STREET WOMEN AND THEIR VERBAL TRANSACTIONS

Some Aspects of the Oral Culture of Female Prostitute Drug Addicts

by

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to describe, through the combination of an interactional framework, an ethnographic semantic approach and an analysis of the folklore, the oral culture of female prostitute drug addicts and the forms of verbal exchange through which they appear to exercise some control over their socio-economic environment.

The verbal transactions examined take place on and off the street, but always involve "street" participants: people whose business is on the street, where they casually meet friends and foes, where they make the initial contacts and contracts which lead to further transactions, and where they report finding an excitement and a pace of life they enjoy. Many of these transactions are described as "bullshitting": the flexibility of meaning of this term enables us to use it to indicate a variety of verbal exchanges among street people on the one hand, and between street people and "square Johns" on the other.

In the first instance, it covers amicable greetings, small talk, anecdotes, gossip, jokes, warnings: didactic narratives and manipulative exercises whose function is to a large extent one of socialization. They serve as a stern description of the rules of behaviour among members of the street group and as means of integrating newcomers to the subculture of the street by
describing the contrasting characteristics of "straight" and "street" culture members. In the second instance, speech acts serve mostly as an instrument of manipulation and exploitation.

The most developed type of transaction examined is the one taking place between prostitutes and their customers, and the strategies developed to cope with problematic cases. The informants are also considered as drug addicts involved in non-prostitutional though exploitative transactions. As incarcerated informants, they are further involved in "interview transactions" based on firmly defined cultural boundaries between straight and street participants.

The informants' perception of the two groups' contrasting worldviews, their lifestyles and opposite characteristics and attributes, give rise to the creation of endo- and exo-stereotypes which reinforce principles of inclusion and exclusion and regulate the pattern of straight and street interaction.

Verbal transactions reflect the informants' understanding of their socio-economic environment, where economic survival rests on a profitable interaction with outsiders, and social survival rests on a cohesive interaction among themselves.
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CHAPTER ONE

A FRAME OF REFERENCE: LITERATURE AND THEORY

Prostitutes claim to have developed a quick appreciation of men as potential customers and the ability to manage them. Prostitutes who solicit in public places and who are also drug addicts explain that their twice vulnerable position with regard to the law increases their need for effectiveness. They claim to seek only quick financial rewards and to feel no compunction in shortchanging those they believe to be out to exploit them.

Moreover, the social and legal vulnerability which results from their visible and illegitimate activities leads them to seek acceptance into a supportive milieu where they find understanding and solidarity. Conversely, they appear to put stress on being self-sufficient and knowledgeable enough not to be "ripped off" by other street addicts. They must learn quickly the rules of behaviour which will enable them to cope with an ambivalent milieu and through which they will earn and retain acceptance into the subculture.

This dissertation describes two types of verbal transactions practised by female prostitutes and drug addicts on the street: those aimed at outsiders as means of what they describe as "conning", and those that serve to socialize insiders through the use of didactic gossip. Both forms are loosely described by
the informants as "bullshitting", a technique of verbal exchange with which they appear to support deceptive and cohesive transactions.

An understanding of the informants' verbal performances must rest on an understanding of their cultural values, and this study attempts to describe how the informants perceive and construct their socio-economic environment and how they interact with it. The addict-prostitutes studied in this dissertation are thus described in terms of the world view of their subculture and their understanding of the conflict between their system of cultural values and that of the larger society.

LITERATURE AND ETHNOSEMANTIC APPROACHES

A comprehensive bibliography of all the titles of fictional, psychological, medical, legal, historical, sociological and anthropological works devoted to the topic of the woman who makes her living on the street - even without considering the fast growing list of works related to the lifestyle of drug addicts and the problems of drug addiction - would be difficult to compile. Moreover, much of what has been written on the subject would not be relevant to the type of analysis and the point of view adopted here. If we look at the psychological, sociological and anthropological literature related to prostitutes and prostitution, we find that until very recently the trend has been to consider the topic in terms of "morality, maladjustment, and rehabilitation: (James 1972a:8). Of these works, the best known are perhaps Benjamin and Masters' Prostitution and Morality
(1964) which develops the theme of the failure of rehabilitation as it is now attempted; Maryse Choisy's *Psychoanalysis of the Prostitute* (1965); and Harold Greenwald's *The Elegant Prostitute* (1970), a psychiatric approach to the study of call-girls. Most of these works focus on the views of the larger society as it contemplates what it understands to be the world of the prostitute.

In contrast to those works devoted to the prostitutes' personality structure or to the social problems presented by what is deemed to be a morally reprehensible and physically detrimental lifestyle, a few studies concentrate on the women's (since only female prostitutes are considered here) own perspective and understanding of the environment in which they operate. Hirschi's "The Professional Prostitute" (1962) examines prostitution as an occupation and briefly attempts to give an insight into the practitioner's occupational ideology; Jackman, O'Toole and Geis (1968) are concerned with the prostitute's self-image, and Velarde, in "Becoming Prostituted", with the way a masseuse-prostitute forms her self-identity; finally, James' doctoral dissertation (1972a) offers an ethnosemantic approach to the study of streetwalkers. The latter work, with its taxonomic and componental analysis of the domains of the streetwalkers' argot, is - to my knowledge - the first study of its kind to concentrate exclusively on these informants' perception of their environment.¹

¹Schutz' definition for "environment" is used: that part of the external world that can be directly apprehended. "This would include not only the physical but also the social environment with all of its natural artifacts, language, etc." (1967:170).
Studies on drug addicts and drug addiction follow a parallel line, although in this case the social problems perceived are of a more recent nature. Agar, in contrast with previous works dealing mainly with the problem of the social and psychological "failure system" of the addict, presents in *Ripping and Running* (1973) a similar approach to James' in her study of street-walkers.

Before him, Sutter's description of the world of the "righteous dope fiend" (1966) provides a good introduction to the subculture of the street addict, and Preble and Casey's ethnography of the heroin user's life on the street, "Taking Care of Business" (1969) seeks to find the meaning of the life for the street addict. In his survey of the literature of drug addiction, Weppner notes that Preble's anthropological field work, which produced this article, the first one emically oriented to deal with the heroin user's life on the street, was the impetus for other anthropologists "to study the street addict's subculture from his point of view and not from the abstracted empirical viewpoint of the sociologist or psychologist" (Weppner 1973:114). Finally, Stoddart's study (1968) will be mentioned, of particular interest since some of his data on drug transactions are drawn from the same city ten years ago and provided a useful source of comparison with data obtained for this dissertation.

It will be shown later how the informants were selected. When they first came to me, they acknowledged that they were "street people". As an indirect way of checking their
familiarity with the environment of the street drug addict, I showed them lengthy extracts of Agar's, Sutter's, and Preble and Casey's studies, asking them whether they agreed with the illegitimate and criminal procedures described and the terminology used. The latter was thought to differ slightly at times from their own, but they totally agreed with the descriptive part of the works. One of them, who was not familiar with the confidence game known as "the hot T.V. game" (Agar 1973:46-47 and cf. Appendix F), found it so plausibly described that she said — only half jokingly, I think — she might try it after her release from jail.

In the same manner, I sometimes showed James' dissertation to my informants, and checked her classification against their own. At the beginning of several interviews, I had James and Agar's works in evidence on my desk, to establish clearly the fact that such information as I requested from them was in fact already known and not at all of a confidential nature.

Both James and Agar's studies take an ethnosemantic approach. In Ripping and Running, Agar, who was mostly involved in institutional research, adapts a technique for gathering retrospective data to the definition of what he sees as conflict situations: his informants were asked to enact street scenes familiar to all addicts (obtaining money for drugs through various means, buying and using drugs); these enactments were tape recorded and later played back to other informants for validity and reliability checks. Both he and James borrow from linguistic methods and adopt in their work a systematic
questioning procedure to elicit data which enable them to analyze the culture under study. In the componential analysis procedure they follow, the initial step is to provide the informants with "substitution frames" through which the ethnographers generate terminological systems. Next, they establish taxonomies by grouping "segregates" and "contrast sets" (Frake 1972; Psathas 1972:209; Agar 1973:28-39). The added sum of folk taxonomies thus obtained constitutes "a society's ethnoscience, its particular ways of classifying its material and social universe"; in other words, it constitutes its "culture" (Sturtevant 1964:99).

In a later work, Ethnography and Cognition (1974), Agar further expands on the methodology of "retrieving both concepts and their relationships" by examining "signs" in informants' utterances (1974:13). Folk taxonomies, already the subject of much of James' work, are examined again in this work by Agar as a means of investigating the informants' conceptualization of their environment.

Applying the same ethnoscientific approach as Agar and James, Spradley makes a formal semantic analysis of tramps and alcoholics in "Adaptive Strategies of Urban Nomads" (1972) and You Owe Yourself a Drunk (1970) and, with Mann, to a female occupation in an essentially male world in The Cocktail Waitress (1975).

Because of their ethnosemantic approach, Agar, James and Spradley break away from the conventional analysis of such subcultures as that of the heroin addict, the streetwalker, or the alcoholic, as "deviant" cultures; they define instead the way
their informants perceive and order their environment and explain their actions in terms of these perceptions.

The repudiation of classical grammars by linguistic analysis, and its description of each language in terms appropriate to its own structure has to a certain extent guided cultural anthropology along the same path. Thus, cognitive anthropology focuses on relationships between units of language and units of cognition and has travelled from an essentially "etic" viewpoint to an essentially "emic" understanding.

Conventionally, Pike's "emic-etic" distinction is used here for the description of behaviour, where "etics" mean features assumed to be culture-free, to which are opposed "emics", or the group's culture-bond apprehension of these same features.

Harris' definitions were found the most useful guidelines for the usage of the two terms:

Emic statements refer to logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions or "things" are built up out of contrasts and discriminations significant, meaningful, real, accurate, or in some other fashion regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves. An emic statement can be falsified if it can be shown that it contradicts the cognitive calculus by which relevant actors judge that entities are similar or different, real, meaningful, significant, or in some other sense "appropriate" or "acceptable" (Harris 1968:671).

By comparison with these statements which reflect exclusively the point of view of members of the subculture and ascertain their cultural competence,

etic statements depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Etic statements cannot be falsified if they do not conform to the actor's notion of what is significant, real, meaningful or appropriate. Etic statements are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event has occurred (Harris 1968:675).
Throughout this work, I have adopted the emic perspective and have tried to examine street women's perception of material phenomena and their cognitive discriminations. As in the works of Agar, Spradley and James in which folk taxonomies reveal the culture's cognitive structure, the starting point of my field work was the elaboration of linguistic categories and folk taxonomies for what the informants recognize as distinct domains.

Through the cognitive constructs revealed by the taxonomy and the added dimension of folklore and verbal performances which call for "some dramatization of the ideals of the group" (Abrahams 1970:290), through the elicitation of stereotyped definitions which justify and reinforce the acknowledged confrontation between the subculture and the larger culture, I have tried to describe the informants' apprehension of the socio-economic environment in the context of which they practise their verbal transactions.

FOLKLORE

Since folklorists view folklore as "raw material for the study of human thought" (Dundes 1971:103), the study of a people's folklore may be taken as an intrinsic part of cognitive anthropology. Adopting Abrahams' definition of folklore as "all traditional expressions and implementations of knowledge operating within a community", knowledge is considered to be "the power of the mind for solving problems" and traditional knowledge to provide "inherited solutions to the recurrent problems of groups" (Abrahams 1971:17).
Some recurrent problems may be solved by material and practical means and the development of specific techniques. For instance, in the addict prostitute culture, items of material folklore deal with the practical problems of fixing, of transporting illegal drugs, of tattooing, shoplifting, sexual practices, etc.

Other problems, of an ethical or social order, find traditional solutions in ethical and esthetic expression, often in the form of proverbs which provide "an argument for a course of action which conforms to community values" and "invokes an aura of moral rightness in the conversation" (Abrahams 1968:150).

As a communicative process, folklore is limited to relatively small groups, whose members (performers and audience) are part of the same reference group. Whatever the form of exchange and the folkloric genre used (tale, proverb, joke), it is transcended by the expression of notions which Dundes calls "folk ideas": the "traditional notions that a group of people have about the nature of man, of the world, and of man's life in the world" (1971:95).

All cultures have underlying assumptions and it is these assumptions or folk ideas which are the building blocks of worldview. Any one worldview will be based upon many individual folk ideas and if one is seriously interested in studying worldview, one will need first to describe some of the folk ideas which contribute to the formation of that worldview (Dundes 1971:96).

One of the folk ideas emerging from a corpus of proverbs and traditional phrases would for instance appear to be in North American culture the "principle of unlimited good" (in direct opposition to the "principle of limited good" found by Foster
(1967) to be a characteristic notion in Mexican, and other peasant cultures). This principle emerges ambiguously in my informants' belief that "marks" are plentiful, and in the carelessness of some of their transactions since they assume that new opportunities will always arise. On the other hand, the pressure exercised by their needs as heroin addicts often make their soliciting a competitive enterprise. But it is also a fact that in that particular case, "good" (tricks) is indeed a limited commodity, and one's gain is somebody else's loss.

Dundes opposed "folk fallacies" to folk ideas and attributes the term to traditional stereotypes. As part of the "stated premises of a culture", they are contrasted to folk ideas of which one may not be aware or which one may not be able to articulate.

Folk ideas would be more a matter of basic unquestioned premises concerning the nature of man, of society, and of the world, and these premises although manifested in folklore proper might not be at all obvious to the folk in whose thinking they are central. Folk fallacies such as stereotypes would therefore be part of the conscious or self-conscious culture of a people whereas folk ideas would be part of the unconscious or unself-conscious culture of a people (Dundes 1971:101).

Street people interact in a close and active symbiosis with straight people who they see as trying to use, control, trap and imprison them, and whom they try to evade, con, rob, trick and seduce. Much of their folklore, especially in the form of gossip and anecdotes, describes how this interaction takes place and how people deal with what they perceive to be the problems created by the conflict of interests between the two groups. To that extent, it reveals the precepts and norms of the informants'
cognitive system.

Gossip may also be seen as a means to achieve social control. It makes "a statement of approval or condemnation which reiterates the approved behavioural limits of the group" (Abrahams 1970:300).

If it is true that folklore lives by force of its function, as folklorists often maintain, then it is the function of street folklore that we must examine. We often see it "protecting" its practitioners. For instance, the function of one of the well typified villains (the "rat") is clearly to shoulder and bear the responsibility of the informants' lack of competence. Much like scapegoats, they are rendered all the more loathsome and despicable so that they serve a useful function in enabling informants to deny what would otherwise be seen as their own failures.

The conscious statements made by stereotypes strengthen the boundaries between the two groups, affirming a much needed insiders' solidarity, and defining the means of coping with outsiders, which often form the topic of gossip and anecdotes.

Jokes are also used as a protective device and allow apparently threatening behaviour to be perceived as a tentative or harmless incursion into otherwise forbidden areas. Their symmetrical or asymmetrical exchange (depending on people's individual prestige - their "reputation" or their "name") is typically such "that in any other social context it would express and arouse hostility" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:91). Since one of the functions of joking relationships is to obviate quarrels or real conflict, it is not surprising that - just as they are found among cocktail
waitresses (Spradley & Mann 1975) or longshoremen (Pilcher 1972) - they should be met frequently in the tight and sometimes explosive confines of the jail. As in the case of longshoremen, this joking also serves as

an important boundary and symbol of group solidarity ... and probably contributes to some unknown degree to the maintenance of this solidarity. This function of joking behaviour was to some degree recognized by Radcliffe-Brown when he stated that the joking relationship is a relation of alliance (Pilcher 1972:112-113).

As in Pilcher's study, however, we must point out that joking behaviour in the context of the street subculture does not fit to the end with Radcliffe-Brown's definition since this particular type of joking behaviour is not connected with kinship or the alliance of normally hostile groups. Yet, when this joking behaviour is also directed at the straight group with whom street people are brought together and have a formally hostile relationship (matrons or guards, for instance), it falls in better with Radcliffe-Brown's thesis since its direct equivalent and frequent substitute is as close a form of avoidance (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:106) as the setting allows.

A further example of the part played by folklore in the daily conduct of the street's business are stories comparing then and now, there and here, which serve to give depth and continuity to a lifestyle centered on the immediate and alienating necessities of the addicts' life and add to it the dimension of belonging to a community expanding over time and space.

Finally, the very strong ethical tenor of some of the anecdotes cannot be overlooked. Although most appear to start as descriptive statements of facts, they often become enmeshed in
value judgements. Fidelity between mates is emphatically stressed, "honour among thieves" (as the informants sometimes voice it ironically), the necessity to present a united front to outsiders, love and support, retaliation fairly meted out to transgressors, are not only themes but explicitly stated morals whose message is indistinguishable from the ones carried by tales of the straight world. The values of a "disvalued" subculture appear in no way less ethical than those of the larger culture.

Through the stories, jokes and bullshitting events, the same care is exercised in providing warnings against physical danger of all natures, but also, more subtly, a justification is expressed, which appears to protect the vulnerability of the group and contribute to the psychological welfare of its individuals.

EMICS AND STEREOTYPES

The formulated statement of what Dundes calls "folk fallacies" takes the form of traditional stereotypes. The formulation of stereotypes by street people is particularly interesting in that they are able to handle several sets of stereotypes.

Much of the data deals with the manipulation of members of the researcher's culture by the informants, a culture also known to them and of which they have sometimes themselves been part. These informants' assumption is that they are familiar with both sets of emics.

In the confusion created by informants providing culture-bound features for examination to a researcher (i.e. a representative of the other culture) whose own culture-bound outlook was
itself examined and challenged, I have used three labels to differentiate the nature and attribution of emic information: *straight* is used for the informants' emic view of the researcher's culture, but also (and there is no differentiation here between these two interpretations since the informants' emics are comprised of both) for what the informants assume to be the straight person's own emic views of either culture; and *street* or sometimes *folk* for the informants' emic views and understanding of their own environment.

The insider's emic view of the outsider often becomes a handy stereotype which contributes guidelines for the proper handling and manipulation of that outsider by the insider. Thus, the stereotypic fabrication of straights as greedy people enables street people to act upon this particular characteristic for their own profit. Conversely, the straight person's emic view of street people as irresponsible and untrustworthy enables him to agree with the principle of paternalistic and authoritarian judicial and correctional systems.

In Chapter V, a double description takes place: a *folk* stereotype of street people and straight people often accompanied by the *straight* stereotype for both groups: i.e. "You think you are ... and that we are ... while in fact you are ... and we are ...". The folk (street emic) description is made to sound all the more convincing ("true") that its contradictory version (straight emic) is also known to the street speaker, thus weakening the straight interlocutor's position. Whereas straight people are only familiar with their own characterization of both
groups, street people know both street and straight versions of the exo-and endo-stereotypes.

It is sometimes difficult to ascertain - when the etic interpretation corresponds to a certain extent with a stereotypic definition of an object - whether the etic interpretation is not simply a rationalization of straight people's emic interpretation.

Let us consider, for instance, the common characteristics attributed to the Trickster (Abrams and Sutton-Smith 1977:30):

- violation of taboo, impulsiveness, a lack of close, caring relationships, apparent disregard for the feelings of others, an inability to learn from past mistakes, lack of anxiety or remorse, an exhibitionistic narcissism, constant use of pretense and trickery, and a demeanor of childlike, innocent charm.

Such also appear to be the characteristics frequently possessed by the main character of the personal-experience stories I was told by women of the street. These characteristics will be recognized throughout the texts quoted here, but Jo's description of her sister's actions may serve to exemplify briefly these traits:

My sister has robbed my mark a couple of times. He sets up an apartment for me and she goes and cleans it out! The furniture, the colour T.V. ... Twice she did that to him! ... She would do that to anybody that would give her the opportunity. But, see, I was in here and I thought I would be getting out on bail. So, he rented me an apartment, and put all kinds of furniture in it, bought a colour T.V. for me ... Just everything! It was all waiting for me. I said "Well, like, I'm going to be a bit, so you might as well give her a key and she can stay there until I'm sprung." And so he did. He went out of town. He came back a month or two later and the place is empty! She sold everything. So, he did it again ...
She blows my mind! [To her friend] You know how outspoken she is? And most people think she's just kidding, the things she comes out with! But I know she's dead serious! And they laugh, and I laugh too, but for different reasons: ... She's downtown, she's sick, she can't get any money ... She says "The next guy that walks around the corner, that's it, I'm gonna nail him!" And she will! She'll just punch him in the face, knock him down, take his money and go [laughing].

Many of the Trickster's characteristics were also described to me by people professionally involved with these women. In other words, this description of what resembles so called "psychopathic symptoms" and which is seen as an etic definition appears to be the stereotypic image of street women (and presumably of street people at large) held by relatively knowledgeable straight people, a stereotype which also appears to be willingly upheld by street people themselves.

It is my impression that the etic characterization tended to disappear from the narratives as my informants came to know me better. Not that they had recognized in me someone whose understanding and openmindedness could easily transcend it, but simply because the point had clearly been made. They had shown me that they knew how I saw them. Knowing my culture, they had "conversed" with me on my terms. This point having been established by them, I made the subsequent point: I knew where I stood and had no intention of foolishly pretending that this was not where I was going to remain: I simply sought to understand. The point was not to "become natives ... or to mimic them", the point was

2 The informants' syntax and vocabulary have been respected in all the texts quoted in this work.
to try and, "in the widened sense of the term in which it encompasses very much more than talk, to converse with them" (Geertz 1973:13).

In the symbiotic relationship in which street and straight people are involved - a symbiosis which justifies perhaps the equal use of etic and emic descriptions by the members of the group examined - they have an advantage over us (it is knowingly that I so clearly draw the line between "them" and "us", only doing what they do themselves). I believe that their stereotypes of us are more useful to them than our stereotypes of them are to us: of necessity, their stereotypes have to be more refined since their dependence on us is greater than our dependence on them, and since they have to work harder at manipulating us than we do them.

CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

Stereotypes mainly serve to reinforce the delineation of cultural boundaries between the two groups. As prostitutes (James 1972a:1-9), as street addicts (Agar 1973:2-4, Sutter 1966:180-186) and as jail inmates (Coutts 1961:24-29, Irwin and Cressey 1964), my informants triply fulfill the requirements for membership in a subculture. Their presence in jail although frequent is usually of short duration and only comes as a result of their participation in the activities of one or the other two groups: it is only a secondary subculture. They also understand their prostitutional activities (or that of their friends when they are not themselves "working girls") to be related to the
need to support a drug habit. Consequently, their first and foremost integration is into the street addicts' subculture. In fact, a sixteen year old girl met on the street gave me this unexpected etymology: "We're called hookers because we're hooked."

As members of a subculture, they share many of the values of the larger culture, but they differ from it in their "shared, learned behaviors" resulting "in the characteristics ways of thinking and acting which make possible identification as a group" (James 1972a:6). Snow, a Tsimshian woman, always referred to her "own people". When I questioned her, she said she meant "street people, not other Indians." Julie indicated that she and her husband are street people "because of the way we fit in, and the things we know."

Julie's statement is the non scholarly version of Goodenough's definition of culture:

Whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its member, and to do so in any role that they accept for any of themselves. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of those things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their model for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (1957:167).

Street addicts share characteristics and values which will be examined later in the study. Since the survival of their subculture depends so much on interaction with the larger culture, they must also introduce outsiders to the role they are to play in their socio-economic system.
When Dee and Bugsy, my first informants, came into my office in Oakalla and agreed to talk to me, I became part of their culture - along with the other "square Johns" who interact with them in a complex system of communication and exchange. As a newcomer to their culture, I had to learn a certain behaviour. I could never be "solid", but could I be taught to be "good people" rather than "ignorant"? What minimum knowledge would I have to acquire in order to understand the rough guidelines of our transactions? What was my place in their order of things? I did not know anything and I had to be taught.

Newcomers to the street culture - whether as street insiders or straight outsiders - have to be somehow drawn into a continual process of socialization. Some of the things they learn are probably the same: what makes a rounder a rounder and a square a square, and what they can expect from each other.

As the data were collected and informants talked about what took place on the street between straight and street people, they simultaneously acted out this confrontation by drawing me into it and defining their characteristics as "street" characteristics, and "straight" characteristics as being my own.

By strictly defining our respective identities and roles, they also established secure boundaries between us. As they described the lifestyle and values of both groups, it became clear that boundaries between them could only be crossed by people who have relinquished their allegiance to their former group. Knowledge of that culture is naturally not forgotten, but may be retrospectively transformed by the adoption of the new
Many street people come from straight families and were themselves straight; or a mark may become so involved in a woman's lifestyle that he may end up adopting her pace of life. Others have crossed the line in reverse. In their transitional state they may even be named: one of the several definitions given for an acey-ducey is "someone who is not on the level. They rock. Like an ex-junkie that comes back for a visit" (Bugsy). Marginal people themselves are useful in determining the boundaries since their exceptional status serves to define the nature of their difference. In spite of the moderate flow from one group to the other, and the symbiotic nature of the ongoing relationship between the two groups, boundaries are firmly maintained.

Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. Secondly, one finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses (Barth 1969:9-10).

But these "categorical ethnic distinctions" are not all that clear cut since - to start with - my informants' definition of straightness was not quite as exclusive as mine. Throughout the research, I had to attempt and divest myself of such reactions as "If her sister is a stripper, her brother is in the Pen, and her parents are God knows where (she does not), how can she claim to have been, until very recently, straight (i.e. like me)"
Thus, it is from the twice antithetic standpoint of straightness and middle class that the contrasting lifestyles depicted to me had to be analyzed. As the epitome of the straight, I perhaps found it easier to act out my part in our street-straight transactions, symbolizing all the straight values and calling in response for an affirmation of the street values. To this extent, only women who felt challenged and met me at least half way became informants.

By incorporating the interview situation into the ethnography, we are dealing with data en abime, a well known literary device which reveals a plot within a plot, both held in an analogical relation, and each serving to throw light on the other. The transactions between researcher and informants, with the definition of boundaries to be maintained and transgressed but always to be acknowledged, are part of an ethnography of communication which encompasses verbal exchanges between the two cultures. Throughout the study, the contrast of outlooks between the two cultures will be stressed, as a reiteration of the informants' need for clearly defined boundaries.

**THE SETTING**

The very setting (the "Street") in which most transactions take place or are initiated is itself viewed differently by the two groups. In Vancouver, the Street can be downtown ("Granville, Davie ...") or uptown ("East Hastings, Cordova, the Stratford ..."). Many people, especially drug addicts, concentrate their activities around the Corner. The Corner
(exclusively a street term) is formed by the intersection of East Hastings and Columbia streets. From a street point of view, the West part of the intersection is quite devoid of interest: it is almost straight. But the North East corner, with the Sunrise Hotel and the adjacent beer parlour in front of which intoxicated or drugged women are sometimes seen taking the early afternoon sun, and the South East corner, with the Cozy Corner, a Chinese grocery store, around which hang expectant junkies and working hookers: that is the Corner. The name also includes a small neighbouring area (see Appendix E)

To me, the Corner is Hastings and Columbia. It's a name for that whole general area. Down to Carrall, from Pender over to Powell, that whole area. To me, the Street and the Corner are the same. Like, when I'm talking of getting out of here and hitting the street, it's just get out, but when I talk about the Street, I talk about the Corner. (Dee)

Julie described the Street as made of "pawnshops, restaurants, hotels, beer parlours, drugstores, novelty shops". Possibly apart from pawnshops (at least highly visible ones), the description would apply equally to uptown and downtown, although the physical appearance of the latter and the type of people it draws put it a definite notch above the former, from a street and a straight point of view.

However, given the location of the two areas, most straight people interviewed make a clear distinction between "downtown" (the centre of which they see as being the intersection of Granville and Georgia streets) and "uptown" (which they call "Chinatown" and do not frequent much: "Most people don't go there, there's nothing that draws them there"). Downtown, they say,
there are "department stores, small stores, office buildings, dental and medical buildings, flower and china shops, hotels and theatres." One person also added "and porno shops." In Chinatown (or "uptown", in Julie's terms), they list the old Library, Chinese and Japanese curio shops, Chinese restaurants and the Police Station. Two young men also mentioned the Traffic Court. Two years ago, this might have been my description, that of an ordinary square John who, like Julie or the people quoted, only sees what is relevant to his or her experience.

The only additions brought by the other informants to Julie's list of beer parlours, drugstores, hotels, restaurants and novelty shops where "sexual aids" ("French ticklers" and others) are bought, were theatres showing X-rated films, the beach ("You might as well get a good tan while you're sleeping") and, in the case of some "boosters", several department stores known for their shoplifting facilities. Obviously, the informants' mental map of the city is reduced to the occupationally relevant sites of the street, their working and living area.

3 In the Spring of 1975, I was asked by the British Columbia Police Commission to do some research into and write a report on street prostitution in Vancouver (Layton 1975). One of the first things I did was to go out at night with street workers from the Gastown Team, an organization concerned with the protection of juveniles, who patrol the areas described as uptown and downtown. It was a total revelation: the nocturnal street became almost a photographic negative of the diurnal street. Stores disappeared and between those vanished shops stared the unsuspected openings of innumerable walk-up hotels and rooms for rent: no lobby, just a door and a steep staircase. The same phenomenon also gave substance to the people who come to life a night, and make shadows of the straight people left over from the day. (see Appendix E)
Not only do the two groups' perception of the physical reality of the two areas differ, but it is also clear from the responses elicited that the straight persons interviewed, whatever their area of residence and work, have a more extensive vision of Vancouver. The same point is well illustrated by Could and White (1974:34-37) who reproduce P. Orleans' characteristic example (1967) of the three maps of Los Angeles perceived through the eyes of (1) upper middle class whites in Westwood, (2) black residents in Avalon, and (3) Spanish-speaking residents in Boyle Heights, in which the city is gradually reduced in size to the extent, in the last case, of only including the immediate area, the City Hall and the bus depot ("The major entrance and exit to their tiny urban world").

Straight people who go to town to work and shop express few feelings about it. Either they "like" it, or they "don't like what they've done with it", usually referring to its physical appearance. Street people, on the other hand draw much of their strength from the very environment of the street where their transactions take place, from knowing it and being known as a part of it.

Lots of people can't go from Burrard to Davie. They go crazy. It's another territory. They're afraid of people, they can't fend for themselves. (Brandy)

The well defined areas in which street addicts feel at home also reflect their own status and the recognized hierarchy of street performers. This is even more true of addict street-walkers, whose choice of area is not only regulated by primary factors as addicts (type of drug they use, their involvement in
the drug scene, whether they are also traffickers, etc.) but also by secondary factors as prostitutes (their physical appearance, grooming, remuneration expected for services, etc.). Sue pointed out that

The Granville street girls think they're better than the Stratford girls, the Stratford girls think they're better than the Hastings street girls.

But, wherever its exact location, the Street is, for all the informants, more than a physical reality: it is a way of life. As addicts, my informants recognize and adapt to their own favourite spot the feelings Dee attributed to her friends at the Corner:

You can take a hype at the Corner, and they can live down there and be content or happy, or whatever, and they can live down there without needing the rest of the world.

SUMMARY


It is essentially an ethnography of communication which attempts to define the boundaries of the community where communication takes place, the boundaries of the situations where specific speech acts occur, the nature of these exchanges and the various codes adopted in these encounters.
Like the works of James (1971), Agar (1973) and Spradley (1970, 1975), the dissertation focuses on an essentially emic interpretation. The aspect of a "deviant" subculture previously considered by social scientists becomes irrelevant here, since the only deviance acknowledged by the informants is that of the culture's members who fail to conform to the expected behaviour pattern within the group and endanger its cohesion: the "rats" and the "rip offs".

The informants' understanding of their socio-economic environment directs their transactions with members of the larger culture and among themselves. Their economic survival depends on their management of members of the other culture, while their social survival depends on their management of relationships within their own group.

The inclusion of the informant-researcher transaction into the study permits the consideration of a double process: the informant's interaction with a member of the straight culture, an interaction usually seen as mutually exploitative, and the informant's method of imparting and defining a cultural value system.
CHAPTER TWO

FIELD WORK AND THE INTERVIEW SITUATION

In the course of a past study for the British Columbia Police Commission and the present research, I talked to about two dozen women, prostitutes and heroin addicts. The actual field work took two different forms: I first became acquainted with the setting as an observer, and I proceeded later to interview women whose transactions normally take place in the same setting.

PAST AND PRESENT FIELDWORK

Throughout the Summer of 1975, I spent two or three nights a week in the areas described earlier as "downtown" and "uptown". I accompanied individual street workers on their rounds, usually from 9 a.m. to midnight or later and, on a few occasions, a policeman detached to the street workers' team. A member of the Morality squad and a member of the gay community also introduced me - separately - to some places outside the working area of the street workers. Through these people I became acquainted with specific locations within these areas: street corners, whole city blocks, hotels, beer parlours and bars or discotheques reputed to cater to groups with specialized interests such as juvenile homosexuals, black pimps or drug traffickers. I sometimes returned to these places later, and in time became more familiar
with them and more sensitive to actions or signals, and even to sounds specific to some of them. During that summer, I obtained some understanding of the physical environment familiar to my informants.

I also sat in on trials or read trial transcripts of cases which reflected events relevant to street life: charges of soliciting, living on the avails of prostitution, rape, trafficking, drug related offences, and even one drug related murder. The common enough offences introduced me to another aspect of my informants' life, the judicial and correctional one. The unusual ones introduced me to events which sometimes became part of the street folklore (e.g. Porky and the Mafia story, pp. 125-126).

For the actual interviews and the texts obtained, I relied however almost exclusively for this study on information received in Oakalla, the Lower Mainland Regional Correctional Centre, from the Spring to the Winter of 1976. The main reason for this selection is that in 1975 I did not think I would be using for a dissertation the data I was gathering. Information given to me as a researcher for the Police Commission might not have been forthcoming had the informants known it would be used to further a personal goal. Moreover, the direction of the research was quite different and the practical use for the following years of work done in 1975 simply became one of familiarization with the setting and the lifestyle.

Finally, from a practical and a personal point of view, I preferred jail interviews to street work. Unlike Jennifer James
who spent many nights talking to her prostitute informants in little cafes, at home, and in a variety of places outside the jail where she had often first met them, I found this forthright and self-assured approach incompatible with my own character. I formed a good relationship with at least four of my informants, but there was never the slightest pretence that it would be carried outside the jail. One of them offered to meet me after her release, but her activities immediately absorbed her (I heard later that she was "misbehaving again") and we never met.

I did not attempt to talk to unknown women on the street when they were working, even before I came to know a little more about street life, and certainly saw it as an impossibility afterwards. Part of this reluctance is due to a natural shyness and a lack of personal salesmanship. The knowledge of my interference with street business (usually "hooking"), the implicit patronization contained in my assumption that I might question them, the supposition that they would have to reject this public approach if only for appearance's sake, did not encourage me to consider this method a desirable one. Most of my reluctance, however, was due to the fact that I could find no answer to the question "Why would they want to talk to me?".

In 1975, I was sometimes introduced to street women by police officers or street workers. This was also an unacceptable method, since the women had very little choice to refuse (only one did) and the person who performed the introduction was also present during the interview. From these brief and rather futile
encounters, I have only retained for the present research the odd remark which struck me as an unsolicited meaningful statement, a challenge, an assertion of self worth, etc. (e.g. Bonnie, when our detective go-between had left for a minute, saying, perhaps to break the silence, "Last night, I made 550 dollars!" I understood this statement as a challenge and answered: "Wow, that's more than I make in a month!", an answer which momentarily denied whatever right I might have felt to interrogate her in a police car. My status was better than hers at the time and for the occasion (researcher for the Police Commission as opposed to junkie hooker who could not refuse a cop's request), but in terms that we could both appreciate, we had established that she was "better" than me).

Then (1975) as now (1977), private interviews in jail were the only method I could envisage as a possibility. Many researchers have mentioned that people seem willing to talk while they are in jail. Among my informants, I guessed at many reasons for that willingness: boredom for some, and perhaps a desire for the more docile to do what they thought was expected of them; sheer enjoyment, after a reluctant beginning, of being appreciated as a person and as a story teller; intellectual challenge for those who stressed their education ("I started one term at Langara"; "I finished grade XII in here") to try and explain in the terms they assumed to be those of the researcher in what way street life differed from straight life and how much more exciting it all was; and for at least one, the interviews were seen as
didactic exercise. In all cases, the practice of bullshitting as an art form took precedence over whatever other reasons they might have had for agreeing to talk to me.

