

XXX

PART ONE CRITICAL WRITING

A Cultural Exploration of Contemporary Feminism's Relationship with Commercial Sexuality

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This project has been separated into two sections: Critical Writing and Experiential Writing.

The Experiential section is not included in the Google Drive share.

XXX has been converted from Corel WordPerfect 10.0 to Word 98/2000 and is now stored in Google Drive (formerly Google Docs).

Some formatting errors may be present that do not exist in the original.

The Table of Contents has been removed due to errors in conversion.

Keywords:

Feminism, equal rights, erotic labor, gender equality, human rights, prostitution, sex industry, sexual slavery, sex workers' rights, commercial sexuality, politics, trafficking, sex trafficking.

Abstract:

Questioning the relationship of prostitution with feminism, XXX investigates the history of the sex industry, and how over the last thirty years it has contributed to fragmenting the American women's movement. Amidst the disagreements there are issues that greatly need unified attention, not just to better conditions for women who choose to work in the sex industry, but also to assist in defining the laws to protect women that are brought into the trade against their will; e.g., during armed conflict.

At what point will women be able to connect when it comes to commerce, sexuality and their combined power?

Combining critical and experiential writing, XXX explores erotic labor from the classroom, where academia creates the cultural concepts of the sex industry, to the working rooms of women performing the acts of sex for money. Within each segment feminism is redefined as consensual and non consensual acts are presented and contemplated, hopefully opening new doors for dialogue on the sex industry.

“ It is [the] statistical analysis of many facts that seems to guide [conclusions] rather than a deep understanding of or intimacy with the world of sex work. The way prostitutes are analyzed – in some instances – objectifies, dehumanizes, and strips them of any personality, like so many flies pinned to a board for an entomologist to study.”

Radical Feminist **Kathleen Barry**
The Prostitution of Sexuality

Introduction: The XXX Industry.

What is the sex industry? A basic definition might be as follows: The sex industry is mature, safe, consensual, profitable, and includes casual sex, simulation of sex, or a sex act that brings about a form of satisfaction for one or all of the parties involved; either the contracted workers, the consumers or both. But what – really – is it? It is prostitution, which spreads out into so many categories within itself that it would be absurd to try to approach it in this essay. There is pornography which has the basic separation of softcore, hard core, and XXX. There is heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay, fetish and S/M pornography. There are porno magazines, books and videos, digital flicks, and live stream sex shows on the Internet. Then there is also the debate between the erotic and the pornographic, which I've read a lot on, but will not address here. There once was the art of burlesque and go-go dancing, which has evolved into more explicit forms of no-sex sexuality for sale. There is topless dancing. There is lap dancing. There is nude dancing.

Then there is domination. There are a lot of fetishes which replace “straight” sex, or accent it. There is phone sex, which has basically been replaced by cyber and virtual sex. There is sex supply distribution, which consists of sex toys such as dildos, vibrators, lubricants, clothing and accessories. There is a legal sex industry, and there is an illegal sex industry. There are apparent aspects of the industry, and there are hidden aspects of the industry. It is a global phenomenon, with few places on the planet spared from its existence. Sex and money are understood in any language and culture. Adult entertainment, as it is called, does not entertain everybody. It leads to arguments as to what adults may and may not do, with whom, and how. It stimulates moral, legal, financial, and philosophical debate. Yet, the more it is discussed the less we are able, in many ways, to touch upon what it is that actually keeps it alive. Sex is, in many ways, most vibrant when it is silent and private, even if that means it is paid for in private. It is a chameleon when displayed before public and legal scrutiny. It presents itself within a masquerade. Over the last twenty years, some very serious discussions have taken place about sex, the sex industry, and what that means as far as personal freedom and feminism. It has made some women wonder where it is leading us, others wonder from where did it come, and still others wish it would simply go away. The sex industry is growing more global right now, though, and the issues are only becoming more complex. For the purpose of this discussion, the sex industry is defined as the specific sale of female to male sex. To keep things in a simple format, this essay will focus on that which is relative to the feminist debate: of age, and/or heterosexual prostitution, and why it is part of the feminist movement's evolution.

Chapter One: Defining the Movement.

First, what is feminism? How is it really defined? Especially with respect to the sex industry?

Multiple categories of feminism have been defined amongst academics over the last twenty five years. I'll assist in deciphering these separations in the movement, then I will discuss some of the categories of commercial sexuality that have created the division of the term 'feminist', and how that has created the need for definitions of the antithesis of the feminist: The Sex Worker!

In the next section religion, philosophy and the history/law of the American sex industry will be discussed, followed by different categories of non-consensual sexual labor and misappropriated sexual labor to show how true sexual slavery, rape and degradation differ from the arguments against formal prostitution and pornography. New trends in international laws and advocacy will be discussed, and by the end of this essay I will bring sex workers and feminists back together, hopefully, as women. Maybe women with a slightly different opinion or perspective, but equal women, nonetheless.

As said, for the purpose of this paper, most of the discussion will be on heterosexual, adult prostitution, though my personal research has included the collection of material on child sexual labor abroad, teenage prostitution in the United States, transgender prostitution, bisexual pornography/prostitution, and commercial s/m. There will be some mention of international concerns with human trade, which includes children. Child and male prostitution will not be mentioned here as independent discussions, as the purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship of feminism with prostitution, as defined by adult women having consensual sex with adult men for money. Each category mentioned is briefly discussed, though in no way completely covered. My intention is to raise interest in these issues, and with such help raise awareness on how important I feel these issues are for our society to be able to peacefully and logically address as a community, and not as adversaries.

Classic Conservatism is a political philosophy which enforces that it is the State's right and responsibility to determine what will be considered acceptable behavior for adults based on social climate, moral tone, preservation of historic and cultural traditions, public opinion or values and how harmful an activity might be to other people, and to one's self. A Classical Liberal position is the idea that the state should only interfere with the choices and conduct when one's activities are harming another. John Mill's work, in particular, On Liberty, is often mentioned in legal and philosophical discussions pertaining to Classic Conservatism, and Classical Liberalism.

We are familiar with the terms of the opposing perspectives in various contexts: gun control, drunk driving laws, the sale of tobacco to minors, and industrial safety standards. Society finds a balance in the boundaries of the arguments between one side and the other. When the issues focus on sex or gender, the standards seem to change. No longer is it one or the other, but a plethora of emotional, moral, legal, and philosophical differences.

The introduction of feminism into the political sphere as a result of the women's movement of the 1960's has benefited numerous causes, adding breadth, depth, and compassion to issues of public concern. The feminist community bonded as they fought to have items added to American forum and agenda. As women have become equal in position in many parts of our culture and society new concerns pertaining to sexuality, gender, and reproductive health have been addressed. These issues have complicated what in the past seemed a fairly straightforward stage of debate.

Since the late 1980's, the sex industry has been a primary issue that has complicated the feminist

perspective, with domestic violence and sexual aggression (rape) first creating heated debate. Leah Platt, author of the article, “Regulating the Global Brothel,” comments that:

“... the feminist community, which is the champion of women’s rights in the workplace in many realms, remains bitterly divided over prostitution. On one side are the abolitionists, who call prostitution a crime against women, akin to rape or domestic violence; on the other side are the pro-choicers, for whom the rhetoric of victimization is itself demeaning, and who say that women should be able to do whatever they want with their own bodies, including renting them out for pay.”[\[1\]](#)

In my exploration of feminist perspectives on the sex industry, I have come across much more dynamic categorization than the two points of separation Ms. Platt mentions. I had thought that it would be a relatively limited argument, but have found I was very wrong. Feminism, as I was raised to define it, has been shattered into fragments of a movement over sexuality, with commercial sexuality taking the blame at the end of many disagreements. The “Bonding of Sisterhood” vibrantly alive thirty years ago, disintegrated by the late 1980s. The sexual revolution had not prepared women for the deeper issues that lay beyond the surface of each woman’s individual idea of sexual freedom. The battle for one’s body was against all men, and their stale patriarchal laws and limitations. Feminists stood together for the right to be women who earn top dollar in any chosen career. A feminist was considered one who has sex when and with whom sex is desired, invests, uses birth control, owns property, is treated with respect and is in good physical and mental health as a result of her control over her life. Feminists fell apart from the central ideal when the topic turned to the woman that is for sale. That *girl*. The Working Girl. Whores. Harlots. Hookers. Escorts. Companions.

What are the feminist perspectives on commercial sex, and why is it important for women to find a common ground to discuss, not battle, the issues? Does it really matter? Will it in any way change the world? It might; if only women can stop calling each other by all of the names that separate them.

I adore vibrant and vocal Pro-Sex activists, such as the Scarlet Harlot of San Francisco, but must women make such an extreme statement to speak on behalf of a woman’s right to suck dick and spank by choice, and for pay? Well? Actually, YES! It took women like Carol Leigh to get out on the street, and make a scene for the ball to really get rolling. “Sex Work” was a term coined and defined in the 1970s as a result of the prostitutes’ rights movement in the United States, and later in Europe. This was not a movement that Gloria Steinem marched with (though she did strut at the Playboy Mansion when “Bunnies” were all the rage), but it is a movement that came out of its closet as a result of the more mainstream, middle class movement. It is similar to the Victorian movement when the “Bluestockings” and the “Redstockings” stood stocked in opposition to one another. Cathy Crossman explains how the “Redstockings” included such trail-blazing pro-sex feminists as Victoria Woodhull, the early Margaret Sanger, and Emma Goldman. The “Bluestockings” in contrast, sought succor from the state they presumed to be beneficent, and in a bolder mood, aspired to become its agents. Their politics were elitist, and centered on the right to vote.

The “Bluestockings” were mainly middle class and sought to protect their own rights, while disapproving of the issues coming from the working class, and immigrant women. Presently, in many other countries, radical women’s groups have protests over women’s and sex worker’s rights, and base their movements on the American movement of the 1960s and 1970s. What is interesting is that the movement that inspired the European sex workers movement, and recently the Third World movement, became bitterly divided over the issue of commercial sexuality.[\[2\]](#) How to include rich/poor, black/white/, citizen/immigrant, young woman/old woman into one set of sexual standards? We had a moral, emotional, legal, and political meltdown; though at least we did create a new platform for international debate and discussion.

Where is a good starting point on prostitution? In his recent research, “Charges Against Prostitution: An Attempt at a Philosophical Assessment of Prostitution”, Lars Ericsson presents contemplation deeper than many of the feminist articles I’ve read. The article opens with the statement that philosophical discussions on the legality and morality of prostitution are neglected amidst much continuous attention to other areas such as pimps, drugs, etc. The author wonders if it is possible to even have a contemporary and philosophical discussion about “harlotry”. After questioning different angles, the intent of his discussion is crystallized:

“It is the purpose of this paper to undertake a critical assessment of the view that prostitution is undesirable. I shall do this,” he states, “by examining what seem to me the most serious and important charges against prostitution.”[\[3\]](#)

1. The Charge From Conventional Morality. This is the most common and general of arguments against women having sex for commerce. According to the moralist, a prostitute is “a sinful creature who ought be banned from civilized society”.[\[4\]](#) Whoredom is a social evil which involves degenerate behavior, existing outside of heterosexual, homogenous, sexual intercourse which is acceptable within the union of marriage. Prostitution is viewed as an act which can adversely affect the nuclear family, and the roles created with respect to sex being strictly for procreation.

The author feels that moral opposition to “mercenary love” is fanatical and ridiculous:

“If two adults voluntarily consent to an economic arrangement concerning sexual activity and this activity takes place in private, it seems plainly absurd to maintain that there is something intrinsically wrong with it. In fact, I very much doubt that it is wrong at all...”[\[5\]](#)

2. The Sentimentalist Charge: Sentimentalists, as they are called, view sex between two persons who love and care for one another as the most precious of things. To the Sentimentalist, commercial sex lacks all of those qualities, and therefore transforms the sexual experience into something negative.

3. The Paternalistic Charge: This is a legal category wherein if a person is found to be hurting themselves as a result of their behavior, the state may intervene and prevent them from doing so. This argument has been used in illegal raids of private S/M associations, and prevents individuals involved in a scenario from pressing or not pressing charges against each other; the

State overrides personal involvement and decides if an engaged activity is suitable or unsuitable. The paternalist argument against prostitution is that a “working girl” runs the risk of being physically and mentally abused / harmed. The “working girl” runs the risk of being exposed to venereal diseases and the HIV virus. She also runs the risk of inducing depression, neurosis and compulsive, self-destructive behavior onto herself. The paternalist feels that though there is no moral reason why prostitution should be illegal, it is in the best interest of the prostitute to be something other than a prostitute.

4. The Marxist Charge: The Marxist is in opposition to a human being forced by economic necessity to become like a machine, and use themselves as a means of eternal productivity, especially for the profit of any other person or business. The parallel here is production, and wage labor. Aleksandra Kollontai states that: “... bargaining over the female body is closely related to bargaining over female working power. Prostitution can only disappear when wage labor does.”[\[6\]](#)

A contemporary socialist, Sheila Rowbotham has a similar view: “Just as the prostitute gives the substitute of love for money, the worker hands over his work and his life for a daily wage.”[\[7\]](#)

Marxists have no moral perspective on the issue, since Marxists are usually agnostic or atheist. In Marxist philosophy, it is believed that there are two sides to prostitution. One side is supply, and on the other side is demand. The two sides have completely different questions and agendas attached to them. One question posed in the essay is: Why do women become prostitutes? The Marxist answer is purely because of their socioeconomic position in a class society.

I was intrigued by this way of viewing prostitution, since I am accustomed to the basic American arguments of morality and class separation. I decided to do a bit more reading. Rosemarie Tong[\[8\]](#) discusses the genre with a bit more in-depth categorization. She describes the Classical Marxist Feminist Interpretation, the Socialist Feminist Interpretation, and brings these two together in her forum on Radical Feminist Interpretation, and Opposition to Prostitution.

