

DRA #4: Prostitution in France

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Hook: Today, there are many women in France that go into prostitution because they cannot obtain a decent job because they aren't qualified or they don't have an education that can help them achieve a job. So, their last resort is prostitution. This happens from ages ranging from as young as 15 to as old as 40. Many women are struggling into finding work that can pay a decent amount and help them achieve a better life. In recent years, there hasn't been much stop to prostitution in France. Many women work in brothels, private areas, or even in the public because those are only some of the places that they can go to perform these sexual acts without being criminalized. Women are being forced into working in such a harsh way because they cannot afford to obtain a different job, since they aren't qualified or they need more money than the job can provide. These women are being sexualized for money. Kilvington, Day, and Ward write, "the major problems of prostitution for the workers remain exploitation, stigma, abuse and criminalization." [5] Women are performing this work in dangerous conditions that they shouldn't have to endure.

Thesis (Paragraph #2): The rise of prostitution among young women in France is due to the lack of laws regulating the practice and, the rise of inequality among women from men. There have been many preconceptions about France and prostitution that women only do it for their sexual desires, but that is incorrect. Women get involved with it because they need to support themselves some way, and cannot get a job because they lack the education. There has also been a lack of laws regarding prostitution and hasn't been stopped. These women are enduring such hard conditions, that one would think to try to stop it permanently.

Paragraph #3: Preconceptions about France and prostitution

Paris has always been known as "the city of love" for many reasons; how beautiful and romantic the city is, and the amount of sex workers that are in the city. In France, many women work as sex workers because they get paid much more than what they would be getting paid for having a "real job". That doesn't make it okay for them to work like that though. Many women who are prostitutes are in dangerous conditions, not knowing what their nights are going to be like or whom they are going to be with. Many women continue to work regardless of the terrible conditions because they need to make a living somehow. Per the article, "it's not against the law to take money for sex in France, the new legislation—passed on Wednesday by the National Assembly—makes almost everything connected with the trade, including paying the money illegal." [1] This is supposed to cause less prostitutes in France, but no matter what there will always be women doing this kind of work. Most people believe women go into prostitution for their benefit and sexual desires but this is not true. Women and young girls get involved with prostitution because they need to find some substantial work.

Paragraph #4: How women get involved into prostitution

Prostitution has been relevant in society and culture, mainly focused on French culture, involving many young girls and older women. Women and young girls go into prostitution because they are born into poverty and can't afford to go attend school, and need to find work to earn money for a way of living. These women are being forced into this labor because they need to feel significant and have a sense of worth in their lives. The book, *Writing with a Vengeance*, is an account of a young girl, Céleste, who goes through life and becomes a prostitute. Mossman, the author, writes, "in 1840 Céleste Vénard registered herself with the Parisian police as a prostitute in accordance with the regulations." [3] She was at a such a young and vulnerable age that she didn't really know what she was doing. She needed to find some form of work that allowed her to work at a young age and earn some sort of living. Most of these women that are going into prostitution are from families or environments that are hurting them emotionally and physically. Among these women, most of them are being raped or beaten from someone in their family. Céleste didn't have a father figure in her life, except her "mother's lover" [3], Vincent, which "attempted seduction and rape." [3] Vincent tried to force Céleste to have sex with him because she was going into prostitution and that she wanted it. Yes, that's her way of living and finding money but it is not okay to force it out of her and rape her. These girls are coming from some sort of broken relationship that they then go and find some way to heal it. This was another reason that many young women fall into prostitution. First, money, and second, a torn relationship. Céleste didn't necessarily have the best relationship with her mom, in fact it was terrible. Mossman writes, "...consented to give the written parental permission required for minors." [3] After her mom gave her consent, their relationship was broken. Céleste went on and became a full-time prostitute. These women are enduring horrible conditions because they have no other way of finding a job because they lack the proper education. These women are also coming from harsh conditions before they even go into work. They're coming from broken families that lead them to fend for themselves and try to live a new life. Those are the main reasons why prostitution started to become more relevant in society and, continue today.