The authorities were extremely generous with me, giving me one of their hard-to-come-by offices, and free access to any inmates I chose to interview. This was done on the basis of previous interviews I held in jail and thanks to a letter of introduction from the Chairman of the Police Commission. I also assume that they appreciated receiving a copy of my previous report. Since, however, I was engaged in this new research as a private individual, I am very much indebted to their generosity.

Jail interviews may leave much to be desired. None puts it more scathingly than Polsky.

We know also, or ought to know by now, that data gathered from caught criminals, for reasons in addition to and quite apart from possible sampling bias, are not only very partial but partially suspect. These are data that are much too heavily retrospective, data from people who aren't really free to put you down; data often involving the kind of "cooperativeness" in which you get told what the criminal thinks you want to hear so you will get off his back or may be do him some good with the judge or parole board; data from someone who is not behaving as he normally would in his normal life situations; and above all, data that you cannot supplement with, or interpret in the light of your direct observation of the criminal's behavior in his natural environment (Polsky 1969: 115-116).

One can counter some of the reasons given by Polsky for condemning the validity of data thus gathered:

1. Data are not necessarily to be shunned because they are "retrospective". Indeed, most data, except those arising from direct observation or participation, are of a retrospective nature. They are also processed and selected data
and serve to provide an insight into emic values and emphases, and the constructs of reality (Whittaker 1973). Narratives are seldom bare statements of facts but usually give explanations for events. It is as such that these retrospective data are useful since, as Schwartz and Merton mention in a passage quoted by Whittaker (1973:7):

Talk about motives does not end with the suggestion that it is the "real" or "true" reason for the act in question but taps the moral vocabulary through which the informant appraises and evaluates myriads actions and relationships.

Moreover, the individual manner of accounting is in itself revealing of the informant's attempts at presenting a front congruent with his or her self-image and believed to be acceptable to the researcher (Scott and Lyman 1968).

2. The simple comparison of street lifestyle and straight lifestyle is the most potent put-down some informants can conceive. It is also a socially acceptable one since, as the saying goes, "there's nothing personal in it". Unless, of course, one chooses to make it so and acknowledges both the put-down and one's inclusion in the decried group.

3. The "cooperativeness" is in itself an event worthy of investigation. As will be seen later, it is a well recognized phenomenon.

4. My scepticism has grown considerably about the ability of the straight researcher to come close enough to the subject's - especially the criminal subject's - "scene" to analyze the latter's behaviour in the light of his experience of this scene. Naturally, exceptions have to
be made for people who belong to it or have come close enough to it, like the Milners for the black pimps (1972) for instance, Polsky for the hustlers (1967) or Becker for the professional musicians (1951). But, can these people be said to be entirely straight any longer?

I am quite aware that this scepticism is a result of the "bullshitting" to which I have been submitted, and the reiteration that square Johns simply cannot "understand" street people. I consider it a part of my socialization as a square John. In other words, "I know my place". Since street people and square Johns often interact and feed on each other, the revelation of the former's culture to the latter is important, as well as the understanding of the role assigned to them by this culture.

THE INFORMANTS

The only criterion of inclusion in my group of informants was that the women "know" the street. For the prison staff drawing up the list, it meant women usually known to be users, traffickers and/or prostitutes, whatever their present charge might be. The informants were selected in a casual manner: the staff looked at a list of inmates and put a check mark in front of those whose experience was appropriate and added: "This one would probably talk to you ... that one might ..." From the checked names I then selected one who was called to the office where I sat. The informants often asked how they had been selected, in which case I explained that I had picked their name
at random from a list I had been given of people who might be "interesting" to talk to (rather than "willing" to talk to me, which may have been seen as a put down), and that I did not know anything about them personally.

My informants are not part of the hard core of often prestigious inmates who are unwilling to talk to non-officials: those who are seen on the street as "solid" or "heavies" and often become in jail the mediators between other inmates and the staff. They use their strength and ability to manipulate people, grant favours and protection, mete out punishment and find that their authority is seldom challenged. They are usually junkies with a "name" on the street who find that their reputation has preceded them in the jail. They would have had no reason to speak to me and would have gained nothing from it.

Of all my informants, Dee was the only one who had a strength of character and personality comparable to theirs. Referring perhaps to the women I interviewed, Dee once explained that it was not "very cool to help straight people", and I later came to see their willingness to be interviewed as a flaw in the composite picture of cultural competence they were otherwise building for me. This flaw was somewhat redeemed by my absolute certainty that they would not have spoken to me on the street.

(a) The Population

The first part of my report of the B.C. Police Commission (1975) draws upon the court, police and probation files of one hundred women arrested between 1973 and 1975 in Vancouver for
"soliciting for the purpose of prostitution". The number was arbitrarily selected, but the files were chosen on the basis of fullness. Thus, a young girl for whom the court had requested a thorough pre-sentence report was as likely to be represented as a woman with a heavy criminal record, well known by the police and who may have been on a long probation.

This biased sample may also not have been representative of the actual age distribution on the street, since information on girls under the age of seventeen had to be sought separately. The manner in which information had been gathered did not present a great consistency either and some files did not even touch upon aspects very well documented in other (e.g. family background). Some files went back ten or fifteen years, and fashions, trends and emphases were sometimes discernible (one file, for instance, even considered the women's early childhood and toilet training). With these serious caveats, an attempt was made to collect information related to the women's personal history, their family background and home environment, their involvement with various types of drugs, their medical and psychiatric history, court history (rather than criminal history which may not always have been formally sanctioned with arrest and trial) and their occupational history. These women form the population from which the informants for the present work are drawn, and a summary of the report's findings, which are consistent with Limoges survey (1967), may serve as a useful if very sketchy introduction.

The youngest woman included in the report was 14 years old
and the oldest one 45; but most of the ages ranged between 16 and 25. Of the thirty who reported when they entered prostitution, 80% indicated that it was before the age of 20, peaking at 16-18. Most were white, and of the twelve Indians in the sample, eight were between the ages 15 and 19. They came almost equally from urban and rural areas, and almost two thirds of them were from British Columbia. Some completed secondary school and a few did not go beyond elementary school; but the majority left school somewhere between grade 8 and 11. The occupations they have intermittently held ranged from waitresses to clerks or strippers. Many have never held legitimate employment and most were on Welfare.

Some of the women arrested had been married and were usually divorced or separated. A few lived with an "old lady" in a lesbian relationship, but most lived with an "old man" in a common-law relationship. The "old man" usually had a criminal record, made his living by trafficking or other illegitimate means, and was most often a heroin addict. Some of the women who were not themselves heroin addicts had worked or were working for a white or black pimp. Many of them (30%) had had one or two children, usually given up for adoption at birth; the few who had kept them usually had them looked after by a relative.

More than half of the women's early home life had been affected by the parents' divorce or separation, by the death or desertion of one parent, or some other family disruption. Fourteen were reported to be illegitimate or to have been adopted in
infancy. Many reported leaving home before the age of 15.

One quarter came from small families of one or two children, more than half came from families with between three and six children, and the rest came from very large families of seven, ten or even more children. Almost a third of the sixty-four women for whom the information was available were first born children. It was also noted that when the family had to bear the pressure of a severe additional problem (a blind mother, a mother slowly dying of cancer, a mongoloid brother, a badly crippled parent, a sister with cerebral palsy, or a mother with psychiatric problems), in half the cases the first born child was part of the sample. Moreover, eight of them were the eldest daughter in families of five to nine children.

Almost half of the home environments were described as "average". An almost equal number were described as "bad" (alcoholic parents, abused children, etc.). The files substantiated seven cases of molestation by a close male relative before the age of 10, and reported two more. A small number of women were reported by social workers or probation officers as coming from a punitive or extremely religious family, often among foster parents.

The parents' work history showed on the whole an attempt at keeping more or less steady employment as labourers or semi-skilled workers. A small group showed only sporadic employment, odd jobs and social assistance. At the other pole, an even smaller group indicated parents with a professional and middle
class background.

Only half of the women arrested for soliciting on the street and in bars were heroin addicts. All, however, used some type of drug, whether alcohol, barbituates, marijuana, LSD, speed, cocaine, etc. The younger girls still reported sniffing glue. Among the heroin addicts, daily consumption was anything from a light habit of two to three caps to an expensive habit of six to eight caps or more of low quality drug. Quite a few were or had been on a methadone maintenance program.

Almost half the women had never been charged with or convicted of soliciting before but may have received several "warnings" under the previous Act. The other half had at least one conviction for the same offence and many had four or five previous soliciting convictions. Most other convictions were for trafficking or being in possession of narcotics. Three quarters of the women had also been convicted of petty theft. Some of the younger women had been involved in crimes which were until recently mostly committed by men, such as car theft or breaking and entering, and more cases of assaults were reported among the juveniles.

The underground prostitution of call girls and housewives was not the object of the study and only visible prostitution figured in the report. I distinguished between three general zones of operation: Skid Road ("uptown" in the present study, see Appendix E), the Granville street area and the Davie street area. In the first area, where the Corner and the Stratford
Hotel figure prominently, the proportion of heroin addicts were overwhelming. Lower fees were routinely charged and the economic rule of thumb (where one trick equals one cap) was usually applied. I understand that, for a variety of legal and economic reasons, prostitution downtown has recently been more obvious, more aggressive and, reputedly under the guidance of pimps, is proliferating. I do not believe that street prostitution among the junkies of the first area has been noticeably modified by the changes reported elsewhere. If the addict prostitutes' business is affected by the competition coming from the increased number of prostitutes reported by the Police and the news media, they must simply resort to more thefts, more con jobs, and those who did not traffick before may now have to do so.

(b) The Individual Informants

For a variety of reasons, the main one being obviously the informants' good will and accessibility, ten women were selected as informants for the dissertation. Their ages ranged between 21 and 33, with a mean of 25.8 years. Only two have not travelled farther than Alberta; the experience of the others, as addicts and prostitutes, covers most of Canada and part of the United States, and three have also been overseas. Two were fairly new to the street, the other eight have been involved in it since their late teens or earlier. All but one had been in prison before, some many times.

Three had requested to be held in protective custody for their own protection and they lived together in one room where
everybody often joined in the conversation. Two others were first interviewed together, then broke up their relationship and were afterwards seen separately. The last three were always seen alone.

Some informants claimed or denied areas of expertise (e.g. "I've never been a working girl, but I've been trafficking since I was sixteen," Dee). The final criterion of inclusion was whether or not the woman herself accepted her definition as belonging among "street people".

All around the jail, I recognized the sounds and smells of an English mental hospital where I worked twenty-five years ago, and some of the listlessness and the restlessness were also the same. All the informants but Boots who had just arrived had the pasty complexion and the shuffling gait of the institutionalized. They all wore the same jeans and the same T-shirts and some said that they were pleased that they no longer had to wear uniforms. They all had jewellery and most exhibited tattoos. The definitions, jokes, boasts and fears quoted in the next four chapters are extracted from rambling conversations held with Bugsy, Brandy, Snow, Julie, Jo, Sue, Sugar, Tiny and Boots. I never saw their files and only know what they told me and what I felt in their presence.

BUGSY was the youngest, a fair skinned girl of twenty-one. From one interview to the next, I did not know how I would find her: boisterous, sulky, funny, apparently pleased to see me or barely civil. Yet, she always stayed. She described herself as
physically and mentally tough and often talked of beatings received and given, of the utter pitilessness of street life, and of surviving it all and coming out a winner. I found her a delightful story teller. In spite of her age, she had been a hooker and a junkie for eight years. Now, almost two years later, I can only remember her as young and disarming.

DEE was a stolid and sturdily built woman. Her composure was always admirable and she exuded strength and common sense. She had always been a lesbian and at the beginning always came with Bugsy. Dee was a junkie, a trafficker, and talked of robberies, escapes and violence. I thought her brave, courteous and felt considerable respect for her. She also applied systematically to our interviews the conning techniques she was at the same time describing for me. After four months, I said: "We can go no further. You now know more about me than I know about you." She agreed politely, and that was that.

BRANDY was at thirty-three the oldest of my informants. I thought her an unwise and indiscreet woman: after twenty-two years on the street and in the jails, she still talked to the wrong people and said the wrong things; she was in protective custody. Her long experience in American and Canadian streets and jails made her an ideal subject, equally fluent in street argot, standard language and medico-legal jargon. She was unfortunately moody, however, with a very short attention span and interviewing her amounted to an endurance test. We often sat out in the sun where she sunbathed, forever distracted by the male
inmates who worked nearby. Although a junkie, her self-professed worst enemy was alcohol: she could never resist it and had "blackouts" during which she beat people senseless. Her violence was also directed at herself and her forearms were entirely covered with slash scars.

She could express herself in the foulest way imaginable, yet was ceremoniously polite with me. I think she found me somewhat simple and totally inconsequential.

SNOW was a beautiful Tsimshian girl of twenty-four, with remarkably fine hands. Since these portraits are purely subjective and impressionistic, I shall say that I saw Bugsy and Snow as "girls" and the others as "women". I saw them both as sentimental, vulnerable, and in need of protection perhaps against themselves more than anything else. In spite of their having an experience of life which I could not even fathom, I saw them both as children.

Snow had been involved in many petty activities and thefts, small time trafficking, and also supported herself by prostitution. Like Bugsy, she had an impulsivity and an almost uncontrollable wildness about her. Two weeks before the end of her term, she escaped.

JULIE came from a "straight" family. She was married and had a child of whom we often talked and who was born in jail during a pervious term of imprisonment. Her husband was also serving a sentence in Oakalla. She gave me the impression that she practised a somewhat higher class of prostitution than the others, that all her activities were in fact superior to that of
the other inmates and mentioned that she and her husband had "worked" in England and done well. She had luminous grey eyes in a heart shaped face and her appearance and manner would support her claim that her greatest success was with marks. She always showed interest in my work and enjoyed discussing a great variety of topics. This was probably another aspect of the insistence with which she projected a "superior" image.

JO was a very composed and handsome, intelligent and often bitter woman. She had travelled to England and North Africa and was pleased to hear that I knew Morocco which she liked. She prostituted herself as a last resort and preferred to boost or steal from her customers.

BOOTS was small and quite childlike in appearance, with long blond hair. She had been well protected by her old man and, after his death, went to work for a white pimp who got her off heroin for a while. Although a prostitute and drug addict of long standing, she had only recently entered street life. She told tales of success unrivalled by the other women, and her contribution figures mostly in Appendix D.

SUE, with Dee the only informant who was not a prostitute, was mostly a trafficker and booster, who started using at the age of thirteen. She was an unfriendly woman and sometimes attempted to intimidate me. Yet, these minor power struggles were neither important nor frequent enough to justify her willingness to talk to me. She was a precise informant who took the trouble to correct my misapprehensions.
TINY and SUGAR were the only two informants who appeared unable to cope with the pressure of their personal life. They had both been "straight" and unable to resist the temptation of a more "exciting" life, but neither appeared to have been very successful on the street.

During the nine months of my field work, Tiny and Jo were released; Bugsy and Boots were transferred; Sue, Snow and Brandy escaped. Brandy was recaptured soon afterwards and said it had been "worth it!"

All the informants were junkies. All made their living on the street and all would probably go back to it after their release or their escape, as they had always done in the past.

**Pseudonyms**

I told my informants that their anonymity would be respected as much as possible. I could have distorted the data to ensure complete anonymity, but have done nothing beyond the vagueness of the above portraits and the attribution of pseudonyms, and this for four reasons:

1. My committee and the problematic readers of a doctoral dissertation care little whether Jane Doe, who lives in another world, becomes Tatiana as long as either name is attributed with consistency to the author of the statements quoted.

2. Since the informants were called into my office through the classification office, the staff know who my most frequent visitors were.
3. It is quite unlikely that any of my informants' associates would ever bother, if they knew of its existence, to go to the university and read my thesis.

4. Moreover, and this is by far the most important point (and the reason for which they showed so little interest in preserving their anonymity) the data I collected are totally unimportant from their point of view.

While working for the Police Commission, I once asked a woman if she did not mind being seen getting out of what was obviously an unmarked police car (others, perhaps less sure of their reputation, had shown some reluctance about it). She answered: "I don't really mind. They know me. They know I wouldn't say anything important!" I can only assume that something "important" would be information on criminal activities (whether knowledge of a crime, its perpetrators, the whereabouts of an escaped convict, or anything which would help the police). This would be "ratting" out on other street people and one would have to have a good reason for agreeing to do so.

The information given to the curious square John - even one endowed with some scholarly title and bent on some scholarly task - is of the same type as the tidbits given to the mark: neither really matter. But since the point of view of the women and that of the researcher (or the mark) are not the same, the so-thought trivia offered by the former may be all that is wanted from them.
On the second or third interview, I would come back to the question of anonymity already briefly mentioned during the first one. All the informants said that they did not care about it. This, I believe, was the first put-down I met. Their denial of a need for anonymity was simply a reiteration of the statement made the year before that "They know I wouldn't say anything important". The implication was also that only what they consider important is important. By the same token, it made me a collector of trivia.

I insisted on their need for a pseudonym because I was keeping an open dictionary which was available to them and where they could always check their own definitions and comments, as well as those made by other people, and discuss these. I made the double point that they might be embarrassed to have their statements read by other people in the jail, and that their anonymity was also for my protection since I only wanted to know them by a nickname and be unable to identify them later (they indeed often questioned me on "Who said that?"). I was also interested in the types of nicknames they would choose.

Only half of them chose their own pseudonyms: Sugar (after consulting Brandy who, with one glance at her well endowed friend, suggested "Grapefruit"), Brandy, Boots, Bugsy (second choice, Tiny being already taken and her own nickname being too well known), and Julie. I selected the others, buy my reasons would reveal their identity.

So, because of my insistence and in spite of their lack of
interest, my informants were given pseudonyms. All but one, who righteously insisted that she had no reason to "hide herself". A few days later, in the course of a gossipy session with Brandy, it suddenly became clear that this woman's real name was quite unknown on the street where she was only known by her nickname. Her real name was in fact the best pseudonym she could have used. In appreciation of her guile and her sanctimonious attitude, I gave her back her own nickname as a pseudonym. It matters little which one it is since the joke is only between her and me, and since, more to the point, her statements are indeed "not important".

THE INTERVIEW TRANSACTION

Since the informants' agreement to collaborate had to be solicited before any further step could be taken, our first interview was almost a storming session, where I went very rapidly through what Olesen and Whittaker describe as the first three phases of role-making: surface encounter, proffering (definitions of one's self and the other) and inviting (definitions of both from the informants), selecting and modifying (meaningful and viable portions of researcher's and informant's role) (Olesen and Whittaker 1967:273-281).

I introduced myself and indicated my affiliations, stating that I was neither a social worker nor a psychologist. It was one way to dissociate myself from the overly familiar. I soon realized that this was a necessity. My door was open when I was
not interviewing anyone, and after having seen me a few times while waiting to be admitted to the classification office across the hall, some women sometimes wandered in and questioned me. Most, having satisfied themselves that I was not what they thought I was (either a psychologist or a social worker, since that particular office was sometimes used by them) left it at that. Others sat on the edge of the desk, ready to flee should I become demanding (or perhaps talk too much), and try to find out what I was. Since these talks were not formal interviews (i.e. they had initiated the interaction, were in control and asking the questions, had not agreed to "talk" to me, decided when they should leave, etc.) they often proved to be profitable conversations where I could observe a free handling of the street-straight encounter. I often noticed that a smoothly running and casual conversation could become diffident and stilted when it turned into a formal interview ("Well, would you like to talk to me, then?" "Yeah ... O.K. ...") or could even appear to come to an end until "next time we meet", while in fact continuing to ramble on for some time afterwards. The commitment involved in the change of status for the informant and the pressure for the inexperienced interviewer seemed to take on a paralyzing quality for both.

Since the informants knew very well - each in her own way - how to handle a social worker or a psychologist, it was a novelty for them to face an unknown quantity as I, and their reconnais­sance into less familiar territory was interesting to observe. For casual visitors and regular informants, I practised a few
definitions of anthropology which would set it apart from their familiar experience. I tried: "In anthropology, we are actually in a very nice position, since we don't have to take sides. For us, nothing is really "good" or "bad". If it works, it's good, if it doesn't, it's bad." Some may have recognized in this what is partly their own philosophy. Others may have though anthropologists pretty wishy-washy. But - even if they did not believe me - it was at least a clear departure from what they consider "preaching" behaviour or what they see as an attempt to "get into my head and set me straight".

To return to the interview, I introduced myself and explained that I was interested in language and how people describe their life experience, giving the example of what a "bastard" cop would mean to a street woman and a "bastard" prof to a student: how they would describe two different behaviours with the same term and how this term and the behaviour implied would be understood differently by another street woman or another student, neither having an immediate recognition of her street or university counterpart's experience, but knowing what the term meant for her own group; I concluded that "the cop and the prof are probably bastards for the same reasons, but act it out differently" - thus claiming acceptance into the ranks of downtrodden inferiors and females everywhere, the only shared experience I could claim with my informants. I also mentioned that I was interested to see how we protected ourselves from such behaviour.

I found it necessary to explain at some length my interest
in language, since my first superficial introduction by a third party as "someone interested in street language" elicited the amused and patronizing reaction: "You mean "fuck" and stuff like that?"

Before they answered my request to talk to me, I also asked: "There's another point and that is what's in it for you, and what's in it for me? I'm working for my Ph.D. at the university, and the last thing I have to do before I'm through is to write a thesis. Once I'm finished, I don't know. Ten years ago it would have meant a good job. Now, I'm not so sure. But I've been at it for so long that I might as well finish! Now, what's in it for you? I'm not so sure about that either ... I can't really pay you. All I can do is leave a "token of my appreciation" or a "consultant's fee" on your account when I leave, but it would not be very much ... Some people enjoy talking about what they know and what they're good at ... There's something else which I think is important and it's simply to try and make people understand a little bit better what goes on. I know most of you really want to be left alone [vigorous nods of agreement], but we make the laws. And if we don't know anything about you, your problems and your needs, our laws are going to reflect that. I can give you two examples of how a little bit of understanding has improved things: as you know, it is no longer illegal to be a homosexual, and very soon now someone who presses charges for rape will not be asked whether she is a hooker or not. She will not first have to stand trial on that before her case is heard.
I always received a strong positive reaction to that last argument since it has long been a very sore spot for street women who seldom even bother to press charges for that particular reason. I went on: "Hookers here would prefer to be left alone, too, but it is not the case everywhere else, where they are trying to form unions and to get their problems recognized. They are the ones who come out and want to talk about it. They even go on strikes sometimes!"

Once our relationship was established, I sometimes brought them flowers, cigarettes, chocolate or gum. Bugsy always brought tea to our interviews, and I felt she was thus establishing a hostess-guest relationship between us. In response, I always brought flowers or soft drinks when invited for dinner. I always stressed the point that I had no rights and depended entirely on the good will and hospitality of my informants. When introduced by the staff who sometimes forgot to indicate this clearly, I added: "If you feel like talking to me, that is!"

It could be said that I was attempting to allow my

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1 The following exchange is somewhat typical of feelings expressed by many informants when faced with the implication that prostitutes cannot be raped. (I met the defendant in 1975).

Defense counsel: Had you had sex with anybody for money?
Defendant: I mean, what are you bringing all this up for? I didn't ask to get beat up. I didn't ask to get treated like that. Just because I was a working girl, he can go around, pointing guns and treating me like that? ... Yes, I have been a working girl. That's what you're asking! Yes, I admit to that. But that does not have to be right for him to force me into that, and pull a gun, and threaten to kill me, does it? Does it?" (Vancouver rape trial transcript)
informants as much self respect and freedom as they could have in these surroundings, and that by stressing their hospitality and good will I acknowledged the inequality of the exchange of data-for-a-dissertation for a few dollars, a bunch of lilacs or roses from my garden with also the same effect. It is such an easy position to assume that I cannot truthfully detect what part fraudulence and manipulation take in the front managed by a researcher especially when this front is most naturally suited to that researcher's personality. Thus, it could perhaps be argued that it was a con game. Having assumed that this attitude would be acceptable, that my recognition of their graciousness and courtesy would be appreciated, this became my game.

A parenthesis is necessary to explain the meaning of the word "game". Of the different meanings attributed to the word by Eric Partridge in his Dictionary of the Underworld (1950), my informants commonly use the first and the third definitions; the second and fourth ones are known to them but are seen as American or more specifically Black American or "nigger talk."

**Game**

1. Used as a noun, the quality of having mastered or having the aptitude to master technique for getting money or one's own way through the manipulation of human emotions.
2. The Game - prostitution, also called the "pussy game."
3. Any game in which money and personal gain are the objects, including all hustles and "legitimate" big money enterprises
4. High game, e.g. "When you give ten cents' worth for twenty
cents and the trick thinks he got thirty cents' worth."

It is also apparent that some straight-street encounters can be seen as "games" in a more orthodox way, since it holds true in these encounters that

at least one of the interactants is aware or capable of being made aware that, in realizing his aims in an encounter, he must take into account the others' expectations of what he expects of them, and vice versa (Scott and Lyman 1970:95).

Furthermore, these encounters may also become "face games", in the words of Goffman, in which "defensive" (self-protective) and "protective" objectives are sought in protecting one participant's identity against damage or spoilage (Scott and Lyman 1970:97).

They are all aspects of the game which are familiar to my informants. The game is also enhanced by their awareness that it is also seen as such my many of the straight people who interview them in their professional capacity.

BOUNDARIES

Throughout most of the interviews and with most of the informants, two sets of boundaries emerged: those resulting from the confrontation of the two cultures, and those created by the situation itself and the way it had been defined.

In the first case, the cultural straight-street boundaries were double: the customary opposition between straight and street values were reflected in the contrasted characterization of street informants and straight researcher, but a second opposition was also established between straight and street women.
In the second case, the type of data sought was mostly linguistic and dealt with conflict situations: I had not expressed any interest in confidential matters or, explicitly at least, in occupational (i.e. sexual) information. Thus, the overt introduction of the topic of sexual practices in our interviews went beyond the boundaries of the "situation" as it was defined, presenting a threat to the structure of the entire encounter (Goffman 1961). I had also expressly described myself as straight and a definite behaviour and vocabulary were expected from me. Consequently, I clearly transgressed my personal boundaries when I once inadvertently used the word "blow job". The term elicited a nervous and embarrassed giggle from the informant, who may not have minded "frenching", but probably expected "oral sex" from a middle age and middle class woman, or even "fellatio", if she knew the word.

Respect for the established boundaries was often reflected in the informants' modesty. Most of them appeared careful not to say anything which might presumably shock me. What might appear to me to be outlandish sexual practices, for instance, would be referred to as "something special". On the whole, they believed - and said so - that I was very conventional in sexual matters and saw as extraordinary experiences which were to them ordinary. "Like, for you," said Jo, "something might be different, but for us, it's normal."

When pressed - as, for instance, when trying to define for me the difference between "perverts", "freaks", "weirdos" and
"nuts" - Bugsy gave me examples but obviously did not enjoy doing so. By the same token, when I volunteered an example, always drawn from another informant's text, to confirm a definition - e.g. "If he wants to watch you pee in a glass, or if he wants you to pee on his face, that's harmless enough, but is he likely to turn dangerous as well and try to hurt you?" - it was received with what appeared to be some embarrassment.

In a story related by Bugsy, her old man asked: "What were we doing?" when she told him that she had seen him with another woman. For my benefit, she explained: "So I told him! I described it right down to a tee!" the single exception to the otherwise verbatim retelling of the whole dialogue that had taken place during their quarrel. Another time, she related in some detail an encounter with a sailor, skipping over this passage: "I picked him up as a trick. We went to my girl friend's house and we did our thing". In the same manner, Julie said: "You pick up a trick and you go to his hotel room, and during the course of whatever may be happening or turning out ..." Her use of euphemisms was such that she often confused me entirely and that, to spare her in her efforts to spare me, I preferred not to ask for clearer explanations.

Another example of a certain sexual modesty which I often noticed in my youngest informants' dealings with me was the manner in which Bugsy and Dee showed me that they were involved in a lesbian relationship. They had both been called to my office together: their names followed each other on the list and
I had asked the counsellor whether they got on well and could be interviewed together. She had simply answered: "Yes, it will be all right, they're friends." They immediately established their relationship by sitting in front of my desk and holding hands. This first clue having been received in a matter-of-fact fashion, Dee then lit a cigarette which Bugsy sometimes took away from her mouth or her hand and from which she drew two or three times before giving it back to her. There was a half full package on the desk in front of Dee, so their sharing was not to be understood as due to the scarcity of cigarettes. Moreover, taking a cigarette away from someone looks like a much more intimate gesture than receiving a half smoked cigarette. Dee being quite obviously the dominant individual in this relationship (whatever the nature of it might have been), Bugsy's gesture denoted a trust and intimacy not justifiable by any other type of relationship. This second clue having been accepted, they proceeded to the next one: Dee sat back more comfortably in her hard chair and lifted her legs to let them rest on Bugsy's lap. Throughout the rest of the interview Bugsy massaged Dee's big toes. They also introduced the word "nichy", grinning and stressing the word so that I would ask what it meant. Dee explained that it referred to anything that aroused one sexually and Bugsy laughed: "Dee is nichy about her big toe!"

What makes the incident meaningful is that in none of their following interviews did they ever touch each other again and I assume that the whole performance only served as a test. The
only other allusion to their relationship occurred during a discussion on tattoos, when Bugsy showed me how her ex-old man's initials had been turned into Dee's initials. When, two months later, I asked Bugsy what were the advantages of having an "old lady" in jail, I felt I had committed a small breach of etiquette since she had never said anything explicit about her first hand knowledge of the situation; I ended my sentence to indicate that the question was not a personal one. She then talked freely of her future plans with Dee.

A possible explanation of this modesty may be found in Brandy's statement: "If someone gives me fifty bucks, I lose all modesty. But if someone's not giving me shit, I'm really modest." But I also believe that their frequent diffidence to discuss explicitly their sexual transactions with me was mainly due to the fact that in them lies what is deemed to be the essential difference between us.

Their respective sexual behaviour is naturally enough a topic of confrontation between straight and street women. In her introduction to The Prostitution Papers, Millett describes some shrill and disorderly arguments between feminists and prostitutes, in the course of which was finally heard

the accusation, so long buried in liberal good will or radical rhetoric ... The rejection and disapproval which the prostitutes have sensed from the beginning, and with the unerring instinct of the unconscious have directed all their energy toward exposing (Millett 1973:25).

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2This resentment resembles the one sometimes expressed by Blacks and Indians when faced with white "liberal good will or radical rhetoric".
This cry: "You're selling it, I could too but I don't", in effect a triple statement, is all the more interesting since feminists are often the first to maintain that wives closely resemble prostitutes and buy with sexual favours or duties their husband's financial support and the security it brings, or that straight women repay men for the pleasure of being wined, dined, entertained and flattered in the only way that is expected of them. Whereas this argument in the feminists' mouth is meant to stress the sexual and social subjection of all women, in the prostitutes' mouth it simply becomes a way to put down straight women and show that they have little reason to feel self righteous (since it is assumed they do) and superior to street women. Understandably, when feminists do take up the argument, it is not well accepted by prostitutes. Or vice versa.

If some reluctance was usually shown when referring to explicitly sexual - occupational in this context - matters, it must also be said that coarseness was sometimes used as a weapon (defensive, retaliative or aggressive, depending on the interview situation). It was at least felt as such, and while I accepted the customary street put down of the "ignorant" straight as a generalized antagonistic gesture, I apprehended the

3"A hustler is any woman in American society. I was the kind of hustler who received money for favors granted rather than the type of hustler who signs a lifetime contract for her trick. Or the kind of hustler who carefully reads women's magazines and learns what it is proper to give for each date, depending on how much money her date or trick spends on her (Terkel 1974:57)."
voluntary coarse sexual remark or suggestion as a personal affront. In fact, both were equally directed at challenging a straight woman's self perception as a liberal and understanding person. The stereotypic description of the straight women's hang ups served to make any personal reference a hostile challenge and an attempt to force the issue, very much as in the passage described by Kate Millett.

But it is possible that this challenge was only a response to what may have been seen as an unfair excursion outside the parameters of the interview situation as they had been defined. On the whole, however, by never proferring any so called liberal good will or radical rhetoric to my informants, I spared us both the embarrassment of their having to "set me straight." When our respective, yet similar, positions had to be discussed, it was often done tactfully and somewhat ironically.

In the following extract, for instance, Brandy switched around a popular statement: she did not say: "All wives are prostitutes." She said: "All husbands are tricks"; furthermore, when she compared us and said that we act in similar ways and manipulate our men in identical fashion, she did not compare us as prostitute and straight woman, but simply as women: she spoke as an "old lady" (rather than as a prostitute) to a wife:

"As Bugsy explained: "It was mainly a sex problem between them. "The same old thing all the time!" That's what Joe said. He said he couldn't handle it. He said she refused to do it in a different way, because she didn't know how. She was scared. She always had the Mommy image in her head: "Don't do that!" That's a naughty girl!"
You look through the centuries, they say the woman's been tied to housework and raising kids. But she's also manipulated that guy to go out and slave his ass, bring home the paycheck, feed her, take her out, wine and dine her. And I think that now women are caught in their own trap. They manipulate a little too good! Because I talked to a lot of people and they'll say: "But how can you turn a trick?" And I'll say: "You guys turn a trick every time you fuck your wives!" And they say: "We don't turn ..." And I says: "Yes, you do! You're buying the groceries for the week, you're clothing her. And if she's not in the mood to get fucked that night, you'll say: "Well, let's go to a party, dear!" and you relax her with booze and give her a good time, and then you get her in bed. And so every man is a trick!" It's true! Women have manipulated men and now they're balking because they're stuck in the kitchen!

You take a good looking woman or a good looking man, and they can get along anywhere. If they have anything on the ball, they use their looks to play on other people. I used to do it when I was younger. I was cute when I was a kid, so I would just pucker up and throw a few cute tears and I'd get what I want. When I got older I had a good shape, so all I'd have to do is wiggle my ass past a guy and I got what I wanted, you know. Or, if your husband's horny, and you want a coat or something, you're gonna be as nice as you can, until you get that coat. And then you'll go back into your rollers and no make-up. And you want something else, so out come the rollers and on comes the make-up! I've done it all my life, and all my girl friends do it. Maybe they don't realize they're doing it, but they're doing it ... You probably done it!

If boundaries were usually maintained, they were also transgressed, and there was often an implication of female complicity during our interviews. It was more or less implied that, whereas the Street Trickster was beyond my experience, I would definitely guess what the Female Trickster was up to, and would know where and when to laugh.

I very much doubt that a male researcher would have received the same data. After our reciprocally tentative gestures of the beginning had finally gelled into familiarity, what they told me because I was a woman, they would have spared him
because he was a man. Even if the words had been the same, the intonation and the grins would have been different. And if those had been there, then the message they carried would have been different. To borrow Geerts' warning (1973:15-16), our fictio would have differed and a man's "making" would not have been the same as mine.

THE DATA

The work done with the informants fell basically into three categories: elicitation of definitions and descriptions through questions and answers; collection of spontaneous anecdotes; and taxonomic classification.

Some women were ill at ease and moody, although on the whole willing to talk; others were helpful and painstakingly informative; others again were friendly and vivacious speakers. A few of them went through all three states over the months of the research. The informants and I naturally adopted a form of communication best suited to their particular talents, the relationship we had formed and their mood of the moment. Bugsy, for instance, who could ramble on from one story to another with good humour, a good sense of timing and a sarcastic turn of mind, sat with glazed eyes when I asked her to sort out and classify cards: within a few minutes, her boredom had made the atmosphere of the room unbearable. Dee and Sugar, on the other hand, dutifully performed the tedious classification over a period of several sessions, often puzzling at what they discovered and saying they had never "thought about it like that before." Juliè,
whose inquisitiveness was always evident, appeared equally interested in providing definitions and descriptions, speculating on the differences between the two cultures and discussing the system of communication and exchange between their members.

To start the first interviews, when the personality of the informants was still unknown to me, I asked them all to name and describe the people they saw on the street. As these were named and described, a rough classification already took place into "street people" (traffickers, users, hookers, etc.) and the "square Johns" (shoppers, tricks, etc.). As the groups were further subdivided (e.g. different types of tricks, hookers, users, etc. see Appendix B), more definitions followed, characterization and stereotypes were expressed and relationships were defined.

Some informants never confined themselves to straight answers. In fact, it was the measure of Bugsy's tiredness when she did, and I would then put an end to the formal interview. She, and at least two others, regularly substituted an anecdote for a definition. If I asked a question on the possible type of relationship between a "good cop" and a street woman, for instance, or on the way to handle drunken tricks, an answer very often took the form of a story. I assume that they found it difficult to answer my questions with generalizations amounting to an interpretation of the culture's socio-economic environment. An anecdote, referring to one incident in which the question asked found one answer, established instead the informant's
cultural competence and her ability to deal with a definite, concrete situation. To an abstract statement on relationships, she substituted a concrete statement on specific interactions. From the sum of these situations described at length and repeatedly through street gossip emerge the approved behavioural limits of the group.