The Classical Marxist Feminist Interpretation: With some variations, classical Marxist feminists adopt the Marx / Engels analysis of prostitution: no woman under capitalism, be she a prostitute or not, can transcend the conditions that determine her and which prevent her transformation into a subject, a person who is in charge of her own destiny. Try as she might, social and economic conditions are such that she must remain an object, a plaything in the hands of those who control the contours of her existence. This is why, as Marx and Engels see it, the difference between a married woman and a prostitute – upper –, middle –, lower-class – is one of degrees and not of a kind.[\[9\]](#)

I decided to look up Marxism and prostitution to see if there was an established connection, or if this was a contemporary academic thing. To my surprise, I did find reference. It was not philosophical, but rather pragmatic statistics on urban life, factories and prostitution.

“Further, the factory system has to be considered, which began to develop in England in the second half of the eighteenth century, and very soon, with its resulting concentration on women

and children, had the worst possible effect on public morality, so that as early as the 22nd June 1802 the indiscriminate employment of children as factory workers had to be prevented by law. The factories, with their concentration of large numbers of people of different sexes, mostly young, were, first in England, later also on the continent, a ceaseless source of prostitution. Colquhoun estimated as early as the year 1793 that amongst the 50,000 London prostitutes, not less than 20,000 were factory workers, whilst only 3,000 came from the domestic servant class.”[\[10\]](#)

Another reference to a need for evaluation of the role of human as absolute commodity is the following:

“... in the year 1838, amongst 3,103 prostitutes 3 were under 15 years of age, 414 from 14 to 20, 872 from 20-25, 525 from 25-30, 237 from 30-40, 88 from 40-50, and 19 from 50-60. Talbot knew prostitutes of 10 and of 50 years of age. Those over 50 years were usually procuresses and brothel keepers. Nowhere was the youth of some of the prostitutes so astonishing as in London, and in no town was child prostitution developed to such a shocking extent as in London.”[\[11\]](#)

Marxism was greatly opposed to the dignity of mankind being manipulated by the reality of man-as-machine for labor for the sole profit of the rich.

05. The (formal) Feminist Charge: To quote Ericsson directly, “Like the moralist and the Marxist, the feminist is of the opinion that prostitution can and ought to be eradicated. Some feminists, like the moralists, want to criminalize prostitution. But, unlike the moralist, they want to criminalize both whore and customer.”[\[12\]](#)

The Feminist Charge against commercial sexuality is also known as Radical Feminism. Though it is against the sex industry, it has contributed to the betterment in understanding the sex industry by defining the differences between prostitutes. In most texts or articles there are street hookers or penthouse call girls. There are single mothers, drug addicts, runaways, and aged whores who never knew how to do anything else, and were stuck. The list adds a new and necessary dimension to the question of who she is, and why, the prostitute even exists.

The categorical reasons according to the radical feminists are:

1. Women who inadvertently fall into poverty.
2. Women born into poor families, with little or no education.
3. Women abducted against their will, and forced into sexual slavery.
4. Women who enter into commercial sexuality voluntarily because of defects in her moral character. A natural born predator (meaning women who view sex and money as easily as they do food and drink, and feel that men are supposed to serve their needs. A woman considered being without any moral or ethical foundation.)
5. Women who were “distanced” and demoralized in a competitive childhood, and did not fully develop psychologically and emotionally as a result.
6. Women of low intelligence. Women who have physical or mental defects.
7. Natural whores. Some women are just born to do it.

8. (The most minimal of categories) Attractive women who are very smart. Opportunists.
9. People with irrepressible personalities who like excitement, challenge and danger: artists, poets, writers, political activists, etc. [\[13\]](#)

Even if you disagree with part of the list, it does show that not all prostitutes are the same, and therefore no solitary argument or law can cover the entirety of commercial sexual politics. To explain the opposition that women have to the sex industry, Sara Brohmberg [\[14\]](#) explains that feminists are divided by that which is considered to be moral and that which is considered to be political. We can better understand this by considering the difference between women in middle class households and women from working class households, or married women vs. single women, or urban women vs. rural women. Ms. Bromberg's explanation seems very simple, but there is a great divide. Do you know what side you are on? By asking that, doesn't it seem even greater a point of distance between each woman and her perspective?

In the same book as Ms. Bromberg's essay appears, there is a list similar to categories defined by Mr. Ericson. These categories are not against prostitution, but rather they define arguments for and against commercial sexuality. There is Liberal, which believes that prostitution is conceived of in the contractarian sense of a private business transaction. Socialist believe that states of oppression have psychoanalytical and social roots which we need to define and solve, and that prostitution is a form of oppression. Marxist, which believes that material greed has dominated social concerns. The Radicals believe that women's oppression is the most fundamental form of oppression, and that women must be freed from the restraints of the patriarchy. To me the most interesting category was that called Existentialist. This category was named after Simone de Beauvoir, who believed that "one of the keys to a woman's liberation [was/is] economic." [\[15\]](#)

Before I began my senior study, I thought that there were only those that were for the sex industry, those who were against it, and those that did not care at all. It turns out that over the last twenty years, many college classrooms have invested a great deal of time contemplating the definitions of today's women.

We can argue that prostitution and pornography harm and degrade women, but to that I found strong and intelligent words which I will state in full as conclusion to this section:

"If the primary cause of predatory services and trafficking is a function of overpopulation, education deficiency, feudal social policy, or fierce competition for attention at school, (for) wealth and jobs, the fact that prostitution thrives and subsequently degrades women is beside the point.

Feminists are likely blaming the wrong people for the existence of a degradation that is part of a vicious cycle of degradation that has its sources elsewhere." [\[16\]](#)

Does all this seem like a lot of repetitive contemplative theory? It did - at first - for me. The categories and the terminology are all very well and good, but it does seem a bit far away from the subject. It is the difference between the street hooker and the student in a classroom. However, the more that I read and began to think about all of this material, the more I began to

realize how important it is to be able to discuss these categorizations. At the beginning of the women's movement, they did not exist outside of the private realities of the women who were working themselves. Though sex work, and research on sex work, is still not parallel, there are presently efforts to change that into more comprehensive understanding in order to better women's studies and women's lives. Elizabeth Bernstein, author of the dynamic essay, "What's Wrong With Prostitution? What's Right With Sex Work? Comparing Markets in Female Sexual Labor" notices, "Amongst feminists, prostitution has been abundantly theorized, but insufficiently studied."[\[17\]](#)

Much of the available writing on commercial sex is much too academic and segregated either from actual workers, or by sex workers in a way that is, seemingly, only for other sex workers. The graphic and pedestrian style of the material at times alienating readers as much as fascinating them, such as with Annie Sprinkle's post modern feminist art and video or editor Matthew Bernstein Sycamore's collection of sex worker tales, Tricks and Treats: Sex Workers Talk About Their Clients. Both have offered important views into the American sex industry, the extremes of their work brought about by the extremes saying the realities of their experiences did not exist, or was not proper to speak about.

Dirty Looks: Women-Pornography-Power[\[18\]](#) contains fourteen essays and articles written from a diverse selection of "Pro-Sex" feminists, activists and artists. From fetish photographers to university professors, the dynamic differences between the women brought together in this format makes it a really exciting book to have on the reference shelf! Most of the articles are about pornography, as opposed to prostitution, and that is because at the time it was published, it was written in response to the growing number of feminist activists attempting to have government interference in the production and distribution of pornographic material. One of the main points involved in this argument is "Who is to decide what is to be deemed pornographic?" The concern is that material that may be erotic within one subculture, may be found morally devoid or sexually incorrect in another community. But who is to deem a sexual relationship right or wrong? The difference between a Mennonite couple in Lancaster, PA, as compared to a lesbian couple in Vermont, or a male couple in San Francisco, CA or a fetish lifestyle couple in Los Angeles, CA or Miami, FL is extreme in their difference of opinion. Then there are young couples in Anytown, USA who may want to explore slightly progressive twists on their attraction to each other and don't even realize they are partaking in controversy.

During the mid 1980s, commissions on both sides of the Atlantic were set up to establish what pornography was, and how pornography affected values, morals and behavior. At the same time, Andrea Dworkin stampeded forth in a blast of anger against the industry. I will discuss this more in the next section, but to understand why women began coming out of the closet in support of material that normally would not be discussed, it is essential to understand that many of the advancements that were made during the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s were under full force attack in the 1980s[\[19\]](#).

Dirty Looks was written in response to this attack. The contributors vary from professors to filmmakers to video artists to writers to critics and curators to freelance photographers to fetish magazine staff.

The book would best be described as “pop culture”, unlike Sex, Morality and the Law which would not have a strong audience outside of the academia and legal researchers. What makes it more viable intellectually and politically, as opposed to some other material I’ve seen, is that over half of the writers come from advanced academic backgrounds, but are appealing to a broader audience. They were willing to step out of their conventional parameters.

Another excellent reference on the subject is Caught Looking, written by a feminist collective from the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

“... we believe that the debate over the nature, the effects and the future of pornography must continue. Further, we believe that this debate should not just take place in the feminist journals and academic conferences only. At a time when a “post-feminist generation” has supposedly dismissed the women’s movement, it raises issues that bring into focus the radical nature of the feminist project which is still a long way from fulfillment. Women have a lot at stake and a lot to gain from dealing openly with their sexual fears and desires. Open discussion of sexuality presents an opportunity for women who live and support themselves in a wide variety of ways to create a politics which is liberating for all of us.

We therefore want to keep asking questions:

1. What is the role of sexually explicit language and images in women’s sexual arousal?
2. What role do images play in the control of women?
3. How can the attempt to control women, which is at the heart of sexism, be most effectively subverted?
4. Would violence diminish if violent images were removed from our culture.
5. How can we incorporate our need for sexual speech and freedom of sexual expression into our feminist thinking and goals?...” [\[20\]](#)

I chose to include that section of Caught Looking’s introduction, which was written by Kate Ellis, Barbara O’Dair and Abby Tallmer, because their own words state better than a paraphrase the direction of their project. Written in 1986, Caught Looking is a creative collective process which discusses pornography, the history of women’s sexual rights, women’s fantasies, and the laws on women’s sexuality. Included within its decadent retro covers is writing by Pat Califia, Paula Webster, Kate Ellis and Carol Vance; amongst others. It also shows in photographs a selection of explicit imagery from the last one hundred years. There is a layered intent within the publication: there is the desire to explore sexual imagery to come to an improved state of awareness of what it is; there is a political motivation behind it in opposition to Andrea Dworkin, Catherine MacKinnon, Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media (WAVPM), and the Meese Commission; and there is an obvious desire of the collective to communicate with themselves and others, not just about pornography, but about the reality and importance of women looking their sexuality in the eye without shame.

Andrea Dworkin, advocate against the sex industry, was once a prostitute. After leaving the sex industry, she was raped. These two events are not directly interconnected, though they obviously impacted her perspective on men and sexuality. In short, her aggressor was given a much lighter sentence than was expected because his attorney used pornography to explain his behavior, and made the argument well. The rapist was not actually a rapist. He was a “victim”. He was altered by the images he consumed while watching pornography. Sexually explicit material “made” him do it. The material was to blame for his behavior, not him.

After the trial, Andrea Dworkin decided that all pornography was synonymous with violence against women, and she went on a crusade to make the United States government stop the violence. In the name of feminism, she, and like-minded radical right feminists such as Catherine MacKinnon, took on the pornography industry, and the United States Constitution. It was a very violent time emotionally, intellectually, and politically for many women/feminists, and even a great deal of men.

Caught Looking is an excellent reference source for people looking to read very intelligent, candid, raw and racy essays in opposition to censorship in the name of feminism. It was the effort of the women involved with the project to “...gather together some of the best work by feminists in the last decade (1975-1985) on the issues of pornography and pleasure, censorship and the impulse to control, sexual politics and sexuality in women’s daily lives. It is meant to be used as a source book from which to derive new questions regarding these topics, to provoke discussion of the nature and goals of feminism, and to expand the relevance of the movement to our daily lives and struggles....”[\[21\]](#)

What exactly is pornography? The easiest place to begin is the most pragmatic, and that is with the law. To be considered obscene, material must meet the following standard:

“... it describes or depicts, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by state law (which may include actual or simulated sexual contact or nudity); and it lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.”[\[22\]](#)

That said, it still does not answer what is being asked. What is pornography? Outside of material found in XXX shops, many people find pornographic material to include some poetry, paintings by Rembrandt and Picasso, performance art, TV shows, plays and photographs. We all may think we know what pornography is at the first sight of the word, but do we really know? No. There is no unanimous answer, and that is why when pornography was taken to court, it became such a vicious argument. How can all pornography be banned with the label, “violent to all women”, when a lot of women are involved with it? Do they have a say in any of the arguments?

In 1984 the Feminist Anti Censorship Taskforce (FACT) was formed in Suffolk County, New York. The activists, feminists and scholars who formed this organization were opposed to the anti-pornography ordinances written by Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon. FACT New York made itself a “clearinghouse” for groups in other cities where the ordinance was proposed. Chapters sprang up all over America, and in every city where the ordinance was

presented it was defeated. Finally, in 1986, the Supreme Court ruled the anti-pornography proposal unconstitutional.[\[23\]](#)

Was this expensive argument about the right of men to read girlie mags while they jerk off? No. Regardless of what some people do with their magazines, the anti-pornography act was viewed as another attempt to bring the women's movement back a few paces. For all of the complex issues the Sexual Revolution may have raised in the hearts of many women, how many really want to go back to the time of petting until marriage? For scholars who remembered the obscenity battles over Henry Miller's writing or the writing of William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, or over films such as I Am Curious, Yellow!, the anti-pornography act presented the possibility that book and film codes would revert back to standards of the early 1950s. Most people have entirely different opinions on the issue, but there are only two sides to choose from, and the line had not been fought over before quite like it was during the late 1980s.

Now, quite a bit of what I have just written I already knew. So, what did I learn from reading the booklet instead of just looking at the racy photographs? Quite a bit, actually. I am in the Generation X category of being in between the "feminists" and the "post feminists". Since most of the women my mother's age were exploring active aspects of feminism, I figured it was set in stone and there you go. I didn't realize that I was being raised in an environment which many still oppose. It was simply being lived. And since it was being lived, I never read that much about it. Finally reading essays from women a decade or two older than myself gave me insight into many aspects of feminist thought and theory that I realized I needed to learn. Considering Madonna appeared when I was 11, I grew up with a pop icon image of what the decadent and daring feminist had evolved into, but pop images only show a doorway to what it is that created the image, and that image was created and maintained by the female public need for an outlet to their own feelings, fantasies and secret realities. It was a new way of fighting the revolution. I understood that aspect of it. I had never read, though, about what women fought for in the 1960s and 1970s to allow the sexual personae to do her business in front of us all.

