Cider-Wenches and *High Prized Pin-Boxes*: Bawdy Terminology in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England

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1. Introduction[1]

For more than a thousand years, the alternative life of female bawds has flourished in London. There have been brothels with fine cuisine, accommodation houses with a selection of pretty street girls, and Covent Garden bath houses which were praised by Casanova himself (Linnane 2003: 104). The names given to these disreputable establishments were as numerous as those that referred to the women who offered their services in them. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, life in the luxury brothels had a kind of glamour for the girls known as *high prized pin-boxes*. However, for girls at the lower end of the market, *cider-wenches*, life in the streets could be truly tragic.

It is the purpose of this paper to study the terms used for common prostitutes in Early and Late Modern English. Firstly, we will define the semantic field of prostitution by focusing on the prototypicality and semantic narrowing of terms reserved for prostitutes in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is an overlap between words for prostitute and derogatory terms for women in general, as a considerable share of the latter rest on the implication of sexual misconduct. We will establish which elements cognitively separate *everywoman* from *prostitute* in the minds and language of contemporaries and conversely why, at the level of language, prostitution is an offence so easily laid at any woman's door (on semantic categorization, see Geeraerts 1997 and Taylor 2003). Secondly, our aim is to study bawdy imagery from a sociopragmatic perspective by looking at how the social status, as well as social character, of these bawdy women is expressed in public writings of the time. Moreover, we will focus on how the terms and images invented in these writings are strategically used to keep prostitutes as a group outside respectable society (for more on social deixis and out-group divergence, see, e.g., Nevala 2004).

The material for this study comes from 13 pamphlets and two additional texts arguing for and against prostitution between 1630 and 1760. In these pamphlets, prostitution is described with such terms as "soul-destroying", "evil", and "perjurious". It is our aim to discuss how the concepts of disrepute and degradation are reflected in the terms used of the prostitutes themselves in the material, and whether there are any diachronic changes in this kind of bawdy terminology.

We will begin by outlining the life of a prostitute during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a sociohistorical perspective in Section 2, and then introduce the public writings that constitute our material in Section 3. We shall discuss the terminology used to refer to prostitutes in Section 4, while Section 5 will introduce some imagery related to prostitution in general and comparing prostitutes to so-called respectable people in particular. Finally, we will discuss some significant aspects of our findings in Section 6.

[1] The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support received during the writing of this article from the Academy of Finland (project number 114045; Nevala) and the Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English (Hintikka).

© 2009 Minna Nevala and Marianna Hintikka. Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 2), ed. R. W. McConchie, Alpo Honkapohja, and Jukka Tyrkkö, 134-152. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

2. Prostitution in Early and Late Modern England

The history of prostitutes in London is a long one: the first reference to a prostitute in this city is dated as early as 1058. When, in 1161, the Bishop of Winchester's right to exploit the 18 brothels in Southwark for the next 400 years was guaranteed by King Henry II, it was said that the area had been full of brothels "since time out of mind" (Linnane 2003: 1). Henry's act decreed that prostitutes were only allowed to sit in their doorways, and were not permitted to get men's attention by such means as calling or gesturing. So, as in present-day London, women were allowed to sell sex but not to solicit custom in any way.

In late medieval London, the level of vice "was higher than at any period in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Ackroyd 2000: 368). Even the medieval Church was very heavily involved in prostitution, giving properties such as those in the Bankside, Chancery Lane, and Fetter Lane to prostitutes. This custom continued throughout the sixteenth century, when even Cardinal Wolsey, although publicly persecuting prostitutes, kept several at Hampton Court for the use of his guests. This is why Anne Boleyn called Wolsey "that old Church pander" (Linnane 2003: 7). Some churchmen, at least, saw prostitution as a necessary evil as well as a source of revenue.

In Early Modern England, prostitution became associated with venereal diseases. Despite a wave of syphilis which began to spread during the late fifteenth century, the brothels in London multiplied. In 1546, Henry VIII suppressed the bawdy-houses in Southwark in order to close down the business of any 'suspected persons' – only a year before he himself died, quite possibly, of syphilis. Four years later, the brothels were re-opened, and, during the reign of James I in particular, the sex industry flourished. The king was known to be fond of bawdy jokes and extravagant behaviour, which was of course echoed in seventeenth-century society at large. Later, the Civil War brought prostitutes great hardships. In 1643, King Charles I issued a proclamation against "the general licentiousness, profanity, drunkenness, and whoremongering of the army". The established Commonwealth was a disaster for entertainers and pleasure seekers of all kinds. The alehouses and taverns frequented by prostitutes came under strict control.

In 1660, the Restoration brought public debauchery back: it has been said that the court was quickly turned into "one vast brothel" (Linnane 2003: 39). This was the time of King Charles II's mistresses, Nell Gwyn, Frances Stuart, and Barbara Villiers, the last of whom the King later called "a whore, and a jade".[2] Prostitutes swarmed into London to supply the needs of thousands of bachelor apprentices, who nevertheless participated in the abuse of these women. Every Shrove Tuesday they would riot and pull down bawdy-houses, apparently for the purposes of "removing temptation" during Lent (Stone 1985: 391). The ranks of the prostitutes were swelled by girls from the lowest class of the poor, since prostitution was seen as an alternative to working as a maid or a seamstress. In general, people strongly believed in the theory known as 'Place's Law', according to which chastity and poverty were seen as incompatible (Stone 1985: 392).

The eighteenth century continued to display an abundance of all the aristocratic vices: gluttony, whoring, and gambling. In the 1720s, Moll King's coffee-house in Covent Garden became the most important meeting place for homosexuals and sex traders, and Drury Lane's 107 brothels made the area a centre of vice. Prostitutes also continued to meet their customers in gin shops and public houses, often taking these men to their quarters and robbing them blind. As Warner reports, "from the *Weekly Register* there is the story of 'a poor Countryman, who came but the Day before out of Gloucestershire,' only to be 'robb'd of all the Money in his Pocket, by two Whores, who pick'd him up date the same Night in the Street, and carried Him' to 'a disorderly Brandy-shop'" (2002: 58). Another prostitute, displaying the depravity of her trade, insisted she would get "a Present of something else" from her client, who had already paid "two-pence half penny" for her services. 'Something else' happened in this case to include the poor man's shoe buckles.

