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Making abuse visible: combating the normalisation of prostitution

A change in language has been a necessary component of the industrialisation and globalisation of the prostitution industry that has taken place over the last two decades. In the 1980s the international sex industry began a massive expansion, profiting from the legalisation or tolerance of brothels by governments inspired by neo-liberal, anti-regulationist philosophy, relaxation of controls on pornography and stripping venues, and the availability of women through sex trafficking to supply the trade. The traditional language of prostitution and trafficking, which indicated social disapproval of these practices, does not suit the newly respectable industry. Euphemisms are being adopted such as 'sex work' for prostitution and 'migration for labour' instead of trafficking into prostitution, which serve to normalise these practices. In some cases these reformulations are quite extreme such as describing women trafficked into debt bondage prostitution as the 'hope of the world', 'daring border crossers' and 'cosmopolitans' (Agustin, 2004: p. 91). In this article I shall examine the changes in language that have taken place in relation to prostitution and sex trafficking through recent material from sex work organisations and from academic researchers, and seek to show how inappropriate the new language is for use in describing the harms to women that are an integral part of this international industry. I will suggest that a more robust language must be retained or developed which identifies the harms of prostitution.

Until the 1980s there was a unified feminist position on prostitution, which was that it represented the very model of women's subordination i.e. the exchange of women for sexual use between men (see Jeffreys, 1997). It started in slavery according to the historian Gerda Lerner (Lerner, 1987). Radical feminist theorist Kate Millet argued that prostitution reduced a woman to 'cunt' and was a 'living fossil' (Millet, 1975). Feminists expected in the 1970s that this practice would die out as women's liberation was achieved. But now this practice is the basis of a massively profitable and constantly expanding international industry. The morality of the marketplace dictates that old-fashioned ethical principles should be abandoned in relation to activities that are profitable. Thus that harmful traditional practice of the western world, prostitution (Jeffreys, 2004), has been repositioned as a legitimate market sector which can aid in building national economies. A 1998 International Labour Organisation Report, *The Sex Sector*, went so far as to make the argument that prostitution in Asian countries, in which it already accounted for 2-14% of GDP, should be recognised as legitimate by governments because of its profitability, even if

they did not go so far as to legalise it (Lim, 1998). In Germany alone, which has legalised brothel prostitution, prostitution is estimated to be worth 6 billion euros annually, with an estimated 400,000 prostituted women and 1.2 million male buyers daily. The city of Cologne gets 700,000 Euros per month from brothel fees and charges (De Pommereau, 2005).

Unfortunately national and international sex work organisations which receive money from state governments to do AIDS education work, such as the Network of Sex Work Projects, and Europap in the EU, have adopted the new market morality in relation to prostitution and the language that goes with it. Women academics who support this approach also use the new language. Helen Day and Sophie Ward, influential researchers of prostitution in Europe through their involvement with Europap, say 'Arguments to treat sex work simply as a business, subject to normal regulations of financing, profit, taxation and so forth have won support, in part because of the growing appeal of free market principles at the end of the 20th century in Europe' (Ward and Day (eds), 2004, p. 5). Though critical of neo-liberalism in general they have nonetheless adopted what Paula Monzini (2005) usefully identifies as the functionalist position on prostitution, that it is 'sex work' and should be seen as just like other forms of work. Day and Ward seek to develop a language that will enable the normalisation of prostitution and enable it to be seen as a legitimate market sector, 'There seems to be no neutral vocabulary with which we can discuss prostitution as simply another sector of the economy, since many commentators consider the exchange of sex for money incompatible with the dignity and value of human life' (Visser, Jan with Arne Radners-Pehrson, Sophie Day, Helen Ward, 2004, p. 241). Those sex work activists and academics who seek to normalise prostitution will be called 'normalisers' here.

The lengths to which the prostitution normalisers are prepared to go can be quite extreme. For Liv Jessen, who is the director of a centre for prostituted women in Norway, prostituted women become 'heroines'. This is because she sees them as embodying the freedom of choice so important to free marketeers and neo-liberals. In the language of pure liberal individualism, she employs the notion of 'choice' as freedom, with no analysis of how 'choices' are constructed and constrained by political and economic realities. She nails her colours to the mast, 'Prostitutes, like all people, must be given the freedom to choose. That is what makes you human. It also means that you are allowed to take the responsibility for your actions. Prostitutes will no longer be looked upon as victims to pity or rescue - but as heroines in their own lives' (Jessen, 2004: p.211). Lenore Kuo, a professor of Women's Studies and author of the 2005 volume *'Prostitution Policy'*, goes so far as to say that the oppression of women will not end until prostitution is normalised, 'I argue that women will never be normalized until sex is normalized, and sex will never be normalized until prostitution is normalized' (Kuo, 2005: p. 2). This is a long way from the

common understanding in the 1970s that prostitution was fundamental to women's subordination.

