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Table of Content

Abstract: **i**

Acknowledgement: **ii**

Chapter 1:

Introduction and Rationale 4

Chapter 2:

Literature Review 14

Chapter 3:

Methodology 33

Chapter 4:

Phenomenological/Experiential Analysis 42

Chapter5:

Analysis and Discussion 57

Chapter 6:

Conclusion and Future Research 79

Reference 87

Appendix A 93

Appendix B 96

Appendix C 98

Appendix D 99

Appendix E 100

Appendix F 101

Chapter 1

Through the looking-glass

Introduction and Rationale

`Who are YOU?' said the Caterpillar.



This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, `I--I hardly know, sir, just at present-- at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

*abstract from **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**
Lewis Carroll
With illustrations by John Tenniel

It has not been an easy journey in capturing my experiences and reporting my finding with regards to striptease in the South African context. The above quote from the classic works of Lewis Carroll promptly articulates not only my own sense of self, but that of the women who have volunteered their own experiences of striptease. I began my fieldwork, as the literature around striptease would suggest, being weary of the struggles and challenges pertaining to stripping as sexualized work—and as something deeply entrenched in patriarchal patterns of commodification of the body (Barton, 2007). What I found was a constant interplay of identification and abstraction that seemed to allow for high-end striptease to exist as a world where societal norms suspend themselves and the rules about patriarchy are modified. Like Alice, my experience of this was at times overwhelming yet fascinating as well. What is to follow is a report on the subjective experiences of high-end strippers in the South African context and how these women derive meaning from such experiences. Here I report on the experiences of Stephanie, Tamsyn, Miranda and Eva,* who work/worked as strippers in more up-market stripping establishments in Johannesburg. This piece is interested in firstly,

* Fictional Names

looking at the experiences of striptease in the high-end sectors and secondly examining, **if there is a form of liberation/emancipation in this form of stripping**. Lastly, I investigate **the psychological aspects to such experiences**.

The work of Barton (2007; 573) understands that stripping is often portrayed as an act of "deviant" behaviour and as a result it is stigmatised as something unsavoury or foul in the theoretical conceptions provided in prevailing literature on the subject. In addition O'Riordan (2005) comments on the notion that stripping has often been associated with acts of deviance in society and is often held as a sub-cultural activity. However, both these authors have noted that literature about stripping has long since progressed to highlighting the negative contemporary conception behind the idea of stripping as deviance. In continuation, Barton (2007) notes strippers are very likely to be subjugated and the act of striptease is still seen as taboo, mostly informed by culturally or religious ideological beliefs. It seems that such ideological beliefs have an overwhelming gravity towards moral arguments against striptease. It is not surprising that for writers such as Brown (1995) these beliefs are deeply patriarchal and therefore the morals which they portray are richly informed by such a discourse.

Through a Durkheimian understanding of social deviancy (which unlike contemporary derogatory connotation, speaks to the act of behaving differently from societal norms), when one deviates from social norms one runs the risk of being ostracized and even subjugated, which seems to account for why strippers are often belittled (Jones, 1981). For a theorist such as Foucault (1982) there exists a power relation between people and norms, one that is sovereign and almost gospel (when referring to his works about the scaffold in Discipline and Punish). Such power relations tend towards subjugation, especially of those who are perceived as deviant. From a Foucauldian perspective one could argue that patriarchy is such a power house and under it women are therefore subjugated by default. For Brown (1995) and Martins (1987) women's defaulted positions under patriarchy adhere to discourses around feminity. For Brown (1995) the female subject under patriarchy seems to take on a role of injury and by doing so claims a 'self' that is broken and therefore easier to victimize.

On this note one may find that under patriarchy there are two views of the female subject; one as the good, wholesome nurturer (Jordanova,1980) and the other as the deviant, immoral seductress (Wesely, 2006). Yet each work to uphold and sustain patriarchy, as both are subjected to patriarchal power and over time such practices become relations of being,

informed by discursive norms (Brown, 1995; Martins, 1987). Such discourses around the female role are often argued through moral reasoning for Brown (1995). In the words of Simone De Beauvoir (1997:13) "[t]hus humanity is, male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being."

When one looks at striptease or the act of stripping, not only can one see women taking on roles different to their normative role as the nurturer, but how they are further subjugated by conforming to the seductress role for the pleasure of men and becoming the victim as well (Brown, 1995; Irigaray, 1993; Wesely, 2006). However, when understanding striptease in theory, for Karandikar and Prospéro (2009) we find that most studies present stripping at the level where women find themselves in circumstances that at times are beyond their control (such as sex trafficking or need). In such situations women are placed in such work relations in order to survive.

However, Barton (2007) and Wesely (2006) highlight stripping as an area of sexualized work which is understudied, especially the psychological experiences of strippers. In this instance these authors find that even within stripping 'high-end' striptease has often been understudied and have alluded to the idea that women at this end of the striptease spectrum possibly have more choice in their involvement in this form of work. In my research, I have found this not only to be true, but as the findings of this report suggests (and as some authors may argue) an idea of striptease being able to transcend patriarchal relation (Wesely, 2006).

My rationale when beginning this study was to position three important factors that called for this kind of research. I believed it was important to investigate the experiences of high-end strippers to further the ontological basis of striptease and add to the theoretical understanding around it. Yet, I found that as I progressed with my research, the more fascinated I became with how this form of work has been deemed merely as perverted entertainment for adults. In essence, striptease is very strategic and is all about "a fantasy world (where) you portray the perfect image of a woman...you are there to give them (the clients) the girlfriend experience," as quoted by Stephanie (one of the participants of this study), while systematically working the crowd for those willing to pay for such an experience.

When researching striptease I found that the majority of literature can be seen as being directed towards either how women are exploited in strip clubs or how engaging in striptease

subjugates women. Yet few focus on stripping as liberation. In addition I noted that most studies about stripping are posited from a sociological ontology, even though one should not see sociology and psychology as mutually-exclusive. As a result few studies have paid attention to unpacking the psychological dynamics of striptease for women in this profession. This was my first position when heading into the field, especially as this kind of work requires much psychological engagement. However, what the literature suggested was that women who strip tend to engage in intense social and psychological issues before they turn to stripping. Karandikar and Prospéro (2009) argue that due to need most women who partake in stripping do so as a means to survive. Hence, they enter into the field already suppressed and are further subjugated in order to make a living. These authors argue that in that stripping is a form of work where, like prostitution, women are caught in highly precarious labour relations and often suffer abuse and many risk factors, especially psychologically.

For Barton (2007) stripping has many other more negative implications for the psyche as it requires the utilization of often maladaptive defences in order to cope with the impact of stripping. This essentially speaks to the more negative methods utilised by a person to cope with stressors from their environment (McWilliams, 1994). At times women in stripping may suffer ridicule which can take the form of physical, emotional and psychological abuse. Such ridicule may lead to negative coping methods such as drugs or alcohol abuse in order to survive (Barton, 2007). As I suspected, the high-end was slightly different, many of the women I spoke to suggested that if you did not keep your head about you, you could easily find yourself lost in the fantasy that is created in this world. In such situations, this wonderland could turn into a frightening place, very much like the situations reported in previous studies. For Barton (2007), the high-end world of stripping is often more lucrative and services wealthier clientele. The women that work here may even be university students trying to make additional money while studying. Again this was confirmed by the women I interviewed, as seen with Eva.

Even though only one of them was a student, most of them ran their own businesses; from modelling agencies to dance studios. Such work provided their main forms of income and stripping is/was something they did for extra money.

Hochschild (1983) argues that service based work requires the usage of emotions to sell services. In this instance stripping is no different and for Wesely (2003), it is the creation and

selling of fantasy and desire through acting. This acting requires the management of emotions in order to convince those paying for the service—which may increase the psychological pressure of such work. Most of those interviewed for this study agreed to this dimension, some even reported on the actual displacement of their own emotions in order to give a convincing performance.

A secondary interest lies in the perspective given by authors such as Wesely (2003) who believe that within the realm of stripping there may even be a sense of liberation for women from their prescribed roles within society. Her views are rare amongst pervasive feminist literature as they speak to an idea of transcendence, whilst most theories speak to the objectification of women. This novel perspective, specific to stripping is important to investigate, especially in an environment mostly dominated by feminist critiques of patriarchy. By looking at women as devoid of history and basis other than as part of man they are subjugated, but for De Beauvoir (1997; 17) a woman can transcend her position within society or her 'otherness' if she chooses to engage "in freely chosen projects." In essence, this could occur by women choosing to strip as a lifestyle choice. To investigate this it is important to understand that such research must be posited in settings where such transcendence and meaning making may most likely occur. For that reason this study endeavoured to investigate high-end striptease as opposed to low-end striptease (which has been researched in previous studies). With this in mind I had tried to conceptualise stripping as a lifestyle choice, hoping to illustrate a possible transcendence in patriarchal relations of subjugation. What I found was a complex interaction between patriarchy and transcendence, where often the price of liberation still worked within the specifics of a patriarchal society.

A third factor I was interested in was that in most South African based studies the focus had been on the precarious nature of sex work in general, paying attention to prostitutes and not on more protected form of sexualized work such as stripping and escorting (Wojcicki, 2002). Stripping in South Africa is legal. In my research I was able to find one other studies relating to stripping. Snyders and Tillier (2010) investigated exotic dancing in South Africa and their article, *'The naked truth: A glimpse into the lives and experiences of exotic dancers*,' was focused on the experiences of strippers in the South African context in general, not exploring the divide between high-end and low-end stripping. The participants seemed to come from troubled backgrounds and hard experiences that led them to stripping. My research participants found themselves in this industry by chance and not due to circumstances. In

addition, Snyders and Tilliers (2010) indentified the psychological impact of stripping on their participants. As one woman mentioned;

> "it makes you or it breaks you. A lot of women don't even make it a month, they can't take the pressure because they either get too sick or they either feel too bad about themselves afterwards," (Snyders & Tilliers, 2010: 18).

Some of their other findings were on the possible therapeutic nature of exotic dance as well as the possible power dimensions to it—again placing this within the realm of patriarchal subservience. Even though there was a sense of liberation reported, it was within the service of the female role under patriarchy (Snyders & Tilliers, 2010). Quintessentially, these authors claim that such research is important as it would be of great value to engage with the experiences of strippers in the South African context and to see if these are at all different to those reported in international literature. I was interested to see whether the risk factors involved in striptease are the same or whether they take on a different form at the high-end. In a smaller, yet equally important vein, Shaver (2005) notes that studies, such as the one seen in this report, allows for much needed knowledge generation. He states that in efforts to reconstitute sex work and (even legalise it some forms of it) calls for the illumination of the field in order to de-stigmatise it. By investigating stripping as the selling of sexual fantasy (Wesley, 2003) one may allow for a later (and comprehensive) understanding of sexually related work and the stigma attached to it, especially when studying sexually-based work in South Africa.

1.1

Conceptualisation

In the literature there seems to be the conceptualisation of stripping either as sex work, this can be seen with Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002), or the idea of stripping as adult entertainment (O'Riordan, 2005). In essence there is the idea that sex work is something fundamentally tied to the selling of sexual service or engaging in sex for money (Price, 2008). O'Riordan (2005) argues that the concept of sex-work is often stigmatised by such a relation and therefore many studies have opted for the utilisation of adult entertainment/ entertainers. However, Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) firmly posit stripping as sex-work in addition to the views of Barton (2006, 2007) and Price (2008). With this in mind, it is highly important to note that any study into a sexually-based work form should be of a

sensitive nature. For Garofalo (2005) sex-work is a politicised term that carries connotations over-and-above its simplistic meaning. Hence, one should be careful with the usage of the term sex-work. Yet, O'Riordan (2005) notes that even so, one cannot merely remove strippers from the sex-work industry, as the authenticity of the sexual activity is tied to their selling of sexual desire even if it is not actual sex. In this instance she utilizes sexualised-work as a term referring to the work done by strippers. Sexualised-work refers to the placement of strippers within the sex-work industry, but specifically speaks to the selling of the sexual idea or fantasy as opposed to sex (O'Riordan, 2005). This may prove a useful alternative for this study as it does not aim to box stripping as sex-work, but grapple with the unique experiences of strippers in the high-end while still being sensitive and contextual about the work that they do. I make usage of Barton's (2007) conception of striptease, which is defined as the performance of stripping in a provocative manner to elicit an appropriate response from a paying client.

Furthermore, this study makes a distinction between low-end and high-end strip clubs. The low-end is defined by Price (2008), Wesely (2003) and Barton (2006; 2007) as a setting where striptease occurs within specific patriarchal relations of domination. Here women are often seen to be highly objectified according to their sex-role and form. Barton (2006), O'Riordan (2011) and Taylor and Jamieson (2000) speak to the precarious nature of the experiences suffered by women in this setting as one that allows for ridicule, emotional and sexual abuse by clients and owners of the club, and the exposure to drugs and even human trafficking. Barton (2006) gives examples of this in her writings where low-end strip clubs may at times have a cover charge for entrance, but this is much lower than more upscale clubs. Most revenue is made in the sale of alcohol and the strippers are commissioned to get the clients to buy drinks or to fill a drinks quota. These clubs provide less protection for the dancers.

The high-end, for Barton (2006) and to an extent Wesely (2003) may present a different relation between the women that work there and the nature of the setting. Barton (2006) notes that it tends to have a wealthier client base and even strippers who may not necessarily be driven into stripping due to circumstance. Here Barton (2007) notes that more upscale clubs generally have higher entrance fee and gain revenue from food and drinks. The women are encouraged to interact with patrons and the clubs tends to be a more regulated environment. I found this to be true when I visited a more upscale strip club in Johannesburg, where the cost of entrance was expensive. Yet, the venue was not only set up for striptease, but included a

wondrous buffet and dining experience. In the dining area, many of the strippers sat casually and dined with the clients as the atmosphere was one where they felt safe enough to do so between shows.

1.2

Positioning myself

I find myself in the position of the fabled Alice, tumbling down a rabbit-hole and lost within a world that was far beyond that of which I was used to. It is true that when starting out this research I held a different mindset to the one which I hold now. My journey to understand the subjective experience and meaning making of strippers in the South African setting has lead me to question my conception of morality and what morality in itself actually means.

My aim was to investigate the manner in which strippers give meaning to the experiential nature of their work. In doing this I decided on investigating a group of strippers form a high-end strip club in Johannesburg. This was mainly due to the fact that most of previous research was focussed on the more demeaning experiences reported in the lower-end (Barton, 2007). I was therefore interested in seeing if there was a difference between these two. Hence this investigation was positioned to see if the perceived experience of these women was different from the portrayed experiences found in the literature presented below. In addition I endeavoured to see if such a setting promotes a notion of transcendence and liberation/emancipation for these women against social conventions and tried to explore the notion of stripping as a career move. My analysis is positioned in the interpretive paradigm and therefore my report will draw on a more interpretive (or hermeneutic) phenomological philosophical approach (Lopez & Willis, 2004). In addition, as very few studies have focused on stripping in the South African context I hope to provide some form of insight into this area. However, an important caveat must be mentioned here as I have aimed to address very specific gaps in the literature. Much of the data gathered in the field has not been reported in this piece but will be utilised in later explorations on the topic.

With these aims in mind, it seems that Moneymaker and Montanino (1978), were correct with the notion that the social meaning made about striptease is of a moral nature, yet even more so (and from a Durkheimian view) there seems to be a sub-culture that exists within this, as claimed by some authors, morally perverse sector of society. In order to understand this or at

least make sense of it, many of my own subjective positions had to be challenged. Hence, the discussion at this point leads to the positioning of the researcher to the research endeavour.

The further I thread through the fields of this 'Underland', the more I found the landscape to be riddled with wonder, decadence and melancholy; a bitter-sweet reality that on one level attempts to de-stigmatise the world of striptease and on the other hand is social commentary on the reality of patriarchal relations. What we are left with is a paradoxical reality where the actors are, myself included, the creators of a meaning-filled experiential world (Schegloff, 1997).

I do not wish to begin this reflective work as a check-listed, rudimentary account of the researcher's own impact on the research process and its activities or other such biases, but rather on noting how my own position worked to actively shape the interactions within this exploration. Here I speak to Silverman's (2004) notion of how the research is an active process and that the researcher is active in the creation of reality within any context, therefore being instrumental in the process. This speaks to Schegloff's (1997) idea of how each research context is specific to itself and the interactions within such contexts work to shape the context itself. My hopes are to deliver a piece that is illuminatory and thoughtful. I do not claim that the accounts given here are the absolute, universal truth, as argued by Silverman (2004). Rather the expressed views of my participants and their subjective understanding of phenomena experienced with regards to striptease in the South African context, not to mention my own interpretative impressions of this portrayed reality (Silverman, 2004).

It is therefore important to speak to the realities in which I, as a researcher, am positioned. This is important within the reflection process as Macbeth (2001) argues, as the researcher holds an influential position that must be explored, or else it reduces the illuminatory quality of a piece of research. Hence, I find that without this acknowledgement I would do this research a great injustice.

I am possibly committing academic suicide by taking on such a topic as this, as other research into striptease has been carried out by female feminists with a key interest in unpacking the nature of striptease and possible exploitation of women in this profession (see Barton, 2006, 2007; Digby, 1998; Garofalo, 2005). However, I do believe that my masculine identity has its merits. I am by no means aiming to undo the feminist literature about striptease by claiming it to be a site of transcendence, but rather illuminating the experiences of those who see it in that manner (de Beauviour, 1997). Foucault (as seen by Jones, 1981)

saw that knowledge was an interesting element. It has the power to illuminate and obscure and that many knowledges were subjugated in favour of a universal perception of reality. In fact through genealogies Foucault argued that subjugated knowledges need to be liberated. This is my stance. I believe that it is important from a feminist perspective to look at both sides of the story and understand the notion of women who find this form of work as liberating as well as a male understanding of such experiences. If not, we run the risk of feminism being non-inclusive and totalitarian (Digby, 1998).

Tom Digby (1998) and a series of other authors (See Goldrick-Jones, 2002; Jardine & Smith, 1989; Porter, 1992;Tarrant, 2008) understood a ludicrous and simple problem of feminism, that is men are antagonistic to the approach and therefore cannot do it. Even more ludicrous is that feminism tends to despise men. However, feminism, specifically men doing feminism works to illuminate men's lives, as it allows for the necessary social skills to show how patriarchy not only subjugates women, but men as well. My position as a man allows me this ability to engage in the socially constructed realities of those of my gender and therefore provide insight into aspects not seen by previous studies done by female academics or researchers in this field (Tarrant, 2008). On the other hand; it is more than true that my position as a male grants me a privilege, which shelters me from the many experiences of women in society (Digby, 1997). As Moneymaker and Montanino (1978) suggest, this privilege may allow for the type of objectification of women within sex-work. Nevertheless, I hoped that by interviewing my research participants, before actually visiting some of the strip clubs in Johannesburg, that methodologically my knowledge of their subjective experiences would give me some insight into my own experience.

Chapter 2

Understanding Underland

Theoretical grounding of striptease

Literature Review

The literature will be presented in three parts. The first part will deal with the creation of sex as taboo. The second with the emergence of stripping as sex-work and lastly the psychological implications found in the literature reviewed for this piece. Please note that the literature draws on seminal works and understandings in order to create a more genealogical account to underpin the rationale of the study. I use this format to wade through the previous studies into striptease in order to make sense of this sub-section of society; which to the layperson may seem fowl and distasteful, while those who work in this area are seen as scoundrels, vagabonds and mad (Moneymaker & Montanino, 1978).

2.1

Part 1

Sex, the creation of the taboo

The focus here is to place stripping within relation to sex in order justify the aims of the study.

Warning; the following is not appropriate for sensitive viewers.

