Are there only ugly men buying beautiful women in prostitution? - The intersection of money and power and money and potency in the prostitution encounter

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Part I: The intersection of money and power

The tale of the ugly man buying a beautiful woman

[112] Paul: [...] Do you know who was in the airplane on my way back? Rolf Eden with his girlfriend, he is 70 and she is, don't know, she was in the beginning of her 20's and if he was simply a machine worker she wouldn't look twice at him because power makes you sexy

Rolf Eden is the owner of a famous disco in Berlin and a local playboy. He recently advertised on TV that he is looking for a woman holding his hand, when he dies. The power Paul is talking about is primarily of economic nature. In this passage Paul makes use of the very common stereotype that rich men can buy beautiful women who otherwise would not be interested in them, since “power makes you sexy”, attractive and beauty has a price. Neither of the two is prepared to love the other, their relationship is only mediated by money. With this comment Paul is in accordance with Marx’ description of money in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript* (1884/1975):

“Money’s properties are my - the possessor’s - properties and essential powers. Thus, what I am and am capable of is by no means determined by my individuality. I am ugly, but I can buy for myself the most beautiful of woman. Therefore I am not ugly, for the effect of ugliness - its deterrent power - is nullified by money” (Marx 1975, p324)

O’Connell Davidson (1998) makes use of this quote to explain the power relationship between a prostitute and a client. She starts off her book *Prostitution, Power and Freedom* by describing a man as unattractive who in her understanding was a sex-tourist but believed that his Cuban lover “had fallen just as passionately in love with him as he had with her” (p1).

All three, Marx, O’Connell Davidson and Paul talk about the same issue, that money makes people attractive who otherwise would not be. Marx explains this with the nullification effect of money. But does a man like Rolf Eden really want to overcome his ‘ugliness’? And why would he need a woman at his side to overcome it, if –following Marx - money would already do that for him? Could one not also interpret their exchange as an exchange of status? Doesn’t she gain status by being with a rich man as much as he gains status by being with a beautiful woman? And could one not follow from there that
beauty is as much a currency as money is? Otherwise it would not make sense to speak about beauty and ugliness as fixed terms, for not all of us fall in love only with good-looking and well-mannered persons. Furthermore, as Marx explains in the Capital, since one can exchange capital against commodities and vice versa, commodities themselves become capital in this process. This is also reflected in a comment made by one of my participants (Wolfgang). He thinks that only woman with great self-confidence ("nem großen Selbstbewußtsein") who are aware of their beauty and who then could actively sell their body as commodity could work as prostitutes\(^1\). From this point of view the metaphor is no longer transferable to prostitution because men paying for sexual services do usually not gain status, since mostly they are not seen in presence of the beautiful woman. In most cases they just enjoy beauty for themselves, independent from their own look\(^2\). Additionally, they do not really buy the woman but the sexual service of her.

The power of money or: How powerful do clients think money is in prostitution?

However, the point O'Connell Davidson wants to make is slightly different. She argues that few women would prostitute themselves, if they didn't need the money. For most it is not an issue of their own sexuality (or social status) but a question of earning money for survival or a more pleasant life-style. For this reason, men who buy sexual services have the power of command over them. Hans makes a comment that makes this very clear:

\[54/55/56\] Hans: [...] because the women calculate really tough, they say to themselves, ok, first a guy will only 20 min for 60 Mark, maybe I can push him a little up to half an hour for 100 Mark. It usually works like that 'oh today I'll be really tender and sweet and all the rest of it, well, they make the wildest promises and in their head they calculate, all right, the average man comes after 2-3 min, first I push him to half an hour but after 3 min I can tick it, well, and when somebody shows them how long half an hour can be they start throwing up, well like that, latest after 10 min they start 'do you not want to finish' or 'come on hurry up' they are really silly and when I say 'hey, I've paid for half an hour' 'yes but you don't have to do half an hour' (laugh). Like that, well, such stories and you can be really done there, where I said to myself, all right, then I want to have those women, who really have fun or

\(^1\) Furthermore, Simmel (1990) argues that money is the best equivalent for prostitution, since in prostitution sex is only used in its generic and most anonymous terms, just like money is anonymous. One could argue similarly in terms of beauty, since it is not the woman’s individuality that counts as beauty in this metaphor, but rather an abstract and anonymous concept of it. The woman is exchangeable against any other who is just as beautiful in the same way as the man is exchangeable as long as the other is just as rich. Thus, Simmel summarises that “[o]f all human relationships, prostitution is perhaps the most striking instance of mutual degradation to a mere means, and this may be the strongest and most fundamental factor that places prostitution in such a close historical relationship to the money economy, the economy of ‘means’ in the strictest sense.” (Simmel 1990, p176/77)

\(^2\) Most interestingly O’Connell Davidson uses the same logic as Paul does who finds himself very successful with women and who uses negative examples of other men in order to create an even more successful image of himself. As Kimmel (1997) argues men constantly compete with each other and being successful with women is part of this competition. In a sense O’Connell Davidson joins this very sexism by transferring this image to prostitution in general and, thus, indirectly arguing that men going to prostitutes are the ones who are impotent outside of it.
who have fun with me and then I know exactly, the half hour I’ve paid for, is half an hour.