Some informants appeared to feel uncomfortable with the interviewing format of questions and answers, perhaps because it resembles too much police interrogations or interviews with correctional staff. They were instead encouraged to talk freely of their experience on the street, of what they perceived to be occupational and personal problems, and how they attempt to handle these, and they usually responded to this request by retelling stories depicting problematic situations and usually successful outcomes.

Whether obtained through one informant's usual anecdotal way of answering questions or another's specific intent to relate a particular tale, part of the data consists of a collection of stories. Some of these stories, through the sheer context of the street's usual means of livelihood and survival and the informants' self-perception, are versions of trickster tales, describing how the "straight" trick or mark, whose intent is to exploit "street" women, are in fact tricked (manipulated or robbed) by them. They also describe how informants come, successfully or not, to terms with problems arising from the illegality of their activity as prostitutes and drug addicts as
they encounter members of the narcotics and morality squads. Always, they attempt to trick those out to trick them. Finally, they describe how the women's good faith is sometimes deceived by the "bad" tricks who rob and beat them, and how they meet such a situation, a situation for which they are always prepared.

While this first group of stories describes the interaction, always of an exploitative nature, between members of the two cultures, other stories establish some of the parameters of in-group interaction and describe appropriate behaviour and sanctions for transgressing its guidelines.

A linguistics analysis went along with the collection of stories. Words intuitively deemed to be significant, or explicitly said to be so by the informants themselves, were extracted from the texts and classified in two ways: alphabetically, with their definition and often ample illustration of usage in context: either ad hoc examples provided by the women as they defined the terms, or extracts from the stories illustrating specific meanings and appropriate contexts; and taxonomically, into domains such as "straights", "tricks", "hookers", "addicts", "cops", etc. This classification was done by the informants as they reviewed some 200 cards bearing the words of the glossary (Appendix A) and sorted them into a semantic grouping that "made sense" to them. Further sorting took place within each category, as words were discussed and the terms were ordered along vertical dimensions of generalization and horizontal dimensions of discrimination. None of my informants had done this type of
semantic analysis before, yet they proceeded with great assurance.

Much like Spradley and Mann's cocktail waitresses (1975: 61-62), it appears that prostitutes and drug addicts who work on the street operate with several sets of categories: some serving as a basis for the formal structure of the setting in which they operate and others understandable only in terms of their specific social networks. In the folk taxonomy established by the informants, people are clearly identified by their behavioural attributes, and socialization partly takes the form of learning the categories, networks among them, and rules for operating within these networks.

The texts and the taxonomy both reflect the informants' emic values, and both cultures are described and evaluated in terms of street emics. These data deal with physical and environmental devices for adjusting to, coping with, and even attempting to get the better of problematic or dangerous situations. The definitions and story excerpts were anonymously available to the informants and their comments served as validity and reliability checks.

The culture's artifacts, such as "rigs" for "fixing", make-shift apparatus for tattooing in jail, containers to carry small quantities of heroin, etc. are - apart from the syringe - easily available, easily disposable, and usually objects with another quite innocent function: a child's balloon, a broken tooth brush, a sewing needle, a bottle cap, a filter tip or some cotton
batting, a spoon. They show a degree of ingenuity but, because of their need to be inconspicuous, easily and anonymously discarded, they have not given rise to any type of art. With the exception of tattooing, only the verbal arts have developed in the culture: the performance of gossip, the oral display of status, joking and swearing, the transmission of common knowledge and practical experience, the verbal manipulation of tricks or marks, serve as a means of personal and cultural survival and as a source of common and individual pride.
CHAPTER THREE

STREET TALK: RAPPING, CONNING AND BULLSHITTING

Rapping, conning and bullshitting are ways to talk. Speech acts serve many purposes: they are used to insult, intimidate, amuse, cajole, coerce, seduce, appraise, greet, subdue or impress. As the interlocutors and the purposes vary, so do the manners of speech. The informants clearly indicate an awareness of the importance of verbal transactions and the belief that they can expertly dominate these.

A female prostitute drug addict on the street - a hooker and a hype - could in the course of a day talk to her old man or her pimp, her mark, her girl friend, other hookers, other junkies, her connection (trafficker), a rip off, cops on the beat, members of the morality squad posing as customers, narcs, her tricks. The tricks alone might include a drunk, a talker, a masochist or a weirdo, all requiring a different type of verbal manipulation on her part. Her alertness, her ability to evaluate people and their needs as well as their expectations of her, her anticipation of situations and their outcome, and generally speaking her precise understanding of her environment and the part she plays in it shape her style of communication.

The women I met all lived, lawfully or unlawfully, by their wits: shoplifting and the perhaps slightly more "professional"
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boosting, rehashing,\textsuperscript{1} Welfare,\textsuperscript{2} prostitution, robbing tricks, living off a mark (described by Jo as a combination of "conning" and "hooking"), B. & E.,\textsuperscript{3} forgery, writing bad cheques (also known as "paper hanging"), or the occasional waitressing, described by Brandy as being a "good stall". Whatever the means of livelihood, the women make sure that these are turned to their greatest advantage. Talking a trick out of sex, for instance, is more advantageous than going to bed with him. If he can also be talked into giving even more money for the same lack of services, all the better. If, on the same basis, he can be turned into a profitable mark, this is a real success.

"READING" AND CONNING THE MARK

All the women boast of having a mark. The little given to him in terms of companionship or sex, the amount received from him (apartment, clothes, money, car) are all topics of conversation where the women's talent at conning is appraised and enjoyed.

In jail, a mark's letters are shown to friends, and his visits are talked about. The faithfulness of marks is legendary

\textsuperscript{1}"That's when you go to the shop and shoplifts something, right? You go back and you make like you've bought it but you've lost the price tag. And you get the refund, the money, instead" (Jo).

\textsuperscript{2}Dee once joked that the day the Welfare cheque comes in is the "hookers' day off".

\textsuperscript{3}The initials refer to article 306 of the Canadian Criminal Code: Breaking and Entering. Until recently, this offence was a typically masculine one, but female addicts have now started to commit it.
and much to the women's credit: it is proof of their conning ability.

In this chapter, I do not make any distinction between a woman's mark and a con artist's mark. The technique used for "reading" a mark is reputed to be the same in both cases, and the characteristics of both marks are also the same, as we will later see. From a "straight" point of view, they may appear to be two different people, but from the "street", a mark is a mark. He or she is also a perfect "straight man" in the oral performance enacted, giving the expected cues to which the artist will reply with a display of verbal mastery.

Snow, asked in what area of street activities she felt to be an expert, answered: "Manoeuvering people into a position to give me money". And Jo added "Speech. Being able to talk". Reflecting upon the qualities that make a good con artist, Julie explained that "Seventy five per cent, I'd say, are good talkers. Conning, you more or less have to talk a lot, and you have to set an impression on the person".

I personally experienced this ability to "set an impression on the person", which all my informants believe they possess and which is an essential part of con artistry. It goes together with the ability to elicit from the interviewer, who is in this instance assimilated to a mark, the nature of his or her needs in order to satisfy these in the informants' own way.

Bruce Jackson noticed the evolution of his interviewing technique with his informants, petty criminals, addicts, prostitutes, seeing in it an achievement of competence on his part. He
describes the customary loss of sensitivity and gain of expertise which causes the researcher to stop conversing with people and start interviewing informants, but he also describes a type of informant's apparent cooperation which resembles the manipulative technique applied to marks.

While working on these manuscripts I noticed some differences in my own techniques over the years. In the early tapes... I seemed to talk a lot. I occasionally gave opinions. These were often more conversations than interviews... I learned along the way that the questions you ask structure the statements you get, not only in form but in content and focus, so I decided to ask as few questions as possible and to make those as general as possible so the speaker could decide what he considered important enough to talk about. That is necessary if you want to get what he thinks important rather than what he thinks you think is important (Jackson 1974: 9-10).

In the following dialogue, where my questions are underlined, Dee describes this technique:

- It's all his personality. You work on his weaknesses. Somebody who likes... Who's always wanted a daughter or whatever... And that's a weakness with him. So you let him more or less take care of you.

- Will you try to change your ways just to be like a daughter?

- No. You just work on that part of him and make him think of you as his daughter.

- Will you call him special names?

- No. It never comes out right in the open, what you're going, because it makes him self conscious. You just work your way around him to get it.

- So, you have to try different approaches before you know...

- Before you know which one is gonna work!

- How much time do you have to feel that he could become a mark? Is it something that you can decide at once?
- At once. You know whether he is. After sitting and having a drink with him or something ... You just get to know their personalities. Like, some personalities can be marked in a lot easier than others. You listen to him talk and you get to know what he wants. And then, that's what you work on. His weaknesses.

Jo and Snow added a few precisions to Dee's description of the method:

- **What sort of "talking talent" do you have to have?**
  - Manipulation.

- Yeah. Put yourself to the level that you know they want to be and that they are.

- Yeah.

- **Which means that you have to listen, too?**
  - Oh, yeah ... You go by ear, you know.

- **You listen first and you talk afterwards?**
  - Well, you start out slow.

- Yeah. They're talking to you and you're answering them. Not giving yourself away by the answers. More or less that you're going along themselves, making them think, you know ...

- Until you have enough to go on that you know what they want.

Vincent Swaggi, Klockars' professional fence, would agree with these informants. From childhood, he says,

hustling taught me how to read people. I was a great bull-shitter, a good con. I could tell nine times out of ten who I could sell (Klockars 1974:38).

Two of Blum's informants stress the dual and complementary aspect of information seeking and self revelation:

There's a con for every man. I'll just approach anyone and it will take me just fifteen minutes to learn his interests and his weaknesses (Blum 1972:30).
The natural thing is to let the mark show you what he wants and then you just go along (1972:30).

Con men often delight in describing successful "jobs". I could draw many illustrations of their skill from the literature or from my informants' text. I thought it more interesting and less customary to give a mark's version of such an experience. Reading con men's descriptions of their exploits, one may wonder how the whole transaction is viewed from the victim's standpoint and to what extent he is entirely fooled. The story reproduced in Appendix F was given to me by a friend, with much embarrassment on his part and gratitude on mine. He describes how he became the victim of the "hot T.V. game". Reading the story, the injunction of Klockars' informant may be remembered: "So you come over to him and you're looking around like there might be cops watching" (1974:43), which serves to confirm the authenticity of the deal: the merchandise is indeed "hot". Interestingly enough in this case, the mark was actually prepared for a con job, but entirely misjudged its nature.

Street people believe they do possess a superior intuition, the insight to assess people and situations and the power to manipulate them. Writers who have worked with con men agree with this self evaluation.

When it comes to "playing con" few people can match the skill and versatility of a "righteous dope fiend" (Sutter 1966: 211).

Michael Agar sees his confidence men, whether junkies or not, as good intuitive psychologists with poise and a sense of authority. They must correctly 'read' the mark and immediately formulate a strategy to encourage his trust (Agar 1973:46).
Maurer refers to "their high intelligence, their solid organization" (1940:1), their "superb sense of human nature" (1940:2). The con artist seems to have been endowed with or acquired almost superhuman qualities. Such a perfect match between a group's self image and the researcher's perception of the group leaves me a little uncomfortable, especially since the self professed talent of that group is "to set an impression on the person", as Julie put it.

My often inarticulate informants also claimed great intuitive powers and said that they know. The field covered by that knowledge is almost limitless: they "know" what a trick wants just by looking at him, by extension what any man wants, and by a further extension, what any square John wants. Questioned further, they answered: "I just feel it!" Brandy explained that she knew how to "read" men and, at a glance, could tell what they wanted and how to adapt her own behaviour to deal with their anticipations, but she could not put that experience and that intuition into words. I suggested to her one particular type of man approaching in the street. "He is obviously ugly/repulsive/crippled/has something physically wrong with him, and presumably, going out with a working girl is the only way he can get it. What do you do?." "Well, they're self-conscious, so you're kinder to them to build their self confidence. They're usually pretty straight and meek." Several women appeared to concur with this: since greed and/or stupidity - the square John's main characteristics - are not the reason for that particular trick's request, they appear to be prepared to deal fairly with him.
From Brandy also, I elicited other interpretations: "A good looking, well dressed guy: more kinky!" The apparent interpretation here is that, since he can "get it" elsewhere, he will obviously require special services. Old men are usually "perverted dirty old bastards." "The guys in taxis are the best: they pay the cabbies to find a girl." "If they're driving a Lincoln, they're cheap, they don't want to spent money: the money goes for the car!" "If they're driving beat up cars, they're more generous." (The Lincoln drivers, described by Brandy, were recognized with amusement by Bugsy and Julie as true to form).

Since it may be assumed that streetwalkers have gained some familiarity with physically handicapped, unattractive or old men, as well as men cruising the streets in a taxicab looking for "a good time", they may have arrived at their definition of such types from solid experience. But the Lincoln drivers are somewhat puzzling. Bugsy and Julie's amused recognition stressed the unusual aspect of this type of customer and may lead one to wonder whether definitions may not result from striking but almost isolated occurrences as much as from a lengthy repetition of similar encounters. Whatever the basis on which they rest, stereotypes obviously contribute handy guidelines for the proper handling of people categorized as having these characteristics.

From the reading of such "clues" as described by Brandy, the informants appear to draw the guidelines of their occupational behaviour. For instance, in his first encounter with a prostitute when he first became a trick, G.L. Stewart simply described a competent operator, a woman who knew her job and
could "read" a customer, and whose performance may be implicitly compared to that of a mechanic judging the problem by listening to a car engine, or a veterinarian the condition of an animal from the way it hangs its head: simple occupational experience.

What had I given her to respond to, other than passivity and nervousness? Toward the nervousness she had directed behaviour intended to calm and relax me, and to the passivity she had responded logically and efficiently ("Just lie there and get raped"), perhaps even assuming that sexual passivity and surrender were my "thing". She had made the most of the clues I had given her (Stewart 1972:270-271).

"Reading the mark" is a skill sometimes acknowledged by the mark himself. It may be that stressing the con artist's talent at deception is a mark's way of reducing the part played by his own gullibility, once he becomes aware of the situation. He may be encouraged to do so by the con man himself to facilitate his recovery and the preservation of his self image (Goffman 1952). The con man's guile is seen by both parties as complementing the mark's gullibility. But behind the mark's back, the con artist is likely to point out the former's greed which it is his acknowledged talent to identify and bait appropriately.

Some of the con jobs described in the literature are cleverly engineered and convincingly carried out. But even the seemingly rougher, coarser rackets of my informants appear to succeed. The reason for their success is claimed to be due to the victim's ignorance, stupidity or greed. Such a characterization of the square John at large as ignorant, stupid and/or greedy is indeed the one elaborated by street people on the basis of what they perceive to be the characteristics of individual straight people with whom they interact for their mutual
exploitation.

Researchers in no way escape the stereotype, and informants transform the interviewers' needs into their own codes. In some cases, the interviewers' difficulties are compounded by the informants' added resentment at being in jail or under correctional supervision. By eliciting from them, whether they are social workers, psychologists, parole officers, probation officers - or anthropologists whose real powers are unknown - an indication of their intentions and goals, and providing the necessary responses to fulfill these, the inmates-con artists-informants test their talents at deception and control and presumably, draw professional legitimation from the exercise.

James, in a recent work (1977:190) quotes from Maruyama on some of the problems of prison research where inmates feel exploited by the interviewers and attempt to minimize the exploiters' intrusion by using "sophisticated phoney answers which make the interviewers happy." It would be simplistic however to view the interview as some interaction between seemingly cooperative informants and naively happy interviewers. Indeed, the researchers' weariness of the informants' verbal skills is often expressed. They know that, when enquiring into verbal skills, they are faced with the danger that their practitioners may feel challenged to exercise them and that a competent performance on their part may cause the researchers to "buy" it. Jennifer James, for instance, in her work with prostitutes, is well aware of the problem. In the introduction to an unpublished report, she writes:
The informants know the researcher's world and deal with questions accordingly. With prostitutes this problem is compounded by the nature of the "hustling" business. For example, a prostitute depends for her success and survival on her ability to judge people and handle them - her ability to give the customer what he wants while not doing more than she wants. The prostitute is thus selling her ability to make the man feel he is satisfied. "Conning" is an art of the profession and the researcher is as likely a victim as the customer (James 1971:4).

As James points out, this communicational skill is essential for the prostitute's survival. In a social interactional analysis of the folklore of a Texas Madam, Davis Johnson stresses the importance of her informants' feeling that "their most important work is mental and verbal - to remain in control of themselves and their interactions with the customers" (1973:219).

I cannot emphasize too much the importance of words in her life. Both she and the girls told us that the prostitute's art is much more mental and verbal than sexual. Men are physically stronger; therefore, to maintain constant control a prostitute must use words effectively ... (She) controls her environment through verbal manipulations (1973:212).

**STYLISTIC DEVICES**

As skilled verbal performers, the informants resort to many stylistic devices to render speech acts more effective. One is the exaggeration of details, to catch the listeners' attention, strike their imagination, and perhaps serve to convince them faster. Budgsy, for instance, is somewhat given to practise the well known story telling device of magnifying incidents. In her case, numbers increase dramatically.

I fixed 3 caps and I had a 8 cop escort home! She sent 8 cops out looking for me!

The next thing I knew, there was 6 narc bulls and 4 policemen down there, looking for me!
So, on the way up, I see there's 2 cop cars in front of us, 2 behind us, and I'm under arrest for soliciting!

Bugsy is a Granville Street hooker and a small time trafficker. I know, she knows I know, I know she knows I know that 8 cops, 6 narc bulls and 4 policemen, or 4 cop cars would definitely not be mobilized to look for her. But she is also telling a good story to an appreciative audience, a story with a good plot and lots of action, obviously calling for homeric proportions, and we are both to understand her figures as an artistic device used to establish her prestige.

In many instances, status is established by demonstrating how "bad" one is. One is reminded of the usage of bad in the Black jargon, where it expresses all the qualities of daring, cool, self-assertion and non-conformity denied to the Negro defined as "good" by White society (Milner 1972a; Milner 1972b: 114), and the prestige conferred by such statements is obvious:

I'm barred from Newfoundland for life, because I pulled a bank robbery there. And they told me they were doing their federal prisoners a favour and send me back where I came from ... They didn't want me to corrupt their prisoners! (Dee)

At one trial, they used my record as exhibit A! (Julie)

My record? The last five-six years, there's been mostly drug offences. And there's been robbery with intent to kill. I beat that. And a murder that I beat. (Dee)

A stylistic device employed to make a point clear while not stressing it in an obvious manner is the aside. I had to train myself to recognize it and its importance for my understanding of the context. For instance, Jo explained to Snow and me: "He was going to give me 200 dollars for one hour. That was up North".
The last remark appears irrelevant to the story as she was telling it. Yet, the explanation was needed since, in Vancouver, girls like Jo and Snow are not paid 200 dollars for one hour of their time. But, up North, this could very well be true. I might not have been knowledgeable about the going rates but, since Snow was also present, the explanation provided in an aside was quite necessary to establish Jo's credibility. Had we felt, Snow in particular, doubts at this point, we might not have believed the rest of the story.

In the same interview, Snow explained: "I was arrested because I went and robbed somebody. Somebody I know!" Small time con artists usually practise a hit and run method. So do thieves. Robbing somebody is not dumb but - her intonation implied in the aside - robbing somebody you know and who knows you (especially, as in her case, her mark) and is in a position to press charges, is very dumb!

To give a last example, here is a story told by Bugsy:

I had this little ol' man, once. And this was cute ... He took me out. He paid me just for a straight, and his time was up and he hadn't even got it hard. And he wasn't drunk, he had nothing to drink. And he says: "Oh, dear!" he says, "my time's up!" Like, it was him that kept the time! I wasn't even lookin' ...

Bugsy's positive and even protective feelings towards her trick was expressed here in many ways:

- she calls him a "little ol' man", instead of the customary "dirty old man";
- she describes the whole incident as "cute";
- he paid her "just for a straight", i.e. he was not a "weirdo",
a "freak" or a "pervert";
- the disarmingly quaint "Oh, dear!" he lets out, while her usual exclamation is "Oh, shit!" or "Oh, fuck!";
- his failing was not due to alcohol (drunks can be "flippy" (unpredictable) and take forever to perform, to the irritation of most prostitutes);
- but the greatest proof she gave of her good mood is that it was he and not she who "kept the time", whereas she would normally have said "Time's up!" at the end of the twenty minutes he had paid for (if not earlier, since he obviously was not going to finish before that time). The little aside was used to express most decisively her approval of the little ol' man and his sense of propriety.

I had expected in this essentially oral culture numerous formulae to anchor the speech and set statements into a context of popular tradition and consensus. Indeed, Sue sometimes punctuated an edifying story with "If you can't pay, you shouldn't play", and its echo "If you can't do the time, you shouldn't do the crime". Other women also mentioned that "Money's money" and "Time's money". But I found the use of pseudo aphorisms, mock riddles and individual definitions more interesting. There were also few of these, but they added spice to the story and stressed individual creativity in the performance of verbal skills.

Welfare is the hooker's day off. (Dee)

The good junkie is self-sufficient. (Dee)

How can you tell a junkie? By how much sugar she puts in her coffee! (Bugsy)
How do you know the narcs? When the door comes in! (Bugsy)

You want a little love for a little money. I want a little money for a little love. (Julie)

There is not enough data available to analyze personal styles, but the paired examples taken from Sue, Dee and Bugsy would seem to indicate a respective predilection for the proverb, the aphorism and the pseudo riddle.

The delivery itself and speech habits are characteristic: the informants frequently intersperse "like ...", "you know ...", and use them to leave a sentence suspended or to force the interlocutor to make the necessary effort to meet them half way; or "right? ...", "hey? ...", followed by a brief interrogative mimic which may be answered with a faint nod or a grunt, or any other sign that you are going along with what is being said. The necessary participation of the interlocutor is required and the elicitation of his or her approval turns the monologue into a dialogue.

Another characteristic of the informants' speech is the reporting of past dialogues in direct style. Beside the conventional alternance of the "I says - he says" insertions, some informants will break up a reported sentence several times with "he says", "so, I says". This contributes to the creation of a vivid and lively style. I found it a very good device for keeping the interest of the audience, even if it slows down somewhat the development of the story.

I asked him. I says: "You were out with Pete's old lady?"
He says: "No".
I says: "You're a fuckin' liar!" I says, "I was sittin' in the car next to you," I says, "I seen you!"
He says: "Well, what were we doing?"
So I told him! I described it right down to a tee!
He says: "What were you going at the show?"
I says: "My mark took me to the show. I got paid 400 dollars to go to the show!"
He says: "Where's the money?"
I says: "I spent it!"
He says: "On what?"
I says: "Junk."
He says: "Oh, you did, did you?"
I says: "Yeah!"
He says: "I gotta go sick, I gues?"
I says: "Well, go get your other slut there to buy you some!", I says, "If she can afford you, if she can afford to go to bed with you," I says, "surely she can afford to buy you a cap of junk!"
He says: "Here we go!"
So I says: "Fuckin' right, here we go!", I says, "Now, if you don't mind, I'm busy. Hit it!"

(Bugsy)

It will be seen further on that Bugsy has also drawn here very neatly the list of reciprocal duties and rights of the "old man" and his "old lady".

Such an exaggerated form is obviously idiosyncratic in her case, but Bugsy is also, and by far, the most entertaining of my informants. It think that her emphatic usage of a very common mannerism among all my respondents, and many people of similar background, only contributes to the vivacity of her style, even if one can only take a little of it at the time.

This speech form is first a temporal distortion: "there and then" becomes "here and now". The past is telescoped into the present as the conversation is relived: "he said" becomes "he says". The past "I" is further modified: not only is it brought into the present but it is exteriorized as a third person: "I" says.

This reported dialogue form also gives an important
diachronic perspective of the self. The reported dialogue between ego-then and alter-then is presented to the researcher by ego-now, who appears not only as a reporter but as a commentator, thus in a diachronic quality. Even if the reported dialogue did not involve ego, his or her presence is assumed. As a literal reporter his presence is essential to both events - then and now - and to both interlocutors. Ego's creativity as a speaker is given its due since he is in control of all speeches: those of ego-then, ego-now, alter-then and the researcher drawn into the present dialogue by the interrogative mimic and the pressure to provide his or her agreement.

Since much of the data is in the form of stories, anecdotes, retelling of specific incidents, the mechanics of tale beginning and ending are easily observable. By far the most common way to start a story is "There's this (guy I know, friend of mine, cop up North, trick had a wife, etc.)". Often the story peters out, but for Bugsy and Julie, for instance, the phrase was as recognizable as "once upon a time", and I automatically started my tape recorder upon hearing it.

Story ending, on the other hand, is much more elusive. Even Bugsy often found it difficult to conclude her tales and it was exceptionally that she arrived at a "conventional" ending such as in a story about a trick's wife, where the trick and his wife live happily ever after thanks to Bugsy's good offices.

Most of the time, however, the anecdotes ended abruptly. This may have been seen as a stylistic weakness by Bugsy who sometimes
sighed and added "Fuck ...", or "Shit ...", as a formal if unsatisfactory conclusion.

This need of a comment of sorts was often created by my silence. The following is an example of a more elaborate ending also elicited by my failure to respond to the natural ending of the story, which was:

As soon as you say you've got a cop for a friend, everybody figures you're a rat. So I told him "Well, you keep your mouth shut, I'll keep mine shut." He says "O.K. You got a deal!" I says "Either I got a deal or you ain't got a friend!"

Obviously, the story could have ended to everyone's satisfaction, but because of the lack of natural context (where stories may be topped at once, or at least commented upon) and my failure to react, she hesitated and went on in a completely irrelevant manner:

He's nice ... He's tall ... He's dark and he's blond ... I had my hair bleached white when I knew him. He says "You look like one of those Amazons." "Ooooh, get off the pot!" I says, "I got white eyes, I ain't got pink eyes!" Shit ...

Finally, the ending of a story will sometimes become the beginning of a new one, told or not:

And I says "You're lucky, you know, because," I says, "'cos if I was Pete," I says, "You'd be long gone. Down at the end of the Bow River, and if you're ever lost in that, they'd never find you," I says, "It took them two and a half months to find my baby sister ..." That was at Christmas ... But that's another story. (Bugsy)

**MANNERS OF SPEECH**

We have examined the recognized art of conning the mark; eliciting the indication of his desires and needs, then finding a satisfactory balance between the woman's reluctance to give and
the mark's greed to take. We have also examined various conventions of speech such as status giving information, establishment of *bona fides*, acceptable exaggeration - as opposed to the type of exaggeration that simply betrays a lack of culture competence, such as Julie's claim to be carrying a .38. All these serve to illustrate part of the culture's verbal skills.

Many categories of speech acts are recognized by the informants who attach distinctive features, such as form, content, intonation, appropriate settings and participants, to various terms referring to manners of expression. The following is not an exhaustive list of terms, but a sample of those most frequently used.

**Bullshitting**

There are two meanings attached to "bullshitting", describing very different types of situations and purpose. The first one refers to the attempt at deception and is used in the same context as "conning". This is the usage already met in Swaggi's claim that he was "a great bullshitter, a good con".

The second meaning simply refers to the type of small talk encountered in many groups. I asked Jo and Snow: "When you meet someone you know, what do you talk about?"

- Small talk.

  - "How're you doin'?", "Oh, fine", "Right", "Pretty slow today, hey?", "Right!" you know ...

  - "So and so got ripped off by ..."

  - "You know who's got good stuff?", "Oh, yeah? Is that right?", "Oh, yeah!"
"I did some stuff the other day that was dynamite!" Just bullshit ...

Street talk, you know ... (Jo and Snow)

I had misunderstood, at one point, the second meaning for the first one. They immediately corrected me:

- Oh, no ... Well, it's not ... It's real!
- It's not bullshitting. It's just ...
- Everyday's happening on the street ...
- Yes, just small talk ... Just bullshitting, you know ...

In the next chapter, the nature and function of bullshitting will be examined separately.

Talking

"Talking" is seen by my informants as the hustle par excellence.

I get enough by talking that I didn't have to go on Welfare. (Snow)

I talk to Welfare pretty good! (Snow)

I like talking to these people. They're so naive, so when you lay something on them, they're shocked! (Julie)

I just talk to them. I sit there and I talk! (Jo)

I phoned him and I talked. Again I talked! So he went down to drop the charges ... I talked to him. Put on my act ... He said he's drop the charges, you know. (Snow)

Naturally, it has other meanings. In the above examples, the women talk "to set an impression", as Julie put it. In the following one, Snow talks in order to receive an impression.

I'll talk for a few minutes in the street, you know, to sort of getting an idea, you know. Then, I'll go. Only then.

"Talking" is a manipulative exercise through which the informants obtain or retain control of a situation. Whether in
an exploratory or an assertive transaction, the interlocutors are seen as verbal opponents to be overcome.

**Conning**

"Conning" also involves talking. "Conning, you more or less have to talk a lot" (Julie). It may also infer a stronger determination to deceive than the one implied in straight "talking". If speech is not always explicitly mentioned, it is nevertheless part of the whole performance.

Conning people to think that you're gonna go to bed with them, knowing that they have money. (Jo)

When I'm on the road, I have no intention of trying to con them out of money. (Snow)

Some (heavies) are liars, they con other people. (Brandy)

Similarly, "I'd hit him for some money" implies the use of a verbal request.

**Rapping**

"Rapping" may indicate a certain degree of closeness between the speakers as well as some seriousness in the topic, as opposed to "bullshitting" which often refers to a superficial exchange. Jo makes it clear in the following exchange that one usually raps to one's friends:

There are only three people in this building that I really rap to, or sit down and talk to ... The rest, it's very casual. I rap (to these people) because they're more real. I know there's no trips and no bullshit.

Unlike people in the black ghetto (Kochman 1969), street people also use "rap with". In the following example, "rap with" is used to describe what Kochman's informants would call "putting
the make" (1969:27) in the context of "rapping to" a woman (Burling 1970:157):

I'll always tell other girls, if I see him rapping with them, or something. You know, just anybody I'm rapping to, I'll say "Hey, I met a really weird guy tonight. If you happen to see him, don't go near him!" (Jo)

Teasing and Preaching

These two terms indicate a manner of speaking as well as a definite purpose. They are in fact self explanatory, but Snow usually specifies the manner in which this teasing or preaching were done:

And they'd come and play pool with us, you know, talk to us, laugh with us ... play pool, tease us ... or else we'd be at a table and he'd be teasing us, right? "I'm gonna beat you guys at pool!" "O.K., You're on!"

He used to say to us "God! It's too bad! I wish you girls would straighten up your act, you know. You would be really nice girls if you wouldn't be so carefree, so crazy!" Yeah ... Always more or less preaching away "Why don't you guys smarten up?"

Snow, in these particular examples, uses the verbs as half adver-bial phrases, i.e. he said teasingly, he said in a preaching manner. Snow is a sentimental woman who often thinks back on the good times when she was just a rough tomboy Indian girl in Prince Rupert and not the thief and junkie she has become downtown. She likes to linger on the teasing and preaching given to her by a good natured local cop - and it is important to note that she does not call him a pig, or a bull, or a narc - who liked her and was concerned about her. So, not only does she "name" that way of speaking but she also confirms the name by a description which could be used as a definition. Other examples of "preaching"
only referred to various speeches made by "do-gooders", and no examples were given.

**Hassling**

"Hassling" also refers to a complex action performed as a speech act, accompanied by implicitly threatening behaviour. Since it is always practised by "assholes" who, by definition, abuse their power, its usage is thus reduced to specific situations (narc and junkie encounters, for instance):

They always hassle you, you know: "Oh, yeah? What's these marks are? Don't give me that story!" (Snow)

They give you a lot of hassle, telling you to get off the street. (Dee)

"Hassling" always takes place between people of uneven status, power, self-assurance or need, since the object of the transaction is to defeat the interlocutor into submission or the relinquishing of whatever the speaker wants from him.

**Making Like, Playing Like**

These are aspects of the "con" or the "talk". Again, this refers to a complex situation where the speech act is not necessarily mentioned but is nevertheless implied:

I said "Yes? Me?", you know, playing like I've never ... you know ... (Snow)

You go to the store and shoplifts something, right? You go back and you make like you've bought it, but you've lost the price tag. (Jo)

I said "I think I've got it". I know I had it, but I was playing, you know, like ... casual ... (Snow)

Once more, they are "setting an impression". The moves
described here are relatively simple ones. When the situation becomes more complex, one may be "laying something" (a "trip", for instance), on someone: "They're so naive so when you lay something on them, they're shocked" (Julie).

A series of verbs indicate the embarrassing and hesitant context of prostitution and the manner in which information is sought and given:

Sometimes, they try to beat around the bush to find out if you're a working girl, because he doesn't want to put himself in a position to ask, and you're not ... When you're walking along to the hotel, you sort of drag out what he'd like and you discuss it ... They usually bring up the subject of what they like. (Jo and Snow; my emphasis)

To ask, in this context, when done by a man, is short for "to ask a working girl to go out". When the woman "asks", it is usually followed by a dollar figure.

Events such as noticing, believing, stopping (someone on the street), etc. when retold, can be immediately followed and without transition by direct speech:

All of a sudden, they notice you. "Hey! Who's that?" (Jo)

They believed me: "Well, you be on your way!" (Snow)

This stylistic short cut, by naming the mental process of the speaker, reestablishes in fact the logical sequence of steps which led to the spoken sentence quoted by the informants. The structure is naturally not peculiar to street people and simply reflects an awareness of the psychological context of various speech acts.

While, once again, none of the previous examples can be attributed only to those informants we call "street people" in
this work, they all reflect the vivacity of style, the verbal
skills and emphasis on speech peculiar to a group who rely almost
exclusively on oral means of communication and transmission of
experience.

**SWERING**

I cannot evaluate the incidence of swearing on the street,
since I only dealt with women in jail. Many of the women who
talked to me, however, mentioned that their vocabulary was much
cruder and more violent in jail. Sue felt "dumb" when we went
back out and started swearing as she did in jail, and Bugsy felt
that "people looked" at her for the same reason. Jo disapprovingly explained that "swearing becomes a way of life in here".
They assumed that the frustrations of life in jail was the cause
of their change of vocabulary.

Becker, analyzing the usage of "four letter words" notes
that "the word takes on the immediacy of the act itself" and
that

usually we use four letter words in situations where we have
no control, where we feel vague and aimless - as in military
life. Continual cursing seems to give us tangibility,
decisiveness; it brings us back strongly into the world
(Becker 1971:94-95).

Fifteen years ago, when Coutts (1961) was a matron in the
same prison, The Manual specified that "a girl is not allowed to
swear in this institution" (Coutts 1961:75) and some matrons
strongly believed that cutting out "street talk and filthy talk"
was a sine qua non condition of rehabilitation and training
(1961:91).
If one of the functions of swearing is to bring one "back strongly into the world", as Becker writes, its prevention may contribute to cut one off from a world deemed unsuitable.

Although swearing is still discouraged in jail, it was not unusual for me to overhear from the office I was lent one inmate yell to another "If you go into my room one more time, I'll break your fucking arm and your fucking neck!" in tones that were deterrent enough.

The vocabulary lends itself well to cursing, swearing and abusing people. Kontrowitz (1968), acting on the principle that what is important enough to be perceived is also named, found 184 names given by jail inmates to homosexuals, proving - if it needed proving again - the wealth of vocabulary of a deviant argot. My informants give names to a number of people possessing strongly negative characteristics: asshole, jerk, punk, prick, goof, pest, pervert, weirdo, nut, freak, flip, rip off, sadist, rat, pig, bull, etc. To these, I could only oppose from all the texts: "She's good people", "he's a friend", "he's a good shit", and "they're solid". I found such a paucity of positive terms so remarkable that I mentioned it to some of my informants who agreed with my examples and were themselves surprised. One suggestion made was that, in jail, one hated everyone and everything, and that this might very well be reflected in one's vocabulary. Upon reflection, however, they could not add to my brief list of positive terms.
As with swearing, I cannot evaluate the incidence of joking on the street. It was with Brandy, Tiny and Sugar, who were housed separately in protective custody and who sometimes invited me for dinner that I had my first experience of jokes freely exchanged. They were mostly drug related and only became "jokes" as an afterthought, because drug is in everybody's mind. For instance, I was feeling the dirt around a house plant and remarked that it was "pretty dry", forgetting a previous definition of "dry" as being "when there's no dope around". Tiny answered absentmindedly "Yeah, everything is pretty dry around here", then, actually hearing what she had said, laughed.