In Ann Snitow's essay entitled "Retrenchment vs. Transformation" (the only essay of the eight or so in the book which I will mention), she discusses the roots of the feminist movement in North America during the nineteenth century. Women began to battle over the right for control of their bodies within marriage. There was no choice about pregnancy, and middle class women wanted rights. In an effort to justify their cause, they became moralists, proving their position of betterment over other women, and therefore creating a pedestal which protected them from being affiliated with other female rights issues beginning to come to attention such as with prostitution and the other results of class struggle. This was the crack in the wall that would maintain the divide between feminists. Different classes of women had different issues with which they were concerned to protect themselves, better themselves and secure their financial welfare.[\[24\]](#) This is still a cause of separation in women's issues today, I believe. There is unity on the issue of breast cancer amongst women, but not over birth control or abortion; and especially not over commercial sexuality.

Also, to confirm the need for specific rights outside of basic civil rights, the original women's movement had to set differences between the genders. In the present, gender is an enormous

debate as bisexual, lesbian and transsexual rights are brought into view, and on a more mainstream level, the need for equal rights and pay in the workplace. Gender separation, which once protected women, is now seen as an issue of concern.

Connecting pornography to the contemporary women's rights movement Ms. Snitow discusses how in 1977, the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court began to consider reversing the 1973 Roe V. Wade, pornography began to be reviewed by right wing feminists with disapproval. Meanwhile, and this is my point, I would say a lot of urban, left wing feminists were involved in the industry without having to "review" it. Many cosmopolitan / career women were living it.

Her essay walks through the "high's and low's" of the feminist battle, and how a lack of quantum speed change disillusioned many women who had felt so impassioned about the movement. She talks about how many people thought that their passion would make everything different; that working for change and realizing it would take generations made some women angry. She discusses new issues which came up as women entered the workplace, divorced more often, dated as single mothers with children. Suddenly feminism was forced to deal with sexual harassment policies, battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, child support issues and deadbeat dads. Denial and violence were becoming more of a problem for women of the 1980s. What was causing this change? Many concluded, *Pornography!* Sexual activity which degraded women. Ms. Snitow makes a comment on this point that is important, "Instead of recognizing that the new visibility of women's sexual victimization is a great leap forward, some feminists are drawing energy from the assertion that women's situation is fast deteriorating." [\[25\]](#)

What I respect about the comment is the honesty. Women fought for change, and change from the nuclear family with a housewife intact has happened. Women are now out in the real world, and having to face men in a new way, and that is not always a positive experience. It will evolve if people keep working for betterment. No one said it would be instant or easy. Or, we can scapegoat the issue and say that pornography creates this hostility, and these breakdowns in communication and etiquette.

I guess that is why so many of us liked Madonna so much, even if we didn't listen to all of her music. She went out there, and obviously took her punches, but she punched back, stood strong, did her thing and made big money doing it her way. To many people (Andrea Dworkin and Tipper Gore included), Madonna was, and still is, pure pornography. There is a vast dimension of sexually explicit material available between the pornography shops and Madonna's *Sex* book, though. Look at the absolute success of publishing empress Helen Gurley Brown, best known for *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Mass consumption mainstream feminism has profited greatly off of everything from the steamy stories of Danielle Steele to the glossy magazines that teach you how to dress for sexual success, or reveal the darkest secrets of strangers suddenly to your intimate friends. Like Carmen.

For two years of her life, 'Carmen Cash became 'Casey', an escort in San Diego, California. At 20, she lived in Alaska working a string of dead-end petty jobs. She got up the courage to move to California to become an actress, and wound up a hooker. The diary reveals her experiences with her clients, the man with whom she worked and the trauma she experienced. In the opening

photo, she is sitting on bed in a hotel room with a pants suit on and very high heels. She looks sad. At the end of the article, she is smiling vibrantly saying she is over the trauma, and will never sell herself again. It is a dirty diary. It is moralistic, with its point that she got out and that she has a psychiatrist now. Ms. Cash hopes her experiences will help prevent other women from exploring prostitution. “Carmen Cash”, writes Glamour Magazine News reporter Liz Brody, “spent two years selling her body to strange men in hotel rooms all over San Diego. Here, in a Glamour exclusive, she wants to warn other women about life as a high-priced escort.”[26]

The regret irritates me about the article. Glamour could not have taken the chance on publishing a story like that if the woman was without regret at the end. Some of the advertisers who need sex to sell their items, don't need THAT much sex to sell them. The other thing is, if she was giving blow jobs for fifty bucks on the boardwalk when the phone at the agency was dead, would they have still published the story? It is okay to have been a high priced escort, and to redeem yourself in the eyes of this brand of feminist “literature”. It is not alright to be a lower level whore, or to be a high level whore and stay there.

I picked this magazine up while on a job myself. Most mainstream women purchase Cosmopolitan, Glamour and other similar magazines, and really, they are the best way to learn how to be a whore. Many prostitutes keep these magazines around their working rooms, and not formal pornography. These magazines, which are sold at every grocery store and drugstore, have more juicy details on how to do it, do it right, and look great while you are doing it. Who needs pornography when you have the guide to getting it yourself? If life leads you into more than just looking the role, there are plenty of articles to show you that you can live through the trauma of experience. After sitting and reading the whole mag, I have to wonder why Andrea Dworkin didn't take on Helen Gurley Brown? She may have realized that she would have lost that battle of the bitches.

Then there is the question of how many “Bunnies” find Playboy covers an oppressive form of rape of virtue. Hugh Hefner's daughter now runs the enterprise. In fact, she “discovered” Pamela Anderson when the, now femme-fatale, Pam was nearly a teenager. And what about the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue? Or Victoria's Secret catalogues. These are the safe “sneak peaks” that good men all want to get at, and which women aspire to emulate each New Year's as is revealed in resolutions to join Weight Watchers.

Regardless of how it is packaged, sex sells. And even when it is not sexual intercourse that sells, it is the power of prowess that sells, along with a young, youthful, healthy, happy attitude about sex. Smile and get that man to do exactly what you want him to do.

Many women like to make money off the concept of their sex, whether it is pushing it forward, or taking it back. At the end of the day, someone is going to be making it make money; just stop by an urban kiosk or suburban Barnes & Noble, or if feeling really daring, your local porno shop and see the real thing.

Chapter Two: Religion and Philosophy

In 1993 while in San Francisco, I was invited to many pro-sex events. I have included an historic information sheet called “Hookers History”, which was part of a media kit I received from Teri Goodson, a member of the activist group C.O.Y.O.T.E (Call Off Your Outdated Tired Ethics). The anonymous author laid out a brief, yet concise walk through of “Her-History”. It is the mythology of the Goddess prior to religion as we now define it. It is the perfect introduction to this section:

“Before the advent of patriarchal religions with their harsh, judgmental Gods and the suppression of sensual pleasure, there was the Goddess. Goddess worship accepted the natural cycles of sexuality, birth, death and concern for the welfare of future generations. Sexuality was incorporated into the very process of worship.

Sacred prostitution, also called religious, ritual, or temple prostitution, was known to cultures on every continent of the Earth. Prostitute-priestesses dispensed the grace of the Goddess in her shrines. The most famous published factual accounts tell about the cultures bordering the Mediterranean Sea, be they European, African, or Near Eastern. But also India, Oceania, and the Americas had sacred harlots.

Aphrodite's priestesses usually remained in her service until their death. The money gained was used to support their house of worship. In ancient Middle-Eastern temples, the prostitutes were sometimes called Charities or Graces; they were known for their beauty and kindness. The sensual magic of the sacred whores was said to have mellowed the behavior of men. Ishtar the Great Whore of Babylon, announced, "A prostitute compassionate am I." Mary Magdalene said of her sisters in the profession, "Not only are we compassionate of ourselves, but we are compassionate of all the race of mankind."

The whores of antiquity often commanded high social status and were revered for their knowledge and erotic skills. As earthly embodiments of the Queen of Heaven, in Palestine called Qadesh, or the Great Whore, the hookers were honored like queens at centers of learning in Greece and Asia Minor. Some even became queens, like the empress Theodora, wife of Justinian and St. Helena, mother of Constantine.

Temple prostitutes were known as healers of the sick. At that time, their secretions were supposed to have medical virtue. A Sufi proverb states, "There is healing in a woman's vagina." An Indian temple hymn says, "To have intercourse with a prostitute is a virtue that takes away sin."

Temple prostitution diminished with the invasion of patriarchal tribes, later ending altogether with the advance of Christianity. Because whores occupied a significant position in paganism, Christianity vilified their profession. However, outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, prostitution often became a fully legitimate lifestyle. We can see that from the revered sacred harlot of antiquity to the often scorned and scapegoated prostitute of today was a long road backward. Let's not forget the proud, ancient heritage left us by our predecessors. Whores were famous for their knowledge, compassion, healing abilities and skills in the art of pleasure.”[\[27\]](#)

Most historical reference on prostitution, however, is removed from the sacred aspects of the Goddess. Historically, the change from matriarchal to patriarchal seems to be with the Canaanites. Mentioned in biblical reference, the ancient Canaanites were a cult of controversy. Due to their worship of idols, and the rites they practiced which involved temple prostitutes, the Israelite authorities ordered their extermination. Dating from 1500 BC, the Canaanites worshiped the Hebrew Goddess, Asherah. It was to be the end of pagan ways. “Both the Temple and the pagan cults shared an intoxication with the feminine Goddess, symbol or Eros.”[\[28\]](#)

In their society, a man would go to the temple and have sex with a sacred female so that his family and his crops would be blessed. In the Torah these women are called Kadeshim, from the word Kadosh, meaning ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’. Archeological evidence has proven that the ancient Israelites worshiped many small idols and the Goddess, but the religious leadership was strictly monotheistic, patriarchal and intolerant of alternatives to their way of thinking.

The Shechinah is known in Kabbalistic sources as the great feminine. She is mother, daughter and lover. She is the force that allows human beings to feel at home in the world. The temple is the place of Eros; it is the experience of being on the inside.[\[29\]](#)

The biblical kingdom of Ugarit, now known as Syria, is where the Canaanites lived according to tablets found at the tell of Ras Shama. These tablets explain the Ugaritic pantheon of Gods: primarily with Baal (son of Ashera), and his struggle with Mot (death). It is from the engraved stone that archeologists learned of the dramatic rites performed by this ancient culture, now defined as “cultic”.

Canaanite prostitutes did not profit off of their sexual services. They served the Temple, and any funds they received went to the Temple. “The notion of prostitution for personal profit is therefore not really a factor amongst religious cult prostitutes as they are not driven to their profession by poverty or crime, as are most prostitutes today, but seem to choose this profession out of a purely religious ideal.”[\[30\]](#)

Connected with the dramatic plays of Baal (god of thunderbolt and rain) and Mot, the Temple prostitutes enacted fertility rites for the community to show the cycles of the fields. When not involved in spiritual enactments, the Temple prostitutes would service the “general worshipers”. Prior to patriarchal religious hierarchy’s condemnation of idolatry and pagan worship, it is believed that many communities extending beyond the specific Canaanites visited the “sacred ones”.

“An Ugaritic cult prostitute living in the Middle-Late bronze age would have also been presented with an onslaught of foreigners. Ugarit was under Egyptian and Hittite dominion for a long period before it was invaded by the Sea peoples in the late 1200s. It is interesting to consider whether there was a “sharing” of religious beliefs. It is known that in other Canaanite cities, Israelites were turning toward cultic worship and thus coming into conflict with their own god,

Yahweh, and so it is possible to imagine that perhaps the Egyptians and Hittite also indulged in Canaanite forms of worship, such as prostitution.”[\[31\]](#)

The belief in the prostitute as a sacred being changes as we place aside archaeological finds of ancient tablets and enter into the Bible itself. In Leviticus 19:29, Israelites are warned not to let their daughters get into prostitution lest they be punished with death. Even more severe warnings are given with respect to temple or cult prostitution and idolatry.

Mordechai Gafni, leader of Bayit Chadash, a spiritual center in Israel, considers the removal of sexuality by pure intellect within religion to be the battle of Ethos and Eros. Speaking specifically about Judaism, he says: “Modern Judaism has developed from the ethical teachings of the prophets. In the process, however, we have overlooked the erotic, present in the pagan consciousness of the Temple service. We have forgotten the Goddess, a vital presence in the life of ancient Israel.”[\[32\]](#)

It is relevant to note that in Kabbalistic (mystical Judaic) tradition, as in Plato, the erotic is an expression of inner passion of life and the quest for truth within, not just a sexual desire or method of gratification. Mr. Gafni feels that the ancient Jews believed passion to be essential in daily worship and everyday life. Eros was the component necessary to maintain a continuous state of intellectual, emotional and physical passion.

He tells of the Asherah tree, and how it was the central symbol of the Canaanites and the worshipers in Judah, and in Israel. The tree was a symbol of Asherah incarnate. It is written that King Josiah attempted radical reform after reading a new book devoted to the destruction of the pagan ways. The new book that King Josiah held in one hand, as he ordered the permanent removal of all Asherah trees from public places, was the Book of Deuteronomy.[\[33\]](#)

When viewing prostitution through the Bible from the Christian perspective based on the removal of pagan rites and ways from the ancient world, it is held as pure sin. One anonymous author whose work I found on-line attempts to reach out to the contemporary Christian community, saying that understanding of prostitution through the Bible may lead to compassion and understanding in a situation that they may encounter in the present day. Ignorance and blind faith (only that prostitution is a wicked sin) should not dictate an absolute reaction.