Hans describes struggles a client might have with a prostitute. He clearly sees two parties: her who tries to cheat him (and succeeds with other men but he is stronger) and him. He shows them how long half an hour can be. With this comment he says two things. Firstly, he formulates a threat, for he potentially exercises power over the prostitute by forcing her to give him the service he paid for. Secondly, he exercises power over her with his potency that is stronger than that of other men. The average men orgasms after a few minutes, however, he can practice sex much longer. There is another passage in the interview that is very similar. In this passage he tells me about the seize of his penis that is longer than the ‘German average’ (ref.) and also there he comments on some prostitutes complaining that his penis is too big what he just thinks is silly. In both comments Hans connects power, money and his sexual ability. I will come back to this connection in the second part. Now, I will give some more quotes to show the connection of power exercised through payment.

[4] Wolfgang: You could say, you find really thick, thin, slim ones, and om they show already, when one walks, they show their breasts or so, that’s no problem, well and it’s 50 Mark or you pay more for a longer period of time […]

In this passage he describes his first visit to a quite cheap and big brothel where men have to pass through corridors filled up with woman, each of them in front of a small room. Men can choose whatever they like. Here men are in sexual Cockaigne⁴, where women are prepared to give everything to them and already ‘show their breasts’. However, such brothels are close to factory work or as he describes the sexual intercourse with one woman:

[30] Wolfgang: […] well for me it is, well for me it was like that. as if she was a commodity, as if I went to a shop and (bought) myself a new door or something like that, like that it’s split (seperated), there was nothing (no emotions) coming across, nothing, nothing at all, only broken German, and even during intercourse, it was pointless, it was just the body […]

For this reason, he dreams of being able to pay for a more expensive sexual service:

[34] Wolfgang: there certainly are more elegant who- bro- prostitutes who cost more, would make more fun I believe, where there would be something more but one could hardly afford it or those who for one hour take several hundred Mark if one could take a bath or so, would be cool, that would be something where one gets feeling, too, not just quick quick, Mark Mark

There are plenty of passages that exemplify this experience or the belief that basically one can buy anything one wishes, even the wish to be passive and just serviced by the woman like in other forms of body care work. I just want to give a last example: Rolf whose wife had been raped before their marriage and who felt dissatisfied with his sexual life in marriage.

[58] Rolf: […] … I have my own imagination of the intimate, my own wishes, but I always suppressed them, because I wanted to bring her

³ “Medieval legend, an imaginary land of luxury and idleness”, where “houses were made of cake” (Collins English Dictionary 2000)
slowly closer again to the, let’s say the intimate and that was basically my crisis that, well we sometimes had intercourse, but not as I imagined and then I thought, this woman, the prostitute looks good and all the rest of it and there you get what you would like to.

All three passages exemplify what Marx called the ‘omnipotent’ power of money. If sex is done without emotions than that is because one has not paid enough money. Money „converts my wishes from something in the realm of imagination, translates them from their mediated, imagined or desired existence into their sensuous, actual existence - from imagination to live, from imagined being into real being. In affecting this mediation, [money] is the truly creative power.” (Marx 1975, p325).

That money for the men appears to be “the creative power” also surfaces, if one reads quotes that express insecurity caused by a too businesslike behaviour of the working woman. For in those interactions men become conscious of money’s limitations, like in the next quote of Sven:

[4/5] Sven: well it was naturally not particularly intensive, well (groan) t’was a business somehow, well, what I found most irritating (disturbing) was that it is completely businesslike: ‘all right, what would you like? We have programme A where you have usual intercourse and special service would be programme B, which will cost more (supplement) well, like a menu, om, if you touch my breast, no you haven’t paid for that, well, these are things, don’t know […] well, no, it’s not my cup of tea.

However, other men find a more constructive way to cope with the limitations of money. In his study on prostitution Ahlemeier (ref.) asked women, if they would offer anything just for money and their answers were definite ‘No’s. The following passage shows that payment does not necessarily mean complete control over the prostitute’s body but that the service and its price are subject to negotiations:

[8] Manfred: well you should face the ladies with respect, that is quite obvious, if you usually dig up somebody in a disco, let’s say so, with him you speak sensibly, too and exactly like that they want to be treated, too, well like normal people, well you have to ask cautiously, for certain things, because not all ladies do everything, if you really have particular preferences, then they will tell you either ok, that’s all right, it costs a little more maybe or not, according to the situation or according to the location and then it’ll be done or not, it also depends on the lady.

