted their 'Orientalist sisters' in a way that forged a role for white women in the colonies, like they had done for themselves at home by depicting working-class women as poor and needy.[37] Whether the British thought that the subjects were too harsh to their women, or allowed them too much sexual freedom, they always attempted to assimilate the men and women to the British standard.[38] Because the control of women's sexuality was essential to the British domestic agenda, they sought to establish this hierarchy in the colonies as well.

Despite the relative decline of venereal disease beginning in the 1860s, medical professionals and reformers were preoccupied by prostitution due to the intersection of imperialism, fears of degeneration and venereal disease, and ideas of gender.[39] This project examines the representation of prostitutes and explains the media's agency in shaping the social and political movements dominating the discourse. I will compare the depiction of female

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[35] Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 6.
[36] Ibid, 5.
[37] Antoinette M. Burton, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
[38] Burton, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities.*
[39] Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 5.

British bodies and colonized bodies in the media to emphasize the connection between sexuality, politics, and empire.[40] Though more analysis of the colonial subjects' agency is an important question, it is unfortunately one that is beyond the scope of this project. Through the analysis of literature, photography, and art, I will prove that the media influenced societal concepts of prostitution and, thus, influenced the policies to remain harsh towards colonized women while simultaneously showing sympathy toward British women.

[40] I want to note that my use of the term "female" is in reference to cisgender women. This project focuses solely on cisgender women and men in order to narrow the project's breadth. Historical analysis of transgender women and men in this context would be an interesting and fruitful project in the future, though at this time, I have no available sources on the subject.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

The British valued class distinctions throughout the Victorian era and beyond. Ronald Pearsall asserts that those involved in social reform, and thus the ones concerned with immorality, were the literate middle-class.[41] Those unconcerned with the question of vice "were mostly at the top and the bottom of society; the aristocracy ignored the rules, the lower classes did not know about them."[42] While the middle-class certainly participated in vice, they were still the main ones pushing for social reform. The middle class put moral constraints on themselves and other classes. Regulations would trickle down to the working classes when, for example, laws were passed to prevent vice. In parts of this essay, I will refer to British middle-class expectations simply as 'societal' or 'British.' While referring to a specific class as 'society' itself may seem like an overgeneralization, I argue that it is quite accurate due to the level of power held by the group and the potent influences they had on the workings of the rest of the population and the empire.

It is also important to recognize the agency that middle-class women possessed in upholding middle-class values in this period. Michel Foucault theorized that the act of being watched, even by peers, can result in a system of self-regulation.[43] The theory, known as the Panopticon, was used by feminist scholars to explain why women participated in a patriarchal, double-standard society. One such feminist scholar, Monique Deveaux, wrote that women perpetuated the standard, set by men, by self-regulating themselves and condemning other

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[41] Pearsall, *Public Purity, Private Shame*, 10.
[42] Ibid, 10.
[43] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

women who 'fell' from it.[44] This context makes middle-class women and men the self-appointed creators, regulators, and enforcers of society's rules. In the empire, European women often had significant influence within the racial hierarchy and could take advantage of their status as "the inferior sex within the superior race."[45] While examples exist of women moving to the colonies and challenging the "Victorian stereotypic female behavior," many reinforced the "economic, political, and ideological subordination of women."[46]

One of the defining works on the British middle class, Davidoff and Hall's *Family Fortunes*, argue that the middle class moved toward a greater separation of public and private spheres.[47] The private sphere was most closely affiliated with women. Domesticity became an increasingly valued attribute for middle-class women, likely peaking in the Victorian period. According to Davidoff and Hall, society expected middle-class women to stay within the home and raise the many children they bore.[48] While historians have argued that this was not the reality, that in fact women were increasingly involved in the public sphere, it remained prominent in the discourse for the home to be an 'appropriate' place for women.[49]

Historians explored the emphasis put on stable gender expectations during this period when women were disrupting the idea of private and public spheres. Men worried as women became more active participants in the public sphere. Feminists pushed for more civil rights,

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[44] Monique Deveaux, "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault," Feminist Studies, Vol. 20, No. 2, Women's Agency: Empowerment and the Limits of Resistance (Summer, 1994), 225.
[45] Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), xi.
[46] Ibid, xii.
[47] Leonore Davidoff, and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.)
[48] Ibid.
[49] Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century*.

such as suffrage, and more women were joining the workforce.[50] In addition to anxieties about merging spheres and changing gender expectations, Judith Walkowitz's study of city spaces exemplifies the other anxieties through the example of sexual danger. She claims that men and women from different classes were physically moving through London in ways that were not possible in the past, causing major concern in the middle class regarding the debauchery or crime the lower classes brought with them.[51] Still, Seth Koven argues that the practice of "slumming," or the middle class visiting lower-class dominant areas of the city, was popular.[52] Sometimes women and men went "slumming" in order to participate in more elusive practices (drink, buy prostitutes, gamble), but Koven argues that some were looking for people to help.[53] Particularly women would 'save' prostitutes and offer them rehabilitation. Still, this upheaval of traditional social relations, spaces, and classes made many elites uncomfortable.

Victorians regulated prostitution due to a push for new policies by both reformers and medical officials were concerned that vice was becoming more commonplace in society. By 1859, there were approximately three thousand brothels in London.[54] Accurate estimates of how many prostitutes worked in London are unavailable. As evidence that prostitutes were numerous and conspicuous, William Acton, a surgeon and writer, claimed he had counted 185 prostitutes "in the course of a walk home."[55] Victorians produced many statistics on the number of prostitutes in the country, and specifically in London, further proving their concerns of rising

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[50] Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.)
[53] Ibid.
[54] David Kerr Cameron, *London's Pleasures: From Regency to Restoration* (London: Sutton Publishing, 2001), 224.
[55] William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects* (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1857), 5.

vice. Many scholars estimate that 80,000 women worked as prostitutes in the late 1850s.[56] Since the statistics are inconsistent, it is impossible to say whether prostitution was increasing. What is clear is that the middle class thought that prostitution was increasing, as seen in the frequency it appeared in medical journals, newspapers, and other media.