“Nothing can happen with prostitution if we keep making it such a dirty subject that we dare not touch it – except in secret. And in the churches, when we move away from a person of the street who comes and sits down with us, will we ever get beyond that flight?”[\[34\]](#)

The author goes on to explain how it is important to look at why people are involved with prostitution, such as in Genesis 38 when Tamar played the role of a prostitute to get her father-in-law Judah to marry her off to a new husband, after his son is dead. Or, in Amos 7:17 when it is quoted:

“Therefore thus says the Lord, ‘Your wife shall be a harlot in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword.’”

With this passage, it is taught that war leads to forced prostitution, and that those who have no protection may all wind up in despair. Anyone may become a whore, or the kin of a whore. The discussion concludes with a thought on the meaning of “oppression”.

“Today we are constantly barraged by media messages which do not associate oppression with pornography and prostitution. It is all supposed to be fun and harmless.”

It is known, however, that the sex industry is not always fun and harmless. Asking for Christians to feel compassion toward the plight of the whore, the author expresses how the light of Jesus Christ may free the oppressed, as opposed to judging from a distance and furthering the oppression.

“Yahweh said to Hosea: Go marry a whore, and get children with a whore, for the country itself has become nothing but a whore for abandoning Yahweh.”

The Book of Hosea, or Osee, is the first twelve of minor Prophets. Another Christian writer exploring the Old Testament found this to be the “the most beautiful Book on the love of God” in the Old Testament, but [he] could not understand why amongst it there was so much talk of whores, harlots and prostitution.[\[35\]](#)

“Finally, Gomer became a prostitute, after lovers (2:5), until she eventually became a slave. And now, Hosea learned that his wife Gomer was for sale at an auction of slaves... The attractive lady of earlier years had become a worn, faded, undesired woman who had aged prematurely... And Hosea bought his own wife at the auction of slaves, the slave Gomer, for 15 shekels (3:3), and brought her home, not as a slave, but as his wife, as the lady of the house.”

The love of Hosea was great. He changed the names of her children of prostitution to “Ruhamah” (loved) and “Amni” (my kin). From that point on in the Bible the worst sin against God is what is considered, “prostitution against God”. This is not the act of actually prostituting oneself, but the act of engaging oneself as a whore: going after money greedily in any fashion.

In this essay it is told that the punishment for becoming a harlot is “to burn her alive” (Lev 21:9, Gen. 38:24). Jesus regarded prostitution as evil, but he went against the tradition of the Old Testament by forgiving whores if they engaged in God’s kingdom through faith. (Matt. 21:32-33)[\[36\]](#)

What contradicts this change in attitude toward Temple prostitution imposed by the Israelites, is that the Israelite priests sponsored houses of prostitution themselves. They provided services to wealthy sinners, and the money they extorted went to their institutions, and provided priests with what is quoted as having been a rather lavish income. This is found in the Book of Micah.

In researching the Judea perspective on prostitution, I was able to find a recent essay written by Rabbi Uri Regev in honor of Israel’s Human Rights Week, supporting the Declaration of Independence protecting freedom of religion. The Rabbi suggests that modern societal laws maintain ancient religious law to impede on women’s freedom. The story of Tamar is asked to

be remembered and contemplated as women of today are punished as widows or left without proper marriage prospects due to class.

“Tamar sees that Judah has no intent of making Shelah her husband. When Judah comes to town for a sheep shearing, Tamar dresses as a prostitute, and Judah sleeps with her, not knowing her identity [as his widowed daughters-in-law]. Judah gives Tamar his seal, cord and staff as a pledge for a kid [baby goat] he promises her in payment. Tamar returns to her widow’s garments and Judah cannot find the “prostitute” to make payment. When Judah hears that Tamar is pregnant by whoring, he orders her burnt to death. Tamar brings Judah’s seal, cord and staff to the judges saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these belong”. Judah recognizes them as his and says, “She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give to my son Shelah.” Tamar lives, vindicated by the birth of Peretz, ancestor of King David.[\[37\]](#)

In modern day Israel, women are not burnt at the stake when forced into lives prostitution, but if left in that predicament, they most likely will not reap the pleasures of liberated and financially cared for wives and professional women; at least not if anyone finds out they are selling themselves.

It is shown that historically prostitution goes back to before Biblical times, and that historic discussions on the subject are entrapped within philosophical and spiritual debate, which can twist reality into an emotional kaleidoscope of truths vs. beliefs.

What is true is that human sexuality has been an essential point to ponder since the beginning of recorded time, and it has been a point that has fascinated and frightened mankind. Edward Craig, editor-in-chief of the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, writes, “Plato, in Symposium, also issued a warning: what we think we are seeking is not really what we want; our Eros for bodies is really Eros for truth and beauty. Augustine similarly thought that the search for God was hidden beneath the search for pleasure in another’s body.”[\[38\]](#)

Mankind has often searched for the meaning of life in the arms of another, be that a blessing or a blasphemy to the concept of God. When the dynamics of the sexual and the spiritual are combined, it is a difficult enough debate, but when we add to that how a woman’s sex corresponds to commerce and community, the sacred and the profane are at odds. It is there that philosophy finds a perfect pedestal for contemplation.

The annals of philosophy have much to offer when exploring the definition of mankind’s sexuality. The question of “what makes an act sexual?” has been contemplated for many centuries. There are two main categories of carnal philosophy according to the Routledge Encyclopedia. Metaphysical philosophy discusses ontological and epistemological matters, and Normative philosophy explores perennial questions on sexual ethics. In what circumstance is it morally permissible to engage in sexual activity or experience sexual pleasure? With whom? For what purpose? With which part of the body? For how long? The historically central answers come from Thomistic natural law, Kantian deontology, and utilitarianism. Normative philosophy of sex also addresses legal, social and political issues. Should society steer people in the direction of heterosexuality, marriage, family? May the law regulate sexual conduct by

prohibiting prostitution and homosexuality? And then there are questions such as “What good is sex?” and “What is its contribution to the good of life?”[\[39\]](#)

“Metaphysical and normative philosophy of sex are well developed, stretching back to Plato and Augustine; sexual ethics has a famous history, and the contemplation of the place of sexuality in human nature is central to Christianity. The analysis of sexual concepts, by contrast, is in its infancy. The subjects of analysis are these core concepts and are the logical relationships among them: sexual desire, sensation, pleasure, act, arousal and satisfaction. Derivative sexual concepts, which presuppose an understanding of the core concepts, and are also the subject of analysis. Among these are rape, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, sexual perversion, prostitution and pornography.”[\[40\]](#)

Greek and Roman scholars and philosophers found beauty within the truths of self discovery. Many adults are still entranced by the writings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. As intellectual contemplation evolved into a more enlightened state, the truth transformed into vile fascination and ecclesiastic authoritarian absolutes with the writing of St. Thomas Aquinas and intellectuals such as Immanuel Kant. Yes, there are buried mentions of what role in humanity sex holds by authors Descartes and Hume, but the conversation did not evolve much between Kant and Foucault. St. Thomas Aquinas, a revered philosopher, viewed sex for any other purpose than procreation as wrong. In Summa Theologiae he states:

“When the act of nature is incompatible with the purpose of the sex act. Insofar as generation is blocked, we have unnatural vice, which is any complete sex-act from which of its nature generation cannot follow.” [\[41\]](#)

These “sins of self abuse” are bestiality, homosexuality, oral sex and masturbation. A category of lesser, but still obvious sin, is called “sins against charity” and consists of adultery, seduction, heterosexual incest and rape. These sins go against “mankind’s plan of living in accordance to nature”.

Kant believed in a similar fashion to Summa Theologiae. Professor Alan Soble dissects and connects the dots between the writing of St. Thomas Aquinas and that of Immanuel Kant in his essay, “Immanuel Kant of Sexual Perversion”, which focuses primarily on homosexual and onanistic sin, as explored in Metaphysics of Morals (1797), and its predecessor Lectures on Ethics (1775-81). It is interesting to note that if it were not for dissident thinkers such as Foucault, and even Pat Califia, the state adherence to such perspectives might still be governing our actions. In some situations, these views are still preached. Just read up on the controversy surrounding recent comments by Pennsylvania’s Rick Santorum, who offended many gay, lesbian and bisexual students and adults when he compared their sexuality to incest and bestiality. Santorum is speaking from the same pedestal as Aquinas and Kant.

Despite Kant’s ability to bring beauty to philosophical language and subtle eroticism to nature, his view on prostitution was in severe and cold opposition. He believed that passion and desire went against rational nature, and that when one felt desire for another outside of procreation it debased man’s reason and judgement.

“[T]here is no way that in which a human being can be made an Object of indulgence for another except through sexual impulse ... Sexual love makes of the loved person an Object of appetite ... Sexual love ... By itself and for itself ... is nothing more than an appetite. As an Object of appetite for another person a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by everyone. This is the only case in which a human being is designed by nature as the object of another’s enjoyment.”[\[42\]](#)

Kant was a celibate, and was never the Object of another’s desires. He believed that sexual relations could only be between a man and woman within the unity of marriage. A perspective he added to that would leave Kant mentioned in many pro-sex articles, confusing his position in the annals of history; for Kant believed that within marriage each person mutually owned the other, and that both were obligated to submit to and please each other. Many Libertines place this concept on a pedestal, but in a rather different manner than Kant may have meant. Or was he occasionally riveted by his desires? Seeing how severe his perspectives are on mankind’s nature and desire, it is almost poetic justice to have him, in some circles, hailed as a pioneer of sexual liberation.

In Lecture on Ethics, I, personally, find no eroticism. “We can dispose of things which have no freedom but not of a being which has free will. A man who sells himself makes a thing out of himself and, as he has jettisoned his person, it is open to anyone to deal with him as he pleases. Another instance of this kind is where a human being makes himself a thing by making himself an object of enjoyment for some one’s sexual desire.”[\[43\]](#)

Kant also believed, according to Professor Soble, that any illegitimate children created degraded the integrity and comfort of the state, and that the child and mother should be put to death. The mother, a murderer for allowing a crime against the commonwealth, the child born a criminal, for they are born outside of law and reason. If a woman, therefore, was anything but a wife and proper mother, she was a despicable criminal, or would soon be/create one.

In what is close to being a plagiarization of Aquinas, Kant theorized on the correct boundaries of sexual activity. *crimina carnis! secundum naturam. contra naturam.* “Every form of sexual indulgence, except marriage, is a misuse of sexuality”, and therefore a *crimina carnis. secundum naturam* are contrary sound reason; *contra naturam* are contrary to our animal nature. These Vorlesung, or Lectures on Ethics, is where Kant presents parallel rationale to Aquinas. Prostitution in this context is considered as vile as homosexuality, which falls immediately after bestiality. Actually, bestiality and masturbation are considered equally as deranged. These acts do not lead to the “preservation of the species”, and are therefore in opposition to the sustenance of the human race. What is interesting is that heterosexual oral sex is also considered a sin and an act against reason, because organs must only go where organs are designed by our creator to be, and that is the penis penetrating the vagina for the blossoming of the next generation. All else is vice. And vice is not of men.

Kant concluded that sexuality activity must be confined to a heterosexual, monogamous, lifelong marriage. Within marriage he believed that “reciprocity and respect remain fruitful avenues to

explore.”

As mentioned, Kant’s work is often quoted now in critical writing on eroticism vs. pornographic. Kant’s views on freedom being possible once all economic pressure is removed from mankind, and also how the value of social interaction and beauty intertwine with actual commerce, open the door for discussion in places he would have rather avoided while alive. In Dirty Looks, from the essay “Above the Pulp Line: The Cultural Significance of Erotic Art”, Linda Nead writes:

“The judgement of erotic art should be seen in Bourdieu's terms, as an act of cultural distinction which carries a particular social significance. Bourdieu's survey of taste takes the form of a critique of Kantian notions of the aesthetic. Kant sought to distinguish the condition of the disinterestedness, which is the only guarantee of aesthetic contemplation and which differentiates it from the interests of reason and the senses. Bourdieu suggests the Kantian notion of the detached gaze and a pure gaze asserts a life free from economic necessity which functions at all levels of society.”[\[44\]](#)

In other words, as long as there are the “high brow” and the “low brown” interpretation of what is acceptable aesthetic, we are all whores to the perspective that could be polished in the context of that which we are when exhibited or contemplated. There is a certain poetic justice to Kant’s rationale being used in the context of a debate in the definitions of erotic art vs. pornography. Or, as Nead says in her essay: “When the model is applied to the judgement of erotic art, we can see that the form of classification might yield a legitimizing force.”[\[45\]](#)

After all that I’ve read of Kant’s work, I rather prefer the sound bites of Foucault, myself: “We must not think that by saying ‘yes’ to sex, we are saying ‘no’ to power.”[\[46\]](#) That does have some impact on me, as opposed to, “Sexual love makes of the loved person an Object of appetite ... Taken by itself it is a degradation of human nature.”[\[47\]](#)

Not all people find Kant to be a radical against sex. In fact, there is even a Contemporary Kantian Movement which supports libertarian sexual ethics. In the opening of the entry on this group within the Routledge Encyclopedia, I find myself thinking of the philosophy of John Stuart Mill in On Liberty.

“If oral and anal sex, gay and lesbian sex, bisexual and group sex, contraceptive coitus, wearing lingerie and cosmetics, prostitution, making or viewing pornography, and the paraphernalia – the things condemned by sexual ethics – can be carried out without harm befalling the participants or others, by consenting adults who know what they want, how could they be morally wrong?”

In America these questions are being transferred more and more from the church or the texts of philosophy, into courtrooms and media formats. The question of who is to choose how consenting adults behave is being raised more and more as people fight for what they view are their constitutional rights to live equal and free. We can see this in battles over gay and lesbian rights, transgender rights, and of course, the debates over pornography and prostitution.

Chapter Three: Sex in American Law.

Sexual freedom is not a new concept. Free love societies began in the Victorian era, and were as controversial then as were drug induced love ins during the mid and late 1960s. Regarding commercial sex trade, the laws now used against many in the sex industry have also been intact for many, many decades, though their purpose is not necessarily preserved with original intent. An example of this is The Mann Act, a law preventing a man (or business entity) from crossing a state line with a woman who is not one's wife, paying for a woman to cross a state line, or coercing a female or minor to cross a state line under the guise of false employment or for reasons of perverse nature. This is an ambiguous federal law which, though created for seemingly good reason, has been grossly misappropriated. Crossing the Line, a resource dedicated entirely to the history of the law, was published by University of Chicago Press as part of a series called The Chicago Series in Sexuality, History & Society. The series offers an important view on subject matter often deleted from many basic American history texts.