'Sex work' as a euphemism

The origin of the practice of referring to men's prostitution abuse of women as 'sex work' lies in the activities of the sex work organisation, Coyote, in the early 1980s (Jeness, 1993). Since then this has become the politically correct term for prostitution in the academy as well as within the non-government and government sectors in countries in which prostitution is tolerated or legalised. The decision to use the term 'sex work' or the term 'prostitution' to describe the practice of men paying to access the bodies of women, children and young men is likely to reflect different ideological positions. Authors committed to the idea that prostitution should be normalised and understood as regular work are likely to use the term sex work (Kempadoo and Doezema, 1999; Ward and Day, 2004; Weitzer, 2000). Those who see prostitution as a practice that harms women are likely to select the term prostitution as one which makes it easier to acknowledge and recognise those harms (Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997; O'Neill, 2001; O'Connell Davidson, 1998; Outshoorn, 2004).

In the course of seeking to normalise prostitution, some academic apologists make analogies between prostitution and other forms of work. Fran Shaver, of Concordia University in Montreal, explains that 'Several researchers are beginning to recognize the utility in comparing sex work with other types of personal service work. Often, it increases our understanding of both types of work' (Shaver, 2005, p. 312). She makes it clear that the motivation behind this endeavour is to normalise prostitution, 'such comparisons will help normalize sex work and place it in the context of other personal service work' (Shaver, 2005, p. 314). Prostitution is similar to other forms of 'service work' she avers, in two respects. It requires what she calls 'Professional distancing' which is 'often required as a form of emotional protection while on the job or is integral to a code of professional ethics, particularly in the caring professions' (Shaver, 2005, p. 313). In this way she is seeking to make the emotional disassociation that is necessary for survival in prostitution and, as some prostitution researchers have pointed out, in the child sexual abuse that prostituted women have often experienced, analogous with the 'distancing' that nurses or teachers might have to do in order not to get too emotionally involved with their charges (Russell, 1995). Like other jobs, she says, prostitution includes the risk of violence, 'Neither sexual harassment nor assault is unique to sex work: there are significant stressors in many jobs' (Shaver, 2005, p. 313). As an example she gives a study of Montreal Urban Community Police which found that 30% of the policewomen had experienced sexual harassment from their colleagues. The rather stark differences between prostituted women and policewomen in the sort of harassment they are likely to face

and their ability to combat it, are overlooked here.

The result of seeing prostitution as a form of service work is that the everyday use of women's bodies by male buyers are referred to by another euphemism, 'servicing'. Thus the prostitution legislation that legalises brothels in Victoria, Australia, for instance, calls the use of a woman's body 'sexual services' (Government of Victoria, 1994). When prostitution is legalised those who were once referred to as 'pimps' become respectable businessmen and thus the owners of legal brothels and escort agencies are referred to by the Victorian state government as 'service providers'. I will refer to those who make a third party profit from prostitution in this article as 'pimps' and realise that those readers who are used to the new language may find this startling. The website of the Victorian Business Licensing Authority provides a page with advice for the pimps entitled 'Prostitution Service Providers' and is headed by a photograph of the back view of a man, presumably a male buyer, knocking on a closed and anonymous door (Government of Victoria nd). The word *prostituidor* exists in Spanish to refer to male buyers and the English translation, *prostitutor*, will be used in the rest of this article. It is useful because it gives the buyer the status of perpetrator in the practice of prostitution, which is generally obscured behind terms such as client or customer.

The harms of prostitution make it not like other work

A consideration of the harms of prostitution can be useful in determining whether the term 'sex work' or 'servicing' is appropriate. There is a most useful source of information on these harms in the material produced by sex work organisations aimed at alleviating occupational health and safety (OHS) concerns. A perusal of the information booklets produced in 2004 for the organisation, STAR, Sex Trade Advocacy and Research, run by Fran Shaver and colleagues, suggests that the risks and harms faced by Canadian prostituted women are very different from those of police work. One of the Star booklets is called 'Security Matters' and includes advice on what to do, 'When a client continues to insist on unsafe sex'. The advice makes the inequality of power involved in prostitution plain as the prostituted woman is advised to 'Learn techniques to put a condom on a client or simulate vaginal sex without him noticing'. The techniques are said to be 'difficult to learn and take practice' and may lead to violence since, 'These techniques may be responded to in a negative way if a client becomes aware of what you are doing' (Star, 2004a). There is other helpful advice for women seeking to avoid penetration by a man who refuses to wear a condom such as, 'Tell him that you have diarrhoea if he insists on anal sex without a condom' (Star, 2004a). The next piece of advice from Star is headed, 'If a client turns violent' and includes the suggestions that a woman should 'Take a deep breath; keep breathing' and 'Talk to the client calmly and, if possible, leave the setting as quickly as you can' (Star, 2004a).

She is told to 'Try to stay calm' and that 'your fear can make you strong. If you are being held, think about the parts of your body that are free (feet, legs, head) and use them to resist and fight back'. Such techniques were described by the prostituted woman Maggie O'Neill interviewed in the UK, and she dubs them 'gentling' (O'Neill, 2001).

These dangers extend to stripping according to another Star booklet entitled 'Dancing Matters' (Star, 2004b). In relation to sexual harassment strippers are told to, 'Watch for roaming hands. Clients have an easier time touching you when you dance on a box, especially when you're bending over' i.e. as the woman displays her genital area from behind to her male audience sitting at the table on which she is performing, a man may grab or digitally penetrate her vagina or anus. In table dances she is told to, 'Watch out for unruly or aggressive customers. Use the mirrors to keep track of your back'. She is advised that in 'secluded areas' such as 'booths or VIP rooms' she is particularly vulnerable and there's a greater possibility of assault, 'If a customer is trying to manhandle you, try holding his hands in a sexy way to control him. But be aware that touching violates some municipal bylaws. If you're being assaulted, scream'. This is complex and contradictory advice. The woman will violate the law if she touches the man but must do so to implement the sexual assault avoidance strategy advised here.