Have you ever paid much attention to the real gravity of the above statement? In reality it speaks to the notion of the inappropriateness about the idea of sex as a reproductive and a sensual act (Moneymaker & Montanino, 1978). Marcus (2011) comments on this as well in her paper entitled *The State's Oversight: From Sexual Bodies to Erotic Selves*. For Marcus sex is multi-dimensional, yet is often held within relations of appropriateness. Marcus (2011) mirrors Moneymaker and Montanino (1978) in dealing with the notion of sex, as one is often cognisant of the multiple meaning assigned to the concept. These authors speak to sex as a categorization of human genitalia, sex as a reproductive act and sex as an act of sensuality.

For Moneymaker and Montanino (1978; 27) the taboo about sex often is addressed as a moral issue;

> "Sexual morality, as opposed to immorality, can be described as the collective perception of appropriate sexual conduct, either widely accepted or at least not generally reacted to negatively. It is often understood to mean normative sexual conduct in society. It can be viewed as sexual behaviour that has acquired moral importance in the process of its transmission from generation to generation."

In essence this speaks to a pervasive, omnipresent truth about the nature of social normativity with regards to behaviour. As Jones (1981) noted, Durkheim argued the creation of norms and practice with values placed upon them lead to certain pattern of relation in society. Such norms and valued practices are socially sanctioned as universal and anything that goes against such norms is seen as immoral in nature. This stems to what Durkheim called anomie (meaning to act without law or in a state of normlessness). In nature these norms, through practice, become law-like and thus work to invisibly control society and one only notices them when one acts inappropriately and is in some way ostracized or set apart from the system (Jones, 1981).

Why is this appropriate for a discussion about sex? Simply put, it is the process by which society works to create the normal and the taboo, with sex being no different as it is part of the constitution social morality (Bens, 1971; Jones, 1981). With this in mind, one can then unpack what has been said by Moneymaker and Montanino when addressing the above quotation. In essence, sex has a set of norms about it that are embedded in moral argument about what is deemed appropriate behaviour (Moneymaker & Montanino, 1978).For O'Riordan (2005; 130) this notion speaks to a kind of "moral inferiority." For these authors such moralistic arguments are entrenched in socio-political, cultural, religious and historical value-based processes that have set the parameters for how sex is viewed. Hence, sex and its related activities must be controlled and to be held private and when one geso against this one is seen as morally deviant (Brown, 1995). For instance, the idea of masturbation or even the usage of pornography is highly sensitised as most people refuse to acknowledge their engagement in such activities in order to remain morally sound (Brown, 1995). By applying this understanding about sex, it is easy to understand how negative stigma is then placed upon it. For Brown (1995) sex is made private under patriarchy as it is a manner in which to assert control, especially with regards to female sexuality as it is morally inappropriate and lustful and thus must be controlled.

From a social constructivist dimension one may argue that the nature of the taboo is not in essence real, as human beings tend to construct the nature of reality in order to make sense of it (Mosher, 1989). However, such a critique does not extend to the true experience of everyday life as one does not merely challenge the valued norms of society and walk away unscathed (Jones, 1981). A recent example well-known to South Africa is the Noord Street Taxi Rank incident where women perceived as being deviant (in the Durkheimian sense, as cited in Jones, 1981) by wearing supposedly sexually enticing attire and therefore warranting the abuse that was suffered. In essence, what the literature discussed leads to, is the notion that anything associated with sex will hold to the same sort of normative practices attributed to sex as being taboo and censored; where even the body as the vessel for it is held to the same restrictions (Brown, 1995).

Drawing on the antecedent discussion about the taboo surrounding sex and sexual activity the analysis now turns to the idea of stripping as work based on sexually related performances. Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002), understands sex-work as a billet of services that include prostitution, pornography, erotic massages, telephonic sex calls and striptease. They speak to the conception of stripping as a sex-work as it is a labour form that operates on the provision of sexually provocation as a service. Yet this does not give credit to strippers' unique position within the industry. One cannot merely assume that they engage in sex as well. Price (2008) extends on this understanding as she notes that sex work is defined by payments made by a client for sexually provocative acts under which she posits stripping as a facet of such services. However, this facet is merely the sale of a sexual fantasy. Shaver's (2005) conception of stripping is the selling of sexual desire as a service. In addition, Shaver (2005) argues that it is still important to see stripping as part of the sex-work industry as it is still about the generation of revenue for services rendered. However, as we have defined stripping as sexualised work instead of sex-work (which was done not to undermine the identity of those women involved), one may then note that for Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) striptease utilizes an interesting way of commodifying the body of women as something that can be bought and sold, even if it is merely in relation to sexual fantasy.

Lucinda Jarrett (1997; 28) in her book entitled *Stripping in Time: A History of Erotic Dancing*, argues that stripping is a work form where a "person offers services appealing to the erotic or sexual appetites" of others. Simply put, there exists an idea that striptease is ultimately a performance or an act that endeavours to create an illusion, a sexual fantasy, for

a paying client from afar (Jarrett, 1997; Valverde and Dias Barrero, 2002). The management behind this act, if one recalls, is what this study would aim to investigate.

The naked female form as fantasy

According to Delaney (2005) and to a greater extent Martins (1987), the female body has often been the site of contestation. Martin (1987) and Jordanova (1980) noted how the historical progression of discursive relations about the female form has led to the notion of the perception of the female sex as the weaker sex. This weakness required protection by the stronger of the two sexes, being the male sex. Under patriarchal relations the female body was seen as a site for modesty and fragility and derived from the man (Delaney, 2005; Martins; De Beauviour, 1997). This modesty became a conduit for the often subjugatory normative control of patriarchal domination, which for Martins (1987) and Jordanova (1980) allows for such a naturalness to it that even women, themselves, are active in the reiteration and reproduction of such norms.

With this in mind, Delaney (2005) noted that under the notion of modesty, the regulations of patriarchy meant that there were certain behavioural norms expected of women. These included the notion of appropriate dress and behavioural etiquette. In certain societies, the modesty assigned to the female form meant that, as seen with the privacy around sex and the body, when a censored part of the body was revealed it was seen as greatly arousing (Delaney, 2005). For example, in early Japanese cultures the mere exposure of a wrist or ankle was greatly eroticized. Yet, what is unique to female modesty is the construction of it as a virtue that needs to be protected. As a result any portrayal of it as anything other than pure and fragile, especially through exposure, may then hold great erotic potential (Brown, 1995; Skipper and McCaghy 1978). In coalescence, this idea ties into the later discussion about the notion of burlesque and the liberation of the female body, but a liberation marred by the power relations under patriarchy. Yet before we address this, we must first come to understand what stripping is.

2.2

Part2

Nipple Caps: The Emergence Striptease.

"I'm your private dancer, a dancer for money. I'll do what you want me to do."
Tina Turner (Capital Records 1984).

When Tina Turner released her hit single *Private Dancer* she describes a particular subset of society, one that operates in the shadows and on the periphery of society. For MacLeod (2005) It is the place where even psychology as a practice finds itself. It is a place where people come to feel comfortable enough to be able to express their deepest feeling or desires (MacLeod, 2005). In *Private Dancer* Tina Turner works to describe the world of the stripper. It is a world filled with mystery and shame. Hence I began my journey studying the emergence of striptease.

Dance is a cultural norm of expression, of story-telling and of symbolic representation (Delaney, 2005). In many cultures one may find many forms of dance, from the mere casual to the more sensual (Delaney, 2005; Valverde & Dias Barrero, 2002) Examples of these include belly dancing of the Middle East to that of the emergence of burlesque theatre in Europe (Jarrett, 1997). Many of these dance forms are utilised to create illusions or fantasy by their expression and are often whimsical in nature (Jarrett, 1997). According to Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) striptease can be traced back to early burlesque pantomime. This form of dance was indigenous to the English European traditions and then later imported to North America around the 18th Century. Burlesque dance sparked a progressive move towards the portrayal of the female form as commercially seductive. For Jarrett (1997) it was the first time one could find women being allowed to wear tight fitting garments or to bare their legs or even cross-dress. It is important to note though that even such a liberation was still posited from a highly patriarchal power relation. In addition, such performances under patriarchy were for the pleasure of men (Valverde & Dias Barrero, 2002). For example, one of the women interviewed in this study confirmed the link between the different forms of sensual dance and striptease, speaking specifically to burlesque;

> *Burlesque, originated...in like the 1600s?! Yeah, around there and* ***it's very much a striptease, unfortunately because it was so taboo back then it had to be done in a manner that was very***

> ***tongue-in-cheek, okay****? Uhm, it had to be like very humourous, very 'oh my gosh,' with lots of shadows and lighting and feathers covering things up. So Burlesque, I would say was probably the earliest form of striptease, uhm,* ***but it differs to striptease in the fashion that with exotic dancing in a nightclub, it's straight up just about you and the pole and you and the contact with the gentlemen.*** *As opposed to burlesque which is on stage, it's a show, it's a production. It's not really the one-on-one interaction. Uhm, so it's feathers boas and uhm beautiful fans and it's lighting and it's the whole theatre production. Yeah, choreography so it's never really the one-on-one, like up close kind of (Stephanie).*

Not only does Stephanie note the linkage of stripping to burlesque, she has indicated the politics about sexual taboo, indicating and confirming two things. First, that taboos around sexuality are historically placed confirming Brown's argument seen earlier and subtly indicating a change within modernity. Stephanie went on to say later in her interview that in society today people are a bit more open to striptease, except in South Africa claiming that it is still perceived as problematic in such a setting. Secondly, I found that this statement by Stephanie speaks to something not explored in the literature presented here about the knowledge of striptease's genealogy in relation to burlesque. Stephanie argued that **'it's** (burlesque) **very much like striptease...but as it's is straight up just about you and the pole and the contact with the gentlemen.'** Whereas, burlesque seems to be more of a stage production using props and is choreography whereas striptease is more about the social contact. This social contact is a very important marketing technique spoken to later in the analysis.

Returning to the literature, expressions of the female form as a commodity progressed to a series of sexually provocative and taboo art forms, such as highly detailed sketch cards (Jarrett, 1997). In fact by the 20th Century such expressions became more sophisticated and marketed to a particular audience within a capitalistic framework (Valverde & Dais Barrero, 2002). For Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) and O'Riordan (2005) under the capitalist engine one could note how the body itself became not only commodified, but idealised as a tool for capitalist production. This was first articulated through Marxist labour power, yet with striptease this labour power is more ingenious.

Under capitalism, for instance, the body can not only be bought and sold, but has the imaginative power to create fantasy; the most peculiar of which are those activities based on the interaction with a naked woman (Valverde & Dias Barrero, 2002). Here we not only see

the body as a commodity, but a vehicle for fantasy as well. For Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) the body becomes the conduit through which such fantasies can be realised and fulfilled. Through the idea of burlesque entertainment (and the sexualised version of the female form), the seeds were well sown for the emergence of stripping. For Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002), Jarrett (1997) and Moneymaker and Montanino (1978) striptease, even with its artistic emergence, is often debunked as an art form. This is mainly due to the incongruency it has with the moral conventions of society. However, Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) firmly suggest that striptease is an art form in its own right as it meets the requirements of artistic expression even though it is directed towards sexual stimulation. It is expressive, learnt and perfected; it requires creative skill and license and utilizes that imagination to communicate with an audience. This too was seen by the women in this study as they saw the stage performance as artistic and in many ways a manner through which they could express themselves.

Yet what is Striptease?

Delaney (2005) argues that in the social would there exists a set of rituals and symbols that express meaning and messages about our world. According to Skipper and McCaghy (1978) this is true of the world of striptease. The most expressive and stereotypical of which is the symbolic perception that the stripper is a woman of low moral standing; associated with drugs, hoodlums, hustlers, prostitutes and so forth. Skipper and McCaghy (1978) the stripper in the layperson's terms is a social deviant, that is oversexed and promiscuous. For Skipper and McCaghy (1978; 176) there are often highly emotive judgements placed onto these women, such as "what type of women...make a living by stripping?" This is indicative of the almost morally imperialistic view covered earlier when coming to understand the nature of sex as taboo and striptease as deviant behaviour. For Barton (2007) this expression held in the works of Skipper and McCaghy is a dated expression. Strippers are more than just their work and such a perception of their character is highly problematic.

In continuation, keeping to Delaney's (2005) understanding, the act of stripping is a ritual as well. For the most part, it involves the removal of clothing until one is left bare or close to naked (Valverde and Dias Barrero, 2002). This is often done to the sound of provocative music. The act is typically three songs long, beginning with a clothed tantalizing performance of a highly sexualised nature. The next song begins the removal of garments until only the underwear is left, whilst the last song either reveals the breast or total exposure of the female

dancer (Valverde and Dias Barrero, 2002). There are predominantly two forms of dance performance, namely stage or table dance. The table dance is normally part of a private show, where depending on the price paid a lap dance may be given (Valverde and Dias Barrero, 2002). According to Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) a lap dance is an act that involves the stripper sitting on the client and provocatively and rhythmically moving her body, while initiating contact with the client's groan. My own experience at one of the clubs in Johannesburg can confirm such a definition, as much of what the stripper does is ritualistic, but the ritual is performed by both stripper and the patron of the night club. For instance, in one club I was approached by a stripper working the floor. She sat next to me and fondled my beard. She said she had seen me looking at her dancing on the stage and that she had never noticed me there before. After a series of questions, she saw I was not interested and then preceded to the next client, with the same type of questioning. He met her actions with the appropriate responses and requested a lap dance. She did a different, more sensual strip show than her performance on stage, striping until naked, enticing the client, but never allowing him to touch her.

When speaking to stripping as an occupation Skipper and McCaghy (1978) argue, women often enter stripping due to fortuitous circumstances in order to make a living. Most women when entering the industry know little about it further than that of the layman's interpretation. Shaver (2005) expands on this by noting that most forms of sexualised-work are often pursued as a means of making a living when little else is left for women to do in times of need or desperation. Skipper and McCaghy (1978) specify that most of the women that turn to stripping as sexualised-work do not have any skill or training when it comes to dancing before their first show. Quick adaptation is essential to survive the strip scene and as an occupation, protection in the legal sense, may be at time not always possible (Valverde & Dias Barrero, 2002). This was also confirmed in my research as most of the women I had interviewed had work at both the high-end and the low-end. In each setting the experience is the same, women come in with limited skill and have to teach themselves how to dance. Some, as both Stephanie and Miranda claim, are fortunate to have previous dancing skills or training such as being a "Russian ballet dancer," otherwise they would just look and mimic at what others are doing. However, Miranda has noted that the low-end tends to be more risky and less protected.

Nipple caps: Stripping and Patriarchy.

For Butler (1980), Martins (1978) and Jordanova (1980) the power associated with patriarchy is one that evolve from cumulative historical action that spans hundreds, upon hundreds of years. Such power relations cannot be simply changed or uprooted overnight with the inclusion of women's rights in society. Patriarchy, for these authors, still assigns to both men and women what they are supposed to be and act like and in many cases it allows for the domination of men over women, or even creates a sense of ownership. Martin (1978) notes that women are supposed to be understood as fragile and nurturing, and if they act against such roles they are often further subjugated as they threaten the power of patriarchy. For Irigaray (1993) and Butler (1980) the idea of female subjugation seems to be linked to a patronising view of what is in the best interest of women. If we turn to Foucault's (1982) docility, or the creation of the submissive being, it seems that through socialisation, women are expected to be almost extra docile in order to adhere to masculine power relations. If not, it may often be enforced upon them.

However, as with all systems, loopholes exist, especially when female deviancy falls within line of hegemonic subjugatory practices. For Karandikar and Prospéro (2009) and Price (2008) sexualised-work falls within such lines as with this type of work women are expected to have lower morals and therefore are utilised as mere objects for the pleasuring of masculine desire (Price, 2009). In essence, this form of acting against their normative, nurturing role upholds patriarchy as the power differential is not challenged or threatened. Price (2009) elaborates on this as she notes that even with the understanding of striptease as sexualised work, there exists a patriarchal power relation where authority is still afforded to men in that the managers, bouncers and customers are predominantly men, while the strippers and waitresses are normally female. In this setting much of the literature speaks to the construction of the stripper's identity as pervasively degrading, which under mainstream feminism is indicative of such patriarchal power relations. For Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray, McIntyre and Horlow (2004) stripping is still viewed as an identity, as opposed to a revenue generating labour from. For Skipper and McCaghy (1978; 187) the derogatory views of strippers as demoralistic is pervasive, as one of their respondents noted, "[y]ou cannot be in this business for six months without becoming a prostitute."

In addition Price (2009) argues that even through the practice of referring to strippers as 'the girls' in their work form can further subjugate their identity. For Skipper and McCaghy (1978) the *identity form* of a stripper is all encompassing and often at the ignorance of other factors that make up identity. Foucault (1982) articulates that identity is formed through the creation of the docile body by means socialization, upon which social ideology is placed as if it were natural. At times subjugation and exploitation are artefacts of this particular identity creation which would explain why strippers are often treated badly. For Price (2009) the stripper is still often reduced to her genitalia and seen as cheap and easy and these women seem to accept it due to their knowledge of women's positions in society as opposed to men." However, my analysis later indicates something quite unique to this identity formulation within regards to strange suspension of the norms that may exist in the high-end.

Bare essentials: the experiences of strippers.

At this point the analysis tries to explore the literature about the reported experiences faced by women in this profession. As a majority of the knowledge-claims made about stripping are from the realm of lived-experience, it is important to explore some of the literature about such reported experiences. Note these studies are predominantly from the low-end part of the spectrum. For Barton (2007) in her article *Managing the Toll of Stripping Boundary Setting among Exotic Dancers*, she seems to define the reality of strip work as precarious, due to the wide variety of abuses that are implicit of this work.

Barton (2006) notes that for the most part, work in strip clubs can be demeaning and may lead to emotional and psychological fatigue. For most strippers their identity consists of a wide variety of social resources such as family and friends over and above the nature of their work. Yet these resources are almost sacrificed in the donning of the stripper role (Barton, 2006). For Wesely (2006), the victimization of the stripper's experience speaks to a special form of objectification. What she articulates is that the stripper is often idealised as merely a sexual body or 'Barbie-like' fantasy. The nature of striptease is such that the more one lives up to the fantasy—or the Barbie ideal, the more financially rewarding the outcome could be. Wesely (2006) posits that in reality many women struggle to live up to this role and may constantly measure themselves up to it with negative consequences to their self conception. In striptease, Foucauldian docility seems most appropriate to describe the experiences of stripper as Wesely (2006) notes the within extreme cases, women are forced to lose weight in order to keep their jobs and often turn to dangerous methods to achieve this. The logical

question then is to ask why do these women choose to stay in this form of work? This question is especially pertinent when looking at this form of objectification, as some of the methods used to lose weight involve the chronic use of laxatives or even unnecessary liposuction. From this perspective it is almost as if women are expected to be extra docile in order to make headway as a strippers. Wesely (2003; 652) articulates a moving account of such an experience:

> When I was performing I was constantly comparing myself to other people. Constantly. 'Cause there's always somebody who looks better. There's always somebody who's got a tighter body, bigger boobs, who's got better looking abs. . . . You become very in tune with how you look and who is making money and how they look. And you know, most of the girls who are making money have dyed blonde hair, and big boobs, and they look like Barbie dolls. . . . It really affected me personally when I would walk up to a guy and he would look me up and down and say, no thanks. . . . I would start feeling down on myself, what's wrong with me, my boobs aren't big enough, my hair's not blonde enough, I'm not tall enough, I'm not thin enough. . . . I'd start picking apart my body. I'd sit in the dressing room, wondering: what can I change about myself, to make myself more appealing to these guys?