Another time, Tiny had mentioned that her jeans were too loose at the waist and she needed another pair. A member of the staff asked "Why don't you fix them? You're pretty good with a needle", then realized the play on words and everybody laughed.

Greetings and brief exchanges between women who afterwards describe themselves as friends often take the form of insults. Abrahams, in his analysis of black talking of the street points out that apparent aggressivity is an essential part of joking activity or street play, and that for play to operate successfully, there must be a recognizable relationship between it and the real world. One of these vital connections is that for play to operate successfully, there must be a sense of threat arising from the 'real' and 'serious' world of behavior. The threat of incursions from the real world must be constant. That is, in the most successful kinds of play, the most constant message must be the deeply ambivalent one: this is play - this is not play. With joking activity (which
accounts for most playing in the street world) this paradoxical message is very commonly carried out by the use of the same aggressive, hostile formulaic devices found in use in real arguments - i.e. this is precisely what one finds in the Black street world - so much so that the passerby often has a hard time discerning whether joking or a real argument is taking place (Abrahams 1974:245).

The following examples provided by Brandy illustrate very well Abrahams' point. She also indicates how carefully one must handle such a situation.

I have this friend that's half Indian. I call her "Hey, you fuckin' waggon burner!" and she calls me "Puerto Rican cunt!" and people who see us together think we're gonna fight. But we're friends and we know just how far we can go.

Jokes are also used to relieve tension in problematic situations. In the next example Brandy quotes a guard whom she considers to be a "real gentleman" and describes a fight which had started playfully: she and her friend knew "how far" they could go, as in the previous case, but had just reached the critical limit:

She was holding me like that, see, and I was holding her. She wouldn't let me go because she knew I would hit her, and I wouldn't let go because I knew she'd hit me. And we were going like that, and it wasn't funny anymore. So he says: "You guys want some music so you can dance?" Well, it was so funny that we broke up!

They broke up literally because they broke up laughing first, as a face saving device thoughtfully provided by the guard.

Another type of joke - only used in the data collected by street people when talking to members of the other culture - is a direct challenge to the latter's assumed self righteousness. It takes the form of a denial of having committed a reprehensible or unlawful action, giving as an alibi that one was in fact, at
the same time, busy committing an equally reprehensible or unlawful action.

Julie (relating an exchange between herself and a policeman): "Are you a user?" And I says: "Hell, no! I'm an alcoholic!"

I wasn't soliciting when he busted me ... In fact, I was on my way to score! (Bugsy)

He couldn't have been trafficking when they said he did, because at that time he was passing bad cheques! (Julie)

The pause that followed, so brief as to be barely noticeable, was a cue to laughter, appreciatevely received. I acknowledged the "naughtiness" of the remark and, presumably, appeared to condone the naughtiness of the intention. What I certainly did was to respond to an offer of friendly complicity.

Coutts (1961:134) mentions the complicity into which matrons are sometimes drawn. With them the situation is naturally different; but, as a square John, I was expected to feel uncomfortable at seeming to condone that of which I disapproved. But, once more, the "definition of the situation" and our relationship were such that I could not allow the joke to pass without acknowledging it. Moreover, I had also labelled myself an anthropologist, one for whom there was neither "right" nor "wrong", only what "worked" and what did not; and that, too, had to be tested, I presume.

The only joking behaviour I personally observed among inmates themselves took the form of one-liners and come-backs, which will be considered for their value as status markers in the next chapter.
ARGOT AND COMPETENCE

It is at once apparent that street people speak a language all their own, although, when speaking to square Johns street people use the latter's terms in order to be understood. The informants' general compliance and their usage of a common language make it at times easy to overlook the difference of terms. In the questions I asked Dee, my first informant, for instance, I used such terms as "heroin" and "night club". Dee answered with "heroin" and "club". In my notes, I reported "heroin" and "night club". One day, she used "policeman". I was surprised and asked: "Do street people use the word 'policeman'? "Only when talking to square Johns", she replied. "What other words do street people use when talking to square Johns? Do they ever say 'heroin' among themselves, for instance?" Naturally, I had to go over all my notes and check them. In the case of "night club", it was simply a case of inattention: Dee and all the other women only said "club", which is quite logical, since bicycle clubs, sports clubs, etc., are meaningless in their lifestyle and the only professionally relevant "club" is the "night club". They simply avoided what they saw as a redundant form, while I automatically imposed my vocabulary.

The acquisition of this second language, made to appear difficult or beyond the comprehension of the average person, is the key to a prestigious insiders' world. Jo and I were talking about the type of conversation she and an ordinary square John like me could have if we met on the street corner in
circumstances which would make such a conversation possible. She explained: "Well, you wouldn't use the same words as I would, talking to another person on the street. That would be a little different ... Probably you wouldn't catch the point ..." Hence, the need for her to come to my level of ignorance to be understood.

I once asked Snow if the straight people who spend a certain length of time working in "arcades", pool rooms, beer parlours patronized by rounders and other street people, were not eventually able to understand them. She said doubtfully: "Oh, maybe things like "far out! ... But that's all." If the information is likely to be erroneous, the attitude probably reflects well the superiority felt by street people in having a different, commonly shared and bonding language.

Certain terms have seeped into the general language to facilitate professional and personal transactions between the two groups ("trick", "mark", "french", "con", "old man", "pig", "bull", etc.). These terms, a concession of sorts, are deemed to be so elementary that anyone who does not understand them — like Boots' "English duke", for instance — is thought to be "really stupid, or something". (see Appendix D)

An interesting point made by Polsky (1969) is that the special language developed by a socially deviant group is not devised, contrary to general belief, as the means of protection which secrecy would provide. At first glance, it would appear to do so because it has special terms for every process of the
criminal activity concerned, for distinguishing outsiders from insiders, and requires a competence not achieved by outsiders. But Polsky and Maurer (1940), the only linguist Polsky credits with common sense on this point, recognize in these characteristics the mark of professional affiliation and probably no more. Halliday, however, sees as "argots" those languages whose features are "no more than the technical and semitechnical features of a special register", but names "anti-languages" (i.e. languages of anti-societies) "the professional jargons associated with the activities of a criminal counterculture" (Halliday 1976: 571).

This so-called secret language is in fact relatively easy to acquire. Policemen know it, even those who do not work undercover. Other rounders know it. Some social scientists probably know it.

Polsky's and Maurer's main argument against the validity of seeing a protective device in criminal argot is that it is used by the speakers only when among themselves, when secrecy from outsiders is not required (Polsky 1969:99), since its usage when among outsiders would immediately label its speakers as deviants (Maurer 1940:284).

Halliday (1976:572) quotes a study on Calcutta underworld where the question of why what he calls "anti-languages" are used was asked of 400 "criminals and anti-social elements". Of the respondents, 158 explained it as "the need for secrecy", apparently agreeing with the common belief. More interestingly, 132
saw its use "as communicative force or verbal art."

I do not believe that this special language of theirs offers the small time criminals from whose group my informants are drawn any protection against the police. The square Johns are not affected by it since they seldom understand it. What are the need for and the function of such a language, then? Polsky believes quite simply that this type of argot develops partly to provide a shorthand way of referring to technical processes but partly also as an elaborately inventive, ritualistic, often rather playful way of reinforcing group identity or "we feeling" (1969:99).

Maurer also explains the needs for this common language:

Criminal groups or mobs work outside the law and consequently count very little upon it for protection. There is a very strong sense of camaraderie among criminals, a highly developed group-solidarity, which is further increased by internal "organization" and by external pressures from both the upperworld and the predatory underworld. A common language helps to bind these groups together and gives expression to the strong fraternal spirit which prevails among them. This is true of the entire underworld, with the partial exception of prostitutes. On the other hand, each specific trade or profession develops a feeling of mutual exclusiveness among its members; this feeling springs from the fact that they are all criminals, that they have a commonality of life-experience, that their training and background are somewhat similar, that they face identical mechanical problems which must be solved with somewhat similar tools and techniques, and that certain professional attitudes or "ethics" must be recognized if the mob is to prosper (1940:283-284).

Maurer's reference to the prostitutes is rather ambiguous. Does he mean that prostitutes are exceptional (even partially) because they do not have a common language; because this common language, if they have one, does not help bind them as a group; or because they do not share a strong fraternal feeling? As it turns out, he means all three in a previous article (1939) and...
gives the following reasons for the lack of argot he found among prostitutes:

They lack the sophistication to make and acquire an artificial language for themselves (p. 546).

She never develops a sense of trade, or group solidarity, of gang morale (p. 547).

The prostitute sells a standard service and depends heavily on simple commercial good-will ... There is neither incentive toward a classification of her patrons nor a psychological approach based on such a classification (p. 549).

There is a prostitute argot, and Jennifer James amply proves it (1972a; 1972b; 1972c). She also insists in all her work on the strength of the commitment that prostitutes have to make to the "fast life" because of the moral and legal sanctions inflicted on them by the larger community. She is also clear on the part played by a common language:

Acceptance in the prostitute social organization depends to a great extent on the ability to communicate in the argot. The newcomer learns the rules as she plays the game ... If she handles her game well and can communicate in the acceptable manner, she can function as a member of the social organization (1972b:103).

Unlike Maurer, James also describes a fairly supportive milieu where the prostitute always knows some people willing to offer her shelter, bail her out of jail, welcome her if she decides to move away or leave her pimp (1972b:104).

Maurer sees the prostitutes' lot as essentially a passive one. It stands to reason, however, that if the streetwalker wants to survive she has to handle various situations in the context of her occupation, and has been led to name and classify a variety of customers. James' informants recognize fifteen
different types of tricks, four of them "freaks". Mine also gave me fifteen different types of tricks, grouped into those "it's all right to go out with" and "those you should stay away from." (see Chapter Six and Appendix B).

In his article, Maurer writes that "the argot vocabulary which applies strictly to the profession appears to consist of less than fifty words" (1939:546). In her dissertation, James collected over two hundred terms which she classified into four domains (streetwalkers, tricks, pimps and stable sisters).

Maurer's arguments may have been valid some forty years ago, when he wrote his article. The prostitutes he describes had the choice of three possible set ups: living in a brothel, working in a "call-house", or "working the street". In these, they were "perpetually on the defensive ... (and) never permitted to develop professional independence, which appears to be the first essential in the formation of criminal argots" (1939:547).

The low status of prostitution in the criminal world denies them "all claim to true professional status". Moreover, he continues, police oppression and the tightening of the bonds which ensues, are also missing from the prostitutes' life.

Between Maurer and James, thirty years have elapsed. If we look at the more recent terms elicited by James, especially in the domains of the pimp and the "stable sisters" (women working for the same pimp), we see the very strong influence of Black Jargon. Iceberg Slim's Pimp. The Story of My Life (1969), known by pimps and hookers as The Book, and Milner & Milner (1972) make
abundantly clear the influence over the conduct and language of prostitution which their style and prestige have earned the Black American pimps. Even my Canadian informants, who usually deny that they use such terms themselves, know them nevertheless and characterize them: "That's Nigger talk", "The Black guys call it like that". In James, we see the enrichment of prostitute argot partly due to the control exercised by a group with a thriving and colourful language of its own.

The growing visibility of street prostitution has also increased police interference and control and, by the same token, the tightening of the streetwalkers' ranks, creating the need for a common insiders' language. The desire of prostitutes to professionalize their occupation has given rise to such organizations as the West Coast COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) or the British PUSSI (Prostitutes United for Social and Sexual Integration), not to mention the French prostitutes' strike of Summer 1975.

In the case of my own informants, there is an added factor, one which differentiates them from James' streetwalkers and further links them to an "insiders' group": although sharing the technical skills of prostitution and the problems the occupation entails, my informants are also drug addicts, and James' are not. Hers were deliberately chosen as such in the Seattle jail. The same choice would have been impossible for me in the British
Columbia Provincial Jail: the inmates who were also prostitutes were, first and foremost, junkies.

Their argot is that of the junkie, as well as the prostitute. Their lifestyle is that of the junkie as well as the prostitute. Prostitutes **score** when they get a trick, junkies when they buy dope. Turning a trick, scoring and fixing is the usual succession of events for the junkie hooker; soliciting and scoring for the ordinary prostitute. The shift of meaning and emphasis of the success of the "score" from the non addict to the addict streetwalker is revealing of the totally different outlook of the two types of women.

I also think that another relevant point is that the non addict prostitute only shares her argot with other prostitutes and with pimps (the two extremes in terms of occupation status and sex roles), making very clear her own position as the most inferior one, whereas the junkie prostitute who usually trafficks shares her argot with her equals, other junkies, males and females, among whom her own status is not dependent on sex or occupation, but on whether she happens to have heroin for sale. An argot which introduces her into a basically equalitarian

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4This was especially true at the time the research was conducted. The police were waiting for the decision of a Supreme Court appeal before making further arrests, and simple soliciting charges were not laid over a period of several months. Thus, prostitutes who were incarcerated at the time had been arrested and sentenced on a drug or robbery charge. Sentences for straight soliciting are usually short enough that women "doing time" for it were soon released. But the likelihood of finding non using prostitutes in jail would have been minimal at any other time.
group may be seen as more desirable than on which restricts her to a permanently lowly position. Moreover, a dealer is someone whose services are highly prized by street people, while a prostitute's are only appreciated, and very ambiguously so, at that, by her straight customers. The prestige of the former is by far the higher. And so is the argot of the subculture.

I found among my informants a sororal feeling, the tight bonds among members of the same group. However, this feeling exists because the women see themselves as street people, not as prostitutes. Towards non addict prostitutes, their feelings are more reserved and quite ambivalent. This latter group is seen as "street" because of their common lifestyle and experience, but also as "straight" because of their values. The double dichotomy present-future and freedom-security, which will be discussed later and which polarizes "street" and "straight", also divides user and non-user among prostitutes.

All my informants feel pride in and jealousy of their language. The two following examples come from Julie:

So, we're getting close to where I'm getting off, and he says "Well, would you like to do a trick?" And I says: "Do a trick?", I says, "don't you mean turn a trick?" And he says: "Oh, yeah! That's it! That's it!" And I says: "Do a trick ..." And I just laughed ... I mean, what kind of a trick did he want me to do?

After I scored, I got back to him and I said "O.K., now you've got to get me a rig!" I don't know what he was thinking about ... "rig" ... He said: "Oh ...", he said "Ah ..." He was a truck driver, too. He said: "Oh, my rig's at ..." I says: "Hey! I'm sure you don't use heroin ... You just don't appear to be the type." So, he says: "What's this rig business?" So, I says: "Well, you have to go to a
drugstore and get me an outfit, a syringe."\(^5\) And he says: "Oh JEEEEZUS!"

Whereas in the second example, Julie is merely amused by the play on words and the truck driver's lack of sophistication (shown by her own exaggerated use of straight terms), she openly sneers at the first man's attempt at talking like a rounder. Not only does he betray his ignorance of the argot, but he is despicable because he tries to pass himself off as a knowledge-able person. Moreover, the degrading implication of "doing a trick" is not lost on Julie, from whom "turning" one, on the other hand, is merely business. In this sense, he is ignorant in both languages.

The possession of a common language establishing the boundaries of a community and indicating membership in a common culture strengthens the bonds between group members and is valued because of it. In the present case, verbal skills are all the more valued as they are some of the culture's few non-violent weapons for exercising control over both insiders and outsiders.

\(^5\)Tighter conditions now prevail, compared to the situation described in Stoddart (1968:3-4) where a small envelope containing "an inexpensive hypodermic needle, syringe, and a bottle cap" could be obtained in a drugstore from the same area for 53¢ by asking for an "outfit" or a "machine" [now "rig"], much as, a few years later, kits of airplane glue and plastic bags were easily available from grocery stores.
CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE AND FUNCTION OF BULLSHITTING

Bullshitting is the mainstay of street talk. It has already been examined in its two aspects: a con, a trip, a tall tale - and the small talk between people who share enough understanding of the same language and the same culture to converse in an easy manner. It is its dual or combined nature and its function that we are going to consider in relation to the informants' apprehension of their environment. Its limits are not easy to define since bullshitting is both content and form. We will see that beside its two manners of expression, it has two different goals: to deceive and to instruct.

I never witnessed either aspect of bullshitting being performed in the street context. However, in the exchanges which took place between my informants and myself, a mild form of bullshitting was forever present. In fact, it was the blending of its double aspect which was particularly interesting to me.

I found it difficult to organize my data into recognized folkloric genres, since as well as jests, jokes, trickster tales, proverbs or aphorisms, so much of it was the repetition of hearsay and the passing of gossip. But gossip itself is a conversational genre, with its standard casual story-telling patterns and its following of some of the dictates of conversation such as the

THE NATURE OF BULLSHITTING

I found many similarities between my informants' casual "bullshitting" and the "talking trash" of Cothran's informants in the Okefenoke Swamp Rim of Georgia. "Trash" is described as ranging from small talk about the weather to discussion of the respective merits of brands of pickup trucks, interspersed with some teasing, joke telling and yarn spinning. It is defined as "loafing and lying behavior", comprised of a variety of folkloric genres but unified in its context (Cothran 1974:342).

As small talk, what events does bullshitting cover on the street? Jo and Snow already gave us an example in the previous chapter. Sue also describes two other aspects of street gossip:

Well, someone comes up from the street and says "I saw so and so, and they're doing really well!" (You know, they're staying off the drag and not using, or they're not drinking too much, or they're not taking pills, or whatever their weakness is, they're not indulging in it too often). You talk with just people you run into, acquaintances.

People run stories about somebody else, you know. Mostly they talk about bad things. If it's something about a friend of yours, they can't wait to spread the bad news. Like, if they know your old man is going out with somebody else, they can't wait to tell you! You get it really bad in here, more than on the street. You know, people like instigating, in here.

She also confirmed the range of circulation already mentioned to me by Julie, and the continuum between street and jail mentioned by all the informants:

Stories spread like wild fire. They'll start in the street, and they'll be in here, and back in the street within a week ... usually with a little bit added here, a little bit added there ... Some time you'll even hear about them in
Calgary or Edmonton, or back East, you know. I've heard a lot of stories about back East.

Jo had already indicated that warnings were an important part of street talk. This is confirmed by Sue:

Stories like that (about bad tricks), the girls tell themselves, warning people against the guy in case he's creeping around here ... You want to keep your distance from them. Or people selling bad dope, you know, you warn people about it.

Bugsy, in her inimitable style, gives other examples of bullshitting:

Sure travels fast! "Oh, did you know so and so robbed a trick last night?" or "Did you know so and so fucked so and so's old man?" Some pretty good things, too: "Hey, did you know Bugsy was on escape?" "Far out!"

Julie, who had a straight upbringing and is now married with a child while very much belonging on the street, adds yet another dimension to street talk:

You see each other, and there's a lot to talk about, and what's going on now ... You go back over what's been happening, and talk about, you know, a lot of things. And it's not just what's happening downtown that you talk about, because some people have met other people's families, and you know, being in the homes and have dealings with them, maybe growing up with them ... So it's not just going down there to talk about what's going around ...

In Julie's terms, a lot of things, "trips" and others, are being "laid" in these talks. Thus bullshitting blends with bullshitting. Moreover, they also bullshitted with me about bullshitting, an event within an event, and re-enacted the street-straight confrontation which forms the didactic content of many of the stories.

The stories told are obviously of a more elaborate nature than the dialogues reproduced for me by Jo, Snow or Bugsy. They
are about an event (a bad trip, a freak you go out with, your old man going out with so and so's old lady, being hassled or busted). These narrated events, above and beyond the greetings and chit-chat which act as feelers for recognition and acknowledgement of inclusion, are the depository of the culture's wisdom.

Abrahams notes that in the black speaking community, there are three basic types of street-talk events:

those intended primarily to pass on information, those in which interpersonal manipulation or argumentation involving a display or wits is going on, and those in which play is the primary component of the interaction (1974:246).

Although the last type of event is not developed here to the level of the verbal art form described by Abrahams (1974), Kochman (1970) and Milner & Milner (1972), all three are present and easily recognizable.

I do not think that I was stretching the limits of the genre when I decided, for the purpose of this work, to include all talk. What was not good humoured inclusive bullshitting was deceitful exclusive bullshitting. According to my definitions, my informants were either bullshitting with me or bullshitting me. In so doing, they practised in the latter what they preached in the former.

THE FUNCTION OF BULLSHITTING

The world emerging from the stories they told me is one of treachery and violence, where friends are few, even if acquaintances are many. With the latter, it is important to establish a
tenuous network of small favours rendered and owed; of tricks, cop and rip off warnings; and also of bullshitting.

The favours and warnings are prestation, as Mauss uses the word to signify things given in an apparently voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous manner, while being in fact obligatory and interested. The economics and politics of street survival are indeed based on this system of prestation. Bullshitting is also part of the same system, since many of the things exchanged are "courtesies, entertainments, ritual" (Mauss 1969:2), to which bullshitting events would be assimilated.

The disconnected small talk and the retelling of events, exchange of news, gossip of escape, busting, hassles, bad tricks and good marks, good "junk" and bad "shit", serve as an ongoing definition of the boundaries of the street community by constantly differentiating between straight outsiders and street insiders. By the same token, they provide convenient endo- and exo-stereotypes. They also serve as a means of socialization by redefining each time the rights, duties, and sanctions for transgressions for street performers, thus reaffirming the bonds among them. This is often done through personal-experience stories, the type of stories sometimes qualified as "lies" by the corrections officers, the type of stories where the interweaving of fact and fiction "proves so smooth than one could not separate the two strands even if it were important to do so" (Cothran 1974:346).

In the fine balance achieved in these stories between fact
and fiction, the part played by each is difficult to assess. But fact and fiction are equally relevant, and one would have to go as far as Cothran, for whom

what actually took place was decidedly less significant than what is alleged, imagined, or wished to have happened ... A fantasy is neither true or false. Rather, it has a particular degree of experienced reality or unreality, as prescribed by society or by a deviant individual (Cothran 1974:343).

Bullshitting, like myths, fairy tales or riddles, sets the coordinates of the universe.

The occupants of my informants' universe are divided into the Street and the Straight. Most people fit neatly into one group, some loiter on the margin of one group with their affiliations or interests in the other. But, on the whole, the characteristics of the large cast of people found in the tales are polarized into two contrasting groups, with opposite values, experience and attributes.

Two opposite groups are ideally represented. The "street", free and living in the present and for now, living an exciting life full of thrills and fraught with danger, full of generosity and cleverness, and the "straight", sacrificing excitement for security in a doubtful future, living a life of drudgery and petty duties, full of greed and ignorance. In such a simplistic universe, one's allegiances are made clear and so is one's sense of duty.

If the experienced reality does not always correspond to the ideal representation, the lesson remains nevertheless. And the model is seen as true, even if it is recognized that some people do not conform to it, even if the non-user prostitute has
straight values, if the straight fence is involved in criminal activities and the street rip off is as greedy and stupid as the square John. The exceptions reinforce the rule, since they are indeed perceived as exceptions. In some cases, they are also named: "acey-duceys" with "a foot in and a foot out".

As in most societies, a sense of temporal and cultural continuity is given by the reminiscences of long time participants in the culture. Comparisons between "then" and "now" oscillate between the poles of the "good old days" and the "it was tougher then" positions. Stoddart's informants (1968:89) look back upon an undeniably less strict era. Since the function of the two following statements is to enlighten the uninitiated observer, explicit comparison is made with contemporary conditions. They might well have been omitted from oldtimers' ramblings when among street people.

A lot of things changed since they started usin' all that fuckin' electronic equipment to help them pinch guys. They've got everything goin' for them, now, y'know.

Most guys around now don't know what it used to be like before they started really cracking down. It used to be that you could just score a cap of dope and go home and fix with no worries. It's not like that now.

None of the present informants would have known the twice removed situation described above, the Golden Age of drug addiction in Vancouver, as it were. They look back upon times when the confrontations between drug addicts and drug control officers were physically more violent, and "old timers" such as Brandy and Sue recall occasions where people, and often they themselves, were "throttled", "choked" and "punched". When a comparison with
present times is explicitly provided, "hassling" in its many forms is mentioned and one does not get the impression that the situation has necessarily improved. In every case, the description of the hostile forces at work serve to strengthen group solidarity.

The diachronic, historic perspective is complemented by tales of elsewhere, in which "there" is compared with "here". Both Stoddart's informants (p. 89) and mine agreed that (a) elsewhere is different, and (b) local residents are in the less enviable position, usually because of law enforcement policies and methods. Spatial continuity is thus also provided, and both dimensions serve to affirm the concept of a drug addict community expanding beyond the immediate confines of the present and one's "corner".

The historic and geographic evaluation of the nature and quality of the street addict's environment is all the more important that there is no formal apprenticeship on the street. Unlike criminal occupations practised off the street (Letkemann 1973, Bryan 1965), skills are learned as they are practised. Sometimes, advice is given, but it is usually done when people work together.

The supposedly strong bonds which unite street people seem to be much more a unified front against the straight world than a real fraternal feeling. They understand one another, and share the same values and lifestyle. But they also leave one another free to learn the rules of the game on their own, by trial and
error, even if error must mean being busted, beaten up or ripped off.

I made an attempt to find out what type of coaching or help my informants received at the beginning of their career. Bugsy started at thirteen. "It was my birthday", she explained, "and I wanted to get drunk, so I turned a trick." Soon afterwards, she met "this one girl".

Her and me used to go on double tricks all the time. And these two guys that we always went with, continually ... I mean we went with them about three times a week. This one guy, the guy I was always with, wanted to sit and watch the other two. And Connie, she knew all the positions. And I was watching her and I used to ask her about them.

In Julie's experience, however, the situation is likely to be somewhat different:

You can work with another girl ... They usually don't want to because it might cut into their business. Young, too ... It's always a new face coming up ... And you don't want to take too much of a chance on her, because you really don't know her.

At the age of fifteen, Jo met somebody "that gave her an idea". ("They just told me that they knew this guy and he was all right. An older businessman. He wanted to give me fifty dollars.")

Then, all of a sudden, it was there, and it was happening, and it was just left to my own discretion.

It is certainly up to each individual to acquire technical competence in whichever manner he or she can contrive to so so. What must be acquired rapidly, however, and over which others have some control, is the knowledge not to endanger the group.

Some people talk too much. Like, when I first hit the street, I did that all the time. I talked too much, you know, not realizing what I was doing. Until I got told,
you know. "Hey, settle down! Keep you mouth shut when the bulls are around!" I never ratted out on anybody but I was talking when there were bulls close by, close enough to listen, and not realizing what I was doing. So, I got it all straightened out, and now when I see a bull, I shut my mouth, no matter what I'm talking about, I just shut right up! (Bugsy)

But patience is reputed to be short on the street, where the pace is fast and people are watchful. Bullshitting, by depicting the world and its occupants, establishing rules of behaviour and describing sanctions for transgression, provides a clear indication of the culture's expectations. It is a didactic tool, flexible and adaptable in content and form, expendable with time and leisure or rendered as concise and striking as need be.

Gossip, a form of bullshitting focusing on others rather than the self, is seen by Abrahams as a "technique for maintaining community control through the elucidation of public morality" (1970:291). Among the Vincentians where he observed it, he saw it as a means of maintaining in a small community "some kind of community-held public image in the face of internal conflicts and external pressures from the city" (291). Although his informants saw gossip as "potentially disruptive" both to communal and individual life, they recognized its vital advantage: it gave "a sense of community identity and involvement" (293).

THE DIDACTICS OF STREET TALK

In the brief paragraph where Bugsy told of the quarrel she had with her old man, she described the reciprocal duties of an old man and his old lady. To the newcomer to street social organization, she gave several pointers:
1 I asked him, I says "You were out with Pete's old lady?"
   He says "No".
   I says "You're a fuckin' liar!" I says, "I was sittin'
in the car next to you," I says, "I seen you!"
   He says "Well, what were we doing?"
   So I told him! I described it right down to a tee!
   He says "What were you going at the show!

2 I says "My mark took me to the show, I got paid 400 dollars
to go to the show!"
   He says "Where's the money?"

3 I says "I spent it!"
   He say "On what?"
   I says "Junk!"
   He says "Oh, you did, did you?"
   I says "Yeah!"

4 He says "I gotta go sick, I guess?"

5 I says "Well, go get your other slut there to buy you
   some!" I says, "If she can afford you, if she can
   afford to go to bed with you," I says, "surely she
   can afford to buy you a cop of junk!"
   He says "here we go!"

6 So I says "Fuckin' right, here we go!" I says, "Now,
7 if you don't mind, I'm busy. Hit it!"

1. The offence is double: her old man has been out ("going
   out" is a euphemism for having sexual relations) with a girl who
was equally unfaithful since she was somebody's old lady. An old
lady owes personal fidelity to her old man, marks and tricks not-
withstanding. The danger and the sanction was also double and,
in another part of the story, there was a free for all, with Pete
bashing Bugsy's old man and she splitting the lip of Pete's old
lady. Moreover, Bugsy and Pete spend the rest of the day
together and he bought her dope during that time, probably using
his old lady's money to do so. This was fair payment for Bugsy's
deeply felt grievance: "He was taking my money and spending it on
her! Buying her beer and shit! And he was doing it behind my

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1One of the many names for heroin. The two most commonly
used by my informants are "junk" and "stuff".
back and every time I asked him about it, he said no, he wasn't!"

2. Her old man's feeble attempt at suggesting that she may have been as guilty as he was crushed, and Bugsy's virtue and professional integrity were triumphantly established: she was working and being well paid for it, too! (Bugsy's usual homeric proportions, I would suspect). Her answer also reveals to the newcomer that the mark has to pay for the smallest favour: it is his duty, and some women would probably argue that it is his privilege.

3. Normally, Bugsy would spend the money by scoring for both of them. Yet, nothing has been said about it, and the fact that he had to ask shows that he was not expected to share her dope.

4. This is the key remark. Bugsy was paying him back for his infidelity by not providing for his needs. He had failed in his duty to her: faithfulness and specific use of her money. So she did not perform hers: bringing him the money she had earned or the dope she had scored. He then had to go sick (do without his fix), which is no small punishment and well befitting the crime.

5. One could perhaps assume that by being unfaithful, Bugsy's old man has spoilt their relationship and treated her, retroactively, as it were, like a slut. I am not sure that there is room for such romantic conceit in Bugsy's anger: it was mostly her pride which was hurt.

6. This does not mean that the other girl was paying for Bugsy's old man's favours. It may have been meant as an insult since she was comparing him to a pimp. It may also have meant that the "other slut" might as well assume all the
responsibilities of an old lady.

7. To the injury of not bringing dope to her old man, Bugsy added the insult of implying that he was only a one-cap addict. For an old timer like Bugsy, this was almost as insulting as accusing him of sniffing glue!

8. Bugsy's anger was so well founded that she could even afford to be self righteous about it.

9. The whole scene took place at Bugsy's place of work, in front of a bar, and the last remark was meant to humiliate him even further by stressing the fact that she, at least, was doing what she was supposed to do: she was working.

   Another important lesson was given by Bugsy at the end of the tale:

   When I was finished with her, she didn't look too hot! She had two black eyes and her nose was split all over her face, her mouth was all bleeding, and the cops walked in just as I finished. "What happened here?" And I look at her, as though to say "Oh, hey, say something!", you know. And she says "I was a little bit drunk and I walked into the door as she was opening it." And the cop says "And you didn't know she was behind the door, I guess?" I says "No. I didn't know she was in the bathroom. I don't watch the bathroom," I says, "I'm in here to getting (sic) drunk, I ain't here to watching no can, to see who goes in and who comes out!" He says "Yeah", and he says to her "You're sure that's all that's happened?" And she says "Yeah", and then she looked at me! And that was it! And they left.

   This is the only time the girl has acted properly. Her last "Yeah" and the look she gave Bugsy were thoroughly enjoyed by the latter, but the listener learns at once that a black eye, a split nose and a bleeding mouth do not give anyone the right to involve the cops in what is, after all, a well deserved punishment for a transgression to the old man-old lady code of behaviour.
The listener also learns that cops are not entirely gullible, but that it does not matter if they do not believe you as long as they do not "have something on" you. In this case, the policeman's suspicions, his disbelief and his inability to do something about it are evident. Yet, he had to leave because of the lack of corroboration from Pete's old lady. Three pointers are thus given about one's dealings with the police:

1. "They" can't do anything unless someone rats out or provides proofs.

2. A united front must be presented, whatever the situation.

3. Cops' frustration, while enjoyable, is dangerous; this is not apparent in the story, but the cumulation of such stories eventually leads to the same comment made by Dee, Julie, Jo and Snow in various forms:

- You've beaten them so many times ...
- They don't like that! They don't like to be beat, so they'll show you!
- They hold a grudge ...

(Jo and Snow)

And then, they become "dirty" (Dee).

In telling me the story, it was probably not Bugsy's intention to describe for me her old man's duty to herself and her duty to him, nor the sanctions which follow a transgression. Yet, she has done so - and does so when she tells the story on the street. What actually took place between them is irrelevant to the bullshitting event she performed in the retelling of it. What she said took place is all that matters, since it makes sense in terms of the street rules of behaviour. It is a
She has also "laid something on" me at the same time: that she was a good earner and that she was tough. It had already been established in the course of previous interviews that she was on the whole a better earner than I and that she was tougher than I. Now, once again, the exciting street qualities of toughness and smartness (it takes wits to be paid 400 dollars to go to the show) were pitted against the wishy-washy square Johns whose group I represented. In this case, as often happened in the narratives, a street woman who prided herself on her "smartness" when dealing with square Johns, has shown "toughness" when dealing with her own kind. Milner recognizes those alternatives strategies in the way black men deal with white society: "the devious (trickster) and the open confrontation (bad man)" (Milner 1972 b:115). A third person listening to Bugsy telling me the story would have got the double message of street social organization (duties and sanctions) and street-straight confrontation.

Having two informants at the same sitting provided me with a double bonus:

1. They gave each other a knowledgeable audience, thus checking their tendency to bullshit uncontrollably about so called "facts".

2. They provided each other with an appreciative audience in front of whom to enact the street-straight communication and exchange interaction.

Instead of having two people present at once, I occasionally gave an anonymous transcript to one of the women, asking her
to check a detail or give her opinion of the proceedings described in the story.

For instance, Julie had once told me that she "packed a 38." When Jo and Snow read and commented on Julie's story of a particular racket she favoured, they could not hide their contempt for someone who had so obviously hinted at a much higher criminal status than her real one, and who had moreover done so in such an unrealistic and unbelievable manner. Julie's claim did not make sense.

- She says she carried a 38, you know ... Someone who carries a 38 is not going to do petty things like that!

- That's here, isn't it? How, in the States, I'd have to say yes, but here, no! I've never met anybody in this city, any woman that's carried a gun ... All the different scenes that I've been through in the past years, I've never met a woman who walked around packing guns. Was she a hype?

- Yes.

- Well, now, you couldn't take that risk, because too often you get in a regular run of the mill hassle and getting pulled over and there's no place where you could put a 38! When they stop you, you know, they might get you to open your coat, your purse, you know. Take your coat and your sweater off and look at your sleeves. Now, where are you gonna have a gun that they're not going to see it? Especially a hype!

After Julie had finished telling me about her racket, I had rather treacherously, asked a typical square John question: "Wasn't it dangerous?". And this was when her unfortunate "I always packed a 38!" escaped her. My question called for an outrageous answer, outrageous from the point of view of the logic of competent street behaviour. As Jo and Snow pointed out, a small time female hype, whatever her racket or hustle, does not
"pack a 38". Experience shows that it is unpractical and dangerous for her to do so. But my question, stressing my "straight" attributes, ignorance of street customs, concern for one's safety, fear of danger and excitement, assumption that street activities are all fraught with danger and violence, almost exaggerating them, elicited from Julie the equally stereotyped reaction of the wild and dangerous gun packing street hustler.

In cold type, however, Jo and Snow failed to see it as a joke at my expense and simply treated the statement at its face value. Since it was now directed at them and no longer at me, they even took umbrage at the bullshit. All of Julie's story became at once suspicious and they dismissed it entirely, refusing to give her the benefit of the doubt and rejecting the plausibility of her tale and her racket.

Reading the story and having to judge it, they saw the statement "I (a Vancouver hype, street hooker, small time trafficker and hustler) always packed a 38" as an insult to their intelligence and competence as street people. Had Julie been foolish enough to make such a statement to her peers on the street, her sanction would probably have been the same total dismissal she suffered in absentia in my office.