The last two quotes both exemplify limitations of the business. Whereas Manfred is only interested in negotiating the ‘physical’ side of the service, Sven is struggling with the businesslike nature of prostitution. He even feels ‘very hurt that she just does it for money’ (57). He later states, having sex preferably means an absorption of female energy (67), which is not possible, if she is too cold. Thus, he misses exactly this: the more emotional or mental side of the meeting. This is a very common theme in many

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4 These prostitutes appeared in a quite secured position. Women who are under severe economic pressure might react differently.
interviews, even though each man has a different approach to it. Paul, for instance, is quite clear about it:

Paul: though there is a level you can’t buy, it starts with sympathy, the entire ideational (non-material, spiritual) realm.

Furthermore, Paul is very self-confident. He thinks about himself as very manly (97). He believes that with the woman he goes to regularly he has overcome this hurdle:

Paul: […] for instance, Channelle is one of my regular hookers […] and who’s incredibly delighted and I can tell from certain bodily reactions, there are things you can’t simulate, to say it bluntly, there are really things happening and that I suppose, it can’t be like this with anybody, that for me is the great fulfilment, or that she was prepared, even without condom, what usually, usually doesn’t happen, but where I say ‘no’ it’s all right, though I had them but one has to make compromises, always.

Here, Paul describes incredibly precise how he believes to overcome the anonymity created by the fact that he is just a money-giver like anybody else. The woman is ‘delighted’ to meet him. She enjoys having sex with him and even orgasms. Thus, despite the fact that he buys the service, the relationship is based on mutuality. A theme that can be found in many of the interviews. Attention-grabbing in this context is his reading of signs: ‘there are things you can’t simulate’ that can be a very tricky issue. In his essay on libertinage and female orgasm Steintrager (1999) illustrate the difficulty of the female orgasm and the insecurity caused for males that it might be faked. He uses the example of the libertine novel Point de lendemain (Denon) in which exactly this happens: he has sex with a woman all night and is certain of her enjoyment but learns the other day that she is unable to orgasm². Paul, too, cannot exclude this possibility of a faked enjoyment, even though in his speech he tries to convince himself and me. He cannot be sure, if he really overcomes the mediated nature of his relationship to the prostitute, even though he wishes to. Interesting is also that the signs he reads make him different from other men. Again, the motive of male rivalry connected with sexual potency and the longing for the ‘real’, the ‘natural’ reaction of the prostitute to which I will come back in the second part is an important issue.

One last aspect that needs to be discussed in this context is the ability or inability to forget about the money. Some men forget that they have paid, whereas other men always remember it. Those who remember do enjoy less, since “one never knows, whether she really likes it” (“Man nie weiß, ob es ihr wirklich gefällt”) This is a quote of Xaver who was raised with the idea a man has to sexually satisfy a woman. Because he cannot know, he finds sex with prostitutes ‘rather un-erotic’. Or, as Michael states:

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² Compare also Williams work on pornography: “The woman’s ability to fake the orgasm that the man can never fake (at least according to certain standards of evidence) seems to be at the root of all the genre’s attempt to solicit what it can never be sure of: the out-of-control confession of pleasure, a hard-core “frenzy of the visible”.” (Williams 1999, p 50)
For both of them, prostitution can never create a natural situation, for the money is always between them. They are clear about the fact that the woman would not be there, if they had not paid. Thus, they realise that money mediates the relationship and that, therefore, it is less real. On the contrary, Rolf - who claims that he would completely forget about the money issue during his stay with a woman (he regularly went to) (156) – makes an equation between giving the money to a prostitute and paying for a woman he goes out with privately (106) (quote?). He was convinced about the mutuality and talked about the woman like a lover. For him paying was just the condition to meet her but he did not realise the mediative character of money. This mediative character of money is in contrast to Marx’ claim that through money imaginations would leave the mediated sphere and come into real being. One could further say that the metaphor of the ugly man buying a beautiful woman disguises that the prostitute is not just a ‘beautiful woman’ like an image of it or a ‘living doll’ but a living human being with her own feelings, thoughts and intentions that despite the men’s economic power always interfere. Similarly, he is not just ‘a purchaser’. As I have shown, some men do miss the ‘emotional’ side and these feelings do interfere as well.

Money as a medium has yet another function. It not only creates relationships but also makes them very clear. It “does not imply any commitment” is “in principle [...] always at hand and welcomed” (Simmel 1990, p176). Additionally, “[I]n as far as one pays with money, one is completely finished with any object just as fundamentally as when one has paid for satisfaction from a prostitute” (ibid.). This function is also welcomed in the interview material. For instance, Claus says that he particularly likes that there is nothing left between them (“Das finde ich ja gerade das Gute daran, es bleibt nichts im Zwischenraum so”) (43) and that everything is unambiguous (eindeutig). Another example is Gerold whom a prostitute offered to come for free (38, 40). He would not go there anymore (38, 40). He does not say why but it is very likely that he fears the responsibility.