It would appear from the above notation, that stripping is well entrenched within a network of subjugation, which operates under patriarchy. In addition, Wesely (2006) reports on how these women are not only objectified, but how intense the patriarchal commodification of the body can be. In fact, many of the women found in her study either had serious thoughts of body modification or have had it done. In some instances patrons would go as far as to buy special costumes for their favourite dancer or even pay for her plastic surgery:

> I had this guy that used to come into the club, he was my customer, he would give me money all the time. So once I was like, I've always wanted a tummy tuck, just picture me with a tummy tuck. And he was like, yeah, you'd look so good. I was like, I need the money to do it, and he was like, you want me to get you a tummy tuck? I was like, will you, please? So he did get me a tummy tuck, which costs about $5000 (Wesley, 2006; 655).

It would be interesting to know what the patron thought about the process. Would he then view the dancer then as belonging to him due to this so-called gift?

In addition, Karandikar and Prospéro (2009) in their research, indicate that strippers are even seen to be at risk of abuse due to their work, either intimately or commercially (by means of management and the cliental). Many strippers, according to them, do not even report any form of abuse as they fear intimidation or ridicule from law enforcement officers. For

Karandikar and Prospéro (2009) many women in this profession suffer from physical, emotional and psychological strain, which often results in them utilising drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism. This was also found to be true in my experience; hence the literature looks to the psychological domain of stripping.

2.3

Part3

Smoke and mirrors: The self and the portrayed self

As this is a psychological study (and as most of the literature presented here comes from a more sociological perspective) one has to pay careful attention to the psychological phenomological meanings that stripping has on the stripper. As seen in the aforementioned discussion on the perceived experiences of strippers one cannot deny that the nature of their work opens them up to a wide variety of negative psychological experiences. As Price (2008) noted earlier the role allows for a wide variety of abuses. Barton (2007; 581) for example reported the experience of one such stripper:

> The job is bad, because you have to deal with the customers who can be problematic and rude. Most of the time, the customers are okay, but that one bad apple can really ruin your day. I guess they feel like the normal laws of etiquette that govern any other social or business interaction are suspended there. It is okay to call someone a bad name or use foul language. They'll say, "Turn around bitch, I want to see your ass. I'm paying."

Such a remark would instantly leave one feeling degraded. Here Barton (2007) states that often, for these women, the emotional contact with the clients leads to stress management techniques that are as problematic as the stress itself, and many engage in dissociative techniques to cope. As stripping is an act that creates the illusion of lust and desire, it often involves the process of convincing oneself, and for Barton (2006, 2007) strippers often draw from a pool of psychological defences to enable them to do so. Some defences include dissociation, transference, projection and denial.

According to McWilliams (1994) defences are often confused with being negative responses to external and internal pressures. However, they are the methods employed by the psyche to deal with the occurrences of everyday life. In extreme cases they may manifest negatively and the person may rely on more immature defences as opposed to more mature ones to deal with stressors. The perception gathered in the literature speaks to the management of stripping exacting a toll on the psyche of women in this profession or as Barton (2007) illustrates, many strippers find it difficult stop dancing even when it is destructive to their psyche. Some project the negative stereotypes labelled to strippers onto others in the profession instead of taking it into the conception of self (Barton, 2007; McWilliams, 1994).

Projection and transference are utilised to externalise internal conflicts as a result of cognitive dissonance (McWilliams, 1994); which seems an appropriate defence that is utilised in this case in order to deal with the ideological pressure of striptease.

Another common defence is that of dissociation. McWilliams (1994) argues that dissociation is an oddly invisible defence that may require a separation of certain acts from oneself or even the creation of an alternative sense of self. This is quite an interesting defence as for Goffman (1961) identity is created in every moment and that there can never be a real self, only a self in relation to situations and sets of relations. However, McWilliams (1994) articulates that under the right conditions and pressures an alternative sense of self may come in conflict with the perceived true self. This is when the defences become maladaptive. Take the following scenario, as seen in Barton (2007; 588), with a dancer called April who was concerned that Ariel (her stage persona) was taking over her life;

> "April was slipping away and that Ariel was becoming more dominant—not only when she was stripping, but in the rest of her life as well: I think Ariel did the first interview. You could probably play the two tapes together and even see a significant voice change. I was having a character conflict because April had just about disappeared, and then, all at once, Ariel was the only person I was dealing with. I was two separate people. I had to learn to integrate the good qualities of Ariel into my life, the good things."

It is quite evident from the above assertion the act of striptease requires that the women who engage in this form of labour have to play a difficult game of smoke and mirrors with heavy psychological implications. As stripping is an act to elaborate the sexual desire and fantasy it seems to rely heavily on the persuasion of the self before others, thus requiring deep psychological and emotional sacrifices (Barton, 2006).

Yet are such experiences universal? Barton and Wesely both speak to the experiences of strippers as a way of giving a voice to those who often go unheard, and like most literature around sex-work it reveals the precarious nature of the profession. Much of the literature is located in the high-risk world of low-end strip clubs. For Skipper and McCaghy (1978) there is a difference between high-end sex-work and low-end sex-work. Each have a cliental and setting that poses different experiences for those who work there. Such experiences are not usually spoken about as most of the research speaks to the more negative experiences of sexualised-work. Barton (2007) herself notes that the character of strippers at high-end may be different. Some may even be graduates earning extra money as opposed to those who have

limited choice in the matter. This concept of choice was another reason why I thought it important to conduct research into the high-end world due to the fact that it may speak to a lifestyle choice for the women involved in the stripping arena, where they had chosen to become strippers for highly different reasons. This was not to say, as covered in our conceptualisation, that the high-end is without the same or similar risk factors, but rather it would be interesting to investigate it, especially in the South African context. What I found was an experience that was mostly different to that of the low-end as reported in the literature. In fact all the participants interviewed here had spoken to having a positive experience of stripping, enjoying the thrill of it. They acknowledged that such risks did exist, but within the high-end it is less pronounced and that if the stripper was not careful she would find herself in such precarious conditions. However, unlike the low-end this is through her own doing:

> *You do find that there are girls who end up doing more... yeah I think as long as you have your head on right, then it's okay, but like I said; a lot of people can lose themselves along the way (Stephanie).*

In addition, Stephanie pointed out that once you start doing more (specifically sex or sexual acts) you open yourself up to a lot more of the dangers in the profession, as the clubs do not condone the solicitation of sex.

Stripping as emotional labour

There exists a theoretical framework that may prove essentially useful in the exploration of sense making by those who engage in stripping. As this study is mainly focussed as an explorative analysis with an inductive nature; the literature points to a deeply emotional component to stripping as a labour form. Therefore, this study will utilise the concept of emotional labour as a method to investigate the psychological implications of striptease.

Arlie Hochschild (1983) in her book entitled '*The Managed Heart*,' speaks to the idea of Emotional Labour. The process of emotional labour requires one to induce or suppress emotions in order to create, maintain and sustain the continence and state of mental being that will elicit in others the sense of being cared for. It entails two levels of acting. Firstly there is superficial or surface acting which speaks to a dissonance between portrayed emotional states and the actual emotional state. Secondly, deep acting which requires a more imaginative approach in training the internal self to believe that the required emotional state was actually

real. The latter acting is real acting for Hochschild. Hochschild (1983) specifies that deep acting on a daily basis may lead to the actual dissociation from one's true emotions. The April/Ariel issue shown earlier can be illustrative of this acting. Hochschild warns that one may run the risk of estrangement from one's ability to respond to events and experiences as one normally would as this form of acting leads to the estrangement or alienation from one's own emotional base.

Emotional labour is not without its critiques. Sharon Bolton (2005) believes that emotional labour as a concept has been so hyped up that most research into labour forms that require emotional engagement has rushed to use it to explore emotional dissonance. She claims that one should question the idea of capitalism successfully appropriating emotions as a labour form and commodifying it via "the commercialization of intimate life" (Bolton, 2005: 2). In addition she critiques that emotional labour does not account for real emotion that may arise in the course of service work. Yet in Brook's (2009) critique of Bolton he argues that theorists such as her tend to conflate the actual sale of emotion, as Hochschild noted, with emotions that arise from interaction. For Brook (2009) Hochschild speaks to the emotions that are created as part of labour power in service based work. Hence, the creation of desire to sell the fantasy of striptease speaks directly to the process of emotional labour.

Previous Research positions

Experience and phenomological research and Feminism

It may be worth mentioning at this point that most of the research covered here is of a phenomological explorative nature. For Sokolowski (2000) phenomological research is directed towards the orientation of capturing human experiential information. It is based on the idea of capturing experiences as part of the social milieu. Yet Silverman (2004) questions this, arguing that experiences cannot really ever be obtained through most conventional techniques as experience is often reported in retrospect. He argues that the result of exploration into the phenomological realm relies on information that processed as meaningful to the participants and this comes as per the reflection process. Because of this Silverman (2004) is of the opinion that one should be careful of the knowledge claims posited when it comes to studies that involves perceived experiences. However such a critique allows for one of the main thrusts of this study as most of the feminist studies into the realm of stripping report it as merely a manner of patriarchal domination with the utilization of experiential

information to validate such claims. For Holstein and Gubrium (2004) the researcher actively creates the context within which experiential date is collected (interviews or focus groups and the like). Therefore, when participants are asked about their experiences they are often part of the meaning making process as they claim that sometimes 'context' is only placed onto experience once someone is questioned about it. For Schegloff (1997) qualitative inquiry must stay true to the data and often relies too heavily on inferential processes to explain the experiences reported by research participants. This means that unless participants mention an issue one cannot merely infer that it is a reality expressed by respondents. With that in mind claims about patriarchal oppression, especially when it comes to sexualised work, must be validated by the evidence provided in the data. Schegloff (1997) notes, that many qualitative studies do not employ this level of scrutiny and often make knowledge claims that are not actually found in the evidence. Therefore, can stripping be seen as a liberating practice as Wesely expresses? Can stripping be empowering to woman, just as it is seen as subjugatory? I endeavour to address this later in the analysis through a more interpretative phenomenological position which draws on my own interpretations of the reported experiences.

It is important to gain insight into more than one avenue of research when it comes to striptease as Shaver (2005) claims, as it means that in order to reconstitute sexualised work as a service based work form one needs to illuminate all aspects of it. As Foucault (1982) noted we cannot privy one set of knowledge over another. In this case, even though the predominant feminist literature is of the idea of stripping as demeaning to women, one may run the risk of further subjugating them by only representing one side of their knowledge base. As seen earlier in De Beauviour (1997) women can utilise their freedom of choice to transcend existing notions of patriarchal subjugation and in this lies empowerment and liberation. From a liberal feminist perspective the challenging of patriarchal norms, especially about female docility and fragility may be important to equality, stripping does by all means challenge such norms (Beasley, 1999; Wesely, 2006). For the sake of clarity, high-end striptease seemed to allow for such relations to exist, especially when stripping for such women is a choice.

An important caveat to this research is not to discount mainstream feminist literature on the topic of stripping and female objectification, but rather to gain and adequate understanding about their identity form. Wesely (2006) herself critiques feminist writings when it comes to

stripping as it lack fluidity when claiming that women's experiences are unique to their position within patriarchy and fails to account for women's experiences of their body. Wesely (2006: 149) notes that even as an act, stripping objectifies women, but she stresses that there does exist a notion of liberation that needs to be explored;

> My fantasy: I wanted to do this job too. I wanted to look out over the crowd and have enough space to move, put my energy out there, get people psyched up, bend and twist and sweat, feeling the crescendo of the beat right before it breaks. I can lose myself in it, and it's the only time that happens—my escape.

Some may argue that her desire was merely a reflection of her privileged position as a researcher and in fact even her own colleagues questioned her feminist positioning, taking the hard and often one-dimensional view of feminism as opposition (Wesely, 2006). In her approach Wesely brings something to the fore; what if some women actually enjoy this form of work? Should their perceptions not be explored? In fact as Barton (2007) notes the more strippers are treated poorly as a subjugated group, the more they expect it (docility) and the harder it is to constitute positive change.

Stripping and Male Stripping in South Africa

Not much is reported, in the literature about the nature of stripping in South Africa. Most studies in the South African perspective are on the nature of prostitution (Wojcicki, 2002). The importance of studying stripping in the African context for Wojcicki (2002) is because sex-work takes a slightly different position here than in that of western societies, as in some cultures women are able to escape the identity of sex-work and others are even empowered through it. In Nigeria for instance, the Hausa women enjoy autonomy afforded to them by means of sex-work while in Uganda sex workers use their high income to invest in community investment (Wojcicki, 2002). Hence, it was of importance to understand how stripping as sexualised-work presents itself in South Africa and whether high-end stripping has the ability to give women a liberatory choice in some instances. In my research this seems to be the case. Stripping has allowed some form of financial freedom that all of my participants seemed to enjoy. Most of them argued that the money was the biggest reason they chose to strip. Furthermore, as this study was predominantly focused patriarchal relations of domination over the female stripper no male strippers were utilised. This is merely due to that fact that within male stripping different elements may arise such as

masculinity as identity, heternomativity and homosexuality which is beyond the scope of this current research (Margolis & Arnold, 1993). Some of the literature about it poses male stripping as a subjugated form of striptease under the predominance of female stripping, yet if the literature discussed here is true, then how is the male stripper's subjugation equivalent to the female stripper's subjugation? This requires an explorative and comparative analysis which is not what this current study aims to achieve.

With the above literature in mind this study posited the following research questions;

Research Questions

1. What are perceived experiences held by strippers in high-end stripping in Johannesburg?
2. How do these strippers in the South African context handle the emotional demands of their job psychologically?
3. Do strippers in the high-end have more control in their work place as those seen in the literature?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

As the literature has noted, most of the previous research has been that of a qualitative nature. However, such research has either been about the negative implications of sex work in general or about low-end striptease—namely posited from a sociological framework. These studies have been housed in the phenomological paradigm where epistemological discourse has placed value on qualifying the experience of strippers or sex workers in general (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). This is an inductive process, which aims to be of an explorative nature to establish emergent themes (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). Yet when we understand this position in the face of the literature covered thus far, one cannot help but notice that the main shortcoming of this paradigmatic approach is the assumption about the gathering of such experiential information. For Silverman (2004) the validity of such an assumption cannot by conventional means extract the real phenomological experiences of people, merely their own representations of experience. Therefore he questions the knowledge claims made on such assumptions. This proves counterproductive to the claims of the interpretivist position that aims to gain understanding about experiences and the fluidity of meaning, as knowledge claims cannot conflate actual experience with sense making (Silverman, 2004; Bhana and Kanjee, 2001). Bhana and Kanjee (2001; 144) argue that "the experiences of people and the meaning that is attached to phenomena are completely overlooked," and hence it is important to investigate the way they make sense of experience. In essence, experience is important but we should focus on the actual methods utilised on the sense making of experiences as opposed to experience itself.

As the analysis is directed towards the subjective meaning making of striptease on strippers and how they make sense of their experiences I employ a Hermeneutic, or interpretive position. This approach, as seen with previous research utilised on the topic, is based on the assumption that human behaviour is situated and understood according to the context that it is found in (Bhana and Kanjee, 2001). For Bhana and Kanjee (2001; 142) "human action can only acquire meaning among people who share the same meaning systems." Hence, it was important to investigate the knowledge exclusive to strippers as they are often, as with sex workers, found in the periphery of society, looking in.

Based on this position, the hermeneutic lens notes that the production of knowledge is not for generalisation but for illumination, hence why it is an ideal position for such research as it additionally aims to illuminate the psychological defences at play in striptease (Bhana and Kanjee, 2001). Any other method would not allow for this process as effectively. However, that is not to say that the approach is without flaws. As Newman (1997) notes, the inductive approach may be embedded in a system of meaning, yet it lacks objectivity. This study aimed to overcome this limitation by reporting the absolute importance of the researcher as a critical component to research. By keeping to the true understanding of reflexivity, my position as the researcher entailed the understanding of my role as influential in the interaction with my participants, my construction of the participants as strippers and the implications of such identification practices (Potter & Hepburn, 2007). As for Potter and Hepburn (2007) the researcher actively constructs his/her participant as an identity form and interactions are based on that process. Hence, detailed field notes and reflections were useful in maintaining some form objectivity. However, Usher (1996) believes that one should not merely avoid personal feelings or discard them as they can be utilised to attain deeper understanding. As the proposed position of the researcher is one that understands the importance of the actual interaction with participants. Usher's logic proved a useful technique in the collection of data in this study as many of my own experiences were instrumental to the write-up given here. In fact chapter 4 will aim to illustrate some of my own experiences at strip clubs in Johannesburg.

In keeping with the spirit of the above discussion this analysis proposes the following methodological considerations. This position is held in expectation that it will yield valuable data that is meaning rich and ethically sound. I aimed to, in this study, incorporate previous research findings as a primary source of information and position the research from a slight, but vital understanding of looking at the ways in which people make sense of their lives. This is in opposition to the misunderstanding that reports on experiences equate to actual experiences seen by many of the authors seen above. Hence, with regards to what has already been said, I propose that an interpretive phenomological stance will be taken in the analysis of the data. This position validates the importance of my participants make sense of the interactive realities, focussing on the use *freedom of choice* in their everyday lives (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Yet that freedom is situational and it is this interaction that provides meaning. It is in the interpretation of the stripper's narratives that is important in this study (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Participants

As the research aimed at investigating the psychological experiences of stripping on women in such work, the proposed sample is that of six participants currently working as strippers in Johannesburg, South Africa. However as with the nature of field work, what one proposes does not necessarily equate to what one gets (Mandel, 2003). As a result I was only able to attain a sample of four women within the time constraints of this study. However, they were women from the high-end sector of striptease in Johannesburg. This allowed me to investigate whether experiences and psychological defences are the same for such a pool and they are with the reported literature. The sampling method was that of snow-ball sampling, due to the fact that it is a highly difficult pool of participants to obtain. Hence I had managed to get hold of one participant who then introduced me to other women who were willing to participate. Another reason for the utilisation of those in high-end striptease was to unpack the secondary aim of this study of investigating the impact of stripping in support of lifestyle choice and the psychological defences involved.

Inclusion criteria was on the basis that the women were at least eighteen-years (18) and older. Participants under the age of eighteen were excluded from participation. None English speaking participants were excluded as well (see procedure). I had hoped for participants currently working as strippers at a high-end strip club in Johannesburg. However, the reality of research saw me interviewing two women currently working as strippers and two that had recently stopped. Participants did not report having had any psychological problems that they were aware of or having had any treatment which may have impaired their participation.

Data Collection

The study utilised semi-structured interviews that were audio taped for each participant. On a technical basis semi-structured interviews provided flexibility which allowed participants the space to explore their ways of making meaning about their experiences (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001), while still adhering to a systematic interview schedule that guided the process. Not every question posited on the questionnaire was utilised as the interview was tailored for each participant and adhering to themes applicable to this study. The usage of audio recording provided me with the freedom to observe and engage with my participants. Potter and Hepburn (2007) are of the opinion that interviews must be of an active nature, conversation-based, thus allowing the participants the freedom of not feeling objectified. This was a beneficial point for me as my participants felt more at ease talking to me in the knowledge

that I fully listened to them and participated in discussion-like manner, rather than milling through a questionnaire. In addition, the audio recordings ensured that I could stay true to the information gathered. Schegloff (1997) notes that research must be driven by the data and not by inferences, as inferences remove a sense of truth from the interaction with research participation. One may then run the risk of misrepresenting those being investigated, which is counter conducive to the purpose interpretivist approaches. Less obvious methods employed was the usage of extensive pauses between questions to allow the participant a chance to elaborate or exemplify their answers and experiences. I endeavoured to make observations as a supplementary to the responses of the participants and have reported these in my findings. Such additional markers allowed for an enhancement of the data collected by incorporating the 'unsaid'. I kept detailed field notes and reflection pieces to note my own perceptions and feelings about the process and research in general (Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas, 2003). These include reflection of pre and post interviews. An interview schedule was prepared in advance with each interview (See Appendix A).