I was very seldom allowed to recede unobtrusively into the background. I could only accept invitations to lunch or dinner where more people would be present, never suggest them. Unless the whole group knew me, as in Protective custody, a woman would be hesitant to ask me, since she would then impose my presence on the group. Apart from Dee in her group and Brandy in hers, my
informants were not leaders. They were either loners or rather meek individuals, in no position I believe to impose me on others or to ask me without their tacit consent. I was not important enough to warrant a previous consultation with the group about it, either, since it would then have made the invitation a formal one and the meal a special occasion. Moreover, I believe that the women were not particularly interested in making public knowledge their sessions with me.

This situation naturally reduced my opportunities to see people interact more or less normally. Bugsy and Dee asked me for lunch once, and I accepted the protective custody group's invitation to dinner three times and to lunch once. These enabled me to witness the exchange of one-liners and come-backs on several occasions. To me, an uninitiated spectator, they were useful indications of the speaker's status.

To "Up yours!", Dee gave the drawling answer "Sorry, it won't fit!" The challenge, or the establishment of a contest (Goffman 1971:178-179), issued by the first speaker was taken up and successfully met by Dee. It also established the first speaker's status as one tentatively equal to Dee's. The latter's mild come back signalled her acceptance of that status while giving her the last word. It also set the mood of the interchange.

In the case of Brandy and Sugar, the former's untopped and slightly malevolent one-liners simply confirmed by appreciation of her status. I had already seen an indication of it when
Sugar, the cook and person in charge of the meals, always checked with Brandy before issuing her invitations. When the fancy took her, Brandy would make such remarks as: "Sugar, cross your legs, it's drafty in here!" These remained scrupulously unanswered, in deference to Brandy's recognized leadership in terms of jail and street experience, as well as in terms of sheer personality. "Moreover," Brandy scornfully explained later, "it's true! She smells and she knows it."

The measure of the street is constantly taken. Life there is dangerous and, lest it should be forgotten and people become complacent and careless, reminders are given in the form of stories such as the one Bugsy spontaneously told me one day. As well as a stern warning that it is unwise to have dealings with the big guys and to rip off one's business associates, it is a nice piece of folklore meting out horror and humour in an almost unbeatable combination.

- Did you know about Harry B. being killed? Who was strangled with a pair of women's panty hose? Last year? And Hurst? That's another guy.

- Porky?

- Yeah, Porky! Well, there was those three, Harry, and Porky, and Rocky... They all go it, the same three. Harry was the one who was strangled in his mother's backyard. And Rocky, they found his body, and it took them

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\(^2\)Since my status was ambiguous, a total outsider, yet under the apparent auspices of the Authorities, no amount of knowledge or ignorance shown by me was actually surprising. Thus Bugsy found it natural that I should know at once the nickname of a junkie killed the year before (the ethnocentric assumption that such knowledge may well be shared by everyone would not play in the case of an ordinary square).
two weeks to identify him. Whoever did him in did a good job. They pulled out all his teeth, put arson on his fingers and on his toes ...

- Put arson?

- Burnt his fingers, you know ... and ... oh, they just destroyed him completely, so that there was no way to identify him. His mother identified him by his heart ... He had a heart shaped mole on his ass ... Heart shaped! Lots of people got moles, but they didn't figure anybody would come with that! And Rocky's mom and dad had gone out of town. And they came back unexpectedly. And when they couldn't find Rocky, they went down to the Morgue. They couldn't identify him by his face because he had acid poured all over his face, so they turned him over and she said: "Yeah!"

All three of them were drug addicts. The guys that did that are guys from the States. There's two guys from Canada serving time for it and they didn't do it. Four guys from the States ... in the Mafia. Some guys in the Mafia from the States. They gave Harry B. and Rocky the money to go and pick them up an ounce. And they say: "If you don't come back, you're not going to live to see tomorrow!" Well, they came back and said: "We got ripped off!" They had the money stashed. So these guys say: "Well, you've got one week to come up with the money." And when the week was up, that was it! The guys came down; they were hiding; they found them! They were watchin' them ...

The presence of the "guys in the Mafia from the States" puts the blame on outsiders, thus strengthening the bonds among insiders. This is particularly important in this case since the alternative interpretation would be that insiders (the "two guys from Canada" now "serving time for it") were in fact guilty of the deed. By the same token, the injustice of Justice is also glossed over lightly, a useful lesson.

In spite of the real dangers evoked in the last story, one should not allow the fear of potential dangers to interfere with the conduct of one's business on the street. One must be ready to take chances. Such a story was told by Bugsy again who, for once and to her mortification, was unwilling to overlook the
"funny feeling" she had about a customer.

Well, I know one girl ... I turned down a trick, and he asked her, and she went out with him. And she got 200 dollars for it! It was true, very true, I know she wouldn't lie to me. If she would have lied to me, I woulda hit her! I hate somebody who lies, I do! And she says: "You know, that trick that you turned down?" She says: "I got 200 dollars from him!" I says: "You didn't!" She says: "I did! Really!" She showed it to me ... and she hadn't worked all night, and she had no money on her when she came downtown. "You bitch! I want half! I turned him down for you!" She had the choice of giving it to me or I'd take it! My best friend goes out and turns him! I told her, I says: "Ah, I don't like him!" She says: "Well, if I'm not down in 16 minutes, come up and get me." She was down in 10 minutes. She got 200 dollars for it! I asked her: "Did you rob him?" She says "no". I says: "Are you sure?" "No". The guy walked by, patted her on the ass and he said: "I had a good time," he says, "see you, baby!" O.K. ... Oh, wow! That pissed me off!

One should not take too seriously Bugsy's threats to her friend. The woman was after all her "best friend". However, she was not entirely kidding either. The story ends as foreseen, Bugsy remaining the heroine: she gets her half and all ends well, with two "caps" each and a meal in a restaurant.

Beyond the preliminary search for identification and assertion of bona fides, provided by the establishment of who you are, whom you know and who knows you, what you know about them, and the acknowledgement of insider's status, bullshitting maps out very clearly, in a very limited sampling of tales, the following rules of behaviour.

1. Rights and duties of street people, such as those described in Bugsy's story where the old lady was defined as a provider, and where solidarity against the police, whatever intestine dissention there may have been, was
2. sanctions for transgression, as in the story describing the fate of Harry and Rocky, who had attempted to rip off their business partners, or the one about Bugsy's punitive measures against her unfaithful old man;

3. ranking among street people, sometimes established, as in Dee and Brandy's case, by the use of one liners;

4. dealings with the police: other stories treat such topics as how to beware of Morality squad cops, of newcomers on the street, of rip offs; how to deal with a trick's wife; what to expect of marks, how far to go with them; how aloof one must always be with "good cops"; how to handle drunks, "perverts", "East Indians" - described further as "Villains"; how to foil the narcs.

This is vitally important conduct which is formalized in narrative description. These stories are told for their entertainment value. They help pass the time of day, establish the teller as someone with experience and knowledge, tighten the bonds of the community, strengthen stereotypes, create folk heroes and villains. They are amusing, fearsome and sad. They are also stories through which new comers are instructed and group members keep their values alive.

Mutual story telling and the various forms of bullshitting form a transaction known as conversation, in the course of which reality is constantly redefined.

The most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation. One may view the individual's everyday life in terms
of the working away of a conversational apparatus that
ongoingly maintains, modifies and reconstructs his subject-
tive reality ... It is important to stress, however, that
the greater part of reality-maintenance in conversation is
implicit, not explicit. Most conversation does not in so
many words define the nature of the world. Rather, it takes
place against the background of a world that is silently
CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRASTING CHARACTERISTICS OF STREET AND STRAIGHT PEOPLE

The characters perceived by my informants and depicted in their stories are clearly divided into two main groups: Street and Straight. Through characterization and stereotyping, rigid boundaries are created between them.

Verbal manipulations performed by street people on square Johns base their technique on cultural interpretations of the square Johns' characteristics. Without the street woman's certainty that a mark is, by definition, "greedy" and "stupid", she could not have elaborated her method for handling him. In this sense, definitions serve as interactional guidelines.

There are visible boundaries between the two groups: they speak and dress differently, their means of livelihood are different, their lifestyle is different. In addition to this objectively evident contrast, my informants also perceive a corresponding ideal separation: values and life experience.

SQUARE JOHNS, ROUNDERs AND THE JAIL EXPERIENCE

The paragon of straight life is the square John. According to Rumack (1972), "a square is a person who does not possess a police record." More than a simplistic definition, it is, by street standards, an erroneous one: there are "squares" in jail,
and there are "square" crimes. Were I to commit a fraud and be convicted of it, I would not *ipso facto* change sides. Squareness is much more than a legal definition, but jail experience is certainly an important factor in determining the characteristics of both groups.

Even more than crimes typically committed by square Johns, there are also square criminals, who do not live on the street, who are married, have children and lead a conventional life. Their way of thinking, explains Dee, "is different from ours. Their life is the same as yours, yet they know a way of ours. Like, it's mixed between the two."

Since not possessing a police record is only an official recognition and sanction of a certain type of behaviour, it is not surprising that it should not play an exclusive part in the definition of a square. It must also be understood that a square John's lack of involvement in illegal activities is not necessarily due to his honesty: many street people may see him as simply careful or pusillanimous. The lawfulness of his conduct is certainly one of the factors which serve to define him, but Rumack's privative definition is not only insufficient, it is also partially unfounded. Letkeman's definition is much more comprehensive since it regards lifestyle as a most important component:

Criminals use the term "square" to refer to (1) the conventional citizen committed to the legitimate lifestyle, and who is stable and reliable, and (2) the one-time offender otherwise committed to a legitimate lifestyle (Letkeman 1971:110).
To the *square* John, the street usually opposes the *rounder*. This linguistic opposition between the terms serves to illustrate a cultural opposition almost as visually as Black and White do for other groups.

The person "out of line" is normally defined as a "deviant"; however, the power of naming and defining has been granted to those who, in this case, are themselves "straight".

Honest folk give names to things, and the things bear these names... I am aware that honest people are also objects to each other. I am given names... But if I am named, I name in turn. Thus, naming and being named, I lived in a state of reciprocity. Words are thrown at me, I catch them and throw them at others (Sartre 1963:40-41).

The straight naming process makes the object what it has been named – in this case a "deviant", a "criminal". By this naming, "their failings and errors are transformed into a permanent predisposition, that is into a destiny" (Sartre 1963:34). There is no true naming reciprocity between straight and street people. Street naming is almost powerless to affect and metamorphose straight people into their definition. Literally and metaphorically, straight people are seldom reached by the language of the street.

Yet, they must acknowledge the name given to them by street people as the derogatory term and the branding mechanism it is. And they must also accept the name given to themselves by street people as a self-praising definition. In this article on folk ideas and worldview, Dundes (1971) discusses the opposition of line and circle: the positive connotation of linearity, evident in the expressions "straight" talk, getting "straightened" out or
"squared" away after having got "out of line" is opposed to the negative connotation of the circle, also evident in the expressions "circular" reasoning, "roundabout" ways of speaking, "going around in circles". But he points out a recent reversal of these connotations.

Recently, the line versus the circle opposition has taken a new turn. It has been restated in terms of straight versus groovy. Curves mean "curvaceous" and sex; lines mean "straight" or "square" and the denial of sex. There is a movement away from the "straight and narrow" towards the "groovy and broad" (Dundes 1971:99).

Thus it is not surprising that street people have defined outsiders as straight people and square Johns, and insiders as rounders.

A rounder is "someone who has business on the street", said Dee who described those in the "fast life" as people who hang around the Corner, are into different things, are always on the go ... They are generally Rounders.

Julie has them hang around in bars, and you see them on the street as well. And they probably know a lot about what's happening, you know, if you go up and talk to them.

A relatively new-comer to the street, Tiny listed as straight people seen on the street:

tricks, marks, common shoppers. They're not even there! And rounders. They know everything. But they're not involved.

Yet, if their degree of participation and commitment is not unanimously agreed upon, they are however uniformly thought to be knowledgeable about the ways of the street, and usually trustworthy. For Snow and Jo, rounders are the successful ones on the street:
You know, there are people out there collecting pop bottles. And there's the ones that are making hundreds and thousands of dollars a day. Those are the rounders.

When I asked them if they were rounders, they answered yes only after the briefest hesitation.

Rumack defines the rounder as

A person who has spent time in jail or who is engaged in an illegal activity. All the girls whom I met considered themselves Rounders.

Only Brandy, among my informants, would agree with his narrow definition. For her, rounders are simply "criminals" and the "top men are those who don't get caught".

The participation in illegal activities and jail terms, once again, is not seen by the informants as figuring predominantly in the definition of "rounders", except perhaps for Brandy who has spent half her life in jail. However, the fact that all Rumack's informants claim rounder status is quite significant.

Here again, Letkeman's definition seems much more pertinent:

The most common distinction made by the offender is between the "rounder" and the "square" (or "square-john"). "Rounder", however, has different connotation than "criminal". Simply to be labelled a criminal by the court does not confer rounder status. To be a rounder one must be known and recognized as one, by other rounders and by persons seriously committed to the illegitimate lifestyle. In fact, inmates of prisons refer to some other inmates as "squares" (1971:110).

Bugsy's definition of a rounder explains the prestige conferred by the title:

Someone who's been around a long time, knows the street up and down, knows who are the cops. They are solid people: they don't rat out to the cops, they don't have to!

Rumack's and Letkeman's definitions are important here since they
are Canadian definitions, an exception in a predominantly American field of study, and since they reflect the terminology used in two large Canadian cities. The informants themselves stress the fact that American and Canadian terms vary.

If Rumack's definition were adequate, he would hardly feel it necessary to mention that all his informants "considered themselves Rounders", since as prostitutes just out of jail they would automatically qualify for the title. What the statement indicates is the prestige attached to the term and the eagerness of informants to be identified with the "solid people."

In the days when "dope fiends" were despised exceptions and criminals were professionals - four or five decades ago in Vancouver - the distinction was clearly made. According to Old Sal, Jackson's old timer addict:

Police gave us that name, characters. In them days we was people. Folks was squares and we was people. The police had a lot of respect for the characters, they only rode the people that shot dope. Characters tended to their own business (Jackson 1972:72).

Jail is a part of street life and, as such may count little as a formal marker, not as much as being a hype does, for instance. It only bestows the title of "con" or "ex-con", with its connotation of particular experience and membership in an additional subculture. But, for most street people, one is either in jail, has been in jail, or will probably soon be in jail, and the continuity of life is not broken through the passage in jail, however unpleasant the experience may be. It does not change people, their lifestyle, their values as radically as,
for instance again, being a hype does. Brandy, an old time con, says: "I got a good home in the street, but jail is part of life; it doesn't faze me."

Not only is jail in many cases a necessary physical respite, but is also strengthens bonds by adding an extra dimension to group inclusion. Julie mentioned several times the warm if superficial feeling experienced when someone known "in here" is later met on the street, a result presumably of the "relaxed socialization" which Preble and Casey (1969:8) see as being centered around the "facts and folklore" of the heroin user's life on the street.

Since a stay in jail figures extensively in straight definitions, one must remember that concern with the legality of one's actions is indeed a typically straight notion. The street people's initial encounter with the criminal justice system is often reduced to being "hassled" or being "busted", and this may well be how they define the border between activities that are lawful (and only cause you to be hassled) and those that are unlawful (and enable them to bust you).

The common belief that "there's a law for the rich [and also the straight] and a law for the poor [and also street people]" perhaps leads to the ineptitude or indifference of some women at protecting themselves. It is true that like Stoddart's informants, whose knowledge of the requirements of the law enabled them to manipulate the format of their transactions, the women interviewed are informed of the legal technicalities
surrounding the possession of narcotics and trafficking in drugs. As prostitutes, however, all but one misunderstood their legal status.

Bugsy, for instance, after eight years as a prostitute, does not really know what part of her transactions causes her delinquency. She did not alter her modus operandi in 1972 when the charges against prostitutes changed from "vagrancy" to "soliciting". She believes that "soliciting", which is in fact the offence, means "selling your body for sex", a legal endeavour in Canada. As far as she is concerned, she "propositions" her clients, minds her own business and hopes to be left alone.

The many tactics used by women (Layton 1975:197, 201-202) to protect themselves from the law or even to try and operate within the wording of article 195.1 of the Criminal Code on soliciting for the purpose of prostitution, have been so unsuccessful that a definite bitterness is felt against the police, who are moreover accused of "turning everything around" in their testimony.

**CONTRASTING LIFESTYLES**

More than by their involvement in criminal activities or their legitimate occupations, street and straight people are differentiated and contrasted by the life they lead. Square Johns are seen as engaged in the dreary routines of "nine-to-five" jobs. Their social life and their pleasures are perceived as equally dull:

Straight people, you know, they go out once a week, twice a week for dinner, to the bars for a few drinks, and they sit at home and watch T.V. We're downtown all the time, you
know, and there's nothing big about going for a drink or anything! (Sue)

As well as stressing the lackluster square way of life, the inability of street people to cope with the demands of a straight occupation was also mentioned. Moreover, if they are heroin addicts, as so many of them are, they cannot support their habit on a straight salary. "They couldn't afford to be a junkie on a job. They might hold a job, but they'd need to boost, or something" (Dee).

The pace of street life, as well, would not allow a junkie to hold the conventional "nine-to-five."

You can't stay stabilized as a straight job and be, you know, running downtown and scoring, plus the fact that the money isn't enough ... You'd have to have a high paying job, and you couldn't hold it, not running around looking for the people that you need. (Julie)

Instead, she explains,

If you're hooking and you're using, you go out and make money half way through the night, score for the morning, continue working. So that when you wake up in the daytime, you'd have stuff to fix.

One only has to listen to Bugsy describe how she spends her day to understand the total incompatibility of the two life-styles:

I do¹ my first trick, then I score. I fix, then I do another trick, and then I score two caps and fix. Every trick I do, I score. I spend all my money unless I'm loaded enough that I want to hold on, so that I can buy a couple of caps to take home. Usually at the end of the night, I have about $120 and I score enough to take home. I usually quit around six in the morning.

¹Julie, in spite of her firm stand on the impropriety of the expression "to do a trick" (see p. 105) would never challenge Bugsy's right, after eight years on the street, to say whatever she pleases. Rules of linguistic discrimination are for outsiders.
The men she meets in the early morning are all straight. Yet, she clearly shows the difference between their "straight" reasons for being on the street at that time, and hers.

There are people who drive all the time: guys who work late at night, or guys who come into town, loggers or something, or guys who have been out for something to eat, or have been at a party or something. There are four or five of us at that time of night.

Often the fear of the street felt by straight people was mentioned to me. Julie's straight parents were terrified by it and thought they would get "mugged or raped, or something", if they went "there". Yet, she stresses how "normal" street life is, with people "eating and sleeping, like everywhere else!" Dee also cannot stress enough that "we think of our life as normal. To us, it's normal, it's our normal way of life."

They live on the street because they do business there, their friends are on the street, and that's their big living room. (Dee)

To the straight life described by Sue, Dee opposes that of the hypes:

They like the excitement that's on the Corner, they like night life, they like the excitement ... They like the excitement of being either a dealer or a junkie, of playing cat and mouse with the bulls. You've got to like all this to become a hype. To be a real junkie, you've got to like it, because if you don't, you'll never make it down there.

As one of Coutts' matrons admits: "A real live game of cops and robbers, an exciting life, and how tame everything else must be in comparison!" (Coutts 1961:101).

Agar (1973:1) refers to previous studies of addiction which mostly "assume the social psychological failure status of the addict as the problem to be explained" and challenges this
assumption. Preble and Casey go further still. For them, heroin
does not provide for its lower class users "a euphoric escape
from the psychological and social problems which derive from
ghetto life." It provides, on the contrary,

a motivation and rationale for the pursuit of a meaningful
life, albeit a socially deviant one. The activities these
individuals engage in and the relationships they have in the
course of their quest for heroin are far more important than
the minimal analgesic and euphoric effects of the small
amount of heroin available to them (Preble and Casey 1969:
21).

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Some characteristics of the two groups were better defined
than others by the informants. What was less well known - the
straight world - tended to fall into stereotypes and lack the
grey shades of what was more familiar - the street world - about
which statements were usually qualified.

Street and straight people were contrasted in almost every
one of their activities. Their values and attitudes were con-
stantly opposed and no doubt was left that street ways were the
best. The essential differences between the two constantly con-
trasted protagonists were described as touching on the basic
quality of their life: freedom and constraint, competence and
ignorance, generosity and greed.

In opposition to the sedentary and secure square Johns, the
unlawfulness of the street people's occupations dictates many
constraints in their life, such as the requirement of mobility
and the need for privacy.
Most people don't like too many people knowing where they're staying ... People that you're close to or you're friends with, they usually know where you live ... Like, just everybody on the street wouldn't know where I was living, and yet there're might be ten people that know where I am. Like, all the people that buy off me, there's a few that know where I live, but mostly, I show up when I show up!

You move often, just to keep ahead of the police and too many people get to know where I live and they're coming all hours of the night (that's if you're a dealer). Lots of people live in rooms on a monthly basis, or weekly. (Dee)

This freedom of movement is accompanied by an independence from many conventional constraints which was sometimes expressed in direct contrast to the square Johns' concern with his neighbour's opinion and his fear of stepping over the conventional boundaries of straight propriety.

Like you, for instance, if you thought: "Oh, geez, I think I'd like to tattoo!" You'd think: "Well, maybe the woman next door would think I'm ..." Where the con doesn't think that, you know. "Hell with the person or what he thinks! If he doesn't like it, that's my arm!" (Dee)

Dee was the first to admit that everyone on the Corner was not necessarily "smart", but she saw them all competent enough in the ways of the street to survive and enjoy their lifestyle, even if they were not like the "good junkie" who is "self sufficient". In opposition to this knowledge, we find the square John's ignorance.

A square John walking down the street couldn't pick four hypes out of a dozen. If there's a dozen people there and four of them are hype, you wouldn't be able to pick them out. Another hype would pick them out! (Dee)

She also described a woman shopper walking down the street:

She walks with her attention on herself, she is not interested in people around her ... a hype would be! She only looks at shop windows.
Snow, in contrast, described a hype, forever anxious not to miss anything, and indicated to the uninitiated how being attentive and observant usually pays off:

If you don't look, you're gonna miss something. Like, I notice someone lurking in a doorway and I think: "What's that guy? Is he looking for a girl or is he..." I was watching. "He's up to something! So, I'll just watch him for a while." And, sure enough! You know, like, say prior to that I had money and I was gonna, say, buy some dope, right? But I just held back. I wanted to watch this person. Sure enough, some trafficker comes by and that guy jumps on top of him with another partner! Of nowhere, right?"

When this plain ignorance of street mores and the inability to read clues express themselves, they take on another quality:

Ignorant means obnoxious. Straight people are ignorant to your kind of life, to the street scene. They don't know anything about it. (Sugar)

"Ignorant means obnoxious" is the street version of the straight statement that "ignorance of the law is no excuse".

The lack of knowledge and understanding leads to an "obnoxious" behaviour. This behaviour itself is seen as "ignorant."²

Ignorant cops: they have no manners at all! They say "There's a prostitute", or "There's a slut", or something stupid like that." (Bugsy)

Equally ignorant are some policemen to whom freaks are reported. "Most of them just laugh at you and say "Well, it's your own fault for being a prostitute!" (Bugsy)

Straight people's ignorance and obnoxious behaviour is well established. Their main characteristic, however, is not that,
but greed. Greed is indeed what causes them to become marks. A mark is defined by Maurer (1940:119) as someone who must have "larceny in his veins", who wants something for nothing. If such a man has money, he is a con man's ideal prey. Klockars' expert, Swaggi, draws from his experience to confirm this assessment:

Any hustler can tell you that 9 out of 10 people got larceny. May be even 99 out of 100 ... If the price is right and a man can use the merchandise, he's gonna buy. No question about it (Klockars 1974:62).

In my experience, women have just as much larceny in them as men. May be more (Klockars 1974:49).

My informants are unanimous about the truth of statements such as these. Dee, talking about boosting, said she never had any problem selling the stolen merchandise at about one third of its retail price. She claimed to have solicited people in bars and beer parlours. "Usually people will buy from [boosters]. Especially square Johns. They're glad to get a good deal!"

The women's experience with square Johns explains their feelings, since they usually enter with them into a mutually exploitative relationship. The following dialogue (where my questions are underlined) was one of several where the terms of straight-street transactions were defined.

- What do they want from you?
- (Bitterly) All of us! ... It depends, sometimes they want company.
- Sometimes they just want to be with you and find out how you live, how the other half lives, how you're doing.
- Like me!
- You know, they do! They say: "we're observing you."

- Some just want a party.

- Some want ... Like I said, company. Company into clubs, bars, you know?

- If the price is right, are you willing to give them what they want? Or will you always try to give a little less for the same money?

- I always try to get a little bit more!

- More money, rather than give less?

- Right!

- Well, I don't like to give any, really, but if I know they've got money and I know I can get money, I'll stick with them, you know.

  (Snow and Jo)

They want something, or they just want to screw me and they don't want to give me money ... They're trying to do something ... (Jo)

As Jo and Snow indicate, curiosity as well as greed properly speaking may be the basis for a mark or a trick's desire to purchase the services or company of street women. This is particularly true for heroin addicts:

He wanted to watch me ... He wanted to see, you know, to see the whole nitty gritty right there, that he'd heard about and he's seen on T.V. And then, when I got it, his eyes were just bulging! (Julie)

Julie, who often met older men "out for a good time", told stories about them and depicted them rubbing their hands and thinking with a lusty sneer: "Well, Jesus Christ! There, the old lady's at home, and I get me a young whipper snapper here!"

To the square John's exploitative greed, curiosity or lust is opposed to the rounder's generosity. In the context of the junkie's world, this usually means giving someone money to score
or dope to fix. This is normally done for "friends", not for "acquaintances" or "associates".

If she's good ... I mean not just anybody, but people I consider friends, that I know would do the same for me if I was in the same, you know ... (Jo)

If she had money and knew I didn't have any, and I was getting sick, she'd split ... That'd be out of friendship. I've done it 101 times for her! I'm a sucker for fixin' people! (Bugsy)

This occasional willingness to share mentioned by my informants does not however seem to be the rule everywhere among heroin users. Yet, another feeling is sometimes expressed, even among partners:

I'm looking out for myself. I might be sick tomorrow; anyway, he's got something working for him that I don't know about (Preble and Casey 1968:8).

The informants have not explained this apparent discrepancy. I would assume that the more limited means of livelihood open to women (prostitution being the one to which they most often resort) and their usually more restricted involvement in criminal activities may account to some extent for their apparent greater generosity: if their friends had "something working for" them, they would probably know about it. Hence, the need expressed is genuine. Moreover, the necessity for prostitutes to be visible on the street makes it easy for the lender to claim her due when her turn comes to be in need. For it is always implied that the reciprocity of the gift is expected.

There appears to be a curious mixture of disregard for short range needs, such as tomorrow's fix now available and given away, and a long range concern for undated future needs, such as
some other day's fix lacking and expected back. Since junkies usually live very much for the present, this apparent contradiction may be an indication of their solidarity. It is however no more than an apparent contradiction, since this loan is made while their own needs are being satisfied, the present is taken care of, and the future seems far away.

**ADDICTS, NON-ADDICTS AND TIME ORIENTATION**

Not all street people are drug addicts, although many of them do take drugs. Yet, users form the core of street life. A strong solidarity exists among them and they have now acquired a prestige until recently denied to them. A few decades ago, good citizens and criminals both frowned upon drug addiction.

You didn't shoot dope back in them days. If you shot dope you was a sorry, rotten, non-good bitch, it was strictly uh-uh, you didn't shoot or sniff dope or anything. If you did, you wasn't no good (Big Sal, quoted in Jackson 1972:72).

Fifteen years ago, Oakalla had a small section reserved for drug addicts who were separated from the rest of the inmates. They now form a large proportion of the jail population. Jo's first estimate from "nearly all" became upon reflection "70-80%." They also form a recognized group and act as one. One staff member commented: "The hypes always put pressure on everybody ... The hypes are bloody big heroes around here!" With the increased number and the increased prestige and acceptance of its members by other street people, the heroin addict subculture and its values tend to affect even non-using street familiars.

The need to live exclusively in the present is part of the
junkies' life. Their needs are pressing and immediate. The "straightening out" provided by the drug relieves anxiety and restores peace and optimism. The hard core junkie lives almost exclusively to fix. I once asked Bugsy, barely out of her teens, whether she had any fun.

On the street? That's hard to say ... If I wasn't using, I believe I could have a lot of fun. But when I'm using, I don't have any fun. My mind's too set on getting money to fix. That's it!

As Jo and Snow described their hit and run techniques, it became evident that they were only concerned with immediate profits and were not ready to plan more profitable hustles if those required some delay. They joked: "Well, our needs are bigger now! Anyway, there's always money around ..." This is a belief shared by all my informants. Marks are there for the picking. They will be there again tomorrow, and again they will provide. All windfalls are seen in the same light:

Everybody, pretty well, is on Welfare. Oh, the day you get your Welfare cheque, you go down and score 3-4 caps, and then, your Welfare cheque's gone and you don't worry again for another month! It's easy money for a day ... It's a hooker's day off! (Dee)

The future is not something junkies feel particularly anxious to delve into. They face rip offs, beatings, a diminishing ability to provide for their needs, and overdoses which are often fatal. Based on the experience of everyday life on the street, they could only too well foresee a possible future of their own, and it appears that they would rather overlook what they can foresee. Moreover, the drug fixes their mind on the urgency of their needs, and the immediacy of satisfaction.
Using prostitutes tend to shrug off mention of the future. The non-using prostitutes, on the other hand, are reputed by my informants to have a different attitude, and this different attitude appears to be enough for the street group to attribute to them straight values, in spite of a lifestyle which a straight observer might see as quite similar. It is thought that their ambition is to get off the street and, possibly, become call girls. Since call girls are thought to have legitimate occupations as well, it is not surprising that most of my informants saw non-using prostitutes in their role as aspiring call girls as almost square, if not in their lifestyle and knowledge of the street, at least in their desire for security and improved working conditions.

Dee believed that their ambition to become call girls is accompanied by a liking of the lifestyle that presumably - since neither she nor her friends know any call girls - goes with it. "They like that. They enjoy being wined and dined, where the ordinary street girl doesn't enjoy that."

Julie's description of non-using prostitutes indicated their assumed desire to build up a clientele. For instance, they are usually believed to avoid ripping off their customers. If they need extra money, they are more likely to turn an extra trick. They also have little to do with fences. In other words, they conduct their business as legitimately as possible, with an eye to improving their lot.

They are said to observe some of the street rules of
behaviour but they do not entirely belong to the street. Because their outlook is seen as basically different they can be viewed with some suspicion.

Yeah, they're good, they're good about warning. They're helping ... But only as far as the heat's concerned, and if they had a bad trick ... They don't like junkies, most of them ... The users are very leery of them. I mean, they're on their guard. You know, they're not users, and you don't know whether they're sincerely hooking ... and they could be watching everything, right? (Julie)

Because of their lesser involvement in criminal activities and their different life orientation, both due to their outsider status in the "drug scene", non-addict prostitutes are partly assimilated to straight people.

The basic opposition between now and later, the present and the future helps to distinguish between the immediate concerns of the street and the planning of the straight world. But equally important to understand is the concept of a dichotomy of the present as it may be perceived by the addicts.

There seems to exist two opposite aspects of the present, as it is lived on the street by addicts. A normalized present is clearly perceived, one where needs are momentarily satisfied and things are again in order. Language indicates that being under the influence of heroin is normal. For instance, one is "sick" when one needs the drug and one "fixes" in order to "straighten out". To this present reinstated by the drug into normality, the street opposes the concept of another, almost anomic present, where every thought converges on the regaining of this normality.

In the first case, all needs are satisfied for the present and the immediate future. The addict may then revert to what
Dundes describes, in opposition to the peasant cultures analyzed by Foster (1967), as the larger, North American culture's belief in a principle of unlimited good, a culture where prevails the belief that "there's plenty more where that came from" (Dundes 1971:96).

In the second case, the need and the pressure to satisfy it are such that the addict can only believe the glaring evidence of that money, that dope, that trick as being the ones which must at once be stolen or turned, since no other will serve to fulfill present yearnings as fast as those would. "You would understand that I'm sick and that I need that money", explained Jo's friend, and I believe that indeed what is meant is not "I need money", but "I need that money", where that simply means now.

STREET AND STRAIGHT VILAINES

Street folklore provides four easily identifyable villains: one street villain, the "rip off"; one marginal villain, the "rat", sometime classified as an "acey-ducey"; one straight villain, the "East Indian": although villainous characteristics are also found among all "bad tricks", the East Indian is the one who embodies them all in a fashion best suited to fulfill the street's sense of horror and drama; and the "narc", or arch-villain.

The Rip Off

"Rip offs" are street people. It is also usually street people who are "ripped off". The same action performed on a
square John is more likely to be called a robbery and no particular stigma is attached to it. Indeed, on the contrary, if the robbery is performed with wit and elegance, or at least with impetuosity and recklessness, it becomes a topic for boasting.

Although a trick can also be ripped off, the word is mostly used for street people: "When you talk about a square John, you say you "robbed" him" (Sue). A few seconds later, she added with a hesitant laugh: "You rip off your friends!" Her reservations may have been due to the fact that rip offs, although remaining street people, cease to be friends.

Jo describes what she refers to as her "code of moral ethics" (her intonation puts the words between quotation marks):

Like, I won't think nothing of taking from a trick or something in that type of situation. Or boosting in stores, or in a general con thing. But I wouldn't take from my own kind. And I wouldn't rob my friends, although my friends should understand ... You know, people tell me: "If you're my friend, you should understand that I'm sick and that I need that money." Well, you should ask me, and maybe I'll give it to you!

I wouldn't do that because I could never go back to them. I'd be too ashamed ... There's times I've got awfully desperate and I've been awfully crazy ... Still, I haven't gone and robbed by friends ... And I've done a lot of things!

If Bugsy's story of Harry and Rocky (pp. 125-126) is unusually sympathetic towards them, it is probably because they ripped off the "guys from the Mafia, from the States", twice outsiders.

My informants' experience is usually with small time rip offs:
Sometimes they wait for you outside when they see you have a trick, and they threaten you ... even with a knife, so you have to give them your money. (Bugsy)

They are often junkies who stand in the Corner and try to intimidate you. (Dee)

They can either out and rob you, or sell you blank caps, or just take your money and disappear. Usually it's from a dope dealer you get a rip off. (Sue)

Peter Reilly in a *Fifth Estate* television special (CTV, March 15, 1977) reporting on the seventy five drug-related murders, acknowledged as such by the police, which have taken place in Vancouver over the last twenty years, mentions the satisfaction expressed by street junkies after the execution of well known rip offs.

There are stories prevalent in the oral tradition which retell the deeds of rip offs. When the narrator is also the victim, threats are issued, strangely reminiscent of grade B gangster movies or old melodramas: "He won't live to see tomorrow" or, by Bugsy: "This guy ripped me off and I'll see him in his grave."

As bitterly resented as rip offs are, their actions are however seemingly understood. Although I only heard once: "Dog eat dog", there is a strong belief, expressed by many informants that "It's a jungle, out there!"

**The Rat**

Not only are rats as hated as rip offs, they are also despised. One of the questions I had asked Sugar led her to talk about her being held in protective custody. She said:
"I'm in here because I'm supposed to be a rat ...", mimicking all the loathing on her face and in her voice that such an accusation would generate when made by other street people.

Yet, without rats, many people who are arrested would have to face their own responsibility for their arrest. Instead, they can rest secure in the belief (or, at least, the expression of the belief) that had they not been ratted on, they would still be free. Their own skills remain essentially unchallenged since they cannot be held responsible for the unfair advantage taken over them.

It's worse to be a rat than a rip off. Most of us wouldn't be in here if it wasn't for them. (Sue)

The next thing I knew, there was six narc bulls and four policemen down there! I know who did it. And when she does come in, she better move into (my) group, because then they can take her out again and bury her. I don't care! But she won't live very long. She put too many people in here ...

(Bugsy)

I once mentioned to Bugsy that I had not seen for quite some time a woman I know in front of a small Granville street hotel where she works, and was wondering if she was all right. She answered scornfully:

Maybe somebody put cement boots on her. She's wrong. She's a rat. Maybe they put swimming boots on her. If they did, she deserved it. She's been working for the cops. She's never been busted.