Around 1700, several Societies for the Reformation of Manners were established by Puritans who disapproved of practices such as lewdness, drinking, and swearing (Linnane 2003: 173). They were determined to drive prostitutes out of public places and playhouses. After the beginning of the eighteenth century, these societies went into decline. They were not able to make a great impact on the

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[2] This information comes from the diary of Samuel Pepys, quoted in the entry on Barbara (Villiers) Palmer in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (see Wynne 2004).

increasing number of prostitutes, but the movement managed to raise the issue of the morality of the working classes, which later became a fashionable topic among the Victorians. The nineteenth century saw a rise in the number of societies devoted to the abolition of child prostitution in particular, such as the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution, founded in 1838 (Linnane 2003: 243). As Briggs comments, in Victorian times prostitution was considered more than anything to be "a great social evil" (1999: 271). Whereas fallen women had traditionally been regarded as an active target of malice, in the nineteenth century prostitutes were seen as helpless victims of the trade.

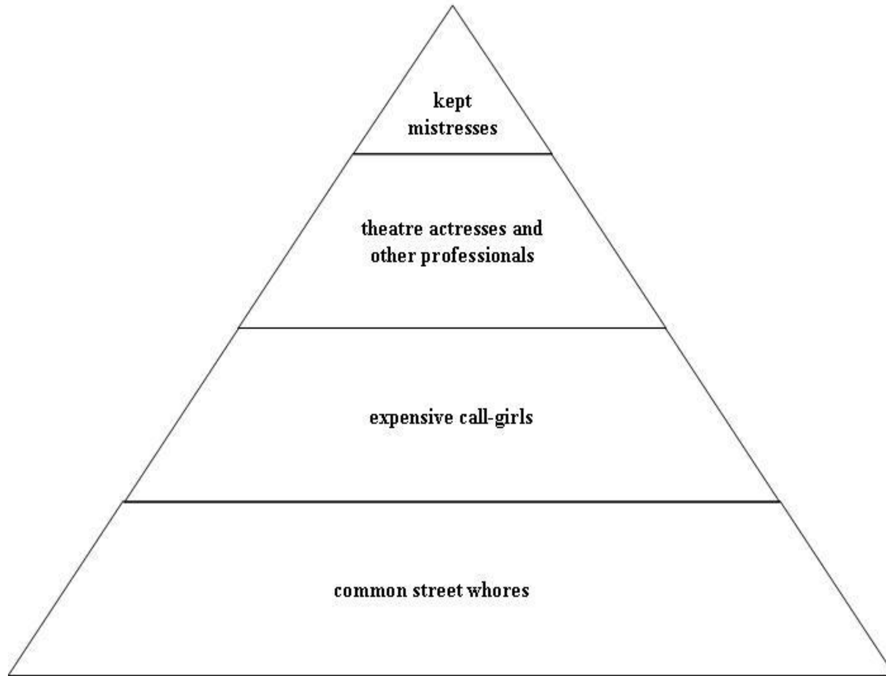

Figure 1. The hierachy of prostitutes in London in the eighteenth century (based on Stone 1985: 380–381, 392–393).

Like any other profession, prostitution was clearly hierarchical. This hierarchy can be seen in Figure 1, which presents an overall division of prostitutes into four main groups. The figure is based on Stone, who writes that during the eighteenth century the top of the 'ladder' was occupied by respectable, sometimes even married, women with whom wealthy individuals could have expensive relationships. Below mistresses were theatre actresses, who were known to lead a more sexually promiscuous life than the rest of the population, and other professionals, like milliners and shirt and ruffle makers, who were in need of extra income (1985: 380–381, 392–393).[3]

Those women who supported themselves solely through prostitution always belonged to the lower social classes. At the top of the group of ordinary prostitutes were the more expensive call-girls who met gentlemanly clients at their own quarters. Below them were women who worked as prostitutes in common, organised brothels. Finally, the bottom of the hierarchy consisted of common street whores who served clients on the streets and in the backyards, and gin-houses, as well as poor maids who were continuously exploited by their multiple masters. Prostitution was understandably more widespread

[3] Linnane (2003: 57) notes that early and late modern plays have proved to be one of the best sources for the daily life of prostitutes. Since these women commonly used theatres as places to pick up clients, many playwrights added to the fun by creating prostitute roles for young actresses, many of whom were in reality as easily available as the women they played.

among the poorest, while kept mistresses at the top of the hierarchy presumably constituted a small proportion of all the women in the trade.[4]

The hierarchical structure and different levels of prostitution are also evident in the terminology used to refer to prostitutes in the Early and Late Modern English periods. Several names found in early literature, such as *punk*, *wagtail*, *jilt*, *doxy*, *brown bess*, *blowsabella*, and *punchable nun* appear in Linnane (2003: 57). We shall discuss the terms and corresponding attributes found in our material in Sections 4 and 5.

3. Material and method

In order to examine the terminology which was commonly used of prostitutes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have chosen a sample of 13 pamphlets written either against or in favour of prostitution and published in London between 1630 and 1760. Our material also includes two minor publications (*The High prized Pin-Box*, 1681–1684, and *A Catalogue of Jilts, etc.*, 1691), which are included here because they add to the variety of terms found in the pamphlets proper. Since no representative corpus of texts on prostitution exists, and since texts such as the court proceedings of the Old Bailey do not include enough records on cases handling prostitution to provide sufficiently comprehensive data, the material used in this study has been gathered from *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) and the *Eighteenth Century Collection Online* (ECCO) by searching for entries including various terms for prostitutes, prostitution, and brothels. A second criterion for the selection of our material was that the texts should have originally been intended for middle class, 'respectable' people (see Section 5.2); a third was that they should be diachronically representative. Considering the narrow scope and expected length of the study, it would have been too laborious to include all the texts on prostitution available in EEBO and ECCO; thus, we decided to choose 13 of the most substantial pamphlets found in the electronic databases.[5]

Table 1 presents details about the material, including the approximate length of each text; the total length is over 142,000 words. All the seventeenth-century data is taken from the EEBO collection, and the eighteenth-century material from ECCO (for details on availability, see Primary Sources). Unfortunately, owing to the format of the material in the databases, we are unable to give accurate word counts; instead, we have made rough calculations using the 'words per page' method. The original format also prevented us from performing any statistical analysis on the material, since using estimated figures would skew the statistics.

The data has been manually searched for all the terms and expressions referring to prostitutes, including any metaphors and imagery related to the concept of prostitution. Since the terms used of prostitutes are partly interrelated with those used of pimps and the keepers of brothels, we have checked the meaning of each term in the *Lexicons of Early Modern English* (LEME) and additional eighteenth-century dictionaries. In order to take into account changes in the meanings of the terms over time, we have also consulted the contemporary *Oxford English Dictionary Online* for etymologies. A more detailed account of the different categories the terms fall into will be presented in the next section.

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[4] Stone refers here to James Boswell (1740-1795), whose writings, Stone claims, provide the "most revealing information of all about sexual mores in the eighteenth century" (1985: 350).

[5] EEBO alone gives, for example, over 14,000 hits for the term *whore*.