Marx concludes his fragment on money that, if somebody is unable to attract another person naturally, his love would be impotent. Similarly one could deduce that the described insecurity is caused by the overtones of the metaphor of the ugly man: that without money, they would not succeed and that they need the money in order to have sex with a woman, as Paul puts it: “A rich man is a poor man with a lot of money” (Ein reicher Mann ist ein armer Mann mit viel Geld). To be incompetent and powerless without money, points to the fact that money is a substitute, it is our second not our first nature. In this context Marx uses the German word ‘Vermögen’ which has a double meaning. It means ability, capacity as well as fortune. Both the ability as well as fortune are potential, latent, they can take effect potentially at any time. Hence, similarly to Marx who names unreturned love ‘impotent’ one could argue that the fact that they pay money for sexual services implies their impotency. In this respect one could say that at least the threat of just being an ugly man is always present. Or to describe it in another
way: the German word ‘Schein’ has several meanings. To begin with, it means fake but it also means light, glow, gleam. And last not least it is a synonym for bank note. Summarising the discussion until this point, one could say that with the nice bank note (dem schönen Schein) they buy (or try to buy) a nice appearance (den schönen Schein), the appearance of mutuality and recognition. It is not of importance, whether the prostitute really likes a client or being with a client or not. Important is that they have paid in advance, which causes an ambivalence, since there is space left for the woman to control the situation. Even though the prostitute would really like the client or would orgasm or whatever, the prostitute relation remains a simulacrum (of mutuality, relationships, the ‘real’) because it is always mediated by money. Without the medium money, the relationship would not exist. But this also means that from the outset onwards, the relationship is defined as temporal. And in case a prostitute breaks this temporality by offering free service, it is impossible to go there any longer. This is as much a threat as a woman behaving too businesslike. Thus, I would like to conclude that it is the ambivalence on the side of a prostitute, which is crucial for the working of it, since neither a too businesslike behaviour nor a too private behaviour (a prostitute offering free service to a man she likes) appears to be appropriate. Whereas the fact that money sets the men free is very much appreciated.

Even those men who appear to be very clear about the businesslike character and who clearly say one should not expect anything, sometimes express ambivalent feelings:

[122] Andreas […] Well, sometimes it feels a bit funny [ while leaving], but in the end, if one explains oneself that it is a pure business relationship, sometimes one could have the idea that it might be more than just purely, that the financial aspect plays a role, but it isn’t more.

Part II: The intersection of money and potency

The origin of the term ‘potency’ is the Latin *potentia* meaning power, *posse* meaning to be able and *potens* meaning able (Collins English Dictionary, 2000). Similarly, the adjective ‘potent’ includes (both meanings to be powerful or possess great strength and “(for male) to be capable of having sexual intercourse” Hence, power and potency are synonymous terms. For this reason, in this part the issue of money in prostitution is looked at at a different level. Here I will investigate the cultural practices and beliefs that are part of the discourse of money and gender and are important for a discussion on male sexuality in the context of prostitution. In order to do this I will follow Greenblatt’s (ref.) methodology of interpretation. Influenced by Foucault Greenblatt looks for different discursive streams in the texts. For him any material is never ‘raw’ but always ‘cooked’, it is made up of several different discursive streams intersecting with and contradicting each other. In the first part I discussed the discursive streams of power and ambiguity and came to the conclusion that prostitution constitutes a simulacrum of an ideal, mutual, relationship. These aspects will surface again in this part, though from a different angle; one, which shows their cultural embeddedness.

Greenblatt’s methodology includes that one distances oneself from the actual text and includes aspects that do not necessarily appear visibly within the text but nevertheless inform it. This approach to include wider contexts brings about the complexity of the issue that (maybe unspokenly) resonates in the text. Similarly, I will
distance myself more from the actual interview material and will investigate aspects of money that are less visible in the texts as those I have analysed in the first part. However, both parts are very closely connected to each other. Metaphorically speaking, one could say that the first part shows the tip of the iceberg that is above the water, whereas the second part explores the wider foundation of the iceberg, which is underneath the water.