Julie, describing the technique employed by the police to invite people to rat out on their associates, concluded:

It helps in some cases (to rat), maybe, for yourself. But, believe me, it's not a quiet world. And if you're sure you're gonna rat, you might as well be sure you're not gonna use junk anymore, and that's because ... You know, it always comes out in the wash!
Unlike rip offs, rats are excluded from the community: the classification reveals that they are unanimously put by the informants with the Police group. As mentioned in the second chapter, I gave the informants some 200 cards bearing a word taken out of the texts and intuitively felt to be relevant to the culture and asked them to put these cards into groups that "made sense" to them (see Appendices A and B). The four or five initial groups were then subdivided and further refined. The only surprise I had was to see Rat put unhesitatingly in the first round with "cop", "bull", "pig", "narc", "probation officer", "matron", "jail", "judge", and other people representing the "Authority" group. On the second and third regrouping, it remained with "narc", "pig" and "bull".

Neither rip offs nor rats are in an enviable position: as street defined deviants among straight defined deviants, they are rejected by both cultures.

The East Indian

The characteristics of certain visible groups are negatively established and members of these groups are branded as villains. The villain stereotype also makes it impossible for these people to be treated otherwise than as such.

The folk characterization of the East Indian trick, for instance, prevents the "nice" East Indian, who is said to exist if only as an exception, from being treated in a friendly manner.

You don't want to be seen having a beer with them because they might call you "Hindu lover". (Bugsy)
He [her East Indian mark] came here [Oakalla] ... Well, shit! I almost got laughed out of the whole building, hey! (Julie)

The reputation of East Indians is unmatched by any other group of customers: "East Indians are the ones you're supposed to stay most away from" (Sue).

Oh, boy, they do some terrible things! I hate them guys with a passion! They're terrible! They've done things like taking a light bulb and stuck it up a girl, and hit her in the stomach and shatter the light bulb; or take a broken bottle and shove it up her. They've killed a few girls, slashed them up, left them bleeding ... Or they get a girl up to a room ... if she's a new girl, she doesn't know and she'll go up to a room, and he'll have six or seven of his friends there, and they'll just keep her in the room all night. They usually take all the money she's already got. (Sue)

Sue is not a prostitute, and she has often declined to answer questions pertaining to prostitutes and prostitution, pleading her lack of first hand knowledge - the same lack of personal experience she would have in the case of East Indian tricks. Yet, she was willing to talk about them at length.

Bugsy's indignation was such that she for once forgot her usual modesty in my presence:

East Indians cheat a lot ... They try to get two for the price of one. Sometimes they come and they think you have not felt it, and they try to come again. But, then, you show them (pretending to hold up a "safe") and say: "What's that at the bottom, hey?"

Police and Court records show that some cases of violence and abuse committed by East Indian men, either alone or in groups, have been reported to the police and taken to the courts. Given the reluctance of female and especially transvestite prostitutes to take their complaints to the authorities, it may be
assumed that more cases of violence, abuse and theft than the ones reported have in fact taken place.

It is perhaps also not unreasonable to assume that the preconceived notions of a prostitute who "does not like going out with them" may contribute, in some cases and to a certain extent, to make the encounter a negative experience, a self-fulfilling prophecy which reinforces the stereotype.

The story of the electric bulb was told to me in exactly the same terms thirteen months earlier by another woman, and alluded to by a third one. It is striking enough not to need any embellishment, and the variations only occurred in the closeness of the relationship between the women who repeated the story and its victim.

Since behaviour such as this could not be seen as being simply individual (thus arbitrary) because of its assumed frequency of occurrence, it is explained in cultural terms:

They're usually trained to think that their women are trash. I guess they treat all women pretty bad. (Sue)

East Indians are cheap, anyway, because they come from a country where it's cheap ... I think these fellows tend to be abusive with their own women. (Julie)

In another interview, Julie also explained the East Indians' behaviour through their misunderstanding of Canadian culture and frustration with it. As they see Canadian women drinking, smoking, and dressed immodestly by their standards, they assume them all to be the worst type of prostitutes, and consequently brutalize prostitutes as the only Canadian women available to them.
The Narc

Narcs, because of the nature of the activities in which they willingly participate, are by definition "assholes": "They turn my stomach" (Sugar); "the lowest" (Tiny); "any sneaky behaviour that looks sneaky, it's a narc!" (Bugsy); "How do you know the narcs? When the door comes in!" (Bugsy); "cops, pigs and bulls, they're all the same; only some are worse: the narcs!" (Dee). The folk stories related to narc-street transactions are full of violence. "They hit me in the stomach and I miscarried" (Sue). They describe "throttling" and "hassling". Instances of broken teeth or choking while searching for dope concealed in the suspect's mouth and ready to be swallowed, are said to have been frequent in the past. Nowadays, narcs are mostly accused of "playing dirty": "They frame you" (Dee, Brandy, Julie).

They go behind you back and tell your employer that you are a junkie or an ex-con and they tell him to fire you or else! (Jo and Snow)

Long, intricate stories are told to demonstrate the length to which the narcs will go to "get you".

Here again, an explanation is given for the type of behaviour met among members of a certain group. The cultural explanation given for the East Indians' behaviour is now replaced by a psychological one:

You have to be sadistic to be a narc. (Bugsy)

They can't handle their job. They enjoy it. They take it on everybody on the street: everybody is dirt and must be stepped on. (Tiny)

It's a personal thing, like a personal trip. They're specially after hypes and the working girls who are also addicts. (Dee)
If East Indians are physically recognizable and visibly alien to the street, the narcs' effort to pass themselves off as street people causes anger and bitterness. They "hang around the Corner" posing as "chippy hypses" or weekend users (Dee).

To a lesser extent, members of the Morality Squad are also part of what the folklore sees as the culture's villains. It was thought at one point that police officers could not lie and, when challenged, had to answer truthfully. In their case, "bust" stories are told which detail not only the manner in which the women were made to think the cop was a bona fide trick, but how he deceitfully answered the question: "Are you a cop?" (Layton 1975:197).

The two groups of villains can be contrasted from the perspective of a street-straight opposition. Rip offs and rats are individual villains; East Indians and narcs are collectively so. Reasons that may pass as excuses are found for the first group: need and fear. Culturally and psychologically, on the other hand, the other two are simply "wrong". All street people could, in certain circumstances, although they would probably deny it, become rip offs and rats. None of them could be an East Indian or a narc.

In the street group, the rat is the most hated of the two since he has not only transgressed the rules of solidarity but has - even linguistically - crossed the line between street and straight. In the other group, the narc's villainy is twofold: he is the cultural enemy since he devotes his efforts and time to bring about the undoing of street users and traffickers, but he
too has crossed the line, in reverse this time, in his attempt to look, speak and behave like them.

In a subculture that sees as essential its differentiation from and antagonism towards the larger culture, the least forgivable sin is perhaps boundary crossing for reasons of villainy.

FORMAL AND SUBTERRANEAN VALUES

The norms of street life, which are also the norms of the drug addict's life: "hedonism, thrill-seeking, lack of employment, unstable formal marriages" (Young 1971:53), are incompatible with the middle-class standards of behaviour and attitudes which are seen as representative of the larger society. More than incompatibility, they represent in fact a diametral opposition to formal values, and form what is sometimes called the subterranean values of society.

Young (1971:126) constructs a table to illustrate the contrast between subterranean and formal values (the "official values of the workaday world"):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAL WORK VALUES</th>
<th>SUBTERRANEAN VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. deferred gratification</td>
<td>short-term hedonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. planning future action</td>
<td>spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. conformity to bureaucratic rules</td>
<td>ego-expressivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. fatalism, high control over autonomy, control of behaviour in detail, little over direction</td>
<td>detail and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. routine, predictability</td>
<td>new experience, excitement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. instrumental attitudes to work activities performed as an end-in-themselves
7. hard productive work as a virtue disdain for work

These subterranean values are only released in the straight world at intermittent, institutionalized periods (holidays, festivals, etc.); thus, the two sets of values are said to coexist in our society. In fact, these two sets of values contradict each other. Straight and street norms are not only different: they are mutually exclusive, and their safeguard and cohesion depend on the maintenance of boundaries between the two cultures.
CHAPTER SIX

JUNKIE-PROSTITUTES, TRICKS, MARKS:
DEFINITIONS AND TRANSACTIONS

This chapter provides further definitions of members of the two groups who are engaged in a relationship seen as mutually exploitative by the informants. The transactions performed achieve a balance when prostitutional services are obtained and paid for, and an elementary contract is then fulfilled. Many instances occur, however, when events may cause this contract not to be fulfilled. These events (robbery, beating, arrest) are determined by the characteristics of the trick or the woman herself.

A streetwalker's customery soliciting technique consists mostly in expressing the amount of her expected remuneration in terms which would not lead to her arrest, should the potential trick be in fact a member of the morality squad (Layton 1978). It consists also, at times, in eliciting from a perhaps diffident customer the nature of his needs. Beyond this basic display of verbal skills, a woman may be called upon to handle problematic and difficult cases where her mastery of verbal manipulation may make the difference between a safe outcome and a violent encounter. She may find herself placed in these problematic circumstances in her role of prostitute or drug addict.
The subculture of the drug addict has been well described by authors (Preble and Casey 1969, Agar 1973) who themselves comment and evaluate previous works on the subject. Stoddart has already described the drug addicts' transactions in the same city (1968). The various and well known "connections" who form the trafficking network among users will consequently be glossed over.

The junkie-prostitute considered here is often herself a trafficker. She is however almost exclusively a small time "connection", who sells directly on the street. Let us remember Bugsy who, in her Mafia story (pp. 125-126) has the guys from the Mafia asking for an ounce (400 caps). She, herself, sells "caps" which she obtains from a "middle man" dealing in "bundles" (25 caps), and, for her, those who deal in ounces are as far removed in the hierarchy of crime as the Mafia organization is from the petty larceny she knows. In fact, traffickers in ounces are only three or four times removed from the street sellers, and not terribly high up in this hierarchy.

A point must be made here, however, and it is that, as in many other walks of life, a woman's status may depend on her mate's. He may be a higher "connection" than one would normally expect her to be, judging from her other activities. However, she may be "putting out" for him directly on the street, thus regaining what is seen as her proper status.

In short, their availability on the street, their variable but secure income, and their needs - increasing but controlled by
the necessity to be visible as street walkers - contribute to keep the junkie-prostitute at that particular level, the lowest, of trafficking, when trafficking is one of her means of livelihood.

There are a number of people marginally involved with the street, with whom the informants interact, and who will only be briefly described, such as the "teeny boppers":

Kids around the Corner, hanging around and trying to be a rounder. They say things like: "I drink hard likker" "I smoke dope" "Hey, man, you scored?", and then you find out that they are talking about MDA or something like that, not stuff. They are a nuisance to a working girl. They talk to you ...: "I have ten bucks, you wanna ..." (Dee and Bugsy)

Julie spoke in a derogatory manner of their "frenzied state", their overzealous interest in what goes on on the street, their "loving the excitement", their irresponsibility. Not being "very, very solid in their own mind", they are a risk to street people who cannot afford to have them around.

Others are the employees of the "arcades", restaurants, coffee shops and pool rooms frequented by street people. Others, still, are people working in hotels or "rooms" who may be willing to knock on the door after half an hour and ask "Everything O.K.?" or else do not want to get involved and "don't give a shit and can't hear nothing if you scream!"

Fences and pawn shop operators are also part of a junkie-prostitute's life:

A fence is into anything that's illegal - and they're always wondering about the illegal part of what they're buying, like serial numbers. That's all they care about ... Pretty well most of the time, fences are straight. (Julie)

In contrast to the fence, the pawn shop operator is described as
keeping in touch with the police who "inform them on what's hot and what's not."

Part-timers such as a "chippie hooker" or a "chippie hype" are also frequently met characters. They are not really part of the street and would be overlooked if they did not in fact represent a potential danger: undercover police officers are rumoured to pose as chippie hypes.

All these people gravitate around the informants, but this chapter will consider basically two people: the prostitute and the trick. Since the trick may become a mark, the latter will also be considered in this new role. And, since the junkie-prostitute may mistake for a trick or a buyer someone who is in fact a member of the Morality Squad or the Narcotics Squad, the role of police officers is also considered here, but only in this limited capacity.

THE PROSTITUTE

In his analysis of urban nomads, Spradley (1972b:239-240) briefly delineates the various models used in the studies of Skid Road alcoholics, showing the different group interpretations and the composite portrait they form. The same could be done for prostitutes, if only to contrast these various models with the street emic one.

The straight model1 of the prostitute, based on cultural

1This model is called the "folk model" in Spradley. However, since in this work we assimilate "folk" views with emic views, what Spradley names the "ethnographic model" will be called folk model.
knowledge, appears to provide the following characteristics. She was "hooked" on drugs by a pimp, so that he would achieve control over her. She is sadly abused and often beaten by her pimp, while being emotionally and sexually dependent on him. She often has a "heart of gold". She is mainly responsible for spreading venereal diseases. She dies in "the gutter" or, in a few cases, becomes wealthy and fades into respectable retirement.

The legal model is an ambiguous one, since it has to recognize that prostitution, like drug addiction, is not an unlawful activity. Yet, since it is, like drug addiction, a morally reprehensible one, legal control has to be achieved over its perpetrators with statutes which are difficult to endorse because — as to a lesser extent in the case of those dealing with drug possession — they recognize the legitimacy of an action while attempting to prevent it from being committed (Layton 1978). Consequently, in Canada, the sexual component is omitted in the legal model, where the prostitute was described until 1972 as a "vagrant", a "night walker", a "loiterer", and is presently seen as a "solicitor" and an "importuner".

The medical model shows the prostitute as an agent of diffusion of venereal diseases but, unlike the straight model, no more so than any other very promiscuous person. She is also seen as a likely sufferer from venereal and sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal infections, and the complications of abortion. Her exposure to various types of weather also causes her to be seen as a likely sufferer from bronchial and respiratory infections. Finally if she is an addict, she is also seen as running
a high risk of malnutrition and hepatitis.

A superficial psychological model describes her as a maladjusted, self-indulgent woman, deprived of positive parental models. If she is an addict, she is usually classified as a sociopath. In any event, she is seen as a high suicide risk.

The sociological model defines her in terms of age, sex, race, income, geographic location, types of customers, means of introduction into her occupation, etc. (e.g. James 1971).

Finally, the folk model, or ethnographic model, in Spradley's words, "aims at discovering the insider's view of his social world" (1968b:240). This model has been examined for the non-junkie prostitute in Seattle by James (1972a). What follows is a definition of various types of prostitutes given by junkie-prostitutes in Vancouver. Predictably, the categories of prostitutes and customers do not vary greatly from those elicited by James (see also Sheehy 1974:35-38). At least three women have mentioned to me that Vancouver is "years behind" the United States in terminology, so the five year difference in the gathering of James' data and mine is probably not important.

Some general terms are frowned upon: "I would never call myself a whore" (Sugar); "Prostitute sounds too gross" (Bugsy). Bugsy prefers to call herself a lady of the evening, a term seen by Sugar as being "more high class" than hooker, and on arrest sheets I twice saw women identify themselves as ladies of the night to potential tricks. Working girl and hooker are generally seen as acceptable terms and can be used for all levels of prostitution. They are commonly used by the women themselves and
when I asked what term would be suitable for me to use, my informants suggested that either one would be appropriate.

A first distinction is made between the hooker and the amateur, the chippie who may turn an occasional trick but is a "straight girl". Real hookers need not carry on their occupation full time, since weekend hookers, Friday and Saturday night practitioners who "may have a job or a home life", and Summertime hookers, students who "work" during the summer holiday, are recognized as being part of the group. However, they only appear to my informants to be marginal in "the life".

All the informants gave a list of different types of prostitutes, describing such features as their trade, general location, degree of involvement in the drug scene. They later attempted to classify these descriptions in the manner shown below, with one noticeable exception. Brandy alone gave at once a hierarchic classification: "high class, middle class and lower class hookers". In the high class group are the call girls who would at the most use "smoke dope" (marijuana and hashish). Little is known about them. Middle class hookers often take "coke" and often have a pimp. They work in bars and lounges, have a "small business and lower prices", and often specialize in "stags". The lower class hookers are often "sick" and in need of a fix; they have an old man or an old lady to support and "work on Davie, Granville, the Stratford ... Cordova's the worst." It is unusual to put these locations together: a definite hierarchy is usually seen, with Davie at the top, Granville Street in the middle, and Main Street, Cordova Street, the Stratford Hotel,
East Hastings Street at the bottom.

Brandy's classification is interesting in that she sees as the crucial differentiating factor among the various types of prostitutes the type of drug they use. From this alone derives the type of prostitution they either favour or can only expect to practise, with its ensuing social consequences. She explicitly described a decreasing social and occupational status following an increasing involvement with the more addictive drugs.

From the other informants, I obtained five main categories: call girls; hookers working in saunas, steam baths and massage parlours; camp to camp hookers; hookers working in hotels, lounges and bars; and street girls. There appears to be a certain amount of mobility among the members of the last two groups. Whereas street walkers would not work in the most expensive hotels in town, they often frequent less exclusive bars and hotel lounges. There is also a certain amount of mobility in the sense that women who work in hotels have often started, and will end again, on the street.

1. **Call Girls**

Dee saw them usually in their 30's, often with a trade of sadists who "know where to go" and do not want to risk unknown working girls on the street. Most of their regular customers have become marks. They were said to live usually in "an apartment in a highrise in the West End". The fees they charge was open to speculation, ranging from "probably a minimum of $100 for at least an hour" to "hundreds and even thousands of dollars".
Bugsy said she "wouldn't mind being a call girl: they stay at home!" They were reputed to "have it easier" since they don't have to "worry about the cops". Beside, most of them are said to "have a legal job" as well. "Sometimes they phone, and sometimes they get phoned." Rather wistfully, Bugsy repeated: "They're inside, they're not down on the street!" She described the way she assumed one could become a call girl:

You give your tricks your phone number and tell them you're not going to be coming downtown no more, and they'll have to phone. If they're steady tricks, they will.

Another woman reported:

I've been in this business for a year. I'm with a girl friend, and we're making up some business cards with our phone number on it. We're going to give those out and when we're well known, we won't have to work on the street.

But Bugsy concluded: "It's very difficult to tell about call girls, 'cause I've never been a call girl". Only Boots, in fact, said she knew anything about call girls.

2. **Massage Parlours and Steam Baths**

Much like call girls, women working in sauna baths, steam baths and massage parlours were reputed to have it "easier" since they do not work on the street. They were thought to be "usually non addicts" and "usually with a pimp."

Having female prostitutes in these establishments is a relatively new thing in Vancouver and my informants knew little about them. It is possible that since these women were said to be non-addicts and to operate off the street, their paths would not cross very often.
3. Camp to Camp Hookers

They usually travel in groups of three, four or five women, with occasionally a male or transvestite prostitute among them. They are accompanied by a pimp who "shares himself" and is white; it was thought that the loggers and construction workers who form their clientele would not accept a black pimp among them. They travel from camp to camp in the province, for about five months every year. The work was reputed to be hard, but it was also said to pay very well. "They make real good money" (Dee); "Some might be junkies, but they've kicked their habit for a while, you know, trying to save all that money" (Julie).

4. Bar, Hotel and Lounge Girls

Part time practitioners, such as chippie or weekend hookers were said to prefer operating from bars and hotels rather than work in the less protected environment of the street. Women who work in bars and hotels were said to require good clothes and good grooming. Those among them who are full time hookers were said to be mostly non addicts and working for a pimp.

Some of them, especially weekend hookers who may work only on special occasions were said to be hired for conventions. If they specialize in that type of work, they are known as stag girls. "They work at parties and banquets, and probably get $200 to go there, and then they get extra payment from individual men" (Dee). The informants also stated that from the ranks of the bar girls, as well as the "better" street girls, come the
women who travel from the P.N.E. in Vancouver, to Klondike Days in the Yukon, to the Calgary Stampede.

5. **Street Girls**

"Streetwalkers" were defined by Dee as "girls who work on the street, but it's hardly ever used." Dee, not herself a prostitute but with many friends who are, believed the street girls' trade to be often made of of "masochists who don't like to ask their wives." Street hookers themselves said they "get all types", and will charge higher for special services. Their fees are normally $35 (East Hastings and Granville) or $50 (Granville and Davie) for twenty minutes of their time. Characteristically, the price of one trick follows the price of heroin: one cap, one trick. Most street girls were said to be hypes (addicts) who were sometimes desperate enough to lower their prices when the trade is poor, the weather bad, or the hour late.

When their appearance worsens or they get too old to frequent their ordinary places of work, they may become sleazies or flea bags and "turn tricks in cheap hotels in Skid Road." They are not to be confused with old timers, who may in fact be quite young, but "have been at it a long time and know all the tricks of the trade", and are moreover thought to be "reliable" or "solid", and can give good advice.

Hookers on the boats are often young Indian women or juvenile girls who frequent the harbour, where they are picked up and taken to the boats. They are more likely to consume alcohol than take hard drugs; they are on the whole not very highly regarded
by other street girls because of their age group and racial origin. An contributing factor to this lack of regard is their choice of drug: they are perhaps the only ones still accused of sniffing glue. Their lack of professionalism is further reflected in the inconsistency of the money they command.

Certain terms can refer to women who operate in different categories, but my informants usually applied them to street girls: the chipper hooker who works mostly as a hobby, the turn out who "has just started hooking", the rip off who is only or mostly interested in robbing her customers, finally, the out of town girl who was reputed to bank on the novelty she provides: "Anyone who's from out of town, she gets all the business, because she's new, and usually the out of town girls dress a lot nicer too."

A look at the Police arrest book at the City Archives, the Rogues Gallery, showed that many of these categories were found in the city at the beginning of the century. The rip off: "This woman got L. into the alley and while having connections with her she stole his money" (July 24, 1904); the hype: "This woman is

2The more picturesque name of "buttock-and-file" was given to this well known type of practitioner in the 17th and 18th centuries in England. Cited by Kockars (1974:5), Patrick Pringle in The Thief Taker described the modus operandi of Mary, Jonathan Wild the Great's "old lady": "Like many of her colleagues on the game, she was, in the crooks' slang of that time, a buttock-and-file. The first word meant whore and the second pickpocket, and the reasons for the hyphens is that she did both jobs at the same time. Most whores did their business standing in the street, and a girl with a light touch was in a good position to pick her customer's pockets when he was likely to be somewhat off his guard. The main danger was that he would discover the theft before she had time to get away, so most girls liked to have a boy-friend lurking in the shadows. He was called a twang." (p. 21).
an opium fiend" (Feb. 20th, 1905); chippie or weekend hookers: two young women, 19 and 17 years old, were described as gainfully employed as a "laundress" and a "tailoress" (Aug. 3, 1904). Common street walkers or night walkers as they were then called, were usually more heavily penalized than the many women who resided in the numerous "houses of ill fame" on the old Dupont Street.

My informants knew of black pimps, stables and main ladies, but, as a rule, they only knew them by hearsay. Some believed that "the black guys around the Stratford used to carry knives or guns"; some were impressed or amused with the way they dress: "His pants were so tight, I thought he would self-destruct!" They recognized the main lady's high status: "She's a black pimp's girl; she does not have to work; she's the one he's the most fond of."

Apart from Boots who reported having worked for a pimp and liked it, the informants said that they did not understand how one could be so "dumb" as to work for a pimp ("those leeches!") and believed the women who do have "bought the pimps' philosophy of themselves", a "philosophy" which holds the pimp as protector, lover and business partner. Compared to James' informants and to the data coming from the Milners (1972), their knowledge was scant. Women previously met who admitted to have worked for a very short time for a black pimp hardly appear more knowledgeable. I have no reason to suspect them of being evasive since, as drug addicts, they would not work very well in a stable system and probably did not find themselves too actively pressed
into joining one.

Sugar's description of the black and white pimps' way of running their affairs can be used as a recapitulation of all the traits mentioned by the various informants:

A pimp takes everything, and he buys you clothes and he keeps you, and sees that you are fed and clothed. Most of them are coloured pimps. It's "Get out and make that money and get home, or else!" Some girls say the reason they work for black pimps is because they make them work. They say "I'd never go out to work if I were on my own. I'd never make any money. I'd get lazy if I did not have someone to make me work", but they never see any of that money anyway!

There's the odd white pimp. I saw them in Prince George. They usually have 4 or 5 hookers with them. The ones I seen seemed a bit better than the black ones. Not as mean. The girls cashed in, but they were not beaten up and made to go out and work.

Finally, my informants also recognized another group of prostitutes: the male hustler, who is sometimes a drag queen. Among transvestites and transexuals, "some are working to support their habit and some are working to get their operation." Since they too solicit men, they appear to be seen as colleagues and, at times, competitors.

THE TRICK

A trick is a prostitute's customer. He can be a good trick: "He's fast, pays you good and is no trouble" or he can be

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3 Iceberg Slim, the pimp par excellence, whose book Pimp, The Story of my Life is known as "The Book" on the American prostitution "scene", describes this argument as the one most frequently used by pimps and eagerly accepted by the women in their stables.

4 This definition refers to the trick as a person, whereas "Do, over with, parted and finished" refers to the good trick as a transaction.
a bad trick, such as a nut, a flip, a weirdo, a pervert, and so on.

Bugsy was exceptional among my informants in that she did not express a general contempt for her customers and dislike for her work.

Oh, I enjoy it [being a hooker] to an extent, but nothing more! It's not something that ... you wake up in the morning and you run out and do! I take my time doing it ... When I'm getting out, the first night, I'm going down to turn 2 tricks and score! ... and then I'm going to quit ... Then, if I turn a trick, it might be for rent, or something ... or maybe just to go and get drunk ... I don't do it for pleasure. I'd never do it if I didn't have to ...

At the other end, for Tiny, all tricks were "horny old bastards" and there were only two types of tricks: "He's a weirdo, or not a weirdo." For Brandy also they were all "bastards": "The only way they get their kick out of life is through a piece of tail." The very straightness of their life is what makes them what they are:

They are straight, they work all day, they have a wife and kids at home. They want to do kinky things. (Brandy)

When I asked my informants to sort out words in a way that "made sense" to them, they included in the trick domain such adjectives as flippy, rank, or ignorant, or people such as a jerk, a sucker, or an asshole, who can be found among various types of tricks.

Basically, the customers were divided into "tricks to stay away from", such as East Indians, perverts, freaks, sadists, weirdos, drunks, or "tricks that it's all right to go out with", such as greenhorns, students, fast tricks, regular or steady tricks, servicemen, Greek sailors, straight tricks, old men, masochists, Orientals, talkers.
The Good Tricks

**Students:** this category usually refers to students from colleges, universities, technical or vocational schools. The younger ones are normally called *greenhorns*; they are "young guys, they don't know what they're doing." The older students don't usually ask for the same things as the other tricks: most want a straight lay. Often, they do their lay and then offer you another thirty bucks to talk or take you for a drink. They like to talk about what they do in college. They say they have nobody to talk to. (Bugsy and Dee)

**Fast tricks** are, naturally enough, "guys who turn their trick very fast." When they do not argue that the woman 'owes' them time, they are the ideal customer.

**Regular or steady tricks:** they "could be marks, but they're not that steady: they come about twice a week." As regular customers, they do not necessarily receive special treatment. Julie believed that it would spoil their relationship:

If you do, you're changing and he'll probably wonder why. What would be coming over you, that you're so friendly, if you are? There's no reason to treat him any better than what you've already found works.

Yet, women who have the ambition to become call girls tend to cultivate a steady trick. Moreover, as James mentions, "when times are hard, he is the bread and butter of the prostitute" (1972a:63).

**Servicemen:** are "guys on ships and stuff." Yet, a distinct category seems to exist for the *Greek sailors* who take on board the waterfront women and girls. Servicemen are more likely to pick up the women on the street or in bars.

**Straight tricks:** they are straight Johns wanting a "straight lay."
Old men: opinions about them vary from Brandy who referred to them as "perverted old bastards" to Bugsy who liked them. They are however classified as "good tricks" by all.

Masochists: the masochists are reputed to be "straight guys, square Johns who are too embarrassed or afraid to ask their wives." Dee also believed that "the girls like to go out with them: they take their frustrations out on the poor guys!" Sugar confirmed this view: "He's all right. We do it to them. They like pain!" Tiny saw a danger for the prostitutes who become "involved in that S. & M. They enjoy it. Those who enjoy it are a bigger trick. It's a weakness, because it is not business anymore."

Orientals: in Vancouver, the Orientals are all Chinese. "They're cheap and easy!" (Dee).

They're fast, so that's good. From what I gather, they don't pay well ... Most of them are really cheap ... But it's just five minutes and you're on the street again! (Sue)

Talkers: a "talker" is a trick who "wants mostly conversation." He is safe to go out with but, unfortunately, "he takes lots more time" (Dee), and many women resented this.

The Bad Tricks

We saw in the preceding chapter the collective reputation acquired by East Indians. Other villains are freaks, who may also be known as sadists.

He can be crazy: he's liable to freak out on you, and he's more likely to hurt you than a pervert. (Sugar)

They hate whores. They threaten girls with a knife or a revolver. The best is to fight back: if you cower, they'll get worse. (Brandy)
Many women, on the contrary, thought it was wiser and safer to "play it cool" (see next section in this chapter).

It was believed that there may be less danger from freaks now than in the past: more women are carrying knives and there is more police protection.

Some women put weirdos in a separate category. A weirdo, said Sugar, is

weird in the way he looks, weird in what he likes, about his sex ideas, but he's not necessarily dangerous. Some guys like to see you pee in a glass or they want you to pee on their face. They're good tricks because they're fast.

Yet, most women were leery of them since there is always a possibility that their mood might abruptly change.

Perverts are very much like weirdos. They, like the weirdos, are not as likely to hurt women as freaks. A pervert, explained Sugar,

can have different things that he likes with sex: for instance, he can get off on watching two girls together, or he can be a peeping Tom. He's not necessarily going to hurt you.

Drunks are more ambivalent tricks. They are easy to rip off and, for that reason, some women preferred them and considered themselves very good at handling them. Jo, for instance, talked them to sleep. Many others, however, found them "flippy". They are mostly annoying because:

It takes a lot of time and a lot of energy. Sometime they have not even come after an hour, and they keep on saying that they'll come in a minute! (Bugsy)

Watch out for them! They can't get off. (Sugar)

Experience and intuition, once more, will help decide whether a drunk will be a good or a bad trick:
You can get more money out of them, but you've got to be on your guard. You can usually tell if he's obnoxious or ignorant. (Sugar)

They vary. Some of them get nasty, some of them don't. The girls get where they can sort of judge just by talking to the guy. (Sue)

Tricks, good or bad, are the means of livelihood of non addict streetwalkers. And, although female addicts often have other ways to make a living, prostitution remains as a rule the most profitable one.

In the next section, the various transactions between prostitutes and their customers are examined, transactions which usually start on the street where contact is made and a preliminary contract is drawn.

**TRANSACTIONS**

The relationship between prostitutes and their customers may be seen as the most complex one on the street, since the characteristics of the two groups are diametrically opposed: male-female, buyer-seller, straight-street, straight-addict. Yet, the first two pairs of opposites are also complementary, and many women argue that the tricks' curiosity or perversity makes it equally true of the second pair. This divergent-convergent relationship of the two groups is not its only paradox since, just as paradoxically, this mutually exploitative relationship is also based on mutual trust.

The mutual exploitation - where the woman often attempts to talk herself into performing as few sexual services as possible or even out of performing any, and where the man is often said to
feel that he is "buying" the person as much as the services - this mutual exploitation, however, can only take place once the basic premise of trust has been established.

In his study of the relationship between cab drivers and fares, Henslin (1968:141) draws a list of criteria to be met by drivers and fares before trust could be established. These criteria are singularly similar to those that could be drawn between the prostitutes and their customers before trust could be established between them.

The driver and the prostitute will both accept customers who, in their view:

1. Desire a service that they are both willing and able to provide.
2. Appear as if they are able to provide an exchange for services that are defined as being equal to or more than the service was worth under the circumstances, this exchange not necessarily being monetary.
3. Appear as if they will in fact provide such an exchange.
4. Offer to provide an exchange that represents little or no risk to themselves.

Similarly, the fare and the trick must also trust the driver and the prostitute to be only what they appear to be, and assume that the service will be performed and that they will not be robbed or manhandled.

Let us, first of all, examine the types of transactions which commonly take place between prostitutes and their
customers. An initial contract is usually drawn on the street between a prostitute and her customer. It normally defines the type of services to be performed, the time to be spent, and the price to be paid. Both parties having agreed upon the terms of this simple contract will then retire to a room. The customer pays the agreed upon price before the services are performed. This transaction (fig. 1) is the one usually known as a "good trick", where the word "trick" refers to both the customer and to the transaction itself.

contract - payment - performance

Figure 1

There are however many other possibilities stemming from the initial contract. Some women, for instance, have indicated that a customer's shyness may sometimes prevent him from expressing at once what he really wants, but once this reluctance is overcome, perhaps later when they have already "gone up" another price may then be agreed upon and paid beforehand; or the newly defined transaction may be rejected by the woman. The customer may then respect her wishes and agree to have the contract annulled. On the other hand, the customer may not accept her refusal and violates the annulment. This violation is often accompanied by violence. He may either pay her afterwards, or refuse to pay her thus robbing her of the money earned under stress, or even rob her of whatever money she had in her possession as a further "punishment" (Fig. 2).
The same situation may also occur after the initial contract has been fulfilled. A further request may be made. The pattern then follows the previous one (Fig. 3).

Figure 3

In other cases, a customer may simply refuse to pay the woman after they have "gone up", but demand that she fulfill her part of the contract, and may further rob her.

Figure 4
Or, again, a customer, to ensure satisfactory services, may first pay the prostitute, then later demand that she return his money, or whatever else she may already have in her possession. The woman may or may not willingly comply (Fig. 5).

Or, finally, the "customer" may turn out to be an officer of the Morality Squad (Fig. 6).

These are, essentially, the six possible situations which may result from the initial contract. In the short time allowed from the preliminary interaction, the woman has to read the various cues which will enable her to assess the type of transaction she is entering.

Henslin(1968), as a cab driver, was able to pinpoint the cues on which he based his evaluation of potential fares and established his trust. In spite of my informants' good will, I found it difficult to determine the rules of character evaluation which help street women trust on sight a good trick ("He's fast, he pays you good and he's no trouble", Sugar), mistrust a freak or a pervert, or suspect a cop.

They claim that a woman usually trusts what she may call
her "intuition" (Snow). The man's physical appearance and his manner of speaking serve to provide clues. Jo and Snow explained:

- If the guy's a flip, you won't know it. You can't usually tell.

- I always go by feelings. Like, a guy who's really nervous or something, I won't go. Or if he looks weird, you know?

- ... with his hair long ...

- And he's grubby, or the way he talks, the way he acts. I'll talk for a few minutes in the street, you know, to sort of getting an idea, you know. Then, I'll go, only then.

Brandy and I discussed the case, reported in the newspapers of a woman who had been severely beaten by a paraplegic customer. She concluded:

I'd never go with someone that would have an arm or a leg missing, or something like that. They would be bound to have real hang ups.

Yet, several months earlier, she had described men with an obvious disability as usually "pretty straight and meek", even adding that prostitutes sometimes tried to build up their self confidence.

A cop or a pervert propose two different types of transactions. Whereas one might simply get a "feeling" (Tiny, Sugar, Brandy, Snow) about them, experience would perhaps dictate whether the "bad vibes" (Sugar) received were sent off by a police officer or a sadistic customer. This does not seem to be the case however. When I asked Bugsy why she had turned down one particular customer, she suggested that he could easily have been either:
I don't know why ... I didn't like him ... I probably thought he was a cop, and I didn't like his looks, anyways. He looked like one wrong move and the game's over!

In fact, he turned out to be a particularly "good trick", as her girl friend later reported.

A policeman's physical appearance does not necessarily give him away, but certain restrictions, such as size, age, weight, physical disabilities, would prevent a man from being on the Police Force. These serve as clues. Policemen also follow a certain routine when they are about to arrest a prostitute, which give away their intentions, unfortunately too late for the woman.

I says: "How much will you spend?" He says: "Fifty bucks." I says: "O.K." He says: "Just a second, I want to park my car." I says: "Yeah!" and I knew he was a cop! Why? Just by what he said! And then he left and he did not come back [the arrest was performed by another officer]. It was the way he acted. And then, it dawned on me ... Like, I was sick [this explains why her alertness was somewhat reduced]. And then it dawned on me that I'd never seen him before ... and he just comes up, like: "I've got to park my car ...!" (Bugsy)

A friend of Bugsy's had a much more tangible clue to assist her:

When she was going up, she realized he was a cop, and she'd solicited him! She realized he was a cop 'cause she'd seen his handcuffs!