Table 1. The material.

Source	Word count
A Common Whore. With all these graces grac'd, shee's very honest, beautiful and chaste. 1635.	ca. 8,000 words
A Bawd. A vertuous Bawd, a modest Bawd: As Shee Deserves, reproove, or else applaud. 1635.	ca. 10,300 words
Nocturnall Occurrences Or, Deeds Of Darknesse: Committed, By the Cavaleers in their Rendevous, etc. 1642.	ca. 1,300 words
The Crafty Whore: Or, The mistery and iniquity of Bawdy Houses Laid open, etc. 1658	ca. 27,700 words
The Wandring-Whores Complaint for want of Trading, etc. 1663.	ca. 1,600 words
The Miss Display'd, With all Her Wheedling Arts and Circumventions. 1675.	ca. 28,000 words
The Swearers. Or, Innocence Opprest and Sacrific'd, In Consequence of Indulgence To perjurious Prostitutes. 1681.	ca. 1,250 words
The High prized Pin-Box. 1681–84.	ca. 900 words
A Catalogue of Jilts, Cracks, Prostitutes, Night-walkers, Whores, She-friends, Kind Women, and others of the Linnen-lifting Tribe, etc. 1691.	ca. 1,000 words
The Devil and the Strumpet: Or, the Old Bawd Tormented. 1700.	ca. 1,700 words
An Account of the Endeavours That have been used to Suppress Gaming-Houses, And of the Discouragements that have been met with. 1722.	ca. 9,400 words
A Modest Defence of Publick Stews: Or, An Essay upon Whoring, As it is now practis'd in these Kingdoms. 1725.	ca. 21,000 words
A Plan for A Preservatory and Reformatory, For the Benefit of Deserted Girls, and Penitent Prostitutes. London: R. Francklin. 1758.	ca. 4,300 words
A Proposal to render effectual a plan, to remove the Nuisance of Common Prostitutes from the Streets of this Metropolis, etc. London: C. Henderson. 1758.	ca. 19,000 words
The Insinuating Bawd, and the Repenting Harlot. etc. 1758.	ca. 6,800 words
Total	**ca. 142,250 words**

4. Terms for prostitutes

In his *Modest Defence of Public Stews* (1725), Colonel Mordaunt quotes Plato thus:

> Plato, on the same subject, has these words; *The Gods*, says he, *have given us one disobedient and unruly Member, which, like a greedy and ravenous Animal that wants Food, grows wild and furious, till having imbib'd the Fruit of the common Thirst, he has plentifully besprinkled and bedewed the Bottom of the Womb.* (pp. iv–v)

The passage is emblematic of its age in its outlook on the male sexual drive: the inevitability and intensity of this drive are likened to a wild and potentially destructive force of nature which must be allowed to take its necessary course lest it become dangerous, "like a … ravenous Animal". The object of this lust, and the play-pen where this "unruly Member" is to be set free to quench its thirst, is the female body. This is an attitude shared by a large number of early and late modern writers, such as Harry Mordaunt and Bernard Mandeville, whose pens often dwelled on the subject of prostitution. Whether they condemned or sanctioned prostitution, men seemed mostly to agree that their sexual

passion was beyond their control. The existence of prostitutes was necessary to serve this unruly lust and to protect virtuous women.

Attitudes towards prostitutes varied from writer to writer, but two main streams emerge clearly, namely pity and repulsion – and, very often, a combination of the two. Here, the somewhat paradoxical image of women as both naturally lascivious creatures, helpless in the face of their own, overwhelming lusts, and also as all-powerful conductresses of men's passions, almost tyrannical allurers of innocent creatures, finds frequent expression. Evaluations of prostitutes, although varied, did tend to concentrate on the baser end of the spectrum of human emotions, ranging mostly from hatred and fear to the slightly more refined emotional tones of pity and concern. Those who took an understanding, even empathic, view saw prostitutes as public drains for immorality, equating them to a necessary sewerage-system for public morality, but the view of the prostitute as a 'base conductress' whose 'filthy carcass' could make the Devil himself faint with its vile stench (the 'perfumes of the pox') was never too far below the surface. Those with the most edifying goals tended to see these women as 'poor girls', 'unhappy creatures', and so forth, deserving of pity and Christian charity, if not quite the same respect as more 'upright' citizens.

From a modern perspective, one of the striking features of early modern pamphlets concerning prostitution is the variety of imaginative epithets attached to these women. In an era untroubled by any notion of what today is known as 'political correctness', there was no need for lexical or conceptual restraint. Regardless of the underlying purpose and tone of the pamphlet, words such as *whore*, *harlot*, and *strumpet* were used as standard names for prostitutes in any connection, whether negative, neutral, or sympathetic. In addition to such generic terms, the tone of the passage was usually accentuated through the addition of an adjective, as in *wicked strumpet* vs. *repenting harlot*. Interestingly, terms like *courtesan* and *concubine* are also used as synonymous with *prostitute* in many instances.

A small number of terms, such as *bawd*, tended to be used more specifically, and their specificity was also related to the degree of reproach implied, so that the more specific the term, the more severe it tended to be in tone. A bawd seems to have been a madam who 'employed' several younger, more inexperienced girls, often after having first seduced their minds and diverted them, through cunning, from the path of chastity – hence the epithet "kidnapper of virginity" (*The insinuating bawd*, p. vi). This was a serious offence, and the pamphlets generally treat bawds with universal contempt and reproach. It is common to drive the moral home through vivid and extremely grotesque imagery. A woman's body was, at best, a leaky vessel characterised by overflowing fluids and other, similarly uncomfortable 'animal' functions, a place where the boundaries of the (humoral) body were crossed and re-crossed in ways that were experienced as both unnerving and foul. In a prostitute, these qualities were presented with such an emphasis on filth, stench, and rottenness that it effectively undermined the subject's humanity and presented a revolting, blistering entity of reeking malignant flesh which could erupt in the faces of those who beheld it at any minute.

In addition to terms for prostitutes themselves, we have also taken note of terms for 'prostitution' and 'brothel' found in the pamphlets, along with related imagery. The main bulk of our data, however, consists of the terms denoting 'prostitute', as these are statistically by far the most significant. The main focus in this part of the present study is the nouns denoting prostitutes or, more significantly, the nouns plus their defining adjectives. Since the nouns used are largely interchangeable and, taken alone, do not necessarily reveal the writer's attitude, the adjective often plays a significant role in determining the tone. Here, we may look for what might be thought of as the prototypical qualities attached to prostitutes.

Tables 2 and 3 show the absolute number of occurrences of the most common nouns in the seventeenth and eighteenth century material.