In order to do this I have drawn on historical works of money that include a gendered perspective, starting with the origin of money in ancient times and going over to early modern times. With this I do not want to suggest that money is a-historical. However, cultural scientists like Kallir (1961) and Mathes (2001/2003) argue that, even though society has moved away from historical practices certain aspects of them have shifted and continue to exist as residues in contemporary culture. In other words, the symbols of money still carry their history. Just to give an example, as I will describe in more detail later, money is now believed to originate in ancient fertility cults, in which they sacrificed bulls. Kallir (1961), for instance, who went over the history of the alphabet and related signs found that the two lines in the $ as well as the £ are remains of the two horns of a bull (and they have been used now for the € as well). A sign that is much closer for us is that the stock market uses the symbol of the bull for rising shares and that bull-papers are tested, (proven to be strong) papers (Mathes 2003). Furthermore, one of the most important cults of the roman empire until 300AC, the Mithras cult, has been (secretly) practiced further on in Alchemy, which is a similar male-only culture and in which men tried to make artificial gold.

After reading about this very gendered history of money, I wondered, whether – if there are residuums of historical meanings of money – I could find them in my material, too. I read again through some of them and found traces of them there as well. Additionally, this perspective allowed for different interpretations that also inform the question of the power of money. In this part now I will mainly look at four topics: the function of money as sacrifice, the connection of money to potency, the gendered relations of male and female to money and the search for the ‘real’ experience. All of them represent discursive streams that might meet in prostitution with the streams on the obvious economic level.

Money as a sacrifice

[68/69] Manfred: as I said before, some time this sexual drive in question became so strong, that I though, all right, if you can’t find a woman, give it a try, then you go there naturally with mixed feelings, because you realise in this moment, or at least that’s what I experienced, that I said, basically it’s a pig’s work what the woman does, she sells herself, or also a part of her soul, if she prostitutes herself, but then I said to myself, partly she might do it voluntarily, in certain respect at least, she sees the money, that what she gets from it and then I collected all my courage and went there, but as I said, again with mixed feelings, and when I had finished, so to speak, with her, I left and asked myself, what have you done there? You go in there and use this woman, but, well, I have, I had to give her a lot of money for that.
Manfred describes his moral struggle of using the service of a prostitute. He is one of the few men of my research who actually went to see a prostitute because they lacked other sexual contacts to women. In his case this was caused partly by his sexual preferences. He mentions several aspects that will be important for this part of the chapter. Firstly, he mentions his sexual drive. Secondly he talks about the woman selling partly her soul but having the sexual profit, too. And thirdly he speaks of the financial sacrifice he made for the use of her. I will now go into the last one (sacrifice) and in later passages discuss the other two (potency as well as male and female identity in relation to sex and money).

From the outset on, money was a substitute. In historical terms probably not for male potency but for animal sacrifices (mostly cattle). It originates in ancient fertility cults, in which animals were sacrificed as a kind of paying-off of guilt towards nature (Kurnitzky 1980). They sacrificed one of the animals for the goods the community had received from nature (deity). Thus sacrifices were economic exchanges and an attempt to keep deity in a good and spending mood. Because only the best animals and preferably bulls were taken as sacrificed animals, they became a measurement of value in trade relations and over the time money came to substitute them. Hence, most European words for money stem from words related to slaughter (either to the animals or to the tools of slaughter). For example, the Greek term ‘drachma’, consisted of 6 ‘obolen’ (sing. ‘obolos’ = skewer)\(^6\). In German this word is still used and has the same meaning as the contemporary English term (financial) contribution. Kurnitzky argues that money replaced the skewer or the meat hanging on them. Subsequently, on the early coins one either finds pictures of the sacrificed animals or of the tools that have been used during cultic slaughter (like a double axe). Thus, money was invented as a substitute for an economic exchange with deity: people felt indebted to deity and paid back their debts with sacrifices.

Could one now transfer this context to contemporary prostitution? And if so, for what does he need to make sacrifices. Certainly, he expresses some kind of guilt feeling for using the woman for his sexual desire. This alters the power relation slightly: not because he pays money he feels powerful, but because he has the privilege of using a woman for his needs he pays a sacrifice.

**The issue of impotency/castration**

\[180\] Sabine: Would you then start to rape women, if you could not buy them?

\[181\] Paul: No, no, because I know I would do it differently then, I would be rhetorically more skilful, well, that didn’t happen until now that I wouldn’t get a woman, even if I have to pull her for half a year, that doesn’t happen

\[182\] Sabine: You are really persistent (stubborn, dogged) then?

\[183\] Paul: I am a bull, a strong, proud, stubborn bull, just now in the air plane – do I have the sheet with me, no – beside me, I had the best place in the cabin, beside me the owner of a tanning shop, I already have her mobile number, all, she is already prepared to go with me to Westerwald

There are two aspects that need to be addressed here both linked to the issue of potency/impotency. Paul told me before that he is convinced that prostitution has a social

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\(^6\) One could probably find similar interpretation for the English ‘coin’ that stems from ‘cuneus’ which means wedge.
function, for, if it would not exist, many more rapes would happen. Thus, I would like to investigate the taming effect that money in his (and many other participants’) imagination has. The other point is that he names himself a bull. In other words, he equates himself with the sacrifice, the original sacrifice not the substitute money. This implies that he gives himself away with the money or as Mathes (2003) states, money came to symbolize self-abandon.