Historians have discussed how preoccupation with prostitution, vice, and the spread of disease was evident in the British empire, as well. On the one hand, scholars describe the colonies as a source of pride that defined Victorian "Britishness."[57] Exhibitions showed Britain's modern technology in comparison with colonized subjects' 'backwardness.'[58] Stories, press, and images sent back home were all consumed rapidly by the public. Even home decor might include 'oriental' objects.[59] The idea of empire defined what it meant to be British: "to embody civilization, to be born to rule, and to *not* be colonized, not enslaved..."[60] Yet, as prideful as the British were of their colonies, questions about race and sexuality arose that concerned those in the mainland. In her work on prostitution in the empire, Phillipa Levine claims that many questioned what kind of rule would encourage prostitution and how that fit with the 'moral superiority' narrative the British touted to justify their presence.[61] She claims that regulationist policy exemplifies both Britain's flexibility, a strength when ruling empire, and its limits.[62] Levine's work shows how the policies created by the British to regulate prostitution were impacted by ideology about empire and sexuality. She also states that race was equally as important as gender in influencing ideology. Even in the metropole, missionaries searched the

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[56] McHugh, "Prostitution and Victorian Reform," 18.
[57] Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 5.
[58] Ibid, 2.
[59] Ibid, 2.
[60] Ibid, 5. Italics in original.
[61] Ibid, 4.
[62] Ibid, 4.

docks for "dark-skinned heathens" for whom to minister. Building on Levine's work, this project will treat race, class, and gender as equally powerful forces and will also show the media's role in influencing these topics.

Luise White delves into the lives of prostitutes in Nairobi in the early twentieth century in her work published in 1990. Her arguments about prostitute's agency and the reality of their daily lives is only strengthened by her critique of the social hierarchies some historians have used to describe prostitutes. She argues that when scholars use labels that reflect those used by contemporary middle-class men and women, they demean women in the profession and create harmful narratives that disrupt the understanding of prostitute's agency, particularly in different cultures around the world.[63] She questions the historians who continue to use such language and draws larger conclusions about the flaws in how one studies sex work by only listening to the sources created by men and non-sex-working women (typically reformers). She remedies this in her own work with personal interviews with former sex workers. White's work allows scholars to critically examine the agency of colonized peoples, especially those involved in sexualized professions with little to no historical record.

Cultural historians debate the theory of culture's influence on politics. While some scholars have argued the opposite (that politics influence cultural values), historian Tim Blanning affirms culture's influence in his 2002 work on the power of culture. Using Jurgen Habermas' public sphere theory, he argues that the emergence of the public sphere in the late seventeenth century resulted in the exchange of ideas and information, the production of art, music, and theatre, and led to political movements such as the French Revolution.[64] He argues

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[63] Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.)

[64] Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

that the influence of the public sphere changed the perspective of authority, and resulted in cultural power having more traction than political power. In this project, I use this theory to claim that the media was culture's avenue for expression, and thus maintains the power to influence politics and society.

This project will engage with portrait photographs, images of women, and sometimes men, taken by anthropologists in the empire, often with erotic themes or explicit nudity. Scholars working in many fields have studied different types of photographs from the colonies. Photography, anthropology, sociology, and history are a few disciplines that lent their unique perspectives to the field. *The Colonial Harem* (1986) by Malek Alloula, a literary critic, is an album of erotic images from Algeria that were turned into postcards.[65] Providing an Algerian native's perspective, Alloula describes these photographs as a show of power by the French. Later, a collection compiled by David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson argued that scholars can study postcards as the history of art, modes of communication, photography or printmaking, tourism, or even as a sign of "modernity."[66] For this project, postcards can be viewed as art or propaganda, but they are also objects of material culture that can be analyzed for themes of sexuality, gender expectations, and race.

An essential part of this project is the analysis of photography, particularly erotic imagery. Lisa Sigel's work on pornography (2002) demonstrates the connection between sexuality and political or social ideology.[67] She argues that pornography reflects the issues of the time, where this project will build on that to argue that some nude imagery had the agency to not

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[65] Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.)
[66] *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*, ed. by David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson. Pennsylvania State, 2010.
[67] Lisa Sigel, Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

just reflect, but influence public opinion. This project will utilize this argument in the case of colonial photography and other art.

Alfred Gell, British anthropologist, argued that art should have social agency within the wider contexts religion, politics, kinship.[68] Richard Vokes expands on Gell's work, arguing that "art objects should be seen as not only reflective of social contexts, but also *generative of them...*"[69] Context, Vokes argues, changed the way one saw the portrait photographs, giving the example in the American context of a locket of the subject's hair accompanying a photograph, to cement his point.[70] In the case of colonial portrait photography, the context was often not there, or not truthful. The absence of context puts the agency in the hands of whoever possesses the media, often European men.

Until recently, historians of empire have not explored the portrait postcards' relevance to the colonial world in the context of colonial authority. A recent publication by photographer Christraud Geary discusses the photographers in the colonial era. Briefly mentioning the erotic photographs, he argues that the lack of earlier scholarship was due to various prejudices, primarily that mass-produced art made for commercial use was not useful for academics.[71] Christraud Geary's work on Cameroon and West Africa (1998) and David Prochaska's work from Algeria and Senegal (1991) demonstrate the importance of postcards in French colonies. More recently, Phillipa Levine has explored the significance of erotic portrait postcards. In this article Levine lays a framework for the exchange of erotic portrait photographs as a means of

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[68] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998.)
[69] Richard Vokes, "Reflections on a Complex (and Cosmopolitan) Archive: Postcards and Photography in Early Colonial Uganda, c.1904–1928" *History and Anthropology*, 21:4, 376. Emphasis in original.
[70] Ibid, 376. Vokes is citing Geoferry Batchen's example here.
[71] Christraud M. Geary, *Postcards from Africa: Photographers of the Colonial Era* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2018.)

colonial authority and argues that the British controlled public opinion of the colonies and their subjects based on the narrative created in the photographs.

Work by James Ryan engages in a discussion about the use of photography as a means for authority in colonial spaces.[72] His work deals closely with the "categorization mode" that Levine defines as a type of "scientific" photography, used during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, that attempts to show the characteristics of race. James Ryan argues that educational, or scientific, photography reinforced ideas about colonial subjects' culture and defined British ideas about the landscapes of colonial holdings. By using the photographs as 'educational' tools, the British were able to own the knowledge and thus control the narrative of imperialism. Not only could the British control the story being told, but by placing nude images of women and men on postcards, a white, British audience could physically own the subject.

Luise White has opened the door for scholars to explore the agency of prostitutes and their willingness to participate in the profession. This project, while also recognizing women's agency during this time, will focus on the agency that the media had to affect policies for women. Using the analytical methods first seen through other works on portrait photography, literature, and art, I will discuss the influence that images had on Victorian culture and public opinion. Using popular culture as an expression of both media and changing cultural values, this project will contribute to the historiography of empire's ideas about prostitution, sex, race, and gender.

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[72] James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.)