Table 2. Number of occurrences of the most frequently used nouns (seventeenth century).

Noun	***Source***									
	A common whore	*A Bawd*	*Nocturnall Occurrences*	*The Crafty Whore*	*The Wandring-Whores Complaint*	*The Miss Display'd*	*The Swearers*	*The High prized Pin-Box*	*A Catalogue of Jilts, Cracks, etc.*	Total
whore	111	11	34	9	5	10		1	1	182
bawd	10	90		11	5	11			1	128
pin-box								18		18
queen	6			2		2				10
miss						10				10
wench	4	3				1				8
mistress			2	3		1			1	7
courtesan				4		3				7
prostitute						4	2		1	7
woman		1		2		2			1	6
creature		1				4				5
crack						1			3	4
trull	3	1								4
concubine	1	1								2
other	14	12		21	4	32		2	4	89

In her study of social roles in nineteenth-century British children's literature, Sveen maintains that "if the same qualities are consistently attributed to a category of characters […] eventually readers will perceive these features as typical for the category and thus a part of the represented social role" (forthcoming). Similarly, within the prototype theory of semantic classification, one of the methods for determining prototypical meaning is the frequency with which a given term is associated (or collocates) with certain other lexemes or attributes (Geeraerts 1997). By this token, the most frequent collocations represent the most prototypical meanings.

The figures in Tables 2 and 3 suggest a decline in the number of occurrences of the most common nouns for prostitute from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, in spite of the fact that the texts from both periods represent the same genre and were written on very similar topics. Not only was the number of tokens higher in the earlier period, but also the number of types, i.e., the diversity of expressions became more limited towards the eighteenth century.

Table 3. Number of occurrences of the most frequently used nouns (eighteenth century).

Noun	***Source***						
	A Modest Defence	*The Insinuating Bawd*	*Account of the Endeavours*	*A Proposal to render effectuall*	*A Plan for a Preservatory*	*The Devil and the Strumpet*	Total
prostitute	2	3		48	17	1	71
bawd	1	5		9	2	7	24
wretch		1		10	1	2	14
courtesan	13						13
whore	3			4	1	2	10
harlot	2	6		1			9
woman		2	1	1		3	7
creature		1		4	1		6
mistress	6						6
penitent			1		4		5
Dame		4					4
procuress		1		1			2
beldam		2					2
strumpet						2	2
other	2	4	3	7	6	5	27

The texts and their language seem to reflect a shift in attitudes towards prostitution and prostitutes themselves. The seventeenth-century pamphlets tend to be written in a admonitory and lamenting tone, as edifying and sobering accounts of the dangers that await those who get involved with these 'Hackneys which men ride to hell'. The blame is laid very much at the doors of individual prostitutes, and fewer questions are asked about the social structures that render prostitution the only option available for certain members of society. The focus is on the filthy whore on the street corner, the sight and presence of whom compromises the health and youthful strength of men and the virtue and innocence of women.

The eighteenth-century texts, on the other hand, are more concerned with prostitution as a social evil, and tend more often to view prostitutes as victims of their fate. Some pamphlets are dedicated entirely to reform plans, the principal aims of which are either to rid society of the polluting consequences of prostitution or to reform prostitutes themselves, or, indeed, both. Suggestions for methods of achieving this range from wholesale abolition of the trade to institutionalising it. For example, a relatively lengthy pamphlet entitled *A Modest Defence of Public Stews* (1725) has a benevolent matter-of-factness about a group of people who are, throughout the text, likened to a sewage system, as in the example of an "Over-nice Gentleman, who could never Fancy his Garden look's Sweet, till he had demolish' a Bog-house that offended his Eye". His folly is likened to that of "pulling down Bawdy-houses to prevent Uncleanness": "it was not long before every Nose in the family was convinced of His Mistake" (p. xi).

4.1. Nominal terms

In the case of the lexical field of prostitution it is easy (and, for the most part, correct) to assume that most terms convey principally negative connotations. There are, however, differences in degree which can be distinguished either by the defining adjectives or from the contexts of the terms. The term *prostitute*, which in PDE is perhaps the most commonly used technical (and therefore perhaps most neutral) term, and simply denotes a practitioner of prostitution, seems to have been fairly neutral in the early and late modern period, too. However, what was seen as acceptable language and vocabulary during the early English periods was very different from today. Vernacular medical books included terms like *arse* and *bollocks* as acceptable anatomical terms, and *pissabed* (dandelion) and *wind-fucker* (kestrel) were not words whose use was restricted to the gutter (Hughes 1991: 128).

The *Lexicons of Early Modern English* collection (LEME) yields a total of 264 entries for the term *whore*, while *prostitute* has only 21. The range of tones for *whore* is varied and mostly negative, while *prostitute* is defined more matter-of-factly. In the OED, *whore* is defined as a term of abuse while *prostitute* is not. Significantly, in the seventeenth century material, the most common noun used is *whore*, while in the later material it is *prostitute*. This supports the argument that there was a change in attitudes toward prostitutes between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. It is, of course, possible that the reduction in frequency of *whore* is the result of the increasing prescriptiveness of dictionaries and does not, therefore, purely reflect developments in attitude. However, the decline is so marked that it should not, in our opinion, be altogether discarded as an indicator of shifts in public propriety.

The other terms listed among the most frequent in both periods are less predictable than these two. The second most frequent term in both sets of texts is *bawd*, a term little used in PDE. This word seems to be semantically slightly more specialised than most of the general terms found. LEME gives it such definitions as “carrier of love-messages”; “procurer of whores”; “pimp”; and “pander”.[6] As stated earlier in this article, the bawd seems to have been seen as the worst kind of whore, namely, someone who haunts innocent girls and turns them into whores. It should be noted, however, that the term *bawd* is also occasionally found with positive and neutral connotations. In Cotgrave’s *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611), for example, *bawd* is equated with *carrier of loue-messages*.

Terms specifically reserved for prostitutes (and not women in general) are *pin-box*, *mistress*, *courtesan*, *crack*, *trull*, and *concubine* (seventeenth century) and *courtesan*, *harlot*, *mistress*, *procuress*, *beldam*, and *strumpet* (eighteenth century), although these could be used of women generally as terms of coarse abuse. Other nouns include semantically inherently neutral terms such as *woman*, *creature*, *queen*, *dame*, *miss*, and *wench*. There are also a few terms which can be seen as inherently sympathetic or pitying, such as *penitent* or *wretch*.

Perhaps the most interesting group of terms, however, is the ‘other’ category, which mostly consists of single occurrences of more or less figurative expressions (*a linen draper*) and/or complex expressions (*the principal secretaries to the great goddess Venus*). It is perhaps not surprising that most of these terms or expressions are seldom neutral in tone, being instead either positive or negative. The fact that these more colourful expressions seem to have been widely sanctioned in seventeenth-century usage, but much less so during the following century, further testifies to the hypothesised ongoing change in the moral climate regarding prostitution and the role of prostitutes.