Procedure

I had identified an acquaintance of mine that was friendly with a female working in striptease at an upmarket (high-end) strip club in Johannesburg. Through this acquaintance I was able to establish contact with this woman, who by means of snowballing, allowed for contact with others who were willing to participate in my research. This was intended as a protective measure for myself, as to ensure that I was well protected from any harm by approaching these women at strip clubs. It was also to ensure a better means of participation by these women, who may have been more suspicious of my intentions otherwise. Once access was granted I approached the participants and discussed the research with them and the nature of the study and invited them to participate in it (See information sheet, Appendix B). Once the participants were informed and consent had been granted (See consent sheet, Appendix C), I commenced with the interviews. In addition as my acquaintance is on friendly terms with participants I was relatively sure that there was no coercion that took place, as the acquaintance does not have any relation to the strip club or owner other than his friendship with the participants.

The interviews were held privately, in a quiet space in a public area most convenient to the participants at a time that was appropriate to them. This was to ensure that the participant was

as safe and comfortable as possible, removing any inconvenient costs involved in participating. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and permission was granted by the participants for audio tape recording (See consent sheet, Appendix D). Interviews took place in English as both myself and the participants were English mother tongue speakers. The interviews were positioned around the participant's perceptions of the psychological and emotional experiences of their work within the framework of emotional labour. In one case two of the participants were uncomfortable meeting me by themselves and decided to come to meet me together. Although this was not part of the intended procedure, I found value in this as there was a sense of identification and confirmation of experiences expressed in these interviews, almost in line with the benefits of focus group analysis (Smithson, 2000). I have utilised this interaction where appropriate as it is my position, as stated earlier, to see to the benefit of interaction in the construction of meaning.

Data Analysis

Earlier it was stated the nature of this analysis is that of a qualitative manner, which aims to be noted as phenomenological in nature in order to delve into the perceived experience of striptease (Lorkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Buhlungu, 2001). With this in mind I will utilise an interpretative phenomenological approach. The reason for such an approach is to go further than just describing the experiences of strippers in the South African context, but to unpack the meaning made of their experiences by these women (Lopez & Willis, 2004). The participant's accounts of their understandings and perceptions of the psychological impact of their work were transcribed and analysed into groupings around existing or emergent themes around this prospect. These included issues of emancipation, psychological experiences and emotional labour, to name but a few. To further unpack this position I utilise the basic principles of thematic content analysis to add themes to the interpretations in order to address the question posed in this study.

Hence, after the data was collected it was analysed through a process of thematic content analysis to thematically house my interpretations according to the aims of this research. Even though there is much discussion about the nature of thematic content analysis and its usage it has the ability to describe data and interpret various components of the research topic into a concise thematic format (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is important due to the nature of this study. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), as well as Attride-Stirling (2001), thematic

content analysis works through a manner of thematic networks that work to identify, analyse and give detailed reports to patterns that may present themselves in the data. Thematic content analysis allowed for such relations in data and the coding thereof. I hope, through this method of coding the content thematically, to derive the sense of meaning made by strippers at the high-end. The meaning spoken to in this piece, underpinned by the sense of reality held by my participants, will form the interpretive thrust of this study. The aims is to understand what their "narratives imply about," their everyday experiences as stripper (Lopez & Willis, 2004; 729). Due to the proposed nature of my research one can clearly note that such an approach would justly fit the investigation of meaning making and the effects the experiences of striptease on the stripper's psyche. The discussion is themed as well, as seen with the literature reviewed thus far, and as summarised in the interview schedule.

Thematic content analysis is of the position to try and negotiate between essentialism and constructionist paradigms and work to provide the space for the inexperienced researcher to develop the study, as it is rigid and provides data grouping of a workable and expandable nature (Braun & Clark, 2006; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Bryman, 2004). The following procedure, as seen in Braun and Clark (2006), was utilised to code and write up the final report. Firstly, once interview data was collected I began by transcribing the data and superficially unpacking elements that emerged. Then, in relation to the thematic nature of the analysis, the data was coded and linked to potential themes. The themes and coded data were reviewed and reworked in order to establish and operational "thematic 'map' of analysis," which allowed for the refinement of specific themes and the overall story which the analysis aimed to tell (Braun & Clark, 2006; 87). Following these steps this analysis aimed to generate a clear understanding of each theme and produce a report that satisfactorily attempts to unpack the perceived experiences of women in striptease. The data was checked by means of my supervisor. As Adler and Detzner (1995) noted this is a form of triangulation that allows for accurate transcription and data rich descriptions. In addition to thematic content analysis I have, once interviews were transcribed, manually utilise *Jefferson light* conversation analysis to unpack certain aspects of the interview that were information rich (Jefferson, 2004). Conversation analysis in the light form served as another manner of triangulations in order to substantiate the findings presented in this final research report (Jefferson, 2004). Conversation analysis, only serves as an additional tool of analysis in this report and a key has been provided (see Appendix F).

In addition the data was collected, transcribed and coded by myself and was done manually. Only I have access to the original recordings, while my supervisor was allowed access to the transcripts. The reason for this allotment is for the purpose of intercoder reliability. The original data was kept safe under password protection software, especially due to the sensitive nature of the study, and was destroyed once analysis was completed. The transcriptions will be kept and pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant.

The findings were made available to my supervisor, external examiners and the University of the Witwatersrand psychology department. In addition, the findings may be refined for publication—a fact which was taken up in the participants' consent. To protect the participants, original transcripts were made available to them once transcribed in order to ensure they are well represented and the research report will be made available to them as well for similar concerns. None of them have reported any concern with the information presented here.

Ethical Consideration

This study, without a doubt, deals with a vulnerable group. In addition it deals with the sensitive topic of striptease in South Africa. It was important that participants were well informed of their rights and that I, as the researcher, ensured their safety and anonymity. In this case anonymity was partially guaranteed due to the utilization of an acquaintance known to both myself and participants.

In terms of the process, the interviews were only conducted with participants once the University of the Witwatersrand had awarded ethical clearance to the study and a certificate of permission has been granted to conduct the proposed research. The proposed participants (professional strippers) were required to give informed consent in order to be interviewed (see Appendix C).

Participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study by means of the participant information sheet and that interviews and data given will be dealt with confidentially (See Appendix A and C). Each participant was free to answer those questions that she deemed appropriate. For any reason (and at any time during the interview), the participant was free to terminate the interview if she wished to do so. Each participant was notified of the audio

recording of the interview and was free to withdraw their participation at any time if she so wished to do so.

In addition, with further regards to confidentiality, the participants were informed that for the duration of the research all of the interview transcripts and recordings would be stored in a secure location under password protection and original data would be destroyed on completion of the research, while the transcripts would be kept. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to assure anonymity.

The participants were made aware that the interviews may have raised highly emotive or psychologically distressful/discomforting issues. As one cannot know for certain the risk factor involved in the high-end stripping arena, confidentiality was very important as not to further create problems with this already vulnerable group of women. Some ethical issues that may have presented themselves in this vein may have been issues of rape, or coercion, or abuse that may have been revealed during the interview. Luckily, this was not the case.

Where counseling or debriefing was needed, adequate counseling referrals were arranged. Each participant was be given the contact details for the Emthonjeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), which offers free counseling on Thursdays. In addition they were given the contact details of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (telephonic-based help-line). Participants were made aware that participating did not in any way place them in an advantage or disadvantage and that their identities would be kept safe, especially if the report is to be published in an academic journal or within relation to their form of employment. If the participants had any questions about the research, my contact details were provided on the consent forms and information sheets. The full research report will be made available to them upon request.

With regards to the researcher's acquaintance, it is important to know that he was both friendly with myself and the participants. Therefore it was important that I had paid specific attention to what information each participant was comfortable with our mutual acquaintance knowing. This may be countered by the fact that original transcripts were made available to the participants and that they were free to edit out any information they were uncomfortable sharing. In such a case anonymity cannot be totally guaranteed, but was significantly accounted for.

In another moment Alice was through the glass,
and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room.
The very first thing she did was to look
whether there was a fire in the fireplace,
and she was quite pleased to find that there was a real one,
blazing away as brightly as the one she had left behind



Chapter 4 and 5 Analysis

Chapter 4

Observations in the high-end

Through the looking glass and what I found there

Anthropological research has been at the cornerstone of investigating social exchange, societies, cultures and subcultures of society (Delaney, 2005). In fact, many of the social sciences have drawn much of their investigative techniques in the social realm from anthropology (Delaney, 2005). For Delaney (2005) the use of data rich explanation has gone a far way to shape the way in which analysis is done. My analysis hopefully adheres to such a principle and is broken up into two sections. The first is an observational account of my own experiences in one of the elite strip clubs in Johannesburg. For purposes of this analysis we refer to it as *The Club.* The second part looks into the actual interviews with my participants.

The reason why I have decided on such a split is due to the thematised information I was privy to whilst interviewing my participants. Many of them had spoken to things that were mentioned in the literature, but with some interesting insight to help direct my observation. I found it fruitful to interview my participants first, before going to the strip clubs, as their insight to the club scene allowed me access to a knowledge that may have been lost to me otherwise. I was able to see *the* somewhat ritualistic aspect to stripping, as seen in the literature. This allowed me to understand how it operates in a South African setting. It also provided me with a form of triangulation of which I was able to confirm some of their experiences with my own observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Another form of triangulation that I will occasionally employ here (in addition to thematic content analysis) is Jefferson-light Conversation Analysis to better explore the interpretive phenomological position of this study, in order to pick at tone and inclination to indicate not only how I drew evidence from the interaction with my participants, but, in addition, how their reality is constructed and made sense of (Jefferson, 2004; Silverman, 2004).

I must begin by saying that it was not easy keeping extensive field notes while I was at The Club, as I did not want to draw too much attention to myself as a researcher. My exploration of this particular club was at the suggestion of the women I interviewed. They claimed that it

was a very diverse setting and that unlike other strip clubs the women there were "prettier and more entertaining," claims Eva. Eva is a 26-year-old brunette undergraduate student in Johannesburg who moonlights as a stripper from time to time to help with her university tuition. "Many of the girls there are smart and interesting. Some are even from Eastern Europe or somewhere like that," continued Eva as we spoke anecdotally about my interests in striptease after the interview. She described the club setting as an interesting experience and that there were many things to look out for. These included the kinds of people that were there, the sort of 'rituals' when it came to getting a customer to commit to a private show and how the women get their commission. In addition I found other more interesting elements that I did not expect to find in such a setting. The following account is of my own experiences as a customer at The Club.

4.1

Being a Lady in the court of the Red Queen

The high-end of Striptease

Our story begins by stepping through the looking glass. On the one side you find the social world that is filled with set norms of morality and on the other an 'underland' that is a subset of reality with its own norms and valued practices (Jones, 1980; Valverde & Dias Barrero, 2002). These norms include entering into this subset of society. On entering the establishment, one finds that the literature is correct about the entrance fee (see Barton, 2006). The high-end is more expensive. I paid about R400.00 for entrance; however a small consolation is that meals are included in the cover fee, but not drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) as much of the commission charged is from the price paid on alcohol. There is a separation between the main lounge area and an area that is used to entertain dinner parties, business conferences and post strip show meals and refreshments for both strippers and patrons alike. I found this particularly interesting as much of the literature spoke to how women in striptease found their employment of a precarious nature (Barton, 2006). Therefore, it was surprising to see how well these women were treated at The Club. Here, I found that many of the strippers, whilst waiting for their scheduled stage time, sat and dined with other people working there (including male and female managers, kitchen staff and even bouncers) and that often they would sit and talk to some of the customers over supper.

The dining hall lavishly caters to all sorts of tastes from a breakfast buffet to a Sunday lunch buffet. No expense was spared to provide such decadence. The restrooms are of an exceptional nature, each cubicle the size of two or three in a normal setting. After freshening up one has a wide variety of expensive perfumes/colognes to either use or experiment with. In essence this was not what I had expected from such an establishment. I expected more of a seedy atmosphere with people you would not necessarily associate with on a normal day. The Club provided, to my understanding, an environment of decadence for strippers and patrons alike. Stephanie, a very attractive blonde Portuguese woman in her late twenties confirmed my observation:

> *For example, there will be certain clubs that like uhm "you're here to make money," so talk, but if you see if you're not going to make money or if you see that there is a certain time limit, talk to them, but if they don't ask for a dance within a certain time frame, okay, rather move on. Give the other girls a chance to work, rotation...move, move, move money, money, money.*
>
> *But not all places are like that. Some (like The Club) you have the freedom to walk around, do as you please. Talk to who you please, don't talk to whom you don't please. Uhm, yeah there's a lot of freedom to—as long as you conduct yourself in a classy,* ***lady-like fashion***

Not only does she speak to the literature about the nature of stripping, in relation to the low-end, there seems to be monetary to drive such establishments—in an almost assembly-line fashion. In the low-end, the sale of striptease is merely a service. Yet at this particular club it was different, more interaction-based. Yet what I found appealing in her explanation was the notion of being ***lady-like.*** This is a very interesting social construction as it embodies the norms of patriarchal discourse. 'Ladies' are by definition, classy and with Stephanie's proposition here, it is almost virtuous (Jordanova, 1980). It was not only Stephanie that noted this. Tanya, who is two years younger than Stephanie with jet-black hair and porcelain skin also described herself as being lady-like, and with that comes "etiquette...(as a lady) knows how to communicate with other people. She is graceful and has an air of perfection." Again this is laden with patriarchal discourse and that 'perfection,' for a woman lies within this notion of being lady-like. However, this was the reality of my experience of The Club as many woman held themselves with an air of sophistication and grace, especially when they walked about and talked to patrons of the club. The conviction held by these two women, meant that they believed this and I found that my own educative biases came to the fore when I regarded this reality. I found myself questioning the validity of their statements based on my

feminist background. I saw them in relations to my understanding of patriarchy instead of the meanings that they attached to their experiences. This is exactly what Schegloff (1997) warns against: the risk of the own assertion of one's own reality on the experiences of those being researched. This is a bias that Quinlivan (2008) questions, as she too found herself entrenched within her research into education at an 'all-girls' school and about subjugation that she had perceived, instead of the unique experiences of her participants and how they shaped their reality.

An interesting finding on *being a lady* was with the notion of patriarchy allotting for spaces for the 'good woman' and 'the bad woman.' It is worth remembering that the literature noted that striptease is firmly in the realm of the bad woman (Price, 2009), I found that with this experience of being lady-like, reported by both Stephanie and Tanya—as well as my own experience of The Club, one could not deny that the notion of *lady-like desire* that was being played out here. This portrayal was not on the level of moralistic vulgarity, but comparable to descriptions of geisha culture (Foreman, 2008) where women were entertainers and companions for the night. They held themselves in a respectful manner and teased and tantalised. As Stephanie noted, it was about "seduction" through fantasy. However, geisha culture is seen as an exceptional art form and a way of life (Foreman, 2008), whilst striptease is still often perceived in a moralistically negative light (Price, 2009). Being in such a setting it was hard for me to understand (barring the obvious reservations about the taboo of striptease) why it was that so little research had been been done this form of work in South Africa. Many of the women I saw were South African; The Club seemed to cater to many ethnicities. Not just merely just white men. I found many black men as well who were being spoken to by black strippers in a fashion that would not be condoned in traditionally conservative African culture (Wojcicki, 2002).

If striptease is conceived as broadly a western construct and performance, it may provide a site for further research into what the modern day black South African male perceives it be from a cultural perspective. It has been often argued that many western activities, especially when it comes to sex, sexualised activities and differing sexualities (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexuality) are not part of African culture or tradition (Francis & Mbisi, 2011). Yet, on understanding this, one cannot assume that the concept of what is feminine and masculine in the African setting is universal. In fact, such conceptions are deeply entrenched in various

other factors such as generational influences and various intersecting traditions and beliefs that exist in the African context (Wojcicki, 2002).

4.2

The Fantastical Underland

The Stripper

The Club's set-up is stereotypical of the commercial strip club setting with loud and sometimes popular music. The general lighting is dim, with bright flashes from the stage lights that are reflected with the use of mirrors and mirror balls sending the fast flashing lights rapidly across the place. The stage is surrounded by booths and two/three seater tables with chairs. The stage itself is an elevated, circular platform with two poles placed opposite one another, while a smaller circle surrounding it is used as a waiting area for the women who are about to perform. As confirmed by the women I interviewed, there is not much choice granted in the kind of song that each stripper performs to, but they do have control over their own stage time. The strippers are the main form of entertainment at the club. Based on this, each woman has normally a two song stage-time and begins her performance fully clothed for the first song and then slowly and sensually exposes her breasts with the second. The performance of the stripper is very much ritualistic, or as Delaney (2005) comes to understand it, a culturally based action that conveys a message or meaning and in this case the enticement of sexual fantasy (Barton, 2007). It was easier to spot the newcomers to the stage and for those who were seasoned in the art-form of striptease. The newcomer would simply sashay from side to side around the pole while the first song played and quickly expose herself to the crowd at the beginning of the next. The more experienced stripper would use the elements of the stage to dazzle the audience. Some would do choreographed dancing to the beat of the song and would perform jaw-dropping displays on the pole, whilst simultaneously performing the tease show.

To a newcomer to a strip club there is no pattern to this performance, but luckily for me the women I interviewed taught me that the stage performance is the first part of working the crowd, the beginning of the ritual. As Miranda put it "it's a technique used to **break the ice**." I had wondered what she meant by this and I had then proceed to ask her to elaborate.

> **Miranda**: *For me on stage is more about **advertising yourself**, making eye contact and that sort of thing. Yeah, **it's marketing**. You **break the ice on stage basically**, you know. **Winking at a guy or you know, making him feel like you're dancing just for him.** In the meantime you're doing it for a few guys.*

'**It's marketing**,' very clear and very direct, advertising of a product, or in this case the woman as the fantasy, or as Stephanie notes below, the **ultimate fantasy**. When I asked the other women about this, they agreed. It was a manner of working the crowd.

> **Stephanie***: it's, it's a fantasy world. You get to portray this whole fairytale image. You get to dress up and do your hair and do your make up and be like the* ***ultimate fantasy*** *and—'so it* ***can be a lot of fun.***

It seemed that ***winking at a guy or ...making him feel like you're dancing just for him*** is one of the techniques used to initiate the bartering ritual. It seems that that fantastical ritual is considered fun for these women. Miranda noted that even though she is happy with her life post striptease, she confirms that she had fun doing it and actually "miss(es) it, some times. I miss that rush of being on stage and being the centre of attention, being that fantasy." What is it about this fantasy that makes these women enjoy stripping? Again, it may be the perfection that is tied to that fantasy. One could argue that patriarchy has constructed the role of women in such a way that they cannot live up to it ordinarily (Barton, 2007; Jordanova, 1980), and have to put on an act to be seen in such a way and that the club, as a subculture of society, allows the space for this. If this is the case then it actually articulates something quite unique about the subtlety of gender roles, that even with its insidious nature people preconsciously realise that it is problematic and require such space to create the perfect self and the beauty associated with it (Barton, 2007; Beasley, 1999). This may be isolated in what Stephanie says in the segment below:

> ***Addictive. Extremely addictive****. Uhm, it's very alluring. As a woman, you-'want what every woman really wants* ***is to feel beautiful****. And you get to dress sexy, you get to be sexy. You get to talk to a lot of people. Uhm, you, you get told on an ongoing basis, in every manner and form how beautiful you are. Uhm, how sexy you are, how, how, how.* ***Dreams****. Beautiful words; a lot of beautiful words. So it's* ***very addictive***

What this indicates is that once you are seen as this perfect woman, the feeling of beauty comes with it and this is supposedly what every woman wants. This is a bold statement to make and may even be directed by Stephanie to the broader socialised conception of a gendered self (Beasley, 1999) and with such a setting as a strip club these women are able to achieve this, hence it being **addictive** as you are able to grasp those ***dreams*** of the ideal woman.