## Chapter Three: Race, Policy and Empire

British ideologies about gender and sexuality developed during a period when Britain expanded its empire rapidly. Thus, these expectations did not only affect the domestic plane. Colonies held by the British faced regulation on prostitution as well. Women were an essential part of the 'nation' as wives and mothers, and middle-class women acted as active participants in creating policies and spreading ideas. Nationalist ideas formed in Europe in conjunction with imperial desires, affecting the way the British saw themselves in the racial hierarchy. As has been shown in the French context by historian Robin Mitchell, depictions of female colonial subjects influenced ideas about national identity in the metropole.[73] In a fight for the fittest position in Europe, Britain's middle class tried to strengthen its population in a variety of ways.[74] Resources were required to fuel many of these policies, which drove the British to conquer more and more territories across the globe. In addition, ideas of Social Darwinism, or the application of 'survival of the fittest' to humans were a catalyst for nationalist ideas and affected how Europeans interacted with other cultures. Historian Micheal Adas claims that, by the nineteenth century, Europeans discussed Africans as innately inferior, and even proposed Africans descended from a different species all together.[75]

Policies in the colonies reflected ideologies about sex in the mainland. Though the system varied according to colony, regulation of contagious diseases was in place in every British colonial possession beginning in the mid-1870s, each policy focusing on female

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[73] Robin Mitchell, *Venus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020).
[74] In reference to Charles Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* (1859), and later, *The Descent of Man* (1871) which influenced nationalist thought. It was an extremely popular book in the middle class and fueled the concept of 'Social Darwinism' developed by Herbert Spencer.
[75] Micheal Adas, *Machines as Measures of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

prostitutes as the source of disease.[76] British feminists, such as Josephine Butler, fought to repeal the Contagious Diseases acts and argued that the law was a government endorsement for prostitution which only upheld social and economic institutions that kept working-class women in the profession. They were also angry about the way that the profession was regulated. Because the focus was on the spread of venereal diseases, especially to soldiers, the Acts included invasive medical testing on government-registered prostitutes around the military bases. These feminists, while arguing for the individual liberties of these women, also joined other reformers in ignoring and denying prostitutes' agency. They believed that prostitutes were only 'stuck' in that profession and ultimately wanted out of it.

Still, feminists fought to end the 'legalization' of prostitution successfully in 1886. While the Contagious Diseases Acts were abolished in Britain, the laws lasted longer in the colonies. Abolitionists kept the campaign to end the acts in the colonies throughout the 1880s and 1890s.[77] Where the policies differed between the mainland and the colonies was in the expansiveness of the law. While in Britain the law focused on garrison towns or port cities, mainly protecting the military, the colonies faced this law in a much broader sense.[78] Phillipa Levine argues that, in the name of military health, the British used the contagious diseases regulation to "bring to heel sexual disorder in colonized people."[79]

British men travelling alone to the colonies were considered incapable of restricting their sexual desires, and thus officials worried about their intimate relations with colonized women. Venereal disease rates were higher in the empire due to the male, unmarried demographic the

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[76] Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 1.
[77] Ibid, 3.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid, 2.

British sent there.[80] The British considered sex with non-white women to be against nature and improper in theory, though they seemed to tolerate it in practice. European prostitutes, recognizing a need for their profession, moved into these colonies.

While it is true that mostly men travelled to the colonies, European women from different professions also moved to the colonies for a plethora of reasons. Historian Margaret Strobel states that for women "the empire presented opportunities not found in Europe."[81] Strobel claims most European women did not question the hierarchy that, as members of the 'superior' race, benefited them and instead saw the colonies as an opportunity.[82] Women immigrated to the colonies to improve their social class, their marriageability, convert subjects to Christianity, or most important for this discussion: employment.[83] Prostitution became more common in British India after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which allowed easier travel.[84] Immigration of European prostitutes to colonies, such as India, raised concerns about "racial purity." Ann Laura Stoler, historian of empire, argues in her Foucauldian analysis of colonialism and sex that "Colonial discourses of sexuality were productive of class and racial power, not mere reflections of them."[85] One must trace the intersectionality of race, class, and gender to understand the power, hierarchies, and ordering of colonial societies, which changed depending on the situation

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[80] Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 2.
[81] Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, xi.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid. It is important to note that women did not only exist as either the wife/mother or prostitute in the empire. Many women had employment as anthropologists, teachers, nurses, and reformers.
[84] Harald Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914,"177.
[85] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.)

and context. In this case, a white British man with a colonized woman was disapproved of but tolerated. A British woman with a colonized man was unacceptable.

Historian, Elizabeth Collingham, argues that the first Europeans to settle in British India, affiliated with the British East India Company, attempted to assimilate to the culture as local rulers, even taking on native mistresses.[86] But as colonial subjects called racial hierarchy and the authority of the British into question, officials became more concerned with interracial sexual relationships, first in India and later across African countries.[87] As Collingham argued, the British wanted to physically separate their bodies from native bodies.[88] Harald Fischer-Tiné, historian of empire, argues that "Crossracial sexual relations became problematic when colonial rule became increasingly informed by idioms of racial and moral superiority, especially from the period of the 1880s onwards."[89] The increase of wives in the colonies contributed to the growing sentiment that interracial relationships harmed the hierarchy.[90] Still, some contemporaries argued that the official 1909 edict that prevented 'concubinage' actually hurt the relationship between the British officials and the colonial subjects.[91]

With intimate interracial relationships now taboo, the demand for European prostitutes rose along with fears of the practice. Historians have used W.T Stead's "Maiden Tribute" article as a watershed moment in Victorian social reform. The article, which outlined and 'exposed' the trade of young girls into sex work, ignited a public movement to end the practice. It also

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[86] Elizabeth M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge:Polity Press, 2001).
[87] Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire,* 5.
[88] Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj c. 1800-1947*
[89] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914,"165.
[90] Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire,* 5.
[91] Ibid*,* 4.

contributed to the popular narrative for middle-class reformers that all prostitutes were 'victims.' Harold Fischer-Tiné, however, argued that these specific women going to the colonies were not simply victims of the system. He claims: "While the abolitionists constantly portrayed the prostitutes as victims, as 'utterly powerless' slaves 'forced to submission by their brutal proprietors,' there are clear indications that the overwhelming majority of the women chose a career... by their own free will" [92]

Still, the 'victims' of 'White Slavery' fueled concern for prostitutes both at home and in the empire. The first international conference met to end the practice and defined 'White Slavery' as

> the purchase and transfer from place to place of women and girls for immoral purposes, who are in the first place inveigled into a vile life by the promise of employment in a foreign country and, thereafter are practically prisoners, and who, if they really desire to escape from a life of shame cannot do so.[93]

Feminist abolitionists and Christian activists formed an alliance, though with different motives, to end the practice, a popular campaign that developed quickly into the National Vigilance Committee.[94] Their concern was to prevent white women from getting 'seduced' into prostitution and, once in a foreign land, incapable of leaving the profession.[95] Some contemporaries understood, however, the agency that the prostitutes had in British India. Many prostitutes were previously prostitutes in Europe and chose to go to Asian countries to make