Descriptions of undercover police officers are circulated among streetwalkers; others are simply recognized and the word is passed around.

In the same manner, "bad tricks" are also talked about and described. "Car tricks" are often avoided; many women refuse to get into a customer's car; others mention taking down the license number before getting into it. A good many women carry a knife on them and say that they are ready to use it to protect
themselves. For, in spite of their "intuition" and their "feeling", they agree that "you can never tell whether a guy is a nut or not. They may just turn on you, like that, for no reason." (Dee)

Everything was O.K. and when we had finished, I says: "I'm gonna leave." I was getting dressed and when I turned around, he cracked me on the head with a candlestick holder. He was a nut! He wanted more, and everything, and he wasn't planning to let me go! (Bugsy)

This is a case similar to transaction #3, but Bugsy was not even given the chance to agree with him.

If the prostitute takes a chance every time she agrees to go with a customer, she is also willing to admit that he too may be taking a chance.

Like, one time, I was with a guy and he was going to give me 200 dollars for an hour. That was up North. And he was going to give me a hundred then and a hundred later, before I left. I said: "No way! Can't do that. You know, I'll be nervous thinking you won't pay me." So finally he just gave me all the money, but he had to go to a stash to get the rest, because he only had 100 dollars on him. And I seen all the money and I just ... Well, I just had to have it! Before I left! I get like that. And I just ... He put it in his pocket and he was playing with the television. I poured myself a drink, pulled out my knife, drank the drink, walked over and just cut money and pocket right out of his pants. How, I had to fight with him to get out of the room, but he was a lot older than I was, so it wasn't too much trouble. (Jo)

Julie, who prides herself on the efficacy of her manipulative techniques, does it in another way:

You pick up a trick and you go with him to his hotel room, and during the course of whatever may be happening or turning out, there's always the opportunity to snap at his wallet ... And he's always got his back turned at one time! You know, he's not always staring at you ... And you can play the little girl act, you know: "You don't trust me?" So, he just thinks: "Oh, God! The poor little thing is just going to ... shrivel up if I don't trust her!" So he'll finally go to the washroom, maybe even shut the door, and you've got a good chance! You can make maybe 180-200 dollars, you know ...
Another type of encounter familiar to my informants, whether junkies or prostitutes, is the one where "intuition" has failed them and they must now resort to "coolness." When I asked Brandy what advice she would give to a young girl starting out on the street, she answered: "Be cool, be careful, and ask a lot of questions." The last part of the advice may not necessarily meet with everyone's agreement, since one is always somewhat suspicious of people who ask too many questions. But the injunction to "be cool" is one with which everyone would agree.

Coolness, "poise under pressure", is defined by Lyman and Scott (1968:92) as

the capacity to execute physical acts, including conversation, in a concerted, smooth, self-controlled fashion in risky situations, or to maintain affective detachment during the course of encounters involving considerable emotion.

Although coolness shows a certain elegance when practised in everyday life, its functions is not exclusively esthetic: its main purpose is to get one out of dangerous situations. For the female addict, these situations usually involve a "narc" or a "pervert." The examples of the former abound, since my informants were always pleased to relate how they con people, especially police officers.

A few times, you know, they go to throttle you, and I've got it in my mouth all the time, and I can bluff my way out of it. I say "Why, I don't have anything!" You know, they usually stick the handcuffs and dig for it. And they haven't done it because they figure: "Oh, she's too casual. She doesn't have any." I've had 25, 50, 75 that I've had to swallow! (Sue)

From Julie, while on escape:

I was sitting with some fellows from halfway house out from the B.C. Pen. These guys, I started sitting with them, drinking. I seen the police, I thought: "Oh, shit!" Now, I grabbed all the coins on the table and I went to the juke
I get the handcuffs on me, like this. There's one cop on this side of me, and one on this side of me. And when this one here, in front of me, is writing, the other one, over here, is watching. And when he's writing, this one is watching me. And I'm sitting like this, all charm, trying to get in my bra and get those two caps outta there, because they're going to take me upstairs and skin me. So this cop says: "Now," he says, "what are you gonna do?" I says (sarcastically): "Now, I'm gonna go out and make more money so I can fix!" So he says: "Well ... You have nothing else on you, hey?" I says: "Do you think I'd be dumb enough to be sitting here if I did?" (Bugsy)

On my escape, I see the police all the time, but I wouldn't ... Like if they'd come right toward me, right? I know they'd stop me and ask my I.D., which I had my cousin's I.D., not my own. I know they would stop me, right? I thought "I'll turn around! ... No, I'll just remain calm, cool..." You know, I could turn around fast and they would stop me and ask why. So I walked by. I knew they would stop me, and he said: "Hey!" And I said: "Yes?" You know, playing like I've never ... you know... (Snow)

I found it unpleasant to question my informants on the way they kept "cool" while facing a freak, since the experience often

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5 She would have been stopped as a matter of routine, not because the police officers might have been suspicious of her. "On East Hastings, they stop everybody. They're always walking up and down the street" (Snow).
means that they have to obey his commands while trying to talk reasonably to him and calm him down.

The gun's pointed at me, what am I going to do? I agree ... I have to agree to everything he's going to say for me to do.

However, the transcripts of rape trials usually show the women complying with their oppressor and often abductor, while attempting to appear as natural - i.e. unafraid but also unchallenging in order not to excite him further - as possible under the circumstances

I don't remember too much of the conversation. I do remember I was saying things, trying to calm him and trying to get myself out of the situation I was in. But as to what I said and what ... I can't remember ... I did not know how I was supposed to react and I stayed calm. I didn't know what to do. I was shocked ... He kept the gun at my temple until I said to him: "Is it necessary to hold it at my head? Please, take it away. I'm cooperating with you and I won't do anything to harm you or deter you." He took it away from my head and then put it in the middle between my back and held it on my back the entire time.

(Rape trial. The plaintiff was the woman who told me in 1975 that she "wouldn't say anything important").

The transactions described are seen as absolutely exploitative ones. But relationships between the two groups, while not relinquishing altogether their basic nature, can be somewhat more positive than that. One informant described the roles of inmates and prison staff members: "My job is to con them. Their job is to bust me." Consequently, she does not, for instance, "ask for" a pass, but she "cons them out of" a pass. She explained that the reason she would truthfully have to give for wanting one - the need for "a good fuck" - would not be acceptable. So, she has to make up another reason which she knows will meet with the authorities' approval. On the other hand, she also admitted
that "you can't pull one over" the staff member in charge of granting passes. Actually, the whole exchange was viewed as much in terms of showing "respect" as in terms of "conning."

The same woman gave several examples where the staff were either "respected" or "disrespected" in their authority. Such an example related to the wearing of shoes. Inmates are not supposed to wear their own shoes. However, many do. And they show their "respect" by allowing their pant legs to cover these shoes, thus not flaunting their disobedience. "Disrespect" would consist in making this disobedience obvious to a matron, forcing her to take action.

The same relationship is extended on the street to other members of what some informants classified for me as the "Authorities": police, judiciary, etc. Conning-busting is seen as the essential complementary relationship, tempered however with the notion of respect-disrespect. Thus, in this sense, the use of "respect" (i.e. the respect of the other's rights and duties) is an intrinsic component of the conning behaviour. By not forcing the issue, the manipulative individual has conned the other one in accepting the status quo (a similar technique is often used in marriages where the dominant role of one mate is traditionally recognized (Anderson 1974:62-63). The street version of this situation is the blind eye turned by policemen on the activities of a prostitute who tries to operate with discretion.

The notion of respect (this time without its implicit value as a manipulative tool) is often mentioned as a significant
factor in positive straight-street relationships. Brandy could not accept the authority of "young kids, just out of university" who tell her what to do, but "respects" her present probation officer, "an ex-con who's been there."

After three months of frequent talks with Bugsy, when it became clear to her that I really liked her, she once said: "I wouldn't mind having you as my probation officer." This was obviously the highest compliment she could have paid me, one which also envisaged a reasonable and realistic continuation of a relationship between us and set it in a context more familiar to her than the present one. It also established without any doubt that, as close as we could ever become, she did not conceive - even in the passing warmth of a fleeting moment of benevolence - that we could ever cross the dividing line between our respective cultures.

**THE MARK**

We have so far treated the con man's mark and the woman's mark as one and the same individual. However, an interesting difference exists between them. The mark who is victim of a con man is "the sucker - the person who is taken in" (Goffman 1952:451). A situation is misrepresented to him and he accepts the misrepresentation as true, hoping to draw profit from it. He is later made to face the evidence of his foolishness and gullibility and must be "cooled out" in order to face and accept his loss of money and, more importantly, his loss of role (Goffman 1952). The characters con man and mark are
clear cut and the "trick" is never mistaken for the "trickster."

A woman's mark, on the other hand, is a much more ambiguous character. Many women describe his as a "masochist", who will "take anything", who "knows that he's being used" (Dee). He may be "someone who's good to you and you don't have to give him anything" (Brandy).

Some like to be treated mean. Some enjoy being hurt. They can enjoy it, sit back and say "Poor me!" I abuse them. All they get is the pleasure of being around. (Julie)

Unlike the other mark, this one appears to be getting what he wants. The usual cooling out of the mark described by Goffman would be inappropriate in this case. As with the previous mark, the relationship must be severed when the mark has run out of funds and his usefulness has ceased. But since this particular mark is, in fact, a satisfied customer - one who may possibly be reinstated at a later date - he must be treated in a different manner.

The purpose of cooling the mark out is to allow him to get over the episode. Julie's technique for leaving a mark has the opposite result. By putting him in the wrong, she keeps him in reserve.

If I bleed him of his money, well then, it's time to go! It's been nice! You usually blame it on them. If you know the money's run out, then you do something to make to look like it's their fault you're leaving. You can always start a fight, or you can say that he'd been downtown and dropped your name to another girl, or that a girl phoned you, one of your girlfriends, and said he'd come to her. (You just don't go to somebody else for business, right?). So, you blame him for that. Or you say a girl phoned up, you know, one of your girlfriends, and said that he had left a number with her. Now, you just lay it on him! "You just don't give a number, especially, you know, when I'm at the other end of it!" And
that's a good start for a fight. He also feels guilty, 'cause no doubt chances are that he has dropped a number once before and may be he thinks you know her. And the fight's on! And he's really ashamed! He feels guilty, you know. He thinks: "Oh well, shit! I must have done something ..." And, Jesus, sure he don't want you to go, right? So, as you're packing your bags, he's crying. So, you say that you're going to think about it. And you're not gonna let him see you for a couple of months. Or, else: "Come and see me in about a month!" So, by then, he's gathered up his money again. He'll keep bugging you. But you just tell him: "I'll talk to you as soon as I've given it some thought."

For the mark, writes Goffman (1952:456),

cooling represents a process of adjustment to an impossible situation - a situation arising from having defined himself in a way which the social facts come to contradict. The mark must therefore be supplied with a new set of apologies for himself, a new framework in which to see himself and judge himself.

The woman's mark need not face a situation in which facts contradict his self image. He may indeed never know for sure that the situation was other than the way he perceived it.

The verbal manipulative skills we have described throughout, aimed at guessing the mark's needs, discarding him and possibly keeping him in reserve, evaluating a trick's intentions, keeping her cool in a dangerous confrontation, all rest on the woman's definitions of herself and the people with whom she interacts, and her understanding of their characteristics.
CHAPTER SEVEN

"FAILURE" AND "SUCCESS" ON THE STREET

In the retelling of events, informants not only describe but also interpret. They establish links between what they see as causes and what they understand to be consequences. Nowhere perhaps is there a more contrasted position between Street and Straight than in the understanding of what constitutes street-women's failure and success. The following brief discussion on the concept of "failure" and "success" touches again on the subject of emics and etics and the opposite orientation of street and straight people on a topic essential to the survival of a group: the self-esteem of its members.

The informants, incarcerated female heroin addicts and prostitutes, are drawn from a group described to me by a senior probation officer as "the losers of the losers." Probation officers and counsellors often stress these women's "low self-esteem." For them, the women involved are "losers" since they have "failed" to come to terms with the conventional values of the larger society. They are moreover twice losers since they have failed to do well in their own subculture and have been imprisoned. The high rate of recidivism among these women only confirms the labeling, a labeling already well
established by the officers' training. People professionally involved with these women tend to see them as social failures. They naturally enough endorse the so-called "correctional" viewpoint which sees them as moral failures as well, and "violators of cherished and widely shared standards of conduct and morality" (Matza 1969:15).

I adopted another perspective and, instead of discussing what outsiders see as failures, the informants and I talked about what insiders see as successes. Not only did we talk of their successes, but also of the skills that made these successes possible. The shift of emphasis from "failure" to "success" no doubt gave me an equally distorted image. I do not deny that the reported lack of self confidence and self-esteem of hookers and junkies exist. The fresh and old slash scars on their forearms and wrists are proof enough that the stories dealing with triumphant trickery, "dynamite" junk and good times which I collected are but one part of their life. Moreover, studies quoted by Kaplan (1975:24-26) report that subjects with low self-regard are more likely to display "the relatively specific defensive behaviors of rationalizing and projecting: (1975:21) than subjects with high self-regard. But at the time of initial and even later contact, low self-regard was not evident. The women displayed during our interviews an apparently unshakable confidence in their talents as "talkers" and connivers. And it is that repeatedly expressed self confidence which is considered here.

Behind prison walls, they enjoyed delving into past
pleasures, clever cons and generous marks. Even the "rip offs," the "rats" and the "perverts" - because they belong outside - lost some of their ominous aura. Carried away by the mood, they all promised themselves an immediate return to their way of life. "First thing I do when I get out? Score!"

I wonder to what extent the necessity of reaffirming in the course of our interviews the cultural parameters of the Street did not contribute to their self-esteem. They became "together" again, seemingly regaining this self-esteem which Becker describes as "the glow of certainty that the world of meaning is intact, that the multitude of symbols forming the self are real" (Becker 1962:85).

I also wonder to what extent the conflict between the reaffirmed values of that culture and their present incarceration where these values are formally challenged and opposed, did not also contribute to their loss of self-esteem, again described by Becker as "the warm inner feeling of self righteousness that arms the individual against anxiety" (1962:79).

Bruce Jackson would probably apply to my informants the terms in which he describes his, and with which many of the correctional staff would likely agree:

They represent the population that gets itself caught. With rare exceptions people do not go to jail because they are guilty of something: they go to jail because they are too dumb or broke or clumsy or unlucky to stay out. And a few happen to like it there.

The people in this book have worked at a variety of occupations, all for money: turning tricks, dealing dope, heisting banks, (...), writing cheques, negotiating major
or minor swindles, peddling hot merchandise and cold women. They are people who aren't criminals so much as fuckups. A lot of fuckups are in prison (Jackson 1974: 3-4).

The main difference between the terms "losers of the losers" and "fuckups" is that one is used by square Johns and the other usually is not. The first one is patronizing and definitive, and moreover street-unacceptable because it expresses the views of a group which carries no weight on the street, a group indifferent, curious or hostile, but normally seen as unknowledgeable. I do not think that the second term is any less patronizing, but it leaves a way out: to be a broke and unlucky fuckup does not necessarily mean that one is a loser. Even a dumb and clumsy fuckup, since it could be taken in a situational context and explain why they are presently in jail. Indeed, they always explained that they had been arrested because someone "had ratted on them"..., because they "were framed"..., because the police "lied and cheated"..., because the "narcs were going to get them" anyways...

The Street provides a psychological "sanctuary" where public fictions support a system of values which together with the value system of society at large, make for a world of ambivalence, contradiction and paradox, where failures are rationalized into phantom successes and weaknesses magically transformed into strengths (Liebow 1966:214).

The negative effects of possessing disvalued attributes and behaving in disvalued ways (Kaplan 1975:42) which strongly contribute to low self-esteem can be successfully countered by rejecting society's normative expectations of one's behaviour. The former "deviant" is then accepted into a new group whose
expectations he can now fulfill.

He ceases to be considered a member of the former group and comes to be viewed as a member of the latter group; and his behavior that violates the standards of the former membership group is no longer characterized as deviant but rather is perceived as conforming to the standards of his new membership group (Kaplan 1975:4).

Thus, in terms of what matters to the "street": what we might call freedom, money and excitement, street people are successful. In terms of what matters to the "straight" world: what they would see as a need for security in its many guises, they certainly are not, and neither do they seem to care. The new values may well have been rationalized to fit the failure to live by the old values, but it appears that these street values exist, and people believe in them. It also appears that straight values are denied to the extent that success according to them is not seen as success at all. The reverse is also true and straight people even seem to go further: not only do they deny that "success" exists in terms others than theirs, but they sometimes go as far as calling it "failure." Yet, street success, according to the contradictory street values, is seen as very real.

The 'righteous dope fiend' has mastered the art of 'hustling'; his world is fused with the same success symbols prevalent in conventional society. He selects a retreatist role adaptation only if he takes the social role of an 'ex-dope fiend', or a 'sick addict'. The 'righteous dope fiend', if he retreats at all, becomes a retreatist when he quits using drugs, not when he starts using drugs (Sutter 1966:177).

With uncharacteristic heat, Dee exclaimed, trying to overcome politely her distaste as I described what I perceive to be my way of life:
I can't understand how somebody can live like that!
I can't understand how they can! I guess it's subconscious...
I can't see somebody doing it!

What I see as my strengths, for instance, were only seen as rationalized weaknesses when they were considered by my informants who were, I am sure, convinced that I would never make it on the street, where people are really put to the test. This is part of the game they played with me, and the reverse may well be part of the formalized game we play with them.

It may well be that the basic divergence of views between straight and street people is whether the latter's "fuckup" status is seen as permanently dispositional or temporarily situational. Jones and Nisbett's study of actors' and observers' divergent perceptions of the causes of behaviour would indicate that straight people as observers of street people's actions, process information available to both groups differently from street people.

The actor's perceptions of the causes of behavior are at variance with those held by outside observers. The actor's view of his behavior emphasizes the role of environmental conditions at the moment of action. The observer's view emphasizes the causal role of stable dispositional properties of the actor. We wish to argue that there is a pervasive tendency for actors to attribute their actions to requirements, whereas observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personal dispositions. This tendency often stems in part from the actor's need to justify blameworthy actions, but may also reflect a variety of other factors having nothing do to with the maintenance of self-esteem (Jones and Nisbett 1971:2).

The observer's focus is the actor's behaviour, rather than the environment which, from his point of view is "stable and contextual" (1971:7). The actor's focus, on the other hand, is more likely to be on "environmental cues that evoke and shape"
his behaviour (1971:7). Jones and Nisbett make the double point that different information is available to observers and actors, but when the same information is available to both, it is differently processed by them. This is a point which has already been mentioned when discussing the problem of the emic and etic perspectives.

In the case under study, the street informant (as retrospective actors) provide a different interpretation of events from the one which (as observers) we might be tempted to infer from the actions and transactions observed or, in the present case, described.

The failures of street people, as my informants seem to perceive them, are situational. They are temporary failures of competence: they went out with a pervert, they got busted and sent to jail, they sold to a narc or got ripped off. Moreover, they often add that they had a peculiar "feeling", but being "sick" (in need of a "fix") at the time, they threw caution to the wind. These failures are not usually rationalized into successes and can, as failures, be simply chalked up to experience.

The only negative experience in which some good may very reluctantly be perceived is imprisonment. Heroin is a pain killer and most women discover that they are suffering from a wide variety of ailments while they are in jail. The women also eat well and regularly (usually too much and complain about gaining weight, especially those about to be released) and regain their strength and their health. The rundown women who
are admitted are usually released after a few weeks or a few months in good physical condition. To this extent, the inevitability of having to serve a prison term may be perceived as a somewhat beneficial experience. This may be the only benefit they believe they draw from the experience, apart from seeing in it a confirmation of their proper insiders' status.

The subdued women who promise somewhat dubiously that they will "smarten up", "kick" their habit, "go straight" are probably only providing the expected response to counselling and "lecturing". Experience, however, often shows that jail is a place where one recovers one's powers and from which one can once more spring into the world with renewed strength and, often having learned much, expertise.

Believing that, as prostitutes, they encounter contempt and curiosity, and that straight women in particular see their occupation as a despicable one, the informants first assert the basic equality of all women as prostitutes (cf. p. 58). Having thus threatened the self-esteem of straight women, they further assert their own self-esteem by describing their own transactions in terms of power gained over marks, and success.

As they describe their relationships with marks in terms of the "power" they hold over them, they also mention the tricks' need for power. One of Millett's very articulate informants explained:

What they're buying, in a way, is power. You're supposed to please them. They can tell you what to do and you're supposed to please them, follow orders themselves, you're still following his orders to give him orders (Millett 1971:52-53).
Yet, the final word remains hers: "I did not feel that controlled by the customer. I felt I was the boss because I could say no to the deal" (1971:53).

Among my informants, Julie, in particular, was quite explicit about the part played by power in the relationship between a woman and her mark. Since she assumes, like many other informants, that marks are partly, if not mostly, masochists, this is the way she understands their needs for this type of relationship:

Jerks have had it pretty good all their life. It's a big change, you know, for somebody who's just come through high school with no sweat, maybe been a scholar in some athlete field, and joined in Daddy's business and Mom's business, or even done it on their own. And within a couple of years, they're sitting behind the top desk. Now, most of these people have people climbing all over them and asking questions.

In the total reversal of roles they seek, they let the woman "play with them".

"Well, what am I doing now?" They're asking the questions, and you're the one that's setting all the answers up for them!

(Julie)

The more power the "jerks" have outside their relationship with a woman, the more power the woman attributes herself within this particular relationship. This power is a vindication of her deviant status meted out by the people she now dominates.

She is also vindicated against straight women's contempt by asserting the social value of prostitution:

1. By taking in charge, willingly or unwillingly, all the nuts, flips, perverts, freaks and sadists, she makes the streets safer for other women.
2. By enabling husbands to act out fantasies or practise perversions, she often saves their marriage.

3. Since, however, some customers only require a little variety, she may also save a marriage by advising open-mindedness to straight wives:

   Before I left, I had a long talk with her, and I told her: "Read that 'Hundred and One Positions'. It'll do you a lot of good." And I says: "Try some of the positions," I says, "you could be happily married and he wouldn't have to come down here looking for girls." (Bugsy)

   If the women's descriptions of events tend to stress their personal successful handling of transactions, they must also stress the exceptional quality of their failures. Both serve to preserve the informants' self-esteem.

   Reasons for accounting for what the outsider-observer might take as errors of judgement or lack of competence (i.e. decisions leading to an arrest, a rip off or a beating) all give the context of an exceptional situation, an accidental lapse of one's customary competence, or an unusual set of circumstances.

   In other cases, the situation was unavoidable and no one, in spite of their competence or alertness, could have foreseen it, except as a constant possibility. This is the case of the "nut", for instance. Everyone concurs that "you can't tell a nut." Bugsy stressed that fact when she pointed out (p. 185) that "everything was O.K." and they even had "finished" and her customer had acted normally, until he suddenly "cracked" her on the head. The logic of the situation was then violated
and no one could have done better than Bugsy in the same circumstances. The rule of the unpredictability of the "nut", the "flip", is so well established that Bugsy can even build up in a comic vein the reverse story of the unpredictability of the good trick (p. 127). Equally unavoidable, and also unfair, is the situation in which one is "tricked" by a narc playing "dirty" ("lying and cheating").

In other cases, failure to evaluate properly available information or clues can also be blamed on an unusual and understandable (and perhaps even excusable) carelessness:

Sometimes they aren't as careful as usual. A guy might be sick himself and want to get rid of the last few caps and get out so he can fix. Or he might think you "look" okay. That's how come they get caught, though (Stoddart 1968:76).

Thus Bugsy explained (p.184) that her usual alertness had failed her and she solicited a police officer because she was "sick."

Furthermore, as Stoddart points out (1968:107), when arrest is defined as "normal", failure to be arrested may be taken as evidence of abnormality. One may even be encouraged to think of arrest (a "failure" by straight standards) as a "successful" attempt at showing one's legitimate status in the community.

Bugsy was adamant (p. 153) that a woman we both knew must have been a police informer since she had never been arrested (which is, by the way, untrue since the woman had a police record). This widely held belief explains the concern shown by one of Stoddart's informants, especially at a time
when stricter control followed the easy going early days: "If I don't get pinched soon, people are gonna start gettin' suspicious of me. They'll figure I'm a fink or something" (1968:108).

Ten years ago, it could be said that

If you use junk, you're gonna get pinched. That's all there is to it. It may take them a while to catch on to you, but sooner or later you'll get it. The only people that don't get pinched are the finks, the guys that are keepin' out by workin' with the bulls (1968:107).

Ten years later, this belief has only been strengthened. It provides a further excuse for shifting the burden of responsibility from the victim to an outside cause and denies the reason of the individual's incompetence.

Whatever the reasons for one's failures, they seldom reflect a basic incompetence on the part of the individual. In ordinary circumstances, competent behaviour is assumed to be exercised as a matter of course, and reasonable and foreseeable problems are competently handled. The ones that have not been met successfully are usually made to appear (in their retelling at least) such that normal competence alone is not enough to deal with them in a satisfactory manner.
CHAPTER EIGHT

VERBAL SKILLS, MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The informants' self-perceived manipulations of outsiders only form one aspect of the oral culture of the group. The didactic use of anecdotes, gossip, jokes, tales, and the definition of a common linguistic framework firmly excluding outsiders are characteristic of groups which rely predominantly on their oral culture to perpetuate their values and strengthen their boundaries. Although these have also been described, the study's emphasis is on the skills of verbal manipulation because, as an object of cultural pride, it reflects the group's self perception and self definition.

Verbal manipulative techniques such as the ones described by the informants are seen as essential to their survival. They see themselves constantly threatened as *prostitutes* (by rip offs, bad tricks, Morality Squad detectives, straight women's contempt), as *drug addicts* (by rip offs, narcs, lack of drugs), as *jail inmates* (by the prison structure and regulations, by individual staff members and other inmates), as *street women* (by the mistrust and contempt of the general public) and *deviants* (by psychologists, criminologist, sociologists, and
society). In the face of these overwhelmingly hostile forces, they can either accept their vulnerability and its consequences or believe they can control them through their own manipulations. My informants all appear to have, in various degrees, made the second choice. Their verbal manipulative skills are developed with care by practice, as a defensive and aggressive weapon - since both defence and aggression are intrinsically merged in survival. The informants' belief that they can, more or less, control their environment through manipulations does not necessarily conflict with the evidence of their frequent failure to do so. What it appears to do, is enable them to transform what might otherwise have to be seen as a permanent, dispositional inability to cope with their environment and their place in it, into a temporary and situational failure of competence.

In a "hustling" environment, where trading of one sort or another, where communication and exchange are the lifeblood of the society on terms clearly defined by that society, classification of people and events is of primordial importance, since certain types of transactions are desirable between certain types of people, possible between certain types of people, possible only between certain types of people, or impossible between certain types of people.

Since the basis for a streetwoman's verbal manipulations is an understanding of her socio-economic environment and the place she occupies in it, she must first arrive at a definition of herself. The primary distinction she makes is between straight and street, and a secondary one between male and female,
and in that environment of opposites, she must define herself as belonging to the street and being female.

**THE STRAIGHT-STREET OPPOSITION**

Other groups than street people have defined themselves in opposition to straight people: hippies, gays and cons (or ex-cons) for instance are members of subcultures which identify themselves in direct opposition to straight culture. In a local newspaper report, a woman recently identified herself as "straight", in her objection to having been mistaken for a prostitute and solicited as such. The opposition here appeared to be meant at the occupational level, and may or may not have included considerations on the related lifestyles and worldview. However, it is obvious that the basic oppositions loose-straight, gay-straight, con-straight entail much more than the sexual and legal differences on which they focus.

The opposition street-straight is an all-encompassing one, since it includes the sub-groups x-straight just mentioned. "Straight", as the primary antithesis, stands for what society would define as "normal" in this restricted context: reasonably monogamous, heterosexual, law abiding. What renders this paragon of societal virtues the arch-antagonist it is in its many pairs of oppositions, is that it is the dominant and socially powerful member of the opposition.¹

¹It requires little effort of imagination to construct subsequent oppositions of terms such as poor-straight, female-straight, Indian-straight, etc. and still keep the basic "straight" characteristic attributes, while making the opposition a valid one.
The weakening of one constitutive element of the "straight" composite (as long as this element can itself be construed as "straight" in opposition to something else, e.g. "gay" or "con") immediately destroys the whole. Thus the vulnerability of straightness as a whole makes it all the more determined to control or overpower its many sub-classificatory opposites. By the same token, it is equally essential for their survival that street people resist these attempts at controlling them.

The constant comparison between what straight people do and say, and what street people do and say, serves to strengthen the latter's working stereotypes of the negative straight ("them") and the positive street ("us") with and within which to operate. It confirms the boundaries between the two groups and makes affiliations clear.

THE MALE-FEMALE OPPOSITION

The male-female dichotomy already mentioned as a secondary set of opposites often serves to strengthen the primary opposition since straight men and street women are the most frequently names trans-actors. But men are members of both cultures and in their dual straight and street aspects, they confuse the clear cut delineation of the male-female and straight-street universes.

The street woman examined here describes her relationship with street men as mutually supportive and her relationship with straight men as mutually exploitative. She further denounces the straight woman-man relationship as being also an
exploitative one. In her own world, she recognizes many such relationships as well: prostitute-pimp, unfaithful old man-old lady.

The only relationship she describes as non-exploitative is an ideal one between an old man who "looks after" his old lady (is faithful to her, appreciates her devotion to her work, protects her - usually afterwards in the form of retaliative measures - against rip offs and bad tricks) and an old lady who "looks after her old man (is faithful, is a good provider, does not complain about her work).

The relationship she described is identical to the one so often provided by a pimp's old lady (Milner & Milner 1972, Hall 1972) with, for the latter, the added satisfaction and prestige (since she provides for him by working around the clock, outside in all kinds of weather, facing humiliation and danger in all her encounters) of seeing her pimp's elegance, style and nonchalant enjoyment of his leisure, properly admired and envied. All my informants, however, see these men as "leeches".

Since in both cases (old man and pimp) the woman's stand is identical, it is the sincerity of feelings of the man which provides for my informants the decisive distinction between a supportive and an exploitative relationship: the old man does not need to "sell" his "philosophy" - a term used by Jo to refer to the manipulative power of conviction of a pimp over his women - since he is honest and sincere.

From the man's sincerity stem other qualities which fill
the woman's needs: faithfulness and appreciation. If sex, its performance and its avoidance, is the basis of a prostitute's transactions with tricks and marks, her personal relationships on the other hand are often full of sentimentality. Her tattoos, for instance, often reflect her feelings. Bugsy drew for me the most popular tattoos in jail and on the street, as well as the one she was designing for herself as soon as she "could find somebody that can draw clasping hands." Her latest tattoo involved the transformation of her old man's initials into Dee's, which could fortunately be done by the simple addition of a stroke on the last initial, the first one being the same. Popular tattoos include the cowled figure of Death, or a tombstone bearing the two names, or more simply the lover's initials followed by T.D.D.U.P. (Till Death Do Us Part).

Significantly, it is in her relationship with her female lovers that the street woman's need for affection, understanding and companionship often appears best fulfilled. In the case of my informants, this may be partly explained by the

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2 I could not help thinking, when I first noticed it, how appropriate was the location of the city's largest store of "Harlequin Romances", on Granville Street, where almost every block in that particular stretch patronized by streetwalkers has an "Adult Bookstore", stores with assorted and restricted "novelties" and "adult movie" theatres.

3 Limoges mentions that among her informants (Montreal prostitutes), the oldest tattoos usually represent men's names and the most recent ones women's names (Limoges 1967:95).
fact that most of those sentimentally or sexually involved with other women were, when I talked to them, deprived of other romantic associations. Yet, my first impression that lesbian relationships were more supportive than the heterosexual ones - in the street life context - resulted from conversations on the street in 1975, where the heterosexual alternative existed. Many writers on prostitution mention the large and presumably above average proportion of lesbians among prostitutes. Limoges (1967:96) mentions that nine out of her twenty informants were lesbians, for instance.

Through extended periods in jail, frequent interruptions of her relationship with a steady old man (because of his or her incarceration, for instance), increasing dissatisfaction with men as a whole whom she sees in their exploiters' role, a woman is sometimes led to substitute her ordinary male companion for a permanent or temporary female one in whom she finds the faithfulness, appreciation, and even the physical protection she seeks.

Since the description of the ideal and romantic relationship between two people is in fact asexual and stresses - much more than in the straight world - a mutually supportive sharing of values and defence against outsiders, it is not surprising that this relationship should be best exemplified when joining together street women in a unified front against men and straight people, rather than in a more limited fashion against straight men, as in the more frequent heterosexual street associations.
Only when her "old man" becomes an "old lady" does a street woman take her place in the simplified universe where female-street-support are directly opposed to male-straight-exploitation and does she acknowledge the experienced exploitation of her body, mind and earnings by all men, straight and street alike.

SUMMARY

To cope with the legal vulnerability and the social disvaluation of their position, female street addicts and prostitutes must acquire a competence which enables them to participate fully in the life of their subculture, where they find acceptance, understanding and support.

As members of a subculture, they operate within the framework of the larger culture and appear to be constantly faced with their double and opposite values. Only by strictly defining this contradiction can the informants hope to define their own position and regulate their behaviour.

The manifestations of the essential incompatibility between the straight and street cultures, form the core of the data. The sharp opposition between the two sets of cultural values is constantly brought into light. Since members of the subculture are cognizant of the value system of the larger culture, they use it to define their own by opposition. To explain a lifestyle in many ways opposite to the "normal" lifestyle (illegality of enterprise, nocturnal activity, venal and impersonal sex, immediate squandering of earnings, etc.)
they describe a system of values opposite to the one of the larger society. Yet, the opposition lies not with the professed values of the larger society (generosity, prudence, enlightenment) but with what they see as being the real values of that society: greed, pusillanimity, ignorance.

These very values cause members of the larger and dominant society to try and take advantage of members of the subculture, female members in particular, and the latter feel justified in retaliating. Their own attempt at and frequent success in exploiting the other group, or defending themselves from its exploitation, take the form of verbal manipulations which they believe to have taken to a high level of expertise.

The goal of verbal manipulation is to manage people to behave in a manner that the manager sees as profitable to herself. Such management can only rest on her knowledge of these people. From repeated encounters in specific circumstances with specific individuals, the informant elaborates broad and refined categories and constructs an interrelated system of values and relationships.

The feedback elicited from each transaction serves to refine the classification, as the classification itself serves to regulate the transaction. As the informant's verbal manipulations are examined, they can only be understood in the context of their apprehension of their socio-economic environment and the subculture's system of values.
ABRAHAMS, Roger D.


ABRAMS, David and Brian SUTTON-SMITH


AGAR, Michael


ALBERT, Ethel M.


ANONYMOUS


ARDENER, Shirley

BAHR, Howard M.

BARTH, Fredrik

BAUMAN, Richard

BECKER, Ernest

BEN-AMOS, Dan

BENJAMIN, Harry and R.E.L. MASTERS

BERGER, Peter L. and T. LUCKMANN
BERNSTEIN, Basil


BERREMAN, Gerald D.


BLACK, Mary B.


BLACK, Mary and Duane METZGER


BLUM, Richard

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BLUMER, Herbert


BOVIN, Mette


BROWN, L.B.


BRYAN, James H.

BURLING, Robbins


CHOISY, Maryse


COHEN, Albert K.


CONKLIN, Harold C.


COTHRAH, Kay L.


COUTTS, Dorothy Mae


DALLAYRAC, Dominique


DAVIS JOHNSON, Robbie


DORSON, Richard M.

DOUGLAS, Dorothy J.

DOUGLAS, Jack

DOUGLAS, Mary, ed.

DUNDEES, Alan

ERICKSON, Kai T.

ERVIN-TRIPP, Susan

FOSTER, George M.

FRAKE, Charles O.


GALLANTIN ANDERSON, Barbara
GEERTS, Clifford


GOFFMAN, Erving


GOLD, Raymond L.


GOODENOUGH, Ward H.


GRAVEN, Jean

GREENWALD, Harold


GUMPERZ, John J.


HALL, Edward T.


HALL, Susan


HALLIDAY, M.A.K.


HARRIS, Marvin


HAYS, Terence E.


HENSLIN, James M.


HIRSCHI, Travis


HUMPHREYS, Laud

HYMES, Dell H.


IRWIN, John and Donald R. CRESSEY


JACKMAN, Norman, Richard O'TOOLE, Gilbert GEIS


JACKSON, Bruce


JAMES, Jennifer


JONES, Edward E. and Richard E. NISBETT

JUNG, C.G.