In continuation, with regards to the notion of the marketing ritual, Eva said that these are basic techniques and that they were not isolated to the stage. Some women work the floor and will do the same sort of things, "If a girl happens to approach him and the guy is not interested, he can say 'no thanks or just look at the girls on stage." I was fortunate that I had leant this from Eva, because while I was at the club I found one of the women came up to me and started stroking my beard. She said that she had not seen me there before and questioned whether I was from South Africa as I looked exotic ("like from the Middle-East"), as she put it. I laughed and told her I was South African and that I was actually there waiting for a couple of friends. As we spoke, I just kept my eyes on the stage. She saw that I was not interested and went onto the next man who returned her interest and the ritual continued; a few courteous exchanges and then she began her little show for him right next to me. I found myself feeling very uncomfortable when she positioned her one leg (after removing all her clothing) on the wall behind the man and the other firmly grounded while enticingly drawing his attention to her exposed vulva. Tanya gave a clear explanation to what I had witnessed:

> *I used to make like four-and-a-half a night (R4, 500.00). Depending on how many people were there. 'Cos I used to* ***really work hard****. I used to do my dance and move on to the next people, to the next customers.* ***It's about hustling****, so you gotta like go and—e—interact with the people and* ***move along straight away if you are not gonna make any money there.***

Not only is this a very lucrative form of work (as R4,500.00 can easily be someone's entire month's wage), Tanya also indicated that this is a form of **hustling**, where it is about 'working really hard' and 'move (-ing) along straight away if you are not gonna make any money.' Watching them participate in this exchange I did not feel the 'hustle.' Instead what I felt was myself being very self conscious, as if in some small way I had claim to this woman first and in an unspoken way my masculinity was being questioned in this exchange. It was almost as if a 'real man' would have paid for the dance. This could be understood by the subtle way in which masculinity is reproduced, not only are women reified under this patriarchal exchange, but men are socialized to relate to things through a sense of ownership (Martin, 1987). In reading Martin's (1987) work and the works of Valverde and Dias Barrero (2002) the commodification of women is more complex than merely a capitalistic motive, it is engrained within masculinity, the man with the most money and women is more masculine than the one without.

This experience on that basis can even be argued to be emasculating. However, on reflection of this it might have actually been the worth of being a feminist male researcher that made me aware of this deeply masculine relation, something that a female researcher may have not have experienced or even understood. Yet, when I looked around I realised I was not the only one finding this whole experience a daunting one. In fact there was this one man at the club, awaiting his bachelor's party to arrive. He was wearing a little German bar-maid dress and was being enticed by the strippers to join them on stage. He refused with nervous laughter as several women asked him to show them his g-string and when he did they mockingly laughed at him. There was something about this experience that was very interesting. It was almost as if the man had minimal power in this exchange—I delve more into the notion of the reverse of power differentials in the next segment. Ultimately, the interaction between the stripper and the client is about the ritual of sexual fantasy and the work these women do is a method to exploit (in the Marxist understanding of the term) this labour form. It is subtle and requires intense acting of the part of the woman to convince the client to pay for her as a 'fantasy.'

4.3

The power of the Queen of hearts

I was quite taken in by how comfortable the women in the high-end were as compared to those described in the literature. Based on that fact, it was particularly hard to see these women at this particular establishment as vulnerable. It is true that another researcher may prove to discredit this claim, but allow me the opportunity to explain. In understanding the power dynamic that exists in this strip club the literature notes that power is exclusively held by men in the stripping industry (in hard-line feminist reviews), and to an extent that is true here, most of the bouncers are men and most of the clientele were men as well. Yet, there are even moments where masculinity is called into question, as seen with the earlier example of the bachelor's party. The strippers and the hostesses at The Club, however, are women and it seemed that many of the customers that were there by themselves were uneasy towards them. As one man anecdotally said to his friend next to me, "these girls are like the Amazons, hey?!" The Amazons are noted as mythical race of women who ran their own society without the prescribed desires for men and male authority (Du Bois, 1992). They were reportedly very strong and powerful. One could say that their society was a matriarchy if such a matriarchy was on the same level as a patriarchy. However, this customer's response spoke directly to how I was feeling at the time. The only men that seemed to be enjoying themselves were those who were in a group larger than three people and those who were regular to the establishment. With regards to those men in larger groups, it was almost as if the communal masculine identity allowed them the power differential they needed to comfortably objectify these women. What does this then say about masculinity and the power relation that patriarchy imbues in it?

It seemed that in this instance the normal patriarchal relations were suspended as it was very clear which sex was the more intimidatory of the two in the place. Some evidence for this may be seen in Stephanie's account of her experience of men at The Club. She indicated that most of the young and impulsive men want to touch the stripper, "again anyone who is good at it will be like (teasingly) "no-no-no" kind of thing, **"no touching,"** as opposed to other girls who have been in the industry longer with a 'no-bullshit' tolerance will turn around and will be like very snotty." Often the man would realise that a boundary has been set in place. Even with a lap dance, the stripper may touch you or initiate touching, yet the men here seem to know not to do anything. As Tanya indicated earlier she had worked in both the high-end

and the low-end and that with the lower end there is not much control in the work place for the stripper. Yet, as seen earlier, Stephanie believes that there is more freedom at the high-end. As Stephanie noted "there's not many stories where you hear of a guy, where he has taken (a woman) for a (lap) dance. Where he has become too pushy or too this or too that. They **kind of know their bounds from the girls**." These **bounds** seem to be unspoken and, as Stephanie indicated, these boundaries seem to stem from the women in the high-end and not so much from management.

There was a table not too far off from where I sat where there were two women entertaining two men. They sat and laughed and drank together. As Tanya indicated, this again was ploy to get men to spend money; "they think you are interested in them, but it's just to get them to spend more." Again this speaks to the hustling process. From my experience of this, these women are very skilled in making men believe that they are interested in them, as Stephanie noted;

> *Unfortunately what tends to happen is **that they start to develop feeling,** not really understanding the **difference between the fantasy and the reality version**. Uhm and for them it does become a reality version, because for them it's—'they want that in their lives, they want that perfect girl and because they come there for the **girlfriend experience** they tend to think that you really are that into them. **When you are really just playing a role.***

For her this is the clincher, where men are paying for the so-called 'girlfriend experience.' As striptease is about selling the fantasy (Barton, 2007) it seemed to me that the men being entertained by these two women were, in that instance, unable to realise that they had paid these women to entertain them. For them that fantasy was real, evinced by the amount of money they had paid for drinks that night. They had bought several bottles of champagne, which at such an establishment is very expensive (Barton, 2006). In addition it is not uncommon for men to fall in love with the women at such clubs. Miranda had told me that she had in fact met her fiancée working at a strip club. It therefore does seem that in some situations feelings do develop, but as Miranda indicated most of the time these men fall for the role these women play, not the real woman.

It is therefore important to extend the discussion on the fantasy that is created here as it seems to convince the patrons that the attention paid to them by these women is real. The level of such acting must be so intense as to convince these men of their act. The works, of

Wendy Parkins (2000) and Susan Bordo (1993, 1994) makes sense of this through the notion of embodiment and the phenomological experience of the body. For Parkins we learn to understand and make sense of our experiential world through our bodies as an expressive tool and subjective meaning is tied to such experiential embodiment. Bordo clarifies this when she argues that people invest their bodies with meaning through experience and that our bodies are essential in this process. For Bordo (1993; 309), borrowing from the work of Foucault and Bordo, the body is "a practical, direct locus (site) of social control," and that people, especially women spend huge amounts of time managing their bodies and making sense through such management. Yet what is intriguing here is that through this management of the body, people are able to enact different roles deemed appropriate in certain contexts (Goffman, 1990). So in essence, women in a strip club are able to, through their bodies and their experiential understanding of it, don the fantasy and don it well. Goffman (1990) articulated, that roles such as that of the stripper is an established (fantasy) role, but require strict practice to give a performance that is truly informal or spontaneous or convincing enough. It becomes so well expressed that "*they* (men at strip clubs) *tend to think that you really are that into them.* ***When you are really just playing a role***," as Stephanie noted.

The ultimate girlfriend fantasy that the stripper provides require a phenomological understanding of such ideologies and the actual embodiment of them to make it a convincing performance. Hence for Bordo (1994) the body can be seen as a site of experiential meaning making. Yet Goffman (1990) warns that with such dramatizing we have invisible costs; as in order to give a convincing performance, painstaking effort is required (an issue I will later address). In coalescence, the power of the red queen or the stripper at The Club lies within her ability to embody and give life to the fantasy.

4.4

The men of Wonderland (Underland)

I was often taken aback at the happenings in the club, particularly when I went to the dining area. Here I found an assortment of men (and to some extent women as well). Again I was glad I had spoken to the women before going to the strip club. It allowed me the ability to notice the different types of men that seem to frequent South African strip clubs. This was something I had not found in the literature and is a very interesting finding that I explore later. When I asked Eva, for instance, what she thought of the men that visited the club she said the following (please note I utilise conversation analysis here instead of ordinary thematic analysis):

Darrian: What do you think of some of the men that come and watch you perform?
Eva: ↑Do[gs! Hahah]ha, a[ll o]f them. No, I dunno hey.(0.2)
Darrian: [hahahaaha] [well]
You get where I work different sorts. Look some people come for conferences there during the day; because of the food, **°f-uck↑!** It's really good. But, you can get ↑married guys, (clicks tongue) single guys <lonely guys, the young jocks and his buddies and dudes that are about to get married, having a bachelors'

As we noted earlier, Schegloff (1997) argues that findings reported must stay true to the evidence found in the data, yet, as Silverman (2004) pointed out, conversation analysis helps use this evidence to show how reality is constructed by participants. In addition to how, in the interaction between researcher and the researched (Schegloff, 1997), meaning is made. I try to show this here.

From this exchange (line 3), we find that Eva makes use of the common stereotype about men. This is evinced by the inclination with the word 'dogs,' but this is closely followed by laughter. This could indicate that she is aware of the social taboo around strip clubs and the kind of men that go to such places and proceeds to indicate that there are different sorts, not just the stereotypical notion of a man as a cheating dog. As I am familiar with this stereotype I too laughed as seen by the speech overlap in line 4. This for Jefferson (2004) is how speech

can be mapped to show how context can be constructed to illicit meaning. The meaning here is clear, men are often referred to as dogs and that men are expected to visit such spaces.

From line 6-8, we find that there are people who go there for the food. Eva seems to think that the food is amazing, evinced by the soft and drawn out **°f-uck↑!** She then articulates her judgement of those who are married and who come to the club. We see evidence for that in the inclination of ↑married, and coupled with a clicking of the tongue which indicates her disdain. Then her slowly emphasised tone around those who are lonely may be read as a sense of pity for the latter grouping (see line 8, <lonely). Here we find that Eva has assigned meaning to certain elements in her explanation, firstly that men have a stigma attached to them as being dog-like, even though this is a joke, judging by her attitude in line 7 about married men it seems in some cases this may be her true feelings. In addition, and conversely to this, she seems to empathise with the men she has categorised as lonely men. I was very surprised to find that when I was at the club that I could identify such groupings as well and had expressed a similar emotional state as Eva's when it came to those men I saw as 'married' or 'lonely'. She went on to explain then how in such settings your morals often cause you to read things the wrong way. For instance, even though she may not have liked the fact that married men were at the club, when she spoke to one of them things turned out quite differently:

> *I mean I had a guy come in once and he was like, just coming to getting his mind off stuff. He was very stressed about work and his wife.* ***He felt he couldn't talk to his wife about stuff****. Ya, sometimes we are like,* ***like*** *(hahhaha)* ***counsellors****, even marriage counsellors* **.**

It seems that this man had an issue that he felt unable to communicate to his wife; in fact Eva claimed that in such instances the women at the club are able to provide some form of support and may even perceive themselves as **counsellors** as she put it. I intend to explore this thought later in the analysis. However what was interesting about my experience at the club was that I was able to confirm Eva's understanding as whilst I was in the dining hall, not only did I see the kinds of men she spoke of, but at the table next to me sat a group of married guys, each complaining about their families and work situations. What is it then about a strip club that allows men to communicate their emotional states rather than settings such as therapy or even being at home speaking to their families? It is almost as if the latter of two situations is emasculating and the strip club was not. Was this high-end club an area where masculinity could be in a way subverted at times? This occurrence coupled with the power

relation that seems to be allotted to the women in the high-end may actually provide evidence for such a claim. Yet, in a less critical vein, the Club setting seems to be a site of homosociality, or male-to-male social boding (Flood, 2008). It seems that setting such as strip clubs provide a supportive network that cushions masculinity and allows a softer, gentler male performance to arise (Bird, 1996). The hegemonic ideals around masculinity seem to be relaxed and made fluid in a sense and that men in these settings are allowed to be sensitive. It is almost that by their mere presence at a strip club that their masculinity could not be held to question. However, this is a concern that is beyond the scope of this research, but may be better explored in future research.

Chapter 5

Interviews with Participants

Down the rabbit hole: a tale of sex, nipple-caps and smoke and mirrors

Before we begin the second part of the analysis, it is important to understand the trajectory of this segment. The analysis aims to answer the questions poised earlier at the end of the literature review. What is to follow aims to understand the perceived experiences held by strippers in high-end strip clubs. I investigate how these women, in the South African context, handle the emotional demands of their work. Lastly; I aim to see if women in the high-end have more control in their workplace as those seen in the literature. In order to address such issue the analysis firstly looks at what the reported experiences of women in high-end striptease are. This section looks at unpacking how striptease within such a setting promotes a sense of empowerment and transcendence in terms of feminist reviews of stripping. Secondly, the analysis employs the notion of emotional labour, as a precursor to the discussion about the psychological aspects to striptease. Finally, the analysis turns to understanding the psychological defences involved in striptease.

5.1

Sex and nipple-caps

5.1.1

The Fantasy, the girlfriend experience and the faux-self

As Digby (1998) related, the essence of my position as a male doing feminist work is not only important, but as Goldrick-Jones (2002) notes, critical. In this segment I work to show how important the experiences of the women interviewed in this piece are to the illuminatory and transcendence power held in feminism (De Beauviour, 1997). Yet first I provide some commentary on the idiosyncrasies around the fantasy involved in striptease.

Striptease for these women is not only about getting up on stage and stripping down to one's bare essentials. No, striptease for these women is an art form, spoken to by the literature and created by the stripper. The art is about creating the fantasy of perfection, or as Stephanie saw it creating the perfect 'girlfriend experience.'

> ***Stephanie:*** *you are there to give them the **girlfriend experience**, in inverted commas. So basically, they become enthralled. They become captivated. They become everything, they become mesmerised. How many words can we use here. **They fall in love...with the idea of it.** Of the **perfect girl in sexy lingerie, beautiful clothing who dotes on them, laughs with them and jokes with them**. And has fun with them and it becomes a very fun environment to be around.*

As I noted earlier, there exists this notion of perfection that proliferates the world of striptease at the high-end. Stephanie seems to illustrate in the above segment an idea that men go to strip clubs to be captivated and to ***fall in love*** *with* ***the idea of the perfect girl***. This is a highly problematic notion as it works within the realm of the unattainable. Simply put, there exists the perfect female form and behaviour, illustrated by ***sexy lingerie, beautiful clothing*** and the men ***who dotes on them, laugh(s) with them and joke(s) with them.*** Or the idea that women must be of a certain nature in order to be desired by men and that have to perform certain duties. In essence, it is a patriarchal view that paints women as objects of desire that should revere men and serve them with pleasure (Irigaray, 1993). Wesley (2006) referred to this process as the Barbie-like fantasy. In addition this fantasy creation is the same in the South African market as within the settings as reported in international research on striptease. However, that does not mean that this fantasy creation is without its complexities and contradictions.

The creation of this fantasy is most fascinating. Stephanie refers to it as the girlfriend-*experience*, or as Miranda spoke to earlier, the idea that you are performing to make a man believe that you are performing only for him, to have him ***fall in love*** with that fantasy version of you. Yet, as Tanya insightfully noted, such fantasy creation is dangerous. She argues that when the stripper interacts with a client to create the fantasy she and the client step out of reality.

> ***Tanya***: *You **don't really know if they are talking the truth or not.** Also from my side we are also just putting on an act, so you are not really telling them the truth. So we are all like **ducking-and-diving each other.***

What Tanya went on to say anecdotally, is that "we just end up bullshitting one another as that is part of the game." What I believe Tanya is expressing here is that with this fantasy being created, the truth is arbitrary. More importantly, creating the faux-self is important for such a role-play. This was evinced by her perception that the whole thing is an act were they

are '***ducking and diving one another.***' This again works to highlight Goffman's (1990) argument of a self that is organized around the control or management of the impression. Goffman notes that through an interaction between defensive and protective practices people allow for others to experience them and treat them in a desired or an appropriate way. That can be clearly seen here as both Tanya and the men she entertains are behaving according to the situation, as the "projected definition of the situation is crucial" in organizing the impression made (Goffman, 1990; 24). In fact, I was able to validate this with my own experience at The Club. One of the regulars made mention to his friend in the dining hall that he knew one of the women that worked there and that she was not in fact Eastern European. He pointed her out at the buffet table and then called her over. She sat down and had supper with them as if suddenly the whole setting had changed from a strip club to a regular restaurant. There was no talk of her role as a stripper, but rather that of the regular's son who had just turned twenty-one. This also seemed to go against the literature where women who strip are defined as strippers rather than merely working in this profession (Wesely, 2006). With such evidence in mind and the literature studied earlier, one then begins to question the nature of these interactions; as here, in this particular setting, there seems to be a constant shift between the fantasy and the reality. This interchange between the real and fantasy requires more research.

By utilising the meaning made by Stephanie and Tanya, it seems that not only is perfection sought by men in women, through this girlfriend experience, but also in themselves. We find evidence for such a claim by Eva, where perfection is wanted more and is paid for, and that her job is to give attention to such a desire. Yet this desire has a deeper allure to it, as men need to feel like something important, or as Eva noted, "***like a man wants to feel***."

> ***Eva:*** *You have to look perfect, as they will* ***pay more for a perfect girl****. But I am grateful. I give him much more attention than the other customers making them feel awesome,* ***like a man wants to feel.***

This is an important finding, as it speaks to something fundamental about gender performativity that goes beyond this interaction, even though this was not mentioned by my participant. As our interactions shape the context or our reality (Schegloff, 1997), it is informed by superstructure that inform our behaviour, most of which are norms and in this case gender norms. We are dealing here with a situation that needs more investigation as it seems that the crux of the matter around the seeking out of the perfect fantasy lies in the very

norms that we have created for gender. The subtle and hegemonic function and nature of gender means that these norms are not directly questioned, but instead we create sub-cultural settings or spaces that allow us to perform out these norms and constructs. Yet these are the very same spaces that seem to be frowned upon or reconfigured as deviant in society.

In addition, in order to ensure this fantasy is believable a faux-self must be created. Evidence for this lies is in a simple statement by Miranda, "if you wanted reality you'd go to your girlfriend...but guys don't like problems. Girlfriends have problems." The perfect girlfriend is therefore without any real problems. The perfect girlfriend is a notion that can be seen through Foucault (1982) as a docile subject. From a feminist perspective, it can be argued that such docility is informed by the ascribed norms of patriarchy. Therefore the art of the stripper lies in the ability to create that perfection through the inciting of faux-selves and the interactions based there upon.

"Unfortunately what tends to happen is that they start to develop feelings. Not really understanding the difference between the fantasy and the reality version." Stephanie highlights here another issue tied to the creation of this fantasy. In essence, if the stripper's art is to create the fantasy, then the customer's role is to buy that fantasy, but it can "*become a reality version, because for them it's (*what*)—'they want that in their lives, they want that perfect girl and because they come there for the* ***girlfriend experience*** *they tend to think that you really are that into then, when you are really just playing a role."* This seems to be the issue that arises out of the creation of this faux-reality. In addition, as seen later, with my participants, the women in this work can get caught up in this false reality as well. A reality, as Wesley (1996) reports, that comes with the creation of the fantasy.