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[92] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914."
[93] *The Shield*. [The Official Organ of the British Committee of the International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice], July 1899, 42.
[94] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914."
[95] It should be noted that this was a concern for prostitutes in Britain as well. There was a known trafficking route between London and Hamburg, as discussed in the famous article "Maiden Tribute", first cited and analyzed by Judith Walkowitz in *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.
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more money, some even able to send money home or eventually return to start a 'respectable' business.[96] As Fischer-Tiné points out, the phrase 'slavery' was likely much more palpable to the Chinese and Japanese prostitutes that outnumbered the European women and were sold into prostitution by their families.[97] Phillipa Levine argues that in official reports, authorities close to the profession of prostitution actually presented white prostitutes as active participants and non-white prostitutes as passive women who possessed no agency.[98] Fischer-Tiné disagrees, offering a more complicated layer to the racial hierarchy by arguing that officials wrote about the white prostitutes similarly to the 'native' non-sex-working women and thus argues that white prostitutes were considered lower than may expected on the hierarchy by colonial authorities, considering their race.[99] In this way, class maintained power in the colonies. Elizabeth Collingham confirms this in her argument that notions of class excluded colonized people as much as race.[100]

Interracial relationships were common, though often it did not end well, especially for colonized men with white women. It was nearly impossible to prevent colonized men from patronizing white brothels. Madams took no issue with well-off subjects taking on white mistresses and British soldiers could rarely afford the white prostitutes.[101] In South Africa,

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[96] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914," 174.
[97] Ibid, 177.
[98] Philippa Levine, "The White Slave Trade and the British Empire" *Criminal Justice History*, Vol. 17(2002): 142.
[99] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914,"181.
[100] Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj c. 1800-1947*
[101] Fischer-Tiné, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914,"184.

colonial officials feared "Black Peril," or the myth that an interracial relationship with a colonized man and white woman would "trigger… a wave of sexual assaults on white women."[102] In response, in South Africa, colonial officials created The Commission of Enquiry into Assaults on Women.[103] Other colonies faced much harsher legislation. In Papa New Guinea, a 1926 policy made the death penalty the only possible punishment for rape or attempted rape, a direct attack on interracial relationships.[104]

To make matters more complicated, the British brought their cultural values and recently ignited reformist attitude into cultures around the world that differed greatly from their own. Phillipa Levine argued that "The British generally chose to emphasize what they saw as indigenous examples of prostitution rather than to recognize the effects of their own rule on local society."[105] In India, the devadasi, a Hindu group of women married to the gods, formed sexual relationships with upper-class men.[106] While the women were not available for marriage, due to their religious commitment, the British focused on their sexual relationships and perceived this practice as prostitution. Levine states that "For the British, the devadasi was not the servant and wife of the gods, but a slave to unharnessed human desire and a profound threat to Victorian readings of the marriage contract"[107] Women's sexuality, when not controlled strictly, threatened the balance of power in British society. The lack of understanding the British extended to Indian culture exemplifies their treatment of all their colonial subjects, particularly when it came to expectations of gender roles.

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[102] Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire,* 5.
[103] Ibid, 5.
[104] Ibid, 4.
[105] Philippa Levine, "A Multitude of Unchaste Women: Prostitution in the British Empire." *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 4 (2004), 161.
[106] Ibid, 174.
[107] Ibid, 161.

Preoccupation with sexuality and maintaining a gender order was a consistent theme in European empires. Since the eighteenth century, Europeans cited the 'unique' politeness between men and women as a foundation for proper 'civilization.'[108] Malek Alloula discusses this cultural difference in the French setting. He claims that the way that Arab men treated their women, or rather how the French portrayed this treatment, horrified those at home in the metropole. The French narrative claimed that Muslim men subjected their women to forced concubinage and sexual slavery.[109] Despite this rhetoric, the French treatment of colonized women was far from exemplary. Alloula wrote, "Possession of Arab women came to serve as a surrogate for and means to the political and military conquest of the Arab world."[110]

The British wanted to control colonized women and labeled the colonized peoples' traditional gender roles as 'uncivilized.' Sometimes their tactic to control the society was by collaborating with colonized women against the colonized men. As mentioned earlier, feminist reformers took up women's rights issues in the colonies and advocated for women to reject the native traditions that the British felt were unjust. Without any true understanding of the value of traditions in that culture, many British reformers attempted to disrupt the practices they did not agree with or understand. In India, they wanted to end practices like *sutee* or, in Kenya, female circumcision, which became a symbol of resistance and national identity for some later on.[111] Similarly, in French Algeria and later in Iran, the veil became a symbol of resistance against European control.[112] The complicated relationship between gender roles, colonial authority, and

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[108] Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670–1789* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 60.
[109] Alloula, *The Colonial Harem,* xv.
[110] Ibid, xv.
[111] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiongʾo. *The River Between* (London: Heinemann, 1965).
[112] Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, xv.

national identity are all essential to understanding the interactions between the British and colonized subjects.

## Chapter Four: "The Sympathizing Public"

The driving country behind the Industrial Revolution, Britain dominated the market on textiles. British men and women could easily afford more clothing that looked nicer than anything from previous generations. The growing ability of working-class people, especially prostitutes, to buy nicer clothing, made dress more ambiguous and difficult to discern. Judith Walkowitz described clothing as an aspect of anxiety in Victorian culture.[113] She argues that the practice of 'slumming' caused some women to even be confused with prostitutes and arrested.[114] Though class boundaries were becoming more fluid, the media continued to present prostitutes in more traditional ways. Any Victorian looking at the Figure 2, would recognize the prostitute. Prostitutes' dress in art was depicted as less restrictive, indicating the freedom to partake in more illicit sexual behavior and an involvement in a non-domestic occupation. Often wearing low-cut dresses, with shorter hems and sleeves, prostitutes were identifiable almost immediately by their clothing. As shown above in a print by an unknown author, the low-cut neckline indicated to both the man, and the disapproving woman in the background, that the woman on the left was a prostitute. These images existed in an anxious society in which it was otherwise difficult to discern women's morality by their location or attire, as could have been done in previous generations.

Yet, photographs possessed more power than simply comforting an anxious middle class. In the colonies, the British used portrait photographs to control the narrative at home and keep in line the sexuality of colonial subjects. By using the portrait postcards, like in Figure 3 to unveil or undress the colonized woman and then control who, where and when the image was seen, they

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[113] Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London.*
[114] Ibid.