The position of the book is adamantly against the law because of the way it has been used against citizens who are innocent of the actual reason for the laws' creation. Also, it is a felony with a very severe penalty regardless of the individual situation for which it is recommended. One example takes place in the early 1950s when a seventeen year old boy was out on his birthday with his sixteen year old girlfriend. While driving around trying to find a place to "pet" after a party, he accidentally crossed the state line, did not know it, was pulled over for speeding and held in custody for violating the Mann Act. Both his/her parents adamantly argued on behalf of both teenagers, and the charges were - luckily - dropped.

"The Mann Act", known prior as "The White Slave Traffic Act", federally "prohibits transporting women over a state line for immoral purposes." Many people believe that this applies only to prostitutes or strippers; others believe it only applies to those adversely coerced. Originally intended for slave traders (mainly considered to be Russian Jews and Negroes), the Mann Act was actually used mainly to place "immoral types" in prison for anywhere from six months to twenty years for sexual misconduct; sex that was not within the proper definitions of marriage, such as Kant had taught.

In 1908 the United States committed itself to an international agreement for the repression of trade in white women. This was known as the White Slave Traffic Act. In 1910 the statute was officially created, and though debated, it is still on the books. Congress has chosen to keep it on the books, despite requests to rewrite or remove the law.

"Under the most extended libertarian argument imaginable, men who would drug and kidnap women, force them to prostitute themselves, and hold them as prisoners are clearly legitimate and most appropriate targets of government power."[\[48\]](#)

The problem is that most of the people charged with violating the Mann Act were not guilty of the above mentioned crimes. Most of the people who were found guilty of violating the Mann Act between the 1930s and late 1950s were couples committing adultery, couples on secret rendezvous or vacations. No slave traders were caught.

“It seems clear enough that interstate travel for the purpose of the mutual enjoyment of sexuality by a man and a woman, as lovers and as friends, is activity that imposes no tangible harm on anyone. Its suppression is at odds with the American system of limited government and ought to be abhorred by all who respect liberty.” [\[49\]](#)

Before going any further, let's step back and get an understanding of where this controversial federal law started. In 1875 the import of women for the purpose of prostitution became illegal in America. (Note that it *became* illegal, which implicitly implies that the purchase of foreign women had been legal for over a century prior.) Around this controversial change which led to underground prostitution channels were numerous activist groups, the leaders of which were The (Social) Purity Group and the Social Hygiene Group.

An international equivalent of the American Purity Movement was started by Josephine Butler, William Alexander Coote and William T. Stead, and was waged in England against international brothels dealing in very young white girls. This charge was magnified in an article that appeared in 1885 in the Pall Mall Gazette.

The fear and agitation that the article created resulted in an international conference, and in 1902 the proposal of an international arrangement for the suppression of the traffic of young girls and women. A formal treaty was drawn up in 1904.

In 1905 the United States Senate consented to the international treaty, and on 15 June 1908, President Roosevelt proclaimed American adherence to its terms. This would become the basis of Section Six, the Mann Act.

Let's take a moment to go back again, and look at the origin of the American Purity Movement. First, prostitution existed in segregated districts of most American cities: San Francisco had its Barbary Coast, Chicago the Levee, New York the Tenderloin, New Orleans had Storyville, and smaller districts thrived in Washington D.C. (Division), Salt Lake City (Stockade) and Fort Worth (Hell's Half Acre). St. Louis also had a district, and it is there that the Purity Movement began. In 1870, changes began taking place in accepted brothel arrangements. In St. Louis, legalized prostitution by ordinance, regulating what had been de facto arrangements, forced the licensing of brothels and required periodic medical inspections.

Middle class women attacked vice. They named themselves the Purity Movement and lobbied for various changes. First was to raise the age of sexual consent, which in some states was as low as ten years old. That means that there was no separation between child trafficking and consensual, adult prostitution. Second was an attack on the theory that men had a physical necessity to engage in sexual intercourse. Third was an urge to allow open sexual discussions, decrying the “Victorian reticence that precluded open consideration of sexual topics.” This would evolve into a moral brigade set up to rescue prostitutes.

In 1904 the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis was set up by Dr. Prince A. Morrow to deal with ways of preventing disease, creating a cleaner, urban society. Soon

thereafter began the Red Light Abatement Movement, where courts joined in brothel operations for a period of time, and then closed them all down. Reports from that era scream of complicity in the name of cleanliness. The initial clean up lasted only a few years.

By 1914 prostitution was considered a product of three developments that were causing angst amongst progressive thinkers in America: 1. Prostitution became a symbol of decline and a manifestation of social dislocations. 2. Prostitution gave deeper meaning to the problems of immigration, urbanization and the dramatic roles of women that threatened traditional forms of social control and traditional ideas of civilized morality. 3. New immigration.

In 1900 the U.S. population was 76 million. By 1914 the population had gone up to 99 million, and would almost double in a very short period. Originally comprised of immigrants from Scandinavia, Britain, Germany and Ireland, the new additions to the U.S. population were Roman Catholics and Jews from Poland, Italy and Russia. Prostitution became a flashpoint for social tensions because of immigration, urbanization and the increased sexuality of women; cultural differences surrounded and exaggerated these three points.

An aggressive police task force was commissioned and sent to eradicate the superficial problem. After basic whoredom was cleaned up though, rumors began in Chicago that Russian Jews were selling white country girls in an open black market. This would create the famous “white slave scare” that would lead to attorney Edwin W. Simms drafting the White Slave Traffic Act in 1910, with the support of his friend in the Senate, James R. Mann.

At first people stood behind the Act, because, of course, no good American believed in slavery. Within twenty years, though, the Mann Act would become one of the most abused laws on the books. Beginning with everyday lovers in serious trouble as they snuck away on secret rendezvous (*Caminetti v. The United States*), the Mann Act would not really come under scrutiny until the McCarthy era when false charges were pressed against Charlie Chaplin, who was set up for his radical politics, and boxer Jack Johnson for his controversial interracial marriage. Even so, the Mann Act would stay intact.

During the “sexual revolution” the Mann Act became more difficult to enforce. Women were traveling America with men, and even living in nomadic or communal domestic situations which differed from the conventional marriage of yesteryear. In an effort to make the act more relevant to modern issues, the government added that the Mann Act had to coincide with RICO (Racketeering) charges.

In the 1970s, there was an upsurge in young prostitutes being brought to New York from other parts of the country. By 1978 Washington D.C. cops began investigating teenage prostitutes in their city, and found they were imported into the District by pimps from California. At the end of the 1970s, The Mann Act was used for extreme acts of transport for the first time in its history. By the 1980s, though, much of the business of teens was back to small, specialty districts. The Mann Act was used against consensual adult entertainment entities that the government viewed as criminal networks involved in RICO, conspiracy to aid and abet prostitution rings and the interstate commerce of women. In the 1990's when state or local authorities may not have

cared about local adult businesses, the threat of the Moral Squad and the Mann Act loomed heavily above adult entertainment's heads. Traveling workers were/are a huge part of maintaining diversity for clientele.

Though it may have once served a decided public purpose, is the Mann Act now protecting our nation from the threat of white slavery? Or is it a device that the government installed and maintained to be used to monitor the underground commerce of women as they worked through aspects of financial and social inequality? Is consensual adult entertainment a form of white slavery? Do economic realities bend and fatten the definitions of consensual? Considering it is a federal crime, with twenty possible years as the penalty, and complete seizure of assets, the Mann act may have proven itself to be a law against modern women, and not for them. Often, it is now used in affiliation with RICO to add charges in an effort to create plea bargain deals when individuals or syndicates run advertisements via legal means for escorts, in what has become a gray area for the government to control. Sadly, when genuine acts of modern sexual abduction and slavery do occur, the dynamics are often beyond the boundaries of the Mann Act. The recent rise of international cyber related sexual crime is a perfect example.

Chapter Four: Forced Prostitution

On 22 June 1998, The United Nations Commission of Human Rights released a Report of the Special Rapporteur on systematic rape. This report, entitled Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict was submitted by Ms. Gay L. McDougall. I believe most rational people would think that women would have human rights if taken prisoner and forced into sexual or manual labor during war, armed conflict or rebel attack. This is not necessarily the case, though steps are now being made to extend the international court to address crimes against women. Initially, it may not seem that the issues surrounding international human rights for women during war are related to a distinct discussion about American feminism and prostitution. However, once we delve deeper into the concepts of stopping violence towards women and increasing the rights that better the welfare and integrity of women, we see that we must be able to view the horrific realities that at times present themselves so that we can place issues dealing with sex and violence into proper perspective. It is through acceptance of the reality of certain events that we can hopefully begin to contemplate how to work towards prevention and resolve of heinous crimes against women. There is a definite difference between consensual and non consensual acts of prostitution, and women in either situation should have basic rights of protection.

“Point 5. The use of sexual slavery and sexual violence as tactics and weapons of war is an all too common yet often overlooked atrocity that demands consistent and committed action on the part of the global community. Although a wide range of responses is needed, this final report focuses primarily on the development of international criminal law as a fruitful area for effective action at the national and international levels to end the cycle of impunity for slavery, including sexual slavery, and for sexual violence, including rape. This report also advances policy and practical recommendations that may guide the investigation, prosecution and prevention of

sexual slavery and sexual violence in armed conflicts.”[\[50\]](#)

Prior to this report, in many situations, women would be viewed as lost cattle. There were no provisions for them in the international courts; especially if raped, impregnated or violently forced into prostitution. The concept of a female POW is a relatively new one, and women whose lives have been devastated by rape and forced prostitution during aggravated assaults have been ignored.

During the 1980s many of the radical feminist arguments that surfaced against consensual commercial sexuality took the position that pornography and prostitution were oppressive and violent towards women. While there are certainly situations that may clearly be degrading to an individual woman, or to the feminist movement on the whole, the misuse of strong words may also be degrading to women’s betterment. Sexual violence against women must be recognized as criminal, but at the same time violent situations that use the sex industry as a scapegoat, as with Andrea Dworkin’s claim that all pornography is synonymous with violence against women, should not be considered (in my opinion) the same as genuine acts of extreme misconduct. I am not saying that conditions in the American sex industry are without aspects that must be bettered, but they most often are not synonymous with true oppression and violence against women.

“Point 9: The first purpose of this report is to reiterate the call for response to the use of sexual violence and sexual slavery during armed conflict. It is imperative to acknowledge the immeasurable injury to body, mind and spirit is inflicted by these acts. During times of peace, women are subjected to all forms of gender-based persecution, discrimination and oppression, including acts of sexual violence and slavery which often go unpunished even in functional criminal justice systems. The horrors that women face greatly expand in number, frequency and severity during armed conflicts, and are not confined to gender-specific abuses. However, it is clear that women do experience a significantly increased risk of violence and slavery of a sexual nature during armed conflict situations - a risk that must not be accepted or tolerated. In addition, at the same time that abuses directed at women increase during armed conflicts, the degree of impunity with which such violence is committed may also increase. This overall deterioration in the conditions of women in armed conflict situations is due not only to the collapse of social restraints and the general mayhem that armed conflict causes, but also in many cases is a deliberate and strategic decision on the part of combatants to intimidate and destroy “the enemy” as a whole by raping and enslaving women who are identified as members of the opposition group.

Point 10: The second purpose of this report is to emphasize the true nature and extent of the harms suffered by women who are raped, sexually abused and enslaved by parties to an armed conflict....

Point 11: The third purpose of this report is to examine prosecutorial strategies for penalizing and preventing international crimes committed against women during armed conflict....[\[51\]](#)

In the spring of 2002 students at Goddard College were invited to attend a video screening of “Breaking the History of Silence”, from the Women’s International War Tribunal for the Trial of

Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, held in Tokyo in December 2000. It was certainly one of the more intense workshops at the residency. I had not heard the term “comfort women” prior to attending the screening. Amidst the reading I have undertaken on feminism and prostitution, the issue of Comfort Women seemed to take on more importance as I contemplated how to define the boundary between degradation and liberation in the American sex industry. How is it possible to discuss contemporary views for and against the sex industry without taking into consideration situations that are without consent, without parameters, without morals, ethics or laws? We in America are lucky that we are allowed to struggle for and against our sexuality and how that pertains to our commerce. We do have laws on sexuality and commercial sexual practice; though they are ambiguous, often individual to situation, and at times - outright criminal. (Until challenged in the late 1980s the sodomy laws (which included oral sex) were still on the books in my state of residence, Pennsylvania.) Though many of the arguments surrounding a person’s right to have sex in exchange for money, or one’s right to engage in sex outside of a “properly” defined relationship, are frustrating, emotionally volatile and seem to have no immediate answers, the fact that we are discussing what we want or don’t want to engage in is a luxury.

The question of how to define feminism with respect to sexuality is an issue that has created some of the most heated debate for women over the last thirty years. From radical 1970s feminists Gloria Steinem and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, to the present day radicals such as Andrea Dworkin and Annie Sprinkle, women define their feminist pedestal with vast difference of opinion and intention.

We can get so caught up in our differences of opinion, that we are blinded to what a gift it is to have that debate at all. So, I would like to take a moment to step out of the analysis and debate of sexual perspective and history to discuss true rape and sexual degradation. This is a situation where it is nearly impossible to get lost in opposing opinions on the terminology and specific actions which degrade the integrity of feminism and female sexuality. Unlike pornography and consensual prostitution, the plight of the Korean comfort women, and the approximately 200,000 other South/SE Asian woman is an obvious offense. It is a crime. It shows how debased mankind can be, and how it degrades both men and women; it is a devastating crime against humanity.

Rape and forced prostitution during armed conflict and government decline does continue today, for example, in Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Moldova. After explaining the history of the comfort women, I will discuss the tribunals that have begun, and how the Special Rapporteur on systematic rape connects the past with the present in an effort to change international laws to prevent sexual slavery and torture from continuing, and going unpunished.