KANTROWITZ, Nathan


KAPLAN, Howard B.


KERNAGHAN, Patrick


KITSUSE, John I.


KLOCKARS, Carl


KOCHMAN, Thomas


KONGAS MARANDA, E.K. and Pierre MARANDA

LAYTON, Monique


LEACH, Edmund


LETKEMANN, Peter J.


LIEBOW, Elliot


LIMOGES, Therese


LOFLAND, Lyn H.


LYMAN, Stanford M. and Marvin B. SCOTT


McCAGHY, Charles H. and James K. SKIPPER


McCALL, George J. and J.L. SIMMONS

McINTOSH, Mary


MATZA, David


MAURER, David W.

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MAUSS, Marcel


MERTON, R.K.


MILLET, Kate


MILLS, James


MILNER, Christina and Richard MILNER


MILNER, Richard


NEWTON, Esther

OLESEN, Virginia L. and Elvi Waik WHITTAKER


ORLEANS, P.


PARTRIDGE, Eric

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PIKE, Kenneth L.


PILCHER, William W.


POLSKY, Ned


PREBLE, Edward and John J. CASEY


PSATHAS, George

RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A.R.


RADIN, Paul


REISS, Jr., Albert


ROLPH, C.H., ed.


ROSNOW, Ralph L. and Gary Alan FINE


RUMACK, Martin


SARTRE, Jean-Paul


SCOTT, Marvin B. and Stanford LYMAN


SCHUTZ, Alfred


SEARLE, John R.

SHEEHY, Gail


SIMMONS, J.L.


SKIPPER, J.K. and C.H. McCAGHY


SLIM, Iceberg


SPRADLEY, James P.


SPRADLEY, James P. and Brenda MANN


STACK, Carol


 STEWART, George Lee

STODDART, Kenneth


STURTEVANT, W.C.


SUTHERLAND, Edwin


SUTTER, Alan G.


SYKES, Gresham M. and David MATZA


TYLER, Stephen


TOCH, Hans


TRUZZI, Marcello, ed.


VELARDE, Albert


WEPPNER, Robert S.

WERNER, Oscar


WHITTAKER, Elvi


WHYTE, William Foote


WILSON, James Q.


WINN, Denise


YOUNG, Jock


ZUCKER, Hall

## APPENDIX A

### VOCABULARY SELECTION (ON CARDS)

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<td>bundle</td>
<td>the Corner</td>
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<tr>
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<td>busted</td>
<td>dealer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat (the rap)</td>
<td>butch</td>
<td>deviate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(on the) block</td>
<td>call girl</td>
<td>doing time</td>
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<td>cap</td>
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fix, fixing  
flea bag  
flip, flippy  
freak  
french  
gear  
get off  
goof  
go out  
good trick  
Greek sailor  
Greek style  
greenhorn  
habit  
hash  
harness bull  
hassle, hassling  
heat  
a heavy  
high  
hit  
ho  
hooker  
hooking  
horny  
horse  
hotel  
hustle, hustler  
hustling broad  
hype  
ignorant  
jail  
jerk  
job  
John  
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kicks  
kinky  
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lady  
lady of the evening  
lady of the night  
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the Life  
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main lady  
mainlining  
man  
the Man  
mark  
masochist  
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methadone  
middle man  
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Morality  name  
narc  
nichy  
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old lady  
old man  
old men
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<td>pinched</td>
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<td>plainclothes</td>
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<td>steady trick</td>
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<td>smack</td>
<td>Summertime hooker</td>
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<td>rap, rapping</td>
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<td>switch</td>
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the take  trick  uptown
talk  trip  use, user
talker  turn out  weekend hooker
tattoo  turn tricks  weight
teeny boppers  twat  weirdo
threesome  uncles  Welfare
ticket  undercover  whore
tough  upper  wired

work, working
working girl
yen, yenny
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<th>MARGINAL PEOPLE</th>
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<th>STRAIGHT</th>
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<td>guys at the desk (hotels)</td>
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<td>to piece off cabbies</td>
<td>narciss</td>
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## Hooking

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<th>Tricks (Customers)</th>
<th>Tricks (Services)</th>
<th>Straight Involved</th>
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<td>On the Street</td>
<td>Off the Street</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>on the boats</td>
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<td>hookers in bars</td>
<td>regular trick or</td>
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<td>flea bag</td>
<td>and hotels</td>
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<td>old timer</td>
<td>hookers in baths</td>
<td>serviceman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hype</td>
<td>and saunas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>rip off art.</td>
<td>camp to camp</td>
<td>straight tr.</td>
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<td>turn out</td>
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<td>old men</td>
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<td>lady of the</td>
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<td>masochist</td>
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<td>evening or the</td>
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<td>mark</td>
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<td></td>
<td>night</td>
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<tr>
<td>METHODS of administration</td>
<td>DRUGS (DOPE)</td>
<td>EFFECTS</td>
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<td>smoking</td>
<td>pep pills</td>
<td>high</td>
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<td>rush - blast</td>
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<td>coke</td>
<td>yen</td>
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<td>MDA</td>
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<td>angel dust</td>
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<td>cranking up</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPPERS</th>
<th>DOWNERS</th>
<th>MIXED</th>
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<tr>
<td>SMOKE DOPE</td>
<td>DOPE</td>
<td>speed balls (heroin &amp; cocaine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>hash</td>
<td>junk</td>
<td>user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pot - grass</td>
<td>stuff</td>
<td>junkie</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shit</td>
<td>hype</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>snack</td>
<td>to be wired</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>skag</td>
<td>head</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>hophead</td>
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<td>acid freak</td>
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<td>pill freak</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>USERS</th>
<th>TRAFFICKERS</th>
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<td>user</td>
<td>dealer</td>
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<td>pusher</td>
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<tr>
<td>hype</td>
<td>middle man</td>
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<tr>
<td>to be wired</td>
<td>connection</td>
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<td>head</td>
<td>man</td>
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<td>hophead</td>
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<td>acid freak</td>
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Cops, also known as pigs and bulls, are police officers. Harness bulls are officers in uniform (although some people reserve the term for policemen on horseback or motorcycle policemen). Narcs are the much hated members of the Narcotic Squad, and undercover is used to describe members of the same squad who infiltrate the drug subculture. Asshole (although the term is not exclusively reserved for them) is often used to describe an ignorant cop who abuses his powers.

Dope is a general term for drug, although among junkies it refers mostly to heroin. Drug is basically divided into downers (bombers, barbiturates, heroin) and uppers (amphetamines, speed, coke, acid, MDA, etc. and smoke dope: hash and pot). They can also be mixed (e.g. speed balls).

Junk and stuff are the most frequently used terms for heroin. Other terms, less commonly used in Vancouver, are: heroin (only used when talking to a non-user straight person), skag, shmeck (an old term still used by "old dope fiends") which
became smack nine or ten years ago, and shit. Horse, H, snow (also referring to cocaine) and jazz are known here but said to be mostly used in the United States.

The terms user and junkie (user of junk) are comparatively recent. Stoddart's informants (1968) always refer to "fiends" or "dope fiends," a term which is found in all the older texts. The terms trafficker, connection, and man, are used at many levels of the business of selling illegal drugs. On the street, people put out caps (gelatin capsules in which units of heroin are sold in Canada) or bundles (25 caps) for a dealer or middle man who handles bundles or ounces (400 caps). Pure heroin is cut down with milk sugar and has been sold in very weak concentration for the last few years in Vancouver.

Heroin can be absorbed by sniffing, skin popping (subcutaneous injections) or mainlining (intravenous injections). A rig or outfit (syringe, needle and bottle cap) is used to mix and inject it. "Collapsed veins" and hepatitis are frequently the result of mainlining. A blast or rush immediately follows the administration of heroin, itself later followed by a nodding period of contentment. A wired (addicted) person will feel sick when he cannot score (buy) and fix. These withdrawal pains make it all the more difficult to quit or kick the habit.

Hooker is, with working girl, the most general and most generally acceptable term for "prostitute". For a description of various types of hookers (chippie, weekend hooker, summertime hooker, call girl, massage parlour and steam bath hooker,
camp to camp hooker, stag girl, street girl, sleazy, hooker on the boats, old timer, turn out, rip off, out of town girl, main lady, hustler) see the text.

A mark often started as a trick, but has developed a more permanent and more elaborate relationship with a woman and is reported to provide money, goods and services in exchange for whatever she is willing to give him. Most women simply list him among the tricks. A mark is also a con artist's victim.

A trick is a prostitute's customer. The once familiar term "John" does not seem to be used much any more, in this city at least, except in "square Johns", which applies to straight people in general. For a description of various types of tricks (East Indian, pervert, freak, sadist, weirdo, drunk, greenhorn, student, fast trick, regular or steady trick, servicemen, Greek sailor, straight trick, old men, masochist, Oriental, talker), see text

A trick means also the professional services rendered: to "turn a trick", or can also refer to a certain type of trick turned (e.g. a "car trick", a "double trick").
APPENDIX D

A SAMPLE OF STORIES

The twelve stories below were not selected to offer a representative view of the concerns of the street or the significant events which are seen as occurring there. If this had been the case, a story about hassling by asshole pigs should have, for instance, balanced the restraint of Bugsy's cop stories. However, the selection attempts to be representative of the style of the stories collected. "The English Duke" (#1), for instance, was not so much selected because of its content as because of its form: it is the shortest and best defined of the long, rambling tales which, in their original form, may make somewhat tedious reading, and which were mostly used for extracts illustrating specific points. On the other hand, "The Little Old Man" (#10) is a good example of the brief anecdote which, in an even shorter version, may be passed on for a good laugh.

#1 THE ENGLISH DUKE (BOOTS)

I met this guy on Granville and he come up with this limousine and the two guys. He come up the stairs and he asked me if I wanted to go out and I said: "Well, who's with you?" And he said: "It's a goon squad." I asked: "What's the goon squad?" He said it was his body guards. Well ... what would you think
if you saw a guy with a black limousine? I thought he was a bull, or something! He comes up the stairs and he asked me how much I want and I told him: "Fifty bucks and some." He comes in and I told him: "Take off your gear and get to bed." But, not. First he wanted me to get out. And I didn't know who he was. I thought he was just some guy, you know. But he wanted me to go to his hotel ... His body guards stood outside the door, so I went to the manager, you see, to make sure that these guys don't get me. I thought they were his friends, or something. Well, he reels in there and finishes our trick and goes out.

Next day, the guy comes with 200 dollars and the limousine and his body guards, and asked me to come for dinner. I said: "Where to?" He said: "The Villa Hotel." They had a whole floor booked up! The third floor. So, I wouldn't get in the car. So, he come back and he said: "There's 200 dollars just to come to the dining room with me, please." So, I went and had a steak and lobster and it was really good, and I left with the 200 dollars. So, all the time he was here, he came every day, every night. Twice a day, 400 bucks a day. And I'd go and eat breakfast with him and then dinner.

So, then he goes to leave. The day before he left, it come on the radio! His first name ... And I listen and listen, and it's his voice! I couldn't believe it ... He was a duke! I was so embarrassed! He come that night and he said: "Well, I will have to leave tomorrow morning, and I want to know if you'll spend the night." "Well, we have my hotel ..." "No," he said,
"you come to my place, it will be all right." So I come to the Villa ... got all the floors roped off and that. I walked ... the elevator door opened and about four doors opened around his room ... So I stayed the night with him ... five hundred dollars. Next morning, I went to leave. I told him I had to go downtown to score. He didn't know what "score" means! He's really stupid! He told me ... I was asking what he was doing with a hustler around, you know. So, his wife died last year, or something, and his son got killed the same day my old man got killed. So, he said: "I'd really like to take you back to England with me!" So, I said: "Well, I can't go, you know," I said. "I got lots of things to do," I said. "How am I gonna score over in England?" He said: "Don't worry about that," you know. So, I says "I can't get across anyway, you know ... I got my charges and that, and they're not going to let me cross the border." He said: "With my name on your passport, they'll let you cross, they'll have to! There's no way anybody can stop you from moving around with me."

I went down to the Aristocratic Restaurant to score. I told him to meet me there before he left. He pulls up in his car, while I was waiting there. I says: "Well, you're going, hey?" He says: "Well, yeah ... Just get in the car with me!" I says: "Fuck you!" He says: "Come on, just get in and talk to me before I go." I went to get in the car and he told the guy to take off with me, you know. So, I says: "The hell with you! ... Fuck you! ..."
Now he writes to me all the time ... four, five times a week. Invites me over there ... But if I go over to England, they'll turn me into a Duchess or something! I told him I like Granville street. He says: "Do you think this is your whole life? Once I got you over to England," he says, "give you what your heart desire ... Anything," he said, "that you ever dreamed ..." he said, "you wouldn't want to come back!" He said: "You might miss Vancouver at first," he said, "but once you're over there you'll be all right." Well, he's just going to take me over there and turn me into one of them! When I'm over there, I can't do anything ... See, here, I'm on my ground ... I just whistle and someone comes runnin'! But, over there, I don't know anybody.

He writes to me ... he's been here seven, eight times ... he phones long distance all the time. He'd talk to the manager of the hotel because I wouldn't get on the phone. I'd be standing right there, and he'd say: "Please, talk her into comin' ... I'll send the jet over for her!" So, the guy says: "Oh, that's right ... yeah ... yeah ... be a good thing for her ..." And I'd just stand there, laughing. And he'd be crying over the phone! And this is a Duke! Stupid!!

I told him I'd take his money, but that would be about it. I said: "Go and marry one of your duchess!" But no ... he writes all the time ... He wanted to go to court for me ... tell the Judge that he wanted to marry me, look after me, and plead not to put me in jail, and that he'd be responsible for my actions from
then on ... Crazy idiot! He didn't even know what "junk" was! He hadn't even heard of it! When I told him I had to go fix ... FIX ... he didn't even know what it was!

He just likes me because I'm different to what he's used to. He'd never even gone to the park by himself before. I took him to the park. His body guards thought he'd get lost and somebody would bump him off! Oh, they hated me! He used to tell me, you know. I said: "What do they think of me?" He said: "They just shake their head." I'd bang around up there and make noise and knock on the doors, and tell them I hoped they were getting off, listening to him all the time! I don't know how he could live like that! He had a guy to dress him! Bring him his clothes and lay them out for him ... Taking away his pyjamas. I used to tell him: "You're retarded! You can't even dress youself?" But he said that's the way they were brought up.

I'd get knocked up or something, and then he'd have a kid to take over his ... whatchamacallit? ... because he never had any more kids after that one boy that was killed. But he's a nice guy ... I've got a letter from him just last week. He's coming over soon on business. He asked me to visit him. I said no. I wrote back and told him I was too busy, much too busy ... I told him to send me some money ... After all the money he gave me!

#2 THE SPECIAL TRICK (BOOTS)

This guy comes into town, and he was known for spending thousands of dollars on a girl. The first time she went out ...
I just told my old man that I was going out with this guy. Well, he knew the guy's name right away when I said that! So, he just told me he knew the guy and what to do, and I went out and do it. I got $15,000 dollars for it. He still sends me money, but I'm no good anymore, because he's used me, right? But he still sends me a couple of hundred dollars at Christmas and stuff like that. My old man told me "When you go out with him, don't get into bed with him." He said "Kid him around as long as you can without giving him anything. That's what he likes." He says "You've got to be smart. You've got to know when to give a little bit more ..."

I had every hustling broad in town rooting for me, trying to tell me what to do, because they'd all gone with him before! I got help from them. Because they knew they couldn't get hold of the money. It was sitting there, you know ... and they knew they'd get pieced off. So, they said "He really likes this ..."

Once he has you, that's it. He'll be nice, he'll take you to dinner, but there's nothing else ... Like, a coupla times he took me to dinner right after and he'd start asking me "Can't you get me someone that's never gone out with a guy before?", you know. So I got him another girl and she went with him and got quite a bit of money off him and then she turn on somebody else to him. He likes that. All he does is work all year and then he comes into town for his holidays and he spends everything he's made that year in a coupla weeks. And then, that's it! He goes back out to work. He runs cats or something like that ...
know what to gain and we know what to give and we both live by
the rules, and we both can come out winners. But there's not
many guys like that around.

#3 THE MARK'S WIFE (BOOTS)

One of the guy's wives ... He was the second trick I ever
gone out with ... Her and I are now best friends! She come down
and was gonna cut my throat! ... I didn't know who he was. I
thought he was a nice looking guy. I had just turned out and I
thought he's a good trick ... he's nice ... he spent his money
like it is gone out of style. And he was nice ... Ugh ... I
stuck out much too long, because she come down with the hood down
to Granville Street. I was coming out of the hotel with him, my
arm through his ... Oh God! You never seen a broad so mad! She
said she was gonna cut my throat from ear to ear ... I was young
then ... Oh, she terrified me! And now, we're the best of
friends. We've been best friends for a year and a half. At
first she was really nasty to me. She'd got my phone number, and
about a month after she tried to put a beating on me when she saw
us in the hotel, she started phoning me. First, she was really
nasty. Then she said: "What does he say about me when he's
there?" "Oh, he says how much he loves you and that ..." I just
told her a story. Then she got to be really nice, and she asked
me one day to meet her, and she was really upset because he'd
gone to see me, she said. "He's with some other broad!" She was
all upset about this because he'd gone to see a hooker ... I
said "Look at it ... It's for the money ... Do you think I'd
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go and chase him? Forget it! When his money's all gone, I don't want no more to do with him!" So, she grew accustomed to that. But when she found that he'd seen some other broad, then she flipped and she come to me!" Told me to get him back! So I went to get him back. Told him not to see that girl again. Now, she's one of my best friends.

#4 THE TRICK'S WIFE (BUGSY)

Well, there was this guy I used to go out with quite often. And I knew he was married. And his wife come downtown one night, and she says "Your name is Bugsy?" She says "I want to talk to you." And I says "Oh, yeah? Who are you?" She says "Well, I'm Joe's wife." Eeeeeek ... Oh, oh ... I'm in for shit! But we went into the Blackstone Hotel and we settled down, having a few drinks. And she was talking to me. And she says "Joe seems a lot happier when he comes home at night." And I says "Oh, does he?" And I says "Wait a minute! What's you gimmick?" I says "What are you doing?" She says "Nothing." She says, "I just wanted to thank you for helping Joe and I stay together, 'cause we were on the verge of a divorce." I says "Well, I'm glad I helped out somebody." So Joe come in the bar just out there and I says "Oh, brother! This is all I need!" Cause Joe used to walk in the bar all the time and put his arm around me. Well, he come in the bar, sat between us and he put his arm around me and her. And they were going to Hawaii and they asked me if I wanted to go with them! And I says no, like a stupid fool! And then Joe and I were talking for a while, and I was gonna go. In fact,
I was just gonna go when I ended up here! I'd be in Hawaii right now ...

It was mainly a sex problem between them. "The same old thing all the time," that's what Joe said. He said he couldn't handle it, he said she refused to do it in a different way because she didn't know how. She was scared. She always had that Mommy image in her head: "Don't do that! That's a naughty girl!" Before they left, I had a long talk with her, and I told her "Read that "Hundred and One Different Positions." It'll do you a lot of good." I says "You could help yourself as well as Joe," and I says "You could be happily married and he won't have to come down here looking for girls!"

#5 Hiding Junk (Bugsy)

I remember one time, I had a cap. I had just scored and the cops were walking up, and I had nowhere to put it. I had no bra on, and a halter top, a little skimpy halter top, not even ... This thing I got on now, I got more than I got on ... So ... the cops were coming, so I took it and stuck it in my ear! But I didn't realize I pushed it down too far, and I tried everything to get this thing out, and it wouldn't come out! So I went to the hospital. I says "I got something stuck in my ear." And the doctor says "Yeah? Let me see!" and he looked and he says "What is it?" And I says "Oh, one of my pills, one of my medications," I says, "I take some medication," I says, "I take that for epilepsy," and he says "That looks more like heroin to me." I says "Hey, will you just get it outta there, it's killing me!"
So he pulled it out and he says "Yeah, it looks like heroin," and I says "It ain't!" and I took off! I had one hell of a time getting the cap opened. Finally, I just took it and broke the end off it, because there was all the wax from the ear on it, and I poured it in, and I had one hell of a time fixin' ...

#6  A LOVE STORY (BUGSY)

There was this sailor ... He wasn't a Greek, though, he was an American. And I fell in love with him. I just found out that he died at sea. They made a potato brew, and it was all poisoned. I didn't believe the guy when he told me, because they've usually got tons of beer on board. He says "Well, the beer was all knocked off and they were told they were not allowed to carry anymore beer." So they were making a potato brew ... Him and two other guys died from it. But ... that's a different story. Him ... Oh, that's one night I'll never forget! I picked him up as a trick. We went to my girlfriend's house, and we did our thing. And all night I was stuck with 'im. And we went out drinking, and he was buying me caps to fix, and we stayed in the Austin Hotel, and in the morning ... like he had two days on shore leave, so in the morning he gave me sixty dollars to go score two more caps, and I come back, and we had breakfast in bed. We went downstairs and had a few drinks. We went out. I said "I'm goin' workin'." He says "No, you're not." I says "Well, when I get sick, what an I gonna do?" "You know what you're gonna do," he says, "You'll just keep quiet!" So it was about an hour after we had our beer, I started to get sick. And
I went out, he gave me the money and I bought four more caps and then I fixed ... I did that all night ... I was off work for two days! I just had a good time. Went out dancing all over the place! He tried to talk me out of fixin'. We went up and he met my aunt. And my aunt wanted to help me ... you know ... kick. And he suggested I stay with my aunt, so I did. She didn't do me any good, though. Her and her nagging! Bitching at me all time!

#7 *THE JUNKIE AND THE COP* (BUGSY)

Hey, I was fixin' two caps one night and they kicked the door in. And I had the fit like this ... and I stuck it in my bra, not thinkin'. And the cop come over and say "Undo your top." And I says "Fuck you!" He says "Undo your top!" I says "No way!" He says "Well, I'll do it!" I says "Take your hand away!" So, while I'm undoing it, I'm pushing ... like I figured ... I stuck the needle in my tit, so I was gonna skin it. And as I was pushing the needle in it, I felt it all running down, all over my stomach, and all over my nice blue pants ... and ... the sons of bitches! I pushed all the way down, and I took it off and says "Here!" Yeah ... he was lookin' ...

"Possession of heroin" [clowning intonation]. I had two more caps in my bra. Now, this cop takes me downtown and I got the handcuffs on me, like this. There's one on this side of me, and one on this side of me. And when this one here, in front of me, is writing, the other one over here is watching. And when he's writing, this one is watching me. And I'm sitting like this, all charm, trying to get in there and get those two caps outta there,
because they were going to take me upstairs and skin me. So the cop says "Now," he says, "what are you gonna do?" I says "Now, I'm gonna go out and make some more money so I can fix, hey?" So he says "Well ... you have nothing else on you, hey?" I says "Do you think I'd be dumb enough to be sitting here if I did?" So he says "Well, we'll get you frisked anyways." So, he phones up and they had no matron up there to do the frisk. Phew! He says "O.K. We'll give you this to appear in Court." I says "O.K." He gave me this thing to appear in court, and I left.

I got out on the street and now I haven't got a fit and I have two caps. Well, right at Main and Hastings, there, on the side where the cop station is, right down on the edge, was a fit laying, in a package. Somebody had dropped the fit in a package. Well, I figured "What the hell is going on? Somebody ... Maybe I'm hallucinating ..." Anyways, I picked it up, and I had an aspiring tube on me, and I dumped all the aspirins, and I went to the X Hotel and I fixed. And I just finished fixin', and I hear the cops out there! "Police! Open up!" Everything went down the toilet! I'm glad I got it in my arm! He says "What are you doin' in there?" I says "Nothing!" He says "How come you got ..." I didn't know, but I had black on my hand, and before they come, I went like this [passing her hand over her forehead], so I had fingerprints, like this all over my head! "What are you doing?" I says "Nothing." He says "How come you got black on your head?" "I ain't got black on my head!" And I looked in the mirror, and I says "Oh ... Well, I don't know ... Probably from
something ..." Well, fuck!

(NOTE: the black came from the spoon in which she had been "cooking" the heroin and its significance could not be mistaken.)

#8 SLASHING (BUGSY)

Most of the time, I was drunk when I slashed. Like once, I was out on a pass. I came back pissed, I couldn't even walk. I told the guard at the gate: "I'll walk down." He says: "I don't think you'll make it!" "Sure, I can make it!" (It wasn't on my pass that I couldn't drink! They wanted to crime me, but they couldn't. Anyway, I never slashed in jail. I don't think you'd do it when you're sick, because when you're sick, you're really tender. You can't take any kind of pain ... I did most of it when my daughter died.

One girl did it in here for no reason at all. One night, she broke a window and slashed her wrist on it. Everybody ignores them! That's what they're looking for [sympathy]. There's S ... She's a bit upstairs ... but she slashed one night. I looked at her and I says: "Are you proud of that?" She says: "No." I says: "Did you try to gain attention from it?" She says: "I dunno ..." I says: "I think you did." I says: "Think about it for a minute." And she thought, and then she says: "Yeah ..." And then I says: "Did you get your attention?" She says: "No." I says: "Look at me. I'm ashamed of wearing a short sleeved dress because of them." Then, I says: "Aren't you going to be ashamed of them when that thing heals?" I says: "It's not going to go away like you've never done it." I says:
"You'll always have a scar there."

Me, I just blew my top. It was either slash or die, one of the two. I tried to jump off the bridge, but they wouldn't let me. The cops got me.

#9 THE COP (BUGSY)

When I was working, there was this cop come to see me at work. And he says: "I got to talk to you." And I says: "Yeah, I know, I bet!" And he says: "I'll be up to you when you've finished." So he says: "I'm taking you home." I says: "I don't need a police escort home! I live two blocks away!" There was two blocks downhill ... "Well," he says, I've got to talk to you anyway!" "Well, talk now," I says, "this is my break anyway, so we can talk now." "No," he says.

So he came back to pick me up, and we went driving around and I was drinking all night at the restaurant. Before I left and I was waiting for him to come, I had two triple rye and coke and four Southern Comforts, so I wasn't in too good shape! Well, he's driving and talking to me, and I'm falling asleep! When I woke up, we were up in Little Mountain. "Where am I?". He says: "You're up at Little Mountain." So I opened the door to get out and I says: "Wait! What the hell am I doing up here?" He says: "Well, I've been talking to you." I says: "I haven't heard a word you've been saying!" He says: "I know!"

Anyways, I walked around the park for a while, and he talked to me. And he says they're trying to bring in my charges from Calgary. So I says: "So, let'em do it!", I says, "It
doesn't bother me anymore," I says, "I'm gonna get time anyway! One way or another ..." Well, he says: "I'm trying to hold off." I says: "What for?" I says: "You fuckin' arrest me! You're my arresting officer and here you sit trying to tell me you're holding back other charges?" I says: "Until what? Until I finally get released from Oakalla and walk out the gate, and then you're going to pick me up? Forget it!"

Anyways, I came in here and he's been to see me three times. And I told him I didn't want him out here then. Nothing to discuss!

I don't know ... He feels bad about busting me, 'cause I got thirteen months for soliciting, my first charge. And he feels bad about it. He saw me in court when the judge gave me the time, you know, and his jaw almost dropped down to his knees. And I says to him: "Thanks a lot!" And he says: "Wait a minute! I didn't know you were going to get that much time," he says, "I would have dropped the charges a long time ago!" I says: "Hey, you charge somebody, you don't turn around and drop them for nothing," I says, "Whatever plans you got up your sleeve, foreget it!"

#10  THE LITTLE OLD MAN (BUGSY)

I had this little ol' man, once ... And this was cute ... He took me out. He paid me just for a straight, and his time was up, and he hadn't even got it hard. And he wasn't drunk, he had had nothing to drink. And he says: "Oh dear! (he says) my time's up!" Like, it was him that kept the time, I wasn't even lookin'.
"My time's up", he says, "and all I got is twenty dollars more!"

So, I says: "Well, I'll tell you what," I says, "you give me another ten, just ten of it," I says, and you can stay for another twenty minutes." And he says, "Are you sure it'll be O.K.? Your boy friend's not gonna get mad?" I says: "I haven't got a boy friend." So he says: "I guess it'll be O.K., then."

And he stayed. And he still couldn't get it up! So he says: "Well," he says, "are the banks closed yet?" And I says: "No."

So he went to the bank, and he came back. I didn't think he would come back, I really didn't! And he was ... Before he left his face was just beet red, he was so embarrassed hey? And he says: "Well," he says, "I'll come back." And I says: "O.K., sure, sure!" You know. I was standing outside and I had my back ... I didn't know he was coming back ... I had my back turned. And he come up and he tapped me on the shoulder, and I turned back again. "This time," he says, "this time I've got 200 dollars, we can stay for a long time!" I just cracked up laughing! I was with him for about 2 hours. He made it four times! I got the 200 dollars, too. Plus the other 60! So, it wasn't too bad ...

#11 FEAT OF DARING (JULIE)

Now, I sat one time in a beer parlour with my husband. And we sat there drinking, near a complete tableful of students from B.C.I.T. And I just walked up and plucked up a purse. She was just talking, drinking, laughing. I went up to the parking lot, checked it out. I saw she had a bank account with quite a lot.
So there I went, got the car keys (the bank was just up the block), pulled all her money out of her account. I decided to write a withdrawl, 'cause they don't have pictures on bank accounts, nowadays. So I went, pulled all her money out of her bank account, took what I wanted out of her purse, and returned the purse back with the cheque. She didn't notice at all! And I had all the money! And I finished my drink and then I went out.

THE MARKS (JULIE)

Well, this one mark ... I was hitchhiking through the States. I tripped in old Las Vegas ... Hey, that place is just where it's at, as far as I'm concerned. You could never find such an all night city, and me at seventeen, that was where it was at, to see these bright lights, hey? ... like you're young and you can play the game a lot better when you're young and fresh, you know? These older men figure: "Well, Jesus Christ! There, the old lady's at home, and I get me a young whipper-snapper here." I can just see them taking it all in! You know ... they're there for a good time, that's plain to see, you know, without even asking. They're in that city for good times. So you're open season on their wants. There's your marks, right there! You pretty well get them to buy your entire wardrobe if you play your cards right. I mean ... that's just material things that they like to see you in, you know, if they're going to stick around ... It sometimes works to give the impression that you're not too enthused about things. Then, they'll go out
and keep on buying and buying. And another good thing, you know, is to say you're out of jewellery and "Surprise me, honey!" And they'll go out and they'll buy you ... tiaras, you know, if you wore them! It's something else! Because they want to keep you happy ...
APPENDIX E

Water Street
- Clinic

Alexander Street

Powell Street
- Corral St.
- Columbia St.

Main Street
- COURT HOUSE
- Gore St.
- Clinic

Cordova Street
- BP: Beer Parlour
- H: Hotel
- B: Bar
- C: Club, Cabaret

East Hastings
- The Corner
- Cozy Corner

The UPTOWN AREA

Pender Street

Keefer Street
- BP: Beer Parlour
- H: Hotel
- The Stratford
APPENDIX E

THE DOWNTOWN AREA

BP: Beer parlour
H: Hotel
B: Bar
C: Club, Cabaret
APPENDIX F

A MARK'S STORY

I see a man in his forties hitch-hiking on the highway. I'm in no hurry and I stop. He looks nice but he smells of alcohol, which makes me somewhat suspicious. A conversation starts:
- Where are you going?
- Not very far, down the road. I have to see a guy at the garage. I'll tell you where to stop.
- I'm going to X., to snowshoe. It's a beautiful day!
- Yes, but rather chilly.
- What sort of work do you do?
- I work at the docks, in one of the sheds. My job is to control the merchandise that is stocked there.
- What sort of merchandise?
- Everything, but mainly imports from Japan, you know, cameras, electronic equipment, televisions. That's why I'm going to the garage, to make arrangements for the delivery of a 24" colour T.V.... Hot merchandise... You know what I mean...
- I'm selling him a $700 T.V. for $250, brand new! I hope you're not a cop or a lawyer, or something?
- No, I'm just a teacher.
- If you're interested, I have a $400 Nikkon camera that you can have for $125.
- I don't really need a camera, but I can ask some of my friends. But I'm looking for a small black and white T.V. Do you have any?
- (Slight hesitation) No... No... But I can get some. How many do you need?
- One for myself... perhaps more... I have to ask some of my friends. What kind are they?
- Sanyo... 21"... Portable.
- Do you have anything smaller... say 17" or 19" in Panasonic or Sony?
- No, but I'll see what I can get.
- How do you get the merchandise? I've heard about "hot merchandise" sold by port employees. Are there no controls?

His answer was vague. What I remember is that entire trucks were deviated to the wrong shed after custom control. Merchandise was then taken out item by item.

- I don't quite follow, but I suppose you have to work there to understand the intricacies of custom control and storage?
- Exactly! Anyway, I'm not supposed to reveal too many details of our operations! I don't know you... You could squeal to the cops!
- No, I'm not a cop.
- Are you interested in buying boxes of frozen filet mignon steaks? 50lbs boxes?
- Frozen steaks?
- Yeah! The best filet mignon! Some people buy 200 pounds and fill their freezer right up!
- I don't have a freezer. Anyway, I'm kind of reluctant to buy meat on the sly. You never know...
- Nothing to worry about! It's government inspected meat. I eat some every day.

It must be good meat because the man looks in top shape! I learned at the beginning of our conversation something I forgot to mention: if that man smells of alcohol, it's because he is Irish and he celebrated St Patrick's Day the day before.
- No, thank you. Where can I reach you about the T.V.? Do you want to give me a number where I can reach you?
- No, I can't give you my number, it's too dangerous! I don't know you.
- I told you that I don't have anything to do with the cops! I'm a teacher. I can show you some I.D...
- No need! No need! Give me you number and I'll call you.

I was a bit hesitant to give my name and number to a thief. Could he not take my address with the intention of burglarizing my apartment while I was at work? After some hesitation I finally gave him my home and office phone numbers. He jotted them down on a small piece of paper.

We had arrived at the garage. He told me to let him off, assuring me that he would call me in a few days. He needed some time to make the necessary arrangements. We said goodbye and I continued on my way.

Two days later, I received a phone call at the office.
The man told me he had some T.V.s but they were bigger than what I had asked for. I said: "O.K. Save one for me" "Do you have any friends who would be interested?" he asked. I went to the office next door to ask a friend. He wanted one. We said that we would even take a third set for another person we knew who might need one. The price of each T.V. set would be $75. The man told me the exact place where we were supposed to meet him the next morning at 10 o'clock. He added again that he did not want to see any cops.

My friend and I discussed the matter and thought that the T.V. sets would be delivered to us in closed cardboard boxes. But, after all, the man could be trying to swindle us and he could have filled the boxes with charcoal or dirt... So, we decided to bring along a knife which could be used to open the boxes quickly.

The next day, we parked the car at the prescribed place, which was near the docks. After waiting for fifteen minutes, our man knocked at the side window to have the back door unlocked. He got in the car, sat down, and told us to hurry because it was not safe to stay there. He gave us immediately the directions to the shed where the transaction was supposed to take place. We parked near the fence restricting access to the docks. Then the man told us: "That'll be $225! " We turned around, very surprised. "But, we want to see the merchandise!" we said. "But, this is not what I told you," he answered. "I told you that I needed the money first, to give it to the guy in charge of the loaded truck!"
My friend then said that he was no longer interested. However, I did not want to give up so easily. I said to the man: "Well... I didn't understand that..." "Hurry up," said the man, "it's not safe for me to stay here too long!... Oh, God! It's hard to do business with you! Take it or leave it, the way it was agreed!" I replied: "We're sorry... but you must understand... you see, we don't know you... You might be a crook and leave with our money!"

The man then talked more calmly and agreed with us, but said that after having the money it would take him only five minutes to be back with the three T.V. sets: he only had to go to the truck and give the money to the driver.

I then asked him to leave some piece of identification with us, but he did not have any wallet or I.D. He repeated that he could not stay all day with us! I then decided to risk the price of one T.V. set and gave him $75. He left immediately. We could not even tell which way he went because on the one hand it was wintertime and the car windows were fogged up, and on the other hand we felt ashamed to doubt the word of a man who could be honest, and we did not want to watch him too closely and show him that we did not fully trust him.

Silence prevailed in the car... But after fifteen minutes, my friend and I literally burst out laughing. We had understood that we had been had. We got out of the car. Our man had completely disappeared. We drove around, but in vain. Finally, we drove back to the college, our knife unused. It was obvious that we should have known better!