*Figure 2 Man talking with prostitute on the street*

exemplified imperialism and the European desire to discover and dominate territories. Postcards with naked men and women of color were popular for a white, European audience and were regularly sent through the mail and displayed in the shop windows.[115] Portrait postcards were created by British, French and German colonizers beginning in the late nineteenth century until World War II, with the "'golden era' of picture postcard production" lasting from 1907 to 1915.[116]

[115] Phillipa Levine, "Mobile Cameras and "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic" *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, (2015) 37:5, 473-490.
[116] Vokes, "Reflections on a Complex (and Cosmopolitan) Archive: Postcards and Photography in Early Colonial Uganda, c.1904–1928," 378.




*Figure 3- Portrait Postcard of veiled woman*

The power portrait postcards had to enforce gender expectations and racial hierarchy, was also evident in erotic postcard images taken of men (Figure 4). Historian, Mrinalini Sinha, argues that Europeans' control of colonial masculinity was an essential way that colonial authorities exercised power over their subjects.[117] The images attempt to feminize male colonial subjects, and as a result attempt to control or degrade them.[118] Philippa Levine argues that the men in the photographs look at the camera as if they are "invit[ing] intimacy" with images like the one below offering to "reveal colonial power both in terms of a pose more routinely associated with the feminine, and through the broader power wielded by the anthropological

[117] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).
[118] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic," 486.

camera."[119] The British were therefore not only interested in the 'correct' form of gender roles, but also using gender and photography together as a weapon to control colonized subjects.



*Figure 4- Man leaning on his elbows in erotic position*

Behind the lens, the photographers that took the images were often hired as or by anthropologists.[120] David Prochaska correctly argues that often it is impossible to know exactly who took the photographs.[121] Even if one's identity could be found, there was very little biography written about most of these men, an essential aspect of the art historian's analysis.[122] These men took both educational images of men and women (still often nude) and entertainment images, sometimes merging the two in the same image. Colonial offices made requests for these images as a way of collecting information about their subjects.[123] The request was likely

[119] Ibid, 486. It should be noted that many photographs taken of men were of them working or as warriors, the ones that exist in the homoerotic category are limited but telling.
[120] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"
[121] *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*.
[122] Vokes, "Reflections on a Complex (and Cosmopolitan) Archive: Postcards and Photography in Early Colonial Uganda, c.1904–1928," 380.
[123] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"

inspired by the era's obsession over the collection of 'specimens.' Just like their imperial desires, their collection of the images was another way of owning the subjects' bodies. Typically men, photographers of this nature existed all over the British empire. The Burton Brothers in New Zealand, Paul Foelshe in Australia, Everard im Thurn in Venezuela, and many others collected people, material items, and even landscapes through the technology.[124]



*Figure 5- European woman leaning in erotic position*

Society's perspective on erotic photographs of white, European women illustrate the significance of the colonial portrait photographs. In Britain, photographers like Arthur Munby

[124] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"

were taking erotic photographs of European prostitutes. In theory, the situation was the same as the anthropologists that photographed colonized subjects; Munby would offer women money to come off the street and into his studio to pose nude.[125] Other photographers in Britain took erotic images of prostitutes in a similar way. Even looking at Figure 5, to the modern viewer, it looks similar to the style and positions that could be seen in colonial postcards. The situation in which the photographer captured this image was similar as well. A woman, usually a sex-worker, was invited to pose for a photograph, paid, and sent on her way. Victorians viewed these images, however, very differently than the ones taken of the colonial subjects, rejecting them as smut and restricting their sale and dissemination. This comparison shows that race was the true variable that changed the way the British looked at the nude body.

The subjects of these photographs were often required to be nude. Because the women in the photographs were almost always prostitutes, their representation in these images was truly a study of how the images affected the social movements surrounding regulation of prostitution. Regardless of how the audience understood the subject, or if they thought of that individual at all, the images endorsed, maintained, and supported an ideology about the sexuality and condition of colonial subjects. The narrative that the British, and other colonial powers that created these images, promulgated was 'backwards' communities that walked around nude and not only wanted, but needed, the interference of the European powers in order to help 'civilize' them. The British wanted to maintain the ideology that colonized men were effeminate and incapable of controlling their women's sexuality (and thus not civilized). As Phillipa Levine and James Ryan have argued, these images fueled a major ideology that justified the invasion and control over entire regions. The agency that these images had was to influence the public to

[125] Derek Hudson, *Munby: The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby* (Cambridge: Gambit, 1972.) Not all of Arthur Munby's photographs were of nude women or even of prostitutes.

support imperialism, even into the mid-twentieth century, as criticism of the practice grew. In addition, they swayed public opinion to maintain the Acts that regulated prostitution for far longer in the empire than in the mainland due to the narrative that colonized peoples were explicitly sexual.



*Figure 6- Colonized woman sewing*

Within these collections of photographs, there were distinctly different images that should be acknowledged. Images like Figure 6 were 'educational' images. These photographs often depict women and men participating in traditional activities, such as sewing or chopping wood. Many of the images show people in traditional clothing, not often worn daily, and many more show the subjects nude. The images were an example of how colonizers controlled the

knowledge in order to maintain the narrative of the 'civilizing mission.'[126] The postcards with these nude images could be seen in the shop windows in London or textbooks around the empire.[127] Sometimes in the corner of these images, one can see the modern clothing the subjects have stripped for the photograph.[128] While the images do not appear to be erotic, they seem to always bring attention to the subject's genitalia, as Levine states, while they are "not in any obvious way pornographic or erotic, they are also questionable as science."[129]

On the other hand, most of these images, even if their intention was originally for education, were used on postcards for entertainment. For example, one image of two young women in traditional skirts and no blouse was sent with the sarcastic, hand-written caption "In their Sunday Best."[130] Images like that, with the tongue-in-cheek captions, convey the attitude the British had for their subjects and the way that these images could be used to demean its subjects. Most images, however, were obviously made for entertainment. Women posed in pornographic-like positions, sometimes in studio settings and other times in outdoor, seemingly remote settings. In areas where the population was majority Muslim, many images are of women removing their veils to reveal their natural hair.[131]

The European practice of objectifying black bodies has a long history. One of the starkest examples was the story of Saartjie Baartman, or "Hottentot Venus." The young South African woman was placed on display in London in 1810.[132] Highly sexualized and degraded, Baartman was displayed in a cage and "reduced to her sexual parts," much like the 'educational'

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[126] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"
[130] Ibid, 478.
[131] Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*. This was typically in the French context.
[132] T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

images' focus on the genitals.[133] Even after her death, her brain, skeleton, and genitalia remained in the ownership of Musee du quai Branly in France.[134] She was the object of curiosity, scientific inquiry, and even ridicule.[135] Baartman's story exemplifies the perspective Europeans had of the black body and how they treated colonized subjects. Like the way they took ownership of Baartman's body, anyone could buy a portrait postcard and 'own' the body displayed on it. As Robin Mitchell has argued, European men utilized the black female body in order to discuss white women, black women and black men.[136]