There is a beauty to being able to choose what one does that we can not appreciate, not until we embrace what a lack of choice may create and continue in silent legacy. Consensual sexual labor and sexual slavery, as some radical feminists claim, simply are not the same.

“ I had never heard of the comfort women until the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, in December 1991. Some Korean women, who were taking the Japanese government to court,

made the front pages of the international press.. The Japanese government flatly denied any knowledge or involvement, and argued that the so-called comfort women were privately organized camp followers. Was this a lie?"

George Hicks,
The Comfort Women [\[52\]](#)

“Point 6: One significant impetus for the Sub-commission's decision to commission this study was the increasing international recognition of the true scope and character of the harms perpetrated against the more than 200,000 women enslaved by the Japanese military in “comfort stations” during the Second World War. Recognizing the needs to address past, unremedied human rights, humanitarian law and international criminal law violations involving sexual slavery and sexual violence, a full analysis of the continuing legal liability for these crimes against humanity is contained in the appendix to the present reports.”[\[53\]](#)

The first edition of Mr. Hicks’ book was published in 1994. The first American edition was published in 1995. What is so amazing about his need to answer the question of whether or not the comfort women were a lie, is that these women were going to court over crimes that took place during the Second World War, and much of the information about these women was destroyed by the Japanese military, and also the Allies. Enough existed, however, to fully answer the question. It was not a lie.

It is amazing that it has taken over fifty years for the comfort women to become an issue of concern. Young women abducted or misguided away from their homes at the outbreak, and through the duration, of war; forced into sexual slavery to serve the troops. The average age was 17-25, but there are accounts of young girls in their pre teens also being brought into camps. Either aggressively removed from their households after being raped in front of their families, or offered fraudulent work in non-existent factories and restaurants thousands of miles from their homes, during World War II somewhere up to 200,000 women were placed into forced prostitution. The lives of the Korean, and Southeast Asian women forced into prostitution as comfort women, were ruined well after many people healthily recovered from the war. These women were considered outcasts, carrying emotional and intellectual scars, as well as in some cases, physical ailments, as a direct result of their experiences. This prevented them from integrating into post war reconstruction, and many wound up on welfare and in disgrace. In Korean culture virginity, purity and chaste had much to do with a woman's ability to marry well, and therefore be a part of a normal, stable financial environment. After decades of silence, it has been a battle as difficult as that fought in the front-lines to get governments to recognize that these are actual crimes, not only against women, but against humanity in general.

The first writing on comfort women by Senda Kako was published thirty years before the tribunals would begin. It would take decades for hot lines to be set up across Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and South Korea in an effort to get women to come forward and offer their stories. The evolution and international expansion of feminism created organized women’s groups in the 1980s. These women’s groups would research and document the authenticity of a “large-scale, officially-organized system of rape by the Imperial Japanese Forces. Thousands of women, from young village girls to older professionals, an estimated 80 percent of them Korean, were part of a

comfort system across Asia.”[\[54\]](#)

The term “comfort women” and “comfort system” was used because these women gave comfort to the troops. In some early texts they are referred to as ‘P’ women. In Japanese, it was explained, there is a word beginning with the letter ‘P’ that is similar to “poontang”, but which has a stronger and more vulgar sentiment towards a women’s vagina. It basically would mean ‘dirty cunt’. Because this slang was not appealing to the military men these women served, “comfort women” was chosen as it kept the morale of the troops in high regard. Also, as these were government created secret brothels, on documents for the creation and maintaining of workers / supplies, the term “comfort station” had official and ambiguous understanding.

In 1994 Japanese scholars asked the government to allow education of the “atrocities committed” during Japan’s colonial rule in Korea from 1910-1945. Prior to this time, such information was banned from all educational texts and studies. It is still difficult to obtain.

Japan. The Empire of the Sun. At the time of World War II, Japan was a dominant power claiming Ryukyu and the Bonin Islands, The Pacific Islands, Rabaul, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia, Burma and Indonesia.

Japan had accepted a system of prostitution. Feudal Japanese had open prostitution in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo. The Floating City of mid 18th century Edo (Tokyo) was “glamorized by artists and writers, the wealth of erotic literature and art disguised the slave like conditions in which the women worked.”[\[55\]](#) Geisha, the most well known form of professional sexuality, were different from prostitutes in that they underwent immense and extreme training as “musicians and genteel performers”. Prostitutes merely had sex, whereas Geisha formed many long term relationships with caliber clientele.

In 1872 Japan prohibited bondage, but allowed prostitution under a system of voluntary contract. Many families loaned out their female children into prostitution to pay debts, and often a female child would be given out on contract for a number of years. This was an accepted system, and in pre-war Japan, prostitution was state organized, and women were licensed, along with being subjected to mandatory medical inspection. This was not considered a permanent degradation to a female or her family, as women of lower class would not be considered for marriage within a higher caste in a normal scenario anyway. In the late 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, there were also women known as karayuki. These women were professional prostitutes who traveled all over Asia as specialized call girls.

In 1904 Korea came under Japanese influence. The Japanese, accustomed to state ruled prostitution, attempted to create a sex zone in Seoul. This was received with mixed reactions by the Koreans. In 1910, when complete colonization of Korea was fulfilled, licensed prostitution was formally introduced in Korea. The systematic exploitation of Korean women as comfort women for the Japanese Imperial military would last from approximately 1931 - 1945.

The Japanese had interesting superstitions pertaining to sex and war. It was believed by many that sex before battle worked as a talisman against injury, and some soldiers would even carry amulets with the pubic hair of comfort women. It was also believed that sexual deprivation

made soldiers accident prone. To most, the use of women as sexual slaves was completely justifiable and without guilt, or remorse. This kind of gender ethnocentricity was so common, it was even considered to be the only salvation against the brutality of war.

To soldiers on the front line, ever surrounded by the sound of guns, wrapped in smoke stinking of death and not knowing when death would come, a visit to a comfort station was no doubt the only form of relief. It was the only kind of individual act in which one was “liberated”. Theirs was a prison-like existence, subject to random, arbitrary punishments by mad dogs of NCO’s, their eardrums daily ringing from blows. The comfort station was where they were at least temporarily “liberated” from the savagery of the unit. It was their “oasis”.[\[56\]](#)

Initially, military controlled comfort stations were believed to minimize venereal disease, which ravished many troops in the past. A good example of this is detailed when, between 1918-1922, the Japanese took part in the Siberian Intervention initiated by Western powers. One division in seven was infected and dismantled due to venereal disease acquired while raping women of the opposition. Between 1937-1939, the health of the soldiers became a priority to commanding forces, and established “stations” were organized to provide sexual services for the troops under medical scrutiny and government control.

What led to the Japanese being able to set up these comfort stations, in which an estimated 200,000 women were repeatedly raped by the soldiers on the front lines during war? In the 1930s there was horrible financial depression throughout Asia and China. The Japanese seized Chinese Manchuria, leading to aggressive initiatives by the Japanese Kwantung Army. Manchuria became Manchukuo, and prostitution flourished. It was a vibrant area that attracted many women, including Koreans. Initially, women made money with a profit, and were able to save. The Japanese were pleased with how well the soldiers responded to immediate sexual offerings, and set up a plan to have places of release in all areas of fighting and in garrison territories.

Though women were brought into the comfort stations via many various coercions, the saddest and most extreme were outlined in a 1983 book entitled, *My War Crimes: The Forced Draft of Koreans*. The author, Yoshida Seija, was himself a slave raider. From 1942 until the end of the war, Mr. Seija was responsible for violent raids on civilian villages which led to thousands of men being put into forced labor, and a thousand or so women abducted for comfort duties. It was due to confessions of this kind that many women’s stories were able to be confirmed.

In 1948, however, there was one tribunal pertaining to sexual slavery. The case confirmed forcible seizure for rape and prostitution which led to admission of war crimes. The women involved were Dutch, and though Indonesian women were also present, only the Dutch were represented during the Batavia tribunal. It is now acknowledged that cultural bias (the same as our white to black bias before the civil rights movement) allowed the South East Asian women to be left out of the tribunal.

The Batavia Military Tribunal of 1948 involved female internees from the Netherlands, stationed in central Java. An officer cadet school at Semarang, commanded by Lt. Gen. Nozaki Seiji began an investigation into how to resolve venereal disease. It was established that comfort women would be a wise investment for the cadets, and also officers, and that it would be preferable to use European women from nearby internment camps. The selection process would consist of female volunteers. Gen. Nozaki approved a plan proposed by Col. Okubo, and gave his permission for the operation to be arranged. Okuba was told that verbal permission was adequate, and during a visit to Jakarta he obtained agreement from the Chief of Staff. All in all there would be four to five stations, one of which would be entirely for the cadets, while the others would be for higher ranking officers. The details after this point were left to a captain, and a group of select individuals beneath him who would work as managers at the stations. In February of 1944, the captain's recruiters went to four camps in Semarang, and two in Ambarawa. Women between 17 and 28 were registered; their names, homeland, marital status, number of children and health status were recorded. What began as a suggested voluntary proposal, ended when nine women were forcibly sent out to comfort stations after being forced to sign a "Declaration of Willingness" in March of 1944.

"Two attempted escape, one of whom, who was recaptured and tortured, committed suicide by slashing herself. Another attempted suicide by drinking quinine. Another of the women described how, on arrival at the Futabaso, she was immediately taken into a room by a drunken officer who eventually raped her. He was followed by five others. The pattern was repeated each day in the nauseating surroundings of a house without ventilation or drainage. She finally suffered a nervous breakdown and was admitted to a mental hospital." Soon, over 100 local women (Indian, Chinese and Indonesian) were seized and forced into the comfort stations. Many of these were very young women.

The release of the Dutch women came about through the transfer of internment camps from the Home Ministry to the Army in April of 1944. Due to the length of time necessary for the discussion, I will not go into the details of how their release came to be here, but - in conclusion - most of the women were transferred to Kota Paris in Western Java. Along with them were many, many comfort women from other parts of Java, including Bandung. At the tribunal only the less than one half dozen Dutch women, out of numerous local women, were represented as being victims of a war crime. There would be no other tribunal, or acknowledgment of the ravages the women endured, until the Tribunal in Tokyo, December 2000.

I feel that without going into much further detail, the definition of comfort women has been confirmed. Young women primarily from Korea, and also China, Taiwan, East Timor, Indonesia, the Dutch East Indies were misled by false promises of legitimate work or forcibly stolen from their homes and villages, and put into military controlled stations where they would be forced to service between five and fifty military men per day, round the clock at little or no pay. (There were some established Japanese prostitutes, but they were a minority and not as desired as the younger and healthier foreign females.) Only two percent or so of comfort women were paid, and able to save their money for after the war. Most were left with nothing. Literally nothing. Beyond being impoverished, many were unable to bear children after their enslavement due to the amount of unprotected and aggressive sex they were forced to endure. Between

venereal disease, interrupted pregnancies without proper medical supervision and rape, they were unable to bear children, and therefore many were never able to integrate into post war society. The average comfort women wound up on welfare, leading a life of poverty and alienation. Of course, not all of the women ended up in such an extreme and saddening plight . Some were married, and were able to find financial security. Most , though, were left behind in the lower classes, especially as they aged.

To clarify, most Comfort Women were Korean. The Japanese needed their own women to maintain factories and fields, but this selection process was also due to the fact that it was felt many soldiers would be uncomfortable using women they might identify with their sisters or girlfriends. Though there were some professional prostitutes of Japanese heritage at the stations, they were not liked as well as the Korean women because they were older and more jaded. Korean teenagers and young adults between the ages of 15 and 23 were considered prime, though at the beginning of the war many female children aged even 10 and 11 were captured. By mid war, women up to 27 or so were considered acceptable. Korean women were easily utilized by the Japanese because they were considered culturally similar, but beneath the Japanese in stature in class. Besides Korean females there were also Malaysian, Indonesian, Thai, Burmese and numerous other women from throughout S.E. Asia utilized in the comfort stations.

One of the reasons that their plight was difficult to prove was because when the American Allied Forces came in, many of the comfort women were quickly made into nurses, and the evidence destroyed. However, some women were turned over to the Allied forces, where they became prostitutes to service the American military men.

There were also practices of Gyokusai, meaning “broken jewel”, which is when Japanese soldiers fight to the death instead of surrender, or when defeated soldiers commit mass suicide. The term kamikaze is familiar to most Americans, but there were many different kinds of suicide squads. Many comfort women were murdered in this form of ritual annihilation, mainly in Northern Burma and Micronesia.

In four pages explaining the very end of the war, it is graphically described how comfort women were shot down, had hand grenades thrown into their beds and were annihilated by the troops they served. Many of those that were not murdered or forced into suicide with defeated troops, chose suicide with each other, such as in Saipan in the Mariana, where an entire “female population” of Korean comfort women all drowned themselves as opposed to be taken POW at the hands of the “enemy”.

One in depth description of a comfort station being silenced stayed with me after I stopped reading the book. I imagine all the nights they prayed to see their families again, when in the end, they would live eternally as slaves, and die forgotten and nameless.

“... [The soldier] directed sweeping automatic fire at random into the pitch-dark interior of the dugout. Mingling with the ferocious, deafening reverberations of gunfire were bursts of shrill screams, followed by low moans, until the ensign eased the trigger to end his insane shooting rampage. Within the desolate dugout, the literal silence of death hovered like a frozen pall. He

used his torch to examine the results. There were about seventy bodies. spurts of blood were sticking to the bare earthen walls like geckos; some of the women were clinging to the rough-hewn breadfruit tree supports with their necks snapped; some were heaped up, some were embracing each other, some had fallen like twigs, all drenched in blood.”

Though some of the reports show that Comfort Women and their captors befriended each other despite the harsh conditions of war, most of the women interviewed at the end of the century would repeat the same echoes of hatred towards all men, even young male children. Those that survived lived lives filled with secret pain, hatred, shame, emptiness and ruin. Few accounts of comfort women revealed any happiness from the day they were captured or lured away from their homes.