4.2. Adjectives

The connotation of the adjective normally depends somewhat on its position in the sentence. According to Bolinger, one difference between *be* predication and attribution, which is relatively subtle in case of most adjectives but becomes clear when we look at perfect participles, is that when used attributively (*The stolen jewels*) the word is what Bolinger calls “characteristic”, and when used in *be* predication (*The jewels are stolen*) it is referring to action (1967: 8). Bolinger mentions two types of word that are highly restricted in the attributive set: perfect participles and temporary adjectives:

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[6] OED *bawd, n[1]*: “One employed in pandering to sexual debauchery; a procurer or procuress; orig. in a more general sense, and in the majority of passages masculine, a ‘go-between,’ a pander; since c 1700 only feminine, and applied to a procuress, or a woman keeping a place of prostitution”.

> If an adjective names a quality that is too fleeting to characterize anything, it is restricted (with that meaning) to predicative, or post-adjunct position. (1967: 9)

According to Taylor an attributive adjective and a noun form a semantically more complex noun, whereas predicative adjectives predicate a property of an entity. In his account, the predicative adjective "pertains to 'extrinsic' properties of an entity (properties such as 'age', 'colour', 'size', etc.), whereas attributive adjectives typically invoke 'intrinsic', or functional properties" (1992: 31). This would seem to support Bolinger's claim that it is the attributive use, and not the predicative, that is the primitive one, and that the predicative is derived from the attributive (Bolinger 1967: 16–17). In practically all cases in the present material, the adjectives used for prostitutes are attributive, and therefore serve as a codification of what were seen as the prostitutes' 'intrinsic' properties. The classification into positive, negative, or neutral expressions has been made mainly on the basis of the adjective(s) immediately preceding the noun. The lexicons often give such wildly different definitions of a word that it is not always possible to rely on them entirely in determining the word's definitive contemporary meaning.

As stated above, the adjective plays a significant role in determining the evaluative status of the noun, particularly, of course, in cases where the noun itself is (fairly) neutral in tone. While social roles are labelled using nouns, the attributes associated with them are expressed through adjectives (Sveen forthcoming). Sveen has used a classification scheme based on Hene (1984) to categorise adjectival descriptions of male and female characters in her material into seven different semantic domains. These domains are 'age', 'appearance', 'mental property', 'physical state', 'attitude', 'situation', and 'sociability'. The classification is a very useful one and, given slightly different material, we would have applied it as is. However, the present material and research questions are such that the attributes we are examining are better suited to a rather simple classification on a positive-negative-axis rather than a detailed categorisation into semantic domains.

For the purpose of analysis we have categorised the expressions (i.e., the adjective + noun-combinations) as positive, negative, or neutral. The categorisation depends primarily on the adjective(s) (when they are present) and the immediate context of the term or expression, and was far from simple to carry out. One of the principal difficulties was the fact that the topic area is, by default, one where genuinely positive or even neutral evaluations are scarce. This, along with the associated breakdown of common-sense rules regarding positive and negative adjectives, makes a particularly close reading of the context essential. Thus, a characterisation like *the most renowned Bawd in Europe* is likely not to be a positive evaluation, even though the epithet *most renowned* would, ordinarily, be considered a positive one. Similarly, a description such as *a strange whore (common and yet honest)*, must be read as an either positive or neutral characterisation of the person (though not of the trade), in spite of the adjective *strange*, which prototypically has a negative connotation.

In the many cases where the entire text consists of mock praise, the additional difficulty arises of deciding whether the underlying irony is achieved by the use of unusual or even semantically conflicting collocations (as in the case of bathos) or through strict adherence to stylistic rules, in which case the irony arises from the contrast between the language and its subject matter. In the latter case, the lexical choices (the adjective + noun combinations) must be treated as normal collocations and assumed not to violate the general stylistic or semantic rules of default contemporary discourse.

The category of neutral expressions has the greatest number of tokens for both periods. This is due to the fact that most instances where there were no defining adjectives were categorised as neutral, with the exception, obviously, of cases where negative evaluation was made clear either by the context or by the semantic content of the noun itself (e.g., *caterpillar*, *debauchee*). The neutral category was also the most diverse. Tables 4 and 5 show the various adjectives used in connection with the nouns and their distribution along the positive-negative axis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Table 4. Adjectives collocating with the most common nouns in the seventeenth-century texts.

Noun	***Adjectives***		
	Sympathetic	**Negative**	**Neutral**
whore	poor	cheap	a/any/this/his
	merry	prating	all/most
	kind	filthy	common
	true	wicked	private
	honest	a damned crew of	strange
	famous	notorious Irish-English	city-
	royal	late famous or infamous	new
	fine fresh	arrantest	old
	my		great
	subtle young		a regiment of
			a crew of
			a street of
			professed
			wandring
			common wandring
			ordinary
bawd	good	pernicious	a/the
	golden	cunning	spiritual
	poor, harmless, modest,	absolute	main
	honest, and innocent	silly painful, serviceable	greatest
	guiltless	grave	chiefest
	senting	crafty	most famous
	very merry	most deceitful	ancient professed
	industrious	deceiving	modest ancient
	diligent	crafty	heart's
	skilful	most experienced crafty	old
	universal		private
	poor		
	great		
	of the right stamp		
	most triumphant, rich, and		
	eminent		
	famous		
trull		proud Corinthian	
		inhumane	
		contributory	
		venereal	
woman		lewd and lascivious	loose
		debauched	
prostitute		leather-conscienced	
		perjurious	
wench	pretty		trading
other	first-rate (*crack*)	arch deceitful (*queen*)	city-(*courtesan*)
	gallant (*pin-box*)		

Tables 4 and 5 clearly show that the range of adjectival attributes connected with prostitutes declined from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth in all three categories. While the earlier texts display an almost boisterous range of colourful epithets left, right, and centre, the later examples have narrowed the prostitute down to a two-dimensional character with merely monochromatic fictional potential. The positive evaluations have become invariably lamenting and piteous in tone, and the negative ones focus on the prostitutes' deceptive, shameless ways, presumably an occupational hazard, the observation of which must have required little imagination or inspiration.

Table 5. Adjectives collocating with the most common nouns in the eighteenth-century texts.