When the subject of a photograph was white, Victorians rejected public displays of nudity. In an 1885 *Times* letter-to-the-editor entitled "A Woman's Plea," a British woman wrote in to express her dismay with an upcoming art gallery's use of nude bodies. She argued that it was immoral for the naked body to be displayed as modern art and that the gallery must be closed. The author protested claiming that it was an "insult to that modesty which we should desire to foster in both sexes."[137] The concerned Victorian woman asked the editor, "Will it become necessary to add to these rules a vow that no member of the association shall visit our picture galleries- galleries which ought to be sources of innocent and ennobling refinement to both sexes, of all ages and all ranks of society?"[138] While nude paintings were nothing new, it was not entirely unusual for someone, particularly middle-class women, to object to these viewings. It was the style that the nude painting was done in which determined its controversiality.

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[133] Deborah Willis, *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her Hottentot* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).
[134] Mitchell, *Venus Noire*.
[135] Willis, *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her Hottentot*
[136] Mitchell, *Venus Noire*.
[137] *The Times,* May 20th, 1885.
[138] Ibid.

For example, Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), Figure 7, was a highly controversial painting. The nude woman in the image was certainly meant to represent a sex worker, and audiences would have recognized this immediately.[139] First, the name Olympia in French was affiliated with prostitutes. In addition, the black cat at the foot of the bed was also a symbol of a sexually liberated woman. While nude images of women could certainly be found in Britain and France, her gaze at the audience differentiates this image from more Renaissance-style nude images. A sex worker as a subject would also typically be shown in a state of redemption as in Figure 8. In comparison to the bold, white, nude woman, her Black maid stands beside her fully dressed in no indication of sexuality at all. Despite the poor reception of this image, high art was willing to take risks with representing white women's bodies with autonomy, while Black women's bodies and sexuality remained controlled.



*Figure 7- Édouard Manet's* Olympia *(1863),*

[139] Therese Dolan, "Fringe Benefits: Manet's Olympia and Her Shawl." *The Art Bulletin* 97, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 409–429.

Unlike Manet's work, William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853) was a more traditional image of a prostitute. It showed a young 'fallen' woman, dressed in virtuous white, suddenly realizing her sin and getting up to leave. The insatiable man who had compromised her virtue for his own desires (or so says the narrative) was clearly the antagonist of this story. A man wrote to the *Times* in May of 1854 to discuss the popular painting (Figure 8) and explain its meaning. He claimed that, while the portrait was well-known and discussed by many, it was not often understood. [140] Hunt had transformed the 'fallen' woman from "physically and morally monstrous, a creature unworthy to be represented in art, and elevated her into a religious, and almost saintly symbol...She is the sinner whom Christ did not forget, the damned soul whom He helps to redemption."[141] This type of art became popular, driving (and driven by) a sympathetic view of prostitutes. It was indicative of the direction both popular culture and public opinion were headed.

[140] "The Prae-Raphaelites." *Times* (London, England) 25 May 1854: 7. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 19 Nov. 2018.
[141] Helene E. Roberts, "Marriage, Redundancy, or Sin: The Painter's View of Women in the First Twenty-Five Years of Victoria's Reign." *Suffer and Be Still* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1972), 67.



*Figure 8- William Holman Hunt's* The Awakening Conscience *(1853)*

The boost in free time due to a changing economy meant that many more people read popular literature and consumed art than in previous eras.[142] In addition, social developments, such as the rise in the literacy rate, allowed for more individuals to read novels.[143] Historian Eric C. Brown, argues that fairy tales in particular gained popularity, partly because of their ease of consumption, but more so for their figurative commentary on social and political discussions. [144] Literature, especially novels, were wildly popular for Victorians, finding its way into the political realm as a tool to support policies, such as the Contagious Diseases Acts.

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[142] Cameron, *London's Pleasures: From Regency to Restoration*. The increase in free time to partake in entertainment started in the Regency era. Lower classes had significantly less free time, but still experienced an increase overall.
[143] Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914.*
[144] Eric C. Brown, "The Influence of Queen Victoria on England's Literary Fairy Tale." *Marvels & Tales* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 1999).

While disease was a dominant concern for real-life prostitutes, much of Victorian literature attempted to deter women from 'falling' at all. Without discussing the subject of venereal disease, despite its central presence in political discourse on prostitution, novelists warned women in more emotional and figurative ways. In many ways, the Victorian novel was mythology. It was meant to teach lessons to the reader about morality. Often the lesson for young women was that if they did 'fall,' they would almost inevitably die a violent death with no chance of redemption in society or with God.[145]

One such example of this traditional Victorian novel was George Eliot's *Adam Bede,* published in 1859. In this work, Eliot depicted both the beginning and end for the fallen woman. Hetty Sorrel, a lower-class maiden, was seduced by a wealthy man and quickly left without a marriage proposal.[146] Hetty's aunt, Esther, exemplifies the 'fallen' woman's fate: she dies with "nought but skin and bone," desperate for a "spot to die in peace."[147] Whether the fictional girls were murdered or committed suicide, their fates were sealed as soon as they were 'seduced.' Gretchen Braun supports this argument stating that "For a female Victorian literary character, maidenly demise is preferable to sexual fall, and should physical chastity be compromised before marriage, an outcast state… is inevitable."[148] She continues that a "lonely and early death often follows" and the "immeasurable social chasm" makes a "woman's mature community participation" impossible[149] Another aspect of Victorian society abundantly clear in the novel was the dichotomy found in the representation of women. Men "constructed [women] as both

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[145] Gretchen Braun, "Untarnished Purity": Ethics, Agency, and the Victorian Fallen Woman, (*Routledge Library Editions: Women's History,* Vol. 44, 2015), 343.
[146] George Eliot, *Adam Bede*,1859 (London: Electric Book Co., 2001).
[147] Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 377.
[148] Braun,"Untarnished Purity": Ethics, Agency, and the Victorian Fallen Woman, 342.
[149] Ibid, 343. Braun uses the phrase "immeasurable social chasm" in reference to Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Ubervilles.*

powerful and powerless, as sexual agents but also as victims, as dangerous but in need of protection."[150] In this structure, men convinced women to be a domestic wife, mother in order to protect their honor and preserve their place as a venerated member of society, while husbands partook in vice with the dishonorable members of society. By creating this false juxtaposition of women, one honorable and one dishonorable, men made fictional women both docile and something to be feared.