“Point 12: ... At the time of writing this report, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has issued numerous indictments charging crimes based on sexual violence, and the International Tribunal for Rwanda is under increasing pressure to step up its investigation and prosecutions of sexual violence. In the very period of time during which this report was commissioned and completed, great strides have been made to address gender-based violence in armed conflict not only in the context of the ad hoc international criminal tribunals, but also with respect to the proposed permanent International Criminal Court. This study, therefore, is offered at a particularly timely juncture in the development of international criminal law and its intended to advance ongoing discussions over proper venues rules and procedures that may usefully advance prosecutions of sexual violence and slavery by domestic courts.”

To show that this type of barbaric behavior is not an act of the past, I would like to bring us into the present with a radio spot from: Voices of Our World which aired August, 2001. Global radio programming from the Missionaries of Mary Knol tells us of atrocities against women. These are still not considered atrocities against mankind. Gender discrimination and violence against women are issues which are being fought through education programs offered by the United Nations and UNICEF. Gender discrimination does not begin to bring into the mind of a listener, or reader, what kind of heinous crimes are being discussed on the program. From women who are slowly killed for having an “illicit” affair, to women who threw themselves on the husband’s funeral pyre due to the stigma and financial consequence of becoming a widow, to impoverished parents trading small female children into prostitution to feed the rest of the family, to young prostitutes (aged 7 - 13) working in the Netherlands with HIV, tuberculosis, jaundice, venereal disease and experiencing multiple pregnancies. Next we are in Sierra Leone. An 18 year old girl is abducted from her home by the rebel army. “Cynthia” is beaten, raped, forced to carry supplies and weapons for the men of the army. She is then forced to “serve as a wife” to her captors, cleaning and cooking for the enemy. Her mother must find money for the ransom. By the time she is returned, she is two months pregnant.

Young girls are kidnaped, drugged, raped, and even forced to commit acts of extreme violence on their own villagers as a scare tactic. Rape and sexual assault are integral to the rebels strategy. United Nations radio worked with numerous women’s rights organizations and counselors to prepare and confirm information on the war crimes against women in Sierra Leone. Activists and counselors who worked with female victims in Bosnia / Yugoslavia were disgusted and

horrified by the sexual torture committed against young women in Sierra Leone. Young girls and women had hot oil poured inside of their vaginas, hot coals forced between their legs, and were raped aggressively with sticks until hemorrhaging, and dying from internal bleeding. Homes were burnt down, arms and legs of family members cut off, young women were gang raped in public. When in the hands of the rebels, many young women were forced to partake in these acts of violence or suffer more torture.

Doctors Without Borders confirmed reports of numerous accounts of such severe injury and trauma. It is believed that the trauma from these events will stay with the women for their whole lives, maybe even for generations later. Long after the visual effects of war are gone, the women victimized will live with scars on their bodies, minds, emotions, and psyches. The Forum of African Women Educationalists provides counsel, support and free medical assistance to rape victims. Their society, though, does not embrace them as readily as activists and volunteers. As with the comfort women of Korea, after the victims are sexual violence of war are able to return home from a state of enslavement, most of the women are no longer welcomed; they have been defiled and are disrespected, mistrusted and permanently shunned.

In July of 1992, the Japanese committee first published a report entitled, “Results of Investigation into the Question of ‘Military Comfort Women’ Originating from the Korean Peninsula”. This report addressed, not just Korean women, but women of many nationalities.

Utilizing 127 documents to support its position of acceptance, the committee confirmed as reality:

1. Establishment of comfort stations.
2. Control of persons recruiting women.
3. Construction and extension of comfort facilities.
4. Management and supervision of comfort stations.
5. Hygiene control of comfort stations and comfort women.
6. Issue of identity cards and the like to persons connected with comfort stations.
7. General references to comfort stations and comfort women.

An apology was also issued. There was, however, an absence of documents which explained how the comfort women were recruited. This is a major point of dispute, because many in the Japanese government would like to be able to acknowledge the comfort stations, but only under the terms that the women went to them voluntarily, whereas most of the women who testified stated that they were either misled by agents who scouted young women for false employment, or that they were forcibly abducted.

At this point in time, debate is still being waged over retribution. It is said that for every ten women who speaks publicly, they represent over twenty thousand women, many of whom are now dead. It is desired by feminist activists that retribution come to those who are still alive, during their lifetime. It is unknown whether or not that will happen.

Also recent was the 22 June 1998 U. N. Economic and Social Counsel's Commission on Human Rights; A Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The following agenda was, in part, established due to the issue of the Korean comfort women. Without the pressure put on the Korean and Japanese governments, along with requests for explanation from the American government and the increasing number of women throughout Asia found to be involved with the World War two comfort stations, the agenda mentioned here would not have been contemplated.

“Point 13: As has been noted by many international legal commentators, the development of international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law, was based on the paradigm of males lives, particularly the lives of men in the public sphere. [For a discussion, see Hilary Charlesworth, Christine Chinkin and Shelley Wright, “Feminist Approaches to International Law”, American Journal of International Law, vol. 85, 1991.] The failure to consider the experience of women resulted in a human rights legal framework which failed to recognize forms of violence directed against women as worthy of International State accountability. ...”

In an essay which appeared in *Prostitution: On Whores, Hustlers and Johns*, Masumi Yoneda discusses the Prostitution Prevention Law of Japan. PPL was enacted in 1956, and has been in effect since 1958. It is the first time in Japanese history that prostitution was banned.

This law was imposed when the Japanese surrendered to the Allied Forces. As cited in a reference on global sex work, “Japan abolished licensed prostitution after the war, in 1946. The order to abolish the system came from the occupation forces. The order says that maintaining licensed prostitution would go against the ideal of democracy, and that it would be incompatible with the development of individual freedom within the nation.”

There are many contradictions here. For instance, the American government was involved in initially covering up the black market comfort women, yet they forced Japan to retract its system of licensed prostitution. What is also sad, is that the comfort women are not mentioned in either of these sources I just cited, though they probably had strong influence in the making of this law. One of the upsets that global activists have on behalf of the comfort women is that mention of them is forbidden in most academic texts and historic accounts of the war.

And a fact that we should all find ironic is that in present day Japan, though licensed prostitution is illegal, there is a huge black market underground that deals with preteens, teenagers and women. To strengthen this irony, many women now travel from poor North East and South East Asian regions to work illegally as prostitutes and hostesses in Japan, because of its evolved financial status. These women have no rights, work in often abhorrent conditions and are considered by many to be indentured servants. The laws that were created after World War II

were not created for pure humanitarian intent, nor the betterment of women's financial and civil rights, and therefore have many shortcomings that global feminist activists, inspired by the American women's rights movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, are fighting to have brought into view.

Chapter Five: Today's Sexual Slave Trade / Sexual Labour:

There is a growing traffic of young women. No, this is not a view into the past with the young women now old and nearing their death. This is now, and these are young women and their lives are completely dispensable to the people that trade them. World Financial Times' correspondent, Stefan Wagstyl, reported on a 24 year old woman named Mariana in January of 2002. He talks of how she sits with deep blue lines covering her forearms. No, she did not do that herself, he clarifies. When she tried to get away from the people trafficking her and other young women, one of the men took a butcher knife to her arms and tried to kill her. She speaks to him from Chisinau, capital of Moldova. Wedged in between the Ukraine where mafia activity has forced many to emigrate to America and Europe (if they have the money to get out) and Romania, Moldova is the poorest country in Europe. In the early 1990s civil war left the government in shambles, and criminal activity in the form of violent organized crime has prospered as a result. Under Soviet control, Moldova had been peaceful farming country, and was famed in the Soviet bloc for quality food and wine. Now, it is well known for its slave labour.

Desperate for money at the end of 2000, Mariana answered a job advertisement from the classified section of a newspaper. The ad said simply, "good pay for work abroad". She phoned the next day for an interview. A harsh looking woman explained that the work was for dancing in Yugoslavia, and that it paid \$ 300.00 per week. A single mother, Mariana was elated. She told them she did not really know how to dance, but was told it was all right because they would train her.. She left her child with her parents and accepted the work.

She travelled from Chisinau to the Romanian border where she was greeted by a Romanian man. She had thought a Yugoslavian man would greet her, so she was a bit confused. He assured her everything was fine, but she grew more fearful once in his car. He drove at top speeds, stopping only when he needed fuel. When she said she wanted to go home, he informed her that he had paid for her, and that she belonged now to him.

Brought to a checkpoint where other young women were waiting with their new "owners," she was taken through Serbia, Montenegro, the U.N. administered Kosovo and finally to the Macedonian border where she was forced to walk for eight hours along mountain trails. It was a total of ten days of travel before she and the other women were "installed" in a flat in Macedonia. Sometimes the men watching over them were ethnic Albanians, and sometimes they were ethnic Macedonians.

Police raids were frequent, and the girls were always hidden away or driven away before the police arrived. Violent attacks between the Albanians and the Macedonians created danger for miles around. When Mariana realized the reality of her plight, she said she gave in to their demands and agreed to service the clientele, which she had refused to do upon first arriving.

She worked as a prostitute for little money until she finally fell ill with a liver ailment. When she recovered, she said she was unable to have intercourse still, and asked if she could be a bar keep for a while. It was at the bar she met an ethnic Albanian man who took pity on her, and another young woman from Moldova. He finally went to the embassy seeking help for the young women. Before anyone in the government would assist, Mariana was found by her purchasers and attacked. The fact that she was able to finally escape alive, and go back to her homeland / family was a miracle.

This type of story is a reality which is growing in proportion as more and more women need income, and have little or no resources in their indigenous communities. The governments in all the involved areas are not sure how to combat the problem as poverty is the defined root of the issue, and commerce and industry will not come to many of these war stricken areas for decades. When taken in the context of the list mentioned earlier in this essay, the Marxist philosophy against the sex industry especially the American or British consensual commercial industry) may seem extreme, but when viewed in context, we gain a broader understanding into some of the categorical theoretics of the commercial trade of slave trade.

On Wednesday, August 28, 2002, the left corner of the cover of the New York Daily News read, "Feds Bust Russian Stripper Ring." In an article by Mike Claffey, the caption continues with the story on page 7, "Russian Strip Ring / Preyed on Imported Girls." The young women lured over to America from Russia were promised jobs as dancers, but WERE not expecting to be enslaved strip club dancers who would live in fear and filth in Brooklyn. New Jersey U.S.. Attorney Christopher Christie is quoted as saying, "This is nothing more than a modern form of slavery." The women were forced by the sponsoring couple to hand over all their earnings. Their passports were taken from them. They did not speak English fluently. They were housed in cramped and dirty quarters, monitored round the clock, and driven to and from the strip clubs in a locked van. "These women knew that they were coming over here to dance", said Assistant U.S. Attorney Leslie Schwartz. "They didn't know the lasciviousness of what they were going to do, the nude dancing, the lap dancing." Nor did they know all of their money, up to \$1200.00 a week each, would be kept from them. The women also had to pay a fee of \$200.00 a day to the house, even when they were unable to work due to illness or fatigue. They were expected to work six days a week. The women were told that "the money was owed to organized crime associates in Russia who would seek retribution against the women and their families in Russia" if the payments were not maintained.

This story was originally investigated by Susan Walsh around 1998 for the Village Voice. Susan was a topless dancer and single mother who lived in New Jersey, who began writing for the Voice on the sex industry. She was beginning to write on the Russian Mafia in the New Jersey topless dance clubs, when she disappeared. Her body was never found. Though some people feel she deserved what she got because she was a.) not a professional journalist who should not have been writing expose anyway, and/or b.) a junkie titty dancer who hung out with lower east side "weirdos," Susan was the one who tried to break the story, seven years before a male staff writer at the *Daily News* got to report a federal problem there in her area of New Jersey. To all in the New York and New Jersey adult entertainment and fetish underground who knew her, or knew of her, we hope she is at peace. At present there is still a reward offered by her

family for anyone that may have information on her disappearance. Last summer A & E's Bill Kirby ran an investigative spot on Susan with the hopes of finding her. It brought in no results.

Slave Trade / Sexual Labour? On Wednesday, September 18, 2002, BBC News ran a video story entitled, "Slave Trade behind Europe's Sex Industry." Is it? Or is that an over generalized headline to sell international papers?

The question as to whether or not a slave trade does actually exist is argued today. Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema believe strongly in international rights for sex workers, and are harsh on the terminology and antics used in discussion on debt-bondage and forced slavery. It does exist, but not in every situation, creating a haze of truth and lies around an already difficult discussion. When opposition to sex workers' rights come to the table, slavery and disease are often the arguments working against support of decriminalized prostitution and individual free trade. It has made sex work supporters tired of the talk, which often times has proven to be exaggerated or misappropriated. It does exist, though, almost one hundred years after the creation of the White Slave Traffic Act / Mann Act, so the need for advanced language to define what is consensual and what is forced is a very important first step.

Despite the Meeting on Trafficking in Women and Children in Mumbai, India, in March of 2000, the trafficking of women and children throughout Asia has increased over the last three decades, with over thirty million children believed to have been traded for sexual and manual labor since the early 1970s. In 2000 President Clinton called trafficking a "modern form of slavery" and gave 1.6 million dollars to South Asia to assist in the growing problem. Has that money been put down on the actual issue? Not according to the media reports of the increase in human trade over the last decade. Often public shows of concern for the issue are not synonymous with an ability to be effective in change. People in office and in the public need to work together, in interdisciplinary networks to make change a reality. Unfortunately, many people do not take the issue of the sex industry seriously; at least not until there is a terrible problem.

Discussion on the realities of human trade was addressed again in February of 2003 in Tokyo at the International Symposium on Trafficking of Children. When children are sold into slavery, especially sexual slavery, the definitions of a crime are more easily discussed because there are clear, defining lines on what is consensual and acceptable treatment, unlike with adults. Japan's parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Shinako Tsuchiya, is "urging" cooperation between non-governmental agencies (NGOs) working in the field: "There are many NGOs in the nations that ship our children, in places that are used as transfer points . . . But the truth is these NGOs efforts lack coordination." Often, since corrupt police and officials are involved with payoffs surrounding human trade, it is impossible to coordinate in a multi disciplinary manner.