Not only was the bull the preferred animal to be sacrificed. It also symbolises male, sexual fertility. This can be exemplified with the Artemis cult, practised until 3/400 BC. In this cult the goddess Artemis (later Diane) became laden with bull’s testicles that were interpreted as representing the male sexual element and, thus, combining them with female sexual fertility. From this point of view again, one could argue that Paul defends his very potency. He says that he does not need money to convince a woman. Going back to the quote in which Hanns stated that he could show a woman ‘how long half an hour can be’ (54-56), one could say that he is similarly shielding his potency: he cannot be taken for a ride and he is much more potent than other men. The necessity to ‘proof’ one’s potency becomes even clearer, if one includes later developments of fertility cults such as the Mithras cult.

In the Mithras cult that was practiced in the roman empire until 300 AC the bull sacrifice symbolizes an important change of gender relations in the ancient world, for it signifies a shift from natural fertility to intellectual or spiritual fertility. (Braun 2001) The Mithras cult was a secret male-only cult that was particularly popular among soldiers and traders. It was practiced without written texts, which made it very difficult for researchers to interpret this cult (Ulansey 1994). However, in all Mithras temples there was a picture of a man (Mithras) killing a bull. Furthermore there is a Scorpion underneath the bull, castrating him. Subsequently the bull ejaculates sperm into a bowl that from this bowl goes to the moon and comes back to earth. Additionally, out of his tail grows a corn ear. Braun (2001) interprets this picture as a re-interpretation of fertility and sacrifice cults. In the Artemis cult that was widespread before fertility was celebrated by the communion of the male and female element, whereas the Mithras cult is a cult of masculinity. This cult, on the one hand, celebrates the “decline (destruction) of the male as sexual symbol of fertility” (Braun 2001, p219) and, on the other, “the ascent (rise) of a new image of fertility” which states “spiritual (intellectual) fertility (ibid.). Mithras replaces the bull and out of the death and the castration of the bull new life is born.

The Mithras image shows that castration brings about intellectual fertility, the loss of sexual potency brings about intellectual potency. Like the bull who could only be used for agriculture after its castration. Since it is a man who kills and castrates a male animal and out of the dead new life arises, this cult marks a cultural shift in to the conception of the male being representative for the intellectual and the female being representative for the body. For this reason, it is significant for European culture. As Mathes (2001) argues, the Mithras cult was destroyed by Christianity after it became states religion but its message further existed in monetary economy, since money symbolizes this intellectual potency. Money is an artificial - a human made - product and not a natural product. Thus, it promises that spiritual fertility is not only realised hereafter but now, here on earth (Mathes 2001). It brings forth an artificial growth, following different laws then the
natural growth. Simultaneously, money as something abstract has a concrete form as a sign body and creates an artificial reality (ibid.).

At this point the discussion needs to be related back to Marx statements about impotency I used in the first part, for Marx does exactly this: he explains money as ‘the creative power’. However, “[a]ssume man to be man and his relationship to the world to be a human one; then you can exchange love only for love and trust only for trust, etc. […] that is, if your loving as loving does not produce reciprocal love; if through living expression of yourself as a loving person you do not make yourself a beloved one, then your love is impotent – a misfortune (Marx, ref.). Thus, by paying and, thus, participating in the money order – a symbolic order - their potency is constantly under threat. For this reason they have to express that they have not been castrated like – again – Paul does in the subsequent section:

[105] Sabine: and you, when you go to a prostitute, is it that you just have the thought and then jump or?
[106] Paul: that sounds so …
[107] Sabine: what happens, what happens in between then?
[108] Paul: no, it motivates me, then I have the force of the two eggs and then I go over tables and benches (an idiom for feeling very energetic) and look forward to the end of the working day, that I can go there, but that’s only the case, if I know to whom I go, not just like today I’m horny, today I’ll go to a prostitute, but only, if I know definitely, Channelle, for instance, is there, where I get mad, when I just see her, she is there in the evening and I have the possibility in mind, that in half an hour I can lie on her mattress, that’s something that really inspires me.

Compelling is the correspondence between ancient cults, Marxian economic analysis and the need of the clients to show their potency. It exemplifies how contemporary conceptions of money are still connected to money’s history. Subsequently, it leads to a criticism of psychoanalysis that created a universal and a-historical castration complex, whereas the historical origin of money implies a historically developed threat of potency.