Paragraph #5: Laws regarding prostitution

Before 1980, France had many problems with prostitution and today, still does. In 1960, there was an article published in *The New York times* explaining the measures they are taking to prevent prostitution and have women obtain a "more normal life." [2] The article was written for people who were paying for prostitution and, or prostitutes in general. The purpose of the article is to inform people who are paying for prostitution that the government and police are taking serious measures to end prostitution. *The New York times* writes, "broader powers have been given to the police to control hotels and bars frequented by prostitutes. Such establishments may now be closed for periods of three months to five years and the proprietor faces possible loss of his driver's license and passport." [2] Anybody found with a prostitute will face huge consequences. The article was written on November 28, 1960 and read after it was printed. The author of the article is probably American since the article is from the *New York Times*. I think he may have a biased opinion on the situation happening in France because he isn't in the country experiencing what is happening. The article is just meant to inform people on the consequences and give an insight on what is going on

in other countries. One unspoken assumption the article contains is that there seems to be a lot of prostitution in France and that people haven't been doing anything about it. In France, prostitution was so relevant that they weren't sure what to do. So many women and young girls were getting involved in it, that they couldn't stop mass movements of it. Soon enough, they presented laws that prohibited it, and tried to end prostitution. According to the book, *Prostitution and the Ruling Class in Eighteenth-Century Montpellier*, the government imposed many measures to try and end prostitution. These measures were focused on the middle class, and didn't really end prostitution. They only reduced it. First, they write, "a series of laws between 1684 and 1687 attempted to eradicate the problem of prostitutes following the army." [7] They wanted to diminish the chance of obtaining a disease from these "sex workers". They didn't care about these women, but instead wanted to do everything that they could to get rid of them. This also relates to the idea that men were treated better than women during these times, and still are. They continued to write laws that tried to end prostitution, they write, "the second aspect of government measures in the 1680's was concerned with the honour of families." [7] Again, the government did not care about the women, but the face of their families. They wanted everyone's family to look great and act like they didn't do anything wrong. They wanted the perfect family. These women who are involved in prostitution obviously didn't care about what their families thought. They needed to find a way to make money fast, and carry on with their lives. These laws did not end prostitution because it is still occurring today in many places around the world, especially in France.

Paragraph #6: Inequality among men and women with crime and prostitution, and how prostitutes are being treated

Today, many people define standards for men and women. Women are expected to act like a charming lady while men are to show how masculine and tough they are. This is unacceptable. Women, are also treated way differently than men. Men are treated like kings, always in charge and controlling everything around them. This is a prominent issue in prostitution today. These women don't know where they're going when they are "picked up" and don't know anything about these men. They have a sense of fear in them, not knowing what their nights are going to be like. The *British Medical Journal*, written in 1957, wrote about prostitution saying that "Lombroso regarded prostitution in women as the equivalent of crime in men." [8] This is comparing men committing actual crimes, like burglary or arson, to women who are trying to make money to support themselves. This is unfair. There was also another newspaper article, written by the *New York Times* in 1975, talking about several prostitutes that are calling federation and fighting for what they want. A quote written in the newspaper from a prostitute reads, "As a result, some of us have been getting arrested for or five times a night. Usually that means a \$40 fine, or several nights in jail. What is particularly intolerable, is that then they send us to prison, they take our children away from us." [9] The authorities do not see these women as women, they instead see them as sex objects because they do not believe that they are real people. This is wrong, they have lives, children and families that they need to support, but instead are being treated wrongly. When they are taken away for multiple nights, it puts a huge damper on them. A few nights can mean losing hundreds or thousands of dollars for them. This is all unacceptable. These women aren't being

treated fairly among their male race, and are also not being treated right by the authorities.

Paragraph #7: What's happening today with prostitution

Conclusion: How to end prostitution and why it's important in society

[1] Dickey, C "France's New Prostitution Law Targets Johns, Ignites National Debate" 5 December 2013 <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1662703172?accountid=14902>

[2] "Prostitution Curbs Posed in France" New York Times, November 28 1960 (Assessed February 6 2017) <https://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu:6117/docview/115114525?accountid=14902>

[3]: Mossman, Carol. Writing with a Vengeance. Canada: University of Toronto, 2009

[4]: Gaissad, Laurent. "From Nightlife Conventions to Daytime Hidden Agendas: Dynamics of Urban Sexual Territories in the South of France." The Journal of Sex Research 42, no. 1 (2005): 20-27.

[5]: Kilvington, Judith, Sophie Day, and Helen Ward. "Prostitution Policy in Europe: A Time of Change?" Feminist Review, no. 67 (2001): 78-93.

[7] Jones, Colin. "Prostitution and the Ruling Class in Eighteenth-Century Montpellier." History Workshop, no. 6 (1978): 7-28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4288189>.

[8] "Prostitution." The British Medical Journal 2, no. 5041 (1957): 399-400. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25383562>.

[9] "FRENCH PROSTITUTES FORM A FEDERATION." 1975. New York Times (1923-Current File), Jun 18, 23. <https://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu:6117/docview/120383873?accountid=14902>.