Noun	*Adjectives*		
	Sympathetic	**Negative**	**Neutral**
prostitute	poor penitent poor and most robust sort of	shameless thieving, distempered filthy and lustful	common night walking
courtesan	poor superannuated		professed public
bawd		insinuating deluding	old
harlot	wretched repenting		common
woman	unhappy	lewd lewd and beastly	
wretch	unhappy poor	hardened	
creature	unhappy poor		
whore		rotten	common
other	poor (*wench*)	wicked (*strumpet*)	

This is not to imply that the situation in the seventeenth century was in any way more favourable than in the eighteenth century. On the contrary, the noticeable decline in nouns and their attributive adjectives would seem to herald a gradual, if slow, recognition of prostitutes as individuals of whom one must speak with a modicum of care – if only for pragmatic reasons. It seems natural, after all, to assume that the most colourful range of insulting names is appended to those we tend to fear or loathe the most, as is shown by the fact that a plethora of xenophobic expressions appear in English during periods of expansionism and foreign wars (Hughes 1991: 126–128). Analogously, prostitutes were, and still often are, seen as an ever present civic enemy, or a disease, inspiring similar fear and loathing.

We should keep in mind, however, that ink continued to flow on the topic of prostitution, and the fact that the terms are found less frequently in the later period certainly does not mean that these women were forgotten. It would be equally naïve, on the other hand, to assume that in the course of the eighteenth century prostitutes rose in social esteem and found themselves becoming members of 'decent society'. In fact, overtly negative attitudes probably did not change much over the century, but it is nevertheless significant that language practices seem to have done so: it is not likely that colourful and insulting terminology vanished, or even decreased; it seems rather to have become marginalised and tidied away from formal or serious contexts.

5. Bawdy imagery

5.1. Filthy carcasses and rotten limbs

In addition to names and attributes, some rather striking metaphors and other imagery relating to prostitution or prostitutes are found in the texts. Surprisingly, these metaphors abound in the eighteenth-century texts in particular. Medical metaphors are common, their aim being to depict prostitution as a disease and, very often, the author or some other 'social reformer' as a doctor who cures society, often

by ‘amputation’ of the rotten limb. Similarly, metaphors which draw on sanitation are very common (cf. prostitution as the “Drains and Sluices to let out lewdness”). The most damning and bitter images are put into the mouth of a repenting whore, a former innocent who was seduced by a vile bawd and has thus lost her place in decent society. Her extreme anguish, sense of doom, and futile fury towards her procuress (all of which serve as potent warnings to young girls) find expression in such horrid imagery as *venereal remains of juvenile debauches*, *filthy carcass*, *rotten limbs* or *corps*, *poisonous ulcers*, *lank breasts and nauseous breath*, *vile womb with incessant fury*, *limbs drop by piece meal to the grave*, *till pox and age dry both into a crust*, *savage tyranny of bawds and panders*, and in the phrase *her body…offensive thro' loathsome diseases languishes in extreme distres, and foul coruption maketh every limb its prey* (*The Insinuating Bawd, The Repenting Harlot*, 1758). The fact that the words are ‘spoken’ by a woman, herself a deluded girl and prostitute, is used to justify the use of such apocalyptic imagery. The role of the understanding do-gooder, who will not resort to such abuse, is reserved for the male commentator.

Example (1) is from Mordaunt’s pamphlet, and it is perhaps the most elaborate and prolonged metaphor relating to (and defending) institutionalised prostitution.

(1) This project of pulling down Bawdy-houses to prevent Uncleanness, puts me in mind of a certain Over-nice Gentleman, who cou’d never Fancy his Garden look’d Sweet, till he had demolish’d a Bog-house that offended his Eye in one Corner of it; but it was not long before every Nose in the Family was convinc’d of his Mistake. If Reason fails to Convince, let us profit by Example: Observe the Policy of a Modern Butcher, persecuted with a Swarm of Carnivorous Flies, when all his Engines and Fly-flaps have prov’d ineffectual to defend his Stall against the Greedy Assiduity of those Carnal Insects, he very Judiciously cuts off a Fragment, already blown, which serves to hang up for a Cure; and thus, by Sacrificing a Small Part, already Tainted, and not worth Keeping, he wisely secures the Security of the rest. Or, let us go higher for Instruction, and take Example by the Grazier, who far from denying his Herd the Accustom’d Privilege of Rubbing, when their Sides are Stimulated with sharp Humours, very Industriously fixes a stake in the Center of the Field, not so much, you may imagine, to Regale the Salacious Hides of his Cattle, as to preserve his Young Trees from Suffering by the Violence of their Friction. (*A Modest Defence of Public Stews*, 1725)

Despite the chilling and extremely de-humanising analogies they used, the writer of the above and his like-minded contemporaries did not consider themselves hostile towards prostitutes, let alone misogynist. In contrast to some seventeenth-century texts in which individual prostitutes are referred to in highly offensive terms drawing on death, filth, and rottenness, this text is remarkably restrained in its use of terminology; prostitutes (apart from the seducing bawds) are most often referred to with terms such as ‘poor/deluded girls’, and the author takes great pains to improve their predicament by establishing their position in society. The author makes a serious effort to render the prostitute’s role as society’s moral cesspool more pleasant; however, the role itself is never questioned.

5.2. Good girls go to Heaven, evil girls go to Hell

From a sociopragmatic view, referential expressions are intrinsically deictic indexicals. In Levinson’s words, deixis “introduces subjective, attentional, intentional and, of course, context-dependent properties into natural languages” (2004: 97; see also Sidnell 2007). Social deixis in particular involves the speaker-referent relation, which means that the hearer or addressee can use devices such as direct address or referential terms to calculate what the relation is between him/herself and the speaker (Levinson 1979, 1988, 1992, 2004; Sifianou 1992). Referential terms, like direct address terms, may be used to alter the distance between the speaker and the addressee and/or referent. The speaker may also use reference terms to shift power relations through the use of terms marking in-group or out-group characteristics (e.g., the possessive pronouns *my*, *our* vs. *your*, *their*).

In this sense, referential terms relate to the concepts of in-group convergence and out-group divergence (see, e.g., Giles and Smith 1979; Coupland and Giles eds. 1988). According to Perdue et al. (1990: 476; see also Hogg and Abrams 1988: 74), terms referring to in-group categorisation, such as the

pronoun *we*, may over time accumulate connotations that are primarily positive, whereas out-group-referent words (such as *they*) are more likely to have less favourable, even negative connotations. Pronouns in general introduce evaluative biases to new and unfamiliar addressees and help establish positive or negative predispositions. Such predispositions breed stereotypes: members of the in-group tend to be seen in favourable ways and out-group members in unfavourable ways. Similarly, nominal reference terms may be used for the purposes of inferring positive or negative characteristics, since it is naturally more preferable to be a 'pious virgin', for example, than to be a 'rotten whore'. Actual terms and expressions used of the members of an in-group or an out-group can thus be based on certain general concepts and stereotypes that are prevalent in society at large.