5.1.2

Off with her head: The morals of a straight-up dancer

What I found in striptease is the difficulty of morality. The women I interviewed for this study are seen to be 'straight-up dancers,' a term Stephanie coined for women in striptease who only dance/strip, whilst there are other women who end up doing more. This is a differentiation that is made clear in the high-end and specifically at The Club. In fact Miranda, a now ex-stripper who worked with Stephanie from time-to-time, also regarded this particular establishment as one of the more appealing strip clubs as it was much **'cleaner.'**

Miranda: **1** "I met Steph in a strip club and we have been friends
2 ever since. ↑We've stripped almost everywhere together
3 Some places were (0.2) -were dodgy. Then -then you had to
4 be careful. But (The Club*)is a ↑**cleaner** joint."

Darrian: **5** "Ah, okay, what do you mean by **cleaner**?

Miranda: **6** The industry became very sort—' ↑when I started the industry
7 was much cleaner. A lot of the girls started **doing extra** and
8 it made it difficult for us that didn't do it. They actually
9 took away our money, **because why would a guy take you if he**
10 **can take another girl who is going to give him a(0.2) blowjob**
11 **or whatever?** Ya,(0.2) so that started. It started working on
12 you— It sometimes make you **feel °dirty you know°**

When Miranda started explaining that this particular club was 'cleaner,' it implied that other clubs she had worked for were not of the same status. Silverman (2007) argues that reality is constructed through speech. I believe this is the case here, evinced by the way in which she had said this, in line 5. The inclination on 'cleaner' had made me think if this particular club was unlike the clubs reported in the literature. Hence, I then proceeded to question her for clarification. What she reported from line 6 to line 12 not only shows how her structuring of speech allowed me a point of access to understand the reality she was constructing according to her experience (Silverman, 2007), but indicated a difference between the high-end and low-end. Miranda noted that when she started, the stripping industry was a lot cleaner, not only indicating a shift, but one she did not approve of. She noted that this shift (with the other

The name of the establishment has been removed and replaced with The Club

women **doing extra**) made it difficult for those who did "straight up dancing," as Stephanie indicated.

There seems to be a labour power relational (adapted to Foucault, 1982) change, encroaching on the type of stripping reported by those doing straight-up dancing; and the emergence of a and 'the girls doing extra' (See Appendix E, figure 1, for the typology). The extras being offered are more than sexual fantasy, but are actually sexual services which Miranda found upsetting, evinced by the lengthy pause in speech in line 10 just before she mentions the nature of these 'extras,' (such as blowjobs). What is seen is her logic of how **'dirty'** it would make one feel entertaining such extras. Furthermore, she uses the universal version of 'you' and generalises the feeling to an unspecified broader network. This interplay allows one the understanding that she is making a moralistic claim here at the level of selling the fantasy. It seems that the pure strip show has been made less lucrative with selling of 'extra' services by those women who offer more.

If we recall from the literature much of the taboo about stripping was linked to the nature of sex as moralistically private (Brown, 1995). However, striptease as a subculture has its own norms and values (Jones, 1981). Yet, even in such a subculture we see that there are certain things that are not allowed, especially when it sex. Sex is explicitly not the selling of a sexualised fantasy. Sex is still viewed as something private and the selling of it is viewed as moralistically dirty on the strip scene. Stripping is in fact sexualised-work and is the selling of a certain fantasy (O'Riordan, 2005). Yet what we do find is a relation that speaks to Moneymaker and Montanino's (1978) understanding of the hierarchy that exists within the sex industry. Such a hierarchy seems to inform the views of the women interviewed for this study. Not only do we find a typology within such a market–those who merely do striptease and those who sell sexual services as part of striptease—but that such a relation falls within a hierarchy as well (See Appendix E, table 2). Women who sell more are equated to the likes of prostitutes. Tanya noted, "that (it is) disgusting. It's gotten me off men. They treat you like a hooker...just because other girls give more, na—'I don't like it." Stephanie however, seems to consider this a reality of the sex industry (to an outsider) as she states below, where sex sells more than the sexualised fantasy:

> *[u]nfortunately; it's the **sex industry**. I mean sex sells, so whether it's just **straight up dancing** or whether what tends to happen is that you do find that **there are girls who end up doing more**. And*

> *again after a certain period of time during the evening, once they've had a few drinks and they've had several girls approach them, some are* ***straight up dancers*** *and some allow more. They tend to realise that there is* ***a lot more on offer****. So a lot of the time you have to deal with guys going, (adds* ***masculine tone****) "So what do you offer?", "What can I get from you? And for how much?" but you just kinda have to let it roll off.*

Even though she does not express it here, several times during the interview she made it clear that she does not condone the selling of sex. Stephanie agrees that ***there are girls who end up doing more***. What most of the women I interviewed articulated that it was easy for a woman to do more because of the nature of the work and how addictive the money can be, and if you do not keep your head, you could easily get lost within the industry. It is useful to note here that, with the understanding of the hierarchy according to Moneymaker and Montanino (1978), striptease is considered to be more in line with sexualised-work (O'Riordan, 2005) and not sex-work. This speaks to the heterogeneity of the sex work industry, which has not been covered much in literature this far. This may provide a site for interesting future research.

5.1.3

The queen of hearts and the white queen

Power, transcendence and emancipation

The following segment looks at the interesting power relations at play in striptease at the high-end. Here it is my aim to show how dynamic the power relation—inscribed within ideologies around social taboos concerning sex—afford women in high-end striptease a way of manipulating an existing power relation into something that allows for transcendence. Here we take a look at how an interesting oscillation exists between our participants in social settings outside the club (the white queen) and the club setting (the red queen).

Various authors have clearly spoken to the happenings within striptease as prejudicial, objectifying, sexist and even harmful to the women who engage in it (See Barton, 2006 & 2007; Moneymaker and Montanino, 1978; and Price, 2008). In most cases it is a form of work that still works to uphold the principles of patriarchy, especially in the low-end. This section does not question that relation, as much more evidence is needed to establish whether this form of striptease (high-end stripping) works conversely to the heteronormative order of patriarchy. Instead, what I offer here is an illuminatory account based on the reported experiences of the women interviewed for this piece.

Earlier on, I mentioned a certain power that the stripper held in my own experience at The Club. Here I plan to expand on this in order to try and gain a better understanding of it. I was fortunate enough to observe a young couple, in their early twenties, in the lounge area watching the strip shows. I heard the man say to his partner that if the show was too ‘sleazy’ for her liking they could leave. His partner laughed and said that she found it entertaining. They met my eye and asked why I was looking at them. In that moment I had to explain myself; that I was a student and that I was conducting research into the striptease. The pair found the topic interesting and asked me to elaborate. After a lengthy discussion I found out that they were there with a group of friends. The woman turned to me and asked how I felt about this experience. I laughed and said that it was a bit uncomfortable. She then gripped her boyfriend’s shoulder and said he had felt the same way, but that she was not too sure if it was because she was with him or not. Again we may see the subtly of gender heternomativity working where it is seen to be expected for a man to enjoy himself in such a situation, but as long as his female counterpart was not with him. It seems that in such situations there is a

sense of shame involved; where a man would rather keep this experience to himself or amongst his male friends Brown (1995) and Rubin (1984). The woman's boyfriend added anecdotally, "that this is not the kinda place you'd bring your girlfriend or wife." The question then begged, why not? He then said, "Na boet*, she'd clap** you if she found out." This is a very interesting statement and as he was directing it towards me with the reference 'she'd clap you,' as universal knowledge about men and women, or as Rubin (1984) articulates, the common interpersonal ideologies that exist in culture between men and women passed down through generations (especially when it comes to the relations between intimate partners). It seems that with such norms women have a *social power relation* (as noted in a Foucauldian sense) that suppresses patriarchal power, proving that the internal consistencies of patriarchy are indeed flawed.

It may be then of value to critically discuss such power as traditional feminism may have us understand that patriarchy and the power ascribed to it works to conceptualise women as inherently subjugated by male supremacy or as Alcoff (1995;134) notes, "every source of knowledge about women had been contaminated with misogyny and sexism." The issue presented here, with such a stance, is that such experiences as noted in the above interaction between myself and one of the patrons of The Club becomes as inherently 'wrong'. Whereas from the Foucauldian perspective, it is merely an indication of how fluid power relations can be. This is a central issue with traditional feminism and Foucauldian understanding of power, where the former is more dominating and the latter more dynamic (Alcoff, 1995). For Alcoff (1995) this is problematic as it then lends to a construction of feminism as an antithesis to patriarchy and is therefore almost stagnant. Instead she argues for transcendence, where power is conceptualised as more fluid.

However, such a dynamic provided an interesting backdrop to the climate of the club and striptease in the high-end. In essence, women are revered and adored in such a setting. They have a certain power that may have its roots in the very thing that allows society to frown upon stripping; that is the taboo associated with sex (Brown, 1995). With the interaction and observation conducted for this analysis it is this taboo that comes up time and time again. It is this very same taboo that seems to gives the stripper her power to captivate and enthral her audience. I found that even the couple I spoke to agreed with my surmising of the situation. It

* Boet is a South African Afrikaans word for brother/ slang word for a male friend.
** Clap, Afrikaans slang for a smack.

is the same type of power relation that follows in the words of Stephanie, when I asked her about the nature of striptease;

> *Okay, guys come in and they take a fancy to you,* ***ah they are only human****. You know?! You get to portray this whole fairytale image. You get to dress up and do your hair and do your make up and be like the ultimate fantasy and—' so it can be a lot of fun and prance around...****and the men adore you****.*

Stephanie's cocksure attitude is unmistakable here. By her usage of the phrase ***'ah they are only human,'*** one can gather that she believes in her abilities to 'enthral' the men that come to The Club. She then dresses up to portray the fantasy which men tend to 'adore.' Here we see her speaking to the tools of her work to sell the fantasy.

In addition to this, Miranda (2012) addresses this sense of power as something within herself (once again conversation analysis is utilised here to gain access to the discursive manner in which Miranda expresses herself):

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Miranda:  1  It was very much about the power trip. ↑Like a superhero.
          2  It was definitely a rush. It makes you feel ↑powerful, because
          3  you—'↑you have all these guys oogling over you, drooling over
          4  you. It's like you are, you know, almost untouchable. Because
          5  they are all drooling over you, but ↑they know they can't have
          6  you. That is quite a rush.
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With a different application of conversation analysis we find that Miranda claims a certain power relation in her experience of stripping. Miranda directly speaks to the power held by the stripper in dictating that women in the high-end* are more able to feel and express that sense of power. Yet why would heterosexual men do this here and not in real life? As Tanya notes later, men are excited by a naked woman. This clearly shows that striptease gives these men something that they would not normally have, the naked female form (however this is within in the context of the men paying for it, which is discussed later). This speaks directly to the power of taboo, as sex and nudity are things held private and usually within couples (Brown, 1995). The ideological norms about sex and nudity empower the taboo, resulting in a valued cultural network of censorship (Brown, 1995; Jones, 1981). For Durkheim (as stated by Jones, 1981) this then allows for the allure of subcultures, as they tend to challenge such

* Miranda had worked in the low-end as well and had indicated that it was less empowering to the stripper as it was mainly co-ordinate by men who were at times abusive. This is a reality that Tanya also spoke to in her interview

norms, especially around taboos. Based on this logic, striptease may have a power relation that is informed by such a dynamic process. That may very well be the case as with the use of conversation analysis we see how Miranda emphasised key words related to her work, such as ‘definitely,’ ‘powerful,’ ‘these guys (expressing the men at The Club),’ ‘oogling,’ ‘drooling’ and ‘untouchable.’ When we put this together we find that Miranda constructs a reality where a woman may feel a definite rush that seems empowering when it comes to stripping. Even though traditional feminism would consider this action, regardless of the sense of power it instils in the stripper, still for the pleasure of men. As if still objectifies women. However, both Bordo and Parkins address this issue as seen below.

For Bordo (1993), in the process of embodiment, women can transcend patriarchal subjugation through the power dynamic that lies within such a process. For her, in the extreme perversions of feminity, women are able to access a power relation that is often forbidden to them. This is because they lose their desirability and unlike the ‘bad woman’ described in the literature this is a role of choice which transcends the boundaries of patriarchy and is uniquely liberating (a conception much like De Beauviour’s). Parkins (2000), notes that even though transcendence is important, as feminists we should also embrace the idea of the female body as a source of pleasure in its own right and revalue it. It is a pleasure that is not just for men to enjoy, but for women to enjoy through experiencing their own bodies. Hence, these strippers are uniquely situated to experience this as they have chosen this profession and enjoy the empowerment it provides. It may be in this unique marriage of transcendence and revaluing of the female that even striptease can be dynamically empowering. The proof of this lay in their interaction with the men who are ‘oogling and drooling’ over them. However, these men are aware that they cannot have such women. They only have the fantasy. Striptease as an act, work against the taboo around sex and, therefore, has its own power relation which works to empower these women.

What was interesting about Miranda is that she described herself as “very conservative (and her) grandfather was a dominee (Afrikaans spelling of pastor) in a small town.” Her work as stripper has definitely gone against the institutional patriarchal relations she grew up in. From a critical feminist stance, we could argue that in essence the ‘oogling and drooling,’ over this self proclaimed conservative woman, is merely a sign of the objectification and subjugation. Where women are merely seen as pleasure objects, and that her identification of this as empowering is in fact merely an attempt to escape the pressures of her humble upbringing. Furthermore, one could even argue that the power that ensures that these men do not touch

the stripper is from the greater masculine presence of the bouncers at such clubs and their management, and not because she is in fact untouchable. Yet this would discount the experiences of these women, and further subjugate their knowledge base. If you recall from the literature review, Simone de Beauviour understood that if a woman chooses her own position that incites patriarchal relations of domination, then it is in fact a transcendence of such relations as it was not enforced upon her. However, De Beauviour, Bordo, Parkins and various other authors used to solidify the argument running through this report all portray the concept of a woman in abstraction or, rather, the conceptual notion of a woman. However, it is McNay (2003) that seems to make one of the most interesting argument critical for such a piece, namely that of agency. McNay (2003) argues that many theories overlook the importance of self-interpretation in the understanding of the subject. She argues that where agency has been used it is often through a negative emergence of the *self-in-relation* to others being formed through constraint. For example the subject emerges through the process of subjugation by means of gender, race and so forth. What McNay (2003) positions is that the conception of agency should extend to understand why some women, especially with the woman reported in this exploration, act autonomously regardless of the restrictions of societal relation. For McNay (2003) the subject is not passive, but active and the person makes sense of their own experiences. This seems true for these women as none of them ever felt as if they were treated as mere docile objects of masculine pleasure. Rather, they perceived their experience as liberating.

In essence, what seems to have happened in this setting (true to Bordo's understanding) is that these women have used something seen as taboo and have challenged the power of patriarchal norms that inform it (the white queen then becomes the red queen). In addition the strippers have chosen to interpret their experiences as liberating. This is a knowledge (in the Foucauldian sense) that cannot be ignored as it challenges the traditional understanding of the stripper. Tanya and Eva provide the last bit of evidence to suggest the existence of this dynamic power relation, observable in high-end striptease:

> *You must realise that they are men. Any **naked woman will stimulate them** (laughter). But yes, I did. It makes you feel very powerful as a woman, very liberated.- Tanya.*