The safety advice offered to women in Victoria, Australia, where brothel and escort prostitution are legalised, demonstrates how confusing and euphemistic language in relation to the harms of prostitution has become. Resourcing Health and Education in the sex industry (RhED), is a program of the Inner South Health Service in Melbourne, i.e. it is an arm of the state government. Where prostitution is legalised the responsible governments become involved in seeking to lessen the clear harms that prostituted women experience, by regulating and advising upon the ways in which prostitutes may place their hands and penises in relation to women's bodies and orifices. The RhED website contains a document called 'Power' which advises prostituted women how to avoid rape and assault, and presumably murder, since this is a clear risk also, and how to report these crimes should they occur (RhED, 2002). The title is a good example of the ways in which euphemism can extend even to obvious inversions of the truth. Women at risk of rape and murder in prostitution do not have 'power', rather they are extremely vulnerable to the exercise of men's power over them and need advice as to how to 'gentle' or fend off these men. But in a legalised environment like the state of Victoria, advice on how to survive this violence is called 'Power' with no sense that this is grotesquely inappropriate.

The document was a joint project of the Victorian CASA Forum and Rhed. CASA stands for Centres Against Sexual Assault, called Rape Crisis Centres in other countries. CASA is a feminist organisation and it is

troubling to see it having to contradict itself and its clear feminist understandings in the interests of alleviating the harms of prostitution. The document opens, for instance, with the advice that any prostitute can potentially be a rapist since rapists look just like any other men. But later prostituted women who have been raped, but need to go on subjecting themselves to the risk of rape in order to make a living, are advised to speak to a counsellor about ways to, 'trust your capacity to suss out Ugly Mugs' (mug is the traditional term for prostitute in Australia). The counsellors are likely to be from CASAs and this advice implicates CASAs, which should be aimed at preventing rape and protecting the interests of women, in maintaining women's subjection to the harms of prostitution.

An autobiography of a woman prostituted in legal brothels in Melbourne, Victoria, shows that OHS guides are not very useful in addressing the everyday harms of prostitution (Holden, 2005). The author describes how she tries to maintain control of the discomfort and pain she has to endure in the routine practice of the brothel.

Control, not to squeal when a man grabbed my breast hard enough to make it twinge. Control to keep my legs stretched in the air even when they were trembling. Control to brace against pounding from behind, as my face mashed in to the pillow and my arms shuddered and my spine jarred with every thrust. Control, not to gag at a slimy tongue in my mouth, burrowing wetly into my ear, licking at my throat. Control not to twitch when a fingernail suddenly dug into my anus, when a cock scraped into my vagina against burning skin and I felt my face go pale with pain. (Holden, 2005: p. 172)

Holden is positive about prostitution though she was driven to it by heroin addiction, and does not include such material to show the harms of prostitution but rather the skills she developed to survive them.

If the guidelines are less than adequate in relation to brothel prostitution, they are outrageously inappropriate to address the harms peculiar to escort prostitution. The escort industry involves women visiting the private homes or hotel rooms of prostitutes, where no checks can be carried out for safety, hygiene, or any of the other usual workplace health and safety risks. The safety guidelines published by RhED for escort workers show how serious the risks are (RhED, n.d.a). Escort work is legal in Victoria so these guidelines are directed by an arm of the state at a legal industry. Escort workers are advised, for instance, to reconnoitre around the premises on arrival for too many cars or too many lights on, which may indicate the possibility of gang rape. They are advised to ask for a tour of the property when the door is opened so that they can check the exits in case of trouble. Other safety tips include:

- Pens, screech whistles and breath sprays can make good weapons, and may allow you the opportunity to get away
- Assert yourself in the first 10 minutes of meeting the client. From the moment you are alone with the client it's important to take control and stay in control of the situation. Be polite and friendly – it's often the best way to gain control – even when the client is behaving like a jerk.
- Let the client know that there is someone waiting outside for you, even if you are not using a driver.
- If you drive yourself, park your car so only the back can be seen from the house (for example behind a tree or some bushes) and leave the car radio on if possible (this will suggest to the client that someone is waiting for you).
- Have your belongings near the door in a pile so you can grab them if you need to get away quickly.

The latter instruction is presumably aimed at ensuring that when a woman has to run from danger she will not have to be naked.