Victorians, however, shifted the narrative of novels about 'fallen' women, particularly with the rise of New Women literature. Like their real-life counterparts, instead of death or despair as inevitable fate, many literary women could live and even continue into 'regular' lives. Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1841) represented a young girl who 'fell' into prostitution.[151] While his representation of Nancy was much more sympathetic than other authors' depictions of the fallen woman, her fate was the same. Female writers, such as Dickens' protégé, Emily Jolly, pitched the fallen woman as a victim that could be redeemed. *Witch-hampton Hall: Five Scenes in the Life of its Last Lady* (1864) followed the life of an aristocratic woman who was the victim of rape, became pregnant, and hid the baby. In the end, instead of death, she marries a man who "loves her no less for having had a child out of wedlock." [152] The character's return to society echoes the real-life concerns of the medical officials who knew that real-life 'fallen' women's return meant they could possibly bring venereal disease back with them. The romanticized return to society in fiction concerned medical officials, who were already concerned with real-life prostitutes carrying the disease back into 'regular' society.

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[150] Carol Smart, "Disruptive Bodies and Unruly Sex: The Regulation of Reproduction and Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood, and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 7.
[151] Charles Dickens and Edward Le Comte, *Oliver Twist* (1841).
[152] Braun, "'Untarnished Purity': Ethics, Agency, and the Victorian Fallen Woman," 343.

The theme of sympathy found in art and literature exemplifies the way the media influenced social ideology. Both Hetty and Esther, of Adam Bede, were sympathetic figures that, despite their fate, were victims of society's moral decay. Reformers and artists' sympathy for 'fallen' women influenced, and was influenced by, a shift in public opinion. The eventual eradication of the Contagious Diseases Act in 1886 was after years of the media growing more and more sympathetic towards these white characters, and thus their real-life counterparts.

Yet, some resented the way that the public was leaning into the 'victim' trope for 'fallen women.' One Victorian physician, Frederick Lowndes, expressed his frustration with this ideology, stating that

> the question of how to deal with the 'social evil' still remains wholly unanswered...For to suggest any measures which would have the slightest approach to harshness towards 'fallen women' would be resented at once by the sympathizing public.[153]

Medical professionals supported the Contagious Diseases Act, some even pushing for stricter regulation, and the public's shift to a more sympathetic perspective made keeping the Acts more difficult in the mainland.

While medical officials seemed satisfied to blame prostitutes for the spread of disease, reformers looked to more powerful people within the profession. W. T. Stead's article acted as a catalyst for much of the social and political movements surrounding 'White Slavery.' He also brought to light hierarchies within the trafficking practice. Brothel owners, pimps, or any coordinators of sex work now held much of the blame for the profession. Despite many women working on their own, reformers believed that women must have been seduced into 'falling.' William Logan wrote that the "one blacker and more infamous than others…[should] be

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[153] Frederick Lowndes, and Adam Holden. *Prostitution and Venereal diseases in Liverpool* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1886), iiv.

punished with the strong arm of the law."[154] Policies reflected these reformist concerns. The Cantonment Act in India allowed for the deportation of anyone involved in trafficking, and especially targeted pimps.[155]

Yet, some doctors chose to use the power of media, specifically literature, to their advantage in maintaining medical surveillance of prostitutes. One doctor who was bothered by the fictional works that sympathized with prostitutes and fallen women was William Acton. His article *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects (1857)* exemplifies the strength that literature had in Victorian society. Acton's use of prose and literary language strengthened and popularized his arguments for the restriction of women's liberties in order to protect the general population.[156] While some have criticized Acton's use of flowery or poetic language, Shalyn Claggett claims that it made his writing more accessible to the public and thus more likely to shift opinion. Claggett writes that Acton gained rhetorical power by retelling the societal myths about prostitution.[157] His influential power during the time was obvious due to his presence on the Select Committee, which helped enact the Contagious Diseases Act, and his work being cited by the government report more than any other source.[158] Claggett also notes that Acton gradually uses more literary devices between 1857 and 1870, even going so far as to create small snippets of fictional scenes to support his arguments.[159]

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[154] Logan, *The Great Social Evil: Its causes, extent, results, and remedies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), 114. Note the reference to "blacker." Again, Victorians have the conceptions of the color white as good, and the color black as bad.
[155] Harold Fisher-Tine, "'White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths': European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon Ca. 1880-1914."
[156] Shalyn Claggett, "Victorian Prose and Poetry: Science as literature in William Acton's Prostitution" *Prose Studies*, 01 April 2011, Vol.33(1).
[157] Claggett, "Victorian Prose and Poetry: Science as literature in William Acton's Prostitution"
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

The dichotomy between sympathetic and unsympathetic audiences can be seen clearly in a comparison of Hetty and Esther to another fictitious Victorian woman. Wilkie Collins' *Armadale* (1866) depicted Lydia Gwilt in a dark and aggressive light. Though not in the medical field himself, Collins briefly attended law school and, as an educated middle-class man, can be assumed to have knowledge and an opinion on one of the most talked about issues of the time. In his work, rather than the victim whose fate was a lonely death, Lydia instead seduces men, often murdering them.[160] With Lydia, Collins expressed the fear of an unchecked female sexuality with no societal consequences.

Victorian literature shaped perceptions of the colonies as well. Like the erotic photographs, Victorian novels influenced the way that the British public viewed colonized peoples. Sensational novels, such as Tarzan, were written by white men and took place in the colonies. Historians have long connected the work to social anxieties about masculinity and colonial relations.[161] Tarzan was raised by apes and thus was not civilized. Yet, apparently due to his race, he was smarter, faster, and overall 'superior' to the other characters.[162] The author, Edgar Rice Burroughs, promoted a 'superiority' ideology that dominated the public's perspective of themselves compared to colonial subjects. While this novel was more indicative of ideology about masculinity, it remains a solid example of the ways that literature and public opinion intertwined.

Literature and art were two major forms of media that had agency by swaying public opinion. While this article will not attempt to explain other media forms, such as theater, opera,

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[160] Wilkie Collins, and Catherine Peters. *Armadale* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[161] John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: the White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001.)
[162] Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Thomas Mallon, *Tarzan of the Apes* New York: Library of America, 2012.

and others, it should be noted that these forms of media also spoke to societal concerns over prostitution. Literature and art remain an important entryway into the expression of cultural and societal values. Both can be an expression of existing values but can also spread and influence consumers. By comparing the rise in media's sympathy for white prostitutes with the movements to end the Contagious Diseases Acts in the mainland, one can easily see that the erotic portrait postcards that emphasized colonized peoples' sexuality resulted in the extension of regulated prostitution in the empire.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions

The public was highly aware of the colonies and saw them as a point of national pride.[163] The abolitionists fighting against regulation also fought in colonies, but the movement lost its fervor after they were eradicated in Britain. The public's loss of interest is a direct result of the lack of sympathy given to black bodies, and the narrative of highly sexualized colonized bodies driven by the media.[164] Regulationist policies remained in some parts of the empire until after World War II.[165] The length of the policies, their restrictiveness, and the way in which they differed from those at home makes the strength of the racial element that factored into this project the most prominent. While gender and class remain essential to understanding such laws, the difference in race determined most poignantly the way society would apply and maintain policy.