With Eva we see the following (please note conversation analysis is used once more, but here it is mainly utilised to track the interaction).

```
Darrian:  1  So you are saying stripping gives you a—'a sense of control
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2 over(0.2)men?

Eva: 3 Erm, I am not °**sure** I know what you mean. It is empowering,

4 but I wouldn't say it gave me control over them. Does that

5 answer your question?

Darrian: 6 yes, would you say there's a sense of freedom that comes with

7 stripping, in your—'your view?

Eva: 8 Yes, **definitely.** I like being on stage, and performing. It's

9 exhilarating [...]

From the segment above we see Eva unsure of the phrasing of my question, this evinced by the nervously softer '°**sure**' in line 3, indicating the need that I should clarify. Following this prompt and the rephrasing in line 6, we suddenly see Eva indicating in line 8 that there is **definitely** a sense of freedom when performing a routine on stage, and gathering from the position held by Miranda, this freedom is empowering.

However, I dare to argue that such a power relation extends further than the club setting, within relative terms. The reason for such an assertion is in the interaction that took place whilst I was interviewing Eva. Tanya had decided to come along with Eva has she claimed to have felt more comfortable that way, as she had never met me before.

Eva: 9 [...] the club, the vibe, er it's, it's very ego

10 boosting. It's also rewarding.—'Are you(0.3)gay?

Darrian: 11 (Haaha[ha) n]o, why?

Eva: 12 [ha ha]Well, I was going to say that I just had my boobs

13 done and wanted to know so I can show you [(hahahha).

Tanya: 14 [↑What? Eva?

15 hahahahha. My girl, you're a stripper and you ashamed to show

16 this guy your goods? Hahh[ahahhaha,

Eva: 17 [↑Shut'up ha]hahhaa,

Darrian: 18 [hahahahaha]

Eva: 19 a **girl's gotta have some dignity.** Hahahhaa- do you want to see?

Darrian: 20 No (hahhahaha) it's okay..

Eva: 21 Shame, sorry for you.

From the above interaction we see Eva in line 10 asking me if I was gay. There is a pause before she says gay indicating that she might be aware of the social stigma around homosexuality. I responded in line 11 saying no, where the laughter indicates my non-offense to this question. With my laughter as a social cue Eva too, responds by laughing, confirming the unspoken issue around homosexuality versus heterosexuality. Although this seems arbitrary, it is actually the use of such a social cues to structure the following interaction as seen by lines 12 through 20. Eva goes on to explain that the reason she wanted to know whether I was gay or not was to tell me that she had had breast augmentation and desired to show me (she later confesses that she had been irritated with them as they were too big). At this point Tanya interjects and says that Eva is a stripper and yet she is shy to show me her breasts. Laughter ensued, at which point in the interview I felt very overwhelmed and even shy at the candid nature of this conversation. My response here again illustrates the power held in this taboo. We see then that Eva excuses herself with the phrase "**girl's gotta have some dignity**," which is done in jest, evinced by the laughter that follows. This phrase in itself is laden with information, but is beyond the scope of this piece.

What conversation analysis allowed for is firstly, a look at how Eva used the heteronormative social relations around gender as a basis to either show or not show her breasts. This indicates that she is aware of the conventions of society around nudity and desire and the taboos associated, which she tries to navigate with the usage of homosexuality. In this case it can be seen in the creation of likeness, where as a gay man the attraction, like a straight woman, is to men and therefore the awkwardness is lessened and even condoned. With my response indicating that I am actually not gay, she subtly indicates that if I were she would then have shown me her breasts. Here I will pose, that by mere virtue of her working as a stripper, she should have been accustomed to men seeing her naked, or as Stephanie indicated "you become desensitised." It was surprising then that by my straightness, the power embedded in the taboo was exercised, thus excluding me from that the right to see her breasts. It seems in this instance, social relational laws around taboos as observed by Brown (1995), affords women social relational power that thumps patriarchy relational power. Tanya as if

questioning such relations as well, reminds Eva that she works as a stripper and that is what she does ordinarily. In addition, because I had found myself being overwhelmed by this interaction and through the ability assigned to me as a feminist, I saw that my position was being questioned, as I was within normal masculine relations with these women and not a paying customer.

It seems then that women do in some form have a relational power when it comes to patriarchy, one that in the club setting is a power that is afforded to them through the space of such a subculture (the high-end), and challenging the norm where they may feel liberated from it. It then seems that this space allows them the power to transcend social norms and taboos and even invoke a sense of power over men. Outside of the club setting the power relation takes a different form, as it is embodied in the taboos around sex and sexuality. The latter is therefore grounds for further research. In essence, this power relation may be part of the reason why women who have no need to do this form of work enter into and even enjoy it.

Another aspect that draws women to this high-end stripping is the money involved (as spoken to earlier). It seems to be a very lucrative profession. Stephanie argues that "the money is very good, so it's very addictive. Moneywise." Here we return to what Tanya had to say about the profitability of striptease as an elaboration on how much one may make in a night if one worked hard enough (or hustled):

> *I used to make like four-and-a-half a night (R4,500.00). Depending on how many people were there. 'Cos I used to really work hard. I used to do my dance and move on to the next people, to the next customers. It's about hustling.*

This money also seemed to buy a form of emancipation. If you recall from the literature prostitution in some African cultures is often revered for the ability to grant women emancipation from the dependence on men. Here emancipation is more on a monetary level where stripping affords these women a lifestyle that is addictive as well. Take Eva's claim when I spoke to her about the opportunities that stripping allowed for:

> *I would say travelling (laughter), maybe that's why I do travel bookings and stuff. Tjo! I have been to so many places with stripping. I have stripped from Cape Town to Vegas... and Potch (laughter) and ya, I mean my best friend's a stripper and we travel a lot together and if we need quick cash we just strip for it.*

Eva's statement speaks for itself. It seems that stripping allows for monetary emancipation, even in the South African situation. However, Stephanie warns that this addiction to the money can often lead to very hard consequences for the dancer:

> *Girls can get so wrapped up in how lucrative it is, it's just money, money, money and you forget to be normal. For example I fainted the one night. I was in the bathrooms, in a cubical and I fainted and no one could hear me and I was very weak. I was on the floor I couldn't move. No one could find me. I sent messages out to girls and one of the girls ended up saying to me "I am so sorry I didn't come find you sooner." Because I was literally lying there for hours, I was too weak to even move and I said 'you know what it was a rude awakening,' because I became so wrapped up in money, money, money. So it can desensitise you, it can, it can. If you're not careful.*

As alluring as the money is, it seems that there is a sense that it can run away with you. Chasing the monetary rewards attached to stripping, such as in emancipation, can have negative effects on your health. The above segment indicates a situation where Stephanie had forgotten to eat and became very weak to the point where she had fainted. This may be due to that fact that one can lose track of time in a strip club, especially when your priorities are elsewhere. During my observation I had come to realise that I was at The Club for about six hours. All the while I was too caught up in the happenings of the place to have noticed how much time had elapsed. From this experience it was not hard for me to understand how Stephanie had allowed this to happen to herself.

5.1.4

The Trial of Alice

<u>The emotional and psychological aspects to striptease</u>

Emotional labour, a concept that best describes the management or creation of emotions that do not actually exist within the person (Hochschild, 1983). It may occur on one of two levels; namely surface and deep acting. For Hochschild (1983) the issue around emotional labour is the fact that after an extensive period of time one may suffer a detachment from one's own emotions and even leave room for the dissociation from one's own experiences of the world. This theory forms the framework through which I articulate the final leg of my journey into underland. Many authors have noted that strippers have experienced situations where they have suffered great emotional trauma from stripping. Few, however, have indicated the complexities around the psychological contribution of striptease on the stripper. Hence, this

segment hopes to negotiate the interplay between the creation of an emotionally managed *self* and the reported psychological experiences of the women used in this report. Most of the other works into emotional labour have focussed on nursing, retail work and other sectors where you serve the public (Bolton, 2005). In such settings the focus is on selling a service that is unique to the company. How the employee interacts with the client will work to establish faith in the brand and this is done through the management of emotions, and the creation of a self that seems dedicated to the service of the client. If the client is happy with the service, loyalty is established and the client will continue to support the company. With stripping that relation is the same. If the patron is happy with the fantasy being sold then he will continue to support the strip club. In fact many of the women spoke about regulars that come to the club expecting a good time due to the type of service they receive. Yet as the patron is aware of the money being exchanged for such a service, the performance, especially by the stripper has to be convincing.

> ***Stephanie****: It's all an act. You become this actress****. You put on this game face; you put on a mask****. You are selling the image of perfection.*** *Or as close to as possible. You have to be an actor because it's a role, you have to play a role. If you are having a shitty day you have to put that aside.* ***Because you have to be friendly, naughty, you know****?*

Because you have to be friendly, naughty, you know?! This is an interesting choice of words used by Stephanie to articulate, in her terms, the requirements that striptease requires of the stripper. To the layman that may seem understandable, yet one must remember that '***you are selling the image of perfection, or as close to it as possible.***' Selling the image of perfect, that seems to be a heavy burden, as perfection is hardly attainable. One must then question what is the price of this sale? In the previous chapter I spoke to the creation of the fantasy as directly related to the image of the perfect woman. The strip club seems to be the ideal setting for that creation. As seen earlier, part of the price for that creation is often the neglect of the physical self in order to chase after monetary gain. I began this research interested in the psychological problems that may be involved in this process and how emotional labour allows for clean access into that dimension. All of the women involved in this study spoke to acting. In fact, as Miranda noted earlier, the job of the stripper is to create the illusion that the patron is the most important person in the world. It is about selling the sexual desire and making it believable.

For Miranda there can be an escapist feel to being on stage. She considers the feeling as exhilarating and that portray many different roles which you could not necessarily do in real life. She describes as a fantasy for both her and the patrons alike:

> ***It was a fantasy for the guys and for me***. *I could become anyone I wanted. I used to make my own clothes. And I could create any outfit for any fantasy, you know. I would just go mad. Make these amazing outfits. From Cleopatra to you name it, little school girl. And erm. It was definitely like acting and role playing. And living out all the fantasies, even childhood fantasies. I even did this competition for stripping where I was an Egyptian queen and they led me on stage with this stretcher thingy, it was just eh, ya you can live out all your fantasies. And make money, why not?*

Indeed, when we read this segment, one would ask the same. It seems fantastical and it has an element of theatrical finesse to it as well. Yet, what about those days when you are not in the right headspace to perform? As Eva indicated, being a stripper is in fact about selling the fantasy regardless of personal issues as the reality of it is that the patrons of the club are paying the fantasy and not 'paying for (the) issues.'

> *You must remember, it is all an act. So when you don't feel well or are just in a crap mood, you must put that away. The guys aren't, er, aren't er—'* ***paying for issues***, they can go to their girlfriends for that. You must give them fantasy and that means putting your shit away. I like it when I am on stage 'cos i don't have to be myself when I am dancing I *can become something else, someone else*.

Therefore ,the performance is about being *something else, someone else.* Stephanie indicates that this separation is a requirement for a stripper, as if the client/patron notices an unappetising mood from the stripper he will misjudge her and in some cases go on to be prejudicial against her, at times seeing her as a '*bitch'* or that she believes herself to be superior:

> *If you come across a certain way, maybe like having a bad evening, or someone said something or you just come across as a little aloof, and they'll be like "She must be a* ***bitch****,' or "She's thinks she's pretty," or "****she thinks she's all that****." So a common misconception is judging before they actually know the person.*

Here we see a complexity emerge. This experience seems to go against the idea that the stripper in high-end context has a sense of liberation from purely performing for the pleasure of the men at The Club. In fact ,in Stephanie's own words, she speaks to this objectification by her patrons. Yet, with Stephanie's own understanding of this she does not make sense of it as such, but rather notes it as a *misconception* on the part of the patron. What this serves to highlight is that these strippers operates in an intricate system of power relations that cannot be clearly understood and any attempt to do so will, in effect, undermine their experiences.

In addition one cannot forget the social connotation that is implied by stripping being part of the sex industry. For instance, Miranda repeatedly stated throughout her interview that one had to keep a clear head in this profession, especially when it came to dealing with people's perceptions of a stripper. "It's not really from people inside the club, I mean if a guy is there he can't judge you because he is there. He is paying for you, but erm, it's the **people from outside**." It is this notion pertaining to the views of people from the outside which proliferate the literature on striptease and works to illustrate the social taboos around stripping. As a result Miranda, even though she loved striptease, had to do "it on the low-down. I mean my family had no idea that I was stripping. They still don't erm, because I know that they are very judgemental. Maybe I am wrong."

The taboo around stripping has seen to have an effect on Miranda, where the shame is resultant of the social and familial views connected with it. Yet Miranda also indicates that it is because of this taboo (or **bad name**) that strippers end up getting caught in situations that mat prove hazardous to them:

> *[b]ecause of the **bad name** that strippers have. I mean a lot of the strippers I know of are hooked on drugs and alcohol and so—' I think it has given stripping a bad name, overall and I think that is why people judge you*

This speaks to the inter-discursive situation that someone like Miranda finds herself in, where there are various social institutions, and histories and understandings that have lead to construction of the individual, as seen by McNay (2003), and not Miranda as a person with agency to make sense of her own experiences. In addition and conversely to Miranda, Tanya noted that the club can also draw very abusive men that tend to objectify women. She ties this to the notion of the "girls who end up doing more:"

> **Tanya***: I hated the fact that there were very rude, rude men that just touch you without any consent. That used to make me feel very horrible, otherwise everything else was quite good. The money was good. The girls were okay, just the naughty client every so often.*

In fact, Tanya told me anecdotally that stripping has made her turn off men. Yet, these clients were not the usual patrons of such clubs and such instances were really reported by these women. However, if we look at the above evidence reported here, even with the financial reward and empowerment associated with high-end striptease, how could it not affect them emotionally? Repeatedly, these women indicated that it is all an act, yet some of these experiences must have had an influence upon their psychological well-being. Here I turn to the issue of emotional labour as with the level of external pressures associated

with striptease, it must require a strong form of resilience or convincing acting to displace the effects of stripping on the stripper, or as Eva said earlier, "putting your shit away," but where? This form of emotional labour would require deep level acting as noted in the literature and it often leads to emotional displacement, depletion and dissociation from oneself.

The psychological defences associated with stripping are very intensive. The literature reports that in the low-end these could take the form of denial, heavy dissociation (again as a defence mechanism and not the disorder) and even emotional displacement. With these women I found many spoke to the creation of a stage persona that they adopted in order to create the sale of the sexualised fantasy. When I asked Stephanie if there were times that she could think of that the part of her on stage was different to the part of her off stage, this is how she responded:

> *You have to, you have to become a different person. You have to have a thicker skin, because if you don't it* ***will fuck with your brain****. It will* ***mess with your mind****. You have to have that side and the normal you. You have to have the* ***two different personas to do that.***

What I found interesting is that Stephanie critically acknowledges that striptease can have a psychological impact on your mind, she clearly states this work "***will fuck with your brain***" and "***mess with your mind***" and in order to do this form of work one has to have "***two different personas***."

Tanya had even taken to carving out her second 'persona' and naming her Brooke. Tanya like Stephanie noted that it is important for strippers to have the stage persona different to their actual selves. She articulates in the quote below that she handled the stress of the work through Brook.

> *I don't let the* ***negative feelings*** *get to me because when I am in the club I switch off. I am somebody else.* ***It's like being a clown that is going to go into the circus****, he is just* ***putting on his red nose*** *and he is just doing his act.*

Tanya's emphasis, through the metaphor of a circus clown, is that she was just acting out a role. Yet what is interesting here is that by "***putting on his red nose***," and becoming Brook, she claims to be able to block the "***negative feelings***." This particular claim extends the idea of this alternative persona into the realm of psychology as here the persona is used a defence, not an escapist fantasy as claimed by Miranda, but a defence against negativity. In essence, this 'persona' becomes the defence mechanism. She continues by saying:

> *As **soon as he leaves his act he takes his red nose off**. For me it's like I come home **and I wash my face** and **I am myself again**. I am fine. When I am in my car driving home I am me. As soon as I leave that club I am Tanya. Not Brook anymore.*

However, Tanya goes deeper. She then argues that as soon as she leaves the club she is herself and not Brook anymore, "***he leaves his act and takes off his nose***." What I found particularly interesting here was her comment on how washing her face allowed her to become herself once more. It seems from what she has constructed here one could say that she feels a sense of dirtiness associated with the role, hence the washing of her face, but she did not articulate this idea. Instead what she did say was, if we were to sow the pieces together, Brook would be a different persona, with a different face to hers and a different act to hers. Miranda, referred to it as "the inner vixen."

This speaks to an intense form of emotional labour, as here it is not the person pretending to be a better version of themselves, but a different self altogether. It seems then that the fantasy perfect-self can only exist once the real self is removed. Stephanie notes this as essential and Tanya promotes it as a suitable defence mechanism for this type of work. This then begs the question, what if, as spoken to by McWilliams (1994), such a defence becoming maladaptive? What if such a defence takes over? This is not a farfetched question as these women themselves noted how addictive that act can be. With the dissociation disorder, we find a process known as splitting, or where alternative versions of themselves tend to take control over the host, often without the host's knowledge. This process is a defence to an unconscious threat. I do not claim the same is applicable here, rather that there does exist aspects of this process within relation to the creation of alternative personas for the embodiment of the sexualised perfect fantasy woman.

Let us look at a narrative reported by Stephanie after I had asked her if her other persona had followed into her personal life:

> *Definitely. Let me give you an example. I found that what happened to me once was that I—'you get so immersed, it's either the club or its home. I wasn't really socialising I wasn't going out. I had gone through a bad breakup so it was either work or home. And what had happened to me was I tended lose my social etiquette. In public you've gotta behave a certain way.*

Here we find Stephanie relating to us a precursor to a situation that involved her stage persona being more than just the defence at The Club. She began to isolate herself after a bad breakup

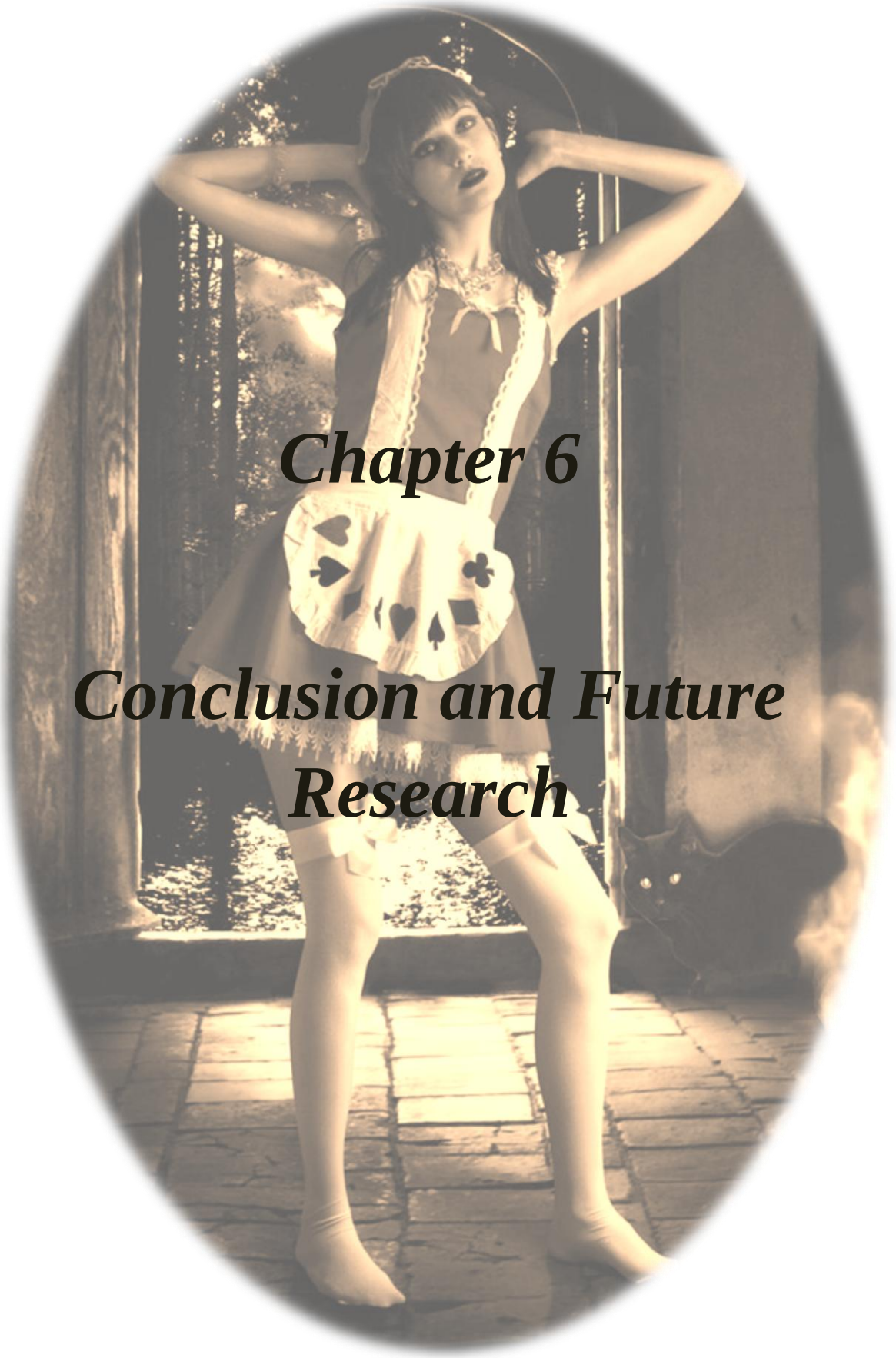
and immersed herself at The Club. In addition, she holds an awareness to what the social behaviour is deemed appropriate outside of the strip club.

> *When you are at the club it's an—it s an act. You're lifting your skirt and smacking your bum. You tease you know. It almost—'it becomes you. And what had happened is I went out into public and I kinda lost how to behave in a normal social environment. So I found it difficult to talk to people, I became almost anxious, because there (The Club) you are playing a role; you can be this whole facade, whereas in public everyone is staring at you and you don't know what to do because you're not wearing the clothes and not wearing the face.*

She went on to talk about the differences at The Club and the differences out of The Club and how she started to forget how to separate the two. She went on to spending more than three months at The Club, working long hour and coming home late.

> *So what had happened to me...it was the first time were, we were out in public and it was New Years, it was VIP section and I'd had quite a bit of champagne and what did I end up doing? I ended up* ***doing a little prancing step, turning around and (kitty roar) lifted up my sexy little dress and flashed my cute little g-string to the whole of the VIP section.*** *So nobody had known that I had been doing dancing, because I was doing it down at the coast, so everyone was like* ***'what the fuck just happened?'*** *(laughter). This girl just turned around and lifted up her whole—'you know. And erm, it can, it can...you forget that not everyone acts that way, because you* ***become so immersed in that world.***