In the legalised environment of Victoria even child prostitution is euphemised. A report on child prostitution in Melbourne (Childwise, 2004) explains that it specifically chose to use the euphemism 'commercial sexual activities' for the prostitution of persons over the age of 18 because it is 'non-judgmental'. For those under 18 the term 'commercial sexual exploitation' is used despite the fact that the activity described is unlikely to change its form markedly when they reach their 18th birthdays. It is hard to imagine such a rigid differentiation in terms being necessary in relation to another occupation a child might perform, such as working in a shop or on a farm. This strange and contorted usage indicates a knowledge that prostitution is abusive but a determination not to be negative towards an activity that is accepted by governments in Australia as ordinary work. Childwise interviewed 30 young people from 16-29 years who had started what the authors call 'sex-working' between 12 and 16 years. All of these children had been sexually abused, i.e. sexually used below the age of consent by prostitutes, but this abuse is relabelled 'sex-working'. For example in relation to one young man the report says, 'He had been sex-working since the age of 13 to support his drug habit' (Childwise, 2004: p. 63). This could be rewritten to make the abuse visible e.g. 'He had been sexually abused by prostitutes since the age of 13'. All the young people wanted to be out of prostitution and in what they called 'normal jobs'. All suffered serious harms before they entered prostitution such as homelessness, child abuse, heroin addiction, violent relationships, and these harms propelled them into the activity. But prostitution is euphemised into 'sex-working' rather than child abuse or violence here, even by an organisation clearly very concerned at the degree of harm, including gang rapes and routine violence, that the young people are suffering.

Other euphemisms used in Victoria to refer to prostitution are 'transaction' and 'mutual exchange'. One document on the RhED website which uses this language is 'Tips for Novices' (RhED, Tips for Novices: n.d.b). This instructs inexperienced, and probably young, prostituted women, girls and boys, that they should be nice to customers and that prostitution is not abusive. This seems a particularly problematic role for a government agency to take in relation to the practice. Thus 'Tips for Novices' tells women to respect their 'customers', 'Unless a customer is terribly rude, there is no reason to cop an attitude with him or her. Both you and your customers get something valuable out of the transaction that takes place. It behoves you to honor the mutual exchange'. The document compares prostitution with a religious vocation, 'The only think (sic) wrong with sex work is society's negative, hypocritical attitude towards it. You deserve as much support for your career choice as Mother Teresa does for hers'. The last line instructs the recruits to 'Lube your orifices' and the author's name is given as 'Taste of Latex'. The state seems to have taken sides here, servicing the pimps through its prostitution outreach organisation rather than the abused women. Women are instructed to smile their way through the abuse they experience and not think negatively about it.

Stigma as a euphemism for abuse

The physical and psychological harms of prostitution are so clear, even to researchers who seek to normalise prostitution, that they need to be explained away. This has led to the creation of another interesting euphemism (see Pheterson, 1996). The concept of 'stigma' is used to suggest that the harms are created, not by the ordinary practice of prostitution, but by the negative social attitudes which lead to the stigmatising of prostitution and prostituted women. Sophie Day and Helen Ward make use of this concept in their research on prostitution and health in Europe (Day and Ward, 2004 a and b). In a piece entitled 'Approaching health through the prism of stigma' they explain the serious health problems their interviewees experienced as a result of being in prostitution. However, they cannot 'approach' health through a 'prism of harm' and seek to attribute all the ills the women report to the social stigma on prostitution. Thus they suggest that complete social acceptance of prostitution, with the removal of stigma, will remove the problems and enable prostitution to be just ordinary work. 56% of the prostituted women they interviewed were 'migrants' i.e. most likely to have been trafficked.

They report, 'HIV was not the only, or even the most serious, health problem for women. Many participants were concerned primarily about violence at work' (Day and Ward, 2004 a: p.148) mostly from 'clients'. 'Women spoke of "the psychological effects", "the lack of respect", "the degradation" and "the humiliation" of the work. Across centres, women also spoke of their own distaste for the job: "I do not have much feeling

left", "it is a heavy job for the mind", "it is dirty" (Day and Ward, 2004 a: p.150). The women also spoke of alcohol and drug use and sexually transmitted infections. When women were asked about the worst aspects of their work, they 'complained about dirty, abusive, drunk and exploitative clients' (Day and Ward, 2004 a: p. 150) Day and Ward report that 'The negative aspects of working were emphasised more than the positive in all centres' (Day and Ward, 2004 a: p. 150). Of the 40 respondents in Lisbon, 'twenty women explicitly claimed that there were no good things about prostitution' (Day and Ward, 2004 a. p. 150).

Day and Ward found the following in their interviewees, 'a range of psychological problems including stress and depression, insomnia, flash backs, panic attacks and fears of disclosure, problem alcohol and drug use, nervous breakdowns, anorexia, bulimia, manic depression and severe personality disorder' (Day and Ward, 2004 b: p. 171) but attribute them to 'stigma'. They explain, 'We had not intended to research psychological problems and did not therefore define these issues closely but noted rather the linkage between mental health problems and a sense of stigma and injury in sex work, which persisted on changing jobs' (Day and Ward, 2004 b: p. 171). All these problems are interpreted as being the result of 'stigma'. Day and Ward describe the importance of stigma thus, 'We propose a developmental model of stigma on the basis of these data so as to emphasise its long as well as short term effects, and the necessary relationships between psychological and sociological approaches. Stigma and reactions to stigma shape sex workers' lives in different ways over time' (Day and Ward, 2004 b: p.162).