Within the colonial empire, consent was a line often crossed. The mere presence of the British in the local governments and spaces penetrated the boundary of consent for many colonized subjects. Consent, then, should be questioned when it comes to the women and men in the photographs. On one hand, the photographs are posed, and the women seem to willingly participate in the transaction. After all, many of these women were prostitutes who were paid to appear in these images. However, the question then centers on how much power a colonized woman had to say no to a white man. If she could physically say no, the system of economic hierarchy and control certainly could force her into an economic situation where she was offered more money than she could refuse.

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[163] Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*, 5.
[164] Ibid, 5.
[165] Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire.*

Vokes complicates the conversation of consent. He writes that a basic anthropological theory that anthropologists of photography start with is "a reading of the photographer's intentions, and all photographs may also be interrogated in terms of their subjects' intentionality—even where the content of the image would appear to suggest that the relationship between photographer and subject was entirely coercive in nature. From a historical perspective, however, Philippa Levine states that

> Many of those shown in the photographs… had little say over how they were portrayed, and sometimes over whether they were portrayed. These are images that do not appear consensual in any convincing way: they ooze power and inequality. [166]

To complicate the question of consent further, one must include the arguments that Luise White presents about women's agency. Perhaps these women saw the photography sessions as simply another job, one with which they could consent to or not. As discussed earlier, in the colonies gender was an important social layer that intersected with race and which the British tried to both utilize and control in order to strengthen their authority. The complex and intangible lines of consent are difficult to decide on; however, it is worse to ignore the subtle undertones of colonial authority and how deep the hierarchies ran. The intersectionality between race, class and gender through the example of erotic imagery and prostitution reveals the power of colonial knowledge and the agency that media possesses to influence public opinion, and thus political policy. Understanding the context of these images deepens our knowledge of the way prostitutes' lives were controlled by the British empire.

British society had complicated lines of cultural expectations. Their expansion into colonies, and their movement into imperial motives, brought race into the conversations about gender and sex. By analyzing the media that Europeans created, historians can expand their

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[166] Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic"

knowledge of these expectations and the differences between them depending on gender, class, and race. While some historians have argued that the media being produced in popular culture was reflective of the ideology they had about sexuality and prostitution, I argue that the media itself also had the agency to cultivate the public's opinion on the topics. The changing public opinion resulted in the eradication (or sustaining) of policies, such as Contagious Diseases Acts, that reflected those ideas and values.

The difference in treatment of the colonial body and the British body was evident in this project. In portrait photography, the pictures influenced ideas about black subjects and helped enact or maintain policy by driving a specific narrative that colonial officials wanted those at home to believe (and thus support the policies that sustained Britain's empire). In the mainland, however, where race and the stakes of colonialism were gone, the media chose a different narrative to embrace: sympathy.

These photographs raise important questions concerning how images of colonial subjects taken thousands of miles away influence the political and social movements for or against British sex workers. While Victorians were debating regulation of prostitution at home, they are also deciding their policies abroad. Images of women (and men) of color were being distributed through mail without the swift and strict response typical of middle-class reformers when nude images of white men and women were sent.[167] Subjects of these images may have had little control over how they were represented in the photograph so what does the usage of the images say about women's consent, gender roles, and prostitution under colonial rule? This project brings these elements together to better understand British policy, and social perspectives, on prostitution and its connection to race and sexuality in the colonies.

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[167] Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914.*

As previously mentioned, pornography made white women the subject of its images, too. Yet, unlike the colonial women, one can assume that they were more likely to be able to consent to the images. The imagery most affecting policies on mainland prostitutes were the sympathetic artworks, due to their ability to be disseminated. While colonized women had nonconsensual images that officials used to control their sexuality and lives, white women had artwork that drew sympathetic (though condescending) opinions. In Britain, class factors into the equation. Prostitutes, often lower-class women, did not have access to the spaces where these images were created, displayed, or discussed. For this reason, they did not have the ability to control their narrative, or the policies based on them. While white women certainly had much more agency in their decision to participate as subjects of these images, like the colonial women, the media had more control over their narrative than they did.

When discussing both sex workers and colonized people, it is important to look critically at their historical record. Sources of prostitutes' perspective of themselves and their profession do not exist. The historical sources were based on white, middle-class opinions which are based on two biased perspectives: first, 'fallen' women as irretrievable sinners who could only bring others down with them, or second, as victims of circumstance, tempted by men's uncontrollable sexual desires and constrained by their economic status. Both opinions disregarded or ignored the potential freedoms that prostitutes experienced in the occupation. Many of these women were utilizing a system of double standards to their advantage: a salary. As for other 'fallen' women who were not prostitutes, but mistresses, neither the reformers nor the medical officials considered that women were capable of enjoying sex, a concept thought by contemporary medical professionals to be unlikely.[168] Carol Smart furthers this critique, writing that historians

[168] Mary Spongberg, *Feminising Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth Century Medical Discourse* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

today are becoming more aware of "the extent to which many women involved in prostitution were resistant to the increasingly dominant construction of themselves as innocent victims who only wanted help to return to a virtuous life.[169]

Cultural expectations of gender, the expansion of empire, and the fear of degeneration through venereal disease created a unique historical moment that can be analyzed through the media. This project has proved that media influenced public opinion of both European and colonized bodies. It draws a stark difference between the treatment of the two bodies and how the media created a narrative that defined how the public reacted to prostitutes. The media's agency in influencing public opinion shaped the changing policies for sex workers, both in the metropole and in the empire, in turn-of-the-century Britain.

[169] Smart, "Disruptive Bodies and Unruly Sex: The Regulation of Reproduction and Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood, and Sexuality*, 26.

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# VITA

Allison W. Johnson is a master's candidate at the University of Tennessee. She earned her bachelor's degree in history at Tennessee Technological University in 2018. She has studied British and French history and worked in London in the National Archives. Her publications include "The Forgotten: Minorities in Industrial Britain" which was funded by an undergraduate grant in 2017. She is currently working on a study of popular culture in Victorian Britain, specifically looking at the depiction of prostitutes in art, literature, and theater as well as studying the physical space that women occupy in Britain and the empire.