In several quotes of part I the connection of money, potency and rivalry among man surfaced. One additional layer of this intersection is the power over woman that is either exercised against them (show how long half an hour is) or for them (make them enjoy sex). The above described background also gives sense to this male rivalry in the interviews. I am not impotent but all the other men buying sexual services are. Furthermore, it appears that being able to purchase sexual services has in their imagination a calming effect on male sexuality, since several men say that, if it was not possible to go to prostitutes many more rapes would happen. (But again, only the other men would do so. The narrators themselves would be potent and loving enough to convince a woman to have sex with them in other ways. Like Paul said in the first quote of this part: even if it takes half a year to pull a woman, he always succeeds (183).)

Money in relation to male and female identity in western culture
However, Paul’s statement of the force of the two eggs can also be seen in a different context that becomes even more explicit in connection with the next quote.
Paul: [money] is the roundabout for wishes and who has no wishes is dead, and wishes exist to be satisfied and to create new ones, and there is no saturation, I can’t say I screw the entire weekend and and then I take a break for half a year, that doesn’t work, would be nice, though, my mother always said, ’if you can’t handle money you have to castrate yourself, she knows about it, she got that, logically, indirectly

With this quote we enter a new field of meaning related to money and masculinity. In the Middle Ages money was not an important factor. For this reason, most historical works jump into the 15th and 16th century. Here the image of the intellectual fertility remains. Groundbreaking was that in the 16th century it became legal to earn interest on money in a new dimension that was forbidden before. Thus, suddenly money could bring forth money to a much greater extend then ever; money could multiply itself, was in itself fertile. At the same time – at around 1600 -pictures with Zeus raping Danae as a gold rain pouring into her lap became popular, which symbolize an equation of gold with sperm (Mathes 2003). Similarly, moneychangers on pictures are either male or old woman who cannot conceive anymore, as if somehow young women could steal this creative power for themselves and as if this would be a danger (ibid.). Hoerisch (1996) affirms this with an analogous argument in literature. He states that in the 18th century the equation of sperm and money/gold in literary works such as Goethe’s Faust was very popular. These representations suggest that men should have both access to the female lap (which consumes) and gold (which creates), whereas women can love gold but should love “cocks” more than money (Goethe, passages written for the Walpurginsnacht-scene in Faust, op. cit. in Hoerisch 1996). Furthermore, the male body was identified with the cultural, the intellectual. Men incarnated it, so to speak. Hence, we have two directions. On the one hand, men need both money and sex, and if they have too much sex which consumes everything they need to castrate themselves, for not being consumed so much. On the other, we have women who should love the male sex more than money. Prostitutes queer this sense of money, since it is obvious that they have sex for money and not for their own sexual pleasure (the love of the ‘cock’). However, woman who really just do it for money are somehow cursed:

Hans: and but the mechanism with this women is eh, they do it for money, very simple, isn’t it? And if they only do it for money, they are dead approximately after 2 to 3 years, you look into their eyes and you know exactly, there is no life anymore, they are simply dead, well and therefore, either they stop early enough, but they usually don’t do that, they want to earn a lot of money, or they will, I say (let’s put it that way) psychologically (mentally, emotionally, ‘seelisch’ is the adjective of Seele=soul) die because of it.  

Here we come back to the first quote, in which Manfred stated that the woman would sell her soul by having sex for money. Thus, by obtaining money, a mental-material means of

7 Bettina Mathes made me aware that what Marx wrote about the creative force of money is exactly what Aristoteles wrote about sperm (‘the truly creative power’)
8 It needs further investigation, if, for instance, this belief combined with our current conception of sexuality as our true identity unconsciously causes part of the burden that women working in prostitution carry.
exchange, a woman looses her mental capacities her soul consists of. Furthermore, by
selling her body she not only gives away her body but also her psychic life. With these
comments both touch on stereotypical ideas of womanhood (and simultaneously
manhood, since for himself anonymous sex is no problem). These assumptions are also
found in theoretical works on money such as Simmel’s Philosophy of Money. He
expresses this common theme as follows:

“Furthermore it follows that the uniformity of the female sex, in
whom the general qualities are less clearly distinguished from
individual traits, is also reflected in a greater uniformity in the nature
of each individual woman. Experience seems to confirm that the
various forces, qualities and impulses of the woman are more
directly and closely connected with each other that are those of men,
whose qualities are more independent, so that the development and
fate of each are relatively independent. Women, however, - at least
according to general opinion – live under the sign of all or nothing;
their inclinations and actions are more closely associated and it is
easier, commencing from a single point, to arouse the whole of their
being, with all its emotions, volitions and thoughts. If this is indeed
the case, then there is a certain justification in the supposition that a
woman gives herself up more completely and unreservedly by
surrendering one part of her self than does the more differentiated
man under the same circumstances” (ibid, p378)

Thus, a woman working in prostitution is constantly selling her innermost nature and her
complete being. Both quotes, hence, witness the supposed split between male and female,
between nature and culture, body and mind etc. In other parts Simmel describes the
female as being “more deeply rooted in the species type”, “in the “dark primitive forces
of nature” (ibid).