Day and Ward found that women grew more unhappy with being prostituted the longer they had been in it. Their conclusion is that this too is the result of stigma. However the issues the long term prostituted women talked about do not relate to stigma very well since the 'most prominent theme in this discussion concerned clients' and 'It was hard to minimise exposure to violent or difficult men' and they were overwhelmingly concerned with 'safety' (Day and Ward, 2004 b: p. 169). Even regular clients were difficult because 'they might hit you when they could not have an erection' for instance. Day and Ward say 'While the conversation ranged over many dimensions of stigma, it was the long-term effects of prejudice that troubled these women most'. This is puzzling since it is clear from this account that it is the behaviour of the prostitutes that causes them stress and not 'stigma'.

The range of problems the prostituted woman suffered are precisely those that other researchers (see Farley, 2003) who seek to document the harms of prostitution attribute to the trauma resulting from abuse rather than stigma. The psychological effects of prostitution are gradually gaining recognition amongst mental health professionals. Thus Judith Herman, the respected author of *Trauma and Recovery* which provides a feminist analysis

for women survivors of sexual violence and those who seek to help them, explains that mental health practitioners have simply not responded to the issue of treating prostituted women though 'our staff... were seeing a remarkable number of patients who had been used in prostitution, and that these were among the most cruelly abused people we had ever seen' (Herman, 2003: p.3).

Day and Ward cannot interpret the data on the women's distress in a way which respects what they were actually saying i.e. the violence and degradation of the prostitutes is the main source of harm, without discrediting the analysis in their volume that prostitution should be seen as like any other form of work. Thus they are forced into mental gymnastics and summersaults designed to attribute the harms to 'stigma' instead. They comment, 'It should be appreciated that the effects of stigma are long term, probably permanent, and difficult to address' (Day and Ward, 2004 b: p. 175). 'Stigma' is a problem, of course, and prostituted women do suffer considerable harms from the way that they are treated socially, by police and the legal system, and by being unable to return to or explain to families what has happened to them. These harms can reasonably be attributed to 'stigma' but the ordinary, everyday violence of the practice of prostitution cannot reasonably be tidied away under this umbrella.

Language and the traffic in women

Normalisers of prostitution, including Day and Ward, use the euphemism 'migrant sex workers', to disappear the brutal reality of trafficking in women into debt bondage, recognised by the UN Working Group on Slavery as a 'modern form of slavery'. Governments all over the world are presently recognizing the seriousness of the problem of trafficking for prostitution. This has resulted in the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons of the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Research into trafficking and prostitution in Europe suggests that the problem of trafficking segues seamlessly into prostitution, with the majority of prostituted women in western European cities now having been trafficked (Agustin 2001: 3). As prostitution becomes less and less distinguishable from trafficking, those who seek to promote prostitution as legitimate work, and want the industry decriminalised, are faced with a difficulty. The issue of trafficking threatens to make prostitution look more like slavery and less like work. It creates an image problem for the industry. Thus the 'sex work' lobby, in the form of sex work organisations such as the international Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), and academic apologists, are now being forced to engage in changing language and seeking to prettify trafficking. In the new language trafficking into prostitution has become 'migration for labour'. Trafficked women in debt bondage have become 'contract workers' or even, with postmodern hyperbole, 'daring border crossers' and 'cosmopolites' (Agustin 2002).

There is a greater agreement from governments, ngos and feminists on the harms of trafficking than there is on the harms of prostitution. Even many of those who consider that prostitution should be decriminalised and seen as work do see substantial harm in the trafficking of women into the industry. The process of trafficking is remarkably similar whether it concerns the trafficking of Thai women into Australia or into Japan (Human Rights Watch 2000) or Eastern European women into Bosnia Herzegovina (Human Rights Watch 2002). The Australian experience is a good example of the components of trafficking. Thai women trafficked to Australia may be deceived about the fact that they will be prostituted, or they may know but be deceived about the conditions of that prostitution (Maltzahn 2003). The Australian non-government organisation, Project Respect, explains that the traffickers actively recruit women in Thailand rather than waiting passively for women to approach them. The women will be told that they must pay off a debt to the traffickers but will not know how large that debt may be or what paying it off will entail. They receive false travel documents. The women who have been deceived will be raped multiple times and threatened in order to teach them what is required in prostitution and to keep them compliant. Women who know that their destination is prostitution may experience violence too, to keep them from challenging the circumstances they find themselves in, such as being confined to brothels, kept behind bars in their accommodation, being unable to refuse any buyers or sexual acts, or sex without condoms, and having to accept 500 to 1,000 buyers before they receive any payment. They will be subject to threats and be under the control of minders. They are prostituted in both legal and illegal brothels and escort agencies. They are required to work long hours and often for seven days a week. If women do complain they receive sexual, physical and psychological violence. The typical debt is 35,000 to 50,000 Australian dollars. It is this 'sexual servitude', now estimated to be the fate of millions of women and girls around the world, that the normalisers are seeking to represent as just 'migration for labour'.

The latest international instrument to define trafficking, the 2000 Protocol on Trafficking in Persons of the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, has a definition of trafficking which covers the variety of methods that may be used to gain control of women, both those which use overt violence and those which do not, and makes consent irrelevant. The definition is as follows:

"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the

consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (United Nations 2000: Article 3a).

The definition makes it clear that besides violent force or deception other methods can be employed such as the exploitation of a position of power, or the giving of payments to others such as parents or relatives of a victim. As to the issue of consent, the Protocol is unambiguously clear: 'The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used' (Ibid: Article 3b).