Stephanie captures here what all the women I interviewed spoke to; situations where the alternative version of yourself takes over in a situation outside of the club setting and you find yourself doing things that you would not normally do in public. Stephanie indicated that no one knew she was a stripper and that she had become so immersed in the world of striptease to deal with her heartache that her stage persona took over. In such instances as Tanya noted, one can forget that it is a different persona and not the real you, especially when you are in it for extensive periods of time. She claims that you do not even notice it until you are in such situations as seen above with Stephanie. In order to avoid this, all the women interviewed argued that it is best to do stripping as an occasional activity; else you might run the risk of being sucked into the allure of it all and lose yourself.



Chapter 6

Conclusion and Future Research

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Future Research

6.1

Slaying the Jabberwocky: understanding what has been said

In the fabled tale of Alice and her adventures of Underland she experiences the jabberwocky, or a seemingly nonsense poem of great proportions. Like Alice, I too find myself at the point where I have to make sense of what I have spoken to in the preceding text. Yet how and where do I begin? So much has been said and so much can be made sense of. If you recall I had indicated that what I have written here is in essence my own understanding and interpretation of the experiences shared by the women I had interviewed and my observations of The Club. I do not claim to report the actual reality of such a setting, merely my interpretations of such a reality and the meaning made by my participants. The analysis was positioned to look at **the experiences of striptease in the high-end sectors** and whether or not there was any form **of liberation/emancipation** in this form of striptease. I also intended to investigate the **psychological aspects** to the claimed experiences by my participants. As a result, I have divided this discussion into three parts as well in order to map out my conclusion in a more comprehensive manner.

6.1.1

Painting the red roses white: reviewing the High-end.

As my time in Underland comes to an end I would like to revisit some of the more interesting aspects of the high-end in the South African context. There definitely seems to be a difference at this end of the striptease spectrum. It is noticeable by the kind of clientele that The Club brings and the attitude of those who work there, that the apparent five-star treatment is true. This would make sense as the club seems to cater not just for those who come and see the women perform, but for business lunches and private events as well. Yet, what was most interesting was the relational power dynamics at play. Firstly, one definitely notices that there are very interesting relational dynamics at play between the women who

work at the club and the patrons. For the most part and through my own experiences as well, the women there claim not to have felt overly subjugated (as seen with the claims of Stephanie and Miranda). They have in fact made use of their work in a very opportunistic way that seems to speak to a more entrepreneurial drive within them. Some strategies involve *working the floor, flirting with the patrons from the stage* and *impression management* (Goffman, 1990) in which the act of selling a 'girlfriend-fantasy' elicits a desire (or rather in my own experience) to pay for the services rendered. In addition part of this impression management is this notion of being lady-like, or the idea of carrying oneself with a certain "etiquette," as Tanya noted, because "...(as a lady) knows how to communicate with other people, she is graceful and has an air of perfection." This mask or role is the method through which the illusion or sexualised fantasy is enacted and sold. Some of the women reported in this study that their performance is more than just stripping; it is in fact an art form of sorts which requires much investment on the part of the stripper. If one follows this chain of thought it is not then impossible to understand how they have positioned themselves within such a work frame.

The data from my interviews not only illustrates a typology that is at work in the women's experience of stripping, mainly the *straight-up dancer* and *the girls doing extra,* but that these women have classified such categories in a hierarchical manner where the former is seen as more respectful and the latter equated to the same level as a sex-worker. This too, speaks to how these women view their work in the sex industry, where because they are selling only a sexualised fantasy they are not in essence selling actual sex or sexual services (Jarrett, 1997). This in itself is a very compelling suggestion that in essence is a site for future instigation.

One of the more interesting findings as well was the suspension of patriarchal power relations. This took place on two levels. The first was on the level of the actual women working at The Club that seem to have taken on more of a dominant and intimidatory role, whereas many of the men at The Club seemed to have been placed in a vulnerable space. Much of such power was enacted through the role of the stripper and that taboo around sex that is exploited. This finding was supported through both interviews and observational evidence, that of anecdotal conversations and experiences that I was privy to at The Club. Secondly, I came to understand that such a setting seems to bolster or protect the masculine identity role and that by mere virtue of being at the club one's masculinity was not questioned. Due to this occurrence, some of the men then took to demonstrating their emotional vulnerabilities, something that is much more prescribed to the female gender role.

This was a significantly interesting finding that demands further attention. Future studies into this may be broader than just strip clubs and can look at other sectors of society almost exclusively reserved for a male audience.

In addition, as this study was aimed at the South African perspective, my findings were not able to fully unpack the experience of stripping in the South African climate. The Club's clientele is mostly white and middle-class, which did not afford me much exposure to a more interracial and intercultural experience. I was privileged to acquire some anecdotal evidence post fieldwork which suggests another high-end strip club in Johannesburg that caters for a largely black community. Hence, studies into such a nuanced sector of striptease may provide access to the more traditional African perspective of striptease in South Africa.

6.1.2

The Red Queen of Mainstream Feminism

Emancipation and liberation in the High-end sector

Before I can begin to make sense of this study I must set out for clarity purposes to establish the position of this piece. My task was not to challenge the broader notion of feminism, yet that is what I am presented with through my findings. Earlier I have noted why it is important that my role as a male researcher needed to be taken as a valid position on such a topic, now I argue, through that very same position, my critique (see Digby, 1998). The issue that raises itself here is exactly what Foucault (1982) argued against, that is the creation of over-arching knowledges that serve to undermine and subjugate other knowledges. The result is a worldview that in essence hampers progress, whether it is in social terms or theatrical terms. Research such as this, challenges the multitude of studies that have gone before it and it would easier to conform to the precedent set. Yet, by doing so we disrespect the integrity and validity of people's experiences in the social world, the very social world we aim to understand for the betterment of all. The issue I am faced with is that my findings have shown an interesting contrast to the body of work concerning striptease.

What I have found is that women in this profession—within certain relations of employment—are able to exist in multiple layers of interaction that range from the most sexist experiences to the more liberating experiences. What this shows is that the world of high-end striptease is more dynamic than that of the low-end.

Mainstream feminism has for the most part understood striptease as a type of work that enters the women in it into relationships that are dangerous, problematic and derogatory (Barton, 2006). In most cases women perform for a male audience and are often subjected to ridicule and shame due to their gender and norms around their gender (Barton, 2006). Women in this form of work are objectified and mistreated, often succumbing to various problems that stem from health concerns to issues of safety (Barton, 2006; Moneymaker & Montanino, 1978). Women that find themselves in striptease are subjected to the *male gaze* and often this is due to serve as a means of survival (Barton, 2007). This is all apparent in the literature and even the women in this study commented on such problematic relationships within the industry. In this case, the hard and fast position of many feminists is correct; in fact, I too held such a position before I undertook this study. However, the experiences of my participants demand that I looked at other avenues for interpretation, interpretations that the more nuanced schools that are emerging from the feminist framework seem to provide answers to. Hence, I make the claim here that even within the domain of striptease, where such work can easily be understood as demeaning to women and objectifying, that in certain cases (namely the high-end) that women to some degree are not merely subject to the negative experience of striptease and exist in a complex relational space where they can, in essence, find stripping a positive and even liberating experience.

Such an idea challenges mainstream approaches to rethink their previous positions as here we are confronted with real evidence of striptease and a phenomenological act. The women in this study have claimed that, even with the negatives associated with the profession, it is a rewarding experience, both financially and egoistically. By grounding this evidence through the more nuanced feminist schools, I have found that not only do women in the high-end have more control over their work situation, they are also not found to be in precarious degrees of employment as seen in the literature—unless as a number of my participants had indicated, they have become too enthralled by the lifestyle high-end stripping may provide and have subsequently lost their way. It seems that the risk of being stuck in precarious relations is due to the woman's own choices at this end, rather than typical of the work.

By understanding the meaning made by these women, I have found two challenging aspects to mainstream feminist critique; firstly that through the works of De Beauviour (1997), Parkins (2000), and Bordo (1993), we find significant insight to the reported experiences. For instance both Bordo and De Beauviour argue that, through the action of choice, women are able to supersede relations of masculine domination and make decisions about what is in their

own best interest; such a stance promotes this notion of transcendence. This could then lend itself to the idea that because Stephanie, Miranda, Tanya and Eva all chose to get involved in stripping as a lifestyle choice rather than against their own better judgement, such an act in itself is an empowering move. Parkins (2000) suggests that as feminist thinkers we should not forget to embrace the value of the female body and revalue it as something that can be pleasurable for women as well. Miranda and Stephanie had explicitly indicted that they enjoyed the experience of the body and the embodiment of the stripper role. They argued it made them feel both beautiful and powerful. In addition to this and probably one of the most important arguments of this study is that through the works of McNay (2003), we are able to understand the role of the self as agency, where the mere fact that these women chose this form of work and that agency is built and fed through their own experiential power. These are experiences we cannot simply ignore. Stephanie Miranda and Eva spoke to a 'rush' of power and feeling beautiful and being adored by men stating ***'ah they are only human,'*** positioning men as something ephemeral, while simultaneously evoking a god-like sense of themselves, where even Tanya admitted a sense of being empowered. That for McNay (2003) may prove as important as it shows that, through their experience of themselves as strippers, these women feel liberated and empowered.

From Bordo's (1993) perspective this power dynamic is fed by the very status-quo meant to subjugate them, or that they should feel ashamed of their bodies and the feminity (Parkins, 2000) that comes with it. Instead, as Bordo (1993) indicates, by challenging this dynamic, women are able to take on power relations that were previously withheld from them. These women have taken the taboo around sex, especially around their own gender form and used it for their own desires and pleasure and in doing so challenge patriarchy. Hence, such knowledges require us to re-evaluate what we claim through the experiences of those who are subjugated. I make no claim that this position is without flaws or error, but rather acknowledge that such experiences do exist, and if they exist they should be explored. With this in mind it will be useful to examine striptease further and to be more mindful of the wider experiences of those from both ends of the spectrum.

6.1.2

Mad Hatter and the Cheshire cat

The psychological dimensions to stripping

Almost contradictory to the previous argument I also must stress that striptease is a psychologically demanding and draining career. Much of the negative experiences reported by my participants spoke to the deeply emotional and psychological toll of striptease. This experience, in support of the literature, spoke to the issues of emotional abuse and exploitation. Stephanie too claimed that there are those instances where a client may be abrasive and rude. However, commenting on this does not add anything new to what has been said in previous studies. What is relatively new in this study is that through the framework of *Emotional Labour*, I was able to ascertain the powerful negotiation that takes place on the psychological level that mirrors the effects of dissociation as a defence mechanism, and to a certain degree as a disorder.

On a conceptual level, they role of the stripper is pre-established— as Goffman (1990) would argue—as the script is well established and there is a social expectation of how that role should be fulfilled. The woman entering into striptease must then don such a mask as the stripper, yet the performance, in order to be convincing, relies on the management of impression. Here it is easier then to refer back to the Emotional Labour framework as it builds from Goffman's understanding where you have both surface and deep acting. If Goffman is to be understood then it requires deep acting on the part of the stripper to pull off the role convincingly. As Stephanie argued, "***You put on this game face; you put on a mask. You are selling the image of perfection. Or as close to it as possible****."* However, both Goffman and Hochschild argue that the toll of deep acting, or painstakingly adopting this role/script, has its repercussions. The women in this study noted that the client does not want to experience reality, but fantasy and in that fantasy, real problems do not exist. This means that even when the stripper is having a particularly bad day she has to effectively portray a self that is bubbly and flirtatious. As a result, many have opted for creating a stage self, much through the same fashion as dissociation. Yet this dissociation requires an act which portrays the perfect woman. Much is invested to convincingly play that role and therefore, at times, these women have reported instances where they had stayed in character outside of the strip club setting and have found that experience quite problematic with their everyday lives. Hence why Stephanie had claimed that it is important that women getting into this field

should be aware not to overwork themselves and not fully invest in it as a long-term career option.

By drawing all that has been discussed in this conclusion and with the with the various future research suggestions posed throughout this section, it is clear that this study has provided some important information about a sector that has been sadly under-documented. This study has also brought to light some inconsistencies with our conceptualisation of lived-experiences, especially when housed within the mainstream feminist perspective. The findings reported here challenge our understandings of striptease and beg for further engagement with this field. This study may help us understand why some women choose such work, especially when it is not out of need. It also provides more illuminations into conceptions of sex and sex-based work, providing strategic critical engagement with normative structures in society, especially around gender, sex, patriarchy and the power that is attributed to it. With all this in mind it is clear that this study is of critical value.

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Appendix A: Interview schedule.

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Demographic Information

- Age (in years) ___.
- Occupation:_____ for_____ years.

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1. In your own words, how would you describe your work?
2. How long have you stripped for?
3. Is this your only form of employment?
4. Are allowed work leave?
5. Would you say that there are aspects about your work that you enjoy and do not enjoy?

Striptease

1. What is your view on stripping?
2. Do you know anything about where it comes from?
3. What do you think other people think of stripping?

Experiences as a Stripper

1. What is your dance routine like?
2. What type of stripping do you do?
3. Are you free to speak to your customers?
4. Do you have regular customers?
5. What sort of requests do regular customers ask for?
6. Was there ever a moment where you felt like you where vulnerable while stripping?
7. Can clients get emotionally/ physically abusive?

Subjugation in stripping

1. What do you think of some the men that come and watch you perform?
2. Do you feel as if they see you just as something desirable?
3. Does stripping give you a sense of control over men?
4. Have any of the men ever treated you badly?
5. Is there a sense of freedom that comes with stripping, in your view?
6. Does working as a stripper give you some form of independence?

Psychological Aspects

1. How do you deal with negative feelings people have about striptease?
2. Is this work stressful? (In which ways?)
3. Can you tell me what you feel like when you are on stage?
4. Were there times that you can think of the part of on stage is different to the part of you off stage?
5. What sort of support networks do you have?

6. What happens when you do not feel particularly well and have to perform a set for the evening?
7. Is being on stage as a stripper like being an actor?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about stripping?

Thank you, for you time.

Appendix B: Informational letter.

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Good day,

My name is Darrian Long and I am presently enrolled as a Research Masters student in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, under the school of Human and Community Development. As part of my course requirement, I am to conduct research for degree completion purposes. This research will aim to explore the perceptions of those in striptease and how they make sense of their experiences.

I will be conducting qualitative research which will entail interviewing approximately six (6) participants who are currently working as strippers with Johannesburg. The interviews will be approximately 1 hour, on a one-on-one basis and will require participants to answer a set of questions around the nature of striptease and experiences related to it as service work. The interviews will take place at a place suitable of those who wish participate in order to ensure that they are well protected and that there is minimal cost involved on the end of participants. The interviews with be audio recorded to assist with accuracy in the analysis process; where applicable directs quotes will be utilized.

You are invited to participate in this study and your contribution will be greatly appreciated and will not put you in an advantage or disadvantage at any point. Participation will in addition not interfere with your work in any way. Please note that this research of a sensitive nature participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw yourself and/ or edit your data from/in the study at any time, which will not be held against you in any manner. In the

event that any potentially difficult or traumatic issue may arise free counselling and referral will be made available to you (see contacts below).

In addition, confidentiality of the participants, their information and records will be ensured and a confidentiality agreement is required to be signed before the interviews may commence. This agreement is assure that consent is well informed and that any concerns you may have are adequately addressed. Transcripts, feedback and the findings of the study will be then made available to participants upon completion and request of the study. Please be advised that findings of the study may be published in an academic journal or presented at conferences at a later stage.

If you have any further enquiries, do not hesitate to contact me, or my supervisor.
Darrian Long- 073 087 47 48 or alternatively at darrianlong@gmail.com
Peace Kiguwa (011) 717- 4537 (Supervisor).

Yours sincerely,

Darrian Long.

Emthonjeni Centre: University of the Witwatersrand.

Free counseling Thursdays (011) 717-4513.

8:00 am – 4:00 pm

1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa.

South African Depression and Anxiety Group

Free containment and referral 0800 567 567

8:00 am – 8:00 pm (daily).

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form:

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Participant Consent on Interview

I, _____, the undersigned, have read the information sheet and have understood that the research project involves the participation by those who are involved in striptease as a form of service work. I understand that participation in the study will not advantage or disadvantage me in any way. I understand that confidentiality is guaranteed and I have a right to not answer any questions that I feel uncomfortable with, and to withdraw from the study at any time. I also understand that the researcher can make use of direct quote where necessary. I understand that participation will require one hour long interview in the privacy of my own home, at a time convenient to both researcher and participant.

I hereby concede to participation in this study.

Signature: _____. Date: _____.

Appendix D: Audio Recording Consent Form.

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Participant Consent for Interview Audio Recording

I _____, the undersigned, grant permission for this interview to be audio recorded. I understand that the contents of the tapes will be transcribed for the purpose of further analysis and that my identity will be protected, access to tapes will be restricted and the tapes will be stored in a secure location. Also, I understand that the tapes will be destroyed on completion of the research.

Signed: _____. Date: _____.

Appendix E

Jefferson Glossary Key:

[	Indicates point of overlap in current speaker's speech.
]	Indicates where overlap ends.
(.)	Brief interval. Timed at times (0.2)for longer pause.
=	indicative of no break in speech.
<>	Utterance has slowed down, in comparison to rest of talk.
><	Utterance has sped up, in comparison to rest of talk.
_	(Underline)—Emphasis placed here.
-	Sudden cut-off of speech.
--	Short interval.
:	Separation and emphasis given here.
°	Softer than surrounding speech.
↑	Increase in tone/pitch.
↓	Decrease in tone/pitch.

Appendix F

Figure 1: Typology of the reported women working at High-end

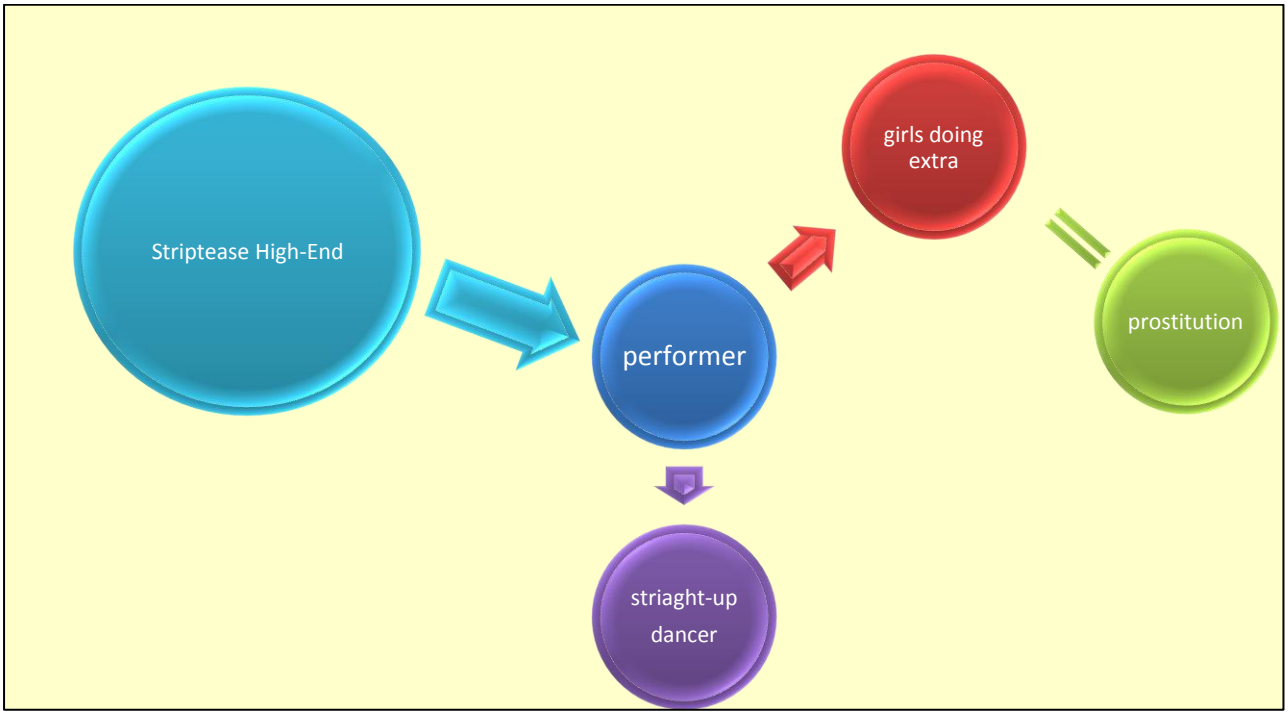
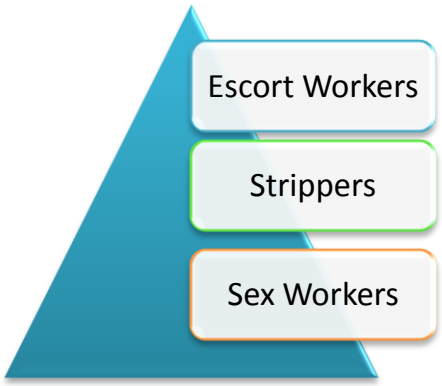


Figure 2: Comparative Hierarchies

Moneymaker and Montanino (1978)



Report by High-End Dancers