The main reasons for the increase in trafficking is cited as a combination of poverty, globalization, organized crime and discrimination against women. Teenage girls make up the majority of those victimized by the sex trade. Most will wind up in sweat shops and brothels. When these teenage girls are young women, they will be of little value to these venues. Sadly, though many find compassion for younger girls, as these girls age and become women with

little or no education, drug problems and financial dependence on the sex industry, there will often be less compassion for them. In an effort to combat the present problem, educational forums are being set up in Bangladesh, where “UNICEF is training 600,000 people to teach their peers about child trafficking”.

In Global Sex Workers, Kempadoo and Doezema edited essays from around the globe on the new international movement on human rights for sex workers. This movement is primarily in the Third World and the Caribbean, and was in part influenced by the American and European Women’s Rights Movement of thirty years ago. Many of the women are non-Caucasian, and feel their interests need to be addressed by collectives of women that understand their diversity. One of their primary desires is for people to get over the continuous claim of all women being victimized by forced slavery and immorality, and come to accept prostitution as labour for centralized and migrant workers in an effort to better all women concerned.

I will say that I feel until sex work, or more formally stated as consensual, adult, sexual labour, is defined both domestically and internationally as an active reality, primarily created out of - though not limited to - financial need, these discussions will continue to separate, as opposed to bond women. Women from each region of the world feel isolated by their individual experiences and hardships, and view women from different cultures and backgrounds as being irrelevant, and even at times harmful, to their personal plight.

In 1993 prostitutes from throughout the Third World organized in Suriname. A former Dutch colony on the north coast of South America, in 1991 Suriname experienced a restoration of democracy after almost eleven years of military rule. The economy depends on aluminum and bauxite exports, and rice and fruit are the main cash crops. There prostitutes were fighting to keep brothels open, apparently under threat since the demise of the military stronghold. Women were challenging stigmas placed on prostitutes, and they were exposing corruption within sex industries from around the globe. Kempadoo attended this event, and was moved by it.

While in Amsterdam in 1994 she hooked up with Licia Brussa, who works with the European Network for HIV/STD Prevention in Prostitution located in the Netherlands, and after mutually enthusiastic discussion, they decided to work on a book on the new global issues surrounding commercial sex. Soon Jo Doezema, affiliate to Members of Sex Work Projects, also came on board. In their own words, Global Sex Workers is about the “politics of the worldwide sex workers movements, about how ordinary women and men in prostitution define and shape their struggles for social change and justice.” One issue they adamantly address is how historically, anti-trafficking measures have been more concerned with protecting women’s “purity” than with ensuring the human rights of those in the sex industry. This is a primary concern of those presently involved in global activism for the betterment of conditions for sexual labourers. The focus now, especially with respect to increased capitalism spreading the globe, is how women can pay for their food, shelter, clothing, education, medical bills and children at all times. This is slow moving, and involves intellectual precision on behalf of the women communicating the necessity of acknowledging that global prostitution laws must evolve with the changing times and regional labor realities.

Another issue to be addressed is language. Vernacular. Sex Worker. Prostitute. Whore. Sexual Laborer. Hooker. Vamp. Bitch Goddess. Tart. "Slave or Entrepreneur?", as The Humanist recently asked on its cover. Which one does your eye lean towards? Are they all equal in the definitions? How do we define women who conceptually make money by selling, or rather renting, their bodies to men? There is an ongoing desire to secure Carol Leigh's 'Sex Worker' as a legitimate term in political and legal debate. That means one who incurs income as a result of the erotic labor. An American who contributed to that is Wendy Chapkis, author of Live Sex Acts, and the one who coined the term, 'erotic labor' in a public forum. 'Sex Work' is simply not viewed as actual work in most nations, not by individuals - male or female - not affiliated with the industry. It is viewed as a crime or a sin or a problem. Amongst prostitutes, desired topics are neither of those two issues; instead the issues they would like to address, and have addressed, are: identity, rights, working conditions, decriminalization and legitimacy. Amongst many involved with social concern, venereal disease and HIV/AIDS are an important point of conversation also. From this perspective, disease control would be much easier if sex work was acknowledged and open to safe sex practice. When in a black market, there is no safe sex. Or, it is up to the discretion of the customer or madam. There is no guaranteed pay. There are no rights. There is only a state of perpetual limbo between the criminal and law enforcement.

In Brazil, prostitution is legal. Drugs however are not. Many prostitutes either use drugs, or may be in the company of paying men who do, or find they have them unexpectedly on them if they are arrested. They are then charged with drug trafficking and sentenced to almost three years in prison. Voices of Our World, a radio show produced by the MaryKnoll Missionaries reports that these women are maintained in terrible conditions. In prison there are no amenities such as here in the States. The women are not even given sanitary napkins, nor toothpaste. They urinate and defecate in a communal bucket in the corner of a large enclosed area with many women sleeping on mats on the ground or on the ground themselves. The government is considering a mandatory i.d system that would deem a woman a prostitute for life, and at the end of her "career", allow her benefits to assist her when she is older.

Are these feminist issues? Or are these human rights issues? Are they at all relative to those of us in the United States? When these women travel as migrant prostitutes to America with hopes of making more money in a safer and more secret environment, it becomes our problem. Doesn't it? The networks that bring them in and assist them in maintaining work are at times legal, such as in New York City, and sometimes black market in other American cities. In Philadelphia in April of 2003, a black market basement brothel was raided by vice. The women, who paid between \$10-25,000.00 to a trader to become a citizen in the United States, were on shift 24/7, never allowed to go outside, and were not even allowed to order food as their meals were supplied out of a small back kitchen when they had no tricks. This raid, which colleagues of mine witnessed, did not appear in the next day's newspaper as far as anyone could tell. What rights do these women have if they are arrested, fall ill, are abused or mistreated? None. Many foreign women continue to come to America to work illegally as prostitutes because it is believed that we offer more money in a free environment. They want to be American, and have the right to create a new life for themselves, and their families. Our women's movement and sexual revolution is known to have made firm advancements in civil

rights and personal liberties that women in other countries don't have available. When it comes to women working in the sex industry, especially foreign women in the American underground, those advancements do not apply.

Jo Doezenia, wrote a well-descript introduction in: Commentary On The Draft Protocol To Combat International Trafficking In Women And Children Supplementary To The Draft Convention On Transnational Organized Crime from January 1999. Though her article introduces the concept of migrant labor as a result of economic shifts throughout Europe, it describes a situation that is global and does affect the United States, as many migrant sex workers from Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Australia - to name areas from where I have known prostitutes working here - have been coming here, for the same reasons. We, also, have Americans that go to work as hostesses in Japanese nightclubs, houses in Amsterdam or England:

“While people of all genders are seeking economic opportunities abroad, women are increasingly involved in this trend. Employment in the sex industry is often a lucrative and attractive option to many people who are attempting to improve their lives and support their families through working in the international labour market. Some migrants are aware that they will be working in the sex industry; others are deceived about the nature of the work. It is important to empathize that deception and exploitation are not limited to the recruitment process. Conditions vary greatly for people working in the sex industry. Some enjoy relatively good conditions, with a great deal of control over their working situation. Others are subject to exploitation, and may even work in situations similar to slavery.”

In reading some of the issues being discussed in the “Third World” over the last ten years, I wonder where women from other countries and on other continents believe this form of activism has brought us back in America? We may be able to talk about a lot of sex in our Women's Studies classes or in magazines such as Glamour or Cosmopolitan, and we may superficially promote a lot of sexuality and sex, but is America really the leader in advancing the actual rights of women as far as the sex industry is concerned? Or, even just the civil rights of women who chose to be sexual, as opposed to more prurient. Right now, commercial sex is under fire from the federal government in a way that is bringing us back to the mid 1950s. All over America private female run businesses are being shut down, and being compared to male and male/female controlled businesses importing women under false intention, creating a national state of confusion. Madams are being arrested for conspiracy, RICO, laundering and slavery. Prostitutes are being “saved” from the evils of their work, but are left without a complete income. Businesses that are run by Americans, working American female adults with some consensual foreign adults, for mainly American male adults are under fire and being considered as devoid of morality as the trafficking of coerced young ladies from other continents. We have fallen behind in the movement, despite what the textbooks tell us. Right now 75 percent of ladies in the House are Pro-Life. Do you think they are Pro-Sex Feminists? Though we may have one of the largest publicly visible commercial sex industries, we have some of the most contradictory laws to back it.

As of 1994 countries that were included in the new global women's movement for sexual rights were Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, North and South America, West and South Africa and

Western Europe. In May 2003, Australia even introduced the first escort agency into their stock market. Or, from a different political sphere, think of Eastern Europe, where war has ravished the morality and finances of many, and introduced the concept of rape as a savage war crime against humanity because of the atrocities that were being done unto women. The rights of people to engage in sex at their consent, and for their own purpose becomes a much more important conversation than it may have been considered if I had not introduced the reason why the subject has evolved.

It has been proven that most people who engage in commercial sex, do not do so all the time. Kempadoo notes that, "Consequently in one person's life, sex work is commonly just one of the multiple activities employed for generating income, and very few stay in prostitution for life."

With that in mind, why must the debate on prostitution be an all or nothing situation? Sexuality should not be a crime.

A segment of an essay by Than Dam Troung that appeared in Global Sex Workers appealed to me due its refreshing perspective and language. In her 1989 study of sex tourism in South East Asia, she produced what has been called by critics:

"... one of the first extensive theoretical elaborations on the subject [of sex tourism and commercial sexuality in S.E. Asia]. Defining human activity or work as the way in which basic needs are met and human life produced and reproduced, she argues that activities involving purely sexual elements of the body and sexual energy should also be considered vital to the fulfillment of basic human needs: for both procreation and bodily pleasure."

To take an exact quote from the book: "Troung thus introduces the concept of sexual labor such that humankind performs to sustain itself – such as mental or manual labor, all of which involves specific parts of the body and particular types of energy or skills. Furthermore, she points out, the social organization of sexual labor has taken a variety of forms in different historical contexts and political economies, whereby there is no universal form or appearance of either prostitution or sex work. Instead, she proposes, analyses of prostitution need to address and take into account the specific ways in which sexual activity, sexual needs and desires are constructed in specific contexts. Wet nursing, temple prostitution, "breeding" under slavery, surrogate child bearing, child-bearing, donor sex, commercial sex and biologic reproduction can thus be seen as illustrations of historical and contemporary ways in which sexual labor has been organized for the re-creation and replenishment of human and social life."

Hm. And we have a difficult time discussing prostitution and pornography here in America...

Conclusion: Isn't sex supposed to be about consensual sharing of our "most personal, private, erotic, sensitive part of our physical and psychic being?" That question is asked by an anonymous writer in a random scribble of my notes. Well, of course. But isn't the world also supposed to be a beautiful, loving place based on truth, justice and the American way? Aren't we all supposed to have food, shelter and clothing with our love, compassion and daily satisfaction? Sometimes we simply have to accept that the order of events is different from what we ultimately desire, and also that all people have different desires. For me, I'd love to have everything that sentence states, and have it with a man I love and who loves me. I don't have that man in my life right now, but I do have some bills due. Shouldn't it be up to me to choose what my body is meant for me to do?

In Live Sex Acts, Wendy Chapkis proposes that if we are able to understand how women experience and define their sexual acts in a commercial transaction, then it is possible to move beyond a "universalistic moralizing position and to develop some knowledge of the complex realities of women's experiences of sexual labor".

Let's get over the bullshit of the good girl / bad girl debate, such dualistic terminology was made for men to better contend with their own fear's own female sexuality. Jill Nagle defines this mode as "postmodern feminism and the deconstruction of binaries of female identity". You know, lesbian / heterosexual, good girl / bad girl, reproductive / non reproductive. As the contemporary rock song says, "I'm a bitch, I'm a mother, I'm your wife, I'm a lover..." Women are more dynamic than simply good girl / bad girl. And to your surprise, some whores may just be mothers, or someone's special private lover. Going back to what Kempadoo said, sex work is one of many things a woman may do with herself at a given time. Whether she chooses it freely, or is forced to go through that route, shouldn't she have the right to be considered a human worth protecting, and in the best of situations a woman who is working?

Violations against women's rights should not be acknowledged after they evolve into crimes against a person, nor humanity.

In the critical writing section of this paper many facets of commercial sexuality have been discussed, showing how different a subject each category may be even though the superficial language is similar. Prostitution. Oppression. Gender/Human Rights. The United States is heralded in many other countries as a leader in women's rights and human rights issues, including sexual commerce / prostitution. Yet, we in America seem to have abandoned this aspect of the women's movement.

I have learned in my research for this essay, even if we do not want to be callgirls through college, it is a luxury to earn that money and not be arrested, ripped off, beaten up, or killed. Would we wish ill will onto another person even if we do not want to live that life ourselves? And shouldn't we accept that our women's movement of thirty years ago has created a need for young women to have access to more cash as they go to school, live in their own apartments, own their own cars, pay for their own health insurance, dress for success and take downtime to vacation and play, and even have sex like some men opt to do? To play you have to pay. If we

can't look consensual, casual choices towards erotic labor in the eye, how can we rationally address issues that are on the other side of that? Issues where people are coerced, forced, abused, kept in a state of subtle, or direct, violence and oppression; in the United States or abroad; during times of peace or during war. Feminism should be one united movement, with all of the issues that create its need fueling its unity, not divorcing women from each other. If women together embrace the value of their sexuality, in all the different ways that may be displayed, they might just find a power that prevents, or at least lessens, oppression and violence towards women regardless of whether they be wives, mothers, lovers, friends; or courtesans.

End of Part One

[1] The American Prospect. "Regulating the Global Brothel." Platt, Leah. Volume 12, Issue 12. July 2, 2001 - July 16, 2001. <http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly/print/V12/12/platt-1.html>

[2] This will be discussed in more detail at the end of the paper with the work of Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema on the contemporary international sex workers movement.

[3] Sex, Morality and the Law. Gruen, Lori and George E. Panichas, eds. (1997. Routledge Press. New York / London. P. 88)

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. P. 90

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] See writings by Tong, Rosemary i.e. "Prostitution" Women, Sex and the Law. (NJ. Roman / Littlefield. 1984)

[9] Sex, Morality and the Law. Gruen, Lori and George E. Panichas, eds. (New York / London Routledge Press. . 1994/7 P. 114.)

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