Despite this clear definition, many sex work organisations persist in excluding any women who have not been obviously forced or deceived from their definition of trafficking. This is clear in the submission which the Australian sex work umbrella organisation Scarlet Alliance made to a parliamentary inquiry into 'trafficking in women for sexual servitude' which took place in the second half of 2003. In the submission trafficking is all but disappeared under a host of euphemistic terms. Trafficked women are described as 'contract' women. Instead of trafficking, Janelle Fawkes of Scarlet Alliance talks of 'women who have come to work under a contract system' and 'contract workers' throughout. She downplays the problem by saying that less than 400 'sex workers' enter Australia 'on a contract' each year of whom the majority 'knowingly consent' i.e. are not, in the Scarlet Alliance definition, trafficked. Fawkes says that the organisations associated with Scarlet Alliance have had contact with less than ten women who have been 'deceptively recruited'. Scarlet Alliance, as a body responsible for advising the federal and state governments on prostitution issues, has played a significant part in downplaying trafficking and allowing the government to say, until 2003, that there was no trafficking into Australia because all the 'migrant sex workers' 'chose' and knew what they were coming into.

The submission describes trafficked women as 'persons who are migrating for work'. Debt bondage in their account gets disappeared too. They say, 'These sex workers usually have agreed to repay a fee to be "trafficked"' (Fawkes, 2003: p.10). They explain debt bondage, as arising from the women's ignorance. Trafficked women have an unfamiliarity with exchange rates: 'often they do not understand the rate of exchange with Australia so end up paying back more than they expected' (Fawkes, 2003: p. 10). Scarlet Alliance characterises the identification of women as having been trafficked as a kind of insult to those women, 'Viewing people under contract as 'trafficked' denies the personal agency people exercise when they desire to work in Australia and then choose to enter a contract in order to do so' (Fawkes, 2003: p. 10).

Europap and Tampep in Europe also deny the significance of trafficking as an issue and redefine trafficked women as 'migrant sex workers'. As a

result of their funding and status as EU expert bodies on prostitution they have considerable influence. Both are committed to the decriminalization of prostitution. A Tampep report on the Europap website, for instance, on 'Intervention models for migrant sex workers in Europe' by Licia Brussa, recognizes that more and more women in prostitution in Europe are from other countries, 'An important change in the prostitution scene resulted from the enormous migration flows from Central and Eastern Europe towards Western Europe' (Brussa, n.d.: p. 5). But Tampep does not make any link between this circumstance and trafficking.

Accepting prostitution as a social reality means that we all have to agree that the resources offered by the prostitution market represent an actual possibility of economic resources for a relevant part of the feminine foreign population ...it may be the right path to consider the objectives of normalisation of prostitution and of protection of human rights (Brussa, n.d.: p. 6).

Their aim is to normalise prostitution as a market sector.

A major collection on international prostitution, *Transnational Prostitution. Changing Global Patterns* (2002), uses the new language and understanding of trafficking. Susanne Thorbek, who edited the collection with Bandana Pattaniak, explains that she considers the word trafficking to be applied on far too wide a scale when the term 'migrant sex workers' is more appropriate, 'It is common in the rich world today to define anyone who arranges for a prostitute to travel to work in a richer country as a trafficker, regardless of whether the prostitute has chosen to travel herself or has been forced or lured into the situation' (Thorbek, 2002: p. 5). Like sex work organisations committed to the normalisation of trafficking, Thorbek and Pattaniak and the writers in their collection seek to radically redefine the meaning of the term. Since trafficking in women into prostitution is such a huge and increasingly serious problem, it might have been expected that a volume entitled 'Transnational Prostitution' would address the issue, but it is disappeared by a judicious change of language and not mentioned here. Only 'migrant sex work' is discussed.

Pataya Ruenkaew writes in this volume that 'transnational prostitution' should be understood as 'a kind of transnational labour migration' (Ruenkaw, 2002: p. 69). Ruenkaew's chapter includes a mention of what the Thai women were doing before they 'chose' to 'immigrate' to Germany. Some had clearly been, as she explains, internally trafficked or trafficked to other countries first. Though their original trafficking may have been through sale by their families, force or deception, once they 'chose' to immigrate to Germany they should not, she thought, be seen as trafficked. There is information from Refugee Tribunal cases involving Thai women trafficked into Australia of this problem too (Jeffers, 2005).

The cases show that some of these women had been kidnapped and kept as sex slaves in military camps, brought up in brothels, or clearly forced into prostitution before their transport to Australia. This sheds new light on the concept of 'choice', enabling us to see this as created by circumstances of abuse which foreclose other options for the women involved.

Ruenkaw is upbeat even about the fact that some of the women who survive trafficking and are unable or unwilling to return to their countries of origin become involved in the trafficking process, 'The pioneer migrant women later function as parts of social networks, maintaining links to their home community, providing information about living and working conditions and on modalities of entrance into the target country. They organize the trip and help at the place of destination, and sometimes even recruit more women' (Ruenkaw, 2002: p. 77). Other writers on trafficking are less positive about this process. Louise Brown, for instance, explains that some women, when they are no longer young enough to make a living in prostitution, or when they want to get out of it when returning 'home' is not an option because they will be outcasts, will become 'procurers', in her words (Brown, 2000). They have absorbed the values of the industry and have few choices.