Table 6. Respectable people vs. prostitutes.

	Concepts related to respectable people in the pamphlets	**Concepts related to prostitutes in the pamphlets**
Bible-related concepts	morality, religion, Heaven, angels, humanity, good conscience, white/bright/light, Christian, freedom, peaceful soul, piety, good	immorality, paganism, Hell, Devil, inhumanity, no conscience, black/dark, Heathen, captivity, tormented soul, depravity, evil
Mental and moral properties	honesty, obedience, honour, modesty, innocence/ignorance, sincerity, sobriety/abstinence, chastity, virginity, happiness	dishonesty, disobedience, dishonour, boasting, corrupted, insincerity, extravagance, obscenity, corruption, unhappiness
Appearance, behaviour, and bodily constitution	good apparel, cleanliness, good education, gallantry, politeness, civility, high reputation, good manners, freshness, beauty, rosy/ruby cheeks	ruggedness, filth, self-education, impoliteness, uncivility, roughness, notoriety, poor manners, corrupted/deprived/poisoned looks/blood, pale/grey complexion, rotten ware

In our material, the terms for prostitutes and prostitution are often opposed or compared to those terms which are used for respectable people or ordinary honourable citizens. For this reason, we wanted to see not only what these latter terms actually are, but also how the concepts usually connected with prostitution differ from those that existed in relation to honourable citizens. Table 6 shows a list of the characteristics of both respectable people and prostitutes which are typically found in our material and are used to create a division between the two groups. The list includes the most frequently recurring nominal terms, attributes, and concepts which are related to the members of either group in our data.

As can be seen from the table, respectable people, and women in particular, are connected with basic Christian virtues, which consist of, for example, morality, humanity, conscience, and piety. Their mental and moral properties usually imply such characteristics as honesty, modesty, innocence, and abstinence. Observed from outside, their behaviour and appearance ought to show qualities like good apparel, cleanliness, civility, and even rosy or ruby cheeks.

The list for prostitutes naturally looks quite different. Table 6 lists only some of the concepts related to them, but from those we can see that prostitution, and bawdy life in general, is connected with evil, darkness, depravity, and corruption – all undesirable qualities in society. By repeating these concepts and attributes, writers emphasise the vast difference between the honourable reader and the criminals who lead a 'lewd life'. The following examples show how the descriptions of respectable people (2) and prostitutes (3) typically differ from each other in the material.

(2) in the mean time, give me leave to give a word of Advice to **honest Females, not yet vitiated, or debauched** by **the cunning insinuations and vitious perswasions of the Huffing Crew**. (*The Miss Display'd*, 1675)

(3) for, in these Brothels, the Apprentice and Journeyman first **broach their Morals**, and are soon taught to **change their Fidelity and Integrity for Fraud and Felony**; (*A Plan for A Preservatory and Reformatory*, 1758)

We also wanted to see what concepts or terminology are used in the 'mocking' pamphlets in cases where prostitution is justified in some way. There are two pamphlets which were written in defence of prostitution, namely *A Bawd* and *A Common Whore*, both by John Taylor and printed in 1635. It is clear from the context that it was the author's intention to shock the public or "displease all", as he writes himself in example (4). He was also disappointed by the unwelcoming attitude towards his previous pamphlet, which was in praise of the "cleane Linnen", i.e., respectable working women.

(4) I am sorry that I have not dedicated this Booke to some great Patron or Patroness: but the world is so hard to please, that I thinke it an easier matter to displease all, then every way fully to please one: for I did lately write a small Pamphlet in the praise of **cleane Linnen**, which I dedicate to **a neat, spruce, prime, principall and superexcellent Landresse**, and shee in stead of protecting my labours, or sheltring my good and painfull study, doth not onely expresse her liberality in giving me nothing, but also shee depraves and deprives me of that small tallent and portion of wit and Poetry which nature hath given or lent me (*A Bawd*, 1635)

A Bawd is dedicated to "a poore, harmlesse, modest, honest, and innocent Bawd" – all attributes which, as we have seen, are usually connected with respectable women. The writer states that "all Bawdry doth not breed below the middle", and writes about spiritual bawdry. He adduces similarities between bawds and grammar and astronomy, and compares prostitution with logic, arithmetics, music, geometry, poetry, rhetoric, physics, and surgery, as well as the seven deadly sins. *A Common Whore* is "sent amongst" the readers, and the writer also makes allusions to himself being a bawd who shelters a whore, his pamphlet, which he has published for all readers.

Both pamphlets are built on a type of word-play in which positive or virtuous attributes are used to refer to negative or disrespectful subjects, i.e., bawds and whores. As examples (5) to (6b) show, prostitutes can be defended as "charitable", since they give their services to everyone regardless of rank and status, and "patient", because they treat their clients and pimps equally and endure the fact that they may be mistreated by clients.

(5) Shee is full of intolerable **charity**, for her whole trade and course of life is to hide and cover the faults of the greatest offenders, in which regard shee is one of the principall secretaries to the great Goddess Venus … they are knowne to be so **Catholikely charitable**, that they extend their loue to all without exception, and are ready enough to forgive all the world (*A Bawd*, 1635)

(6a) In all which uncivill civill hostilitie, the singular **patience** of the Bawd, is worthy admiration; not giving any of these landsharkes an ill word, or shewing any signe of anger or desire of revenge, but intreating the most rough-hewd Rogues in the company, with the stiles of honest worthy Gentlemen (*A Bawd*, 1635)

(6b) Yet still she proves her **patience** to be such,
'Midst all these passions she will beare to much (*A Common Whore*, 1635)

Bawds are described as “civil” and “fairly mannered”, in that they do not ask too many questions of their clients. Examples (7) to (10) also show that they can be “modest”, because they are satisfied with what they are given at any given time. The bawd’s hard-working nature is not forgotten either: she can be considered “industrious” and “diligent”, as well as “careful” and “trusty”; she works when others sleep, and is thus “vigilant”. The writer refers to her as “the true Embleme or Image of security”, and also “a well-fed Embleme of plentie”, since she is not a “starveling creature” like other women.