Most of the men participating in my study articulated a very distinct sense of what
is male and what is female. And expressed in some form that “women and men are as
different as sun and moon, as fire and water” (Frau und Mann sind so verschieden wie
Sonne und Mond, wie Feuer und Wasser). Additionally many of them constantly
distanced themselves from ideas associated with the category ‘woman’. They did not
mention this rather general cultural split between ideas associated to either males or
females. However, one can assume that their narratives are based on them.

Searching for the ‘real’, the ‘natural’ experience

A topic that appeared quite often is one related to the ambivalence of the first part; it is
the search for the ‘natural’:

[258] Wolf: [...] well, when I find one who, so to speak, well, my desire, well
much bodily contact and when she, let’s say, presents herself naked, not just
like this [makes a pose of spreading legs] but open, trustful (friendly),
because if one shows her cunt, it means that she trusts that nobody would
clobber her into, otherwise she would prefer to sit like this, isn’t it [closes his
legs] no, like this they are still relatively open, yes, but there is a difference,
when I sit like this (with his hips straight up), than it is a sign that she
basically is afraid, if she can talk to me yeeaahh, calm (relaxed), naturally, like she was made, without any clothes, which bring her sexual characteristics either in the fore- or background, simply, as they are, then she is for me, I’m really honest in this, I feel a closeness, a closeness of skin to skin, even though I don’t touch her, but I see her, I can soak her up

Wolf is not the only who expresses this desire for the ‘real’ experience. As I have shown in the part on the ambivalence that is created by the meditative character of money, also Paul likes to see the woman orgasm and Sven wants to receive ‘female energy’, which is not possible, if she behaves too business like. Though all of them can be distinguished in other terms, they all talk about mutuality and even more; they all talk about the experience of the natural. Now, I am wondering, whether it is accidental that femaleness is associated with naturalness and they are searching for exactly the same. Is it, then, an attempt of reunion of the male and female of the mind and the body, an overcoming of the split? Or do they want to get in touch with the ‘dark primitive forces of nature’ to which women supposedly are closer? Or do they dedicate their materialised intellectuality (money), their second nature in order to get in touch with their first nature again? Is this a reason for their irritation (in case of an open business) that they give a sacrifice but still do not obtain the real thing? Or is it similar but opposite to the Mithras cult where Mithras symbolizes the defeat of the sexual fertility on the benefit of the intellectual fertility. Could it be that men celebrate a temporally descent of the intellectual (they give it away with their money) that then afterwards can arise from the dead?

One could interpret this search for ‘nature’ also as men being allowed of having both money and sex, whereas women should love only the penis (phallus?) or at least love it more than money. One could also interpret it in economic terms as the request of getting ‘value for money’, independent from, whether the woman is exhausted, really does not like this man but is forced to have sex with him for the sake of money. ‘Value for money’ means not just sexual service, they also want to have something additional that makes it a ‘truly’ emotional but temporary encounter, or as Rolf said:

[108] Rolf: yes, with her, that was simply ... completely different, like that, principally I want to say, it was according to my imagination of prostitution and not like the first experience, that you (description of very quickly and mechanically done sex), basically, if I’m allowed to say so, well, eh, there was really well during … maybe one can’t say but somehow there was more understanding, yes, and she took more notice of the man, yes?

Conclusions/Notes

This chapter has shown that a Marxian approach to prostitution is insufficient. For Marx economy (the mode of production) was first and culture was based on it. However, the cultural historical work on money suggests that money is itself a cultural product. (Thus, theorists like Kurnitzky and Mathes proof historical materialism to be wrong.) As a result, it is crucial to consider that the relationship men and women have to money does not only differ in quantitative but also in qualitative terms. ‘Men’ have been associated with culture, the symbolic order, whereas ‘women’ have been linked to nature and the
body. However, ‘men’s’ association with money is at least twofold. Firstly, they are threatened to be castrated for participating in it and, secondly, their potency became again equated with it. Thus, it is necessary to reconsider the function money takes in the context of prostitution.

Comments of others

What men search is a simulacrum of relationships, ‘surrogate relationship’ often mentioned in prostitution literature becomes a new filling, prostitution about an idealisation on different levels (sex, oneself, the prostitute), still money keeps control: the command over the service and it’s temporary character; nevertheless they want to cancel out them being a client; in psychotherapy money helps to negotiate relationships but also self-worth; the economic model: altruism at home, selfishness in the market = barriere for emotions

Literature on commodification and consumer society might need to be included
How do they construct their argument? Maybe more careful analysis? 2-3 passages compared with each other?

7832 words without conclusions
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