The determination to put a positive spin on trafficking can go to some extremes such as suggesting that trafficked women have won the lottery. Thus Prapirat Ratanaloan Mix in the same volume analyses case studies of 4 Thai women in prostitution in Germany. She writes 'For some it is like winning the lottery, even if it is not the first prize. Ngamnit, and Srithong, for example, could be considered to have won a major prize' (Mix, 2002: p. 97). The major prize refers to the acquisition of husbands and families and some prosperity. But the conditions in which they entered prostitution were those of slavery and deception. One was pimped by a German 'boyfriend' who took her to Frankfurt and put her into a brothel, asking her to 'pay for the expenses of the journey and arrangements' (Mix, 2002: p. 88) i.e. classic trafficking. She is now married to a man she does not love and by whom she has a son, and working as a maid in a hotel. Her daughter is with her previous husband in Thailand. Another woman was persuaded by her sister, already in prostitution, to move to Germany with the help of her sister's 'German boyfriend'. She 'changed her mind' when she found out 'what she had to do' (Mix, 2002: p. 90) and was 'unable to cope with the work at first' (Mix, 2002: p. 96) but was told she had to work. Mix comments 'Many Thai sex-workers who live in Germany do not explain the working conditions and other problems faced by Thai sex-workers when they visit Thailand. Instead, they talk about the amount of money they earn and the jewellery they have' (Mix, 2002: p. 96). This woman had been able to give up prostitution by marrying and her husband was now in work. She had children in Thailand. Another went to Germany knowing she would likely end up in prostitution but was shocked to find she owed

so much, i.e. debt bondage, that she had to work for 7 months to repay the money. She had problems with men wanting to marry her to live off her prostitution and now works as a cleaner. All these women experienced classic aspects of trafficking but are seen as having won prizes.

Bandana Pattaniak justifies her positive approach to 'migrant' sex work by saying that it is important for researchers to use 'careful listening' and have 'non-judgemental attitudes towards sex-workers' (Pattaniak, 2002, p. 222). The result of her listening is that she takes the normalising impulse to new levels of inappropriateness. In the concluding chapter of *Transnational Prostitution*, she suggests that 'Prostitution can be seen as reproductive labour, akin to the work performed by all women under a diverse range of social relations' (Pattaniak, 2002: p. 223). She quotes Jyoti Sanghera who defines reproductive labour as "fundamentally necessary work", 'all reproductive labour is work; it describes fundamentally necessary work undertaken in order for human society to multiply itself and to reproduce its capacity to work and exist as human beings' (quoted in Pattaniak, 2002: p. 224).

Pattaniak introduces another euphemism by suggesting that prostituted women should be seen as 'entrepreneurs', 'There is also a formulation that sex-workers should be seen as entrepreneurs... According to this way of conceptualizing sex work one does not need to have an employer' (Pattaniak, 2002: p. 224). Anders Lisborg in the same volume also translates trafficked women into 'entrepreneurs', saying that the 'vast majority' of 'Thai migrant sex-workers' 'are typically strongly autonomous entrepreneurs, who voluntarily have entered prostitution in Denmark and typically they cannot be categorized as victims of trafficking' (Lisborg, 2002: p. 116). 'Entrepreneur' is a very positive term, especially under neo-liberal conditions in which such enterprise is much respected, but is particularly unsuitable for prostitution. There is no evidence that trafficked women, or the vast majority of prostituted women in general, lack 'employers'. Such a category could only include 'callgirls' working on their own, women in brothel cooperatives or those street prostituted women who do not have pimps or boyfriends who pimp them to support their drug habit.

Daring border-crossers and cosmopolitan subjects?

Perhaps the most remarkable transformation of language in relation to trafficking comes from Laura Agustin, a member of Network of Sex Work Projects, whose research on 'migrant sex workers' has contributed to normalising the trafficking of women into prostitution within migration studies. Agustin explains that trafficked women gain positive advantages. One is that they can earn well so that 'a migrant may be able to pay back debts undertaken to migrate fairly soon' i.e. she will be able to buy herself out of debt bondage (Agustin, 2004: p. 90). But also she has a fascinating work environment,

...she works in multicultural, multilingual clubs, brothels, apartments and bars....For those selling sexual services, *milieux* are workplaces where many hours are spent socialising, talking and drinking, with each other, clientele and other workers like cooks, waiters, cashiers and bouncers. In the case of flats, some people live in them while others arrive to work shifts. The experience of spending most of their time in such environments, if people adapt to them at all, produces cosmopolitan subjects, who may consider the world their oyster, not their home'.(Agustin, 2004: p. 91)