(7) Who then more **civill or fairely mannered** then the *Bawdes*: or they never putany of their customers to the racke to confesse, nor doe they torture their guests with the sawcy inquiry of whence come you? How long will you tarry in Towne? (*A Bawd*, 1635)

(8) for shee is so full of **modestie** that she lives onely vpon what people doe give her: Men doe voluntarily bring her revenues to her, shee kindly takes no more then shee can get (*A Bawd*, 1635)

(9) who then is more **vigilant or industrious** then a **diligent** Bawd, shee is none of the seven Sleepers, nay she carefully watcheth whilst others sleepe, shee takes paines for the pleasure of many, shee is **the true Embleme or Image of security**, her eyes like **carefull & trusty** scours or spies (*A Bawd*, 1635)

(10) Commonly most of the shee-Bawds have a peculiar priviledge more than other women: for generally they are not starveling creatures, but well larded and embost with fat, so that a Bawd hath her mouth three stories of Chinnes high, and is **a well-fed Embleme of plentie**; and though shee bee but of small estimation, yet is she alwayes taken for a great woman amongst her neighbours. (*A Bawd*, 1635)

In examples (11) to (13), bawds and whores are referred to as “innocent”, because they try to create something good despite all their dangers and misfortunes. They are “kind”, “true”, and “honest”, since they give their services when, where and to whom they are needed. As the title of *A Common Whore* states, a prostitute is also not only “beautiful”, but also “chaste”, which is an attribute usually ascribed to virgins.

(11) But all’s one, let him doe his worst, she is confidently arm’d with **Innocencie**: and the threats or danger of the bad cannot affright her but that shee will attempt to recreate the **good** (*A Common Whore*, 1635)

(12) A **kind** Whore to be had for money or loue any where, a **true** Whore and a constant, for she will neuer forsake any man that will keepe her: and (by reason she is an **honest** Whore) shee is a poore Whore, and hath neither money nor Sprats (*A Common Whore*, 1635)

(13) With all these graces grac’d, shee’s very **honest**, **beautiful** and **chaste** (*A Common Whore*, 1635)

Most of the attributes discussed so far are clearly used for the purposes of mockery, since it is difficult to see in the historical context how a prostitute would show no “signe of anger or desire of revenge”, but treat rogues like “honest worthy Gentlemen”, or how she would kindly take “no more then shee can get”. The writer’s style is sarcastic, but it is interesting how these texts build on existing controversy and use juxtaposed attributes, a device which also occurs in other pamphlets in our material.

6. Terminological variation and change

As an overview of the terminology (Tables 2–5) suggests, a notable decline in both the number and variety of terms denoting prostitutes occurred from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. The decline in number is evident in the nominal field, and the 'cleaning up' of the terminology is exemplified by the employment, in the later period, of the relatively neutral term *prostitute*, instead of *whore*, which was more common during the previous century. From the varied and colourful terminology of the seventeenth century, the lexis became restricted to fewer nouns, at least in mainstream language. The range of adjectives that collocated with these nouns also underwent radical restriction. In the seventeenth century, the qualities associated with prostitutes included aspects of physical appearance, disposition (such as humour), age, professional competence and so forth, regardless of whether the estimation was positive or negative. In the following century, the picture became more two-dimensional, leaving the prostitute with but two possible principal characteristics: she was either highly pitiable (positive) or lewd and dishonest (negative). It seems to have become less acceptable to describe prostitutes as possessing more detailed qualities, either good or bad. In a sense, contemporary moral discourse turned them into stylised, fictional characters who served the purpose of both a warning example and an object of public Christian charity and benevolence.

A major part of the imagery that is used in the pamphlets in connection with prostitutes and prostitution can, of course, be directly derived from the Bible. In our material it is not uncommon to find descriptions of prostitutes drawing on concepts of immorality, paganism, inhumanity, darkness, depravity, and evil. Hell's door is always open to those prostitutes who are not penitent, and the Devil will torment the souls of those that stray from the righteous path. Many of the metaphors found in the material are also medical, and prostitution in general is seen as a disease which rots the bodies and corrupts the minds of those continuously exposed to it. This can also be seen in the way in which prostitutes are described as regards appearance, behaviour, and bodily constitution. Incivility, filth, and corrupted looks are considered attributes characteristic of all criminals in general, and common prostitutes in particular.

The concepts and descriptions related to prostitutes are, of course, a breeding ground for stereotypes. By creating and using negative terms and attributes for prostitutes, 'respectable' people place them in a 'detestable' out-group. Naturally, nobody wants to be associated with grave diseases like cancer, plague, and leprosy, or with filth, ugliness, and bodily decay. The biblical images of sin, Hell, and torment are skilfully used in the material to give nightmares to the inhabitants of a nation in the midst of religious strife. Every time prostitutes are referred as having negative attributes, the readers of the pamphlets are able to compare themselves with these rotten women, and acknowledge and strengthen those positive qualities that make them a part of the broad in-group that comprises the members of decent and civil society.

We can ask, of course, whether the moral and social imagery used in the pamphlets derived from social reality, or whether social reality was somehow affected and influenced by the imagery. It is clear from the texts that the descriptions of prostitutes, and prostitution in general, are based on sociobehavioural facts, although the medical imagery in particular can in places be greatly exaggerated. There is no doubt, however, that, along with real life as seen on the streets, the types of pamphlet we have used as our material were quite influential in setting people's minds against prostitution as a 'great social evil'. Thus, the vice was already extant and flourishing, but the writers of these pamphlets wished to make sure that their readers understood prostitution for what it was and steered clear of the destructive effect it was supposed to have on 'good people'.

7. Conclusion

In this article, our aim has been to study the terms used for common prostitutes in Early and Late Modern English, and to chart both variation and change in the meaning and pragmatic function of these terms in relation to sociohistorical factors. As we also suggest, the terms and attributes used of prostitutes in our material are related to the concepts of disrepute and degradation, and our study on the imagery connected with prostitutes and prostitution shows that selling one's body was equated not only to selling one's soul to the Devil, but also to de-humanising oneself and succumbing to disease, filth, and downright rottenness. It is interesting to see that, as the lexical field of the terms used for prostitutes

narrows within the 130-year period that our material covers, the general attitude towards prostitutes seems to go through a conceptual change, with prostitutes going from an active source of malice to helpless victims of the trade. Our findings thus support the idea of a continuous ideological shift towards the later Victorian view of prostitutes as evil, yet pitiful and helpless women.

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Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 2)

edited by R. W. McConchie, Alpo Honkapohja, and Jukka Tyrkkö

Cascadilla Proceedings Project Somerville, MA 2009

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Nevala, Minna and Marianna Hintikka. 2009. *Cider-Wenches* and *High Prized Pin-Boxes*: Bawdy Terminology in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England. In *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 2)*, ed. R. W. McConchie, Alpo Honkapohja, and Jukka Tyrkkö, 134-152. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

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Nevala, Minna and Marianna Hintikka. 2009. *Cider-Wenches* and *High Prized Pin-Boxes*: Bawdy Terminology in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England. In *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 2)*, ed. R. W. McConchie, Alpo Honkapohja, and Jukka Tyrkkö, 134-152. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com, document #2173.