But of course women may not 'adapt to them' and may find the context of sexual exploitation, a world in which men socialise and bond with each other through the bodies of women, frightening and alienating. This is not a world of women but one of men. She endorses the findings of other researchers in UK and mainland Europe that trafficked women are sold between men in the clubs of immigrant communities which are likely to be men's clubs, strictly segregated from the lives of other women. The Poppy Project study of the sites and organisation of prostitution in London found that one woman had been trafficked into a Turkish Social Club, for instance (Dickson, 2003: 16). The women become 'cosmopolitan subjects' because they are moved by pimps/traffickers to different countries and cities to keep the prostitutes interested, and to disorientate the women so that they cannot gain strength through learning a language and finding out where they are. Agustin is positive about this practice as if it is all done just to help the women, 'It is easy to find migrant sex workers who have lived in multiple European cities: Turin, Amsterdam, Lyon. They have met people from dozens of countries and can speak a little of several languages; they are proud of having learnt to be flexible and tolerant of people's differences' (Agustin, 2004: p. 91). The trafficked women become, in her words, the 'hope of the world' because they are unlikely to be nationalistic and have joined a group of people that judges others on their actions, and thoughts and not on how they look or where they are from. 'This', she says, 'is the strength of the cosmopolitan' (Agustin, 2004: p. 91). In her analysis trafficked women, who are, as she notes, the majority of 'those selling sex in Europe', become the very model of citizenship to which others may aspire.

Making abuse visible: the need for strong language

The effect of the new language that the normalisers use for prostitution and trafficking is that the harms of these practices are disappeared. Indeed the huge concern of human rights organizations, feminist activists and ngos that seek to combat trafficking in women and support women to get out, is dismissed out of hand by those who take the sex work position. Thus Helen Ward and Sophie Day describe this concern as 'hysteria', saying,

'Hysteria about trafficked women and children forced to work in the sex industry dominates much discussion of prostitution policy today' (Ward and Day, 2004, p. 6). As feminist historians and commentators have pointed out, women have regularly been described as hysterical, a condition connected to the fact that they have wombs, when making complaints about their health or situation. To disparage a woman as 'hysterical' is an anti-woman tactic. The Shorter Oxford dictionary (1990: p. 1011) defines 'hysterical' as 'belonging to, suffering in the womb, hysterical'. Though I may be labeled hysterical for suggesting this, I consider that an appropriate language needs to be adopted or developed to enable the harms of prostitution to be made visible. The 'customers' should be called prostitutes, the 'service providers' pimps, and the 'agents' traffickers and procurers, for instance. Those who use euphemistic language need to understand that they are complicit in normalising prostitution and the traffic in women.

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ALBRECHT SCHÖNE

'Faust' – Heute*

„Einschüchterung durch Klassizität“ hat Bertolt Brecht seine Anmerkungen zum 'Faust' überschrieben. Das gewaltige Textgebirge dieser Dichtung wirkt ja in der Tat so einschüchternd, daß viele Leser (und allermeist auch die Regisseure) es mit dem 'Faust I' genug sein lassen und sich an den fast doppelt so umfangreichen II. Teil gar nicht erst wagen. Überdies ist das Gesamtwerk doch befrachtet mit den Lasten einer 200jährigen Wirkungs- und Deutungsgeschichte, umstellt von zahllosen gelehrten Interpreten und abgepanzert gegen eine unbefangenen zudringliche Leserneugier durch den Ruf des abschreckend Tiefsinnigen und entmutigend Anspruchsvollen. Da versteht man ganz gut, daß Thomas Mann an Hesse geschrieben hat, „es könnte einen wohl die Lust ankommen, einmal einen ganz frischen, zutraulichen Faust-Kommentar zu schreiben, der den Leuten die allzu fromme Scheu vor dem hohen, heiteren, keineswegs unzugänglichen Werk, exeptionell wie es ist, kühn und menschlich fehlbar, – nehmen sollte.“

Auch ein frischer, zutraulicher Kommentar müßte natürlich erklären, was man ohne Erläuterungen möglicherweise nicht versteht oder mißverstehen könnte und was zu verstehen sich doch lohnte. Goethe übrigens hielt das keineswegs nur bei den großen alten Werken für erforderlich: „Denn bei den alten lieben Toten | Braucht man Erklärung, will man Noten [kommentierende Anmerkungen also]; | Die Neuen glaubt man blank zu verstehn; | Doch ohne Dolmetsch wird's auch nicht gehn.“ Gewiß hat er dabei auch an seinen 'Faust' gedacht. Der solle den Leser nötigen, „über sich selber hinauszumuten“, schrieb er über der Arbeit an seinen Freund Zelter, und: es habe „ein guter Kopf und Sinn schon zu tun, wenn er sich will zum Herrn machen von allem dem, was da hineingeheimnisst ist.“

Galt das schon für's grüne Holz, gilt es vollends beim älter gewordenen. Dem späteren Leser müssen die Kommentare nachliefern, was der Zeitgenosse im Regelfall doch selber wußte und kannte an Wörtern und Sachen. Herkömmlicherweise erklären sie solche Schriftwerke also, indem sie zurückgreifen auf das, was ihnen vorgegeben war an Sprachgebrauch und Sachkenntnis. Mit dem Zeitpunkt der Fertigstellung des Werkes jedenfalls (also mit dem Jahr 1808 für den I. Teil, mit dem Jahr 1832 für den II. Teil des 'Faust') sehen sie auch die eigene Zuständigkeit enden. Das weitere überlassen sie den deskriptiven Darstellungen der Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte. 'Aktualisierungen' gar (unabhängig davon, ob sie dem Text Gewalt antun oder aber dessen eigenen Intentionen folgen)

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